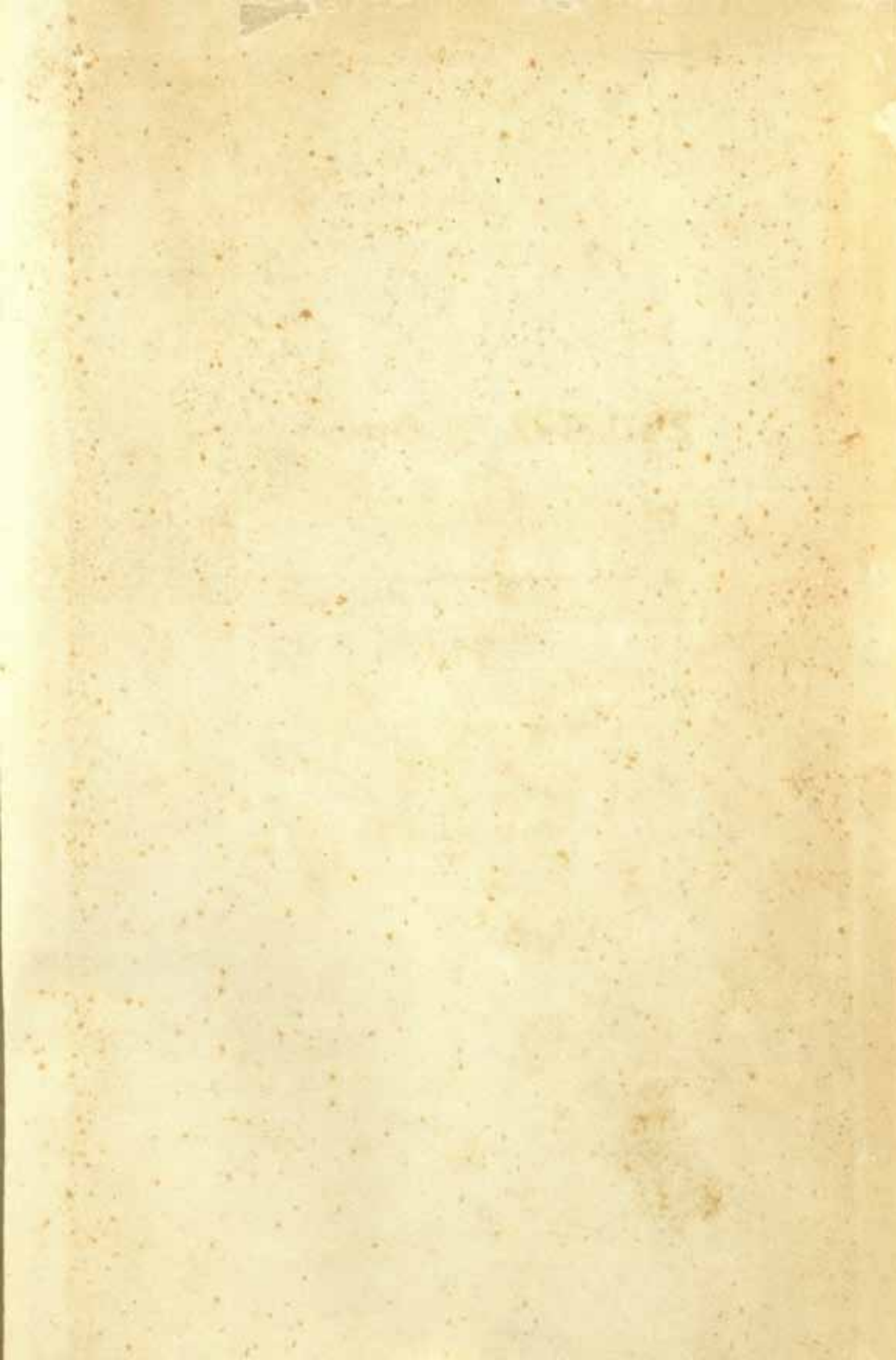


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WORSHIP AND THEOLOGY
IN ENGLAND

WORSHIP AND THEOLOGY IN ENGLAND

FROM WATTS AND WESLEY
TO MAURICE, 1690-1850

BY HORTON DAVIES



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HORTON DAVIES is currently the Henry W. Putnam Professor of the History of Christianity at Princeton University. He was born in Wales, became an honors graduate in both Arts and Divinity at Edinburgh University, and obtained his Doctorate of Philosophy at Oxford University. Mr. Davies has served successively as minister of an English Congregational Church in London, Dean of the Faculty of Divinity at Rhodes University in the Union of South Africa, and Head of the Department of Church History at Mansfield and Regent's Park Colleges at Oxford University.



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H.D.

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1. BAPTIST MEETING HOUSE, TEWKESBURY (17TH CENTURY)

Selected to illustrate the elegant simplicity of the Puritan tradition, with dominating pulpit on the long wall, central communion-table below, and high windows with clear glass. Reproduced by courtesy of the National Buildings Record, London, N.W.1. (Mr. Cecil Farthing, Deputy-Director), with the assistance of Miss Margaret Gossling, as also the succeeding 10 illustrations (Nos. 2-11).

2. QUAKER MEETING HOUSE, CIRENCESTER (17TH CENTURY)

This utterly simple and "scrubbed" interior, without pulpit or communion-table, expresses the conviction of the Society of Friends that every man and woman is illuminated by the "inner light" and that much speaking and all decoration are distraction.

3. UNITARIAN (FORMERLY BAPTIST) MEETING HOUSE, TAUNTON (1721)

Oval windows, carved square Corinthian pier, mahogany panelled pews and gallery front, slim balustrades and many-branched chandelier, provide an exquisite example of Unitarian taste and opulence.

4. THE SQUIRE'S PEW IN ST. PETER'S, CROFT (18TH CENTURY)

The Milbanke Family Pew, in which Lord Byron's future wife used to sit, peering from behind the curtains, is an index of the love of comfort and the social status of the eighteenth century squire who overlooks—in both senses—the parson and congregation.

5. "THREE-DECKER" PULPIT, ST. MARY'S, WHITBY (18TH CENTURY)

At the lowest level the clerk would "line out" the metrical psalms; on the intermediate level the parson would read the service; and, like a miniature Moses, he would mount the Sinai of the canopied pulpit at the topmost level to thunder forth the will of God in a sermon.

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6. INTERIOR OF ST. JAMES, PICCADILLY, LONDON (1682-1684), RESTORED BY SIR ALBERT RICHARDSON (1953)

In this notable Wren "auditory" church Gothic mystery disappears in flooding light, but piers, vaulting, trim galleries, and gilded ornamentation, as well as the festoons of carving, manifest the calm, well-bred, and rational confidence of Georgian churchmanship.

7. WREN'S DRAWINGS OF THE STEEPLE OF ST. BRIDE'S, LONDON (1702)

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12. **IVORY'S OCTAGON UNITARIAN CHAPEL, NORWICH (1754-1756)**

The cobbled courtyard of the octagonal meeting house permitted the affluent members of the congregation to descend from their coaches and immediately to ascend the steps, covered by the elegant portico. Reproduced by the courtesy of the Rev. J. A. Kennedy, the present minister of the church.

13. **DETAIL OF LUTHERBOURG'S "A MIDSUMMER AFTERNOON WITH A METHODIST PREACHER"**

Philip de Louthembourg (1740-1812) here depicts the mixed response to the revolutionary practice of field-preaching. Reproduced by the courtesy of Mr. Robert Hubbard, Chief Curator, the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, with the assistance of Miss Christa Dederling, Librarian.

14. **EVANGELICAL FAMILY PRAYERS, PAINTED BY THE NOVELIST SAMUEL BUTLER (1864)**

This critical but vigorously "primitive" picture of Evangelical "parlour religion" is by the author of *The Way of All Flesh* who sits in disenchantment to the left of the window. Reproduced by kind permission of the Master and Fellows of St. John's College, Cambridge, with the assistance of Dr. Peter Stern, Fellow of the College.

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A vivid index of the cacophonous opposition to the great "enthusiast."

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The scholar-gentleman-saint in the so-called "Hitt" portrait.

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Kneller captures the sensitive face of the man who wrote the first lyrical English hymns suitable for corporate worship.

18. **PORTRAIT OF GEORGE WHITEFIELD BY HONE**

This idealized portrait only faintly suggests that Whitefield was the cross-eyed "Dr. Squintum," a leading character of Foote's satirical comedy.

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19. F. D. MAURICE, A PORTRAIT IN STAINED-GLASS BY CARL EDWARDS

This detail from the fine Scholars' Window installed in Liverpool Anglican Cathedral in 1960 is reproduced by courtesy of the artist, Mr. Carl Edwards, and by kind permission of the Very Rev. F. W. Dillistone, the Dean of Liverpool.

WORSHIP AND THEOLOGY
IN ENGLAND

INTRODUCTION

THIS BOOK is one of a series of several volumes which will attempt to relate the history of English worship in its theological context from the Reformation to the present day. The study begins at a point of historical stability in 1690,¹ when the embattled partisanship of Cavalier and Roundhead, High Churchman and Puritan, gave place to an armistice in which, while the Church of England was firmly re-established, the Nonconformist Churches were tolerated. It ends in 1850, just five years after Newman, the "lost leader" of the Oxford Movement, had made his submission to Rome, and when F. D. Maurice and his fellow Christian Socialists were working out their Christian response to the Revolutions of 1848. Since the first prominent liturgical figure of the period is the pioneering hymn-writer, Isaac Watts, and the last is Frederick Denison Maurice, this volume aptly bears their names in its subtitle. The other great figure who stands midway between Watts and Maurice historically and theologically is John Wesley, whose religious importance in the eighteenth century in England is unequalled.

After two preliminary chapters which provide a synoptic description of what is characteristic of the Anglican and Nonconformist traditions in worship and architecture throughout the whole period, the remaining chapters are grouped in three parts and periods. The first part, comprising Chapters III to VI, deals with the years from 1690 to 1740, when the Latitudinarians flourished in the Church of England and Deism made inroads on traditional Trinitarian orthodoxy in both the Establishment and Nonconformity. Since the characteristic marks of the theology of the period are the reduction of the supernatural to the natural, the mysterious to the rational, and the depreciation of faith in favour of the good works of charity, the period is accordingly described as "The Dominance of Rationalistic Moralism."

The second part of the study, recording the impact on worship of the Evangelical Revival under Wesley and Whitefield and the Anglican Evangelicals, shows that rationalism and moralism yield to the imperative demands of sentiment, or what Jonathan Edwards called "the Religious Affections." Since Whitefield and

¹ Also a period of new intellectual life, since Newton's *Principia* was published in 1687 and Locke's *Essay* in 1690.

INTRODUCTION

Wesley began their field-preaching in 1739, the period from 1740 to 1830 is denominated "The Dominance of Evangelicalism" and includes Chapters VII to IX.

The third part, covering the period from 1830 to 1850, shows a marked reaction from the individualism and other-worldliness of Evangelicalism in favour of ecclesiological and sociological stresses. The rediscovery of the historical and corporate nature of the Christian Church (as signalized by the Oxford Movement and the re-established Roman Catholic English hierarchy) and the challenge of the social implications of the Christian Gospel (as expressed in the life and work of F. D. Maurice and the Christian Socialists) are the chief marks of the religious history of the period. In worship there is a renewed understanding of the apostolical charter and duty of the Church and of its necessary independence from the dictates of the State, as well as of the importance of the Sacraments and of the aesthetic dimensions of Christianity in architecture, symbolism, and ceremonial. The period which begins strictly in 1833, with Keble's "National Apostasy" sermon in St. Mary's Church, Oxford, may briefly be described as "The Dominance of Traditionalism" and comprises Chapters X and XI.

The perceptive reader may be disturbed by the emphasis (or lack of it) given to various subjects treated in the book. While almost half the study is devoted to various "parties" or schools within the Church of England, he may feel that Latitudinarianism receives short shrift in a single chapter of moderate length. My reply is simply that while the Latitudinarian Church excelled in apologetical studies and in stimulating the formation of charitable foundations, it was singularly uninterested in the reconsideration of worship. In support of this judgment I may claim the authority of the eminent historian of the Hanoverian Church, Dean Norman Sykes, who has stated: "Neither liturgical composition nor study, however, were among the eminent gifts of that age."² It remains only to add that it is exceedingly difficult for any Church or age to combine the adoration of God with a proclivity for the polemical.

It might also seem that Wesley and Whitefield, as the originals, respectively, of popular teaching and popular preaching, receive too much attention, and that a biographical treatment of them is out of place in a thematic approach. My justification would be to

² William Wake, *Archbishop of Canterbury, 1657-1737*, Vol. I, p. 188. (Full information as to date and place of publication for titles cited is given in the Bibliography.)

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plead that their method of reaching the "untouchables" produced preaching of a radically new type that helped to revive the dying devotion of the age and revolutionized both Anglican and Non-conformist pulpit styles. I would further argue that in any complete study of worship, sermons and sacraments, as well as devotions, have their important place. Finally, I would contend that my study of the favourite themes and rhetorical devices of these two princes among preachers is the only serious one known to me to be based on a thorough consideration of all their published sermons, and that it at least has the merit of demolishing the all-too-common stereotype of Whitefield as an extemporaneous ranter and brings to light some little known but fascinating references to "Dr. Squintum" in the dramatic burlesques of his day which enable us to see Whitefield through critical as well as adulatory eyes.

Exception might also be taken to devoting almost two-thirds of a chapter (xi) to the liturgical significance of Frederick Denison Maurice. It could be objected that, interesting as Maurice's theology undoubtedly was, it was almost everywhere misunderstood and calumniated in his own day, from his expulsion from the divinity chair of King's College, London, to his death. In rebuttal I would claim that it would have been impossible to devote an entire chapter to the Broad Church Movement because its members were much more interested in matters of doctrinal reconstruction and social reform than in liturgical considerations, and that, in sober fact, they had no common view on worship to maintain. Further, it could be urged that each new age has the right to interpret the past in the light of present-day interests, and there is no doubt that contemporary Anglicanism is witnessing a remarkable renaissance of interest in the life and work of F. D. Maurice. The re-publication of his major works, *The Kingdom of Christ*³ and the *Theological Essays*⁴ and the publication of three major evaluations of his life and thought by A. M. Ramsey,⁵ Alec R. Vidler,⁶ and H. G. Wood⁷ in the last decade are striking testimony to this fact. Maurice's liturgical interest and importance are due to the fact that he more than anyone else in an age of partizanship clung to the Prayer Book as the nexus of ecclesiastical unity. He believed with all his heart that whereas doctrinal unity was improbable, devotional unity was probable and providentially provided for England

³ In two volumes, edited by Alec R. Vidler.

⁴ With an introduction by Edward F. Carpenter.

⁵ *F. D. Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology*.

⁶ *The Theology of F. D. Maurice*.

⁷ *Frederick Denison Maurice*.

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in the national formulary of prayer. Moreover, Dr. A. M. Ramsey (the present Archbishop of York) has drawn attention in his recent work on Maurice^{*} to the historical importance of the man as a link between Pusey and Stewart Headlam, a bridge from the theological traditionalism of the first generation of the Tractarians, which was utterly blind to the social questions of the day, and the later Anglo-Catholic movement, which combined a right-wing theology with a left-wing sociology.

The reader may also mark the absence of any treatment of Newman's homiletical gifts and of his spirituality. Both themes will be treated in the next volume of this series, in which particular attention will be devoted to Newman as a Roman Catholic. His preaching will be considered in a chapter entitled "The Power of the Victorian Pulpit," and his spirituality in part of a chapter entitled "The Renaissance of Roman Catholic Worship: From Winter to the 'Second Spring.'" It seemed preferable to include this important subject in the succeeding volume rather than to give it peripheral consideration in the present volume, because it was only after 1850 that Roman Catholicism ceased to be the religion of a cultured and quiescent minority.

Finally, on the question of proportion and emphasis, the reader may think the author is rigorous in his treatment of Latitudinarianism and Puritanism and romantic in his consideration of traditionalism. This is not because he belongs to the latter tradition, but because it is his conviction that while Protestantism's strength is to be found in theology, preaching, and ethics, its worship requires the supplementation of the Catholic tradition.

Two larger questions must now be considered: What justification can be offered for the study of the *liturgical* rather than the theological or ethical aspects of the Christian life? And, secondly: Why confine the study to *England*?

To the first question many answers could be given, including inclination, previous experience in research, and a conviction of the importance of the discipline both to scholarship and to the Christian life. The latter seems far the most important and decisive. I would even go so far as to claim that the study of the aspiration and adoration of entire Christian communions and communities is a profound clue to the interpretation of religious

^{*} See note 5.

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life at any period;⁹ indeed, that it is as important as the consideration of the ideas of individual theologians. Moreover, the study of historical theology has often been made, while that of liturgical theology in any ecumenical and interdenominational way is a rarity. Important as theology is (and it has been given a significant place in this study), it is doubtful whether most Christians today would contend that an ability to expound and defend its subtleties is as important as the study of the love of God and its necessary correlate, the love of humanity for God's sake. If the opposite were true, then the only true Christians would be theologians, and hence a religion of potentially universal appeal would be reduced to a new gnosticism for intellectuals only. It could, with greater reason, be argued that a concern for an adequate theology is part, but only part, of one's response to the Divine Revelation to and Redemption of humanity consummated in Jesus Christ and mediated by His Church, for this is loving God with one's whole mind. It would be difficult to maintain, on the other hand, that the recital of intellectual propositions takes precedence over the trust and obedience of love, that *fides* is more important than *fiducia*. If these opinions be true, then the supreme privilege and duty of the company of Christians is the adoration and service of God in Christ our Lord, and it is by the same token a great privilege for a scholar in the Christian tradition to delineate those corporate forms of worship in which the people of God have expressed their homage in recent history.

As to the second objection that it is unjustifiable to limit the study to two centuries of English history, I plead not guilty of chauvinism. It could, indeed, be argued that the contribution of England to the forms of worship in the English-speaking world of North America (Canada and the United States) and of the British Commonwealth of Nations is a considerable one. It was in England that many denominations of widespread significance in the modern world originated. This is true, in particular, of Anglicanism, Congregationalism, Methodism, and the Society of Friends, while the Baptists first took firm hold on English soil. Colonists of these denominations took with them the modes of worship of their own religious traditions and, on the whole, clung most con-

⁹ Canon Roger Lloyd in his fascinating book, *The Church of England in the Twentieth Century* (Vol. I, p. 162) makes a larger claim: "The true history of the Church is therefore the history of its worship."

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servatively to their forms of worship in the new lands to which they came. Indeed, some of these denominations (in particular, the Baptists, Congregationalists, and Methodists) are far more powerful numerically and in their impact on national life in the United States than they ever were in the country of their origin, England. Important as this consideration is (and the history of the worship of the Baptists and Congregationalists has never been written before, nor a synoptic account of the contemporaneous development of all the major Christian denominations in England in any detail), there is another of greater import. It is that my chief concern has been to provide a context of rich concretion in this study, and to arrive at general conclusions and evaluations only after a detailed and empirical survey of the developments of worship in each denomination. For this purpose, the restriction of time (160 years) and of space (one country) was an advantage, for it was an invitation to an investigation in depth and detail, rather than to vast inter-continental generalities and titanic truisms.

The present study, then, is in part a broadening, in part also a continuation, of a task which began with the writing of *The Worship of the English Puritans*.¹⁰ That book attempted to show the development of the worship of those who were called, successively, Puritans and, after 1662, Nonconformists, the ancestors of the present English Free Churches. The limits were taken as from 1550 to 1750. The present work shows, in part, how the worship of the English Congregationalists, Baptists, and Presbyterians developed down to 1850.

Of greater importance is the fact that the theme has been broadened in scope and embraces the later development of the entire Protestant or Reformed tradition in England, and, to some extent, the impact of the Catholic renaissance of worship in the nineteenth century through the Tractarians and Roman Catholics on the Protestant understanding of worship. If the Puritans were chiefly conscious of purifying the Book of Common Prayer in a Biblical direction, and if their earlier objection to a particular prescribed liturgy in the acrimonious days of the Commonwealth became an objection to every prescribed form of prayer, their heirs were having second thoughts during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this revaluation the Unitarians, the Methodists, the newly discovered unity of Dissenters and Anglican Evangelicals in projects of practical piety and philanthropy, the Oxford Movement

¹⁰ Published by the Dacre Press, Westminster, in 1948 and long out of print.

INTRODUCTION

in the early nineteenth century, the renascence of Roman Catholicism, and the origin of the Ecumenical Movement in the mid-nineteenth century were to play most significant parts, and the remnant of English Presbyterianism that had not seceded to Unitarianism was to be influenced by the liturgical writers of the Church of Scotland, themselves stimulated by the Oxford Movement. Since it was not possible in my earlier volume to consider the Puritan tradition of worship apart from some understanding of that splendid Anglican treasure of corporate devotion and doctrine, the Book of Common Prayer, so it would prove impossible to consider the theme of Protestant worship in the last two centuries of English history without appraising the contribution of the Methodists and of those who, fifty years or so ago, rejoiced in the party label they now abhor, the "Anglo-Catholics." They, again, are intelligible only as they reflect to some extent the liturgical heritage of the Roman Catholic Church.

One of the minor ironies of history will be the discovery in this study that it is precisely the successors of Archbishop Laud who might be presumed to be hostile to the Evangelical tradition (as the High Churchmen were hostile to the Puritans) who have, through the Oxford Movement, contributed the most to the renaissance of Anglican and Free Church worship in England. The Tractarians, despite their roseate antiquarianism, spurred on the search for reverence, for the moving associations of a great and heroic tradition, for beauty and symbolism in architecture and ceremonial, for solemnity in sacred music, for a greater appreciation of the Sacraments, and for a deeper understanding of that corporate offering of Christ's Body, among the very Dissenters themselves. In short, even the Protestant tradition in English worship, or variety of traditions, cannot be understood if the renewed corporate and liturgical expression of the Gospel in the ecclesiastical revival of the nineteenth century is not taken as seriously as the evangelical revival of the eighteenth century. Our concern, then, is with the entire spectrum of Christian denominations as they thought about worship and developed their modes of worship from 1690 to 1850. It need hardly be said that this is a proper concern for those who, like the author, believe that there is continued scandal in the divisions of Christendom (rather than the contrary view of those who accept competitiveness as an essential characteristic of Christianity), and who think, with F. D. Maurice, that we are likelier to attain unity in worship than in doctrinal

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consensus. Christians believe in a common Atonement in Christ, but there cannot be at-one-ment in worship apart from an open-minded attempt to discern the glories or simplicities of forms of worship other than our own traditions which have been the avenues of Christian adoration and the conduits of the Holy Spirit.

Methodism, on the side of worship, cannot be understood as merely one example of the devotions of Pietism. It is interpreted significantly as the union in the mind of its founder, John Wesley, of the High Church Non-Juror tradition with the freer Puritan tradition. Thus the Methodist and the Tractarian types of worship add new dimensions to the development of Protestant worship—even if, as in the latter case, "Protestant" was almost an epithet of abuse. The fact that it is possible for both Presbyterians of the Church of Scotland and High Anglicans to use the term "Reformed Catholic" of their churchmanship and worship is a signal indication that the former chasm between the Reformed and the Catholic conceptions of worship is being forded in some cases.

A broader perspective is also required in this study because of the important liturgical movement among the Unitarians of the eighteenth century, since during the period when Deism had made the Church of England abjectly apologetic about its worship, there was a vigorous proliferation of Unitarian revisions of the Anglican Liturgy. It seemed that the ghosts of the Presbyterians were showing that they had never given up their ideal of the Savoy Conference days—that of a more comprehensive Church of England united in a liturgy that would assuage tender consciences. Thus among the eighteenth century Dissenters there were numbered two denominations, the Methodists and Unitarians, the one powerful in numbers and zeal among the lower and lower-middle classes; the other small in numbers, but powerful in intellect and supported by the professional upper-middle class, which valued formularies of worship, and thus called into serious question the continued iconoclasm of the heirs of the Puritans, the "Three Denominations" of the Congregationalists, the Baptists, and the loyal Presbyterians.

If a broadening of the theme is required by the Methodists, the Unitarians, the Tractarians, and the Roman Catholics, and their influence on the "Older Dissent," a further expansion of treatment is demanded by denominations further to the left, which also had their own impact and influence on other denominations. Cromwell was most sympathetic to Fox and his Quaker followers, but in this respect he was not in the least representative of Biblically-minded

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Puritans or of their successors in the eighteenth century, who saw in Quaker worship only the Bible and an ordained ministry dethroned, and set times, places, and sacraments excluded, in the interests of a purely spiritual worship responsive to the leading of God's spirit in the heart. In the nineteenth and particularly in the twentieth century the Quaker protest against formalism, coupled with a growing respect for its social reformers and its pacifism, led to a desire to incorporate an element of silent worship in the services of many Free Churches. Its pan-sacramentalism (the negative side of which is the rejection of the two Dominical sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper) was to find several supporters among eager Liberal Protestants who admired its immanentalism and mysticism. Moreover, the nineteenth century brought into being within Dissent the Salvation Army, a most curious combination in worship of non-sacramentalism on the one hand and of colourful ceremonialism on the other, together with an admirable combination of Evangelical zeal and practical concern for the "down-and-outs." This, too, was the century which saw the desire, on the parts of the Disciples of Christ and of the Plymouth Brethren, for a return to a simpler, Bible-based worship. Yet another significant attempt at primitivism, the Catholic Apostolic Church, was to combine the charismatic and the liturgical emphases in forms of worship which ultimately were to influence the Church of Scotland and through it the Presbyterian Church of England in the direction of a liturgical Renaissance. Such novelties cannot be captured without using a net wider than the usual.

The twentieth century, chiefly through the impact of the Ecumenical Movement and the re-entry of many of the Free Church ministers into the ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge, from which they were debarred for two centuries and a decade, has had a twofold impact. On the one hand, it has led to the growing conviction that a nominally Christian England requires a much greater cooperation among the different divisions of Christ's army and therefore a sympathetic regard for traditions of worship hitherto regarded as alien and strange, and the Liturgy of the Church of South India has shown that it is possible for non-Anglican Communion to share appreciatively in a liturgical tradition. But, equally, the Ecumenical Movement has required some of its less worship-conscious representatives to drill down to the liturgical rock whence they were hewn, and to rediscover an inheritance which they had squandered or ignored. It is not without significance

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that scholars of non-Anglican communions, such as William M'Millan, William D. Maxwell (Presbyterians); John Bishop, A. R. George, and John C. Bowmer (Methodists); Nathaniel Micklem, E. Romilly Micklem, John Marsh, Erik Routley, and James Todd (among Congregationalists); and Eric Hayman (formerly a Quaker, now a Roman Catholic) have been as greatly concerned with rediscovering their own denominational liturgical traditions as with discovering the riches of the worship of the Church Universal.

The re-awakening of interest in worship must also be considered within the wider context of the thought and life of its time to which it either responds or opposes itself. For example, it is not enough to consider the worship of Methodism as a phase of that Pietism which stressed the religion of the heart, without considering it as a reaction from the depreciation of the supernatural and of special revelation, and from that emphasis on reason, common-sense, and attainable morality which are the hall-marks of the rational and respectable pragmatism of the Augustan Age. Again, it will be impossible to understand the concern for tradition and continuity that lie behind the Tractarian Movement's emphasis on Catholicity and the apostolical succession, unless we also realize that it is in liturgiology and theology an expression of the same attitude as Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* is in politics: a turning the back upon sentimentalism, enthusiasm, and the threatened convulsions of society, such as the French and American Revolutions, which demanded as correctives the stability of tradition and the emphasis on authority and the institutions that bind the human family together. Once again, the twentieth century concern for neo-orthodoxy in doctrine, and for unity in ecclesiology and in organization, is not unconnected with a revulsion from the individualism, *laissez-aller*, and relativism of the latter nineteenth century. This reaction has led in the twentieth century to the recognition of the need for social solidarity and to the acknowledgment that man is both an individual and social being, and to the change from philanthropy to social justice as a regulative ideal. While this study does not try to be a history of Christian thought in relation to the philosophical temper of the times which it treats, it would be gross antiquarianism to treat the development of Christian worship out of its mental context, and apart from theological changes. For these reasons our study has not neglected the role of preaching.

It is perhaps not entirely fanciful to see a correlation between

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this progressive appropriation of tradition in both Christian thought and worship and the successive names given to Nonconformist edifices of worship during the past two centuries. In the eighteenth century the commonest name was that of a "meeting-house"; in the nineteenth the usual term was "chapel"; and in the twentieth the Dissenter speaks quite unashamedly of the "church." Purists will regard this as proof of a devitalization of the Puritan tradition, for the Puritans insisted that the "church" consisted of the people of God. Others, including the author, will argue that the changed terms can be explained by a centripetal movement. While "meeting-house" might be interpreted purely functionally, it meant chiefly a place where the "saints" had covenanted to meet their God in the celebration of His ordinances; certainly the building represented a conscious difference from and opposition to the "churches" of the Establishment, named after the historic saints, while the Nonconformists preferred a merely geographical location for a distinguishing name, such as, Newgate Street Meeting-House (where the first Baptist congregation met in London). The term "chapel," which has an ancient lineage, was first applied to Nonconformist edifices by Methodists, and implied a tenuous link to the Established Church which their founder had reluctantly left. Nineteenth century Nonconformists cannot have been entirely contented that their edifices should be distinguished only by street-names, because we notice increasingly that "chapels" are prefixed by some Biblical reference, such as "Salem" or "Mount Zion." But the wheel has come full circle in the twentieth century when Presbyterian edifices are called St. Andrew's (as, for example, at Cheam in Surrey) and Congregational edifices are known as Christ Church (as, for example, at Leatherhead in the same county). In the same way churches which once gloried in their independence from the Established Church often have separate orders of worship printed for each Sunday's use, or use a liturgy, or often include along with free prayers collects and versicles, without in any way depreciating the value of preaching. Similarly, Free Church worship is often celebrated in edifices that have a central Holy Table on which is placed a cross (previously thought a superstitious symbol) and on which the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is celebrated at fortnightly intervals. The appearance of a minister in a black cassock, Genevan gown, and white bands, and of a gowned choir, is no longer a striking novelty in Free Churches in English cities. While these things can be dismissed as so much millinery and furniture, they

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are significantly viewed as the index of the renaissance of worship which believes that God is served not only in the beauty of holiness, but also in the holiness of beauty, in ethical obedience, and in aesthetic imitation of the Great Artist and Creator of the universe.

The story of this revaluation of worship in Protestant and Catholic Churches alike is the theme of the ensuing chapters. It is not pretended that this volume is an exhaustive treatment of the theme; it is a study only of major trends and important varieties of Christian worship. What has been cynically called "the dissidence of Dissent" has permitted and encouraged so many variations on the theme of Christian homage that even a bibliography as long as the text of this volume would hardly exhaust the subject. On the other hand, an attempt has been made to study the chief liturgical texts within the several Communions surveyed, and to use representative treatises that expound these differing traditions, so that a fair picture of the unity within the variety may be painted.

Furthermore, the often desiccated accounts of formal worship have been supplemented by contemporary accounts as they were viewed by the sympathetic or critical eye of the trained observer, whether he were poet, novelist, or dramatist. These add a certain vividness and independence of judgment to the conventional records of worship. How much more imaginative it is, for example, in lieu of using the term "Gothic," which in the eighteenth century has an almost barbaric connotation, to employ the eyes of that architect and poet, John Betjeman, and thus to see:

with what rich precision the stonework
soars and springs
to fountain out a spreading vault—a shower
that never fails.¹¹

Or, how quickly we come to share the impatience of the eighteenth century church-goers with the monotonous moral mumblings of their interminable parsons when one of them appears in a Samuel Foote comedy bearing the name of "Dr. Tickletext"! How meaningful becomes the silent worship of the Society of Friends, which we might otherwise deride as mere negation and vacuity, when Christopher Isherwood describes it as a sense of communion and community that was "massively alive and somehow, unimaginably ancient, like the togetherness of Man in the primeval caves"! The author has willingly permitted his plodding style to canter, and

¹¹ *A Few Late Chrysanthemums*, p. 3.

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even occasionally to gallop, when a borrowed Pegasus (by way of a citation) has seized the reins, and for this the reader may often be glad. For if this study of the adoration of God does not occasionally elate and enlarge the mind and heart of the reader as well as inform him, it will have utterly failed. It will, in fact, be merely another example of that frequent source of failure on the part of those who would communicate the joyous and humbling spirit of worship—the didacticism that reduces the marvellous and holy mystery of God, divined in symbols rather than defined in theologies, to the pigmy dimensions of one man's mind, and brief and limited experience. It has been as salutary to recall with Isaac Watts

Where Reason fails with all her powers,
There faith prevails and love adores

and that the worship of the individual is combined with the chorus of the entire Church Militant on earth, which is but a faint and transitory echo of those invisible choirs of the saints of the Church Triumphant forever holding high festival. *Gaudeamus igitur!*

PART ONE

1690-1740: THE DOMINANCE OF
RATIONALISTIC MORALISM

CHAPTER I

TWO TRADITIONS OF WORSHIP: ANGLICAN AND PURITAN

AT THE START of the eighteenth century all serious thoughts of a comprehension of Anglicans and Dissenters within a wider establishment, such as had been entertained in 1660 and 1689, were at an end. Both the Church of England and the Churches of the three Dissenting bodies (the Congregationalists, Baptists, and Presbyterians) went their own undisturbed ways. As eighteenth century English culture was to be a dichotomy of "church" and "chapel"¹—the former inspired by the leadership of the ancient universities, the latter by the emphasis on modern studies at the Nonconformist Academies²—so there were divergent traditions of Anglican and Nonconformist worship, and neither tradition was to be disturbed until the Methodists and the Unitarians were to throw liturgical pebbles into their placid ponds. This inevitably led to stagnation in the theory and practice of worship, an attitude not uncongenial to the characteristic phlegm of the Augustan age. The cynical might attribute the ossification to indifference. More correctly, however, it was rather an unwillingness in the new climate of reason and tolerance to return to the embittered and passionate taking of sides which had embroiled England in a Civil War only two generations before. The result was that both the Anglicans and the Nonconformists supinely accepted their inheritance, rather than entered into and possessed their heritages.

What was the nature of that inheritance which the Laudians had transmitted to the Church of England and that which the Puritans had conveyed to the Nonconformists? And how did these heritages differ? They were both unmistakably Protestant, and yet markedly distinguished.

1. *Tradition versus Scripture*

The basic difference rested upon a different liturgical criterion in each case. For the Anglican, while he would not accept any convenient and comely heritage from the Western mediaeval Church

¹ G. N. Clark, *The Later Stuarts*, p. 23.

² Irene Parker, *Dissenting Academies in England* and J. W. Ashley Smith, *The Birth of Modern Education*

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which was contradicted by the veto of Scripture, the traditions of the ancient and primitive Church of Christ as discoverable from the writings of the Fathers and the Canons of the Oecumenical Councils were to be heeded and respected. For the Nonconformist, worship had to be solidly and consistently Biblical.³ What had been in the first days of the Puritan onslaught on the Church of England an acute embarrassment—namely its retention with modifications and additions of the ancient formularies of the Western rite (especially in the Sarum Use)—came to be regarded less as a compromise than its peculiar glory under the High Church school of Caroline Divines and their successors, the Non-Jurors. The use of the surplice, the kneeling for the reception of Holy Communion, the signing of the cross in Baptism, the blessing of the ring in marriage—those inevitable targets for the Puritan blunderbuss—were thought to be not only the outward and visible signs of Anglicanism's attachment to the past but tributes to its tolerance and sympathy with other branches of the Catholic Church. The persistence of mediaevalism in church building and in the arrangement of ecclesiastical furniture until late into the eighteenth century in most country churches of the establishment is a conspicuous mark of the power of tradition and the dislike of mere novelty that have given the Church of England a grip on the affections of the English people.⁴ The mediaeval setting of Anglican liturgy, until disturbed by the new "auditory" churches built by Sir Christopher Wren and his imitators, undoubtedly gave to Anglican worship a great sense of the communion of saints, and of an intimate tie linking the Church Militant on earth with the Church Triumphant in heaven. In the mouldering gravestones of the chancel, in the brass memorials of crusading knights, in the recumbent figures in the still remaining chantry chapels, or in niches in the nave walls, in the armorial escutcheons on walls or in windows, the worshipper held communion with the mighty dead. Well might he feel that the Church of England was the Church of the centuries and, as a modern wit has phrased it, that she washed her face only during the Reformation. A modern Anglican poet catches this elusive sense of tradition in his poem entitled, *Sunday Morning King's Cambridge*:

³ In many cases where the Bible was ambiguous or silent, theological principles or pragmatic considerations replaced Biblical precept.

⁴ G. W. O. Addleshaw and F. Etchells, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship*, p. 50f.

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In far East Anglian churches, the clasped hands
 lying long
Recumbent on sepulchral slabs or effigies in brass
Buttress with prayer this vaulted roof so white and
 light and strong
And countless congregations as the generations
 pass
Join choir and great crowned organ case, in centuries
 of song
To praise Eternity contained in Time and coloured
 glass.⁵

It is, of course, the strong element of tradition in the Anglican *cultus* which gives it an objectivity and a timelessness, and which accounts for its widespread use and imitation⁶ in the English-speaking parts of the world. That great Roman Catholic and Anglophile, Baron Von Hügel, regarded as the genius of the Anglican rite that it was a compromise between Calvinism and its *bête noire*, Roman Catholicism.⁷ Its historical origins do indeed prove that it is a combination of Catholic and Protestant ideals of worship; this is supported by the further fact that both Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics, while varying in their interpretations and ceremonial, find their nexus in the Book of Common Prayer.

This rich complex of Catholic tradition and Protestant Reformation derives from four sources on which Cranmer drew for the materials of the Book of Common Prayer. The first source was mediaeval English practice, especially the Use of Sarum (or Salisbury), a variant of the Roman Rite, with some traces of Celtic and Gallican influences. From this source is derived the restrained and dignified expression of the idea of sacrifice,⁸ and the devotional riches of the collects of the Leonine, Gelasian, and Gregorian Sacramentaries. The second source was the Breviary of Cardinal Quignon (1535), in which his eminence had rearranged and omitted parts of the traditional Breviary, and made the lections more coherent and the order of the services more intelligible. Cranmer borrowed little directly from Quignon, except his principles of liturgical revision, which he applied in the Orders for

⁵ John Betjeman, *A Few Late Chrysanthemums*, p. 3.

⁶ Cf. W. D. Maxwell, *The Book of Common Prayer and the Worship of the Non-Anglican Churches*.

⁷ Cf. Friedrich Heiler, *The Spirit of Worship*, p. 108.

⁸ Albeit a very different sense of sacrifice: no longer transubstantiation, but the *sacrificium laudis*.

Morning Prayer and Evensong. The third source was the Ancient Liturgies, and from this the Prayer of St. Chrysostom derives, as also possibly some of the petitions of the Litany. Finally, there was a considerable use of the Continental Rituals. Hislop detects "the influence of Luther's spirit, Melancthon's expression, the mind of Calvin, and even the hand of Knox here. Buçer cast his shadow, too."⁹ Certainly the spirit of the Reformation was channelled through a liturgical compilation of Hermann, Archbishop of Cologne, who had the benefit of the help of Buçer, also to be Archbishop Cranmer's liturgical adviser. This source has had a considerable influence on: the Invitation, Confession, Absolution and Comfortable Words in the Communion, and part of the Baptismal service.

At the same time the genius of Archbishop Cranmer himself must not be minimized, for he was no mere scissors-and-paste compiler. Indeed, his chief distinction is to have made a substantial unity of such divergent source materials and translated them into pellucid, fluent, and yet always dignified English. Moreover, he worked throughout on a clear plan of revision. This had as its chief aims the substitution of English for Latin, the elimination of legendary material in the Breviary, the orderly reading of Scripture and the full use of the Psalms, the simplification of forms and ceremonies, and the recognition of the place of the people in worship throughout the realm. It is largely due to his unified combination of Catholic and Protestant ideals and sources in worship that the Book of Common Prayer is such a treasure of Christian corporate devotion. The Scripture has its place, to be sure, but within the context of a continuing Christian liturgical tradition from the primitive centuries of church history.

Contrasted with the beauty and sense of tradition in Anglican ritual and ceremonial, Nonconformist worship seemed a bleak innovation, however Biblical its authority. It was not that the Puritans and their successors were tone-deaf and colour-blind, utterly averse to the glories of the eye and ear and the daring speculations of the human mind. How could they be, when they numbered Spenser and Sidney, Marvell and Milton, Bunyan and Baxter, in their company? If awe and devotion were elicited in the Anglican mind by tradition and symbolism (and we must wait until the Victorian Gothic revival and advent of the Oxford Move-

⁹ D. H. Hislop, *Our Heritage in Public Worship*, Chap. IX; and F. E. Brightman, *The English Rite*.

ment and the Cambridge ecclesiologists before the sense of the numinous is fully exploited in ecclesiastical architecture), it was evoked in Nonconformist worship by the consciousness of the worshippers that they were (in Miltonic phrase) not only "under the Great Taskmaster's eye," but also obeying his behests in the simplicity and spirituality of their unsensuous and Biblical worship. For them to obey tradition was to listen to another voice than that of the lively oracles of God to whom alone undeviating obedience was due. Tradition was for them "invented" or "will-worship." Pleas as to its comeliness, or to the centuries of hallowed usage, were rudely rejected as worse than irrelevant, for they were the rotten fruit of presumption and pride. Since the Puritans had become Nonconformists in 1662 (because they could not aver that the Book of Common Prayer was in all parts agreeable to the Word of God) and had gone into the wilderness, it became a point of honour on the part of their descendants to refuse all compromise with the Anglican way of worship. In living on the denials as well as the affirmations of their predecessors there were, of necessity, serious disadvantages. There is a logic in negations, so that those who disliked a particular Prayer Book came (though this was not their earlier tradition) to condemn all formularies of prayer, and prohibited that corporate vocal expression of prayer that responses provide and that would have fitted their congregational conception of worship more easily than the apparent sacerdotalism of a passive congregation merely murmuring a concluding assent to a pastoral prayer of their ministers.

The refusal to take tradition as a guide also robbed them of what Bunyan called the "eye-gate" to the soul. The difference between Anglican worship and Nonconformist worship on this point should not, however, be too strongly pressed in the eighteenth century, for decoration in Anglican naves was of the simplest kind, consisting chiefly of the Decalogue, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, painted on the east wall of the church above the altar, and the royal coat of arms in place of the images on the former rood-screen of mediaeval times. The contrast was to become more acute when the Cambridge ecclesiologists were to insist on removing the three-decker pulpits that often blocked the view of the altar in late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century parish churches, and on cultivating the sense of mystery and making a full use of symbolism, in what Addleshaw and Etchells call "The Period of

Self-consciousness."¹⁰ But this was to have the further consequence for Puritan and Nonconformist worship of making it, if not too intellectual, then decidedly didactic. While it cannot be said that "there was no open vision in those days" in Nonconformist Israel, there was certainly no "visual-aid." As a result "ear-gate" was excessively used in Dissenting worship. If we may describe, with Will,¹¹ the three basic types of worship as the oracular, the mysterious, and the sacrificial, then Nonconformist worship belongs almost exclusively to the first type. The advantage that Anglican worship has is that it is chiefly a mixture of the first and the third, with an increasing appreciation and stress on the second type in the last century. To be more explicit, Anglican worship regards the Eucharist, the celebration of the sacrifice of Christ, as the climax of its worship,¹² as the central altar indicates; at the same time the reading of the lessons and the preaching of the Gospel in the vernacular are important recognitions of the value of oracular worship. Since the impact of the Oxford Tractarians and the Cambridge ecclesiologists on its worship and with a renewed appreciation of the liturgy as a mystery which the Eastern Orthodox Churches have always emphasized,¹³ the numinous and transcendental element in Anglican liturgy and architecture has increased. Its sacrificial and oracular elements were, as we have seen, respectively, the Mediaeval and Reformed elements in the Edwardian and Elizabethan formulations of Anglican worship. There was no mystery, and only a minor sacrificial element in later Puritan worship, and the latter was mainly ethical rather than liturgical in emphasis.

2. *Two Ecclesiologies*

The two types of worship are also due to two differing concepts of the nature of the Church and its relation to the State. The Anglicans held a national or parish, the Nonconformists a "gathered" concept of the Church. While Puritanism initially worked for a State establishment of religion, and the Westminster Assembly of Divines was requested to advise Parliament on a new national establishment of religion in England, the ejection of the Puritan

¹⁰ *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship*, p. 203f.

¹¹ R. Will, *Le Culte: Etude d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses*, 3 vols.

¹² A view, however, held more strongly in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries than in the eighteenth.

¹³ The Non-Jurors knew the Eastern rites and have transmitted, through the Liturgy of the Scottish Episcopal Church, an Eastern type of Consecration Prayer to the Liturgy of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the U.S.A.

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divines in 1662 and the failure to comprehend them in 1689 led all the Nonconformists to approximate to the Congregationalist conception of a "gathered church." The earliest definition of a "gathered church"—that given by Robert Browne—went to the root of the matter. It stated: ". . . The Church planted or gathered is a company or number of Christians or believers, which, by a willing covenant made with their God, are under the government of God and Christ, and keep his laws in one holy communion: because Christ hath redeemed them unto holiness and happiness for ever, from which they were fallen by the sin of Adam."¹⁴ What is distinctive here is the scorn of an inherited, nominal, birthright type of Christianity in the emphatic demand that the true Church of Christ is to consist only of the redeemed who have, by an act of will as expressed in a covenant they have signed, recognized God's call and gathering of them out of the world for salvation. This note appears unmistakably in the hymns of the Congregationalist, Isaac Watts, in the eighteenth century and most clearly in the lines:

Christ hath a garden, wall'd around,
A Paradise of fruitful ground,
Chosen by Love and fenc'd by Grace,
From out the world's wide wilderness.

It was to be distinctive in the Olney hymns of the Calvinist Anglican Evangelicals, William Cowper and John Newton, both of whom insisted as strongly as the Puritans on the doctrine of election. The latter sang:

Saviour, if of Zion's city,
I through grace a member am,
Let the world deride or pity,
I will glory in Thy Name.

Fading is the worlding's pleasure,
All his boasted pomp and show;
Solid joys and lasting treasure
None but Zion's children know.

This was the heritage of intensity in religion which stressed holiness above catholicity, charity, and unity as the preeminent mark of the Church. Indeed, it was the primary emphasis on holiness which forced the Puritan to become a Separatist or a Nonconformist, and

¹⁴ *A Booke which sheweth the Life and Manners of all True Christians.*

kept the Dissenter dissenting, rather than keep the unity of the Church at the cost of the latter being only, as he phrased it, "a mixed multitude."

The Anglican still held the mediaeval view, restated with vigour by the Elizabethan apologist, Hooker, that Church and State are essentially coextensive, and that as a child is born a member of the English nation so it should be christened as a member of the English national Church. For the Nonconformist, conversion was basic, although a little inconsequentially his children were admitted to all the ecclesiastical ordinances except the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. For the Anglican, not believers, but aggregations of parish communities, constituted the Church.

It follows from such diverging conceptions of the nature of the Church and its relation to the State that there would be different views on liturgy. For the Anglican the prayers of the local church are a reflection of the prayers of the whole Church. For the Nonconformist the worship is that of the local gathered church. Bishop William Beveridge, in his famous *Sermon on the Excellency and Usefulness of the Book of Common Prayer* (1681), stresses the comprehensiveness and unity of a printed national liturgy as contrasted with the more private character of "free" prayers:

"If we hear another praying a prayer of his own composition or voluntary effusion, our minds are wholly bound up and confined to his words and expressions, and to his requests and petitions, be they what they will: so that, at the best, we can but pray his prayer. Whereas, when we pray by a form prescribed by the Church, we pray the prayers of the whole Church we live in, which are common to the minister and people, to ourselves and to all the members of the same Church, so that we have all the devout and pious souls that are in it concurring and joining with us in them; which cannot, surely, but be more effectual for the edifying, not only of ourselves in particular, but of the Church in general, than any private prayer can be."¹⁵

Besides the comprehensiveness and the unity engendered by the use of a national liturgy, the bishop also insists that the frequent repetition leads to the edification of the congregations of the Church of England in Christian doctrine and in the spirit of devotion:

"Whatsoever good things we hear only once, or now and then, though perhaps upon the hearing of them, they may swim for

¹⁵ Cited P. E. More and F. L. Cross, *Anglicanism*, pp. 624-27.

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awhile in our brains, yet they seldom sink down into our hearts, so as to move and sway the affections, as it is necessary they should do in order to our being edified by them; whereas by a set form of public devotions rightly composed, we are continually put in mind of all things necessary for us to know or do, so that it is always done by the same words and expressions, which, by their constant use, will imprint the things themselves so firmly in our minds, that it will be no easy matter to rase them out; but do what we can, they will still occur upon all occasions, which cannot but be very much for our Christian edification."¹⁶

It is clear that for a type of worship which is to be comprehensive enough to include the whole nation, saints and sinners alike, beginners and mature Christians, which is to stress continuity with the Church of the past, and which manufactures unity by imposing uniformity of devotion, doctrine, and discipline, the Book of Common Prayer was the admirable medium and instrument. Indeed, how admirable it is is shown by its survival as the only vernacular national liturgy now in use four centuries after its composition, and by its spread to the British Commonwealth of nations, and to the United States of America.

It is equally clear that the intimate communions of "saints," the covenanted local congregations of Nonconformity, the local and gathered churches, will desire a type of worship suited to their different needs. Such a type of worship presupposes the warmth, spontaneity, intimacy, and even informality of a gathering of friends, of a collection of families each well known to the others. It presupposes a minister who is really the shepherd of his little flock, who has baptized their children, catechized their youth and married them, and admitted them to the fellowship of the Holy Table, and in his visitations "rejoiced with them that do rejoice and wept with those that weep." It also assumes that the free and spontaneous Spirit-directed prayers of their minister will not scruple to speak to their peculiar circumstances, even mentioning them by name in his petitions. There is no place for either formality or uniformity in such a conception of prayer; freedom, particularity, and flexibility are its distinguishing marks. It is, therefore, no surprise to hear Isaac Watts asserting that "it is not possible that forms of prayer should be composed, that are perfectly suited to all our occasions in the things of this life and the life to come."¹⁷

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Guide to Prayer; Works*, Vol. IV, p. 127.

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Watts insists that new sins require new confessions, new temptations new petitions for grace, new sorrows new consolations, and "every change of providence in the affairs of a nation, a family, or a person, requires suitable petitions and acknowledgments."¹⁸ The same author maintains ". . . but generals are cold and do not affect us, nor affect persons that join with us, and whose case he that speaks in prayer should represent before God."¹⁹ John Owen speaks positively of the advantages of free prayer as leading to a "recoiling of efficacy" on the congregation whose minister has thought profoundly of the glory and grace of God and the needs of his people.²⁰

Of course, the controversy between the proponents of "set" and "free" prayers resounded loudly throughout the seventeenth century, but its echoes have not died down in the eighteenth. If the Puritans and their successors criticized a formulary of prayer, the Anglicans were not backward in emphasizing the defects of the extemporaneous and unpremeditated prayers of the Nonconformists.²¹

The Puritans criticized a formulary on five counts. First, it was believed that a constant use of a set form deprived men of the capacity of simple prayer to their Creator, and led to a "napkinning of their talents." Then, again, a prayer book lacked intimacy and particularity. In the third place, to insist upon a prayer book was to equate human decisions (the decisions of the sovereign and bishops of England, for example) with divine imperatives. Fourthly, it was believed that if familiarity does not breed contempt, it may easily lead to the simulation of feelings not felt. Finally, it was alleged that the imposition of forms of prayer had brought persecution as its inevitable accompaniment. John Owen accuses imposers of liturgies of bringing "fire and faggot into the Christian religion."²²

The Anglicans were equally vigorous in their criticisms of extemporaneous prayer. A whole vial of vitriolic adjectives is poured on the Puritans by John Gauden, the supposed author of *Eikon Basilike*, for this habit of theirs: ". . . the affectations, emptiness, impertinency, rudeness, confusions, flatness, levity, obscurity, vain and ridiculous repetitions, the senseless and oft-times blasphemous expressions (all these burthened with a most

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Works* (ed. Russell), Vol. iv, p. 92.

²¹ See the present author's *The Worship of the English Puritans*, Chap. viii, for a full discussion and documentation of the controversy.

²² *Works*, Vol. iv, p. 23.

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tedious and intolerable length) do sufficiently convince all men but those who glory in that Pharisaic way."²³

The more sober critics, like Bishop Jeremy Taylor,²⁴ have four basic criticisms of free prayers. They may be produced by mental laziness, and present only the froth of the preacher's mind, or prayer "without consideration," the product of one who "utters his mind as fast as it comes." Secondly, those who prayed *ex tempore* possessed glib tongues which tended to ostentation rather than to edification of the faithful. In the third place, free prayers cannot gain the full consent and approval of the worshippers because they have not time to digest them. "For," said Bishop Beveridge, "if I hear another pray, and know not beforehand what he will say, I must first listen to what he say next; then am I to consider whether what he saith be agreeable to sound doctrine. . . . But before I can well do that he hath got to another thing."²⁵ The fourth criticism is Henry Hammond's, that it was a real weakness in the plea of the Puritans for free prayer to assume as a matter of course that all would-be ministers could express themselves felicitously and fluently in public. This would, in effect, prevent many godly men who had not "the gift of the gab" from entering the sacred ministry.

From a more impartial viewpoint such as the perspective of history gives it can now be realized that the Anglicans conceived of common prayer as chiefly characterized by uniformity, dignity, comprehensiveness, order, and tradition, and Puritans and Nonconformists thought of public prayer as distinguished by spontaneity, simplicity, intimacy, particularity, and flexibility. The best that can be said of this dichotomy is that Isaac Watts, the great eighteenth century leader of both the prayers and praises of the Nonconformists, had already taken into account the Anglican criticisms and in his *Guide to Prayer* warned those of his tradition of the abuses and dangers to which free prayers were prone. Later in the same century John Wesley was to try to cross the divide in his ordering of Methodist worship so that it should combine the advantages of each of these traditions. But ultimately Methodism, no longer a group of societies within the Church of England but another reluctant Dissenting Communion, went largely in the footsteps of the Nonconformists, when it had become, perforce, a

²³ More and Cross, *op.cit.*, p. 623.

²⁴ *Two Discourses*, p. 1f.

²⁵ *View of the New Directory*, p. 84f.

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connexion of "gathered" local churches. If this proves anything, it may at least incline one to the view that a State Church by its very ecclesiology demands a formulary of prayer, and that by the same token a Free Church requires free prayers, though the former should welcome some flexibility and the latter some dignity and order.

3. *The Relative Importance of Sermon and Sacrament*

It is recorded of the saintly poet George Herbert that when he was restoring and refurnishing the church at Leighton Bromswold in Huntingdonshire he insisted on the pulpit and reading desk being of equal height, "that they should neither have a precedency or priority of the other; but that prayer and preaching, being equally useful, might agree like brethren, and have an equal honour and estimation."²⁶ It is, however, equally certain that the altar against the eastern wall of the church would have precedency and priority over both preaching and prayer. This was the authentic Laudian tradition which accounted for that unhappy Archbishop's insistence, to the chagrin of the Puritans, that the altar should no longer be moved toward the western end of the chancel to be accessible to the people, but that it would be fixed to the east wall surrounded with protective rails, and that all recipients of Holy Communion should kneel at the rail.²⁷ Laud held a very high theological view of the Sacrament and the altar, regarding the latter as the throne of Christ. He spoke of it as "the greatest place of God's residence upon earth." He believed that it was much more important than the pulpit "for there 'tis *Hoc est corpus meum*, 'This is My Body'; but in the pulpit 'tis at most but *Hoc est verbum meum*, 'This is My Word'; and a greater reverence no doubt is due to the Body than to the Word of the Lord."²⁸

While it is not open to doubt that Laud sincerely believed the Eucharist to be the supreme means of grace, it is not surprising that he should hold a lower view of the Sacrament of the Word than the Puritans. For him, homilies, duly authorized by the Church, would have been preferable to the prophetic opening of the Scriptures, which might also be used as means of Puritan propaganda against his ecclesiastical regime.

²⁶ See Addleshaw and Etchells, *op.cit.*, p. 79, for the plan of Herbert's church.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 128f.

²⁸ William Laud, *Works*, Vol. VI, p. 59.

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It seems not unfair to the Puritans to state that, although they emphasized the importance of the Lord's Supper, in their concern for its frequent celebration, in their "fencing of the tables" against unworthy recipients, in their preaching of "Communion discourses," and in their reverent celebrations of it, nevertheless for them the chief regular means of grace seems to have been the Sermon. It was in the Sermon that the Bible, God's authoritative message for faith, conduct, and even the ordering of all their church "ordinances" was heard by the expectant congregation, and it was in keeping with this sense of what is ultimate for them that the pulpit, with its great sounding-board and its red velvet cushion on which the sacred Book rested, had pride of place in their sanctuaries. They preferred to the title "priest" for their leaders that of "Minister of the Word of God." The Sacraments were for them the *sigilla verbi divini*, the seals of the Divine Word, dramatic representations of the Gospel in which they received precisely the same gifts of God as were presented to them from the pulpit, namely, forgiveness and the assurance of eternal life. Many Puritans held a high view of this Sacrament, though not, of course, as high a view as Laud himself. The Independent, Thomas Goodwin, declares that as the moon is variable so is the proclamation of Christ in a sermon; but as the sun is constant so is Christ revealed in the Lord's Supper. Here is a recognition that there is objectivity in the Lord's Supper such as the Sermon cannot attain.²⁹ The Presbyterian Biblical commentator, Matthew Henry, makes it crystal-clear that the Nonconformists did not hold a merely memorialist or Zwinglian doctrine of the Lord's Supper as a *nudum signum*, or mere illustration of the Gospel, since he regards it as a "commemorating, communicating, and covenanting ordinance." He writes: "God in this Ordinance not only assures us of the Truth of the Promise, but, according to our present Case and Capacity, *conveys* to us, by his Spirit, the good Things promis'd; Receive Christ Jesus the Lord, Christ and a Pardon, Christ and Peace, Christ and Grace, Christ and Heaven. . . ."³⁰

However high the Puritan's estimation of this Sacrament, which in the cooling of religious ardour in the eighteenth century might degenerate into mere memorialism, he would never have enclosed the altar with communion rails and elevated its position by steps leading up to it, nor have insisted upon receiving the Sacrament kneeling. To his mind this was to revive the shadows and possibly

²⁹ *Works*, Vol. XI, p. 408f.

³⁰ *The Communicant's Companion*, p. 27.

the very substance of the old superstitions from which the Reformation had, in his opinion, delivered the Church of England.³¹ His own celebration at a table at which Christ's guests sat, at the Master's invitation to share in His Holy Repast, was simpler, less mysterious, and less dramatic. He did not believe that the church should be divided into a more and a less sacred part, corresponding respectively to the chancel and the nave. In his simpler meeting-house the Holy Table was placed beneath the dominating pulpit and bore neither cross nor candles upon its surface, although, when the Sacrament was being celebrated, it wore a fine white tablecloth and the shining paten, flagon, and chalices, which the elders (if Presbyterian) or deacons (if Congregationalist or Baptist) gravely carried to the people in their pews.

If, for convenient but not absolute purposes of description, a distinction can be made between the downward movement of revelation and the upward movement of aspiring, human response, then the Puritan cultus stressed the former and the Anglican cultus the latter. What was chiefly important for Puritans and Nonconformists was the faithful reception of the Divine Word in the lengthy Scriptural readings (they called Anglican snippets mere "pistling and gospelling") and their equally lengthy expositions; even the response which the faithful congregation made to this revelation in prayers and praises and offerings was itself inspired by the inner guidance of the Holy Spirit, by a kind of Divine retroactivity. By contrast, the major emphasis in the Anglican cultus was less on obedient hearing of the Word than on thanksgiving, confession, and, supremely, adoration, so that even the Sacrament of the Holy Communion was, in part, an Eucharist, a thanksgiving and *sacrificum laudis*, the representation of Christ's offering to the Father in which Christ's Body, the Church, is united.

Moreover, it was characteristic of the Anglican responses, the brief collects, the psalms, the changes of posture, the processions and movements, that they all provided variety and made concentration on worship more easily maintained by the congregation. Common Prayer was, in short, an *art*, with a deep psychological understanding. Puritan worship would make no such concessions;

³¹ Moreover, the Puritan could have claimed to be in the tradition of Bishop Ridley of London, who wrote: "The use of an altar is to make sacrifice upon it: the use of a table is to serve for men to eat upon. Now when we come to the Lord's board, what do we come for? To sacrifice Christ again, and to crucify him again; or to feed upon him that once was crucified and offered up for us?" *Works*, ed. Parker Society, Vol. I, p. 219.

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its eye was steadily on God and His inflexible demands, not on the needs of the weaker brethren. The whole difference in attitude may be seen in the Puritan description of the Anglican collects as "short cuts" while Hooker claims that this is their chief merit, keeping the worshippers vigilant by a "piercing kind of brevity."²²

4. *Conceptions of Praise*

The Anglican acceptance of such traditions as are not contradicted by Holy Writ, and the Puritan insistence upon the warrant of Holy Scripture, led to divergent conceptions of the character of praise. Anglicanism retained the chanting of the Psalms and Canticles, the chief content of the Daily Offices of the Mediaeval Church, but translated them from the Vulgate into the English tongue. This also required the retention of trained choirs, and a notable contribution of the Church of England to English culture has been its tradition of Church composers from Purcell to Gustav Holst, who have produced new chant settings, anthems, and sacred cantatas to the glory of God. It should, however, be stated parenthetically, to avoid any anachronism, that what is now regarded as a stereotype—namely, the presence of lay surpliced men and boys occupying the chancel stalls as a choir—was largely, apart from royal chapels, cathedrals, and abbeys, a mid-nineteenth century innovation due to the enthusiasm of Theodore Hooker and his musical friend, Jebb, in Leeds Parish Church.²³

The Puritans and Nonconformists had two serious objections to this tradition. In the first place, they considered that the intricacies of plainsong or polyphony were unsuited to the needs and capacities of the ordinary congregation, and that the use of the prose psalms and canticles in requiring a trained choir for their rendering filched from the whole congregation its right to sing the praises of God. The minister might be the mouth of the congregation in prayer, but the congregation was to be its own mouth in praise, without a choir acting as surrogates or proxies. To meet this need of the congregation they composed metrical psalms and provided a clerk who "lined out" the verses. In the second place, they objected to extra-Biblical anthems and declared that even some of the psalms and canticles were unsuitable for modern praise, either because of their vengefulness or their presupposing the old dispensation, or

²² Richard Hooker, *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Vol. v, p. xxiii.

²³ Addleshaw and Etchells, *op.cit.*, pp. 98, 213f.

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because they were praises arising from a particular context which could not readily be transposed for general purposes.

It has already been stated that the first Puritan contribution to praise consisted of the composition of metrical psalms, easily memorable and fitted to simple tunes that the whole congregation could sing, in which Clement Marot had been the pioneer.³⁴ It was also from within the Puritan tradition that the first English hymns appeared, precisely because the psalms were thought to need serious revision. The daring transition from psalm to paraphrase to hymn was made by Isaac Watts, the Congregationalist. He summarizes the first step of his aim in a sentence: "In all places I have kept my grand design in view; and that is to teach my author to speak like a Christian."³⁵ The first step was taken in his *Psalms of David*, the second in his famous *Hymns and Spiritual Songs in Three Books*, which included such masterpieces as "Join all the glorious names," "There is a land of pure delight," and "When I survey the wondrous Cross," which Dr. Julian, the hymnologist, has declared to be one of the four finest hymns in the English language.

An uniquely important role in Nonconformist praise is played by hymns. They form, in short, the Nonconformist equivalent to creeds, making lyrical rather than metaphysical attestations of faith. It is significant that both Watts and Doddridge in the eighteenth century often wrote hymns which their congregations were invited to sing as their response to the preaching of the Word, in which the words of the preacher found permanent lodging in their affections. The pedagogic nature of hymns was equally strongly stressed by John Wesley, later in the same century, when he declared in the preface to *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists*, that "this book is in effect a little body of experimental and practical divinity."³⁶

5. Different Architectural Concepts

The most obvious difference between Anglican and Nonconformist forms of worship, as they had developed by the mid-eighteenth century, is that of their ideas of architecture, and their respective ecclesiastical furnishings.

³⁴ R. E. Prothero (in *The Psalms in Human Life*, p. 51) tells us: "When Marot's Psalms first appeared, they were sung to popular tunes alike by Roman Catholics and Calvinists. No one delighted in the *sanctes chansonnettes* more passionately than the Dauphin."

³⁵ *Works*, ed. Burder, Vol. IV, p. 119.

³⁶ Edition of 1780, preface, para. 4.

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The "Glorious Revolution" of 1688 gave the Nonconformists their first opportunity of erecting church buildings. From 1689 to 1700 it is known that 2,418 buildings were registered for public worship by Congregationalists, Baptists, and Presbyterians, but many of these would be, not new church buildings, but older disused churches, houses, schoolrooms, or even warehouses adapted for Nonconformist worship.⁸⁷ Martin Briggs lists 23 buildings that were erected between 1688 and 1721, and it is from these that generalizations about the nature of Nonconformist church buildings in the early eighteenth century may be made.⁸⁸ It seems that "both large and small are of a modest, retiring and domestic nature, without spires or definitely ecclesiastical features externally."⁸⁹ They were built simply and unpretentiously of brick and the roofs were usually covered with plain tiles and "hipped"—that is, sloping on all sides, without gables. The doorways had the normal classical pilasters or columns of the domestic architecture of the day, but without embellishments. Windows had semicircular or flat arches over them, and were divided into small panes by strong leadwork between transoms and mullions of wood. Their unobtrusive exterior appearance was due partly to a desire for simplicity; partly to a desire to deflect attention away from themselves since, though tolerated, they might face the fury of the incensed High Church or Jacobite or anti-Jacobite mobs of the period; and partly to reasons of economy.

The interior of a Nonconformist church was planned primarily as a place where all might conveniently hear the preaching and be gathered about the Lord's Table. The central position of the pulpit and Communion-table was ample testimony to this. There was therefore neither chancel nor apse, as in the Gothic churches which the Anglicans had inherited from pre-Reformation times. A maximum use of space was made by the provision of galleries. The general effect was of utility and simplicity, but even the simplicity was modified by the pleasing contrast between the white of the walls and ceilings and the dark brown of the panelling on the gallery fronts and the pews. Artificial candelabra of brass extant today in the ancient meeting-houses of Taunton and Ipswich are of fine workmanship. All in all, the effect would be one of simple, austere dignity. It is supremely important to realize that these buildings were deliberately unchurchlike and rather resembled the

⁸⁷ Martin S. Briggs, *Puritan Architecture and its Future*, p. 22.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

exterior appearance and interior furnishings of English domestic architecture in the Age of Reason. Although Puritan Milton had found his sense of awe elicited by the "dim religious light" of Gothic churches in England, the Nonconformists preferred the full light of day, a symbol of their liberation from the dark and superstitious past. In this they led even Anglicans to agree with them; for Warburton refers disdainfully to "the benighted days of monkish owl-light."⁴⁰

The vast majority of Anglican churches were a mediaeval inheritance and therefore Gothic in character, with a division between the nave for the use of the people and the chancel and sanctuary for the use of the priest. The priest who took the service from the altar found great difficulty in being *heard*, because the mediaeval conception of a church was a place where the Sacrifice of the Mass could be *seen*. Sir Christopher Wren first saw the importance of a specifically Reformed conception of worship necessitating the erection of churches that should be "auditories." However, he was not able to persuade the authorities for whom he was building the new St. Paul's cathedral to permit him to plan it as a Greek Cross, with equal arms, but had to acquiesce in their desire for a Roman Cross, with a long nave and chancel and short transepts. On the other hand, many of his new churches in London were to serve as models for Nonconformists in England and those of the Puritan tradition, whether Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian, or Congregationalist in New England, at least as far as their interiors were concerned, with, of course, the substitution of a Communion table for an altar. Indeed, it might be said with justice that many Nonconformist churches (including Methodist churches of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries) fulfill more adequately his criteria for Reformed ecclesiastical architecture than most Anglican churches. In fact, the inspiration for Wren's architecture is classical rather than protestant. Writing of the need to provide new parish churches to accommodate about 2,000 persons, Wren insists: "The Churches must therefore be large; but still in our reformed Religion, it should seem vain to make a parish-church larger than that all who are present can both see and hear. The Romanists, indeed, may build larger Churches, it is enough if they hear the Murmur of the Mass, and see the Elevation of the Host, but ours are to be fitted for Auditories."⁴¹

⁴⁰ Addleshaw and Etchells, *op.cit.*, p. 63.

⁴¹ Stephen Wren, *Parentalia* . . . , p. 319f.

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Gothic churches,⁴² out of fashion in the early and middle eighteenth century, returned to fashion in the nineteenth century, and they must be regarded as more characteristically Anglican than the "auditoriums" of which Wren wrote. In them the sense of the numinous is deeper than in the common light of day breaking through the large windows. In them, also, stained-glass windows, rood-screens, the cruciform shape of the church itself, and all the hallowed associations of antiquity led to subtle associations and the suggestiveness of symbolism, which were driven out of the mind in the unambiguous clarity of the Nonconformist meeting-houses.

The contrast between the sheerly functional purpose of the church building in Nonconformist worship, and the decoration and symbolism of Anglican edifices, must be stressed as a radical point of divergence. Hooker was to insist that "the very majesty and holiness of the place where God is worshipped, hath in regard of us great help to stir up devotion, and in that respect no doubt bettereth even our holiest and best actions in this kind."⁴³ For the Puritans and their successors, true holiness was to be found in the saints, those living temples of the Holy Spirit. Richly decorated churches might lead to sensuous distraction and even to escapism. If Anglicans venerated the holiness of beauty, Puritans respected the beauty of holiness.

⁴² See Marcus Whiffen, *Stuart and Georgian Churches*, pp. 2-3, for a suggestive functional differentiation between Gothic and Classical churches as respectively "planning by aggregation" and "planning by subdivision." On the other hand, Erwin Panofsky, in *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*, insists that Gothic was characterized by three principles: *manifestatio* or transparency (p. 43), uniform division and subdivision of the whole structure (p. 45), and the acceptance and ultimate reconciliation of contradictory possibilities (p. 64).

⁴³ *Op.cit.*, Vol. v, pp. xvi, 2.

CHAPTER II

GEORGIAN CHURCHES AND MEETING-HOUSES

LE CORBUSIER has defined houses as "machines for living." Churches and meeting-houses were built for the functional purpose of worshipping. Perhaps the greatest difference between Anglican and Dissenting edifices, apart from the differing conceptions of worship held by those who used them, is that for the most part Anglicans inherited the Gothic buildings that had been built to serve the purposes of mediaeval Catholic worshippers, whereas the Dissenting meeting-houses were built specifically for Dissenting worship.

1. *Anglican Churches*

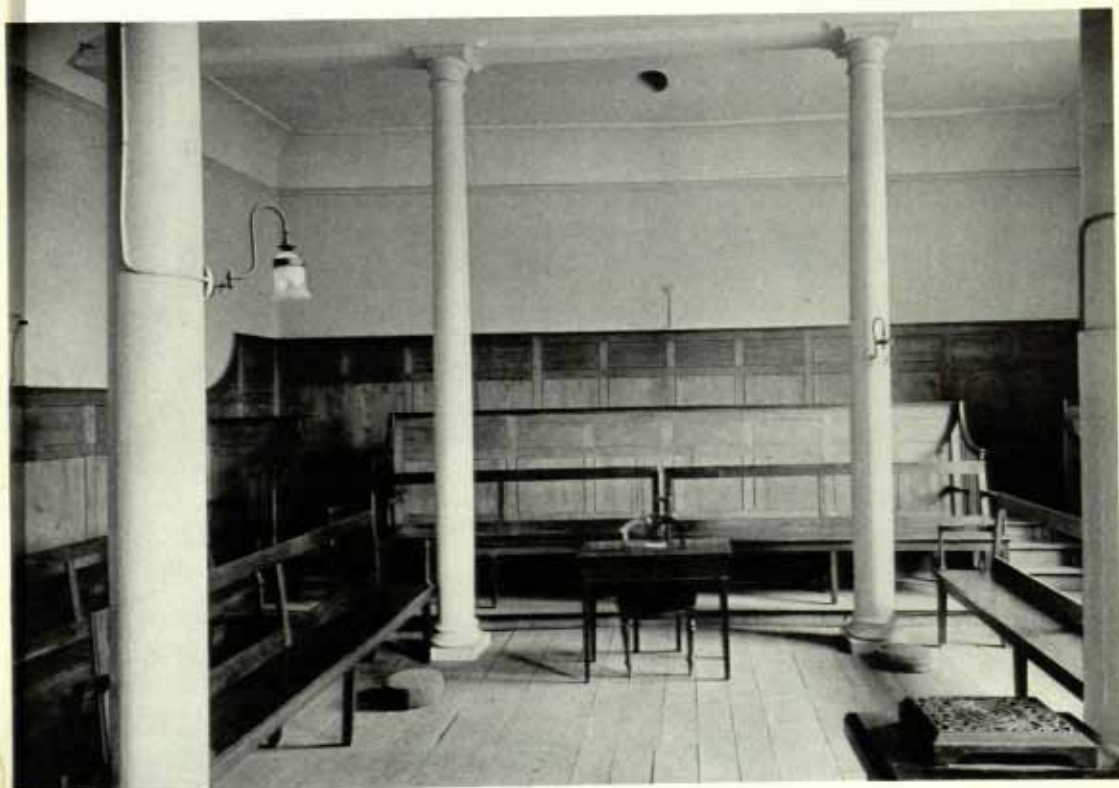
It is clear that Anglicans had to adapt their mediaeval churches for their own type of worship. This process might be defined as "taking the communicants into the chancel for the Eucharist, so that they can be within sight and hearing of the priest at the altar; and of bringing down the priest from the chancel into the nave so that he could be amongst his people for Morning and Evening Prayer."¹ The point of significance is that in the pre-Reformation churches the screen between chancel and nave was treated as a partition for the separation of the clergy from the laity in the performance of the Liturgy, whereas in Reformation and post-Reformation times the screen was a slight partition which separated two liturgical centers, the place for prayer and sermon and the place where the Communion-service was held. It did not separate priest and people, for they were together in the nave for Morning and Evening Prayer and together in the chancel for the service of Holy Communion. It might also be mentioned that there was a third, though strictly subordinate, liturgical center—the font placed immediately inside the west door.

Various experiments were tried to ensure that the service, translated into the vernacular at the Reformation, would be heard, seen, and understood by the people. The Elizabethan and Jacobean Canons clearly indicate that the priest must be in a position where he can lead the prayers audibly. He therefore had either to sit in the

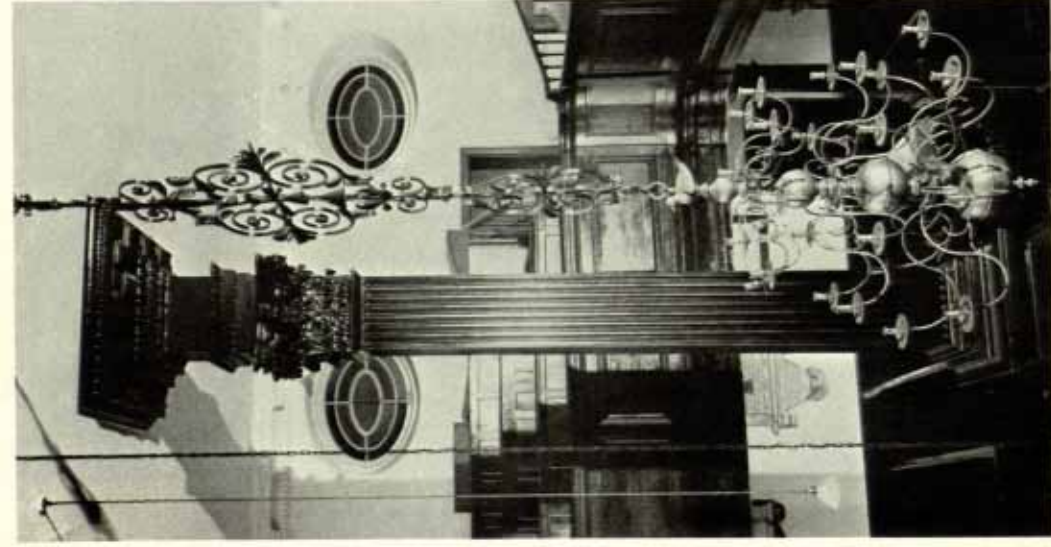
¹ G. W. O. Addleshaw and F. Etchells, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship*, p. 45.



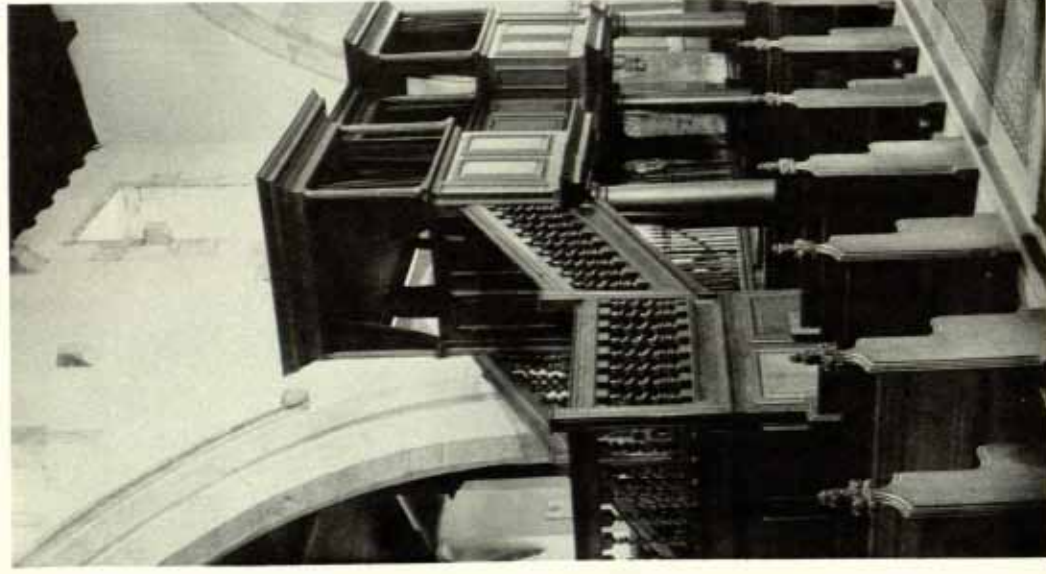
Baptist Meeting House, Tewkesbury (17th century)



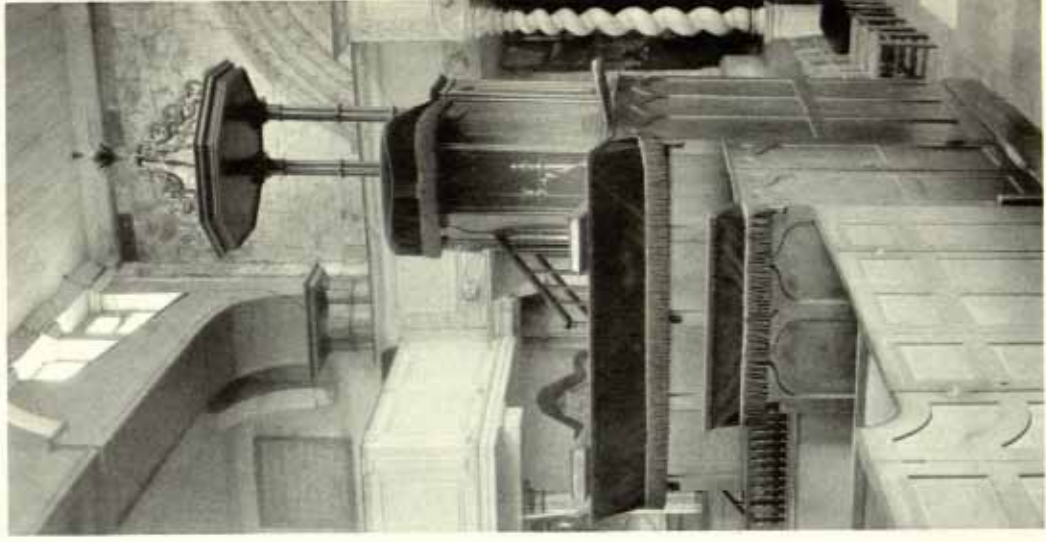
Quaker Meeting House, Cirencester (17th century)



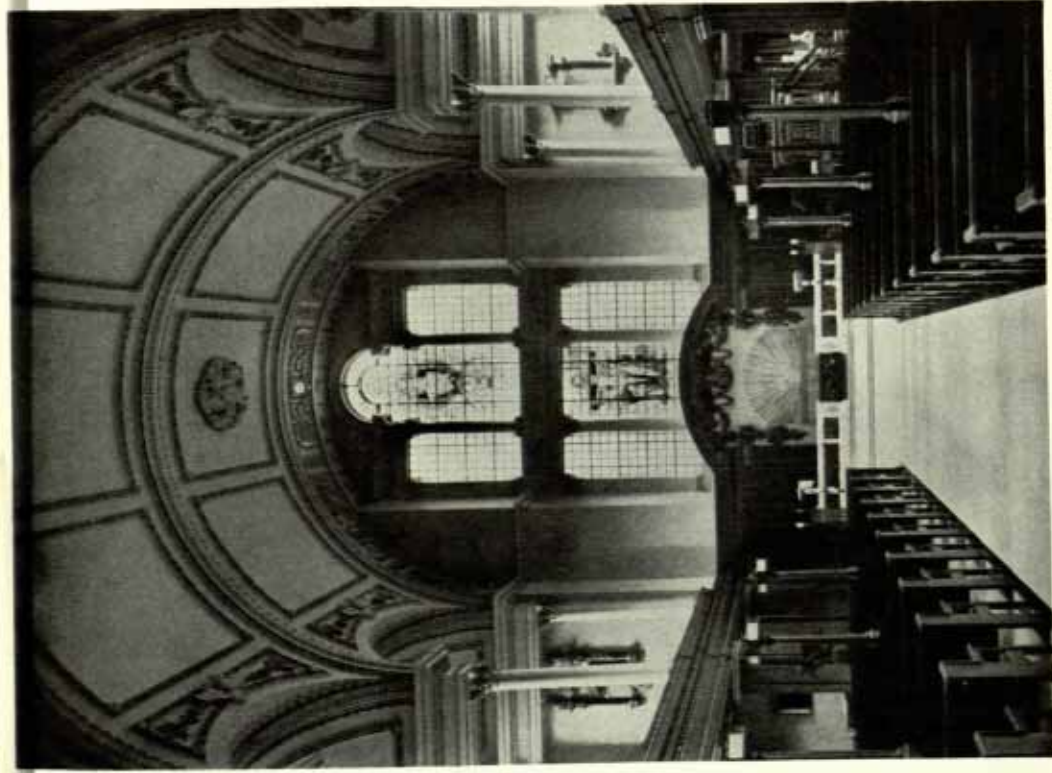
Unitarian (formerly Baptist) Meeting House,
Taunton (1721)



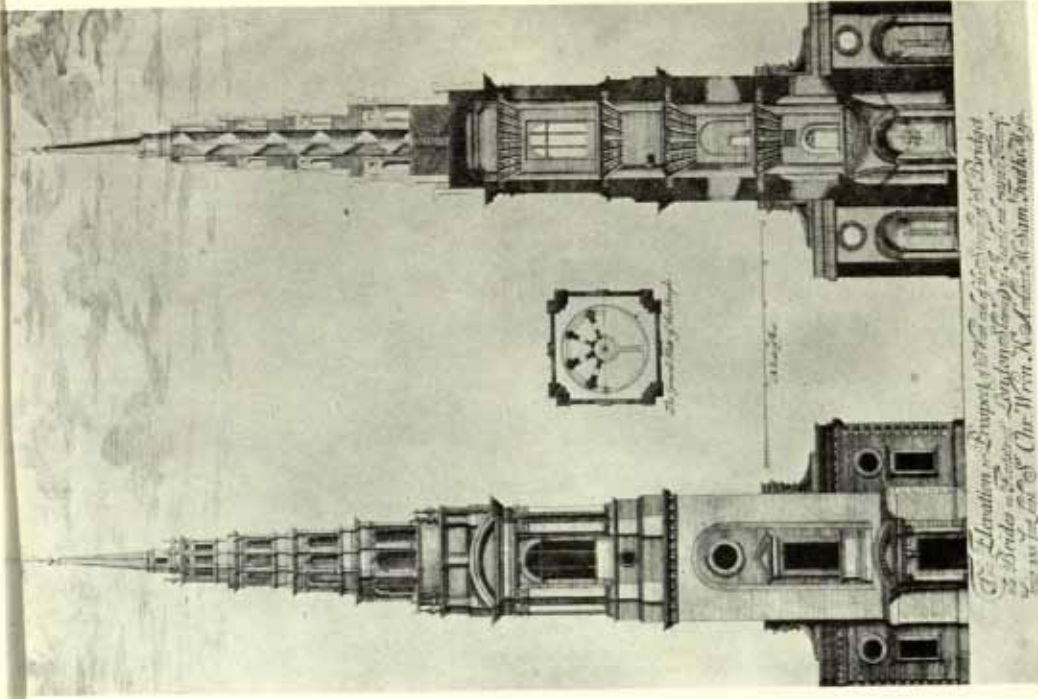
The Squire's Pew in St. Peter's, Croft
(18th century)



"Three-decker" Pulpit, St. Mary's, Whitby
(18th century)



Interior of St. James', Piccadilly, London (1682-1684),
restored by Sir Albert Richardson (1953)



The Steeple of St. Bride's Church, London, designed by Christopher Wren, 1702. The drawing shows the tower and spire, with a small circular diagram indicating the plan of the tower.

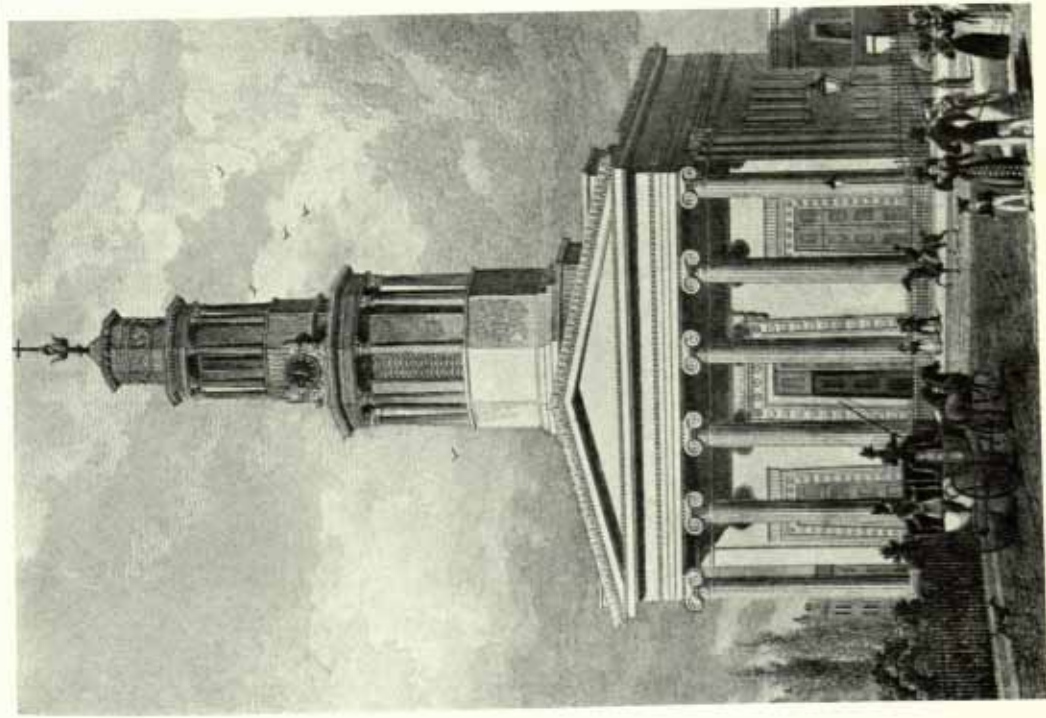
Wren's Drawings of the Steeple of St. Bride's,
London (1702)



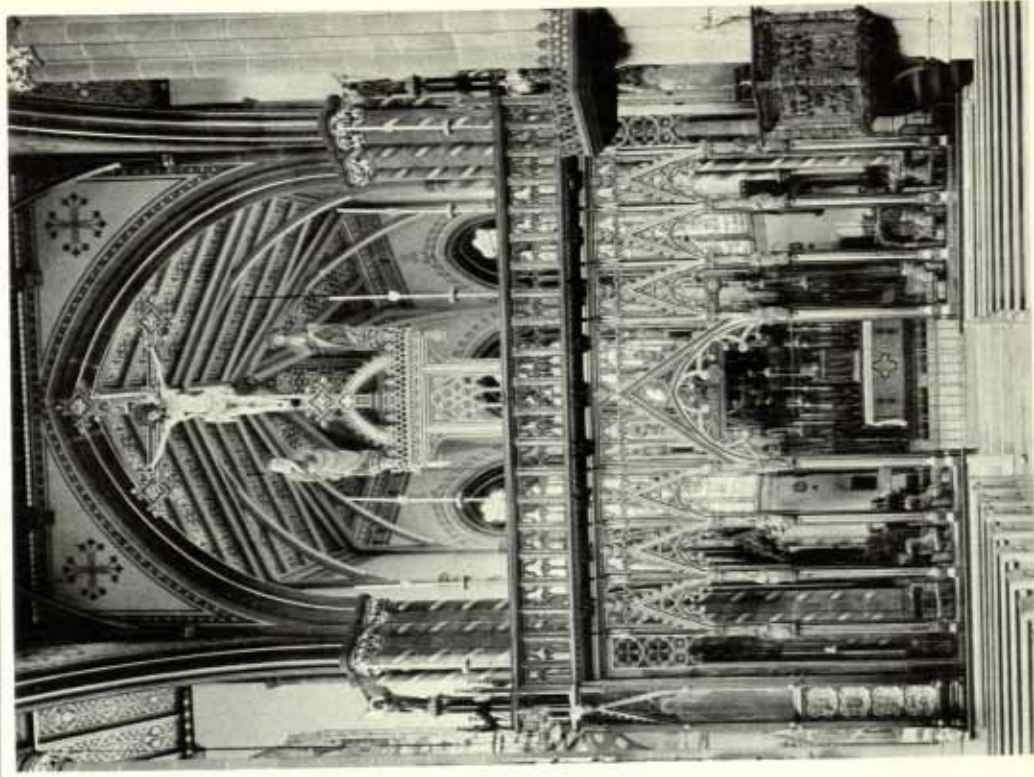
Gibbs's Drawings of the Exterior and Plan of
St. Martin-in-the-Fields, London (1722-1726)



Interior of St. Martin's in 1811 drawn by Rowlandson and Pugin



St. Pancras', London, Greek Revival, by
W. and H. W. Inwood (1819-1822)



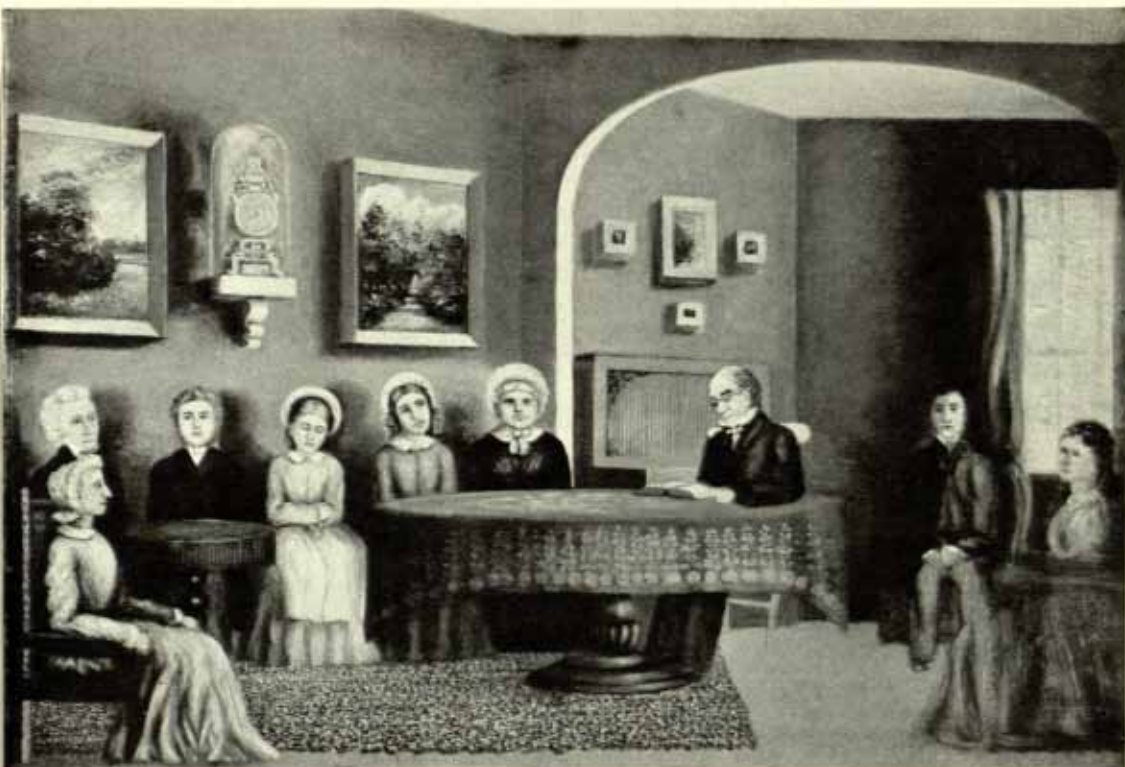
Pugin's St. Chad's (Roman Catholic) Cathedral, Birmingham
(mid-19th century)



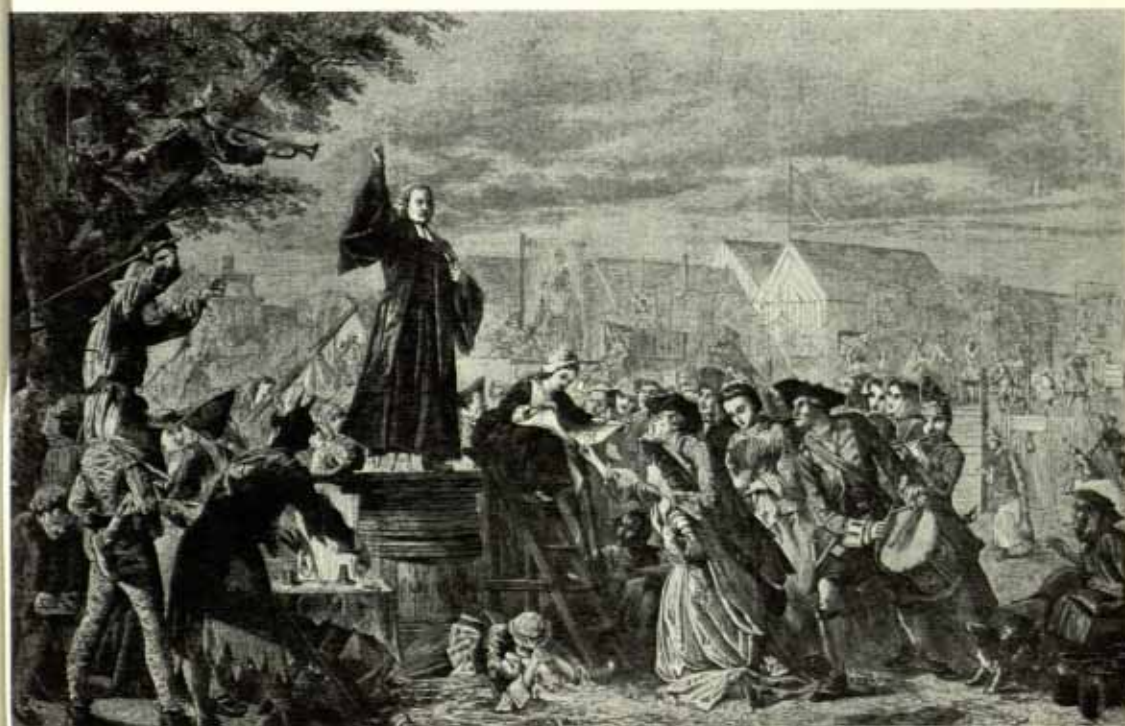
Ivory's Octagon Unitarian Chapel, Norwich (1754-1756)



Detail of Lutherbourg's "A Midsummer Afternoon with a Methodist Preacher"



Evangelical Family Prayers, painted by the novelist Samuel Butler (1864)



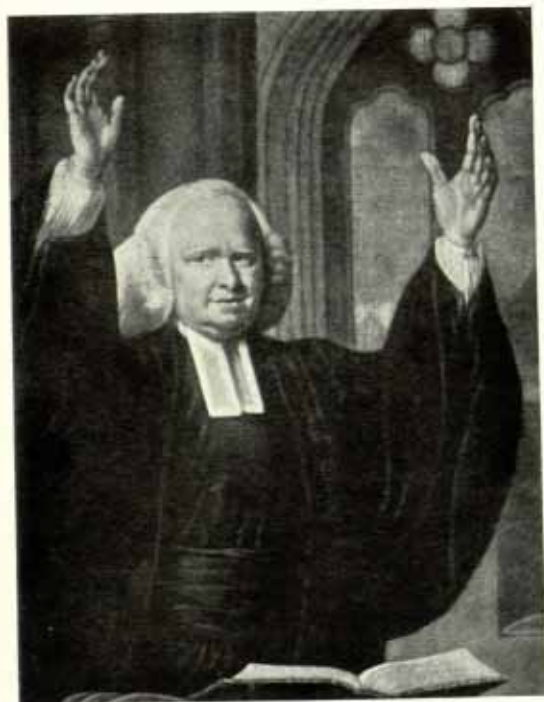
George Whitefield preaching in Moorfields



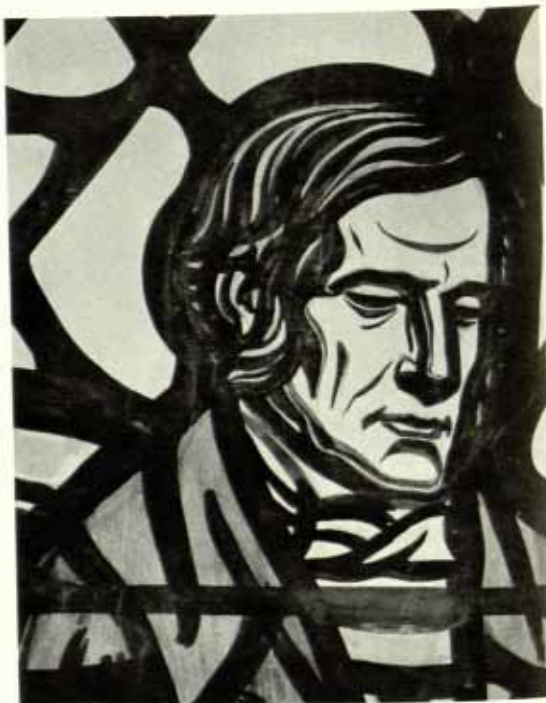
Portrait of John Wesley, ascribed to
Sir Joshua Reynolds.



Portrait of Isaac Watts by
Sir Godfrey Kneller



Portrait of George Whitefield
by Hone



F. D. Maurice, a portrait in stained-glass
by Carl Edwards

westernmost part of the choir in the chancel or bring forward a litany desk into the nave. In the early Reformation enthusiasm of the Edwardian bishop and Marian martyr, Ridley, that prelate had insisted that the altar be replaced by an "honest table" which could be moved from the chancel into the nave for the celebration of Holy Communion. Queen Elizabeth reenacted and extended Edward's injunctions so that during her reign it was the regular practice for the Communion-table to be moved into the nave. Under the high regime of Laud in Charles I's reign, the Communion-table was restored to the east end of the church, set altarwise against the wall and enclosed with rails to the north, south, and west. Archbishop Laud's aim was not merely to express a higher theological estimate of the Eucharist, but also the very practical one of preventing the profanation of the Communion-table. The custodians of an important parish church such as St. Martin-in-the-Fields were guilty of such irreverence as to allow parishioners to place their hats and cloaks on the altar, and even to sit on it, until rails were installed.² So by the eighteenth century movable tables in Anglican churches were a despised memory, and the chief feature in any religious edifice was the altar at the east end, approached by several steps, and railed in to mark its sanctity.

Another unique feature was the provision of tables of Commandments. One of the 1604 Canons had legislated "that the Ten Commandments be set upon the east end of every church and chapel where the people may best see and read the same, and other chosen sentences written upon the walls of the said chapels and churches in places convenient."³ Frequently the Commandments were framed in a triptych with the Lord's Prayer and Creed, and occasionally they were flanked by paintings of Moses and Aaron.⁴ It may be recalled that Addison commended Sir Roger de Coverley for having "beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own choosing," and that Wordsworth in *The Excursion* refers to admonitory texts. The combination of the Creed and Lord's Prayer with the Decalogue was not required by any positive ecclesiastical law, but they had come to be regarded as a most convenient summary of the Christian way of life. Knowledge of the three was a necessary preparation for Confirmation and admission to Holy Communion. They contained the essentials of Christian belief, Christian prayer, and Christian morality. Addleshaw and Etchells see a fur-

² Marcus Whiffen, *Stuart and Georgian Churches*, p. 5.

³ Canon LXXXII.

⁴ A surviving example moved to a more obscure position may be seen at All Saints', Northampton.

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ther value in this custom because the people of this period "did not think of Christianity in terms of atmosphere and sentiment, and . . . did not hesitate to teach that a Christian profession meant a life with a definite ethical content, a belief in certain definite truths, a practice of a certain way of prayer."⁵

Another unique ornament in the Anglican churches of this period was the royal coat of arms, either painted or carved. The placing of royal arms in churches became a requirement at the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. They were either placed on top of the screen or painted on the wooden tympanum which filled the space between the screen and the arch of the chancel, and replaced the old rood. Dr. Harding, the Roman Catholic controversialist, asked the ironical question of the Elizabethan apologist, Bishop John Jewel: "Is it the Word of God setteth up a dog and a dragon in the place of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and St. John the Evangelist, which were wont to stand on either side of Christ crucified?"⁶ Often sentences urging obedience to the secular powers were inscribed beneath them. This was to emphasize that the sovereign of England was the "supreme Governor" of the Church of England, and that the loyal Englishman was also the loyal Anglican. The use of the royal arms in church was not, however, simply a peculiarity of English Erastianism, for this was the custom in many French and Spanish churches on the continent.⁷ Nonetheless, the position of the royal arms on the tympanum led to the type of gibe that in England Christ and the apostles had been replaced by the Queen, a charge that Puritans as well as Catholics were prone to make against the "via media."

Reference has been made earlier in this chapter to the difficulty of adapting the Catholic mediaeval churches for Anglican worship. The first Anglican churches to be built for their own worship were those planned by Sir Christopher Wren as "auditory churches."⁸ Their chief feature was a repudiation of Gothic, as a type of architecture which was suitable for a worship to be seen and not heard and in which the worshippers were spectators and not participants. In its place classical architecture was the inspiration. If the Gothic

⁵ *Op.cit.*, p. 160.

⁶ Cited Whiffen, *op.cit.*, p. 6. In fact, the royal beasts supporting Elizabeth's arms were a lion and a greyhound.

⁷ Addleshaw and Etchells, *op.cit.*, pp. 101-107.

⁸ Wren considered his architecture essentially Protestant. E. V. Lucas, however, thought Georgian churches are "churches for a business man, and a successful one at that; not for a penitent, not for a perplexed and troubled soul, not for an emotional sufferer. Poor people look out of place in them" (*A Wanderer in London*, p. 148).

type of architecture was characterized by aggregation—the mere addition of further facilities when they became necessary, such as a lady chapel, or side chapels, or other extensions—the classical principle was that of planning by subdivision, in which the parts are subordinated to the design of the whole in the interests of aesthetic composition. It is significant that Wren wrote “natural beauty is from Geometry.”

In consequence, Wren built churches that are a unity, each one, as it were, an extended room. The eastern altar is visible from all parts of the church, except, possibly, from behind some of the highest pews—but Wren wished that pews might be done away with.⁹ He gave special prominence to the pulpit: “Concerning the placing of the Pulpit, I shall observe—A moderate Voice may be heard 50 Feet distant before the Preacher, 30 Feet on each Side, and 20 behind the Pulpit, and not this, unless the Pronunciation be distinct and equal, without losing the Voice at the last Word of the Sentence, which is commonly emphatical, and if obscured spoils the whole Sense.”¹⁰ He added: “By what I have said, it may be thought reasonable that the new Church should be at least 60 Feet broad, and 90 Feet long, besides a Chancel at one End, and the Belfry and Portico at the other. These Proportions may be varied; but to build more room, than that every Person may conveniently hear and see, is to create Noise and Confusion.”¹¹

Nothing could emphasize more clearly Wren's chief concern that all the worshippers should be able both to see the ceremonial and hear the ritual. Wren's stress on audibility may also be seen in his preferring ceilings to open roofs. But the most notable testimony that in his view Protestant worship was characterized as “hearing” worship is seen in the prominence and size of his pulpits. This was inevitable if, in Wren's words, his churches were to be “fitted for auditories.” By the use of “three-decker” pulpits with sounding-boards placed in prominent positions, Wren gave practical expression to his theories. The pulpit was generally placed towards the middle of the nave against either one of the pillars, or the north or south wall. In the larger churches, however, it became increasingly the fashion to place the three-tiered pulpit in the central aisle in front of the altar. The consequence was that the minister and the clerk had their backs to the altar during the entire service.

⁹ Sir Christopher Wren wrote: “A Church should not be so fill'd with Pews, but that the Poor may have room enough to stand and sit in the Alleys, for to them equally is the Gospel preached. It were to be wish'd there were to be no Pews, but Benches. . . .” See Stephen Wren, *Parentalia*, pp. 319-20.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

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While the sermon was thus exalted, it would be erroneous to conclude that the Sacrament of Holy Communion was therefore abased. In the first place, the pulpit was used not only for preaching but for the reading of the Liturgy. Furthermore, the chancel was looked upon as the place for Communion, and the nave as the place for Morning and Evening Prayer, so that it seemed reasonable to arrange the nave as conveniently as possible, without taking the altar into account.

The style of the eighteenth century Anglican churches might be described as classical. More precisely, it was domesticated Italian; the English modification was inevitable because the architectural problems were different. Although the works of Palladio were known in illustration to both Wren and Nicholas Hawksmore, and although James Gibbs and Thomas Archer had travelled in Italy, they had to make adaptations of Italian designs for English use.¹² The chief Italian problem was to provide an appropriate classical façade for a church with a high nave and lower side aisles. The English architects were not troubled with this problem since auditory churches would have galleries and high aisle ceilings. The Italians did not, for various reasons, build free-standing churches; the Englishmen did. Further, the English architects were required to provide towers and steeples by the 1711 Act of Parliament, whereas no such requirement faced the Italians. It is impossible to do more than to suggest the great variety of designs and decoration of these churches. Suffice it to state that they employed round pillars or square fluted pillars to support the galleries or arches, that pediments were plentiful, that chancels might be curved or plain, that towers or spires of great variety proliferated, that rich carving characterized the treatment of screens and organ-cases, and that the whole effect suggested clear design and controlled planning, clarity and dignity, without vistas or surprises.¹³ This was essentially the expression of the Renaissance spirit and wholly appropriate to an age which exalted natural theology over special revelation. In retrospect, it is not surprising that the Victorian ecclesiologists returned to mediaeval Gothic forms as expressions of the Age of Faith, because the classical architecture¹⁴ of the eighteenth century was so manifestly the product of the Age of Reason.

¹² Elizabeth and Wayland Young, *Old London Churches*, p. 28f.

¹³ Betjeman evokes the spirit of Georgian worship in *Old Lights for New Chancels*, in his poem on St. Katherine's, Chislehampton, in Oxfordshire. Dowbiggin was the architect.

¹⁴ For Newman's different view of classical forms of church architecture see Vol. III, Chap. 1, Section 6.

2. *Dissenting Meeting-Houses*

It is only by the eighteenth century that it is possible to distinguish a typically Dissenting type of ecclesiastical architecture. Before this time Puritans and Nonconformists had used merely temporary edifices, in the hope that the Establishment would become comprehensive enough to accommodate them. These temporary structures were cottages or larger private houses. Only the Quakers and the Baptists,¹⁵ who had no hope of inclusion within the Established Church, built their own simple places of worship in the seventeenth century, and they were much alike in character. Quakers and the early Baptists had no ordained ministry and despised ostentation as unworthy of Christians. Their buildings have "the quality of a well-scoured farmhouse kitchen."¹⁶ The floor would be of stone or tiles, the open seats of scrubbed oak, the walls white-washed, and the windows of clear glass, as was appropriate for believers in the "inner light" or in the inspiration of the individual by the Holy Spirit.¹⁷ Among Nonconformists the Quakers and the early Baptists were the Cisterians of seventeenth century Nonconformist architecture. The architecture of these two denominations is alike in another respect, also. Whereas in typical Dissenting meeting-houses of the eighteenth century the dominating feature is the pulpit, either two-decker or three-decker, placed on one of the long walls of the building, no pulpit appears in early Baptist and Quaker houses of worship. Instead there is a long bench, often raised from the floor level, in front of which appears a low panelled wall.¹⁸ On this bench the Quaker elders and the Baptist messengers used to sit in full view of the congregation. Since in their democratic forms of polity there was no minister, and each man could and did "testify" to the Spirit within him, there was no need for an elevated place for one leader, such as the pulpit provided. This has remained the Quaker tradition, but the Baptists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries became architecturally and liturgically indistinguishable from the Congregationalists, with the single exception of

¹⁵ In this paragraph the Baptists are more specifically the General Baptists, rather than the Particular or Calvinistic Baptists. The latter, except for their insistence on believers' Baptism, are doctrinally and liturgically indistinguishable from the Independents (or Congregationalists) of the period.

¹⁶ John Betjeman, *First and Last Loves*, p. 90f.

¹⁷ For the likeness of Quaker and early Baptist meeting-houses, compare Jordans (1688), Buckinghamshire, and Cote (1657), Oxfordshire.

¹⁸ H. L. Short suggests that this was derived from their common ancestors, the Mennonites. See his article in *The Listener*, March 17, 1955, p. 471f., "Changing Styles in Nonconformist Architecture."

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their restriction of the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism to believers.

The Georgian meeting-house, like the Georgian church, was a departure from the mediaeval type of church edifice. Far from being cruciform, they were both rectangular in shape. In the Georgian church, the only reminder of the former structural division between the chancel and the nave might be an ironwork screen, a low balustrade, or a lengthy space between the nave pews and the railed-in altar. Both Georgian church and meeting-houses were essentially auditory structures, devised for the preaching and hearing of the sermon and the prayers. In one way, the meeting-house might be said to be an adaptation of the Georgian church for Dissenting worship. This is, indeed, suggested by the curious fact that some Georgian meeting-houses were as long and narrow as Georgian churches, but they were orientated,¹⁹ even though their Communion-tables were on the north or south walls.²⁰ Nonetheless, it is an oversimplification to describe them as mere modifications of Anglican churches of the eighteenth century, because they avoided all the Renaissance motifs in carving which make both reredos and organ case such a magnificent feature of city Georgian churches, and, further, as will be seen, the arrangement of pulpit and Communion-table is quite other than that of their Anglican counterparts. Ornament was thought to be utterly inconsistent with the simplicity and spirituality of evangelical worship. Dissenters regarded worship as most pure when freed from all earthly associations, and could consider Anglican appeals to beauty, mystery or symbolism, only as unworthy attempts to re-introduce those sensuous elements in the old faith from which the Protestant martyrs had died to liberate them. There is a profound significance in the fact that often the only object permitted on a Dissenting Communion-table, apart from the Bible, was a copy of Foxe's Book of Martyrs.²¹

The exterior of the meeting-house was almost as destitute of ornament as the interior, looking like a modest country house of good proportions, built of good brick and often with a hipped roof of pantiles. The flat surfaces would be broken by a central door or pair of doors, with the windows arranged symmetrically around the doorway. Sometimes the doors had classical pilasters or columns to frame them, and the windows were generally built with flat or semicircular arches over them. In some wealthier meeting-

¹⁹ Quite literally, they were eastward-facing.

²⁰ H. L. Short, *op.cit.*, p. 472a.

²¹ B. L. Manning, *The Congregational Quarterly*, Vol. v, pp. 290-92.

houses, as at Ipswich and Bury St. Edmunds, oval windows were to be found.²² The earlier edifices of this type were about twice as long as they were broad, but the later examples tended to become more square in shape. Sometimes the only ornament visible on the outside would be a sundial on the south wall, bearing a Scripture text or a *memento mori*.²³

It has been commonly asserted that the interior shape of the meeting-house indicates, by the presence of the dominating pulpit on one of the longer walls, that it was essentially a preaching-house. This, however, is entirely to overlook the significant fact that the central position in the rectangle is, in fact, reserved for the Communion-table. Indeed, it would be possible to point to Georgian Anglican churches which had an equally dominating and central three-decker pulpit which completely obliterated the view of the altar,²⁴ as a proof that the dominating pulpit was not an arrangement peculiar to Dissenting houses of worship. On the other hand, the placing of the Communion-table in the very center of the interior was uniquely a feature of the Dissenting meeting-house.

To explain this characteristic it is necessary to go back to Calvinian reforms in Geneva, because the Dissenters were sons of Calvin. The reformer replaced the Mass with what he and the Puritans called "The Lord's Supper." To mark the change, the Sacrament was celebrated, not at a remote altar at the east end of the church, but at a table in the very midst of the congregation. In fact, the earliest Calvinian arrangement for the administration of the Lord's Supper was for the people to sit at the Lord's Table. A remarkable example of a mediaeval church re-arranged for a Reformed Communion is that of the Groote Kerk of Amsterdam, which has come into recent international fame as the edifice in which the World Council of Churches was inaugurated, although it has always had a national renown in Holland as the church where that country's sovereigns are crowned. At the time of the Reformation the chancel was screened off and subsequently the great rococo tomb of Admiral Ruyter was placed where the great altar used to stand. Halfway down the nave, the only part of the church used for worship, a high pulpit was placed against one of the piers, with seats facing it from east, west, and north. On the Sundays when Communion was to be celebrated, a vast table was set down the

²² Martin S. Briggs, *Puritan Architecture and its Future*, p. 24.

²³ Robert Halley, *Lancashire: Its Puritanism and Nonconformity*, p. 438.

²⁴ Cf. Whiffen, *op.cit.*, for illustration 48 of St. Philip's, Birmingham, now the cathedral; and Addleshaw and Etchells, *op.cit.*, for plan 22 of St. Nicholas's, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

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whole length of the nave, and the faithful sat at it to receive their Communion. This was the tradition continued in the Dissenting meeting-houses of England, except that the more affluent and respectable Presbyterian congregations did not continue to sit at the Communion-table but received the sacred elements sitting in their places in the pews. For Presbyterians, therefore, it became necessary to erect a dais and to set upon it a small table, and to protect this with a rail. In some meeting-houses a special "table-pew" was built around it. In the early Congregational meeting-houses, however, it was often customary to receive the Communion at a long table which stretched the whole breadth of the church from beneath the pulpit until it reached practically to the other long wall of the meeting-house.²⁵ The table-pew, when not in use for the Communion, was generally occupied by the poor male members of the congregation.

The pulpit was, of course, an impressive structure, as befitted a Protestant service which held the "oracles of God" in high esteem and believed in a learned ministry which knew the Biblical tongues and prepared a lengthy expository sermon for each diet of worship. The pulpit was lofty and often of three tiers, and surmounted by a sounding-board to assist the acoustics. The uppermost tier was the pulpit proper, to which the minister ascended for the sermon, like Moses climbing Sinai, from the middle "deck," where he had led the prayers and from which he had read the lesson. The lowest tier was the clerk's desk, from which he gave out the metrical psalms or hymns line by line.²⁶ So important was the pulpit that here, if anywhere, a little occasional decoration was permitted. Sometimes the sounding-board would reveal the carved image of a dove, bearing an olive-branch in her bill, the symbol of the preacher bringing the news of reconciliation to the voyagers in the ark, itself the type of the Church, bearing the souls of the saved.²⁷ The pulpit often had several adjuncts to add to its impressiveness; these in-

²⁵ H. L. Short, *op.cit.*, p. 472a. Cf. a letter written by Alexander Gordon, June 13, 1923, the distinguished English Unitarian church historian, discussing the difference between the meeting-houses of Independents (Congregationalists) and Presbyterians: "The communion table stretched from the pulpit to the opposite wall and the pews, on either side, faced this table. In my time this long table was still in place in Yarmouth and Ipswich. . . . Now this arrangement seems to belong to Meeting Houses of Independent origin; such certainly were the Cheshire examples, and such were Toxeth Park and Yarmouth. I can say nothing about the two others, but the usual Presbyterian arrangement was to place the table with its broad side under the pulpit." (P. 301 of H. McLachlan, *Essays and Addresses*.)

²⁶ "Clerk" is an Anglican name occasionally used by Dissenters; they usually preferred to call the leader of their praise a "precentor."

²⁷ Robert Halley, *op.cit.*, p. 438.

cluded the bookboard, on which rested a rich red velvet cushion;²⁸ the lofty back panelling behind the preacher; and the broad staircase, which was occasionally doubled for the sake of symmetry. In the pulpit panelling at the rear there was often a peg or brass nail on which was suspended, on the occasion of funeral sermons, the preacher's hat, with its silken tokens of mourning. Some pulpits also had a brass circle attached, which held the basin used in the administration of infant baptism. The only other decoration, if so sombre an object can be defined as decoration, was a huge-faced black clock set into the gallery opposite the pulpit. Significantly, this was clearly visible only to the minister.

The meeting-house was gloomy beyond imagination. Each side of the pulpit there would be a commodious window, but it should be remembered that the other three walls, especially in a city or county town place of worship, would have obfuscating galleries on them. The unpainted walnut pews would add to the sombreness of the total effect, accentuated by the grave black Genevan gown of the preacher and the "Sunday black" of the garb of the congregation. The only mitigation would be the white walls and the scarlet pulpit cushion. In our stressing of the sombre aspect of the general impression of the interior of the meeting-house, it would be wrong to suggest that there was anything slipshod or crude about the workmanship. On the contrary, the panelling of the pulpit, the pews, the gallery-fronts, and the carving of the pillars supporting the roof was in the best classical taste. Some of the candelabra of brass were of exquisite workmanship.²⁹

The pews in the larger meeting-houses were capacious and square compartments in which the chief families sat in almost stately seclusion. Not content with the privacy afforded them by high wooden walls, they often suspended thick green baize curtains on wooden rods. To this day the monograms or crests on these "proprietary" pews can be seen in the Congregational meeting-house at Tockholes, Lancashire.³⁰ Since the support of the minister came from pew rents, the families that used the large square pews regarded them almost as private property. An intruder would have been resented

²⁸ I owe to Professor Winthrop Hudson the interesting suggestion that the pulpit cushion was analogous to the cushion on which the crown would be placed in a Coronation Service or the cushion on which the ring is placed in an Anglican Marriage Service. Thus the solemn carrying in of the Bible in older Dissenting worship can be interpreted as either the congregation's homage to Christ as King, or as a token of the Covenant-relationship between Christ the Bridegroom and His Elect, the Church.

²⁹ Briggs, *op.cit.*, p. 27.

³⁰ Halley, *op.cit.*, p. 438.

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as much as if he had appeared uninvited at the Sunday dinner of the family.²¹ The worshippers did not for a moment think that their pews belonged to the whole community; they considered they were already paying for the community to attend the Anglican parish church by their tithes and taxes. The pews were the exclusive privileges of the "saints" in the gathered church.²² B. L. Manning says these eighteenth century Dissenters would have sung with peculiar meaning that part of the paraphrase of the Twenty-Third Psalm which went:

There would I find a settled rest,
While others go and come;
No more a stranger or a guest,
But like a child at home.²³

There were considerable differences in the materials and in the finish, if not in the style and workmanship, of the Dissenting meeting-houses. Some were built of timber, lath, and plaster, but these would be an indication of the poverty of the country churches, rather than of their taste. Others, particularly in the towns where Dissenters belonged to the mercantile groups, as in East Anglia or Devon, were built of solid brick walls and had massive roofs, substantial galleries, and oak or even walnut pews and panelling.

Perhaps the most elegant of the meeting-houses were those that belonged to the Presbyterians, who, in the course of the century, were chiefly to become Unitarians. It is not fanciful to relate the elegance of Unitarian meeting-houses to the rationalist and intellectual radical theologies that were taught there, for the congregations were prosperous professional people and intellectuals who wished their place of worship to reflect their domestic tastes. The most notable new Unitarian meeting-house built in the eighteenth century was the famous Octagon Chapel in Norwich (1754-1756). When Dr. John Taylor's influential congregation decided to build a new chapel, they wanted a temple that would be a fitting expression of the advanced and humane theology of their brilliant minister, who prided himself on being a mere "Christian" and not a miserable "sectary." They held a competition among architects and selected a short list of three of the aspirants who were required to provide

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Anglican churches had "proprietary" pews also. A large squire's pew extant in Minstead Church, Hampshire, has its own fireplace and presumably the squire could indicate his impatience at a lengthy sermon more forcibly by rattling the coals with a poker than by yawning or coughing, the conventional hints. They were customarily curtained.

²³ Manning, *op.cit.*, p. 290.

models. The model of Thomas Ivory was approved and he was ordered to commence work immediately on a building to cost approximately £5,000. Ivory was probably aware of the new trends in German and Dutch ecclesiastical architecture and of the use of a circle or polygon in the *Zentralkirche* ideal. Ivory's cupola is sustained by round arches resting on eight fluted Corinthian columns (each one carved from a tree trunk). Behind these the gallery extends right round the interior. This church reached its summit of fame at the end of the century, when it included among its members such famous literary and artistic families as the Martineaus and the Opies, and when its choir and organ were reputed to rival those of Norwich Cathedral itself. It has been a frequent criticism of Nonconformist architecture that it aped Anglicanism a generation too late. This particular example turned out to be a prototype of some Anglican proprietary chapels and of many Methodist chapels; Whitefield's Tabernacle in Tottenham Court Road, London, was a partial imitation of it, except that this octagon terminated in a roof-turret! Other Unitarian examples were erected in Liverpool in connection with the scheme for an Unitarian revision of the Book of Common Prayer known as "The Rational Liturgy" (1763-1776), and in Dover, where the Adrian Street church was built in 1820. Anglican examples of octagonal churches were constructed in Bath and Exeter (Bedford Chapel, 1791).³⁴

John Wesley had little use for the mere moralism or rational theology of Unitarianism, but his *Journal* records a reluctant tribute to the elegance of Norwich Octagon. The entry for November 23, 1757, reads: "I was shown Dr. Taylor's new meeting-house, perhaps the most elegant one in Europe. It is eight-square, built of the finest brick, with sixteen sash-windows below, as many above, and eight skylights in the dome; which, indeed, are purely ornamental. The inside is finished in the highest taste, and is as clean as any nobleman's saloon. The communion-table is fine mahogany; the very latches of the pew-doors are polished brass. How can it be thought that the old, coarse Gospel should find admission here?"

If the Norwich Octagon was the most elegant meeting-house in England, it was not the only one. Friar Street Unitarian Chapel (formerly Presbyterian) survives today, with its four semicircular topped windows, two on each side of the richly carved pulpit and its balustraded staircase, and with four small circular windows

³⁴ Cf. *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, Vol. 45, Third Series, No. 18, Aug. 15, 1938, for an article by A. L. Drummond, "The Architectural Interest of the English Meeting-House," pp. 909-17.

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above. The exterior is not less notable, with its two pilastered and porticoed doors and a cobweb window over each. This building resembles the best English domestic architecture of the age of Queen Anne and was built as early as 1700.³⁵ The Mary Street Unitarian chapel of Taunton, built in 1721, shares most of these features but also has a fine gilt iron screen and a splendid central chandelier to hold over two dozen candles.³⁶

Another indication of the fine taste exhibited by the worshippers in some meeting-houses is the quality of their Communion-plate. At the beginning of the century the silver Communion cups were generally of beaker shape, and approximately four inches high. Two such Communion cups used in the South Petherton Congregational meeting-house have some remarkable *repoussé* work. One has a narrow central belt of laurel leaves and below it a belt of upright acanthus leaves.³⁷ The Communion-plate of St. Paul's Congregational Meeting, Taunton, has richly chased beaker shapes (1713) and a more reticent Communion chalice of conventional shape with two handles (1751).³⁸ Other evidence of good taste could be found in the silver Baptismal bowl presented to Silver Street Chapel, Trowbridge, in 1767 by a former member who had established himself as a London goldsmith. This delicate bowl is four and one-half inches high and eight and three-fourths inches in diameter. It weighs over twenty-one ounces troy measure, or twenty-three and one half avoirdupois.³⁹

Just as the Octagon at Norwich is atypical, so also is the richness of the plate that has been considered. For as educated opulence, or at least a reasonable competence, predisposes the owner to good taste, indigence means that latent taste cannot be exploited. Most Dissenters fell into the latter category, and their principles as well as their pockets dictated simplicity in architecture and furnishings. It is well to try to imagine the appearance of the average meeting-house.

Since the position of Dissenters was uncertain during the early eighteenth century, especially when the Tories and their High Church supporters were in power, their ecclesiastical buildings were inconspicuous in location and appearance.⁴⁰ These retiring buildings were found in the side streets of cities, and resembled nothing more than sedate and modest domestic buildings, since they were without

³⁵ Briggs, *op.cit.*, pp. 23, 24, 27.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, Vol. III, pp. 24-26.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 116-17.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ The same was equally true of eighteenth century Roman Catholic chapels. See the succeeding vol., Chap. 1, Section 3.

steeple or towers or any obvious ways of indicating a challenge to the Establishment in religion. They were long and narrow inside, with the imposing pulpit in the middle of one of the longer walls; the central position of honour was given to the Communion-table. In Independent (or Congregational) meeting-houses this was long and capacious enough to seat most of the members and its narrow end faced the pulpit; in Presbyterian meeting-houses there was a central raised dais beneath the pulpit. It was probably surrounded with a "table-pew." Opposite the pulpit would be a gallery and a clock; if the congregation was influential there might also be two additional galleries, one each on the narrower walls. The solid pews, with their doors, would be arranged on the ground floor in such a way that the majority were at right angles to the pulpit. The impression would be lighter or darker, depending on the number of galleries. The chief contrast would be between the dark paneling of the pews, the galleries, the pulpit, and the round or square pillars that supported the galleries, and the white-washed walls and the clear wide windows which let in the light unimpeded. The general effect would be that of the chiaroscuro of an etching, not of an oil painting. The only touches of colour would be the brass candelabra and the vivid scarlet of the pulpit-cushion on which the Bible rested. The inevitable effect would be that of dignity, austerity, simplicity, and spirituality in worship. That old-world eighteenth century impression can be appreciated only if we contrast its Genevan graveness with the comparative gaiety of the popular Methodist chapels that emerged at the end of this century and the beginning of the next. Those Methodist chapels were the buildings of the people, whereas the meeting-houses were the expression of a Puritan intellectual élite, dignified and austere, who were conscious of having admitted no compromise with sensuousness. In the last analysis, the heirs of the Puritans refused the adventitious aids of symbols represented in stained-glass, carved in wood, or sculptured in stone, not only because they kept the spirit and the letter of the second commandment but also because theirs was the intellectual imagery of the Bible and their imaginations were confined, not liberated, by the imagery of Catholicism. It was not that they disliked beauty, for their meeting-houses had the beauty of proportion and good craftsmanship, but that they admired holiness and Biblical fidelity more.

CHAPTER III

ANGLICAN WORSHIP AND PREACHING IN THE AUGUSTAN AGE

SUCH distinction as the Augustan Church attained is not to be found in the sphere of worship. Its pre-eminence may rather be discovered in the intellectual defence of Christianity and in the marshalling of "evidences" for faith in the work of such apologists as Berkeley, Butler, Sherlock, and Paley, or in the imitation of the "Divine Beneficence" through works of charity, as in the generous foundations of hospitals and orphanages, and the provision of free elementary secular or religious education for the children of the underprivileged.

1. *Factors Antithetical to Worship*

The Spirit of the Age was not conducive to worship in general, and was peculiarly opposed to liturgical forms.¹ The dominating intellectual interest from the foundation of the Royal Society in 1660 to the French Revolution of 1789 (which led, by reaction, to a renewed appreciation of tradition) was mathematical science. This was the epoch of Galileo, Descartes, Pascal, Newton, and Leibnitz, manifesting itself in a zest for the clarity and distinctness characteristic of mathematical ideas. A consequence of this interest was a tendency to omit all those mystical and aesthetic elements of experience which are incapable of being displayed in the lucid, consecutive, and convincing form which is proper to mathematical demonstration. Such an age will inevitably relegate to the background whatever is paradoxical and remote from the ordinary ways of thinking. In religion this will mean a reduction of revelation to the limits of the rational and a distaste for such a speculative doctrine as the Holy Trinity, and such a mystical doctrine as salvation through the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Morality, as related to religion, will come into prominence because the intuitions of the conscience are comparatively clear, and the general distinction between good and evil widely accepted.²

¹ Norman Sykes, though a judicious defender of the Hanoverian Church, declares flatly: "Neither liturgical composition nor study, however, were among the eminent gifts of that age." *William Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1657-1737*, Vol. I, p. 186.

² Cf. C. C. J. Webb, *A Century of Anglican Theology and Other Lectures*, pp. 20-25.

The strongly rational emphasis of the age made short work of mysticism, with the result that William Law appeared as esoteric as an albatross in the Fens. The men who were illuminated by the rays of the Enlightenment were so proudly contemporary that they were contemptuous of tradition. The Gothic architecture seemed to them barbaric and rude, and the so-called ages of faith were esteemed the centuries of superstition. This is evident even in the poet Thomas Wharton, who was the exception in being aesthetically attracted to mediaevalism, for he thanks the arbiter of classical and rational taste, Sir Joshua Reynolds, for effecting his disenchantment:

Thy powerful hand has broke the Gothic chain,
And brought my bosom back to truth again.³

The whole duty of man was moral, and by no means did this include the ceremonial part of religion. Paley admirably defined their mechanical Deity as a clock-maker God, active in creation, but inactive ever since. The good functioning of his mechanism, the world, made miracles not so much impossible as wholly unnecessary—a view which tended to reduce prayer and particular providences to a minimum. Moreover, the excessively optimistic estimate of the nature of man and society made such traditional conceptions as original sin, and reconciliation by the atonement, as well as regeneration, not only old-fashioned but also otiose. Renunciation and sacrifice were terms that were appropriate for the ages when the Christian Church was persecuted, but seemed exaggerated and even "enthusiastic" (that is, fanatical) in the eighteenth century, which believed, with Pope, "That whatever is, is right."

Moreover, as the rational excluded the mystical, the paradoxical, and the speculative, so also did it depreciate the element of sentiment in religion. The typical Augustan was the moderate man. The Vicar of Bray read the ecclesiastical barometer aright:

When *George* in Pudding time came o'er
And Moderate men looked big, Sir.

An age of common sense presumes that every man can judge for himself what is reasonable and that his conscience will dictate what is moral. Pope had epitomised the moral emphasis in theology in his lines:

³ From "Verses on Sir Joshua Reynolds' Painted Window at New College, Oxford."

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In Faith and Hope the world will disagree,
But all Mankind's concern is Charity.⁴

The Deistic emphasis upon the common conceptions shared in all religions, primitive or developed, and the consequent denial of the validity of special revelation conveyed through historic acts, was reinforced by the conviction that the Civil War of the previous century was due to taking theological issues too seriously. Samuel Butler in his *Hudibras* ridiculed such "apostolic blows and knocks" and Locke in his "Essay on Toleration" pointed the moral. In outlawing bigotry, however, the Augustans had also excluded intensity of faith and devotion from admiration, and worship was bound to suffer.

Liturgical worship was bound to be depreciated since the Deists attributed the corruption of Christianity from the simplicity of the "religion of nature" to the work of malevolent and scheming priestcraft. In their endeavour to ridicule historical and traditional religion, they made no attempt to do justice to the positive benefits that it had transmitted through the centuries.⁵ Such root-and-branch reformers had little understanding of the fact that religion is communally transmitted as well as individually appropriated, and therefore little sense of the Church as the necessary Body of Christ and the redeemed community transcending the centuries and overlapping national boundaries. Eighteenth century man would have agreed with A. N. Whitehead that "Religion is what a man does with his solitariness" and denied the complementary truth of Berdyaev's dictum that "Religion is both Communion and Community." It is true that several religious leaders, including most of the bishops, warned their clergy against reducing revelation to reason, faith to philosophy, and Christian ethics to prudential morality, and even charged them not to treat worship as merely a preliminary to the rational discourses which did duty for sermons, which was exactly what many in their congregations desired. The significant fact is that these repeated warnings (in the episcopal charges of Butler and Secker, for example) were abundantly necessary; that the episcopal mentors were, in fact, swimming strongly against the tide. Other bishops, by contrast, were on the crest of the rationalistic waves, notably Hoadly, Warburton, and Watson.

Such assertions require further evidence to substantiate them, and to this it is now necessary to turn. One of the most meaningful

⁴ From *An Essay on Man*, iii.

⁵ A correction which Montesquieu supplied in *Esprit des lois*, Bk. XXIV, Chap. 2.

descriptions of worship immediately prior to the beginning of the age (at a time when the High Church Tories were in the political ascendant under Queen Anne) is applicable to the entire Georgian era, at least as regards rural church-going. Its clear supposition is that the main function of worship is a kind of spiritual spring-cleaning for the benefit of man, by which the concepts of religion which have accumulated grime through disuse or abuse during the week are dusted and polished on Sundays, and presumably allowed to get soiled during the ensuing week. The bland assumption is also made that Christianity consists in the acknowledgment of a Supreme and Beneficent Creator in a thanksgiving which amounts to mere cupboard-love,⁶ and for the inculcation of precepts of morality for the well-ordering of social life. Furthermore, it does not seem inappropriate to mix church-going with mercantilism. In short, as will be seen, the emphasis is primarily a complacent anthropocentricity. The description and evaluation of church-going is Addison's and appears in *The Spectator* issued on Monday, 9th July 1711:

"I am always very well pleased with a country Sunday and think if keeping the seventh day holy were only a human institution, it would be the best method that could have been thought of for the polishing and civilizing of mankind. It is certain the country people would soon degenerate into a kind of savages and barbarians, were there not such frequent returns of a stated time in which the whole village meet together with their best faces and their cleanliest habits, to converse with one another upon different subjects, hear their duties explained to them, and join together in adoration of the Supreme Being. Sunday clears away the rust of the whole week, not only as it refreshes in their minds the notions of religion, but as it puts both the sexes upon appearing in their most agreeable forms and exerting such qualities as are apt to give them a figure in the village. A country fellow distinguishes himself as much in the churchyard as a citizen does upon the 'Change,' the whole parish politics being generally discussed in that place either after sermon or before the bell rings."

What the layman Addison was advocating had the authority of an Archbishop behind it, since this was the prudential calculus which Tillotson had inculcated in his most famous sermon, so

⁶ This is not too strong a term to apply to Addison's revealing lines:

Thy bounteous Hand with worldly Bliss
Has made my Cup run o'er,
And in a kind and faithful Friend
Has doubled all my store.

The Spectator, August 9, 1712.

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frequently reprinted during the Augustan age and copied even to the very words themselves by Parson Woodforde in the last decade of the century.⁷ Typically basing his sermon upon the relaxing text, "His commandments are not grievous,"⁸ Tillotson's aim was to show "that the laws of God are reasonable, that it is suited to our nature and advantageous to our interest; that we are not destitute of sufficient power and ability for the performance of them; and that we have the greatest encouragements to this purpose." The naked appeal to self-interest is unashamed: "Two things make any course of life easy; present pleasure and the assurance of a future reward. Religion gives part of its reward in hand, the present comfort and satisfaction of having done our duty; and for the rest it offers us the best security that heaven can give. Now these two must needs make our duty very easy; a considerable reward in hand, and not only the hopes but the assurance of a far greater recompense hereafter." Here is an unequalled combination of eudaemonism, utilitarianism, and pelagianism, masquerading as Christianity. It was left to the Latitudinarians to conceive of a contradiction—Christianity without tears!

No other age would surely have presumed to give Jesus Christ a testimonial of good character, or so deftly to remove the "scandal" of the Cross from the record. Here is Tillotson's urbane portrait of the founder of Christianity: "The Virtues of his Life are pure, without any Mixture of Infirmary and Imperfection. He had Humility without Meanness of Spirit; Innocency without Weakness; Wisdom without Cunning; and Constancy and Resolution in that which was good, without Stiffness of Conceit, and Peremptoriness of Humour: In a word, his Virtues were shining without Vanity, Heroical without anything of Transport, and very extraordinary without being in the least extravagant."⁹

The portrait owes more to the Aristotelian mean than to the Gospels and both the sense of God's sheer generosity in grace and the paradox of the God-man (of Deity "contracted to a span, incomprehensibly made man"),¹⁰ not to mention the ethics of the

⁷ Norman Sykes, "The Sermons of a Country Parson" in *Theology* (Feb. 1939), pp. 98-100.

⁸ Tillotson's *Sermons*, 2 vols., Sermon VI, i, 152-73. This sermon is brilliantly analyzed in Norman Sykes, *Church and State in England in the XVIII Century*, pp. 258-62.

⁹ *The Works of the Most Reverend Dr. John Tillotson, late Lord Archbishop of Canterbury: containing Two Hundred Sermons and Discourses, on Several Occasions . . .* 2 vols. Sermon CXXXVII, "The Life of Jesus Christ consider'd as our Example," ii, 241.

¹⁰ Lines from a hymn of Charles Wesley.

second mile, are lost in the all-too-human picture of the Incarnate Son of God. This urbane Christ is as remote from divinity and eternity as are the well-rounded female models of Sir Joshua Reynolds in New College Chapel windows in Oxford distant from the other-worldly holiness of the saints they are supposed to represent. The halo and the mandorla, the chiaroscuro and the mystery, are all banished in the light of common day. The inspiration came from Hellas, not Jerusalem, as Wharton perceived when he wrote that Reynolds' aim was to reconcile "The Willing Graces to the Gothic pile." Catholic poet as he was, Pope's lyre was attuned to the zephyrs of rationalism in his day when he cautioned:

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
The proper study of mankind is man.¹¹

Evidence is not far to seek for the excessive individualism of the day which not only depreciated tradition but also lost all sense of the Church as the Communion of Saints and of the worshipper sharing in a corporate status as part of the divine-human organism, the Church. Although the chief objection to Bishop Hoadly, who started the Bangorian controversy, might have been that he aimed to include the Dissenters in a more Latitudinarian and tolerant Church than even most Latitudinarian churchmen were prepared to support, yet his definition of the Church was significantly an atomistic one. In his view the Church had ceased to be a visible organization with distinctive "marks" such as Cyprian or Augustine would have recognized; it was entirely invisible in nature and only Christ alone knew who were His sincere servants and subjects. The Church consisted only of "the number of men, whether small or great, who truly and sincerely are subjects of Jesus Christ alone as their lawgiver and judge in matters relating to the favour of God and their eternal salvation."¹² Even when the Church was limited to the merely contemporary worshippers, another Augustan bishop had clearly indicated that his conception was that of a rationalist remnant. This was Bishop Warburton, who gave a new and all-too-pungent twist to the interpretation of the ancient symbol and prototype of the Church, the Ark, which smacked more of Horatian disdain than of Christian charity. "The Church," he wrote, "like the Ark of Noah, is worth saving; not for the sake of the unclean beasts and vermin that almost filled it, and probably made most

¹¹ *An Essay on Man*, ii.

¹² Benjamin Hoadly, *Works*, 3 vols. "The Nature of the Kingdom or Church of Christ," Vol. II, p. 404.

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noise and clamour in it; but for the little corner of rationality that was as much distressed by the stink within as by the tempest without."¹³

Even the Pietists of the age, Wesley and Whitefield, who were strong in their revolt against the rationalism and moralism of the Anglican pulpits—despite the assertion of the former that the New Testament knew nothing of solitary Christians, and of the latter that the true Church was interdenominational in character—yet depreciated the *Ecclesia* in favour of *ecclesiolae*. Evangelicalism might speak of fellowship, but it was not referring to the unity of the Church Triumphant in heaven with the Church Militant upon earth. More often, it was thinking chiefly of the vertical relationship between the individual soul and God, rather than of any horizontal correlate of the primary Godward relationship. Newman, reflecting in the *Apologia pro vita sua* on his earlier and Evangelical days, spoke of two luminous certainties that he had never doubted; the existence of God and of his own soul.¹⁴ It is therefore not unfair of Evelyn Underhill to contrast the individualism of the Evangelicals with the recovered sense of the Community of the Church characteristic of the Tractarians, when she says: "The Evangelical mind tends to present spiritual experience as a duet. For the Catholic mind it is, or should be, a symphony; and now English Christians heard once more the great orchestration of the Communion of Saints."¹⁵ One further provision of the Oxford Movement underscores a grievous lack in the Latitudinarian divines: a due appreciation of the sacramental tradition. It is not without significance that "in St. Paul's cathedral on Easter Day, 1800, there were six communicants."¹⁶ This fact may be explained by an emphasis on the moral to the depreciation of the ceremonial, but it is probably chiefly due to the impact of Deism, which had stressed that Christianity is the republication of the religion of nature and thus denied any peculiar authority to a special historic revelation. By a natural consequence of this line of thought, the Sacrament of the Eucharist had no supernatural or special significance; it was rather but one example of a rite of expiation for which there were many ancient parallels. Such relevance as the Sacrament had was, therefore, not as a means of grace, nor as a "medicine of immortality" (to use the

¹³ *Letters of a Late Eminent Prelate*, Letter xlv, p. 114. Cited in Sykes, *Church and State* . . . , *op.cit.*, p. 426.

¹⁴ Pt. III, "History of my Religious Opinions up to 1833." In the *Image Books* edn., p. 127.

¹⁵ *Hibbert Journal*, Vol. xxx (1932-33), article, "The Spiritual Significance of the Oxford Movement," p. 403.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 408.

Ignatian phrase), but as a memorial to a moving act of self-abnegation. Memorialism, rather than a doctrine of the Real Presence, was characteristically expressed in a work that Hoadly published anonymously in 1735, entitled *A Plain Account of the Nature and End of the Sacrament in the Lord's Supper*. If this was the most common evaluation of the chief Christian sacrament, it is not surprising that attendance at it became increasingly infrequent, or that the other pedagogical element of a Christian service, the sermon, was preferred because of its variety. It is only among the successors of the Non-Jurors, such as Clayton, Alexander Knox, or Cole, that there is a High Church recognition that this is the supreme means of grace and the greatest privilege and consolation of the Christian.

Where moderation, reasonableness, and charity prevailed, it was unlikely that holiness would be in fashion or religious ardour *de rigueur*. Possibly some few High Churchmen might have accepted Otto's definition of holiness as *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*; but the Latitudinarians might have redefined the mystery as *horrendum et repugnans*.

It is by now abundantly clear that the Augustan age was unpropitious for the development of religious ardour and adoration.¹⁷ The contemplative hermit, the monastic ascetic, the martyr, the liturgiologist, and even the ecclesiastical antiquary would have been laughed to scorn as "enthusiasts" by the connoisseurs, the amateur scientists, the aesthetic dilettanti, and the gentlemen of moderation of the age. So sure were they of the rationality and civilisation of their own times that they felt able to relegate almost the whole of Christian tradition to the limbo of oblivion as so much dust and debris. Since liturgy springs from the adoring response of the corporate redeemed to the mighty acts of God in Christ for the renewal of the Church's life in praise, prayers, and sacraments (as well as sermons), and requires a sense both of *heilsgeschichte* and of the *communio sanctorum*, it was natural that the age should either take it for granted or wish to revise it in a rational manner. The surprise is that there were even a few articulate defenders of the main Christian tradition in worship. This worship, to be sure, was performed out of a sense of decorum and duty rather than from rapture and delight. The references to worship in the diary of Parson Woodforde (1740-1803)¹⁸ are prosaic and per-

¹⁷ Christopher Smart (1722-1771), author of the seraphic *A Song to David*, was the exception in poetry.

¹⁸ James Woodforde, *The Diary of a Country Parson*, 5 vols., ed. J. Beresford, Vol. I, p. 92; Vol. III, pp. 345, 370, 400.

functory (except when there are visiting singers) rather than lyrical. More could not have been expected in the context of the times. Explanation does not, however, amount to condonation.

2. *The Use of the Prayer Book*

In attempting to assess the degree of seriousness with which the clergy of the Augustan Church attempted to fulfill the requirements of the Prayer Book, it must be recalled that this was the unreformed Church of England in which they exercised their priesthood. One might even add that since Convocation had been disbanded for most of the century, it was almost an unreformable Church.¹⁹ Even the most serious bishops and their most conscientious clergy were hampered not only by the spirit of the age but also by the prevalent customs of non-residence and the holding of a plurality of offices. Had it been thought desirable to subdivide such vast dioceses as Lincoln, or some of the large and rambling parishes that were unmanageable, it would have required an act of Parliament. *Quieta non movere* was the ecclesiastical as well as the political motto of the times. This may also be seen in the sobering fact that hardly a single new church edifice was built throughout the period, with the exception of occasional proprietary chapels erected at the end of the century to facilitate the propagation of the Calvinistic tenets of some of the Evangelical clergymen.

The plump rector and his starveling curate appear in the "Dr. Syntax" cartoons of Rowlandson and in the caricatures of Matthew Darby.²⁰ Crabbe thought the curate would be:

Better, apprenticed to a humble trade,
Had he the cassock for the priesthood made,
Or thrown the shuttle, or the saddle shaped,
And all these pangs of feeling souls escaped.

The Tour of Dr. Syntax re-echoes the complaint of the inequity of absentee vicars employing curates on a pittance. The curate's lot was indeed a bitter one:

Of Church-preferment he had none,
Nay, all his hope of that was gone.

¹⁹ Convocation existed only in name from 1717 to 1852.

²⁰ See Matthew Darby's caricatures of the pudding-shaped prelate in lawn sleeves, silk cassock, square, bands, and voluminous wig, entitled "A pillar of the Church" and "The curate on a visit," depicting a sorry nag bearing a cadaverous and dishevelled curate with undersized babe in arms and his wife on pp. 57 and 58 of A. E. Richardson, *Georgian England*.

He felt that he content must be
 With drudging in a curacy.
 Indeed on ev'ry Sabbath-day,
 Through eight long miles he took his way
 To preach, to grumble, and to pray;
 To cheer the good, to warn the sinner,
 And, if he got it, eat a dinner,
 Thus were his weekly journeys made,
 'Neath summer suns and wintry shade;
 And all his gains, it did appear
 Were only thirty pounds a year.²¹

There were not enough clergymen to fulfill the requirement of the Prayer Book that daily services should be offered. Also, since many incumbents were too worldly to allow their spiritual duty to take precedence over their social inclinations (such as hunting or playing whist) and since many curates were acutely aware of the hypocrisy of their incumbents and wealthier parishioners (who esteemed charity in the abstract without allowing it to unloose their purse-strings), they necessarily found their grumbles interfered with their prayers and sermons. Moreover, the rational emphasis of the age gave the laity a distinct preference for discourses over prayers and sacraments. In short, if the clergy were disinclined for the most part to go the second mile in their devotions, the parishioners could be induced to run the first mile only by the promise of a sermon. It was considered an act of unusual piety in Dr. Samuel Johnson "that he went to church when there were prayers only, than when there was also a sermon, as the people required more of an example for the one than the other, it being much easier for them to hear a sermon than to fix their minds on prayer."²² It might, of course, be to the point to ask: But who would want to pray to Paley's remote mechanical, Newtonian, watch-making Deity?

Although the Prayer Book required the daily services, the practice fell into increasing desuetude during the century. This is clear from the laments of bishops in charges to their clergy which become louder as the century proceeds. Wake reminds the clergy of Lincoln in 1711 that they are to say "Morning and Evening Prayers daily either privately or openly,"²³ but Secker in 1741 acknowledges to his clergy in the diocese of Oxford that this is almost

²¹ *The Tour of Dr. Syntax*, Canto 1.

²² Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, entry for 5 April 1772.

²³ Cited Sykes, *Church and State* . . . , *op.cit.*, p. 246.

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impracticable. The maximum he hopes for is that "they whose parishioners are the fewest and busiest of all, I hope do not fail of bringing them to church at least on Good Friday and Christmas Day, besides Sundays."²⁴ It seems that William Cole of Blecheley, a High Churchman, read Matins on saints' days and daily during Holy Week, but even he had to discontinue the practice on some occasions since no worshippers attended the church.²⁵ Parson Woodforde did not celebrate any of the weekday services, nor even the saints' days during his later ministry at Weston. Even in his earlier days at Castle Cary he was irregular in holding services on saints' days.

The situation was better in the towns, where there were more clergy available. In the diocese of York in 1743, according to the Visitation Returns of Archbishop Herring, out of the total of 836 parishes there were only 24 churches with daily prayers and these represented the chief towns of Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire. Furthermore, there were only 80 churches with services on Wednesdays, Fridays, and holy days.²⁶

Dr. Wickham Legg's analysis of daily services in the eighteenth century in the churches of London and Westminster, which were supposed to set an example to the nation, showed a considerable falling off between 1714 and 1824. In 1714 there were 72 churches or chapels in the metropolis that offered daily services; in 1728 there were 52; in 1732 there were only 44; in 1746 there were as many as 58; by 1824, however, only 9 parishes had preserved them.²⁷ This is unmistakable evidence of the lowering of the liturgical temperature during the Augustan age.

3. *The Celebration of the Sacraments*

Some of the most ardent High Churchmen of the later seventeenth century, among them the Non-Jurors, had believed in the obligation of a daily celebration of the Eucharist. Such had been the view of Dean Brevint of Lincoln as expressed in his *Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice*, the doctrine of which was so highly esteemed by John Wesley that he published an abridged version of it for the use of his societies. Brevint clearly believed that this had been the practice of the primitive Church, and was still obligatory,

²⁴ Cited Sykes, *Church and State* . . . , *op.cit.*, p. 248.

²⁵ *The Blecheley Diary of William Cole, 1765-67*, ed. F. G. Stokes.

²⁶ *The Visitation Returns of Archbishop Herring, 1743*, eds. S. L. Ollard and P. C. Walker, Vol. 1, pp. xv-xvi.

²⁷ *English Church Life from the Restoration to the Tractarian Movement*, pp. 89-90.

for he declared, "Nevertheless this Sacrifice which by a *real Oblation* was not to be offered more than once, is by an eucharistical and devout Commemoration to be offered up every day."²⁸ There is no proof available that any Anglican priest offered the daily Sacrifice in the eighteenth century. It was difficult enough to find many churches in which there was a weekly celebration of Holy Communion. In 1728, according to Legg, there were only eleven London churches celebrating every Sunday, but at the same time there were not a few fortnightly celebrations, and monthly celebrations were quite common. Even though the Book of Common Prayer directed a weekly celebration, probably most pious persons were satisfied with a monthly attendance at the Communion. Even this, it should be noted, compared very favourably with the usual celebration six times a year, as recorded by the devout George Herbert²⁹ a hundred years before. Most people in country parishes attended on four Sacrament Sundays, at Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and after the ingathering of the harvest.³⁰

As evidence of the gradual decay of sacramental life in the Church of England, it is significant to point to the greater frequency with which the members of the Dissenting Churches attended the Lord's Supper during this century. A quarterly Communion may have been common for Anglicans; a monthly Communion was the practically universal custom among Baptists, Congregationalists, and orthodox Presbyterians during the eighteenth century. W. D. Maxwell, a liturgiologist of the Church of Scotland, has rightly pointed out that the stress of Dissenters on the importance of the Holy Communion should not be forgotten "for there were long periods in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when they laid greater emphasis upon the frequency and centrality of this rite than did the Anglicans themselves."³¹

Preparation for the reception of the Sacrament varied with the locality and the earnestness of the communicant. In large dioceses it was essential to adopt the permissive admission to the Sacrament, without Confirmation, because episcopal visits for confirmations were infrequent in outlying areas. In some cases Dissenters exercised the right to attend Communion according to the "Occasional Conformity Act." The most devout felt that fasting was a necessary

²⁸ *Op.cit.*, p. 74.

²⁹ *A Priest to the Temple*, ch. xxii.

³⁰ Sykes, *Church and State* . . . , *op.cit.*, p. 250.

³¹ Article, "The Book of Common Prayer and the Reformed Churches," *Hibbert Journal*, Vol. XLVIII (1949), p. 326.

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preparation for Holy Communion. Dr. Johnson often felt that this was essential, despite Archbishop Herring's dismissal of fasting as a mere relic of superstition.²² It is certain that the great lexicographer and critic never attended Holy Communion without mental preparation. It is also characteristic of Hanoverian Anglicanism that there were multitudes who flocked to the altar for the Easter Communion. The vicar of Almondbury, for example, who had about 5,000 communicants in his parish, reported that 1,343 received the Sacrament at Easter, with the result that he was celebrating, without any assistant, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.²³ It is probable that since these were the early years of Methodism, numbers of Methodists swelled the ranks of the communicants.

If we are to take the example of the Rev. Mr. James Woodforde as typical, then it is probable that the sacrament of Baptism was administered with fair regularity also. In country villages, where there was a shortage of clergy, it is possible that baptisms were often delayed. But it seems more probable that the heavy incidence of infant mortality, combined with the traditional fear that the unbaptized child would go to hell, accounted for early baptism whenever this was convenient. The same fear was also responsible for the prevalence of private baptisms in the home. Here, again, there is evidence of excessive individualism. Baptism was not considered seriously as an ecclesiastical sacrament—that is, as an entry into the community of Christ—but rather as a private and individual rite. Secker had to warn his Oxford clergy against private baptisms, because they were often followed by unseemly celebrations. He observed that Baptism: “. . . when administered in private houses without necessity is too often treated, even during the administration, rather as an idle ceremony, than a Christian sacrament; or however that may be, is commonly close followed by very unsuitable, if not otherwise also indecent levity and jollity. In these circumstances it is highly requisite that the minister should, by a due mixture of gravity and judgment, support the solemnity of the ordinance. . . .”²⁴

4. Church Praise

It is a moot point whether the Dissenting service (Methodism excluded) or the Anglican was the duller during the eighteenth century. Dissenters could make a claim to this doubtful distinction

²² Cf. *Prayers and Meditations composed by Samuel Johnson*, ed. George Strahair.

²³ *Herring's Visitation Returns*, Vol. 1, pp. xx-xxi.

²⁴ Secker, Charge VII, *Works*, Vol. v, p. 452.

by virtue of the extemporary prayers, which sometimes exceeded fifteen minutes in length. For their part, the Anglicans tested the patience of worshippers to the full with the dreariness of their praise. This dullness can be attributed to three factors. The metrical psalms of Sternhold and Hopkins did not break the laws of God, but they played ducks and drakes with the laws of metre.³⁵ The awkward inversions and plodding progression of their sad doggerel were calculated to dampen the ardour of the most enthusiastic singers. Furthermore, to have them read out, each line enunciated separately by the clerk and sung at a funereal pace, only accentuated the monotony. Finally, unlike the Dissenters, the Anglicans had not, for most of the century, made the transition from the metrical psalm to the hymn and so they were deprived of the superlative songs of Christian experience composed by Watts and the Wesleys. An attempt to rectify this was made towards the end of the century by the introduction of the hymns of Richard Baxter and by the Olney hymns written by John Newton and his friend William Cowper. These, however, became popular only when the religion of the heart had replaced rationalism, and, in any case, they were largely limited to use by the evangelical wing of the Church of England. The only musical diversions would be provided by the organs of city churches (though the quality of the music would not be high) or by the small bands of instrumentalists (consisting chiefly of strings and woodwinds, with an occasional serpent or horn) accompanying the singers in the west gallery of the church.³⁶ This, however, was a sorry declension from the palmy days of Byrd or of Purcell.

5. *The Pulpit*

It is in the pulpit that a rational age might be expected to shine, for here was provided the pedagogical opportunity for enlightening the times. Moreover, there were the admirable traditions of the Laudian and Puritan pulpits of the previous century for guidance. In point of fact, however, the two traditions had almost died out in the middle years of the eighteenth century, so that both the High Church "metaphysical" preaching of Andrewes, Donne, and their imitators, and Puritan preaching with its Biblical authority

³⁵ Tate and Brady were not much of an improvement, either. One is reminded of the wit of Bishop Wilberforce of Oxford. Once when driving through London with a friend, the latter, seeing a name over a place of business, asked: "What is a drysalter?" The bishop replied, "Tate and Brady." (S. C. Carpenter, *Eighteenth Century Church and People*, p. 228.)

³⁶ See K. H. MacDermott, *The Old Church Gallery Minstrels*. Thomas Hardy in *Under the Greenwood Tree* describes such an orchestral accompaniment to church praise.

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and its complicated divisions and sub-divisions of the text,⁸⁷ and its formal *schema* of doctrine, reason, and use were entirely out of fashion. Under the triple influence of the "restored" King, Charles II, who requested simple and short sermons, the insistence of the Royal Society on a naked and natural mode of writing and speaking as alone befitting the new age of scientific experiment, and the impact of the newer style of rhetoric among the court preachers of France (notably Bossuet), preachers, whether of Anglican or Nonconformist persuasion, cried "a plague o' both your houses."⁸⁸ The urbane and witty South may be said to have given the two older types of preaching their *quietus*. He criticized the pedantry of the scholastic and metaphysical Andrewes and the almost innumerable divisions, the whining intonation, and canting phraseology of the Puritan divines in his scathing sermon, *The Scribe instructed to the Kingdom of Heaven* (1660). In excoriating the "Metaphysicals," he insisted that wit consists in wisdom: "Tis not Shreds of *Latin* or *Greek*, nor a *Deus Dixit*, and a *Deus Benedixit*, nor those little Quirks, or Divisions into the *ὅτι*, the *διότι*, and the *καθότι*, or the *Egress*, *Regress*, and *Progress*, and other such Stuff (much like the Style of a Lease) that can properly be called Wit." The darts for the Puritan Preachers were chiefly directed against John Owen. He thus describes their method: "First of all they seize upon some Text, from which they draw something, (which they call a Doctrine), and well may it be said to be *drawn* from the Words; forasmuch as it seldom naturally flows, or results from them." They then "branch it into several Heads; perhaps, twenty or thirty, or upwards. Whereupon, for the Prosecution of these, they repair to some *trusty Concordance*, which never fails them, and by the Help of that, they range six or seven Scriptures under each Head; which Scriptures they prosecute one by one, first amplifying and enlarging upon one, for some considerable time, till they have spoiled it; and then that being done, they pass to another, which in its turn suffers accordingly."⁸⁹ In a sermon preached a year later South returned to the attack on Puritan jargon, stating that ". . . some you shall have amusing their Conscience with a Set of fantastical new-coin'd Phrases, such as *Laying*

⁸⁷ It should be noted, however, that early Puritan preaching was decidedly uncomplicated and "plain." See Perkins, *Works*, Vol. II, p. 222: "Here first we are to observe the properties of the Ministry of the Word. The first that it must be plaine, perspicuous and evident."

⁸⁸ W. Fraser Mitchell, *English Pulpit Oratory from Andrewes to Tillotson*, pp. 121-22.

⁸⁹ South's *Sermons*, Vol. III, pp. 33-34.

hold on Christ, getting into Christ, and rolling themselves upon Christ, and the like" which he dismisses as "really nothing but Words and Wind."⁴⁰ The older sermons were unable to survive the ridicule of South and the popularity of the eminently sensible and practical discourses of Tillotson and his Latitudinarian imitators.

Henceforward, it was standard practice for both Anglican and Dissenting ministers to preach sermons that were more like discourses or essays than prophetic proclamations or learned lectures. One central theme would be developed in the clearest way possible. Much as Addison or Steele appealed to the enlightened common sense and politeness of their readers, so did the preachers to the prudence and elegance of their congregations. It was understood among all courteous people that fanaticism and enthusiasm, as well as controversy, were the barbarities of the past embattled and superstitious age. Since there was so much disputation about matters of faith, it would be wise to concentrate on morality, on the deliverances of Hutcheson's "moral sense" in which all mankind was united. Suited to such agreeable themes would be an unostentatious manner and an elegantly chaste style. It may be easily understood that Archbishop Tillotson's favourite text was "And His commandments are not grievous."⁴¹ One can only surmise that the Augustan divines would be equally fond of—"For my yoke is easy."

Apart from the legacy of Restoration and Latitudinarian models of preaching, the very spirit of the age had demanded changes in the content and mode of preaching. In the first place, the chief interest was not in speculative doctrine or confessional theology, upon which men differed, but on morality and charity. Alexander Pope divined the temper of the age when he wrote:

For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.
In Faith and Hope the world will disagree
But all mankind's concern is Charity.
All must be false that thwart this one great end,
And all of God that bless mankind or mend.⁴²

⁴⁰ *Op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 346. See also the criticism of Simon Patrick in *A Friendly Debate between a Conformist and a Non-Conformist*, pp. 25-26 and John Eachard, *Grounds and Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy*. For convenience, relevant citations may be found in Charles Smyth, *The Art of Preaching*.

⁴¹ Norman Sykes, *The English Religious Tradition*, p. 59.

⁴² *An Essay on Man*, iii.

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Addison's prose had anticipated the poetry of Pope, in proclaiming the pre-eminence of morality over faith: "Because the rule of morality is much more certain than that of faith, all the civilized nations of the world agreeing to the great points of morality, as much as they differ in those of faith." He concludes that the best that can be said of faith is that it "strengthens and supports morality."⁴³ Lecky does not in the least exaggerate in his judgment of the eighteenth century sermon before Wesley and Whitefield, by declaring: "The more doctrinal aspects of religion were softened down, or suffered silently to recede, and, before the eighteenth century had much advanced, sermons had very generally become mere moral essays, characterized chiefly by a cold good sense, and appealing almost exclusively to prudential motives."⁴⁴ It was still a just criticism of most Anglican sermons long after the Revival, as Crabbe can testify. This Anglican rector and poet, whose detractors call him a "Pope in worsted stockings" and whose eulogists "a Hogarth in verse," expresses most aptly the contemporary Methodist criticism of moral preaching in the Establishment:

They give their moral precepts; so they say,
Did Epictetus once, and Seneca;
One was a slave, and slaves we all must be,
Until the Spirit comes and sets us free.
Yet hear you nothing from such men but works;
They make the Christian service like the Turks.
Hark to the Churchman: day by day he cries,
"Children of men, be virtuous and be wise;
Seek patience, justice, temp'rance, meekness, truth;
In age be courteous, be sedate in youth."
So they advise, and when such things be read,
How can we wonder that their flocks are dead.⁴⁵

The indictment is the more impressive in its objectivity since Crabbe himself described Methodism as "spiritual influenza." Certainly it warranted the frequent tirades of George Whitefield against the confusing of religion with respectability and decency, and his condemnation of Anglican "Rabbis" who teach only a "little dry morality."⁴⁶

⁴³ *The Spectator* No. 459 (August 16, 1712).

⁴⁴ W. E. H. Lecky, *A History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (8 vols.), Vol. I, p. 84.

⁴⁵ *The Borough*, Letter IV (1810).

⁴⁶ See Whitefield's sermon written against Dr. Trapp, entitled *A Preservative against Unsettled Notions and Want of Principles in regard to Righteousness and Christian Perfection*.

If morality was the chief theme of the conventional eighteenth century sermon, this was only because the Age of Reason had all too readily dismissed mystery to the realm of superstition and was inclined to interpret reason, with Locke, as being limited to the organization of observation and introspection.⁴⁷ To be sure, the Enlightenment was an age in which clarity, honesty, the courageous and disinterested search for the truth, were rightly valued. At the same time "only the measurable aspects of reality were to be treated as real."⁴⁸ That is, space, time, mass, force, momentum, and rest were asserted to be the ultimate constituents of the universe. The task of the scientist was to measure these forces, and the proof of the accuracy of his understanding of their nature was the capacity to predict their reactions in exactly similar conditions. A mechanical precision and secondary causes had taken the place of such interpretative categories as final causes, or substantial forms in the older metaphysics, and of the Divine purpose in the older theology. The God of the eighteenth century was a mechanical and mathematical deity:

Nature and Nature's Laws lay hid in Night:
God said, Let Newton be! and all was Light.

In these circumstances it is not to be wondered at that the categories of the supernatural, the revelational, the mysterious, and the miraculous were at a discount; still less that appeals to the immediate inspiration of God, or to the emotions, were dismissed as "mere enthusiasm." Christianity, as interpreted by the conservative, was itself appealing to the rational criterion of self-authentication when it claimed that its uniqueness depended upon prophecy and miracle, for the former was applying "prediction" of the New Testament in the Old and the latter was felt to be a reasonable activity for an omnipotent Deity. When this line of defence fell, it was then held that Christianity, as a natural and reasonable religion was, in the title of a book by Tindal, "the republication of the religion of nature." The very facts that sermons were entitled "discourses" and that they were argumentative and dialectical in character were a proof that they had succumbed to the rational. The majority of eighteenth century divines were far more rationalist than St. Thomas Aquinas himself, who had won fame by baptizing Aristotle, for St. Thomas had insisted that reason and faith were two complementary

⁴⁷ See *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.

⁴⁸ Isaiah Berlin, *The Age of Enlightenment*, p. 17.

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but different modes of apprehending Divine truth. Now the attempt was being made to reduce Christianity to the rational.

Perhaps even more serious, as another example of the desire to accommodate religion to the spirit of the age, was the sheer worldliness of so many of the official representatives of the Church in the century. It had come to the point where parsons were expected to preach with their tongues in their cheeks. Fielding makes Squire Weston in *Tom Jones* rebuke the clergyman in these words: "Art not in the pulpit now! When art got up there, I never mind what dost say." Cowper complains of the "cassock'd huntsman and the fiddling priest"⁴⁹ and Crabbe re-iterates the theme:

A jovial youth, who thinks his Sunday's task
As much as God, or man, can fairly ask;
The rest he gives to loves and labours light,
To fields the morning, and to feasts the night;
None better skill'd the noisy pack to guide,
To urge their chase, to cheer them or to chide;
A sportsman keen, he shoots through half the day,
And skill'd at whist, devotes the night to play.⁵⁰

It is also significant that each poet also criticizes the dishonesty of preaching sermons that others have written. Cowper excoriates a certain Dr. Tusler who taught sacred elocution and wrote sermons for sale:

He teaches those to read whom schools dismiss'd
And colleges, untaught: sells accent, tone,
And emphasis in score, and gives to prayer
The *adagio* and *andante* it demands,
He grinds divinity of other days
Down into modern use; transforms old print
To zigzag manuscript, and cheats the eyes
Of gallery critics by a thousand arts.⁵¹

Crabbe is contemptuous both of the moral homilies that are preached and of the fact that such unworthy effusions are actually purchased by clergymen:

And lo! with all their learning, when they rise
To preach, in view the ready sermon lies;

⁴⁹ From *Table Talk*.

⁵⁰ *The Village*, Book I.

⁵¹ *The Task*.

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Some low-prized stuff they purchased at the stalls,
And more like Seneca's than mine or Paul's.⁵²

In addition to taking their duties in and out of the pulpit with excessive levity, the eighteenth century parsons were guilty of vanity and even of foppishness. With mock amazement Cowper asks of such a preacher:

What!—will a man play tricks, will be indulge
A silly fond conceit of his fair form
And just proportion, fashionable mien,
And pretty face, in presence of his God?
Or will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,
As with the diamond on his lily hand,
And play his brilliant parts before my eyes,
When I am hungry for the bread of life?⁵³

Cowper is continually fascinated by the coxcomb and butterfly type of curate in the pulpit, as in these lines:

See where the famed Adonis passes by,
The man of spotless life and spotless tie;
His reputation—none the fact disputes—
Has ever been as brilliant as his boots . . .
He makes the supercilious worldling feel
That e'en religion can be—quite genteel.⁵⁴

The evangelical poet chastises the clergy with whips, but the bishops with scorpions:

Behold your bishop! well he plays his part,
Christian in name, but infidel in heart,
Ghostly in office, earthly in his plan,
A slave at court, elsewhere a lady's man,
Dumb as a senator, and as a priest
A piece of mere church-furniture at best.⁵⁵

This is, of course, too complete a condemnation of the entire episcopal bench to be taken seriously, and Cowper himself would have exempted Bishops Lowth and Bagot from the general condemnation. Anger, as Homer said, and Wesley repeated after him, is like smoke that blinds the eyes to truth.

⁵² *The Borough*, Letter IV.

⁵³ *The Task*.

⁵⁴ Cowper, cited E. P. Hood, *The Throne of Eloquence*, p. 4.

⁵⁵ *Tirocinium; Or, a Review of Schools*.

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A more impressive, because less indignant, testimony to the this-worldliness of most clergymen is contained in the metrical meditation of the parish sexton on the five rectors he has known, as recorded in Crabbe's poem, *The Parish Registrar* (1807). The first was vain and lazy, who in the pulpit "dozing, died." The second, a muscular and jocular parson, avaricious and unreliable, the parish was glad to get rid of. The third, Dr. Grandspear, was opulent and so open-handed that "E'en cool Dissenters at his table fed." The fourth was the scholar-rector. Careless in appearance as of differences in rank, he was a pedant, not an expert in practical divinity:

Of questions, much he wrote, profound and dark,—
How spake the serpent, and where stopp'd the ark;
From what far land the Queen of Sheba came;
Who Salem's priest, and what his father's name;
He made the Song of Songs its mysteries yield,
And revelations to the world reveal'd.

The fifth and final rector is already a proof of the impact of the Evangelical Revival, since he is an extemporary preacher. Even this brief sampling of the evidence shows that on the rare occasions when the preacher was not merely perfunctory in the performance of his duties, he taught morality and charity or a type of Biblical archaeology utterly unrelated to the spiritual needs of his flock. In brief, even where there was morality, tricked out in the most elegant phrasing, there was no gospel. "The hungry sheep looked up and were not fed." The dry husks of decency, Deism for dilettanti, and such philosophical fudge were a sorry substitute for the strong meat of the gospel.

The prevailing mode of preaching exhibited the triumph of Tillotson, as both Dean Norman Sykes and Canon Charles Smyth have shown.⁵⁶ On the archbishop's death, his widow was offered the then unheard of sum of £2,500 for the copyright of his sermons; this was a bargain in view of the continuing sales to country parsons throughout the century. The disadvantages of the content and motivation of Tillotson's sermons have been sufficiently exposed earlier in this chapter. The more challenging task remains—that of evaluating their merits. Bishop Warburton, who was more addicted to the pulpit oratory of Barrow and Taylor because of their elo-

⁵⁶ Sykes, *Church and State in England in the XVIII Century*, p. 260f. and Smyth, *The Art of Preaching*, Chap. IV.

quence and sublimity, yet conceded that Tillotson's preaching was "simple, elegant, candid, clear and rational."⁸⁷ After the cloudy paradoxes of Donne and the etymological hairsplitting of Andrewes, these were, indeed, virtues. The chief of them has not, however, been mentioned by Warburton. It is that of the practical nature of the advice that he gave. Avoiding all metaphysics, he concentrated solidly on ethics. Men owed a duty to God and their neighbour; he would therefore give them every encouragement to the fulfillment of their duties by pointing out the clear advantages that obedience would bring. This was the approach that would succeed in the age of common-sense, and many clergy there were to prove it.

It is, however, open to question whether the Tillotsonian language and approach could be transplanted very successfully to rustic pulpits. Dr. Johnson, for one, admitted that the Methodists were more successful than the country parsons in gaining the ear of country listeners. He averred to Boswell that the Methodists had succeeded because "it is owing to their expressing themselves in a plain and familiar manner, which is the only way to do good to the common people, and which clergymen of genius and learning ought to do from a principle of duty, when it is suited to their congregations." Johnson proceeded to underline the point with an admirable illustration: "To insist against drunkenness as a crime, because it debases reason, the noblest faculty of man, would be of no service to the common people; but to tell them how dreadful that would be, cannot fail to make a deep impression."⁸⁸ It is to be feared that most country clergymen had not learned Wesley's lesson when, seeing the stupefied inmates of the Oxford gaol drop their jaws at his pedantic polysyllables, he determined to speak as simply as the condition of his hearers warranted.

To modern eyes the Latitudinarian sermons are eminently reasonable, admirably practical, but unconscionably platitudinous. This is the opinion not only of a modern reader, but also of an eighteenth century listener, as may be seen from Goldsmith's comment: "Their discourses from the pulpit are generally dry, methodical and unaffecting; delivered with the most insipid calmness."⁸⁹ They lack, as do the accounts we have of Augustan services, any element of holy excitement, of passionate pleading, of heroic challenge, of winged imagination. In this decorous desert of the soul, though the loyal Anglican parson saw the supposed fanaticism of

⁸⁷ *Letters from a late Eminent Prelate to one of his friends*, Letter L, p. 127.

⁸⁸ Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, entry for 30 July 1763.

⁸⁹ *Essays*, Vol. iv, p. 294 (Globe edn. of *Works*, London, 1869).

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the Methodists as a mirage, the hundreds of thousands of common people recognized an oasis, and drank thirstily of the life-giving waters.

No amount of special pleading, nor even of judicious explanation, can amount to a condonation of the dullness of Augustan worship. The undeniable fact is that if you were a rationalist you would find much more enthralling rationalism in the Unitarian congregations of Lindsey and Priestley, where scientific enterprise, philosophical daring, and advanced political views accompanied a profound concern for liturgical revision. If you craved an expression of the romantic spirit, of sentiment in religion, you would find it in the dramatic and soul-stirring sermons of Whitefield, in the spontaneity of the prayers of the Methodists and in the serene and uninhibited joy of their hymns. Only the circumspect and the circumscribed settled comfortably into the liturgical grooves of eighteenth century Anglicanism.

6. *Decorum*

The very picture which Augustan Anglican worship implants upon the retina of our imagination is summed up by the one term, decorum. Decorum is the enemy of extremes, of enthusiasms, of spontaneity, and often of sincerity. It is seen, symbolically, in the whitewash with which the dark corners of the Gothic churches were covered up. The Hanoverian vicars were addicted to its liberal use because of its cheapness and its appearance of cleanliness, but also, according to Dean Sykes, because it "possessed for that age a symbolic value as typifying the dispersal of mysticism and obscurity by the penetration of the pure light of reason."⁶⁰ Metaphorical whitewash is a term that may be used to suggest the posturing that often did duty for real religion for many during this century. Even their much vaunted charity did little to assuage the inhuman treatment of so many curates by their clerical superiors. So genteel had many worshippers become that they found it unbecoming to kneel in the house of God.⁶¹ Behind the concealing high-backed pews⁶² of the Augustan churches, it was customary for the "Rattling

⁶⁰ *Church and State*, p. 233.

⁶¹ The anonymous author of *Medicina Clerica*, p. 32, pleads for rows of seats in churches instead of boxed pews, since "Pews are too often only a screen to sitting, instead of kneeling during the prayers, and to talking or sleeping, during the sermon."

⁶² In his fable *Baucis and Philemon*, Swift characterized the uses to which they were put:

A Bedstead of the Antique Mode,
Composed of Timber many a load,

Clubs" (as Steele called them) to conduct their uninterrupted conversations.⁶³ The perfunctory tones of the clergyman, who might be wearing his hunting clothes and spurs beneath his cassock and Genevan gown as he raced through the service in his eagerness to get to the social diversions of the day, seemed often to reduce the liturgy to mere play-acting, in which the fashionable members of the auditory acquiesced. There were, of course, many exceptions to the rule, in episcopal palace as in rectory. But the predominant impression of an age of manners and affectation which found its appropriate laureate in Alexander Pope is that a worldly society found the Church all too much to its liking. The Church did all things (where pluralism and non-residence permitted) decently and decorously, and in order; but it lacked the essential Christian quality of sacrificial ardour. Even a corpse has dignity, and Anglican decorum sometimes seemed next door to death. Its renewal of life was to come from the example of the Evangelicals and the Tractarians, who, different as their viewpoints were, agreed in their all too exaggerated detestation of the Latitudinarians as men who fatally compromised the Church and subordinated historic Christianity to contemporary culture.⁶⁴ Perhaps later Latitudinarian whitewash is appropriate for the embellishment of what looked uncommonly like a sepulchre. The final estimate comes appropriately from a loyal but discriminating Anglican, Dean Church. "The beauty of the English Church in this time," he writes, "was its family life of purity and simplicity; its blot was quiet worldliness."⁶⁵

Such as our Ancestors did use
Was Metamorphos'd into Pews;
Which still their ancient Nature keep,
By lodging Folks dispos'd to sleep.

⁶³ Hogarth's cartoon "The Industrious Prentice performing the Duty of a Christian" shows a stout gentleman taking "cover" behind a tall Georgian pew. Cf. F. D. Klingender, ed., *Hogarth and English Caricature*, p. 24.

⁶⁴ Roland N. Stromberg writes: "A religion which preached submission and sobriety to the poor, yet sanctioned his own aggressive acquisitiveness and made few demands on his purse, was what the dominant bourgeois wanted. Evidently both a Whiggish Church of England and a debilitated Dissent were willing enough to provide something of the sort." *Religious Liberalism in Eighteenth Century England*, p. 149.

⁶⁵ *The Oxford Movement*, p. 3.

CHAPTER IV

UNITARIAN WORSHIP: THE LITURGY OF RATIONALISM

THE CREATIVE MOVEMENTS in the history of worship in the eighteenth century came from the new, not the older, Dissent. The innovators are the Methodists and the Unitarians, not the Congregationalists, Baptists, or orthodox Presbyterians. The theological and political battles of the seventeenth century, and the important dividing of the ways between the orthodox and the unorthodox created by the Trinitarian controversy at Salter's Hall in 1719, seem to have exhausted the creativity and adaptability of the orthodox Dissenters. They present the appearance of the defenders of a beleaguered fortress of traditional faith in the Age of the Enlightenment. On the other hand, the Methodists, while battling against Deism and rationalism, eagerly embrace as their new ally the forces of Pietism and receive new morale from the religion of the heart, the inner assurance of the love of God in their own experience. The Unitarians, the most confident of all, meet the full onset of rationalism, and ultimately, by making a virtue of necessity, they are enabled to reach an armistice, the terms of which allow them, so they believe, to combine Biblical religion with the new philosophy. The significant fact, in attempting to understand the history of worship, is that both Methodists and Unitarians felt that it was possible to express their distinctive emphases, whether pietistical or rationalistic, within the framework of the traditional Liturgy of the Church of England, the Book of Common Prayer.

The Wesleyan Methodists, as we have noted, regarded their distinctive worship as complementary to that of the Church of England, believing in the practicableness of an union of free and formal prayer. The Whitefieldian Methodists (as we may reasonably call the Calvinist supporters of Whitefield), who were organized into a Connexion under the aegis of Whitefield's great patroness, Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, who perpetuated her influence by the building of proprietary chapels for her approved preachers in the Church of England, also believed in an union of the Puritan and Anglican traditions of worship. At their services the Liturgy of the Church of England was regularly read, but in addition to hymns which stressed the evangelical experience and which replaced the

customary metrical psalmody, and sermons more dramatic than Anglican homilies, it was also Whitefield's custom to interpolate occasional extemporaneous prayers and exhortations or encouragements.¹ Even more striking, however, is the fact that the most radical theologians, the Semi-Arians or Biblical Unitarians, as they were subsequently named, planned to revise the Prayer Book rather than to practice free prayer. A left-wing theology would seem to require a left-wing type of worship for its expression. An account of these Unitarian revisions of the Prayer Book will show how this apparent anomaly of a rationalistic liturgy arose.²

1. *An Anomaly Explained*

To anticipate the explanation of this anomaly of radicalism in content and conservatism in form in worship, it may be said that two factors, one historical and the other social, account for the interesting results. The ranks of the Unitarians were augmented by the Semi-Arian Anglican clergy and by the radical Presbyterian ministers, and their adherents were drawn from the circles of the intelligentsia and the cultivated prosperous. The former Anglicans knew no other form of worship than a Liturgy and were fully aware that some leading Semi-Arians, such as Dr. Samuel Clarke and Professor William Whiston, had remained Anglicans but had prepared revisions of the Liturgy which they hoped would accommodate the legitimate needs of rationalism. It was only when it became clear that the Church of England would not revise the Prayer Book in the interests of rationalism that they left the Established Church, and it was inevitable that they should expect to use a revised Liturgy in the new fold. As far as the unorthodox Presbyterians were concerned, they had never given up the hope, stimulated first by the Savoy Conference of 1661 and later by the proposals for a comprehensive Liturgy to include them in 1689 as part of the new Protestant settlement of religion under William and Mary, that they might acceptably worship God in a Biblically-based Liturgy, after the fashion of Richard Baxter's *Reformed Liturgy*. They were by no means wedded to the idea of free prayers. Furthermore, since the opposite of rationalism in this age is enthusiasm, and since enthusiasm was associated with the worship of the lower classes in their Methodist conventicles, and free pray-

¹ Cf. John Newton's testimony as cited in John Waddington, *Congregational History, 1700-1800* . . . , p. 518.

² For this subject the indispensable volume is A. Elliott Peaston, *The Prayer Book Reform Movement in the XVIIIth Century*.

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ers were represented all too often by the ramblings of uneducated minds, the intelligent, elegant, and cultivated Unitarian supporters deemed that only a Liturgy, however revised, comported with the dignity of worship as they conceived it. This was, at least, the view of the majority of the Unitarians and has remained so to this very day.³ Occasional protests to the contrary were made, of which that of Dr. John Taylor of the Octagon Chapel in Norwich is the most notable, but he was a voice crying in the Unitarian wilderness. It is also significant that when an Unitarian minister declined to use a revision of the Liturgy, his prayers were almost always written out.⁴

It is of cardinal importance to recognize that the Unitarian ministers of the latter part of the century included some of the leading intellectuals of the day, and that as their social position made the idea of a Liturgy congenial to them, so did their interests require a rationalist revision of Christian doctrine. Seven of their ministers towards the close of the century were Fellows of the Royal Society of London, among whom the pre-eminent were Priestley (the discoverer of oxygen), Price, Chandler, Kippis, and Walker.⁵ Apart from their distinction as scientists or philosophers, they were the renowned advocates of freedom. In this respect, the Unitarians had replaced the Independents as the foremost political Dissenters of the age. Many of them were advocates of the American and French Revolutions. Richard Price, for example, had hailed the French Revolution as the dawn of a new age of freedom, and had provoked in reply Burke's superbly romantic defence of tradition, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. The Unitarians who were in the forefront of the movement to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts, as constituting barriers in the way of the political and social progress of the Dissenters. Furthermore, the Unitarian circles were outstanding centres of culture in that age. In Norwich, for example, there were no more cultivated families than the Taylors, the Martineaus, and the Aldersons. It is curious that, with their combination of respect for Liturgy and their advanced scientific, political, and theological opinions, they did not make a larger impact upon the religious life of England. It is possible that, except in rare cases such

³ H. McLachlan, *Essays and Addresses*, p. 257, says "Today at least ninety-two chapels use a liturgy at one service or both."

⁴ Onesimus in *The Pulpit, A Biographical and Literary Account of Eminent Popular Preachers*, Vol. III, p. 328, says of Robert Aspland, Unitarian minister at Hackney, "The prayers of Mr. Aspland are all written ones."

⁵ See J. Stoughton, *History of Religion in England*, Vol. II, p. 211.

as Pascal, the scientific spirit froze the ardour of devotion in worship, and led to a down-to-earth didacticism.

2. Anglican Pioneers

The two Anglican clergy who were to provide the models for later Unitarian revision of the Prayer Book were Dr. Samuel Clarke and Dr. William Whiston, though the former was to have the greatest influence, partly because his plan was less eccentric than Whiston's, and partly because the Rev. Mr. Theophilus Lindsey was to carry on the work of Clarke, at first unsuccessfully within the Establishment, and later successfully among the Unitarian Presbyterians.

Samuel Clarke, a student of Newton, was the leading Low Church divine in the reigns of Queen Anne and George I, and might have expected the highest preferment had not his *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* (1712) been suspected of Arian tendencies. Here he had claimed that God the Father alone was supreme, and that He could communicate neither supremacy nor independence to the Son and the Holy Spirit. Finding the Athanasian Creed quite unacceptable, he made a private manuscript revision of the Prayer Book in accordance with his new theology. The significant alterations which he proposed were six.^a First, the Athanasian and Nicene Creeds were not to be required in the service of Holy Communion, and the latter was to be replaced by a Psalm. In the second place, a slight difference in the punctuation of the first clause of the Apostles' Creed led to an important difference of theological emphasis, as it now read: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty." Thirdly, the Trinitarian formulae throughout the Prayer Book were rephrased so that the Gloria became "Glory be to God, by Jesus Christ, through the heavenly assistance of the Holy Ghost." Fourthly, the proper preface for Trinity Sunday was removed from the Holy Communion service. In the fifth place, the Trinitarian Blessing was removed from the end of the Communion Order and replaced by the Grace, taken from the end of II Corinthians. Finally, there was a modification of all the formulae in the order for the Visitation of the Sick and in the Ordinal which had supported the doctrine of priestly absolution. Important as Clarke's revision is, its permanent liturgical contribution was made through Theophilus Lindsey, so that it does not warrant further consideration here.

^a Cf. R. C. D. Jasper, *Prayer Book Revision in England*, pp. 2-3.

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William Whiston's revision of the Prayer Book is deserving of consideration, partly because it has received little consideration from liturgiologists, and also because of its unique character.⁷ Its full title is significant of its primary intention: *The Liturgy of the Church of England Reduc'd nearer to the Primitive Standard, humbly propos'd to public consideration* (1713). Whiston, after a close study of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, became convinced that Arianism rather than Athanasianism was nearer to the belief of the primitive Church. He also held that the first Edwardian Prayer Book and its ceremonial were closer to the worship of the primitive Church than the Prayer Book of the eighteenth century. His revision was, therefore, one undertaken from opposing tendencies: it was theologically radical and rationalist, and liturgically conservative. This Janus-like outlook made him few friends and many enemies. The nearest present-day analogy would be an attempt made by Anglo-Catholic, Baptist, and Unitarian collaborators to issue a single satisfactory revision of the Prayer Book, for Whiston was in himself combining the theological interest of the Semi-Arians with the liturgical demands of the Non-Jurors, and a belief in adult baptism. This brilliant successor to Sir Isaac Newton in the Lucasian Chair of Mathematics in Cambridge University was as sanguine as he was eccentric, for he dared to hope that his revision or one like it "might be introduced into all Dissenting Meetings, as much better and less offensive to public authority, than any of the usual extempore prayers; and into private families, even the chapels of noblemen themselves. . . ." He even dreamed that "it ought to be far from any offence to the good men of this Church, if it were publicly used by any of the Clergy in their parishes also, that they should rather unite zealously for its introduction; it being nothing but their own established Liturgy made more exactly Christian and unexceptionable."⁸

While what he was seeking ran counter to the conflicting interests of the different parties within the Establishment and was contrary to the desires of the Dissenters, some of his suggestions for revision were not without value, nor were they without practical utility. He suggested, for example, that alternative prayers of general confession and of absolution should be provided for weekdays and Lord's days. He recommended that when only the faithful were attending worship, these preliminaries might be omitted, as being

⁷ Jasper, for example, does not refer to Whiston's revision, which is accessible to students in *Fragmenta Liturgica*, Vol. III, ed. Peter Hall.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

more suitable to the needs of beginners in the Christian life rather than mature Christians. He insisted that the lections would seem more intelligible if prefaced by a short summary, as was done by the Reformed Church in Neuchâtel. He saw no point in saying the Lord's Prayer twice in the Order for Morning Prayer. He thought that occasionally the bishop might permit a learned layman to occupy the pulpit. He had a real understanding of the value of symbolism and ritual. The ultimate importance of Whiston's revision lay not in the details but in its drive. Like the Non-Jurors before him and the Tractarian Movement after him, he expressed the perennial Anglican concern to return to the worship of the undivided primitive Church.⁹ Furthermore, while Clarke's revision was in manuscript, Whiston's had been published to stimulate those who shared his theological views to prepare their own revisions of the Liturgy.

A third, though less significant, Anglican pioneer of rationalist views in worship was the Rev. Mr. John Jones, the vicar of Alcornbury, who produced anonymously in 1749 his *Free and Candid Disquisitions relating to the Church of England, and the Means of advancing Religion therein*. This book consisted of two parts: the first comprised a collection of passages urging the need for the reform of the Prayer Book taken from the writings of several eminent divines, many being still alive; the second included the modest proposals of Jones himself, who was a disciple of Clarke. He hoped to persuade Convocation and Parliament, as the chief authorities in Church and State, to adopt revision for the sake of including the Dissenters in a widened Establishment, and asked that if this proposal failed the work of liturgical reshaping should be undertaken by individuals. His plea was seriously considered even in the highest ecclesiastical circles.¹⁰ His chief aim was to secure the comprehension of the Dissenters. This he believed he could obtain by the omission of everything from the Prayer Book which was not authorized by Scripture. This was itself a recognition of the basic Puritan claim and he was no less Puritan in his desire to abolish sponsors in Baptism, and to remove unnecessary repetitions of the Lord's Prayer and the *Gloria Patri*, than in his urging the production of new occasional prayers. Another compromise to please the

⁹ Although Whiston and his more scholarly contemporaries believed that the primitive Church was undivided, this has been shown to be an excessively romantic view, as revealed, for example, by S. L. Greenslade in his *Schism in the Early Church*.

¹⁰ Cf. C. J. Abbey and J. H. Overton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. 1, p. 434.

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Dissenters was making optional the signing with the cross in Baptism. Orthodox Dissenters would have smelt an Arian rat in his suggestion that the Athanasian Creed should no longer be required and, in fact, should be omitted. His recommendation that the three services of Matins, the Litany, and Holy Communion should be fused into one would probably have met with general approval. Although no official action was taken by Church or State on these proposals, between 1751 and 1768 about half a dozen people produced their own schemes of revision, as he had suggested they should.

Two of the most ardent supporters of Prayer Book revision were admirers of Jones's proposals, namely Archdeacon Francis Blackburne and his son-in-law, the Rev. Mr. Theophilus Lindsey, who eventually founded a society whose immediate purpose was to organize a petition for the relaxation of subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles of Faith of the Church of England and for the revision of the Liturgy to be presented to the House of Commons. This society was known as the "Feathers Tavern Association" since it met in an inn of that name located on the Strand in London. During most of the year 1771 Lindsey travelled through the Yorkshire dales hoping to persuade his fellow clergy to be of the same mind as the Vicar of Catterick himself. No resounding echo was awakened in the hearts of his fellow clergy and the House of Commons turned down the petition by 217 votes to 71. Such churchmen as were aware of the situation were more eager for the revival of spiritual life in the Establishment than for the revision of their articles or their Liturgy. The conservatism of lay religious opinion was well expressed in a metrical squib which exploded in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in January 1750:

A liturgy needs mending; are free thinkers
The only copper-smiths—the only tinkers?
Where are the clergy? Doth not reformation
Purely religious need a Convocation?¹¹

The Feathers Tavern petition represented a real parting of the ways. Had the authorities in Church and State given these proposals sympathetic consideration not only would this have created a precedent within the Church of England for making concessions to widely held new theological viewpoints, but a new principle would have been established. Henceforward, "the strength of the Church of England should be in the breadth of its basis."¹² The failure of

¹¹ Cited Peaston, *op.cit.*, p. 7.

¹² Jasper, *op.cit.*, p. 4.

these proposals to win assent also spelled the doom of liturgical reform within the Church of England, or, at least, caused its postponement for some decades. It also had the result of beginning a new movement for Prayer Book reform in the ranks of the radical Presbyterians.¹³ They, as we have seen, had always hoped for comprehension within a wider nationally established Church and since the majority of them had decided in the Salter's Hall controversy to stand on the Scriptures alone, rather than on the Scriptures as interpreted in the light of the historic creeds, the avenue for private interpretation of the Scriptures and therefore for new doctrinal developments was open to them. Inevitably, therefore, the Presbyterians came to include the Semi-Arians. In this elasticity they were helped by the fact that most Presbyterian congregations formed under the Act of Toleration did not have dogmatically restricted trust deeds for their buildings. Why the equally autonomous Congregational churches did not also become Unitarian (as many were to do in New England) poses a problem that is not germane to the present consideration. However, it may be suggested that this may be accounted for partly by the covenants upon which Congregational churches were founded (these were almost invariably strongly Calvinist and orthodox in basis), partly by the fact that their sung creeds were the doctrinal hymns of Isaac Watts,¹⁴ and partly because in Congregationalism the whole congregation under Christ was the source of authority (whereas among the prosperous Presbyterians it was the more opulent and often cultivated trustees who selected a "modern" minister to their liking).¹⁵

Not all Presbyterian-Arian ministers, however, were supporters of a revised Liturgy. The spokesman for the maintenance of the Puritan tradition in their midst was the Rev. Mr. John Taylor, minister of the Octagon Chapel in Norwich and subsequently divinity tutor at the important Seminary at Warrington, where the celebrated Priestley was also a member of the staff. His views were expressed in his *Scripture Account of Prayer*, written in reply to the editor of *A Specimen of a Liturgy* (1753) who had proclaimed, although a Dissenter, his disapproval of free prayer since it had degenerated into either a minister's opportunity for displaying his elegant style or a congregation's chance to test the orthodoxy of its

¹³ These are sometimes referred to as the "Presbyterian-Unitarians" or "Presbyterian-Arians."

¹⁴ See B. L. Manning, *The Hymns of Wesley and Watts*.

¹⁵ See J. C. Spaulding, "The Demise of English Presbyterianism, 1660-1760," *Church History*, March 1959.

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minister. Taylor argued that set forms of prayer were the lazy minister's stand-by, that if Christ had intended his followers to use a Liturgy he would have provided them with one. He further asserted that a Liturgy is essentially an expression of faith on the part of those who compiled it and of those who use it. Since people pray as they believe, he insisted that the most adequate equipment for a minister is that his heart should be his prayer book.

Taylor also had in mind a most interesting experiment on the part of three radical Presbyterian divines to construct a liturgical service which they hoped to persuade their fellow ministers in the county of Lancashire to adopt. This was the so-called "Liverpool Liturgy" which was the work of Seddon of Warrington, Holland of Bolton, and Godwin of Gatacre. Each is supposed to have composed one service for Sunday and to have submitted it for correction to the other two.¹⁶ The religious sentiments were often vague and indefinite, as might have been expected during that period in which belief not only in evangelical truth but even in deep feeling had almost withered away. Most of the Presbyterian ministers in Lancashire showed that they still held to the old Puritan ways and rejected the proposed Liturgy outright. In Liverpool, however, some wealthy Dissenters, either because they were dissatisfied with the worship of their fathers or because they hoped to attract some disenchanted members of the Church of England to what might seem to be a corrected edition of their own formularies, erected an Octagon Chapel in which, under the ministry of Mr. Clayton, the revised Liturgy was introduced. The congregation might include such notables as Thomas Bentley, Josiah Wedgwood's partner, but the venture was a failure, for it neither attracted dissatisfied Anglicans nor met the needs of most unorthodox Presbyterians.

3. *Theophilus Lindsey's Revision of the Liturgy (1774)*

The Book of Common Prayer reformed according to the plan of the Late Dr. Samuel Clarke was by far the most successful revision of the Prayer Book during the eighteenth century. This was the work of the former Anglican vicar, Theophilus Lindsey, who was associated with the Presbyterians after the failure both of the Feathers Tavern petition and of his subsequent attempt to found a Reformed Church of England. Lindsey became a firm friend of Joseph Priestley when the latter became minister of Mill Hill

¹⁶ Cf. Robert Halley, *Lancashire: Its Puritanism and Nonconformity*, pp. 500-01. See also H. McLachlan, *Essays and Addresses*, p. 255f.

Chapel in Leeds and came to believe that his future lay with the radical Presbyterians. Although his prospects in the Establishment were bright with promise, he accepted a post as minister of Essex Street Chapel, London. On his way down from Yorkshire to take up the appointment, he stayed with Disney, the vicar of Swinderby, near Newark, who had been a colleague in the Feathers Tavern days. In Disney's study Lindsey found a great liturgical treasure. This was nothing less than a copy of Dr. Samuel Clarke's annotated Book of Common Prayer; presumably Disney had made a transcript of Dr. Clarke's own copy which his son had presented to the British Museum in 1768, just five years previously.¹⁷ At first Lindsey thought that this was the very prayer book that he needed for his "reformed Church of England." In this view there were many to support him because of the prestige of the editor's name as philosopher and theologian. On second thought, he decided that his own revision had to be much more radical than Clarke's. For one thing, he objected most strenuously to Dr. Clarke's every Collect terminating with "Through Jesus Christ our Lord," without the least warrant from Scripture. His plan for a "Reformed Church of England" was a failure, largely because he could find only two or three Anglican clergy who were as valiant as he in risking their Anglican futures. Wesley had been in the same predicament for a long time, and in the end he had virtually separated from the Church of England by ordaining his own assistants. This Lindsey was not prepared to do. Nonetheless, this loyalty did not bring many Anglican clergy to his side. He was very successful in his own congregation but subject to gainsaying from outsiders. Quite typical, except perhaps in its wit, was his discovery on the front of his residence of the following satirical verse penned in capitals and pinned to the door:

Of old Theophilus did maintain
That prayers to Jesus were great gain,
But Theophilus Lindsey doth profess
That Arian prayers are godliness.¹⁸

He found the greatest sympathy with his work among the radical Presbyterians soon to be known as Unitarians, and he had the profoundest influence on them. Other radical Presbyterians, such as his friend Priestley, were to produce their own liturgical compilations, but none rivalled his in the number of its editions or in its impact.

¹⁷ Cf. Peaston, *op.cit.*, p. 15 for information and authorities.

¹⁸ Cited *ibid.*, p. 17.

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So widely did this revision circulate that it became the basis of the prayer book adopted at King's Chapel, Boston, in the United States, and was reprinted by Isaac Worsley for the use of English merchants at Dunkirk in 1791.¹⁹

A study of its subsequent editions would mark the evolution of Lindsey's radicalism in theology. After 1789 Lindsey omitted the Apostles' Creed from the *Book of Common Prayer reformed*. All editions after 1792 indicate that he had repudiated any belief in a personal Devil. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, then Lindsey was greatly admired for the radical Presbyterians published five liturgies between 1776 and 1791. From 1793 to 1854 there were thirteen re-issues of Lindsey's Prayer Book. It is clear that he deserves the appellation of the Father of Unitarian worship, for he created a tradition which is still influential today.

The preface acknowledges Lindsey's indebtedness to the plan "proposed long since by the excellent and learned Dr. Samuel Clarke, Rector of St. James's, Westminster," but adds that other alterations have necessarily been made.²⁰ He admits that some prejudice against alterations will have to be met, and shrewdly argues that if this consideration were valid the Continental Reformation would never have taken place. His final plea to the traditionalists reads: "Nor should they refuse to accommodate themselves to times and circumstances in things that are not really essential, and where a good end may be answered by so doing. For when we are enslaved to party prejudices and forms long used, we give up the inalienable right of private judgment and are deaf to reason though it be ever so urgent."²¹

The radical theology expressed in the revision is evident in several particulars. Whereas Clarke had modified the *Gloria* to make plain the subordination of the Son and the Holy Spirit to the Father, Lindsey inserted in place of this a Scriptural ascription of praise derived from I Tim. 1:17 and Romans 16:27. Furthermore, Lindsey objected to the traditional terminations of the Collects which Clarke had admitted, insisting that they were unscriptural and that they stressed the Mediatorship of Christ. Clarke's Semi-Arianism had become Unitarianism in Lindsey. This is clear in his exclusion of the Apostles' Creed in all editions after 1789, when he ceased to believe in the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. Lindsey fol-

¹⁹ The so-called *Dunkirk Prayer Book* may be conveniently studied in *Fragmenta Liturgica*, Vol. VII, and all subsequent references will be to this edition of Lindsey's revised Prayer Book.

²⁰ *Fragmenta Liturgica*, Vol. VII, p. 6.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

lowed Clarke by addressing the Collects to the Father only, and the invocations in the Litany were similarly revised. Lindsey would not accept Clarke's substitution for the Collect for Trinity Sunday, and he disliked Clarke's modified *Te Deum*; so he omitted both items.

Lindsey's dislike of sacerdotalism is seen in his omission of any declaration of absolution following upon the General Confession in the Orders for Morning and Evening Prayer. In the Holy Communion Order there is a Prayer for Pardon, but this takes the form of a petition rather than of a declaration of forgiveness. The same anti-sacerdotalism is probably responsible for the transparent and repeated memorialism of the Eucharistic Prayer. It is also of interest that the Anglican words of administration are changed to the Biblically modelled imperatives: "Take and eat this in remembrance of Christ" and "Take and drink this in remembrance of Christ."²² The proper prefaces to the Eucharistic prayer are reduced to three: those for Christmas Day, Easter Day, and Whitsunday. Instead of the normal blessing, the service is to be concluded by one or other of two "valedictory forms" from I Peter 5: 10, 11 and Numbers 6: 24-26.

The Order for Baptism has some interesting features. Baptism may be administered with the traditional Triune formula or, on the authority of Acts of the Apostles 2:38 and 19:5, by the formula "I baptize thee into the name of Jesus Christ."

The real thrust and basic concerns of Unitarian theology appear most clearly in the Exhortations to parents in the Baptismal Order and to the congregation in the Form of Solemnization of Matrimony. The chief characteristic of these Exhortations is a triple stress on the pedagogical, the moral, and, perhaps surprisingly, the sentimental. The parents are thus catechized in regard to their newly-baptized child: "Tell *him* that *he* is to love and do good to all men, because all are equally the children of God with *himself*, and the objects of his fatherly kindness and care: that *he* is born not only for *himself*, but for others; to serve *his* country and mankind by promoting truth and virtue, and the public good."²³

The same child is clearly to be brought up as a rationalist, for he is to be informed "of the dignity of his nature; of the importance of reason, the light of God within him. . . ."²⁴ The openness to new truth and the tolerance so characteristic of liberal Christianity are admirably recommended in the Exhortation in the Order of Bap-

²² *Ibid.*, p. 53.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

tism "for those of riper years." Lindsey declares: "By being baptized, you do not declare yourself of any religious sect or party: but a Christian. For you are Baptized into the name of Jesus only: not of Paul, or of Peter, for the Apostles themselves were not Lords of our faith; not of Luther, Calvin, or Socinus, in later times: all of whom though faithful servants of God, and eminent reformers and teachers in the Christian Church, were fallible mortals and mistaken in many things; and therefore are to be followed by us no further than as they followed Christ, our common Master, and taught the truth which he taught."²⁵

The unexpected element of sentiment is found in reference to children. Lindsey recommends parents to "remember then that this child belongs to God who gave it you, and intrusts you with it, that it may be educated and fitted for himself. . . . Instil therefore into his tender mind the knowledge, reverence and love of God."²⁶

The same element of feeling, not usually associated with rationalism, finds expression also in the Exhortation to the bride and groom, as Lindsey defines the purposes of marriage: "It was intended by the benevolent Parent of mankind to be a source of the purest satisfactions, to soften the avoidable cares, and increase the innocent pleasures of life, by affording the opportunity of sharing them with a most intimate friend and partner. By Christians, in particular, it is to be looked upon as a state of perfect indissoluble friendship. . . ."²⁷ To be sure, each sentimental noun is qualified by a rational or ethical adjective, but then, who would expect even a tincture of feeling in respectable religion? The Methodists and the Lakeland poets could freely indulge in their charismatic or vatic frenzies; so perhaps even the cool rationalists might be permitted to fan themselves with the aid of the mildest zephyrs of feeling.

A Liturgy is intended to express timeless truth and eternal aspirations rather than the opinions of an up-to-the-minute theology or the vagaries of contemporary sentiment.²⁸ It is to Lindsey's credit that he attempted to retain as much of the structure and language of the Prayer Book as his conscience and integrity of mind would permit. Nonetheless, his revision could not expect to win the approval of even a large section of Anglicanism: it was too hortatory, too prolix, and too personal for such a purpose. It even reflects the

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ The words of Dom Gregory Dix are appropriate: "No man is great enough or good enough to fix the act of the Body of Christ for ever according to his mind and understanding. The good liturgies were not written; they grew." (*The Shape of the Liturgy*, p. 719.)

background of rationalism and the intelligentsia of the age rather than the context of the entire nation and the centuries of Christian tradition. There is, moreover, a suggestion of the affluent background of the Unitarians in the advice to potential parents, in its insistence that education is "a matter of the highest moment" if men are to be both good citizens and "useful magistrates."²⁹ On the other hand, it would not have gone into so many editions or been so frequently imitated if there were not a considerable number of people who found the theology expressed in it more congenial than the traditional theology of the Book of Common Prayer, and who objected to the Puritan tradition of free prayers. Its essential conservatism in form is further proved by its preference of psalms in place of hymns.

4. *The Motives of Liturgical Reformers*

The primary motive of the revisionists before and after Lindsey was clearly doctrinal: they were anxious to provide a Christian Liturgy on which all reasonable eighteenth century men in England could agree. The Semi-Arianism of Clarke and Whiston seemed moderate to them, but excessively liberal to most contemporary Anglican clergy; it was excessively conservative to Lindsey's mind, and Priestley found Lindsey's first revision inexplicably traditional in its inclusion of the Incarnation. It was almost a case of *quot homines, tot sententiae*. At least one radical editor saw no particular point even in having a liturgy restricted to Christian use. This universalist aimed at uniting men of all religious beliefs in common worship in *A Liturgy on the Universal Principles of Religion and Morality* (1776).³⁰

It would be erroneous to conclude, however, that there was little common doctrinal ground taken in the liturgies that were revised by the rationalists. They all agreed that the Athanasian Creed and the Nicene Creed must be omitted. Some excluded the Apostles' Creed, and all took exception to the clause, "He descended into Hell." They were unhappy with the *Gloria Patri*, which they revised or omitted entirely. The *Te Deum* was accorded the same cavalier treatment. The *Benedicite*, *Benedictus*, *Magnificat*, and *Nunc Dimittis* also received short shrift, either because they presupposed a belief in the

²⁹ *Fragmenta Liturgica*, Vol. VII, p. 79.

³⁰ This Liturgy was the work of David Williams, who introduced it into his chapel in Margaret Street, Cavendish Square, London, in 1776. It was translated into German in 1784 and was highly thought of by Voltaire and Frederick the Great. (See "David Williams" in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.)

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Incarnation of the Son of God, or because, being the products of special occasions, they were unsuitable for repetition. It was also customary for the revisers to alter or omit the Absolution after the General Confession to make it manifest that it is God and not the minister who forgives sins. Since the rationalists were no Calvinists, it is not surprising that they all objected to the acknowledgment in the General Confession that "there is no health in us." Furthermore, the *Kyries* in the Order for Holy Communion, where they are retained, are invariably altered to avoid prayers addressed to the Son and not directly to the Father. Hence there is substantial unity in denials, if not always in affirmations. This, however, was insufficient warrant to commend a revised Liturgy to the national Church. After all, a Liturgy is neither the composition of a man nor of a committee: it is the product of the centuries of religious aspiration and experience. Moreover, if a Liturgy is not the medium of worship of an international body of Christians, like the Roman Catholic Missal, it must be, at least, the expression of the religious life of a nation, like the Book of Common Prayer. Lindsey and his imitators were preparing a formulary suitable only for the intelligent few, for the initiates of rationalism. This seemed, in short, liturgical Gnosticism. To prepare a Book of Common Prayer for the uncommon was an experiment doomed from the start. Moreover, the original additions of the Unitarians, with perhaps the single magnificent exception of James Martineau during the succeeding century, lacked the order and ardour, the monumental concision and elation of spirit, the combination of classical form and romantic aspiration, that characterized great prayer. The Augustan age caged the nightingales of the imagination; but the omniscient-looking owls of rationalism were unable to sing. Thus these Unitarian exhortations were full of sound sense, and the prayers were precise in thought, if somewhat prolix in expression. The fault was not to be laid entirely at the feet of the editors; they were no better than their times. What could, indeed, be expected, when a respected writer rewrote the parable of the Prodigal Son, beginning, "A gentleman of splendid family and opulent fortune had two sons."³¹ No revision was likely to win general approval which was sectarian in spirit, however intellectual its aim, and which was circumlocutory in manner, however decorous its intention.

If there was a measure of common doctrinal agreement among the revisers, there were also important differences of theological

³¹ Peaston, *op.cit.*, p. 22.

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emphasis. A very broad distinction could be made between the Biblical Unitarians and the philosophical Unitarians in this respect. The earlier Lindsey and the Priestley who composed *Forms of Prayer for the use of Unitarian Societies* (1783) were believers in the Resurrection and the Second Coming of Christ. According to Priestley, the only hope for human life after death was a Divine act of re-creation. Believing that death involved the dissolution of body, mind and soul, he insisted that only a special act of God could restore human personality. A wit described this tenet in a way that delighted Priestley himself, in the lines:

Here lies at rest,
In oaken chest,
Together packed most nicely,
The bones and brains,
Flesh, blood, and veins,
And soul of Dr. Priestley.³²

The philosophical Unitarians produced liturgical forms that breathed more of the spirit of Locke and Newton than of the Bible, and were distinguished by long prayers celebrating the Divine attributes and the works of the Creator, as in William Wood's Liturgy prepared for the Mill Hill Chapel in Leeds in 1801. The "Liverpool Liturgy" might also be classified as the work of philosophical Unitarians, since Job Orton, Doddridge's liberal successor as principal of the Northampton Academy, described it as "an almost deistical composition."³³

Although the intellectual motive was dominant, it was far from being the exclusive consideration of the revisers. Whiston, as we have seen, after a thorough analysis of the *Apostolical Constitutions* and of the earlier editions of the Book of Common Prayer, was convinced that his revision was a true approximation to the pattern of the worship of the primitive church. He also had the over-sanguine hope of inducing Dissenters to combine with Anglicans in his new Liturgy. Jones of Alconbury put forward his proposals with the genuine desire to make a Liturgy comprehensive enough to persuade Dissenters to come into the Establishment and to that end accepted a number of the Puritan criticisms of the Book of

³² Cited *ibid.*, p. 21.

³³ Cf. J. Hay Colligan, *Eighteenth Century Nonconformity*, pp. 91ff. Orton includes four major criticisms in his indictment: in prayers of Thanksgiving Christ is mentioned as an exemplar and preacher of virtue; there is no reference to His intercession; all sacrificial conceptions of the Atonement are eliminated; and "the Spirit is quite banished from this Liturgy."

Common Prayer, with the result that he either eliminated, or made optional, ritual and ceremonial that had no Scriptural warrant. This was also the aim of the editor of *The Liturgy of the Church of England reduced nearer to the Standard of Scripture* (1791). The Liverpool or Octagon Liturgy was composed with the intention of introducing liturgical worship amongst the Dissenters and of persuading disaffected Anglicans to join with the Dissenters. The purely pedagogical interest of the editor of *A Specimen of a Liturgy* (1753) was to induce Dissenters to overcome their prejudices in favour of extemporary prayers. The aim of the composer of *A Liturgy on the Universal Principles of Religion and Morality* (1776) was two-fold: to promote the fellowship of believers in all faiths and to encourage church attendance. In all these various concerns there can be discerned, sometimes an incipient ecumenical outlook, sometimes an anxious casting about for new ways to inspire incorrigible individualists to participate in corporate worship, and sometimes a liturgical plea for toleration of differences.³⁴

The practical motive was also seen in the recognition that the Book of Common Prayer was proving not only obscure but also tedious to the Augustan worshipper. What was censured and omitted on doctrinal grounds could also be defended on the score of making the worship more congenial, because more brief. Certainly there seemed little purpose in reciting the Lord's Prayer twice over in the same service, as was required in Anglican Matins. Furthermore, as *Candid Disquisitions* insisted, some conflation of the materials in Matins, the Litany, and the Order for Holy Communion was necessary if the combination was not to be inordinately long and wearisome. Yet again, the provision of some alternative prayers was designed to mitigate the familiarity that breeds contempt.

Perhaps the whole revisionist movement was to find its chief significance in awakening the Church of England from its eighteenth century torpor in worship and in arousing in the Dissenters a concern for worship as great as their interest in sermons. While it could not be shown that the Semi-Arians or the Presbyterian-Unitarians had a direct influence on the future of either Anglican or Free Church worship, yet in their very concern for the forms of worship they were preparing for the Oxford Movement in the

³⁴ There is also some evidence of a concern for reductionism, as in the attitude of Dr. John Ward, minister of the Presbyterian Meeting in Maid's Alley, London, of whom it was written: "From a fear of adding to the institutions of Christianity, he absolutely refused, towards the end of his ministry, to officiate on Christmas-day, and on the fifth of November; as also at the burial of the dead." (Walter Wilson, *The History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches . . .*, Vol. iv, p. 174.)

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Church of England and for the slower rebirth of liturgical interest on the part of the orthodox Dissenters which was such a marked feature of their religious life in the latter part of Queen Victoria's reign, when the Gothic vogue in Dissenting ecclesiastical edifices led to an appreciation of the traditions of worship of the Great Church. This liturgical concern on the part of the Unitarians would have justified itself if it had contributed to only one result: the stimulation of the genius of Martineau.

CHAPTER V

THE OLD DISSENT: INDEPENDENTS AND PRESBYTERIANS

THE SONS of the Puritans, the Independents and Presbyterians, who had never forgotten their hopes for inclusion in a wider Establishment, were more subject to the effects of the changing winds of doctrine in national life than the Quakers or Baptists, who had always been regarded as sectaries. So profound was the influence of the prevailing wind of Arianism and Socinianism on the old Dissent¹ that the majority of the eighteenth century Presbyterians became Unitarians, leaving the Independents almost the solitary guardians of orthodox Trinitarian Dissent.² Some of the Independents, too, were not free from the suspicion of heterodoxy, and even such renowned divines as Isaac Watts, Philip Doddridge, and Job Orton were not clear of the taint. On the whole, however, the Independents kept the Calvinistic flag flying at the mast. Why they, rather than the Presbyterians, remained orthodox is still a matter of discussion. Two factors, at least, would help to account for the situation. In the first place, in Independency or Congregationalism the form of church polity stressed the autonomy of the local congregation and the covenant fellowship in which all members joined. The people, rather than their leaders, are notoriously conservative in the matter of religious belief and the Independent laymen were in a strong position to insist on the maintenance of orthodoxy. By contrast, the English Presbyterians did not have a General Assembly, as did their sister Church in Scotland, to control them as the upper court, nor were they ordained to the ministry of the local church and therefore subject to the direct conservative influence of their congregations. In many cases, moreover, the Presbyterian churches were ruled by a board of well-to-do trustees who were proud of the intellectually advanced opinions of their ministers, not by the Meeting of all the church members, as the Congregationalists were. In the second place, the hymns of Isaac Watts counterbalanced in the Independent congregations the tendency to overvalue the rational, apologetic, and argumentative sermons, and served as creeds which the congregations sang. Biblically based, with a

¹ The new Dissenters were, of course, the Methodists and Unitarians.

² The Calvinistic or Particular Baptists were also loyal Trinitarian Dissenters.

strong theological structure, these hymns and the covenants to which every member of an Independent Meeting subscribed on admission to the Church formed the bonds of orthodoxy. Although Independency managed to keep its orthodoxy without formal creeds or confessions of faith, while Presbyterianism in England in the same case largely went over to Unitarianism, both denominations showed the impact of the struggle on their worship.

1. *The Impact of Thought on Worship*

The whole movement of Deism³ and its offshoot Semi-Arianism left a profound impression on the worship of the Old Dissent. The traditional Christian theology had argued since the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas that there were two ways to attain to the knowledge of God: one being a natural knowledge of God attained by the reason, the other a supernatural knowledge of God attained by faith. Since God was the author of both Reason and Revelation, they could not contradict each other and were complementary. The stress of Deism was on the former avenue to Divine truth, insisting that since reason was common to all men but faith the prerogative of only some, its warrant was more certain and clear than that of faith.

In the first encounters with Deism, the traditionalists argued that supernatural revelation was itself demonstrated as superior by the supernatural evidences of prophecy and miracle. Yet it is significant that the apologetical appeal of the defenders of the old faith was itself rational; in appealing to these special evidences they were conceding that revelation does not of itself carry conviction.

As the struggle became more acute with the advance of the century, the defenders of Christianity insisted that their religion was an illustration or example of the "natural religion" of mankind. A century before, in the *De Veritate* (1624),⁴ Lord Herbert of Cherbury had declared that all religions can be shown as exhibiting five principal tenets (or *notitiae communes*): that there is a Divine being, that this being should be worshipped, that the essential part of such worship is moral obedience and piety, that

³ See J. M. Creed and J. S. Boys Smith, *Religious Thought in the Eighteenth Century Illustrated from Writers of the Period* for convenient excerpts from the Deists and their critics. An excellent bibliography will be found in Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the 18th Century*, Vol. 1.

⁴ See *De Veritate* by Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, translated with an introduction by Meyrick H. Carré. For an important but neglected study of Deism, see Mark Pattison's *Tendencies of Religious Thought in England, 1688 to 1750* contributed to *Essays and Reviews*.

obedience is to be rewarded and disobedience is to be punished, and that this rule applies here and hereafter in another life. According to an Anglican clergyman, Matthew Tindal, Christianity concurred in this view. His *Christianity as Old as Creation* urged that Christianity was merely the "republishing of the religion of nature." Bishop Butler might write his great *Analogy of Religion* to refute this view, but millions believed, despite him, that Christianity was essentially attained and defended by pure reason and that its nature was expressed in morality and charity.

The third phase of the warfare was an outright and head-on collision between Christianity and Deism. The latter maintained that the miracles of the Bible were mythological and hinted that they were fabricated by sheer priestcraft to keep the common people credulous and subordinate. For this view there were few supporters in the Churches, but the two previous phases of the controversy had an important effect on personal religion and on worship. In brief, continual argument led to religious indifference among the superficially religious, and among the deeply religious to overestimating the place of the intellect in religion and underestimating the place of faith and of the emotions. The Evangelical Revival was the ultimate practical answer to Deism, by which the spirit of rationalism was encountered and vanquished by the Holy Spirit. But in the middle of the century the chilling impact of Deism on faith and worship was freezing the emotions and, therefore, public devotions.

2. *The Place of the Sermon*

Inevitably prayers and the Sacraments, as presupposing the converse and communion of the supernatural God of the Bible with man and man's response, were depreciated. Inevitably, also, the most consciously intellectual and apologetic element in the service of worship, the sermon, took on an exaggerated importance. People who once had come to worship the Triune God now believed that He was a remote Deity who, like Paley's Watchmaker, had set the universe in motion but had ceased to have a further concern with His creation or His creatures. They therefore came to a "Lord's Day Lecture."² They hoped to hear a discourse on revealed religion, planned with clear divisions, buttressed by cogent arguments, and phrased in elegant terms. In consequence, prayers and praises tended to become the mere "preliminaries" to the sermon.

² J. Hay Colligan, *Eighteenth Century Nonconformity*, p. 88.

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This is, indeed, the burden of the criticism of Strickland Gough, who had been educated in a Dissenting academy and who later conformed to the Established Church. "I think," he wrote to Dissenters, "there are two faults in your manner of public worship, that your prayers are too short and your sermons too long. The one has too little of reverence towards God, and the other is too tedious towards ourselves."⁶ He added that God was worshipped for twenty minutes and the reason of man was titillated for sixty minutes in the sermon.

The complaint is echoed by the Rev. Mr. John Barker, minister of Salter's Hall Presbyterian Church (1741-1760), in a letter to Philip Doddridge: "The disposition of charity continues amongst us Protestant dissenters, but I cannot say much as to our faith. Some charge our fathers with putting believing in the place of doing; I wish we do not put giving in the place of doing."⁷ He cannot help comparing the time when his heart was warmed and his faith edified whenever he attended Dissenting worship, with the present case. "Evangelical truth and duty are quite old fashioned things." The indictment is concluded with this outburst: "One's ears are so dinned with reason, the great law of reason, and the eternal law of reason, that it is enough to put one out of conceit with the chief excellency of our nature, because it is idolized and even deified."⁸ How significant it is that the man who is nauseated by the exaltation of reason still considers it "the chief excellency of our nature," he who is in the Calvinist tradition which had stressed the depravity of the unregenerate reason in the things concerning salvation! There could be no more eloquent testimony of the inroads of rationalism on worship.

An Independent historian provides further confirmation, with a more detailed diagnosis of the sickness. "With the new race of minister," writes Walter Wilson, "a different mode of preaching began to be introduced. Some of the younger sort, wishing to be thought polite, paid more attention to the composition of a sermon, than to the important matter that it should have contained. The prevalence of infidelity furnished others with constant topics of discourse; but as they did not preach to infidels, the people ceased to be interested in what they heard."⁹ Wilson's multifactoral analysis attributes the loss of warmth in Dissenting worship to rational-

⁶ *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Decay of the Dissenting Interest*, p. 39.

⁷ Walter Wilson, *The History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses . . .*, Vol. II, p. 50.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 553.

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ism, but also to a greater opulence among city congregations, as well as to an interdenominational emphasis on supporting charitable organizations which made the expression of a denominational outlook in anything seem mere bigotry—a tendency which he terms “a spurious candour.”¹⁰

The desire for a greater conformity with the Church of England is further seen in the mid-century in the way that Doddridge decked out his meeting-house in Kibworth to look like an Anglican church. He had arranged for the Decalogue to be painted on the walls, and he employed the services of a clerk who said the “Amen” to his prayers and concluded his intercessions with the conjoint saying of the Lord’s Prayer by minister and people.¹¹ One of the interesting facts of the century is that it was not unusual for Dissenters to attend Anglican services, whether for good or less satisfactory reasons. The unsatisfactory reasons would be that, like the Pharisees “they might be seen of men,” in particular, to attend the Sacrament of Holy Communion as a qualification for local government, or because they wished to be thought to belong to polite society. The good reason would be simply that they wished to be edified spiritually. Issue No. 90 of *The Guardian*, for Friday, June 12, 1713, states that “It has happened that the Person, which is seen every Day at Church, has not been in the Eye of the World a Churchman, and he who is very zealous to oblige every Man to frequent it, but himself, has been held a very good Son of the Church.”¹² That this was not only a London custom, but also a feature of church-going in the north country, may be discovered from the report of the Bishop of Carlisle, Dr. William Nicolson, during a visitation of his diocese in 1703. At Ravenstonedale he found a “saints-bell” and was informed that “this bell used to be rung in the conclusion of the Nicene Creed to call in Dissenters to Sermon.”¹³ Had they come earlier, they would have found the parson in a surplice, the offending garment against which the Puritans protested; but, entering when they did, they found the preacher garbed in grave Genevan gown. This attendance of Dissenters on Anglican preaching may, indeed, have been one of the reasons why Anglican ministers may have preferred to preach in a black gown.

These facts and opinions all point to a considerable cooling of

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 550.

¹¹ J. Hay Colligan, *op.cit.*, p. 88.

¹² Cited by J. Wickham Legg, *English Church Life from the Restoration to the Tractarian Movement*, p. 105.

¹³ *Miscellany Accounts of the Diocese of Carlisle* by William Nicolson, late Bishop of Carlisle, ed. R. S. Ferguson, p. 42.

fervour in Dissenting worship, which was caught between the "enthusiasm" of the Methodists and the rational and moral emphasis of the Establishment. How much the temperature had dropped from Puritan days may be judged from an interesting discussion of worship that appeared in book form in 1730 by Caleb Fleming. Its full title is *An Essay on Worship, More particularly on Publick Worship, Wherein some Common Objections are answered*. That it was felt necessary to reply at length to even the most trivial cavils showed how irrelevant worship seemed to the rational climate of the times. Some of the objections to worship were: that it is "only fit for the vulgar and less polite," that "it makes men apt to rest in the externals," that it is productive of family and personal quarrels, that it "occasions many animosities and heart-burnings from the different sentiments and opinions," that "ministers and churches are a great burden to the publick," that "it has no good effects" as shown by the immorality of ministers and laity, and, finally that "the ends of publick worship are better obtained by private means."

3. *The Place of Hymns*

The second influence that the climate of the age had upon the Dissenting worship of the two older denominations was to effect a subtle change in mood and emphasis in the services. Indeed, the old order of worship inherited from the Puritans and Nonconformists was retained, but it had lost its tremendous majesty and awe, its sense of the presence of the sovereignty of God and of the appropriate response of abject submission. For the Calvinist, the hidden and inscrutable Deity manifested Himself in the proclamation of the Word and in the celebration of the Sacraments of His appointing. For the Deist the remote Deity was essentially non-interventionist and it was by the exercise of reason that man traced His laws in nature and His image in human nature quite unflawed. The Calvinistic Independents and Presbyterians had not entirely capitulated to the Deists in their theology, but they shared with them an exaltation of reason and a concentration upon man as God's chief handiwork. The result was that there was a stress on the sociable aspect in worship.¹⁴ Whereas the chief stress in Puritan worship was on the downward, revelational movement of God in sermon and Sacrament, now a new stress was given to the hymns and to the importance of the congregation. At times there was even a

¹⁴ Cf. J. Hay Colligan, *op.cit.*, p. 89.

subjectivity in the worship, whereas objectivity had characterized the metrical psalmody of the previous century. Now Watts sings "When I survey the wondrous Cross" or "Give *me* the wings of faith to rise" or "Come *we* that love the Lord." This subjective emphasis may be open to some criticism, but it is the less heinous when it is recalled that for real subjectivity and wallowing in sentimental feelings we must turn to Victorian hymnody. Moreover, the subjective emphasis in Watts and Doddridge was always clearly related to a historic stress on dogma. Furthermore, the great significance of this eighteenth century Dissenting hymnody was that if "enthusiasm" was banned from the sermon it was reintroduced in the praise, and thus the emotions were not starved, as was so often the case in Established worship during this period. The same subjectivity did, however, have its effect upon the Sacraments, though probably Deism was as much to blame as subjectivity. The Sacrament of Baptism caused considerable embarrassment to the Presbyterian ministers who had Arian inclinations because it required affusion in the Triune Name. Job Orton, a disciple of Doddridge and his successor as principal of a most important Dissenting academy for theological training, wrote to one of his students about to settle in East Anglia, where orthodoxy was strong, that while he might never be entirely satisfied that Baptism was a Dominical sacrament, he yet hoped he would find the arguments in its favour so preponderating as to justify the administration to infants.¹⁵ Since the Atonement was a doctrine of supernatural revelation, those who wished to retain the Lord's Supper found themselves moving from a Calvinistic to a Zwinglian interpretation. That is, they dwelt less on the benefits of forgiveness and eternal life "sealed" to the believers by the Holy Spirit in this means of grace than on its memorial aspect and on its importance as a badge of the unity of Christians. In short, instead of being a "conveying" or "communicating ordinance" (to use Matthew Henry's ineluctably Calvinist terms), it became an illustration of certain spiritual truths, such as selflessness and unity in the profession of faith.¹⁶

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Not all the Independents by any means were Zwinglians. Doddridge, for example, valued the sacrament more highly than the sermon. He wrote in his diary: "In the prayer I had much communion with God, in the sermon little or none, but so much in the sacrament that my very heart was almost swallowed up." (J. D. Humphreys, ed. of *The Diary and Correspondence of Philip Doddridge*, Vol. v, p. 340. See also unpublished dissertation of F. W. Harris in Mansfield College Library, Oxford, *The Life and Work of Philip Doddridge*, p. 56f.)

4. *The Standard Shape of Worship: Services and Sacraments*

The Independents and orthodox Presbyterians worshipped in ways that were fundamentally alike. On each Sunday, except for the last three decades of the century, when evening services were introduced, there was a morning and an afternoon diet of worship. Fathers of pious families spent the Sunday evenings going over the lessons that the sermons were supposed to have taught them that day and in family prayers and religious reading. In Bury Street Independent Meeting, London, the members recorded the precise nature of their orders of worship, as follows: "In the morning we begin with singing a psalm, then a short prayer follows to desire the Divine Presence in all the following parts of worship; after that, about half an hour in the exposition of some portion of Scripture, which is succeeded by singing a psalm or an hymn. After this the minister prays more at large, for all the variety of blessings, spiritual and temporal, for the whole congregation, with confession of sins, and thanksgiving for mercies; petitions also are offered up for the whole world, for the churches of Christ, for the nation in which we dwell, for all our rulers and governors, together with any particular cases which are represented. Then a sermon is preached, and the morning worship concluded with a short prayer and the benediction."¹⁷

Two peculiarities only of this order require comment. The first to be considered is that the usual place for the second item of praise, the psalm or hymn, was not immediately after the exposition of Scripture, but after the sermon. It was misplaced in deference to the minister, Dr. Isaac Watts, who "being for several years so much disposed with nervous disorders, desired the hymn to be sung rather before he went into the pulpit, only because his head was unable to bear the sound." It should be noted that orthodox Presbyterians generally placed the long prayer of intercession after the sermon, whereas Independents preferred it, as in the order under consideration, before the sermon. The congregation usually stood up for the prayers, and petitions for individual members in need who wished to be remembered in the orisons of the congregation were written on a paper and taken to the minister in the pulpit.

The afternoon worship was of much the same character as the

¹⁷ *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, London, Vol. VI, p. 334.

morning worship "with this difference, that we omit the first short prayer and the exposition, and sing the psalm or hymn, just after the sermon. . . ."¹⁸

The Bury Street Records also give a full description of the celebration of the Lord's Supper on the first Lord's Day in every month. Usually this was held in the afternoon, but during the winter months at noon. This is the manner of its administration:

"The Lord's Supper is administered alternately by the two pastors in the plainest manner, just according to the institution, first the history of the institution is read, either out of Matthew's gospel or the first ep. Corinthians, that it may ever be kept in mind to regulate every part of the practice; and the sermons of that day being equally suited to the design of the Lord's Supper, or a commemoration of the sufferings of Christ, 'tis but seldom any other speech or exhortation is made before the celebration.

"The minister, taking hold of the plate in which the bread lies, calls upon the people to join with him in seeking for a blessing on it, which is done in a short prayer of eight to ten minutes. Then the minister says, 'Having blessed this bread, we break it in remembrance of our Saviour's body, &c.' Then the loaves, which are before cut in squares, almost through, are broken by the minister in small pieces, as big as walnuts or thereabout, and taking the plate of bread in his hands, he says, 'This is the body of Christ, or the emblem or figure of the body of Christ, which was broken for you; take it and eat ye all of it in remembrance of our Saviour who died for us,' or such like words, which are a plain declaration that the bread represents the body of Christ, according to his own appointment: it is then distributed by the pastor to the deacons, and, to one or two more of the members who are appointed to it, and it is carried by them to the various members of the church."¹⁹

After an interval, to allow all to participate,

" . . . the pastor proceeds in like manner to pour out the wine, at least into one of the cups, then he asks a blessing on the cup; and then distributes it, as before, to the members or the deacons, and they to some other members of the church, by whom it is carried round to all the seats. In many churches, the pastor is frequently speaking proper sentences or texts of Scripture, to awaken the faith, hope, and joy of Christians, and I cannot but approve of it in the main. But our former pastor, Dr. Chauncey, was so much against it, that it was not practised among us. But when most of

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 334-36.

the members, at some particular occasion, met together, the two pastors proposed it to them, whether we should keep up this practice or leave them to their own silent meditation, they seemed generally to approve our silence, and this is the reason we omit it.

"After this there is a psalm or hymn sung, suited to the ordinance. Then the plate is sent round to collect for the necessities of the poor. After this, the particular cases of the members are represented, who desire the prayers of the church; and then, with a prayer offered on this occasion, together with thanksgiving and the final benediction, this service is concluded."²⁰

The Lord's Supper as celebrated in this manner is interesting in its combination of fixity and fluidity. The fixed elements are the institution narrative, the fraction and libation with separate prayers, and the distribution as well as the offertory for the poor; the varying elements are the particular choice of institution narrative, the extemporary nature of the prayers, and the particular prayers for the special needs of individual members. While the doctrine is formally Zwinglian in its symbolical and memorialist interpretation, yet the special Communion discourses and the prayers imply not a doctrine of the "real absence" (as Don Gregory Dix termed Zwinglianism) but of the "Real Presence." Moreover, it was customary for orthodox Dissenters to spend the afternoon of each Friday preceding the Sacrament Sunday in a service of preparation. This was the custom at Dr. Watts's church as it was in Dr. Doddridge's in Northampton.²¹ Clearly, these attitudes suggest that the Sacrament is not a mere optional extra for the pious few but the climax of Christian worship and a significant source of the spiritual nourishment in grace.²²

It might seem arbitrary to select the orders of worship of the Bury Street Independent Meeting-House in London as the pattern of the worship of orthodox Dissent. In answer to this objection it must be stressed that its minister, Isaac Watts, contributed more to the worship of Dissent in this century by his "Guide to Prayer"

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ The Rev. Mr. F. W. Harris in his unpublished Oxford dissertation, *The Life and Work of Philip Doddridge*, p. 56f., writes: "No occasion was more solemnly observed by Doddridge than a Sacrament day. The Friday and Saturday before such a day were kept with special devotions and meditations, not only for Doddridge himself, but for all his students as well. Detailed self-examination was practised and one is constantly impressed by the way in which Doddridge regarded the Sacrament service. To be in attendance at the Lord's Table was a most awesome experience, and he could not do it without intense preparation."

²² It is to be noted that it was strictly limited to members of the church who had signed the covenant, so that it was the highest privilege of church members to attend The Lord's Supper.

and his hymns than any other man, with the possible exception of Charles Wesley, who, in any case, wrote his hymns to supplement Anglican worship not to subsidize the liturgical resources of Dissenters of any kind (Methodists included). Furthermore, the testimony of other witnesses to the tradition of orthodox Dissent corroborates the view that the worship of Bury Street was characteristic.²³

Orthodox Presbyterians and Independents also celebrated the Sacrament of Baptism in the same way. Full details are provided in two important sources. One of them was *The Celebration of Infant-Baptism among Protestant Dissenters* (1747), which is unusual in being a complete manual for the service of Baptism, including the full wording of exhortations, prayers, and promises required of the parents by the minister and their responses, as well as the details of the ceremonial. The second is a copious description by Robert Robinson of "The Administration of Baptism by Calvinist Congregational Churches not Established" in his *History of Baptism* (1790).²⁴ To conflate these sources of information, it is clear that the essential elements in a Baptismal service were: an explanation of the meaning of the rite and its Biblical basis; the explicit or implicit requirement from the parents of assurances that they will instruct their child in the meaning of the covenant of grace and in the rudiments of Christian belief, behaviour, and worship; a prayer for the child that it may receive the blessings of the covenant and be empowered by the Holy Spirit; the Baptism in the Triune Name and the declaration that the child is now received into Christ's Church; and a final exhortation to the parents to remember their duties and to the church members to be faithful to their Baptismal covenant.

The manual is particularly interesting for the detail in which it describes the promises to be made by the parents. They are required to profess their Christian faith, either by reciting the Apostles' Creed or by answering affirmatively to the question: "Will you make the sacred Bible the Rule of your Faith and Life?"²⁵ They are further asked to declare that, repenting of their sins, they will remain "stedfast in the Covenant." Next, they are required to acquaint the child with the nature of the Covenant entered into on

²³ Notably, Edmund Calamy's *A Letter to a Divine in Germany giving a Brief but True Account of the Protestant Dissenters in England*, p. 9f., and John Stoughton, *Religion in England*, Vol. I, pp. 204-06; also D. Bogue and J. Bennett, *The History of Dissenters from the Revolution to the Year 1808*, Vol. II, p. 361f.

²⁴ P. 536f.

²⁵ *Op.cit.*, p. 6.

his behalf and for that end "to cause him to understand the Nature of the Christian Religion, to learn the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and to read, or hear, the Holy Scriptures, and to attend on the publick Preaching of God's Word." Finally, they are asked: "Will you endeavour by your own Teaching, and Example, and Restraint, to keep him from Wickedness, and train him up in a holy Life?"²⁶ A further point of interest is the declaration, after the Baptism, so clearly modelled on the Book of Common Prayer: "This child is now received into Christ's Church, and solemnly entered into the holy Covenant, and engaged, if he lives to the Use of Reason, to live to Christ, and to bear his Cross, and confess Christ crucified, and faithfully to fight under his Banner against the Flesh, the Devil, and the World, and to continue his faithful Soldier and Servant to the Death, that he may receive the Crown of Life."²⁷ The deliberate and conscious orthodoxy of the rite is patent not only in its use of Prayer Book terminology but in its covenant theology, and also in its insistence that either the Apostles' Creed be recited or that the Bible be not only declared to be the Word of God but also made the rule of life and faith. In these requirements it is deliberately anti-Deistic and anti-Arian. Its determination to remain true to an earlier tradition of Calvinistic orthodoxy is seen in its citation of Matthew Henry's Baptismal Covenant for the use of his children. This covenant form was designed to be not only a creed, but an engagement of the heart:

I take God the Father to be my chiefest Good and highest End.
 I take God the Son to be my Prince and Saviour.
 I take God the Holy Ghost to be my Sanctifier, Teacher, Guide,
 and Comforter.
 I take the Word of God to be my Rule in all my Actions.
 And the People of God to be my People in all Conditions.
 I do likewise devote and dedicate unto the Lord, my whole
 Self, all I am, and all I can do.
 And this I do deliberately, sincerely, freely, and for ever.²⁸

Robinson is worth citing for his meticulous observation of the ceremonial details: "After prayer, the fathers presented the children, one by one, and the minister taking the child into his arms, dipped his fingers ends in the water, sprinkled it on the face of the babe, said in the meantime, I Baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and returned it to the parent,

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

who gave it to the nurse."²⁹ According to Robinson, the service that he witnessed was held in the presence of a large congregation in a meeting-house at two in the afternoon, "and the infants to be baptized were in the laps of their nurses in an adjoining vestry." He, too, although one who practised Believers' Baptism, emphasized the covenant nature of the Sacrament, both in the sermon which prefaced the rite on "Have respect unto the Covenant" (Psalm 24: 20), and in the exhortation of the Minister. From these two accounts it is abundantly clear that orthodox Calvinists in the mid-eighteenth century held a high view of the Sacrament and administered it with dignity and devotion.

5. *Prayers*

The civil disabilities under which Dissenters continued to suffer in the eighteenth century, because their forefathers would not subscribe to the view that the Book of Common Prayer was entirely conformable to the Word of God, were unlikely to make them change their minds about the superiority of extemporary prayers to a set liturgy. It was only the Presbyterians of a Socinian tendency who interested themselves in doctrinal revisions of the Book of Common Prayer. Orthodox Dissent trod most circumspectly in the older paths in the matter of free prayers. In this respect they were excessively conservative, and their prolix prayers must often have been extremely tedious. The typical Georgian Dissenting apologia for free prayers against a liturgy has not advanced a single new argument since the days of the Savoy Conference of a century before.³⁰

The most convincing defence of extemporary prayer (when its abuses of incoherence, prolixity, and didacticism are guarded against) is that it enables the minister out of his intimate knowledge of a congregation to pray for their particular circumstances in a genuinely pastoral prayer; this the generalities of a liturgy cannot do. However naïve may be the language of such petitions, they can still move the heart. A most interesting example of such effective extemporary prayer is provided by the practice of the Rev. Mr. Samuel Brewer, who was the successor of Matthew Mead in the Inde-

²⁹ *History of Baptism*, p. 537.

³⁰ For confirmation see the frequently reprinted book, *The Protestant Dissenter's Catechism*, the reputed author of which is Samuel Palmer. Here free prayer is defended as obliging ministers "to a habit of diligence in conversing with divine things," because it holds the attention and "excites the pious affections" of worshippers, and meets the varied "circumstances" and "occurrences" of the congregation. (Answer to Question 51.)

pendent Church at Stepney. It is reported that "Mr. Brewer was remarkable for great particularity in prayer: some good people used to say, that when it was his turn to preach the Tuesday lecture at Broad-street, they learned from his prayers all the religious news of the neighbourhood. In his own congregation he took particular notice of every event. Having many seafaring people among his hearers, when a merchant ship was going to sail, he specified the captain, the mate, the carpenter, the boatswain, and all the sailors with great affection; and it is said, that impressed with a belief of the benefit of his prayers, they frequently brought him home, as a token of gratitude, something of the produce of the country to which they went."²¹ Brewer's intercessory prayer must have sounded like Lloyd's Shipping Register and we may picture him gathering his information as he swayed along the quaysides of his parish with a rolling gait. We may even—so does this Brewer intoxicate the imagination—visualize the vestry at Stepney, looking like a harvest festival of the British empire, piled high with pomegranates as proofs of his prevailing prayers, and the Sabbath silence broken by the chattering of budgerigars and the squawking of green parrots. The example of the Rev. Mr. Samuel Chandler, D.D., pastor of the Old Jewry English Presbyterian Meeting (1729-1766), proves that it was not necessary to be an eccentric to succeed in holding the congregation's attention in extemporaneous prayer. His secret was that he had "a variety of matter" and that he avoided a "kind of preaching in prayer."²²

6. *Innovations in Worship*

While orthodox Calvinists, whether Independent or Presbyterian, concentrated on holding the fort against rationalist invasion, their worship also showed that they were making changes to meet some of the new demands of the age. In the main, these were four. In the last three decades of the century it became customary to hold evening services. Secondly, the local churches were losing their isolation in the celebration of conjoint special occasions such as ordinations, dedications of new church edifices, and the victory of Protestantism on November 4th and 5th. Thirdly, the impact of the Evangelical Revival was being felt in the final decades of the century in the renewal of the mid-week prayer-life of the congrega-

²¹ Bogue and Bennett, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 634. Brewer died in 1796 in his 73rd year.

²² Walter Wilson, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 378.

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tions. Finally, in reaction from the Methodist "enthusiasts," it became common for ministers of the older Dissent to read their sermons, as was the usual Anglican custom, even though this was a departure from their earlier Puritan extemporaneous tradition.

It seems that the Methodists popularized the evening services, so that their meeting times might not conflict with those of the Establishment. The discovery of incandescent gas as a means of illumination was instrumental in enabling Wesley to make this popular innovation.³³ It is known from a survey of the services of Dissenters in London in 1810³⁴ that several English Presbyterian and Independent congregations convened on Sunday evenings for worship, as also did several Particular Baptist congregations. The General Baptists did not meet in the evenings, and only two of the nine Unitarian congregations did so. It seems that the Independents were among the first to imitate the Methodists, for it is recorded of the Rev. Mr. William Kingsbury, the progressive minister of the Above Bar Congregational Meeting in Southampton (1764-1809), that "not long after his advent in the town, he started the custom of holding Sunday evening services . . . and until he introduced this practice there had been no evening sermons in Southampton at any of the churches."³⁵ Evening services provided several advantages. There was, first, the spur and incitation of novelty. Furthermore, domestic servants and other members of the working-classes felt less conspicuous in the shadows and had free time in the evenings. For the ministers it meant that while they could concentrate in the mornings on the "old faithfuls" and the church-going families, in the evenings they could provide a lighter diet than the strong meat of the Gospel for those who were often making their first contacts with the Christian faith.

The prolix prayers and tedious sermons of the average meeting-house must have made the festival days doubly welcome when several congregations in the one city or in adjoining villages met together. These politico-religious red-letter days of Dissent included the 4th and 5th of November. On the latter they celebrated the discovery of the plot of Guy Fawkes, the Roman Catholic, to blow up the Houses of Parliament, while on the former they recalled with gratitude the anniversary of the landing of William of Orange on the shores of England and the guarantee of the Protestant succe-

³³ Norman Sykes, *The English Religious Tradition*, p. 66.

³⁴ See *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, Vol. VI, p. 126.

³⁵ S. Stainer, *History of Above Bar Congregational Church Southampton from 1662 to 1908*, p. 86.

sion on the throne of the country. A pamphlet of 1793 shows that these were widely observed festivals as late as the last decade of the century. A Dissenter, conversing with a Churchman, is represented as saying, "The Dissenters have been used for a long course of years to pay a particular attention to two memorable days in our calendar, the fifth of November, when by an extraordinary Providence the flower of the nation escaped instant destruction by the hands of Popish miscreants; and the fourth of November rendered as famous by the landing of the glorious King William, whom the same Providence sent hither to deliver us from the chains of despotism, that had been already forged, and were just then ready to be rivetted on us."³⁶

As against the desperate supporters of the House of Stuart and the Non-Jurors, the orthodox Dissenters made a particular point of insisting that they were patriots and Protestants second to none of His Majesty's subjects.³⁷ They especially valued the privilege of the Dissenting Deputies in tendering their loyal addresses on great national occasions directly to the sovereign.³⁸

Other high days were the dedication of churches and the ordination of ministers. It is particularly interesting to note that Independent and orthodox Presbyterian practices drew closer together in the course of the century. In the previous century the Independents, insisting on the autonomy of the local church, allowed the authority of the local church to be sufficient to ordain a member with the necessary spiritual gifts as their minister and to induct him into his office in the local congregation. Neighbouring ministers who might attend the service did so by grace, not by right. On the other hand, the Presbyterians during the previous century would hold a central ordination of several candidates at the same service under the authority of the presbytery and it was rare for a man to be ordained in his own congregation. In the eighteenth century, however, both Independents and Presbyterians usually ordained a man in the midst of the congregation which he was to serve as pastor and regularly invited a group of ministers to participate. The only difference, according to Stoughton, was that in Presbyterian ordinations the people did less and the neighbouring ministers more "both in the

³⁶ *A Trip to Holyhead in a Mail Coach with a Churchman and a Dissenter in the Year MDCCXCIII*, p. 63.

³⁷ That these could also be inflammatory occasions with plenty of opportunity for emotional pyrotechnics can be seen from R. Halley, *Lancashire: its Puritanism and Nonconformity*, p. 524.

³⁸ See B. L. Manning, *The Protestant Dissenting Deputies*.

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choice and in the ordination.³⁹ The choice of a minister required that a day be set apart for fasting and for prayer for Divine direction. At the ordination itself, after fasting and prayer, hands were laid upon him by the ministers present, while one of them sought the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Ordinations came to have three essential discourses: the first, given by a senior minister, explained the basic principles of the denomination and the nature of the occasion as a Divine empowering of the ordinand and as a covenant between minister and people to serve God in His ordinances; it followed logically that the second discourse should be a charge to the minister and the third a charge to the Church, on their respective duties.⁴⁰

A full account of an Independent ordination service is provided by Philip Doddridge. It may be taken as typical of orthodox Calvinist ordinations, since he was the principal of the college or academy in Northampton which trained both Independents and orthodox Presbyterians for the sacred ministry.⁴¹ As Doddridge describes it, the Ordination consists of thirteen items:

1. A short invocatory prayer.
2. Selected appropriate lections from Scripture.
3. General Prayer (on common Christian concerns).
4. Sermon (on the work of the ministry of the Gospel).
5. Explanation of the occasion by a senior minister.
6. Call of the Church to the candidate either by word of mouth or writing or lifting the hand is recognized; and his acceptance declared.
7. Candidate's faith and motives in seeking ordination are tested.
8. Prayer by senior and presiding minister over the ordinand remembering the Gospel, the Church, the Ministry, and this servant of God and this church which calls him, and *Ordination* (and at this point the pastor lays his hand on the ordinand's head, as also do the other pastors present).
9. A Charge to the newly-ordained minister.
10. An Exhortation to the people (unless superseded by previous sermon or an occasion for a separate service, later).
11. Prayer.

³⁹ *Religion in England*, Vol. v, pp. 450-51.

⁴⁰ Bogue and Bennett, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 564.

⁴¹ Cited in *ibid.*, p. 280f.

12. Praise ("also intermingled so as properly to diversify a service necessarily so long").
13. Solemn Benediction.⁴²

Earlier in this chapter it was suggested that evening services were introduced largely through the influence of the Methodists. To the same source may be attributed the growing tendency in the last two decades of the century to re-introduce week-night prayer-meetings. Week-day prayer meetings and lectures had been a significant feature of Dissenting worship at the beginning of the century. Lectures were popular in the cities since they gave members of one church the opportunity to hear the leading ministers of their denomination in turn; in the country districts such conscientious ministers as Matthew Henry made a circuit of the country meeting-houses every year, preaching "daily in the meeting-houses of the neighbouring ministers, and in the habitations of his friends."⁴³ Amusing, if exaggerated, confirmation of this earlier activity in the Dissenting meeting-houses during the middle of the week is given by one of the correspondents of *The Spectator*, who thus complains of his wife: "I am one of those unhappy men that are plagued with a Gospel-Gossip, so common among Dissenters (especially Friends), Lectures in the Morning, Church-Meetings at Noon, and Preparation Sermons at Night, take up so much of her Time, 'tis very rare she knows what we have for Dinner."⁴⁴ In the interval between the first two and the last two decades of the century the blossoms of prayer had been blasted by the chilling winds of rationalism and so the week-night service of devotions was virtually a new beginning. The revivification of prayer was due almost entirely to the breath of the Holy Spirit in the Evangelical Revival which issued in missionary enterprise of astonishing proportions among the Particular Baptists and the Congregationalists in the last decade of the century and in the philanthropic schemes associated with Wilberforce and the Anglican Evangelicals. For each of these groups the prayer-meetings have become a regular feature of church life and are universal among Dissenters, and are

⁴² With Doddridge's account should be compared a Congregational ordination in the old style at Wellingborough in 1770 (Bogue and Bennett, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 277) and a Presbyterian multiple ordination service in the old style in 1714 in London (*The Congregational Quarterly*, Vol. v, 1927, p. 294). That the late eighteenth century Presbyterian type of ordination did not differ from Doddridge's may be seen by consulting Walter Wilson (*op.cit.*, Vol. IV, 1814, pp. 50-51) for details of the ordination of William Nicol in Swallow Street, London, in 1796.

⁴³ Bogue and Bennett, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 362.

⁴⁴ No. 46, issue of April 23, 1711.

held on one evening of each week.⁴⁵ It is extremely doubtful whether the mid-week meetings in earlier Dissent consisted exclusively of prayers. Now, however, such was believed to be the efficacy of sincere prayers that it was no longer felt necessary to include a sermon in a week-night service.

It had been a point of honour early in the century for all Dissenting ministers to preach as well as pray *ex tempore*. As the learned ministry among Dissenters heard of the "rant and cant"⁴⁶ of some of the Methodist local preachers who were bringing extemporary preaching into evil repute, they turned to delivering their sermons from a manuscript.⁴⁷ With this may be contrasted Doddridge's preference for freedom from notes. He censured a candidate for the vacancy at a Dissenting meeting at Bradfield because "he uses notes in the pulpit pretty much, though he does not entirely confine himself to them."⁴⁸ Just as it became increasingly the fashion to preach without notes, so it almost always improved the attention with which the sermon was heard by the congregation. It is told that the Rev. Mr. John Guyse, D.D., minister of the New Broad-street Independent Meeting (1727-1761), became totally blind in the pulpit during his prayer before the sermon. Consequently he was unable to make any use of his written papers when it came to the time to preach. Led out of the meeting after service, he lamented his sudden and total blindness. A rather tactless but well-meaning old lady who heard his complaint offered him this doubtful solace: "God be praised that your sight is gone. I never heard you preach so powerful a sermon in my life. Now, we shall have no more notes. I wish, for my own part, that the Lord had took away your eyesight twenty years ago, for your ministry would have been more useful by twenty degrees."⁴⁹

In conclusion, it appears that the main aim of orthodox Calvinistic Dissent in its worship during this century was to maintain at all costs the worship of its forefathers as a sacred obligation, the more sacred because it was endangered by the rational and moralistic currents of the age that depreciated faith. In consequence, this worship is notable for dignity and sobriety rather than for

⁴⁵ *Op.cit.*, p. 559.

⁴⁶ A telling phrase to describe windy sermons employed by Professor W. D. Maxwell in *A History of Worship in the Church of Scotland*, Chap. v.

⁴⁷ "Not to use notes was, at that time, accounted Methodistical, and, in the Metropolis, reading was the evidence of Dissenting regularity." (Bogue and Bennett, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 264.)

⁴⁸ Ed. J. D. Humphreys, *Diary and Correspondence of Philip Doddridge*, Vol. II, p. 322.

⁴⁹ Recounted by Walter Wilson, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 238 n.

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fervour or rapture. Such innovations as were made in worship were, on the whole, minor modifications. It is in the single sphere of hymnody that a real advance has been made from the trite and often tortuous versification of the Psalms of Sternhold and Hopkins, Tate and Brady. It was in their hymns, especially the hymns of Watts, that they were able to shut out the desiccating winds of rationalism that had almost dried up the springs of personal piety, and could sing:

Where reason fails, with all her powers,
There faith prevails and love adores.

Less inhibited by the traditions of the past, and more sensitive to the clamant needs of the unclaimed millions, Methodism was to shape the newer developments in worship that Dissent was to imitate at a decorous distance. It was enough for the orthodox Dissenters in an age of heterodoxy to have kept the faith of their Puritan forefathers and to have abided by the solemn engagements of their covenant religion.

CHAPTER VI

RADICAL WORSHIP: THE QUAKERS AND THE BAPTISTS

IN THE WHOLE RANGE of Protestant worship, from the Quakers to the Anglo-Catholics, from the spontaneous to the formal, from the radical to the traditional, from the least to the most sensuous, from the internal to the external, the worship of the Society of Friends and of the Baptists will be found furthest to the left in its origin and early development, although, of course, the Baptists have been moving in the course of history more to the centre.

1. *The Quakers*

If their apologist, Robert Barclay, is taken as representative, then the Society of Friends represented a new departure in Christianity. This was because its authority was no longer Scripture and tradition like the Roman Catholics, nor chiefly the Scriptures like the Puritans, nor Reason like the Socinians, but the "immediate revelation" of the Holy Spirit, the "inner light." To be sure, the Scriptures held authority for the Quaker, but subordinate to the Spirit. The Scriptures, on this view, are the declaration of the Fountain, not the Fountain itself.¹ In this attitude towards the Scripture lies the difference between the Quakers and the Baptists, for the latter were Bible men. Yet both the Quakers and the Baptists had proceeded further in the ways of reductionism and iconoclasm than any other children of the sixteenth century Reformation.

To limit our consideration of the Reformation to England, it can be regarded from one, if excessively simplified, point of view as the history of reducing the Christian religion to its essentials. To state this view in the way of a brusque simplicity—the first Reformers lopped off the Papacy, translated the Liturgy into English, reduced the seven sacraments to two, and the result was seen in the Church of England. The Presbyterians subtracted the aristocratic rule of bishops and substituted a polity of presbyters and elders. The Independents (or Congregationalists) removed the oligarchical form of government and substituted the autonomy of

¹ *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, Chaps. II and III.

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the local church under the leadership of an educated ministry. The early Baptists took away infant Baptism and an educated and ordained ministry, and made church membership depend upon conversion and the gift of the Spirit, though their services were always Biblical in basis and gave a large place to the preaching of the Word. Finally, the Quakers completed the process by removing the two remaining sacraments; and the use of singing in worship as well as sermons were proscribed in favour of a silent united waiting for the Spirit of God.

THE ESSENCE OF RELIGION

Early Quaker testimonies show that these ardent experimenters in religion went, like their founder Fox, through this very process of subtraction or reductionism. A most interesting example is provided by the testimony of John Gratton (1641-1712). Of Anglicans he says: "The Episcopalian priests came in their white surplices and read common-prayers. . . . I saw that they had the form without the power . . . their worship to be in ceremony and outward things without life." He heard the Presbyterians after they had been ejected from the Church of England in 1662 and comments: "The Presbyterian priests, whom I had so much esteemed and admired, made their farewell sermons and left us. . . . They ought not to be silent at man's command, if the Lord had sent and commanded them to preach. . . . So I left them." Later, he says: "I went to Chesterfield to seek out and meet those people called Independents for I liked the name, seeing nothing at all in man as man to depend upon, but they depended only upon the death and sufferings of Christ in his own body, and did not come to see him nor his appearance in themselves to be their life, so they were dead professors and dry trees not bringing forth fruit, for I read the Scripture and saw 'if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' " His penultimate visit was to the Baptists: "I found a people called Anabaptists. . . . I thought they came nearest the Scriptures of any I had yet tried . . . After they came out of the water . . . I saw no appearance of the spirit of newness of life or power . . . , their baptism being only with water which can only wash away the filth of the flesh."² At the end of this negative tunnel of darkness and dissatisfaction, Gratton found the unity and inwardness he had been seeking in the community of the Inner Light, the Society of

² John Gratton's *Journal* as cited in Howard Brinton, *Friends for 300 Years*, pp. 12-13.

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Friends. He recounts with great vividness how he, the tempest-tossed, found his haven of peace:

"At Exton at one widow Farney's house. I went to it and found divers Friends were come many miles; and when I came I was confirmed that they were in the truth whereof I had been convinced, though they were so much derided by the world. There was little said in that meeting but I sat still in it, and was bowed in spirit before the Lord, and felt Him with me and with Friends, and saw that they had their minds retired, and waited to feel His presence and power to operate in their hearts and that they were spiritual worshippers who worship God in spirit and in truth and I was sensible that they felt and tasted of the Lord's goodness as at that time I did, and though few words were spoken, yet I was well satisfied with the meeting."³

Happy seeker, happy finder! It is clear that it was the simplicity, interiority, humility, and friendliness of the spiritual worship of the Friends that he admired and wished to share.

A SPIRIT-DIRECTED WORSHIP

Robert Barclay provides a classic definition of Quaker worship in the often cited words: "All true and acceptable worship to God is offered in the inward and immediate moving and drawing of His own Spirit, which is neither limited to places, time, or persons: for though we be to worship always, in that we are to fear before Him; yet as to the outward signification thereof in prayers, praises, and preaching, we ought not to do it where and when we will, but where and when we are moved thereunto by the secret inspiration of His Spirit in our hearts. . . ."⁴

Positively, this is a declaration that the Spirit of God alone must direct worship where and when He wills, requiring on the part of the worshipper an undistracted heart, prepared for and expecting His coming. Negatively, it is a protest against all convention, hypocrisy, externalism, and limitation of the Holy Spirit in worship. This is precisely what the definition goes on to castigate: "All other worship then, both praises, prayers and preachings, which man sets about in his own will, and at his own appointment, which he can both begin and end at his pleasure, do or leave undone as himself sees meet; whether they be prescribed form, as a liturgy, or prayers conceived extemporarily, by the natural strength and faculty of the mind; they are all but superstitions, will-worship, and abominable

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Op.cit.*, Chap. XI.

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idolatry, in the sight of God; which are to be denied, rejected, and separated from in the day of His spiritual arising."⁵

This spiritual revolution, in which all tradition was to be done away with, and in which even the Scriptures were to be used merely as a checking of the authority of a present "immediate revelation," was part of that astonishing eschatological sense which had caused the sectaries of the English Commonwealth to set up the rule of the "saints."⁶ But the Quakers, unlike the Fifth Monarchists, mostly believed in a spiritual revolution without political expression; unlike the Ranters, they esteemed the Spirit of God to be silent in His operations on the human soul. At the same time, however quiet they were in their own worship, there was no mere quietism in the Quakers of the seventeenth century. They testified to their faith in the market-place, as well as on the mountain-top, and before judges who condemned them to imprisonment for troubling the peace. They even challenged their Anglican opponents in the very "steeple-houses," as Fox called the churches. Their Quietist phase corresponded to the Latitudinarian phase of the Church of England, and was in each case a typical eighteenth century reaction against the excessive "enthusiasm" of the previous century, as well as being, in the case of the Quakers, a reflexion of how their honesty, industry, diligence, sobriety, and integrity had raised the majority of them from the proletariat to the bourgeoisie. In the eighteenth century, like many of the Dissenters, the Quakers had lost their revolutionary fervour and, in occupying a fairly secure and respectable position as merchants in society, their missionary zeal. This was proved by their adoption of the "Birthright Membership" for the Society in the eighteenth century and by the provision of a definite Book of Discipline. But however sober and unrevolutionary they might be in nature, they still retained the traditions of worship of their forefathers.

THE REJECTION OF THE SACRAMENTS

The most radical feature of the worship of the Quakers was their rejection of the formal Sacraments. For this procedure three basic reasons may be given. They were convinced that no external rite could guarantee internal sincerity. In the second place, their mys-

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ No ready parallel to the Quaker belief in the new age of the spirit can be found in earlier church history, except it be in the more complex and subtle views of the Abbot Joachim of Flora (c. 1145-1202) and in some of the "spiritual Reformers" of the sixteenth century.

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ticism enabled them to apprehend the entire universe as a sacrament of God, and they refused to limit the number of Sacraments to those declared to be such by the historic churches. At the same time they claimed to have the experience which the Sacraments conveyed. Baptism, for example, they declared to be "a pure and spiritual thing, to wit, the baptism of the Spirit and fire, by which we are buried with him, that being washed and purged from our sins, we may walk in newness of life."⁷ Their link with the Baptists is seen in the view, "As to the baptism of infants, it is a mere human tradition, for which neither precept nor practice is to be found in all the Scripture."⁸ Similarly, "the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ is inward and spiritual . . . by which the inward man is daily nourished in the hearts of those in whom Christ dwells."⁹ Their third reason for the rejection of Sacraments was that they were required to be celebrated by an ordained priesthood, and this was the denial of the priesthood of all believers.

"ELECTED SILENCE SPEAK . . ."

It is easier to describe the negations in Quaker worship than to expound the more positive side of this radical cultus. This is particularly the case when its worship rejects all external signs and helps as the mere crutches of the soul, and claims that the "secret" inner working of the Spirit is alone acceptable because entirely obedient worship. They were, of course, utterly logical in the spirituality of their worship. They rejected the Scripture, the criterion of Protestant and particularly of Puritan worship, since they believed that Scripture was merely a record of past "immediate revelations." This is what made Margaret Fell (later to be married to Fox) exclaim, "We are all thieves; we are all thieves; we have taken the Scripture in words and know nothing of them in ourselves,"¹⁰ on hearing Fox proclaim that conventional preachers merely offered a second-hand religion on the authority of the prophets, the apostles, or of Christ, instead of one in which they themselves spoke as under the power of the Spirit. If, as the Fourth Gospel declares, "The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes, so it is with everyone born of the Spirit,"¹¹ it is manifestly presumptuous of man to attempt to channel that Spirit by set Sacraments, by

⁷ Barclay, *op.cit.*, Chap. XII.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, Chap. XIII.

¹⁰ *Journal of George Fox* (bicentenary edition), Vol. II, p. 512.

¹¹ John 3:8.

set times of meeting, by set places of meeting, or by set persons (ordained clergymen). It is not only presumptuous but also futile, as futile as to attempt to catch the wind in a net. The Divine Presence is known only when the Holy Spirit chooses to become the guest of the waiting group. The focus of attention in a Roman Catholic church is the altar; in a Protestant church the pulpit is where the Divine message is delivered; in a Quaker meeting the souls of the worshippers are the *loci* of the Presence. In the words of Whittier, the American Quaker poet, "God is most where man is least."

Perhaps the most perceptive modern study of Quaker "silence" has been provided by Otto, who distinguishes three elements in it: the numinous silence of sacrament, the silence of waiting, and the silence of union.¹² The former is described as "the experience of the transcendent in gracious, intimate presence, the Lord's visitation of His people," and it is reached after the silence of waiting, of inward detachment and concentration.¹³ The silence of union or fellowship is finely illustrated by Barclay: "As iron sharpeneth iron, the seeing of the faces one of another when both are inwardly gathered into the life, giveth occasion for the life secretly to rise and pass from vessel to vessel. And as many candles lighted and put into one place do greatly augment the light and make it more to shine forth, so when many are gathered together into the same life, there is more of the glory of God and his power appears, to the refreshment of each individual; for that he partakes not only of the light and life raised in himself, but in all the rest."¹⁴ In short, this was a type of worship designed to prevent the substitution of form for spirit, by omitting forms established prior to the time of worship. To predict was essentially to presume; to wait to receive the revelation that the Holy Spirit would give to His people seemed to be the only possible avenue of humility.

RETROGRESSION

As with the old Puritan denominations, the eighteenth century was for the Quakers, at best, a time of standing still if not of defi-

¹² *The Idea of the Holy*, pp. 216-20.

¹³ William Penn asks if the fire of worship is self-kindled by the group, "Or rather do you sit down in True Silence, from your own Will and Workings, and 'waiting upon the Lord,' with your minds fixed in that light wherewith Christ has enlightened you, until the Lord breathes life in you, refresheth you, and prepares you and your spirits and souls to make you fit for his service, that you may offer unto him a pure and spiritual sacrifice?" *Works*, p. 441.

¹⁴ *Op.cit.*, p. 383. See Christopher Isherwood's sympathetic and perceptive account of a modern worship meeting of the Society of Friends in his novel, *The World in the Evening*.

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nite regress. It is fortunate that there is available a description of an eighteenth century Quaker meeting from the pen of Voltaire. He attended a meeting near the Monument in central London in 1726. This is how he describes it:

"The Brethren were already assembled at my entering it with my guide. There might be about four hundred men and three hundred women in the meeting. The women hid their faces behind their fans, and the men were covered with their broad-brimmed hats. All were seated and the silence was universal. I passed through them, but did not perceive so much as one lift up his eyes to look at me. This silence lasted a quarter of an hour, when at least one of them rose up, took off his hat, and, after making a variety of wry faces and groaning in a most lamentable manner, he, partly from his nose, and partly from his mouth, threw out a strange, confused jumble of words (borrowed, as he imagined, from the Gospel) which neither himself nor any of his hearers understood. When this distorter had ended his beautiful soliloquy, and that the stupid, but greatly edified, congregation was separated, I asked my friend how it was possible for the judicious part of their assembly to suffer such a babbling? 'We are obliged,' says he, 'to suffer it, because no one knows when a man rises up to hold forth whether he will be moved by the Spirit or by folly. In this doubt and uncertainty we listen patiently to everyone; we even allow our women to hold forth. Two or three of these are often inspired at one and the same time, and it is then that a most charming noise is heard in the Lord's house.' 'You have, then, no priests?' said I to him. 'No, no, friend,' replies the Quaker, 'to our great happiness.'"¹⁵

The Deism, or priestless natural religion, of Voltaire colours the interpretation of his impressions of the Quakers, whose extraordinary capacity for group withdrawal made a profound impact upon him. The self-conscious insistence upon wearing the clothes of a previous century (he refers to the wide-brimmed hats of the men) strikes him as quaint. The humility that believes that every man or woman may have a revelation of the divine seems to him, not so much amazing humility, as a characteristic of chaotic lack of organization. It is more than likely that this was the typically ambiguous impact of Quakerism upon the Age of Reason, as seen through the lens of one of its chief prophets. The Quakers were an astonishing

¹⁵ Desmond Flower, ed., *Voltaire's England*, p. 551. This volume is a translated selection from Voltaire's *Letters concerning the English*.

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survival from the Age of Enthusiasm. It would be a century before their integrity of life, their campaign for the abolition of the slave trade, and their high standards of business ethics would win them recognition in England, and before even their simple, spiritual worship would be thought admirable, not eccentric. At the end of the eighteenth century, we find John Gurney Bevan writing *A Refutation against the more modern Misrepresentations of the Society of Friends*. He admits that "we are just considered as a good sort of people in the main who refuse to fight and swear and pay tithes; and while the improved manners of the age allow that for these and other singularities we ought not to be molested, the public in general cares little further about us and seldom enquires a reason of the hope that is in us."¹⁶ A. Neave Brayshaw, commenting on this passage, insists that the failure was due in part to Quaker isolation from the world which they also required of would-be converts, and which was symbolized in the anachronistic attire and also in the apparent irrelevance of their worship. The latter he reconstructs as follows:

"The worship to which he [the inquirer] was invited was a meeting of not less than two hours in length, probably held in silence unbroken by word of ministry or prayer. And such ministry as he might hear was for the most part of a rhapsodical nature, often verging upon incoherence, if not actually passing over into it, of great length, and marked by strange mannerisms of tone and demeanour which virtually had come to be demanded as the sign or outcome of divine inspiration. At times, indeed, he might hear a tender or powerful appeal to be faithful to his inward Guide, but . . . the element of teaching was absent, and for this no provision was elsewhere made."¹⁷

It is clear that Voltaire's record was nearer the truth than a caricature and that the most anti-traditionalist group had almost become entombed in its own traditions.

CREATIVE RADICALISM AND ITS DECLINE

It is hard to credit that the Quakers were the heirs of so radical and so profound a reorganization of worship in the spirit as original Quakerism had provided. Yet this original tradition, like Jairus' daughter, was not dead, but sleeping.¹⁸ Its first emphasis was a

¹⁶ Published in London, in 1800.

¹⁷ *The Quakers: Their Story and Message*, pp. 168-69.

¹⁸ In this and the following paragraph the author is greatly indebted to Chap. iv of Howard Brinton, *op.cit.*

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corrective with positive and negative results. Negatively, it was anti-liturgical, anti-ceremonial, and anti-sacramental. Positively, it was an emphasis on spontaneity and inwardness, a waiting of the gathered souls for God to speak to them through the Holy Spirit. It was a renewed emphasis on the primitive, charismatic element in New Testament Christianity. This stress on the immanence of God in the soul was the recovery also of the experience of the great contemplatives and ascetics of the historic Church. Quakerism was kept from making the transition to utter anarchy and individualistic excess (in short, from inner light to outer darkness) by its Calvinistic inheritance of the sovereignty of God (for it began within the Baptist tradition for Fox and within the Presbyterian-Puritan tradition for Barclay and Penn). The consequence of this belief in the inner light was profound: it meant that all men may come to recognize and respond to God's revelation of love in Christ, and that this experience cannot be restricted to a time or place or a priestly caste, or to certain sacramental actions, or even to the Bible.

Original Quakerism was also characterized by a rhythm of withdrawal from and return to the world. It begins with the removal of all obstructions, such as the pride, greed, lust, and impatience of men, that may impede the Spirit's coming, and is thus the analogue of the *via negativa* of the mystics. But the purpose of this withdrawal is to return to the world, inspired by the Spirit. It is an ascent to the mountain and moment of Transfiguration, in preparation for the descent into the valley of Humiliation. It is, moreover, not a solitary action, but the activity of the gathered group of Friends. In these two respects it is different from traditional ascetical mysticism. Barclay has words much to the point in this matter: "God hath produced effectually in many that mortification and abstraction from the love and cares of this world who daily are conversing in this world, but inwardly redeemed out of it, both in wedlock and in their lawful employments, which was judged only could be obtained by such as were shut up in cloisters and monasteries."¹⁹ In the third place, this worship does away not only with all external aids to the senses, but even with words. Silent prayer was thought to be superior to vocal prayer. The reason is to be found in a testimony of Fox to Francis Howgill: "he saw they had no need of words, for they were all sitting down under their Teacher, Jesus Christ."²⁰

¹⁹ *Op.cit.*, p. 518.

²⁰ Cited by Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, p. 65.

It is now possible to see how far the Friends of the eighteenth century had fallen away from their forefathers. Their worship was a withdrawal from the world, without any desire to return into it. They were now embracing the very "cloistered and fugitive virtue" which they existed to combat. The proverb was being reversed: it was a case of *sauter pour mieux reculer*. Their very dress, originally planned as a protest against ostentation, now drew attention to themselves as peculiar people, and caused their children to be nicknamed "Quack! Quack!" by the derision of non-Quaker children.²¹ It seems that they now observed outward gestures and peculiar nasal intonations as external proofs of the inward possession of the Spirit. They had become "professors" not "possessors"—to use the very biting distinction which Fox himself had employed to differentiate sincere from formal Christians. Gone was the missionary spirit which attacked the strongholds of formalism, whether in the "steeple-houses" or in the court of the Protector, Oliver Cromwell, and which journeyed throughout the three kingdoms and the inhabited parts of the New World. In a word, the prophets of a new age of the Spirit had become inoffensive, bourgeois eccentrics! Revolution and rapture had been succeeded by retirement, innovation by innocuousness.

2. Quakers and Baptists: Their Interrelationships

It has already been shown that there were affinities between the Quakers and the Baptists, in their tendency to divest worship of its traditional accompaniments by reducing it to the simple, naked essentials; in the simplicity of their first meeting-houses, in which a bench for their seniors and leaders replaced the central altar of the Anglican Church and the central pulpit and Communion-table of the Dissenting meeting-house; and in the rejection of infant Baptism. There were many other features common to both these radical Reformation communions.

The Baptists had also stressed the subjectivity of the inner response to the Spirit by restricting Baptism, the Sacrament of admission to the membership of the holy community, to believing and converted adults (whereas Presbyterians and Independents allowed the children of the "saints" to receive Baptism, as included within the covenant of God's people). Like the Quakers, the Baptists also formed themselves into democratic fellowships and made no distinction between their meetings for worship and business, be-

²¹ A. Neave Brayshaw, *op.cit.*, p. 168.

believing that worship and the ordering of their common life were equally to be undertaken under the guidance of the Spirit. Both groups stressed extemporaneity in worship and rejected the use of a set liturgy as a "stinting" of the Spirit. If we are to look for an English precursor to Fox who stressed almost as much as he the pneumatic nature of worship, we shall find him to be John Smyth, the Elizabethan and Jacobean Baptist minister, who held "that the worship of the new testament properly so called is spiritual proceeding originally from the hart" and that both in preaching and in singing the psalms a physical Bible should be dispensed with.²² In the same connection, it should be remembered that the General Baptists refused unison singing of psalms or hymns until late into the eighteenth century as unsuitable to spiritual worship.²³ Further, both the General Baptists and the Quakers believed in the possibility of universal salvation and in the need for toleration. Moreover, there seem to be real similarities between the Continental Anabaptists and the English Quakers in their refusal to take oaths or to bear arms. It seems, therefore, not in the least surprising that George Fox should have found many Baptists willing to become Quakers or that he should have found greater satisfaction with them than with any other group of the Puritan Dissenters.

To assert that the Baptists and the Quakers had many resemblances is far from claiming that they were identical. The Baptists celebrated both of the Dominical Sacraments, whereas the Quakers celebrated neither. In doctrine as in church order, the Particular Baptists in England belonged to the Puritan tradition.²⁴ Although there were several General Baptist congregations who believed in universal salvation, there were many more Particular Baptist Congregations who were in the Calvinist tradition in limiting salvation to God's elect. Furthermore, both groups of Baptists practised believers' Baptism, while the Quakers rejected both infant and believers' Baptism. A further difference concerns preaching. Though Baptist ministers did not ordinarily preach from a sermon manuscript, theirs was a serious attempt to expound the Scriptures, their primary authority. Their extemporary preaching was an attempt to allow the Word of God to be driven home to the people by the

²² Cf. the present author's *The Worship of the English Puritans*, pp. 89f.

²³ It should be noted, however, that originally the Quakers were less iconoclastic on the subject of praise; *ibid.*, p. 163.

²⁴ As the Congregationalists in their *Savoy Declaration* reiterated the *Westminster Confession* with a separate section on their distinctive ecclesiastical polity, so the Baptists reiterated the *Savoy Declaration*, adding a revision of the section on Baptism indicative of their restriction of that Sacrament to believers in their own *Confession*.

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illuminating and confirming Spirit. Finally, as a liturgical criterion Scripture was primary for the Baptists and secondary for the Quakers; the Holy Spirit was secondary for the Baptists and primary for the Quakers.

3. *The General Baptists*

It is fortunate that we are able accurately to assess the strength of the eighteenth century Baptists (both of the General or Arminian and of the Particular or Calvinistic groups) in relation to Dissent and the Establishment.²⁵ In England and Wales (excluding Monmouthshire) there were about 9,000 parishes at the beginning of the reign of George I. Outside the Establishment there were: Jacobite Non-Jurors, Roman Catholic recusants, and Protestant Non-conformists. Of the latter there were about 880 Calvinistic paedobaptist congregations and about 244 Baptist congregations; about 111 of the latter were General Baptist congregations. Thus, before the Salter's Hall Controversy had divided the Trinitarians from the Unitarians (and the greater part of the Presbyterians had become Unitarians), it would not be far from the truth to estimate that in a group of 82 Anglican parishes there might be found eight Presbyterian or Independent churches, two Particular Baptist churches, and one General Baptist church.

The Particular Baptist churches would worship very much in the tradition of the Puritan denominations, such as the Independents and Presbyterians. The General Baptists, however, had not only a more radical theology than the Calvinistic or Particular Baptists, but several interesting and unusual customs in their worship, not shared by the latter. The General Baptists were fond of saying that their faith and practice could be deduced from the "Six Principles" enumerated in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in chapter six and verses one and two, and these they shared with the Particular Baptists, except for the wider application of the fourth—the laying-on of hands. Like the Anglicans, they insisted that all believers should receive the laying-on of hands, but unlike the Anglicans they did not separate this from Baptism and reserve it for confirmation. The Particular Baptists occasionally used the laying-on of hands as a part of their ordination ceremonial.

²⁵ From the MS. of the Rev. Mr. John Evans in the Dr. Williams' Library, Gordon Square, London, reprinted in *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, Vol. II (1910-11), p. 94f. See also W. T. Whitley, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches* for the history of the denomination.

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THREE DISTINCTIVE ORDINANCES

The General Baptists practised three other customs fairly widely. They believed they had a Biblical precedent and therefore a Divine imperative for washing the feet of the "saints." They claimed that it was commanded and blessed by Christ and that it tended to "produce affection among the brethren" when "performed decently and in order."²⁶ The custom was falling into desuetude by 1771, when Daniel Dobell, a messenger of the Church, remarked upon it, stating that he had been "in conscientious practice of it upward of forty years."²⁷ It is also interesting to note that they used to anoint their sick with oil according to the command of the Epistle of James, chapter five, verses 14 and 15. Of this custom Grantham Killingworth attests: "I myself have known several persons, to whom it has been administered with the most surprising success; yea, even with instantaneous cure."²⁸ It seems possible that both these rites were derived from Holland and from the Mennonites with whom the early Baptist exiles from Laudian persecution came into contact.²⁹ It is also probable that it was in this land that they came into contact with the Remonstrant Brotherhood and learned of the tenets of Arminius.

In the middle of the eighteenth century it was common to practise footwashing at love-feasts. There is a record of an occasion when there were 145 members of the Ditchling, Sussex, General Baptist Church who participated in this joint rite when gathered at Flagborough Farm.³⁰ Dissatisfaction with the old custom is discoverable among the same community only fourteen years later (in 1767), when the rite was observed by only 90 of the company, the rest being unconvinced of its authority.³¹ By a strange coincidence, this was about the time that John Wesley was instituting the rite of the love-feast for his Methodists.

THE SINGING CONTROVERSY

A peculiarity which the General Baptists shared with the Quakers was an unwillingness to sing hymns or other praises in their worship. At their first Assembly after the Revolution of 1688, the

²⁶ A. C. Underwood, *A History of the British Baptists*, p. 123f.

²⁷ W. T. Whitley, *Minutes*, *op.cit.*

²⁸ *A Full and Particular Answer to Mr. Whiston's Address to the Baptists*, p. 10.

²⁹ Cf. H. Davies, *The Worship . . .*, *op.cit.*, p. 54. On the other hand, these practices could have been derived directly from the Bible since they often occur among Biblicist groups.

³⁰ *The Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. IV (1928-29), p. 69.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

General Baptists decided to consider whether psalm-singing was "so strangely foreign to the evangelical worship that it was not conceived anyways safe to admit such carnal formalities."³² A single voice might sing praise, but conjoint singing was forbidden. Hymns were even more frowned upon as the singing of "men's composures"—this despite the fact that Benjamin Keach of Horsleydown General Baptist Church was one of the pioneers of the English Free Churches in the composition of hymns.³³ By 1733 the Assembly was a little more liberal in outlook and found itself able to say: "There is very few that belong to this Assembly who either practise or approve the way of singing men's composures with tuneable notes and a mixed multitude; but . . . we do not think it justifiable for us to refuse to join with them in a General Assembly."³⁴ Innovations came very slowly in this part of the Baptist denomination. This may be gathered from the fact that at the Purchase meeting in Sussex, the first hymn ever to be sung there was one introduced by a visiting lay preacher, Burgess, on the afternoon of November 5th, 1788, when he had preached on the Gunpowder Plot and the dangers of Roman Catholicism.³⁵ It is significant that Burgess' detailed diary makes no mention that he had ever encountered the rite of feet-washing. It may also be observed that though in theory the General Baptists approved of solo-singing, in practice their worship was entirely without music, vocal or instrumental.³⁶

A general idea of the usual Sunday forms of worship in General Baptist churches is to be obtained from the agreement which was made between two congregations of this association that united in 1695 to form the Paul's Alley, Barbican Baptist Meeting, which remained vigorous until 1768. The compact asserted:

"SEVENTHLY; That the publick Worship in the Congregation on the Lord's Day be thus performed, viz. In the morning about half an hour after nine, some Brother be appointed to begin the Exercise in reading a Psalm, & then to spend some time in Prayer;

³² Whitley, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 27.

³³ Dr. Whitley, in *The History of British Baptists*, p. 186, advances an interesting theory to account for Baptists being the pioneer English hymnologists. He attributes this to the many Fifth Monarchists in their midst who from 1650 onwards popularized their political propaganda by setting it to common metre. Because it was rhymed it was readily committed to the memory. The transition was easily made from political to devotional and doctrinal use. "Their verses were," he says, "sad doggerel, but excellent propaganda." We may note that Vavasor Powell, a notorious leader of the Fifth Monarchists, published his collected hymns for adults in 1673.

³⁴ Whitley, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 18.

³⁵ *The Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. IV (1928-29), p. 320.

³⁶ Whitley, *op.cit.*, p. 187.

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& after yt to read some other Portion of H. Scripture, till the Minister comes into the Pulpit; and after Preaching & Prayer to conclude with singing a Psalm. The afternoon exercise to begin abt half an hour after one, & to be carried on & concluded as in the forenoon.

"EIGHTHLY; That on Breaking-Bread-Days the Psalm to be omitted in the Afternoon till the Conclusion of the Lord's Supper."³⁷

Unusual in allowing one Psalm to be sung, this order of worship must have proved very uninspiring fare except for those whose tongues were parched for want of living waters. In their distinctive ordinances, such as the love-feast, foot-washing, and anointing the sick with oil, however, they were conscious of reviving customs of the primitive Church which others had allowed to lapse, an exciting feeling, if a spiritually dangerous one, compounded of Biblical fidelity and moral superiority.

4. *The Particular Baptists*

Standing in the Calvinist tradition, the worship of the Particular Baptists is closer to that of the Congregationalists and Presbyterians in England. Like them, their form of church order is based upon a covenant relationship between God and each other. We may note that if the Prayer Book is the nexus of Anglicanism, the covenant relationship is the tie that binds the English Calvinist denominations, that gives them the sense of obedience to the sovereign God, the conviction of belonging to the elect that is able to make their churchmanship an anvil that will wear out the hammer-blows of persecution and that requires them, as God's people, to stand for His rule in the life of the nation.

THE COVENANT BASIS

The covenant, whether personal, ecclesiastical, or national (as in *The Solemn League and Covenant*), is a concept central to the understanding of Calvinistic denominations, for this is the muscle and sinew of their ecclesiology. In the seventeenth century that great Baptist John Bunyan cried out at the prospect of death: "If God doth not come in, thought I, I will leap off the ladder, even blindfold into eternity, sink or swim, come hell. Lord Jesus, if thou wilt catch me, do; if not, I will venture for thy name."³⁸ In the middle

³⁷ Excerpts from Burgess' Diary published in *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, Vol. IV (1914-15), p. 47.

³⁸ *The Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. III (1926-27), p. 29.

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of the succeeding century, another Baptist leader, John Collett Ryland, records his secret covenant with God: "June 25. Ev. 10-1744. Aet. 20 years 8 months 2 days. If there's ever a God in Heaven or Earth, I vow, Protest and Swear in God's Strength—or that Gods permitting me, I'll find him out and I'll know whether he loves or hates me or I'll dye and perish Soul & Body in the Pursuit & Search."³⁹

It was in the strength and determination of such existential commitment that individuals entered into a covenant with God and each other as the basis of their church membership.⁴⁰ The nature of such a church covenant as undertaken by a Particular Baptist congregation may be seen in the Great Ellingham Church Covenant.⁴¹ In this particular case, besides the covenant, there is a preface indicating why the church drew up a covenant, with Biblical precedents, a lengthy statement of seventeen articles of faith, and a note added in 1758 which reads: "The form Used in the Admission of Members; Are you willing to give up your Self wholly to this Church To walk with this Church in all the Ordinances of Christ, so long as you can walk here to the Glory of God, & your own Edification?" This seems to have been an abbreviation of the original covenant, which is more impressive:

"We likewise desiring to be Added to ye Lord, Do make a sure Covenant according to the example of the Church in Nehemiah's time . . . and we do hereby Engage ourselves (as the Lord shall Assist us) to walk with one another to the glory of God & Edification of Each other in love, for the bearing of one anothers burdens, for ye strengthening of one anothers faith, for the improving of each others gifts, and the watching over one anothers Souls; and we do hereby further engage ours[elves] as the Lord shall assist us, to keep close to ye pu[re] Ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ as they are delivered to us in the holy Gosple, without an [ad]mixture of human Inventions."

The covenant also includes provisions for regular attendance at worship, and the maintenance of the ministry.

THE BAPTISM OF BELIEVERS

The distinctive contribution of Baptists to worship is, of course, the administration of Believers' Baptism, of which we have admira-

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁴⁰ See H. Davies, *The Worship . . .*, *op.cit.*, pp. 273-77.

⁴¹ A MS. seen by courtesy of the Rev. Mr. J. A. Smallbone of Wymondham, Norfolk.

ble accounts in Robert Robinson's *A History of Baptism* (1790). The fullest account is of a public open-air baptismal service at Whittlesford, near Cambridge, in which the leader was the famous Dr. Andrew Giffard, Sub-librarian of the British Museum and minister of Eagle Street Baptist Church, London. At 10:30 a.m. Giffard ascended a movable pulpit in a large open courtyard near the river and adjoining the house of the lord of the manor. "Round him stood the congregation; people on horseback, in coaches, and in carts forming the outside semi-circle; many other persons fitting into the rooms of the house, the sashes being open."⁴² After a hymn sung by the congregation, a comprehensive intercessory prayer followed "for all ranks and degrees of men," including a blessing on the service of Baptism. His sermon preached from the text "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance," had four clear divisions. Baptism was not a pagan rite, but a New Testament institution of Divine appointment; its proper subject was a believer, not an infant; the mode was dipping, not sprinkling; and its end was to testify to the mission of Jesus and the truth of the Christian religion. The sermon concluded, there was a hymn and a shorter prayer, after which the candidates for Baptism retired to prepare themselves.

Robinson stresses with what dignity and comeliness the candidates were dressed: "About half an hour later, the administrator . . . in a long black gown of fine baize, without a hat, with a small New Testament in his hand, came down to the river side accompanied by several Baptist ministers and deacons of their Churches, and the persons to be baptized. The men came first, two and two, without hats, and dressed as usual, except that instead of coats each had on a long white baize gown tied round the waist with a sash. Such as had no hair wore white cotton or linen caps. The women followed the men, two and two, all dressed neat, clean, and plain, and their gowns white linen or dimity. It was said, the garments had knobs of lead at bottom to make them sink. Each had a long light silk cloak hanging loosely over her shoulders, a broad ribband tied over her gown beneath her breast, and a hat over her head. They all ranged themselves around the administrator at the water side. A great multitude of spectators stood on the banks of the river on both sides: some had climbed and sat in the trees, many sat on horseback and in carriages, and all behaved with a decent

⁴² Robinson, *op.cit.*, p. 571.

seriousness which did honour to the good sense and good manners of the assembly. . . ."⁴³

Our narrator, himself one of the most eminent Baptist ministers present, describes the rite itself with equal clarity and vividness. The administrator, a nephew of Dr. Giffard, first gave out a hymn, and then read the portion of Scripture telling of the Baptism of the eunuch, which he afterwards expounded for about ten minutes, and: "then, taking one of the men by the hand he led him into the water, saying as he went, See here is water, what doth hinder? If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest be baptized. . . . When he came to a sufficient depth he stopped, and with the utmost composure placing himself on the left hand of the man, his face being towards the man's shoulder, he put his right hand between his shoulders behind, gathering into it a little of the gown for hold: the fingers of his left hand he thrust under the sash before, and the man putting his two thumbs into that hand, he locked all together by closing his hand. Then he deliberately said, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and while he uttered these words, standing wide, he gently leaned him backward and dipped him once. As soon as he had raised him, a person in a boat fastened there for the purpose, took hold of the man's hand, wiped his face with a napkin, and led him a few steps to another attendant, who then gave him his arm, walked with him to the house, and assisted him to dress. There were many such in waiting, who like the primitive susceptors assisted during the whole service. The rest of the men followed the first and were baptized in like manner."⁴⁴

The account continues with a description of the Baptism of the women: "A female friend took off at the water side the hat and cloak. A deacon of the Church led one to the administrator and another from him, and women at the water side took each as she came out of the river and conducted her to the apartment in the house, where they dressed themselves."⁴⁵ The lengthy service, or series of services, was not yet ended. The administrator first dismissed the assembly with an exhortation and a blessing. He then visited the apartments to address the newly baptized men and women. Having prayed with them, this apparently inexhaustible minister closed with "a short discourse"—on such comprehensive topics as the blessings of civil and religious liberty, the sufficiency

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 571f.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

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of Scripture, the pleasure of a good conscience, the importance of a holy life, and the prospect of a blessed immortality.

Inordinate as the length of the service may seem by modern standards, it must have been a singularly impressive occasion for all who had witnessed it, and of incomparable importance to those who had thus dramatically attested to their having died to the old Adam and risen again to the new life in Christ through this symbol of regeneration in the waters of Baptism. Its simple, rustic setting must have recalled vividly that greater Baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan. Moreover, the public profession of the Christian faith in such a rite must not only have required more courage than attending a confirmation service in the Church of England, but also manifested more clearly the transition from the life of the world to the life of the holy, covenanted community in Christ.

In their practice of other ordinances the Particular Baptists were hardly to be distinguished from their fellow Calvinists, the Independents and the faithful Presbyterians. If their distinctive occasional ordinance was the administration of Baptism to believers, their normal services of worship consisted of praise, prayers, and the sermon. In common with the growing apathy of the age, Dissenting congregations seemed to have regarded sermons as important and prayers as often irrelevant. A London Baptist minister, preaching before a group of his fellow pastors in the London association in 1770, laments the negligence of public prayers:

"How strange then, and deserving reproof are they who accustom themselves to be absent great part of the time allotted for prayer in the service of the sanctuary! yet, alas! who is unacquainted with this shameful practice among us? So far are many sunk below a becoming readiness and zeal for this interesting and delightful branch of social worship, that it is but too much the case, that our first and chief prayer, with the previous psalmody, is like what is vulgarly called the saints bell, which rings the people into church!"⁴⁶

Unfortunately, the rest of the sermon is largely exhortation rather than an analysis of the factors that have led to the decline in public prayer. We might hazard that the prevalent Deism had made of the intimate God of the Puritans, sovereign Lord but near, a remote Deity almost prisoned within the laws of the Newtonian universe. William Whiston, the able but eccentric Anglican clergyman who practised believers' Baptism, wrote *A Friendly Address to the Bap-*

⁴⁶ Benjamin Wallin, *Gospel-Requisites to Acceptable Prayer*, pp. 21-22. See also J. Ivimey's *A History of the English Baptists*, Vol. IV, pp. 207f., for an account of London ministers in three denominations agreeing to preach on public worship because of the decay in religion.

tists in 1747, which consisted largely of criticisms of their worship. Some of these seem peripheral, if not entirely irrelevant. Such, for example, is the suggestion that the Baptists should mix water with the wine in their celebration of Holy Communion, or that they practise single instead of trine immersion in Baptism. More to the point, however, are the criticisms that they often omit the Lord's Prayer in worship, and exclude the simple reading of the Scriptures without exposition, and the singing of hymns and psalms (this is a criticism applicable to the General Baptists, but not to the more numerous Particular Baptists). In modern terms, this charge could be re-defined as a lack of authority and objectivity in worship, due to an excess of subjective didacticism. There is also substance in the charge that the Baptists allowed deacons and even laymen without official standing in their churches to offer the solemn public prayers of the congregation and to pronounce the benediction. Here, it is not the principle of the priesthood of all believers that is at stake, but the competency of untrained men in that most difficult of devotional exercises—extemporary prayer. A *reductio ad absurdum* of this practice is provided in a parody of the unskilled extemporary prayer of "an Anabaptist Teacher at Norwich for the Clerk of his Meeting-House." It proceeds:

"O Lord, a Brother of Ours, and Servant of Thine, being sick and weak, desires the Prayers of us thy Faithful Servants: Lord, if thou knowest him not, his Name is John Mason; and Father if thee knowest not where he lives, behold, O Lord, he lives right over against the Cockey in Pockthorpe; and behold, Lord, he is a lame man, and walks with one Crutch, and he is a Cobbler by his Trade; and, Father, his Wife is a very Tidy Woman, for she is a Bobbin-Filler, she brings her boy up to fill Pipes, and her Girl to knit: and now, O Lord, lest thou shouldst mistake, behold there is a great Stone lying at his Door. We pray thee, Father that thou wouldest be pleased to call upon him, and visit him in thy Mercy, &c."⁴⁷

This is not reporting, but malicious and even bawdy misrepresentation. Nonetheless, its language, compounded of Biblicisms and vulgarisms, its naïvete, its suspicion of the Divine omniscience, and its rambling nature may well be characteristic of some of the unlearned effusions of Baptist laymen during the elegant century. It must be remembered that Isaac Watts had to offer many criticisms of extemporary prayer among the Independents for a dif-

⁴⁷ *English Presbyterian Eloquence &c. in a Collection of Remarkable Flowers of Rhetorick, By an Admirer of Monarchy and Episcopacy*, p. 16.

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ferent fault—pedantic ostentation, though he, too, warned against the chaos of unpremeditated prayers.⁴⁸

It would be entirely erroneous, however, if the impression were to be left that only Isaac Watts guarded against the growing depreciation of prayers and their abuse in Dissenting worship. Free prayer as a deep devotional discipline had its own Baptist defender in Dr. John Gill. The first and supreme part of prayer for him is the adoration of God, through the consideration of His perfections. He is profoundly aware of the ultimacy and intimacy, the transcendence and immanence, of the Holy God. He, therefore, declares:

"The greatness, glory, power, and majesty of God, the holiness, purity, and righteousness of His nature oblige us to an humble submission to Him, and reverential awe of Him. The consideration of His love, grace, mercy, and goodness, will not suffer His dread to make us afraid."⁴⁹

INTERPRETATIONS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

The same danger of subjectivity is seen in the prevalence of Zwinglian rather than of Calvinist views of the Lord's Supper among many Baptists and Congregationalists during this period. It is, in effect, to believe that the Lord's Supper is a memorial to a dead Christ, or a badge of the members' loyalty to the Church. It is to make of the sacrament a *signum nudum*, not an efficient or conveying symbol of God's grace received in faith. The stress here is on what men do, not on what Christ did for men on the Cross and renews for men when they meet at His Table. One ought not to be too surprised by the Dissenting depreciation of the Sacrament in the eighteenth century, when even the members of the Church of England did not seriously object to Dissenters' attending at Holy Communion as a quick test for qualifying for municipal office, as required by the Occasional Conformity Act:

And make the symbols of atoning grace,
An office-key, the pick-lock of a place;
That infidels may prove their title good
By an oath dipped in sacramental blood.

However, there were those who held the old high Puritan conception of the Lord's Supper, notably the most famous Baptist

⁴⁸ *A Guide to Prayer*, p. 27f.

⁴⁹ *Two Discourses; the one on Prayer, the other on Singing of Psalms*. . . . Gill deals with various other parts of prayer such as confession, thanksgiving, petition, deprecation, and ascriptions. He also distinguishes between mental and vocal prayer.

preacher of the century, the learned and eloquent Robert Hall, who wrote: "To consider the Lord's Supper as a mere commemoration . . . is to entertain a very inadequate view of it. If we credit St. Paul, it is also a federal rite in which in token of our reconciliation with God we eat and drink in his presence. It is a feast upon a sacrifice, by which we become partakers at the altar, not less really, though in a manner more elevated and spiritual, than those who under the ancient economy presented their offerings in the temple. In this ordinance, the cup is a spiritual participation of the blood, the bread of the crucified Saviour."⁵⁰

In fairness, however, it must be stressed, as E. A. Payne does, that Baptists were "probably the first among English Protestants to have a special collection of hymns for use at the Lord's Table."⁵¹ This was, in fact, Joseph Stennett's *Hymns in Commemoration of the Suffering of our Blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ, composed for the Celebration of His Holy Supper* (1697). It is from the same unusually perceptive mind that we have an eulogy of the Anglican Prayer-book. In a remarkably objective letter written to the Rev. Mr. John Waldron of Exeter on the 22nd of March 1750, Stennett refers to the dangers of Deism and Arianism and reports what he had said to Dr. Gibson, then Bishop of London: "I told his Lordship, indeed, that I more than ever saw the usefulness of the Book of Common Prayer; for considering how little the Scriptures are read by the common people, and how little the Gospel is preached by the clergy, if it were not for what is said of Christ in the Prayer Book, multitudes would forget there was any such person."⁵²

HYMNODY

The Particular Baptists had an important contribution to make to English worship as the forerunners of Isaac Watts in effecting the major transition from metrical paraphrases to hymns proper. This, however, is a chronological, not an intrinsic significance.⁵³ The real artists in Christian hymnody during this century were Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge (among Independents), Charles and John Wesley (among Methodists), and William Cowper and John

⁵⁰ *Works*, Vol. III, p. 45. See also for high Calvinistic views of the Lord's Supper Anon. *Thoughts on the Lord's Supper* . . . , p. 185.

⁵¹ See Ernest A. Payne's *The Fellowship of Believers*, Chap. IV, for a thorough discussion of Zwinglian and Calvinist views of the Lord's Supper among the English Baptists. For a Zwinglian view see Dr. John Gill, *Attendance in places of religious Worship*, pp. 37-38.

⁵² Joseph Ivimey, *A History of English Baptists*, Vol. IV, p. 581.

⁵³ For details of the earliest Baptist hymn collections of the pioneers see W. T. Whitley, *A History of British Baptists*, p. 186f.

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Newton (among Anglican Evangelicals). Justice requires that it be said that what the Baptists did first, others did better. Perhaps it was their fidelity to the letter as well as to the spirit of the Bible which made it difficult for the Baptists to take lyrical flight; perhaps, also their very pedagogical understanding of the function of a hymn, as almost a jingle by which to sum up the message of the sermon, may be responsible. In the latter respect, the indefatigable sermon summarizer in verse, Benjamin Beddome of Bourton-on-the-water, was only taking a leaf from Philip Doddridge's book.⁵⁴

FUNERALS

Eighteenth century Dissenting funerals were most dignified yet most lugubrious occasions. A memorandum on the arrangements planned for the funeral procession and burial of Dr. John Gill, the leading Baptist minister in London, by his deacons is most informative; it is dated the 19th of October, 1771, and reads: "We design to Assemble at the said Meeting House in Mourning, at twelve o'clock on that day & thence proceed in Coaches and pairs, to the Turnpike at Newington, & there wait for the Procession that will come from Camberwell. And that our Bror. Button provide as many Coaches as may be wanting, & also Cloaks for the Men, & Scarves & Hoods for the Women & Hatbands & Gloves for such as are not provided therewith. And that the Pulpit & Clerk's Desk in the said Meeting-place be hung with black Cloth, & the fronts of the Gallery with black-baize. It is also desired that the Members of the Church come in the Afternoon of Lords Day the 27th of this Inst. Octo'r very Early, when a Sermon will be preached by Dr. Stennett & that they come in at the Vestry Door & take their Seats, the Men at the Table Pew & the Women in the Middle of the Meeting as near it as possible."⁵⁵

Perhaps equally genuine proof of the deep love this congregation had for its deceased minister is afforded by the information that the church was prepared to raise a mortgage and go into debt in order to have a portrait made of Dr. Gill, from which mezzo-tints might be provided for every member of the congregation. So felicitously intimate is the tie between a beloved pastor and his people in a gathered church.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ See article by Carey Bonner entitled "Some Baptist Hymnists" in *The Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. VIII (1936-37), p. 261, and compare with Philip Doddridge, ed. Geoffrey F. Nuttall.

⁵⁵ *The Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. V (1930-31), p. 96.

⁵⁶ For other details of Baptist burials see Ivimey, *op.cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 478, 604; and John Rippon, *A Sermon occasioned by the decease of the Rev. John Ryland . . .*, pp. 51-52.

RADICAL WORSHIP

MARRIAGES

It is exceedingly difficult to gain any information about the marriage services of Dissenters in the eighteenth century, for the sufficient reason that after the passing of Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1754 no marriage could be legally celebrated in any Dissenting chapel until the repeal of the Act in 1836. Our chief information on the Baptist marriage service consists of the description of Thomas Grantham, the leader of the General Baptists, the gist of which was copied into his register by another distinguished Baptist minister, Dr. Rippon. The account proceeds:

"The parties to be married . . . call together a competent number of their relations and friends; and, having usually some of the ministry present with them, the parties concerned declare their contract formerly made between themselves, and the advice of their friends, if occasion require it; and then, taking each other by the hand, declare, That they from that day forward, during their natural lives together, do enter into the state of marriage in the service-book, acknowledging the words to be very fit for that purpose. And then a writing is signed by the parties married, to keep in memory the contract and covenant of their marriage. . . . After these things some suitable counsel or instruction is given to the parties, and then prayer is made to God for his blessing upon the parties married, &c."⁵⁷

It seems that even before the law of the land required the marriage service to be held in the Established Church, it was the custom for Dissenters to make their vows of marriage in much the same terms as those in the Book of Common Prayer.

ORDINATION SERVICES

The final ordinance of the Baptists which must be considered is that of ordination to the ministry of the Word of God. Its searching of the motives of those intending to become ministers, its "recognition" that the call comes from God and must be assented to by the congregation among whom the ordinand is to minister, the solemn "charges" or exhortations to both ordinand and people concerning their mutual responsibilities in the covenant which they have taken together in God's sight, the frequent preparation by fasting, and the climax of the laying-on of hands, are cumulatively most impressive. Among such a variety of evidence as to the nature of this ordinance, the difficulty is to select one particular service.

There is extant a most thorough account of the three stages by

⁵⁷ *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, Vol. I (1908-09), pp. 122-23.

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which in 1778 and 1779 John Giles was tested for the ministry and ordained in the Baptist church which later came to be known as Spurgeon's Tabernacle in London.⁸⁸ The first stage was the calling of a meeting of the church members to resolve on the right procedure to be adopted. It was decided that the president should, at the next church meeting, ask the members: Is it your desire to hear our Brother at this time in the Fear of God, and will you give him the best advice in your power? John Giles was to be asked: Will you take the advice that the Brethren present, or the majority of them may give you, and abide by it in the Fear of the Lord? At the church meeting of 22nd September 1788, Dr. Rippon reported that he and many members thought Giles had ministerial gifts and wished the church to make trial of them.

The second stage was the testing of Giles's call. A month later he preached on the text "My beloved is white and ruddy, and he is the chiefest among ten thousand." The brethren could by now hardly doubt his enthusiasm, so they required proof of his doctrinal soundness. This he was able to provide in the following month as he expounded the high Calvinist text, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."

A third hearing was held in December, when Giles held forth at great length from a Colossian text on the pre-existent Christ, so that he exhausted his congregation and only half exhausted his theme. It was decided to hear the continuation of the theme a fortnight later. By now the members were fully satisfied as to the genuineness of the ministerial gifts of John Giles, but their minister for good measure (and running over) wished to hear Giles recount the work and influence of the Holy Spirit. At the close of the fifth discourse, the members unanimously decided "that the Lord had bestowed ministerial gifts" and that Giles be ordained "next Lord's day afternoon."

The third stage was the ordination or "recognition" service. This is described in the words of the recording deacon: "Our pastor in a very affectionate manner called upon our Bro. John Giles, and asked him if he was willing to take upon him the work of the ministry and consent to the voice of the Church and cheerfully abide by their decision. On his consenting, the opinion of the Church was taken, which was unanimously in the affirmative. He was by our

⁸⁸ *The Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. IV (1928-29), pp. 38-40.

pastor in the name of the Church solemnly set apart to the public work of the ministry by prayer and the laying-on of hands.⁷⁹⁹

It is clear that the local church, far from being lenient, tested the vocation of the candidate most rigorously. Since "a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country" (and church, it may be added), the spiritual and moral demands must have been of the highest order. To modern eyes it might seem that there was an excessive emphasis on preaching ability, without a due regard for any capacity for leading worship and with little consideration of the future minister's ability as a visitor and adviser. On the other hand, the Baptists, in common with the other Dissenters, had the highest regard for preaching as the chief means by which God wins his victory over the obdurate human soul.

It is a fitting close to this chapter on a greatly neglected aspect of our subject to quote the famous eulogy of Pitt on the preaching of the Dissenters who lived throughout the century under the shadow of educational, social, and civil penalties, and who had few mercenary temptations in exercising their high heavenly and low earthly calling as "fools for Christ's sake." The Earl of Chatham, defending the Dissenting ministers against the charge of ambition, and replying to the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Drummond) said: "The Dissenting Ministers are represented as men of close ambition; they are so, my Lords; and their ambition is to keep close to the college of fishermen, not of cardinals; and to the doctrines of inspired apostles, not to the decrees of interested and aspiring bishops. They contend for a scriptural and spiritual worship; we have a Calvinistic Creed, a Popish Liturgy and Arminian Clergy."⁸⁰⁰ Can this be written off as antithetical rhetoric, as a purple patch appropriate to the House of Lords?⁸⁰¹ This is not possible when it is recalled that Pitt offered the Baptist Chrysostom, Robert Hall of Cambridge, a bishopric if he would join the Established Church. Pitt was magnanimous to recognize, even in his disappointment, that Hall was a man whose conscience was not to be bought. That the Baptists kept Hall within their denomination is a tribute to their profound evangelical faith and his.

⁷⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 40. See also Payne in *ibid.*, Vol. xv, pp. 203-15.

⁸⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. iv, pp. 28-29.

⁸⁰¹ The speech was made in the Upper House in 1773

PART TWO

1740-1830: THE DOMINANCE
OF EVANGELICALISM

CHAPTER VII

THE METHODIST REVOLUTION IN POPULAR PREACHING: THE TECHNIQUES OF WESLEY AND WHITEFIELD

THE PREACHING TECHNIQUES¹ of Wesley and Whitefield deserve detailed study because they transformed the function of the pulpit and also the religious life of England and North America.

1. *Wesley and Whitefield: Their Backgrounds*

Both of the leaders of the Evangelical Revival were creatures of their age, even when they thought they were most in revolt against it. It is, however, possible that the century in which they lived has become undeservedly a byword for infidelity among the nobility and gentry, and for despair among the poverty-stricken masses. While Methodist and Marxist historians have subpoenaed cynical Chesterfield and squalid Hogarth as witnesses, Anglican and Free Church historians have brought forward Bishops Butler and Gibson, and Dissenting divines such as Isaac Watts, Philip Doddridge, and the Rylands, as proofs that the Christian faith still illuminated the dark skyscape of the eighteenth century. All in all, however, the situation was crepuscular. Deism and formalism must have made the struggling Christian circles in England seem moribund, except where men looked with the eyes of faith, and even these had to be exceptionally long-sighted. Did not the vicar of Haworth (the masterful Grimshaw) report in 1742 that his rural Yorkshire parish included four disused Presbyterian chapels?² Like the surface of the moon, the eighteenth century terrain was pock-marked with extinct religious volcanic craters. And if some were still spluttering, they would soon be only Presbyterian pumice-stone. The future of the Independents and Baptists seemed hardly less promising. Even the Established Church was merely offering fifteen minute doses of morality, apparently without even a tincture of the emotion that

¹ See W. L. Doughty, *John Wesley, Preacher*. No satisfactory homiletical study of Whitefield exists.

² L. E. Elliott-Binns, *Early Evangelicals*, p. 109.

Matthew Arnold was to require a century later. It was, then, in the main, to an England which was largely desperately poor and hopeless, materially and spiritually, or genteelly indifferent to the claims of the Christian revelation, and within a Church and nation where enthusiasm was a term of abuse, that Whitefield and Wesley were ordained to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments.

For this task they were well endowed, but very differently. Wesley came of good Anglican and Dissenting stock and had the quiet assurance and dignity given him by an Anglican rectory, fortified by the discipline of Charterhouse, the prestige of a scholar of Christ Church, and the achievement of a Fellowship at Lincoln. This very security and dignity, however, made it all the more difficult for him to play the role of religious revolutionary as a field-preacher, and the criticisms of his more timid brother clergymen of the Anglican Church were always bitterly distasteful and wounding to him. He remained what Whitefield had never become, the man of discipline and devotion, with a superb gift of organization; the scholar who almost always read his New Testament in Greek before expounding the Scriptures; the Fellow whose pupils were the Methodist lay-preachers; the editor and writer of Christian textbooks; the man with a profound concern for tradition and for doing all things ecclesiastical "decently and in order." He looked the slight, disciplined, ascetical scholar until middle age, when his venerable face and silver hair betokened the saint.

Whitefield grew up haphazardly in the rough and tumble of the Bell Inn, Gloucester, a man of the people who reciprocated their extraordinary affection for him. We can imagine the listless and rubber-faced pupil of the cathedral grammar school of St. Mary de Crypt, standing on a solid oak table ringed with the stains of overflowing ale tankards, mimicking the gentry and the shopkeepers of Gloucester to the goodnatured applause of the tapsters. The atmosphere was thick, it may be supposed, with perspiration and porter, smoke and sniggering. And the boy was droll, but what a pity he had crossed eyes! Ambition drove him to Oxford, where he acted as servitor to the gentlemen-commoners of Pembroke College, as Samuel Johnson had done three or four years earlier. Dreaming perhaps of a decent competence and professional standing in the Church of England, he was delighted that Mr. Charles Wesley, a don of Christ Church across the way, should invite him to join the "Holy Club" for religious exercises. How great, it would seem, were the advantages John Wesley had over George Whitefield! Yet

Whitefield had been endowed with two advantages—he was given a voice of great sonority, richness, and timbre, with a penetration so great that, without shouting, he could be heard by 30,000 souls as computed by Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia.³ The other gift, partly natural, partly the result of his environment, was his ability to get on well with all kinds of people. The only qualification that must be made is that perhaps he was only too eager to be thought well of by the nobility and the gentry, but that was only the index of his social insecurity. The common people heard him gladly, as they had heard his Master. It is, therefore, an exaggeration of the contrast between the two great preachers to say, with Maximin Piette, that Whitefield was only a drawing-room and garden-party preacher, while Wesley was exclusively a preacher to the common crowds and lower classes.⁴ Was there, perhaps, just the slightest tinge of envy for Whitefield's genial and extroverted personality, almost smothered with genuine grief, in John Wesley's last tribute to his friend and former theological antagonist? In the commemorative funeral sermon Wesley had said "Should we not mention that he had an heart susceptible of the most generous and most tender friendship? I have always thought that this of all others was the distinguishing part of his character."⁵ In the same sermon Wesley remarks on Whitefield's "forcible and most persuasive delivery."

Certainly, Whitefield was the greater pioneer, sometimes rushing in where angels bade him tread, as in the great and successful venture of field-preaching and in founding orphanages and furthering educational and theological institutions; sometimes, as in his more polemical sermons, where angels feared to tread. There was a naïvete, even occasionally an egotistical brashness, in Whitefield, and a deplorable lack of taste and insensitivity, in which he compares badly with the restrained dignity of Wesley, who looked and was every inch the Christian gentleman and scholar-saint. But the impulsiveness of Whitefield was needed to overcome the hesitations of the scholar and the gentleman in Wesley. In short, the restraint and calmness of Wesley made him the superb organizer that he was; while Whitefield's passionate temperament, bell-like voice, gifts of mimicry, dynamic gestures, and uninhibited speech were to make him the exciting popular preacher that he was. The actor's adaptability in Whitefield would enable him to hold the attention

³ See C. H. Spurgeon, himself a Stentor of a preacher, *Religious Zeal Illustrated and Enforced by the Life of the Reverend George Whitefield*, p. 27.

⁴ Piette's splendid study is entitled, *John Wesley in the Evolution of Protestantism*. See p. 351.

⁵ E. H. Sugden, ed., *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, Vol. II, p. 519.

of nobleman and common man, of kitchen-maid and countess alike. Wesley's self-discipline, training, background, and inclinations were to make his proclamation of the Gospel simple, logical, lucid, and practical, like the good teacher that he was. They both had a passion for God and a passion for souls, but they expressed these differently. Whitefield was a volcano—often brilliantly lurid and coruscating with sparks; occasionally he exuded only ashes. Wesley's fire was controlled, emitting only occasionally the white light of a smelting furnace when the door of his heart was opened, but the heat was always there, if almost always invisible, because checked by his reason. In Whitefield there was more heat than light; in Wesley more light than heat. More important than this contrast between them was the fact that their gifts were essentially complementary.

2. *Field-Preaching*

Wesley's and Whitefield's greatest achievement was to take the Gospel to the people in the fields, first of Bristol, and afterwards wherever an open eminence was afforded them, on the Cotswold hills, in the natural amphitheatre of Gwennap in Cornwall, standing on the steps of market crosses in rural England, or on the Calton Hill in Edinburgh, and even in North America. It was five centuries since the Franciscan friars had come on a similar errand and by their word and example had taught simple folk the love of God in Christ.

It was Whitefield who first had the inclination to preach outside church walls in Bermondsey, before he embarked for Georgia, seeing the many hundreds who could not be accommodated inside the church itself. Some friends dissuaded him on this occasion. At Bristol, however, he felt he had a clear call to try open-air preaching. He had heard that the colliers were so numerous and rough that they were left to their own social and spiritual devices. These men had no place of worship and, when provoked, were a terror to the neighborhood. According to his biographer, John Gillies, who had access to an autograph manuscript of Whitefield: "After much prayer, and many struggles with himself, he one day went to Hannam Mount, and standing upon a hill, began to preach to about a hundred colliers, upon Matt. V.1,2,3. . . . At the second and third time the numbers greatly increased, till the congregation, at a moderate computation, amounted to near twenty thousand."⁶ Whitefield's

⁶ John Gillies, *Memoirs of the Life of the Reverend George Whitefield, M.A.* . . . , p. 37.

own explanation of his inspiration was this: "I thought it might be doing the service of my Creator, who had a mountain for his pulpit, and the heavens for his sounding-board; and who, when the gospel was refused by the Jews, sent his servants into the highways and hedges."⁷ His description of their reception of his preaching has the chiaroscuro of an etching by Rembrandt: "Having no righteousness of their own to renounce, they were glad to hear of a Jesus who was a friend to publicans, and came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. The first discovery of their being affected, was to see the white gutters made by their tears, which plentifully ran down their black cheeks, as they came out of their coal pits."⁸ So great a spiritual innovation in Augustan England deserved so clear and memorable a word-picture to arrest the flux of time.

There was a romantic strain in Whitefield, as well as a sentimental one, which never failed to excite him when facing a great multitude in the open air. Thus he could write: ". . . the open firmament above me, the prospect of the adjacent fields, with the sight of thousands and thousands, some in coaches, some on horseback, and some in the trees, and at times all affected and drenched in tears together, to which sometimes was added the solemnity of the approaching evening, was almost too much for me, and quite overcame me."⁹

It was late in April or early in May 1739 that Whitefield first preached in Moorfields in London, on the wall separating upper and lower Moorfields, since the table prepared as a rostrum had been trampled to pieces by the urgent crowd. He had been interrupted by the churchwarden of an Islington church after beginning a sermon, and this had incited him to field-preaching in London. He would often recur to these early heroic days, especially when he thought his fellow-preachers and their hearers were settling down to ease in Zion. In his vigorous sermon on persecution, he said: "I know we had more comfort in Moorfields on Kennington Common, and especially when the rotten eggs, the cats and dogs, were thrown upon me, and my gown was filled with clods of dirt that I could scarcely move it; I have had more comfort in this burning bush than when I have been in ease. I remember when I was preaching in Exeter, a stone came and made my forehead bleed; I found at that very time the Word came with double power to a labourer that was gazing at me, who was wounded at the same time by another stone: I felt for the lad more than for myself—went to a friend, and the lad came to me: 'Sir,' says he, 'the man gave a wound but Jesus healed me; I

⁷ *Ibid.*, citing Whitefield's manuscript notes.

⁸ *Ibid.* ⁹ *Ibid.*

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never had my bones broke till I had my head broke . . . ' thus it is that prosperity lulls the soul and I fear Christians are spoiled by it."¹⁰

Such was Whitefield's courage and native mother-wit that what might have been a calamity for others was a triumph for him. "Throw your filth at me," he would say, "my religion will grow all the better for such manuring."¹¹ Those who came to criticize his preaching had to stay to admire his pluck.

John Wesley followed only with the greatest reluctance George Whitefield's suggestion that he should preach for him in the fields outside Bristol, as Whitefield was about to return to Georgia. The *Journal* entry for Monday, 2nd April 1739, records his first attempt at field-preaching: "At four in the afternoon I submitted to be more vile, and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation, speaking from a little eminence in a ground adjoining the city [of Bristol] to about three thousand people. The scripture on which I spoke was this (is it possible that any one should be so ignorant that it is fulfilled in every true minister of Christ?), 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.'"

How much this expedient or enterprise went against Wesley's grain may be seen in another reference in the *Journal*, in which he wrote that, after he met Whitefield, "I could scarce reconcile myself at first to this very strange way of preaching in the fields. . . . Having been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, and I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin had it not been done in a church."¹² If valour was needed to begin a work so unconventional for a respected and restrained Anglican clergyman, equal courage was necessary to maintain it against the fulminations of the ungodly, and the sneers of the cloth, not to mention the inhibitions of such otherwise laudable bishops as Dr. Butler (of *Analogy of Religion* fame),¹³ or the attacks of enraged mobs with bucolic missiles. The "inconveniences," as Wesley styles them with characteristic understatement,

¹⁰ Whitefield's Sermon entitled "The Burning Bush" (No. 68 in the collected edition of 75 Sermons).

¹¹ C. H. Spurgeon, *op.cit.*, p. 33.

¹² Entry for Sat., 31st March 1739.

¹³ Henry Moore, *Life of Wesley*, Vol. 1, pp. 463-65 copied the account of the interview with the bishop from a transcription in John Wesley's own hand.

must be described in his own words, as he defends the practice of field-preaching:

"Can you sustain them if you would? Can you bear the summer rain to beat upon your naked head? Can you suffer the wintry rain or wind, from whatever quarter it comes? Are you able to stand in the open air without any covering or defence when God casteth abroad his snow like wool, or scattereth his hoar-frost like ashes? And yet these are some of the smallest inconveniences which accompany field preaching. Far above all these, are the contradictions of sinners, the scoffs both of the great vulgar and the small; contempt and reproach of every kind; often more than verbal affronts, stupid, brutal violence, sometimes to the hazard of health or limbs or life. Brethren, do you envy us this honour? What, I pray you, would buy you to be a field-preacher? Or, what think you could induce any man of common-sense to continue therein one year, unless he had a full conviction in himself that it was the will of God concerning him?"¹⁴

This was the sober, realistic note, just as Whitefield's descriptions were incorrigibly romantic.

Yet perhaps so great an innovation owed a great deal to its novelty, and is better described in the romantic than in the realistic manner. Certainly, Dr. Samuel Johnson thought that there was little else but self-advertisement in Whitefield, though this was a shallow judgment. "His popularity, Sir," said the magisterial voice of literature, "is chiefly owing to the peculiarity of his manner. He would be followed by a crowd were he to wear a night-cap in the pulpit, or were he to preach from a tree."¹⁵ Others beside Whitefield were impressed by the drama of the crowds magnetized by sacred oratory. Whitefield was, in truth, a spell-binder. John Newton, the converted captain of a slave-ship, the evangelical rector of Olney and boon companion of Cowper, fondly recalled Whitefield: "I bless God I have lived in his time; many were the winter mornings I have got up at four to attend his Tabernacle discourses at five; and I have seen Moorfields as full of lanterns at these times as I suppose the Haymarket is full of flambeaux on an opera night. As a preacher, if any man were to ask me who was the second I ever heard, I should be at some loss; but in regard to the first, Mr. Whitefield exceeded so far every other man of my time that I should be at none. He was the original of popular preaching, and all our popular ministers are only his copies."¹⁶

¹⁴ Wesley's *Works*, Vol. VIII, from Part III of his *Farther Appeal*.

¹⁵ Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, entry under October 6, 1769.

¹⁶ Cited E. P. Hood, *The Throne of Eloquence*, p. 28.

Even when due allowance is made for the partisanship of this Calvinistic Anglican, it is a vivid and impressive tribute that he pays to a vigorous personality. Even more significant is his assertion that Whitefield is "the original of popular preaching" and that he had many imitators. It can fairly be said that the joint impact of the examples of Whitefield and Wesley was to change the whole character of the English pulpit. Thanks to Whitefield, the Evangelical party within the Church of England, and the Calvinistic Methodists in Wales, the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion with its proprietary chapels, and the orthodox Dissenting churches rediscovered the gospel and preached it with relevance, passion, and drama. The chief impact of Wesley was confined largely to the important denomination of which he was the reluctant founder, the Methodists.

3. *Favourite Themes*

In an attempt to account for the amazing popularity of the sermons of the two great evangelists, it will be necessary to consider their favourite themes and the characteristic way they develop them; the whole range of rhetorical devices which they employ, which shed light on their different and complementary personalities; the different types of audiences to which they appealed; the accounts of eye-witnesses of their preaching (use will be made of critical as well as sympathetic reports); and an evaluation of their respective qualities and defects.

The modern reader is at a serious disadvantage in trying to identify himself imaginatively with these princes among preachers. Not only is he separated from the period of the Enlightenment by a period of two significant centuries; he also reads in cold print sermons that were first proclaimed passionately in a tense and lightning mood of expectation and awe. Only with the greatest exercise of empathy can the reader join the milling thousands who jostled to the market-places and fields to hear Wesley or Whitefield, and make out the different social classes and degrees of interest—the elegant gentlemen withdrawn in their emblazoned coaches, with their ladies half hidden behind fluttering fans; the sceptics also appropriately on the edge of the press; the merely curious citizen with weasel eyes and the country bumpkin with mouth agape; the hundreds with tense look who are the inquirers pushing to the front that not a crumb of the Divine Word of the preacher may be lost. In brief, for us moderns the *mise-en-scène* is missing. It is practi-

cally impossible from the written sermons of Wesley to conjure up that serene face which was living proof of the saintly doctrine of Christian assurance he loved to preach. No more can we summon from the misty deep of oblivion the mobile face of Whitefield, and visualize thereon the rapid changes of sentiment from broad humour to flashing indignation to melting tenderness. Not only is the stage empty for us, but the leading actors have retired forever to the wings; all we have left is two prompter's copies of their lines. Even these meagre reminders are unequal. Wesley's collection of sermons is much fuller and more representative of his maturity. Whitefield is at a double disadvantage: he was the greater orator, whose preaching was extemporaneous; of the seventy-five sermons printed, only fifty-five or fifty-seven of them appeared in print before his death, and almost all of them were originally published separately before he was twenty-five years of age.¹⁷ In the case of Wesley, the written sermons have obviously been recast for publication, presumably to prove to his brethren of the cloth that they are good, orthodox, Scriptural discourses in the main Anglican line of tradition; but what they gain in decorum they lose in directness.

The chief topics on which both preached were the practical doctrines of experimental religion which are the hallmarks of Pietism to the degree that they require an inner verification in the heart, but are also the great doctrines in the Pauline, Augustinian, Lutheran, and Calvinist traditions. Wesley, however, while accepting the doctrine of Election, stops short of Predestination¹⁸ in the interest of universal salvation. They both begin with the universal need of salvation by stressing the doctrine of original sin. Whitefield's famous narrative sermon on "The Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent" (No. 1) is a parallel to Wesley's sermon on "Original Sin" preached from the text, Genesis 6:5 (*Standard Sermons* No. XXXVIII).¹⁹ From this they proceed to Justification by

¹⁷ The other eighteen additional sermons were taken in shorthand by Gurney and edited by Gifford. The most available addition is in Vols. v and vi of Whitefield's *Works* (ed. J. Gillies, 1770-71).

¹⁸ In his famous sermon on *Free Grace*, Wesley criticizes predestination as a doctrine that destroys holiness, the comfort of Christianity, the zeal for good works, and to its exponents he says: "You present God as worse than the devil; more false, more cruel, more unjust."

¹⁹ Note that the numbering of Wesley's sermons will be always that of the Sugden edition of the *Standard Sermons*, 2 vols. While it is true that Wesley published many other sermons during a longer life than Whitefield's, the former wished to be judged by the *Standard Sermons*. Furthermore, it is fairer to Whitefield to compare Wesley's 53 *Standard Sermons* with Whitefield's 75 unselected sermons than to compare the large total output of Wesley with the much smaller and less representative production of Whitefield's printed sermons, many of which are hardly more than juvenilia.

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Faith in Christ (Whitefield's Sermon No. XLVI and Wesley's Sermon No. XL). This central doctrine they interpreted as having three essential notes or characteristics. Justification or the declaration of the sinner's acceptance by God and the annulment of his guilt was attained *meritoriously* through the work of Christ consummated in the sacrifice of the Cross; it was appropriated *instrumentally* by faith alone; and good works are the consequences and correlates of justification, or, to use the technical term, justification is *declaratively* demonstrated by good works.²⁰ This crucial doctrine is, of course, all-pervasive in their sermons and is the presupposition of all their preaching. Though it was often misunderstood as implying that faith was everything and conduct nothing, such anti-nomianism was carefully guarded against by both preachers while, quite naturally, they opposed the stress on faith in Christ to the current pelagianism and moralism of the day which, in effect, was teaching a salvation by good works apart from faith.

The great practical problem in preaching these two interrelated doctrines was not only to avoid the extremes of legalism and anti-nomianism; it was rather to make a balanced presentation of the judgment and mercy of God, so that the sinner would neither be so awakened to sin as to despair of his eventual acceptance by God nor offered salvation on too easy terms, so as to take it lightly.²¹ Both Whitefield and Wesley were acutely aware of this problem and believed that they had solved it, so as to present both the fear and the love of God in the right proportion. In Whitefield's first sermon on original sin, he had said: "We must take care of healing before we see sinners wounded. Sinners must hear the thunderings of Mount Sinai, before we bring them to Mount Zion. They who never preach the law, it is to be feared, are unskilful in delivering the glad tidings of the gospel. Every minister should be a Boanerges, a son of thunder, as well as a Barnabas, a son of consolation. There was an earthquake and a whirlwind before the still small voice came to Elijah. We must first shew people they are condemned, and then shew them how they must be saved."²²

Wesley's similar approach is explained in a letter to Ebenezer Blackwell: "I think the right method of preaching is this. At our first beginning to preach at any place, after a general declaration

²⁰ See especially Whitefield's sermon, "What think ye of Christ?" (No. XXIV) for these terms.

²¹ The proclamation both of the fear and the love of God had a long lineage. Cf. Henri Talon, *John Bunyan, the Man and His Works*, p. 109, and C. R. Owst, *Preaching in Mediaeval England*, p. 334.

²² *The Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent*, Sermon No. I.

of the love of God to sinners and his willingness that they should be saved, to preach the law in the strongest, the closest, the most searching manner possible; only intermixing the gospel here and there, and shewing it, as it were, afar off."²³

The same letter also contains two important definitions: namely, that of the gospel and that of law. "I mean," says Wesley, "by *preaching the gospel*, preaching the love of God to sinners, preaching the life, death, resurrection, and intercession of Christ, with all the blessings which in consequence thereof are freely given to true believers. By *preaching the law* I mean explaining and enforcing the commands of Christ briefly comprised in the Sermon on the Mount." Wesley was the more careful to insist on the law of Christ, as his thirteen sermons on the Sermon of the Mount (included in the *Standard Sermons*) plainly prove. Whitefield, on the other hand, was constantly guarding his hearers against the opposite error of anti-nomianism.

If original sin and justification by faith were two of the chief emphases of both preachers, an equal stress was also given to conversion and the second birth—the regeneration by the Holy Spirit.²⁴ Whitefield has at least two sermons on this topic, one entitled "Marks of Having Received the Holy Ghost" (No. XLII) and the other "Of Regeneration" (No. XLIX); Wesley's single standard sermon on the topic is called "The New Birth" (No. XXXIX). Each preacher also has a practical sermon by which his hearers may test the reality of their conversion. Whitefield's bears the title "The Marks of a True Conversion" (No. XXIII) and Wesley's "The Marks of the New Birth" (No. XIV). Each man was to revert frequently to the distinction between formal and genuine Christianity, and the point is made in two different sermons on the same text which both Whitefield and Wesley entitle "The Almost Christian" (Whitefield No. XLIII and Wesley No. XLIX).²⁵ Incidentally, the substantial unity of their theme is further proved by the selection of common titles for two additional sermons: "The Lord Our Righteousness" (Whitefield No. XIV and Wesley No. XLIX) and "Satan's Devices" (Whitefield No. XLVIII and Wesley No. XXXVII). The stress on conversion was essentially the pragmatic and over-riding insistence

²³ Letter dated 20 Dec. 1751, cited W. L. Doughty, *op.cit.*, p. 175.

²⁴ It may be said that both Wesley and Whitefield preached "the three R's"—Ruin by the Fall, Redemption by the Cross of Christ, and Regeneration by the Holy Spirit. These were also characteristic of the preaching of the Anglican Evangelical Party. See V. J. Charlesworth, *Rowland Hill, His Life . . .*, p. 49.

²⁵ A distinction popularized in the previous century by George Fox as that between "professors" and "possessors" of the Holy Spirit.

upon results. Conversion was the beginning and was accompanied by the inner assurance of God's love, while the end was Christian Perfection, the growth in Scriptural holiness, or, as Whitefield would have preferred to term it, Sanctification.

Both preachers were frequently criticized for the abnormal manifestations that characterized some of their conversions, their hearers frequently being contorted in apparent agony of mind and body or falling into cataleptic trances or emitting hysterical screams and groans. The only effective rejoinder of the evangelists was to point to the transformed lives of their converts as proof of the genuineness of their conversions. In 1739 Wesley wrote, as evidence that the revival was no mere outbreak of perfervid emotionalism without staying power: "I will show you him that was a lion until then and is now a lamb; him that was a drunkard and is now exemplarily sober; the whore-monger that was who abhors the very 'garment spotted by the flesh.' These are my living arguments for what I assert, viz. That God does now, as aforetime, give remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit even to us and to our children—yea, and suddenly, as far as I have known, in dreams and visions of God."²⁶

The assertion that the Holy Spirit is the agent in conversion was regarded in those days not as a commonplace of theology but as an affront to reason, and to claim the work of the Holy Spirit in the preaching of Anglican ministers who were invading other men's parishes was regarded by critics as tantamount to blasphemous presumption on the part of Whitefield and Wesley. This is plainly the cause of the rudeness with which an official apologist for Christianity, Bishop Butler, received Wesley in his episcopal palace in Bristol. The evangelist had sought his Lordship's permission to preach in his diocese. The Bishop replied, "Well, Sir, since you ask my advice, I will give to you very freely. You have no business here. You are not commissioned to preach in my diocese. Therefore, I advise you to go hence." Wesley made the spirited and spiritual reply: "My Lord, my business on earth is to do what good I can. Wherever, therefore, I think I can do most good, there must I stay, so long as I think so. At present I think I can do most good here; therefore, here I stay. As to my preaching here, a dispensation of the Gospel is committed to me, and woe is me if I preach not the Gospel, wherever I am in the habitable world." Wesley further insisted that he was ordained as Fellow of a college and not limited

²⁶ See also the *Journal* entry for 16 June 1755, in which the following criteria are used: statistics, swiftness, depth, clarity, and continuance of conversions.

to any particular cure. He took even higher ground—he was “a priest of the church universal” and did not break any human law, and even if he did, then he would have to ask himself the question, “Shall I obey God or man?” He concludes in words as intransigent as Luther’s *Hier steh ich*: “But if I should be convinced in the meanwhile, that I should advance the glory of God and the salvation of souls in any other place more than in Bristol, in that hour, by God’s help, I will go hence, which till then I may not do.”²⁷

Although Whitefield and Wesley concentrated on practical divinity, rather than on “speculative divinity” (as Doughty terms it,²⁸ though historic and orthodox Christian doctrine would be the more accurate term), they show a considerable divergence in the selection of other themes. This is true not only of their theological statements, though it is true of those, for Wesley was an Arminian who preached universal grace, while Whitefield was a Calvinist who believed in predestination and was not averse to anti-Arminian polemical references in his sermons.²⁹

Wesley concentrated on the practical doctrines, as we have seen, but Whitefield also adds several sermons celebrating the various aspects of the Incarnation. There is, indeed, much more traditional doctrine in him than is commonly supposed. He has, in fact, many more sermons appropriate to the various festivals of the Christian year than Wesley has. This is not to imply that he was, therefore, the more orthodox churchman; it may merely be that since Wesley was constantly itinerating amid the common people he had to concentrate on the basic theme of sin and salvation, irrespective of the Christian year, whereas Whitefield’s duties as a preacher in the proprietary chapels of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, required him to read the Liturgy and preach on themes more appropriate to the Christian year. Whatever the explanation, the fact remains that Whitefield has many more doctrinal sermons than Wesley and Wesley has many more ethical sermons than Whitefield.

Whitefield’s fidelity to traditional Christian doctrine is seen in his sermons on Election (No. VIII) and “Hell Torments” (XXVI and LXXII), in a sermon on the Incarnation (XVI), which he entitles “The Observation of the Birth of Christ; or, the True Way of Keeping Christmas” and pre-eminently in a profoundly theological sermon “What think ye of Christ?” (XXIV). One who wanted to

²⁷ Henry Moore, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 463-65, transcribes an account of the interview written in Wesley’s hand. It is also known that Bishop Butler regarded the claim to inspiration by the Holy Ghost as a “very horrid thing.”

²⁸ *Op.cit.*, p. 86.

²⁹ As, e.g., Sermons XIV, LXII, and LXIV.

prove Whitefield's real theological capacity³⁰ would only have to analyse the sermon referred to last. It stresses the real Divinity and the real humanity of Christ; it provides a subtle correlation of justification by faith and justification by works; it is both constructive and polemical in its anti-Socinianism; it makes the three-fold analysis of the nature of justification by Christ. Similarly, there are several sermons which are suitable for the celebration of the chief Christian festivals. There are sermons for Christmas (xvi), Lent (xvii and xxix), for the Transfiguration (xxx), for Easter (xxxix and liii), and for the New Year (xxxii). Of course, the "Conversion" sermons of both are apt for Pentecost. Whitefield also has sermons for various ordinances, such as the Lord's Supper (xxxiii), Baptism (lxx), Weddings (xxxvi) and Funerals (lix, lxi, and lxv).

Wesley's great gifts lie in the practical relevance and clarity of his ethical sermons, as well as in their wide range.³¹ They are not limited to morality, but also include matters of expediency and decency. Wesley's sermons deal with such issues as Health, Sleep, Redeeming the Time, Dress (against slovenliness), Marriage (motives for contracting marriages), the Education of Children, The Danger of Riches, Making a Will, Pleasing All Men (courtesy), Vocation, Temperance, Business, Conversation, The Use of Leisure, and Reading. His most famous sermon in this *genre* is on "The Use of Money" (No. xliv), in which he sums up with three aphorisms in the form of imperatives: "Gain all you can, Save all you can, Give all you can." This is Christian prudence at its most practical and proves how much Wesley had at heart the interests of the poor who had never received the kind of advice from their parents that he was able to offer. The higher reaches of his ethical teaching are found in the thirteen sermons on the Sermon on the Mount which stress the sacrificial love of God as requiring the free and total response of Christian love, without stint and without calculation of its cost to the believer. In effect, Wesley's ethical sermons provided for the spiritual illiterates what another Arminian, Baxter, had given the Puritan élite in his *Christian Directory*.³²

³⁰ See also his analysis of six kinds of grace in Sermon lviii, "A Faithful Minister's Parting Blessing," and his assertion that Christ is "co-equal, co-eternal and co-substantial with the Father" in Sermon li.

³¹ J. H. Rigg affirms that he was "a great preacher to the conscience" and that "the power by which he gripped and held and overwhelmed the souls of his hearers was partly logical, partly spiritual." (*The Living Wesley*, pp. 128-29.)

³² See James M. Phillips' unpublished Princeton University doctoral dissertation: "The Ethics of Richard Baxter: A Dialogue between Conscience and the Law."

Whitefield rarely preaches on ethical themes, probably because his Calvinism did not lead him in that direction as Wesley's Arminianism did. He has perhaps only three sermons of a definitely ethical character, though many sermons have ethical allusions. These three are entitled "The Great Duty of Charity Recommended" (XLVII), "The Heinous Sin of Drunkenness" (LII), and "The Heinous Sin of Profane Cursing and Swearing" (XVIII). On the other hand, he has several sermons on Christian duties, such as, Intercession and Prayer (LIV), How to search the Scriptures (XXXVII), How to hear Sermons (XXVIII), and on Family Religion (IV). Perhaps one of the greatest distinctions of Whitefield is the number of sermons he provides with incentives and encouragements to fight the good fight of faith, and these express the natural sensibility and sympathy of the man most admirably. His sermon on the Burning Bush, as a symbol of the faithful Christian community persecuted as by fire but not consumed, must have put new life into dispirited converts and caused the laggards to walk with firmer step. With characteristic wit, he remarked, "It is observable that when the Church came to prosper, when Constantine smiled upon it, it was hugged to death."³³ Sermon LXV on "The Furnace of Affliction" insists that it is the glorious privilege of the servants of the Crucified to share in His sufferings.³⁴ The volatile Whitefield looks into his own heart before he writes his sermon on "Soul Dejection" (LXIX). Here, too, is expressed his overwhelming sympathy for the handicapped in life's race, the blind, the maimed, and the poor.

The same generous nature of Whitefield makes his sermons abound in catholicity and ecumenical references, even though this meant that it was his heart not his mind that won in the unequal conflict between consistent Calvinism and Christian charity.³⁵ Whitefield declares that "the Spirit of God is the centre of unity: and where ever I see the image of my Master, I never inquire of them their opinions; I ask them not what they are, so they love Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, but embrace them as my brother, my sister, and my spouse: and this is the spirit of Christianity."³⁶ A famous exhortation to catholicity and the mutual recognition of

³³ Sermon LXVIII ("The Burning Bush").

³⁴ See also "Persecution Every Christian's Lot" (LV), "Christ The Support of the Tempted" (XIX), "Christ the only Rest for the Weary and Heavy Laden" (XXI), "An Exhortation to the People of God not to be discouraged in their way . . ." (LVI), "Christ the Believer's Refuge" (LIX), and "Glorifying God in the Fire" (LXIII). Wesley has only two sermons on this theme: XI and XII.

³⁵ Three sermons with a strong ecumenical emphasis are: LX, LXIV, and LVII.

³⁶ "The Folly and Danger of not Being Righteous enough."

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Christians across denominational barriers is one that Whitefield made in Philadelphia: "Father Abraham, whom have you in heaven? Any Episcopalians? 'No.' Any Presbyterians? 'No.' Have you any Independents or Seceders? 'No.' Have you any Methodists? 'No, no, no.' Whom have you there? 'We don't know those names here. All who are here are Christians—believers in Christ . . .' Oh, is this the case? Then God help us to forget party names, and to become Christians in deed and truth."⁸⁷

The ebullient spirit in Whitefield that made for generosity and catholicity also projected him into polemics. While he is on rare occasions capable of sophisticated theological analysis, as we have seen, his usual method in dealing with opponents is declamation and exhortation. It is most instructive to contrast the vehement denunciations by Whitefield with the careful and reasoned rebuttals by Wesley of the critics of "enthusiasm."⁸⁸ Whitefield is ostensibly preaching on the theme "The Indwelling of the Spirit, the Common Privilege of all Believers" (xxxviii), while Wesley's topic is "The Nature of Enthusiasm" (xxxii). Whitefield, in militant mood, accepts the designation of enthusiast, though intended as a slur, as an eulogy and wears the term as proudly as a veteran in the wars displays his battle scars. "A great noise hath been made of late about the word enthusiast, and it hath been cast upon the preachers of the gospel as a term of reproach; but every Christian in the proper sense of the word must be an enthusiast, that is, must be inspired of God, or have God, by his Spirit, in him." Immediately, he proceeds to attack his critics, particularly Dr. Trapp, the Anglican clergyman, as mere pedants and Pelagians, "letter-learned" preachers who feed their flocks on "dry husks of dead morality."

Wesley, by contrast, begins vigorously with the text "And Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself." He adds immediately, "And so say all the world, the men who know not God, of all that are of Paul's religion: of everyone who is so a follower of him, as he was of Christ." Thus his foes are the really deluded men, for they imagine themselves to be Christians but they are not. Characteristically, he proceeds to show that the term, etymologically, may mean either "in God" or "in sacrifice," from which he argues that, being ambiguous, men should use the term carefully. Very skilfully he goes on to describe several kinds of disorders or enthusiasms. First are those who believe they have grace when

⁸⁷ W. W. Sweet, *The Story of Religion in America*, pp. 41-42.

⁸⁸ It is only fair to Whitefield to assert that elsewhere (e.g., Sermon II) he distinguishes between inspiration and delusion in treating "enthusiasm."

they do not, for they do not live holy lives. The second type of enthusiasts are those who imagine they have wonder-working powers, such as a capacity even to raise the dead or to foretell the future. Some, more modest, think that every thought in an extemporary prayer is directly God-inspired, or that they have special Divine instructions for performing the most trivial duties. A third type of enthusiast thinks to attain the end without using the means appointed thereto, by the immediate power of God. For example, he thinks to understand Holy Writ without reading it or meditating upon it. He is even prepared to consider that it is enthusiasm to be "imagining those things to be owing to the providence of God which are not owing thereto." However he doubts how clearly this can be asserted or denied, but is aware of the presumption of claiming special providences. It is better to recognize that God presides *universis tanquam singulis, et singulis tanquam universis*. Enough has been shown to demonstrate the cool, rational, discriminating treatment of a highly controversial theme by Wesley, as contrasted with the heavy denunciation of Whitefield's polemic.

Whitefield chiefly aims his darts of denunciation and sarcasm at four groups: the fashionable worldlings and those who cater to their selfish tastes, the ministers of the Church of England who confuse morality with revelation, the Deists who confine religion to the rational, and the Arians and Socinians who deny the divinity of Christ. In addition, he is often engaged in defending his Calvinism and refuting Arminianism, though he treads more delicately here, since this was the point at issue between him and Wesley. A typical glancing reference to the Deists is the following: "Indeed our modernizers of Christianity would persuade us, that the gospel was calculated only for about two hundred years; and that now there is no need of hating father and mother, or of being persecuted for the sake of Christ and his gospel."³⁹ Equally characteristic was his refutation of Deism by an anecdote: "There was a nobleman that kept a deistical chaplain, and his lady a Christian one; when he was dying, he says to his chaplain, I liked you very well when I was in health, but it is my lady's chaplain I must have when I am sick."⁴⁰

The consideration of the favourite themes of Whitefield and Wesley seems to lead to the following conclusions: that for the most part they both concentrated on the three R's of practical theology; that Whitefield's imaginative genius was best employed in the narration and application of Biblical story, history, and parable; while

³⁹ "Satan's Devices" (Sermon XLVIII).

⁴⁰ "A Faithful Minister's Parting Blessing" (Sermon LVIII).

Wesley excelled in the didactic type of sermon where careful distinctions and logical development are required and that his chief distinction as a teacher lay in the field of Christian ethics and prudence. The chief difference between their preaching, as far as theme and inclination is concerned, is that Whitefield is the more inflammatory in polemics and Wesley the more judicious and rational.

4. *Homiletical Style and Gestures*

Whitefield was ever the orator, Wesley always the don. It was this fundamental difference in endowment, training, and inclination that distinguishes the styles of their preaching. All that they had in common was the concern to preach the law and the Gospel of God and to convert men from wickedness to holiness, and the conviction that extemporary preaching was the most satisfactory way of accomplishing their intentions. That is not, to be sure, to suggest that they did not prepare their sermons in full or, at least, in outline; it is merely to state that they looked steadily at their congregations throughout their preaching.⁴¹ Wesley first began to preach without a manuscript in All Hallows Church, London, in 1735 because Dr. Heylyn, the appointed preacher, had failed to arrive. Returning over forty years later, Wesley told the verger how this had happened: "I came without a sermon, and going up the pulpit steps I hesitated, and returned into the vestry under much mental confusion and agitation. A woman who was there noticed that I was deeply agitated, and she inquired, 'Pray, sir, what is the matter with you?' I replied, 'I have not brought my sermon with me.' Putting her hand upon my shoulder, she said, 'Is that all? Cannot you trust God for a sermon?' That question had such an effect upon me that I ascended the pulpit and preached extempore, with great freedom to myself and acceptance to the people, and I have since never taken a written sermon into the pulpit."⁴²

Probably this was the single most important concession to popular preaching that was made by the former Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. The extreme clarity and simplicity of his thought and language are the *desiderata* of a good teacher and need not be attributed to popular preaching. Similarly, also, we may attribute the choice of a relevant text to the ability of a superlative teacher, as, for example, when he preached to the Bristol poor-house inmates on

⁴¹ Wesley insists on this in his tract "Directions concerning Pronunciation and Gesture," reprinted in *Works*, Vol. XII, pp. 518-27.

⁴² *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, pp. 105-06, cited Doughty, *op.cit.*, p. 20.

the comfortable words, "When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both."

If further proof were needed to emphasize that Wesley is the adult school lecturer simplifying the procedures of the university lecture hall, it can be found in a consideration of his literary allusions and references, in which the classical scholar predominates. In the 53 *Standard Sermons* of Wesley there are 20 citations from a wide range of classical authors and poets, made up as follows: Horace 4, Virgil 3, Juvenal 2, Ovid 2, Quintilian 1, Homer 1, Cicero 3, Seneca 1, Terence 1, Suetonius 1, and Plato 1. With this may be compared the 6 references to classical authors in Whitefield's 75 sermons. The literary interests of Wesley are further seen in the 28 citations from English poets and other authors which cover a wide range: Prior 6, Milton 5, Shakespeare 2, Sir John Davies 2, Edward Young 1, Pope 1, Hervey 1, Cowley 1, Addison 1, with 8 citations from minor poets, and 26 quotations from the hymns of Charles Wesley. Whitefield has only 6 references to English authors, but 14 references to the Reformation Fathers, 26 to the English Puritans, 26 to English divines, 10 to Scots divines, and 7 to New England divines.⁴³ Beyond doubt the cast of Wesley's mind was literary and Whitefield's theological references show how practical his reading was. Furthermore, the literary references are all the more impressive since it was Wesley's desire not to vaunt himself as a scholar in these sermons, and the modesty of the man is seen in his citation of many sources without attributing them to their authors while indicating that they are citations and not of his own composition. That true art conceals art is shown in some words which preface the 1746 volume of the *Sermons*:

"Nay, my design is, in some sense, to forget all that ever I have read in my life. I mean to speak, in the general as if I had never read one author, ancient or modern (always excepting the inspired). I am persuaded, that, on the one hand, this may be a means of enabling me more clearly to express the sentiments of my heart, while I simply follow the chain of my own thoughts, without entangling myself with those of other men; and that, on the other, I shall come with fewer weights upon my mind, with less of prejudice and prepossession, either to search for myself, or to deliver to others, the naked truths of the gospel."⁴⁴

⁴³ Wesley has only 10 references to contemporary theologians and philosophers, 6 to the Fathers, 3 to Anglican divines, and 6 of a miscellaneous character in which Luther, Calvin, Bellarmine, and a Jewish rabbi are included.

⁴⁴ Ed. Sugden, *op.cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 31.

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This was a deliberate accommodation of his own style and thought that he might "design plain truth for plain people." True to this aim the teacher in Wesley abstained "from all nice and philosophical speculations; from all perplexed and intricate reasonings; and, as far as possible, from even the show of learning, unless in sometimes citing the original Scripture." For the same reason he excluded all difficult words and, except when absolutely necessary, all technical theological terms.

It is clear that such a teacher will subordinate his personality to the truth for the sake of the instruction, and that he will advise his preachers to use no distracting or dramatic gestures, or shouting. Wesley, in fact, would permit neither clapping of the hands nor thumping of the pulpit. He considered that shouting in the pulpit, which he called "screaming," was an occupational disease of mediocre preachers who hastened their deaths by overstraining the larynx.⁴⁵

Had Whitefield's nature and his gifts been such that he could readily have accepted such advice from Wesley, he would not have been the great popular orator that he was, using all the devices of rhetoric and all the artistry of an actor in gesture and mimicry to catch and hold the attention of his vast auditories and to drive home the lessons of the Gospel. He was, indeed, the original of English popular preachers and many from Rowland Hill to Charles Haddon Spurgeon have paid him the supreme tribute of imitation.

Because of Whitefield's profound influence as a popular preacher, it is essential to attempt to account for his success in terms of the techniques he used. Any thorough analysis of his oratorical powers would show that he employed over a dozen different devices for arousing or retaining the attention of his congregations and commending his message to them. Some of the devices which deserve detailed consideration are the following: the element of surprise; travellers' tales; anecdotes to lighten the strain or to point a moral; the selection of the dramatic parts of Scripture for his most successful expositions; such rhetorical devices as the formal introduction to an imaginative flight, antithesis, the intermingling of long and short sentences, and the enforcing of a point by a pithy saying; counter-attacks upon his critics by way of declamations; the comic interlude in which wit, satire, whimsy, humour, and even puns are used; the direct form of address to individuals or to groups in the auditory and particular applications in the exhortations of his sermons; the great range of his appeal to sentiment, arousing pity (he

⁴⁵ See Wesley's "Directions concerning Pronunciation and Gesture."

was a master of pathos), indignation, or terror; the use of homely and telling illustrations; and the employment of topical references and impromptu applications. Altogether this represents an astonishingly varied and subtle apparatus which is the more remarkable in that Whitefield appears to have developed these powers from his own genius, and not by conscious study or imitation. They were immeasurably enforced by the magnificent bell-like voice with which he was endowed and by the whole range of an actor's gestures. Wesley was his equal only in a few of these oratorical devices, and, in the particular matter of illustration, greatly his inferior.

No one knew better how to use shock-tactics than Whitefield. His element of surprise may catch the hearer at the beginning of a sermon, as when he starts and startles with the paradox "bad manners beget good laws."⁴⁶ Similarly, in the midst of his sermon, "The Burning Bush," we are amazed to hear the assertion, "I will assure you, Moses was a Methodist."⁴⁷ Half the fascination of his anecdotes is their unexpected conclusions. Illustrating the ubiquity of God's Spirit, Whitefield tells this story: "A judge said to a good old Christian that was persecuted in Charles II's time, I will banish you to America: says she, Very well, you cannot send me out of my Father's country."⁴⁸

So many of the thousands whom Whitefield addressed had led circumscribed and even drab lives within the confines of the same village or town for decades. When speaking of far-off horizons and distant lands he could be sure of exciting their fascinated curiosity. On one occasion he is telling an English crowd of the great generosity of American hospitality and remarks upon the fact that because there are no inns in the remoter parts of New England, Americans invite the traveller to their own houses.⁴⁹ He is illustrating Jacob's pilgrim spirit from the great and relatively uninhabited spaces of North America, where "you may there travel a hundred and a thousand miles, and go through one continued tract of tall trees, like the tall cedars of Lebanon; and the gentlemen of America, from one end to the other are of such an hospitable temper . . . that they would not let public houses be licensed, that they may have an

⁴⁶ Sermon LXXV "The Good Shepherd." He also begins Sermon XLI with a paradox. Sermon LVIII begins thus: "It is very remarkable that the Old Testament ends with the word *curse*; whereby we are taught that the law made nothing perfect."

⁴⁷ Sermon LXVIII ("The Burning Bush").

⁴⁸ Sermon LXIII ("Glorifying God in the Fire . . .").

⁴⁹ Sermon LXXIV ("Jacob's Ladder").

opportunity of entertaining English friends." This is probably an oversimplification, but it does credit to Whitefield's motives and travellers' tales are proverbially tall. One even taller tale comes from Lisbon, but the ingenious application is all Whitefield's. "I will venture to affirm," he says, "that if your souls prosper, you will grow downwards. What, is that? Why, you will grow in the knowledge of yourselves. I heard when I was in Lisbon, that some people there began at the top of the house first. It is an odd kind of preaching that will do for the Papists, resting merely in externals."⁵⁰

As we might guess, Whitefield was an admirable raconteur and he turned this secular accomplishment to sacred use in his sermons. His peculiar gift was to tell an anecdote that exactly fitted the condition of his hearers. For instance, he well knew that many came to his preaching out of curiosity, or from even less savoury motives, and he had them very much in mind in the following story: "There was a young fellow, called emphatically 'Wicked Will of Plymouth,' who came, as he said, to pick a hole in the preacher's coat, and the Holy Ghost picked a hole in his heart."⁵¹ One can be sure that the respectable citizens in the congregation were careful, at that point, to lay their hands firmly on their wallets, and that would-be thieves thought twice about their first intentions. Often the anecdotes were used to lighten the strain of concentration, but occasionally they conveyed encouragement. Two such, simple in their pathos, are quite characteristic. "One Mr. Buchanan, a Scotchman, who died the other day, having lost his last child, said, I am now childless, but, blessed be God, I am not Christless." Hardly has this story's point had time to sink in, than he begins another: "A noble lady told me herself, that when she was crying on account of one of her children's death, her little daughter came innocently to her one day, and said, Mamma, is God Almighty dead, you cry so?"⁵² An anecdote can also be employed by Whitefield to make a telling criticism, for example, of hypocrisy and uncharitableness. "Ever since I was a boy, I remember to have heard the story of a poor indigent beggar, who asked a clergyman to give him his alms, which being refused, he said, Will you please, sir, to give me your blessing? Says he, God bless you. O, replied the beggar, you would not give that if it were worth anything."⁵³

It is significant that Whitefield makes a much greater use of

⁵⁰ Sermon LX ("Soul Prosperity").

⁵¹ Sermon LXVII ("The Burning Bush").

⁵² Sermon LXV ("The Furnace of Affliction").

⁵³ Sermon LX ("Soul Prosperity").

Old Testament texts than Wesley. Twenty-seven of his 75 sermons use Old Testament texts, whereas only 6 of Wesley's 53 Standard Sermons come from the same Testament. This difference cannot be explained wholly in terms of their differing theologies, respectively Calvinist and Arminian.⁵⁴ It is, in part, attributable to Whitefield's penchant for dramatic incidents, in which the Old Testament abounds. He has narrative sermons on the banishment of Adam and Eve from Paradise (I), Abraham's offering up of his son (III), Jeremiah's similitude of the Potter and the Clay (XIII), Moses and the Burning Bush (LXVIII), and Jacob's Ladder (LXXIV). It may readily be observed how much fonder he is of the dramatic and picturesque parts of the New Testament, while Wesley prefers doctrinal or ethical texts on which to expatiate. Such themes as the Birth of Christ (XVI), His Temptation in the Wilderness (XVII), Christ's Transfiguration (XXX), The Marriage at Cana (XXXVI), The Resurrection of Christ (LIII), The Wise and Foolish Virgins (XXV), The Pharisee and the Publican (XXXIV), The Great Supper (XXXIII), Blind Bartimaeus (XXVII), The Conversion of Zachaeus (XXXV), The Resurrection of Lazarus (XXXIX), The Conversion of Saul (XLI), and The Good Shepherd (LXXV), obviously lend themselves to pictorial and dramatic treatment. The contrast between the abstract titles and subject-matter of Wesley's sermons, with the vividness and concreteness of Whitefield's could hardly be more pointed. The only expanded metaphor suggested by a title in Wesley's Standard Sermons is "The Great Assize."⁵⁵

Among several rhetorical devices Whitefield employs, the fondness of contrast and antithesis is apparent not only in the titles of his sermons (some of which have been indicated in the preceding paragraph) but in extended passages. One of the most striking of the latter contrasts the spirit of worldlings and the spirit of Christians: "While they are singing the songs of the drunkard, you are singing songs and hymns: while they are at a playhouse, you are hearing a sermon: while they are drinking, revelling, and mispending their precious time, and hastening on their own destruction, you are reading, praying, meditating, and working out your salvation with fear and trembling. This is matter enough for a world to reproach you; you are not polite and fashionable enough

⁵⁴ Treatments of Wesley's Theology have been offered by R. Newton Flew, W. R. Cannon, Franz Hildebrand, and Harald Lindström; Whitefield's requires a fuller treatment than that provided in Stuart Henry's *George Whitefield: Wayfaring Witness*, otherwise an admirable volume. For the titles see the bibliography.

⁵⁵ Sermon XLVIII.

for them. If you will live godly, you must suffer persecution; you must not expect to go through this world without being persecuted and reviled. If you were of the world, the world would love you. . . . It has been the death of many a lover of Jesus, merely because they have loved him. . . ."⁵⁶

Whitefield had a strongly imaginative style and it is a peculiarity of his to introduce a flight of fancy by the term "me-thinks I see." It was often the signal to a journey to the other world, and sometimes an invoking of what he called "the terrors of the Lord" as a dissuasive from wickedness. "Me-thinks I see," he says, "the heavens opened, the Judge sitting on his throne, the sea boiling like a pot, and the Lord Jesus coming to judge the world; well, if you are damned, it shall not be for want of calling after."⁵⁷ Many stories are told of Whitefield's vividness forcing his hearers to suspend their disbelief. Even sceptics such as Lord Chesterfield and the philosopher-historian David Hume came temporarily under this spell. One less well-known example deserves citation:

"On one occasion he was preaching before the seamen of New York, when suddenly assuming a certain nautical tone and manner that were irresistible, he thus suddenly broke in with, 'Well, we have a clear sky, and are making fine headway over a smooth sea, before a light breeze, and we shall soon lose sight of land. But what means the sudden lowering of the heavens, and that dark cloud arising from beneath the western horizon? Hark! Don't you hear distant thunder? Don't you see those flashes of lightning? There is a storm gathering! Every man to his duty! How the waves rise and dash against the ship! The air is dank! The tempest rages! Our masts are gone! The ship is on her beam-ends! What next?' This climax of nautical horror was described and uttered in a manner so true to nature, that the sailors started to their feet, and shouted, 'The long boat! Take to the long boat!'"⁵⁸

Wesley's sermons contain few passages which would find their way into an anthology of sacred oratory, for they rely for their effect not on brilliant passages but on the steady accumulation of points logically made. It is interesting, however, to note that both preachers are masters of the use of epigram. Wesley has a gift for concise definition which Whitefield cannot match, but both have striking ways of summing up pithily. Wesley's usual summary takes this

⁵⁶ Sermon LI ("Christ the only Preservative against a Reprobate Spirit").

⁵⁷ Sermon LXIX ("Soul Dejection"). For another example, see Sermon LXXV ("The Good Shepherd").

⁵⁸ These and several other examples are cited in C. H. Spurgeon, *op.cit.*, pp. 34-35 from an anonymous account of one who had often heard Whitefield preach.

form: "Christianity is essentially a social religion; and to turn it into a solitary religion, is indeed to destroy it."⁵⁹ Even more incisive is the saying: "In whatever profession you are engaged, you must be singular or be damned! The way to hell has nothing singular in it; but the way to heaven is singularity all over."⁶⁰ With these may be matched Whitefield's "Every cross has a call in it,"⁶¹ "Our senses are the landing ports of our spiritual enemies,"⁶² "the morning befriends prayer,"⁶³ "for every house is, as it were, a little parish, every governor a priest, every family a flock,"⁶⁴ "Faith is the hand of the soul which layeth hold on Christ,"⁶⁵ and a most characteristic statement: "Broken heads and dead cats are no more the ornaments of a Methodist, but silk scarves."⁶⁶ In this particular contest Wesley seems to be the winner and the palm must certainly be conceded to him when Whitefield is not above using a Wesleyan *bon mot* and claiming it as if it were his own, as happens in the case of the saying, "All the world is my parish."⁶⁷

Reference has already been made to Whitefield's capacity to enliven a sermon by counter-attacking his critics, whether they be Deists, or Socinians, Anglican clergymen, or worldly wisemen. This was used more in his earlier than his later sermons, and he kept his reserves of vitriol for the caterers to the polite diversions of the age, especially for actors. They returned the compliment by satirizing him as Dr. Squintum on the stage, misinterpreting his characteristic doctrines and mimicking his most vigorous gestures.⁶⁸ One such declamation appeared in an early sermon entitled "The Polite and Fashionable Diversions of the Age destructive to Soul and Body," which was preached at Blackheath, and published in 1740, but was never included in his re-issued sermons, presumably because he regretted the rancour of it. One denunciation begins thus: "What are the Playhouses but the Nurseries of Vice, the Sink of Debauchery, the destruction of all Religion?" He claims that clergymen do not criticize them because they frequent them. "But why, my brethren, if these Places are not improper for a Clergyman to be seen at, why do they not go in their Gowns and Cassocks?"

⁵⁹ Standard Sermons XIX.

⁶⁰ Standard Sermons XIX.

⁶¹ Sermon II ("Walking with God").

⁶² Sermon I ("The Seed of the Woman and Seed of the Serpent").

⁶³ Sermon III ("Abraham's offering up his son Isaac").

⁶⁴ Sermon IV ("The Great Duty of Family Religion").

⁶⁵ Sermon V ("Christ the Best Husband").

⁶⁶ Sermon LX ("Soul Prosperity").

⁶⁷ Sermon LXX ("Spiritual Baptism").

⁶⁸ Samuel Foote's comedy "The Minor" is the most notorious example, as well as the wittiest.

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No, they always go disguised. . . ." From this he proceeds to ex-coriate the sermons of such clergymen: "Their doctrines, as they now preach, 'tis true, are no better than what *Sennecca* [sic], *Cicero*, *Plato* or most of the Heathen Philosophers would have given as good account as they; for what are their Sermons, what are the Writings of most of our Rabbies, but a little dead dry Morality?"⁶⁹ It is extremely rare for Wesley to use such a technique, though one instance of his use of sarcasm may be given. In his sermon on "Dress," Wesley quotes an unnamed Dean as having said to his Whitehall congregation, "If you do not repent, you will go to a place where I have too much manners to name before this good company."

By contrast, Whitefield made an extensive use of humour, being fond of puns, which have been described as the lowest form of wit. One good use of a pun is found in his story of the prebendary of York who was quite inaudible, so that someone said "they had never heard such a *moving* sermon in all their lives in that cathedral, for it made all the people *move* out, because they could not hear."⁷⁰ Of his wit, which was ready, one example may be given: "Achilles, the Grecian hero, is said to be capable of being wounded only in the heel, but bad priests, ministers, and people, have a great deal more dangerous part to be wounded in, that is, the palm of the hand."⁷¹ His natural quickness of repartee is illustrated in the following: "I spoke to a person yesterday about the cross: pray, sir, says he, would you have me bring a cross upon myself? No, said I, only be honest, and you will find crosses enough."⁷² When the time is appropriate he can employ irony with biting effect, and no one knew better than he how to evoke that laughter that is akin to tears. He was master of the broadly comic, as well as of the deeply pathetic. His mobile face with its crossed eyes was calculated to excite the ludicrous in the beholder, especially when accompanied by the gestures of ridicule. It is not surprising that he could get laughs; it is remarkable only that he was chiefly conscious of the high dignity of his calling, and the redemptive potentialities of the most base and ignoble of men. Since he generally entreated men by the love of God, he was able on occasion to threaten them by the terrors of the Lord. Speaking on the theme of the Wise and Foolish Virgins and the need for vigilance, he said: "Blessed be God, we are all here well; but who,

⁶⁹ The two citations are from pp. 6 and 8 respectively of "The Polite and Fashionable Diversions. . . ."

⁷⁰ Sermon LXI ("The Gospel a Dying Saint's Triumph").

⁷¹ Sermon LXVII ("Self-Inquiry concerning the Work of God").

⁷² Sermon LXX ("Spiritual Baptism").

out of this great multitude dares say, I shall go home to my house in safety? Who knows but whilst I am speaking, God may commission his ministering servants immediately to call some of you away by a sudden stroke, to give an account with what attention you have heard this sermon. You know, my brethren, some such instances we have lately had. And what angel or spirit hath assured us, that some of you shall not be next?"⁷³ It might have been expected that Whitefield would dangle his hearers over the pit in his sermon on "The Eternity of Hell Torments" (XXVI). On the contrary, he regards the flames as metaphorical since Hell is a state, not a place, and the utmost pain of Hell is "the never-dying worm of a self-condemning conscience." Its moderation may be contrasted with the famous sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" of Jonathan Edwards, in which one fearful image after another expresses the inexorable and relentless justice of God in action,⁷⁴ although it is pertinent to state that Edwards preached this sermon from a fully written manuscript. Whitefield's chief indignation was reserved, not for his congregations, but for the foes of Christianity, and even here cheerfulness kept breaking in.

Wesley, if we are to judge by his printed sermons, had little talent for illustration.⁷⁵ Whitefield, on the other hand, was most fertile in producing illustrations, from the simple simile to the elaborate metaphor and from the historical event to the personal anecdote. So pictorial a mind seemed to think in images. "There is a good many people," he says, "have some religion in them, but they are not established; hence they are mere weather-cocks, turned about by every wind of doctrine; and you may as soon measure the moon for a suit of clothes, as some people that are always changing; this is for want of more grace, more of the Spirit of God. . . ." Two more sentences follow and again the homely similes seem to suggest themselves: "Young Christians are like little rivulets, that make a great noise, and have shallow water; old Christians are like deep water, that makes little noise, carries a good load, and gives not way."⁷⁶ These figures are not so much original as they are natural and apt.

Whitefield also has a passion for the esoteric or fantastical image. He begins Sermon LIX on "Christ the Believer's Refuge"

⁷³ Sermon XXV.

⁷⁴ See C. H. Faust and Thomas H. Johnson, *Jonathan Edwards: Representative Selections*, pp. 154-72.

⁷⁵ Doughty, *op.cit.*, p. 155 concludes that many as Wesley's gifts were "that of sermon illustration was not conspicuous among them."

⁷⁶ Sermon LVIII ("A Faithful Minister's Parting Blessing").

with a legend: "There was a tradition among the ancient Jews, that the manna which came down from heaven, though it was a little grain like coriander-seed, yet suited every taste; as milk unto babes, and strong meat to grown persons." He goes on to claim that the Psalms are suited to all spiritual tastes and from one of these he takes his text. On another occasion, forgiveness is illustrated with an historical reference: "Love as archbishop Cranmer did, that it became a proverb concerning him that if any man would make him his friend, he must do him an injury."⁷⁷ All was grist to Whitefield's image-making mill: whether the sources were literary and historical, observation, or personal experience. For the following extended image, it is clear that his many transatlantic crossings stood him in good stead: "God be praised for letting down this ladder . . . O, say you, I am giddy, I shall fall; here I will give you a rope, be sure to lay hold of it; just as sailors do when you go aboard a ship, they let down a rope, so God lets down a promise: climb, climb, then till you have got higher, into a better climate, and God shall put his hand out by and by, when you get to the top of the ladder, to receive you to himself."⁷⁸ By contrast, the nearest Wesley got to illustrations was by way of using allegories, and these tended to be "a bloodless ballet of categories."

Whitefield was not unique, but exceptionally skilful in applying his messages to particular individuals or groups within his crowded congregations.⁷⁹ Such applications invariably took the form of the direct address. In some cases the challenge must have come home as pointedly as the prophet Nathan's accusation of David, "Thou art the man." In his fine sermon on "Persecution every Christian's Lot" (LV) his application is addressed to four different groups: those about to be Christians, of whom he inquires if they have counted the cost; those who suffer patiently he bids rejoice because their reward in heaven will be great; ministers of Christ's gospel are reminded that persecution divides true shepherds from hirelings; and, finally, persecutors are commanded to "howl and weep for the miseries that shall come upon you." In a sermon on "Marks of having received the Holy Ghost" (XLI), his exhortation is directed towards those who are, respectively, dead to sin, deceived with false hopes of salvation, spiritual beginners, and ripely sanctified. No

⁷⁷ Sermon LXVII ("Self-Inquiry concerning the Work of God").

⁷⁸ Sermon LXXIV ("Jacob's Ladder").

⁷⁹ For a particularly fine exhortation to "young men, maidens, busy merchants and cumbered Marthas, hoary heads, lambs of the flock, poor negroes" see Sermon XIV ("The Lord Our Righteousness").

preacher ever confronted men with a more direct challenge; no fisher of men cast his fly more accurately upon the stream:

"Come, ye dead, Christless, unconverted sinners, come and see the place where they laid the body of the deceased Lazarus; behold him laid out, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, locked up and stinking in a dark cave, with a great stone placed on the top of it! View him again and again; go nearer to him; be not afraid; smell him, ah! how he stinks. Stop there now, pause awhile; and whilst thou art gazing upon the corpse of Lazarus, give me leave to tell thee with great plainness, but greater love, that this dead, bound, entombed, stinking carcase, is but a faint representation of thy poor soul in its natural state. . . . Perhaps thou hast lain in this state, not only four days, but many years, stinking in God's nostrils."

Small wonder that Whitefield should then comment: "Me-thinks I see some of you affected at this part of my discourse." Whether it is in good taste or not is beside the point here; what is important is the preacher's capacity to grip every careless hearer in the hollow of his hand by the direct assault. Preaching is for Whitefield a reciprocal relationship between speaker and audience, a retroactivity, and he must respond to the impact he is making. Quite typical are the responses (the preacher's equivalents of the actor's "asides") of Whitefield in the sermon on *Blind Bartimaeus* (xxvii): "This, I trust, some of you begin to feel" and "I see you concerned" and "I see you weeping." He never seems to lose rapport with his auditory and near the conclusion says: "Here is a great multitude of people following me, a poor worm, this day . . . I shall return home with a heavy heart unless some of you will arise and come to my Jesus." Spoken by others these phrases might seem commonplace, possibly even exaggerated; but the plaintive tongue of Whitefield made them solemn and sad as bells tolling for the mute dead. However vivid and sharply-focussed the words and phrases themselves, a voice of vast range from the sonorous to the whispered, united with a face as expressive of moods as the sky itself, and hands that were electric to the finger-tips, made sense, sound, and sight a mutually re-enforcing triple onslaught on the reason and sensibility of his audiences.⁸⁰

Only in the construction, the logical elaboration, the balanced consideration, and the clear presentation of his theme, as also in

⁸⁰ John Gillies, *op.cit.*, pp. 284-85 in an analysis of the sources of his eloquence mentions "an exceedingly lively imagination," "an action still more lively," and, above all, "a heart deeply exercised in all the social, as well as the pious and religious emotions."

the range of his instruction, did Wesley excel Whitefield, for Whitefield excelled in practically all the oratorical devices of preaching. In one respect of technique alone were they equal, their use of topical references and impromptu applications to make the relevance of their preaching clear. Wesley records in his *Journal* for 14 April 1739 that he had preached to the debtors in Bristol poor-house, "to whom I explained these comfortable words, 'When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them all.'" Whitefield was once preaching on Kennington Common where there were three men on the gallows, hanging in chains. His theme was "The Danger of Men Resulting from Sin," in the course of which he said, pointing to the three malefactors, "If you want to know more what wages the devil gives his servants, you need not stir from the place where you are. Look yonder, and there you will see how he pays them. He seeks your souls to destroy them; but, my brethren, fear him not. Though he is your enemy, he is a chained one."⁸¹ Another example of Whitefield's relevance, this time a racy one, appears in a letter of naïve spelling written by a disciple of Whitefield who went with him to preach to a Midlands group of folk who were attending a market in the neighbourhood of a race-course. The hour was early, the numbers few, and the rain fell in torrents; but Whitefield's spirits were quite undamped: "Mr. Whitd was wet through all; and the water ran out of his gownd sleeve. 'Well,' said he, 'if you don't mind the rain, I don't; I believe you don't mind a little rain at a market. Well, com, if you can, find Christ the way. You will have a much better prise than your poor paltry prise they will get at yonder race, where they are forsing the poor creatures almost to death. One that I know well, a godly man (and who is always full of pain), said, 'I felt no pain while I was hearing.'"⁸²

The conclusion of our consideration of the techniques of the discourses of Whitefield and Wesley can only be that Whitefield was the spell-binding orator and preacher par excellence, while Wesley was the best of pulpit teachers.⁸³

5. *Their Audiences*

It seems that Whitefield was equally happy in preaching to men and women of high and low society alike, but that Wesley was hap-

⁸¹ Cited in Luke Tyerman, *op.cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 304.

⁸² This autograph letter was first published in John Waddington, *Congregational History, 1700-1800 . . .*, pp. 449-50.

⁸³ Such commonplace devices as alliteration, or such excessively artificial devices as soliloquy have not been discussed.

piest with the unpretentious poor. Dr. Johnson considered that Whitefield was a success with the poor and ignorant, but that he had no gifts suitable for impressing the polite and the elegant. Denying that he had treated Whitefield's ministry with contempt, and recognizing the good he did among the lower classes of mankind, he yet held that "when familiarity and noise claim the prize due to knowledge, art, and elegance, we must beat down pretensions."⁸⁴ The truth in this criticism is that Whitefield was ambitious to shine in social circles and that his benefactress, the Countess of Huntingdon, was anxious to indulge the whim in the interest of converting the nobility and gentry of her acquaintance. The evidence even creeps into his sermons, in complacent references to his friend Colonel Gardiner and to his pride in opening a new chapel of the Countess with a sermon.⁸⁵ As against this, it should be recognized that his concern and practical sympathy for the poor is shown both in his building and maintaining an orphanage and by the fact that he died a poor man, though no spendthrift. Further, despite Johnson's opinion, he was a success with many of the high-born. Though Bolingbroke might remain a Deist, he was greatly impressed by Whitefield's preaching, for he wrote to the Countess: "He is the most extraordinary man in our times. He has the most commanding eloquence I ever heard in any person—his abilities are very considerable—his zeal unquenchable, and his piety and excellence genuine, unquestionable."⁸⁶ Whitefield's converts included David Stewart, Earl of Buchan, and Lord Dartmouth, of whom Cowper wrote "he wears a coronet and prays." That he was plain-speaking even to the highest in the land is attested by another letter written to the Countess of Huntingdon. This time it is the Duchess of Buckingham, who claimed to be the natural daughter of James II and who wrote: "It is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth" and Her Grace found the Methodist doctrines "most repulsive and tinctured with impertinence and disrespect towards their superiors."⁸⁷ Born of humble parents, it is little wonder that Whitefield was gratified to gain the favour of the social elite, but to accuse him of being a lackey and a lickspittle is undeservedly to impugn his integrity as

⁸⁴ Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Ch. XLIII.

⁸⁵ See Sermons LXIX, and LX, for references to Gardiner, and LXXI for a reference to the Countess. See also Sermon VI, which might almost be the effusion of a court chaplain.

⁸⁶ Cited by L. E. Elliott-Binns, *The Early Evangelicals: A Religious and Social Study*, p. 139.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

a preacher. It was his criticisms, not Wesley's, of "the polite and fashionable diversions of the age" that elicited ribald stage caricatures of his preaching and doctrines from the chief caterers to such amusements.

Whitefield was also *persona grata* to many clergymen of the Established Church in a way that Wesley was not, though both equally insisted on their loyalty to the Church of England. The Evangelicals of the Anglican Church accepted Whitefield because he was a Calvinist in his theology as they were, whereas Arminianism was associated with the High Church party whom Wesley was alienating on the different ground of creating an organization which, although it began as a complement to the Church, increasingly became a competitor with it. Furthermore, the same Calvinism of Whitefield made friends for him among orthodox Dissenters and the Presbyterian clergy of the Church of Scotland, while the Calvinistic Methodists of Wales found him a staunch ally.

Wesley, for his part, definitely preferred to preach to the common people, and in the deliberate simplicity, clarity, and unadorned nature of his style as well as in much of the ethical content of his sermons, accommodated himself marvellously to their limited capacities. If Whitefield's preaching might be called "preaching to the gallery," Wesley's was, in his own donnish phrase, definitely *ad populum*, avoiding all that was meretricious or egotistical so that he could say of Christ, with John the Baptist, "I must decrease, and He must increase."⁸⁸ It is true that occasionally a Horatian disdain for the mob might escape from his normally restrained lips, as when he said, "Nor does this only concern the vulgar herd—the poor, base, stupid part of mankind,"⁸⁹ but his seeking out of those who were lost sheep not only spiritually but socially gives the lie to this as in any sense his *credo*.

A survey of his itineraries as recorded in his *Journal* will show how regularly he visited the new industrial towns in which there were no Anglican edifices of worship. Between 1685 and 1760 the greatest increases of population in England were to be found in these very areas: during this period the population of Liverpool increased ten-fold, of Manchester five-fold, and of Birmingham and Sheffield seven-fold.⁹⁰ His *Journal* also has many references to his

⁸⁸ There was, however, some wilfulness in Wesley, as may be seen in his determination to hold a tight rein on the Methodist societies.

⁸⁹ A phrase contained in Standard Sermon xxvi. (See Sugden, *op.cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 536.)

⁹⁰ H. Maldwyn Hughes, *Wesley and Whitefield*, p. 80. See also R. F. Wear-

preaching to the poor. For example, on October 28, 1765, he writes: "I preached at Bath: but I only had the poor to hear; there being service at the same time at Lady Huntingdon's chapel. So I was in my element. I have scarce ever found such liberty at Bath before." Of a polite auditory at Pembroke, he wrote: "I spoke on the first elements of the gospel. But I was still out of my depth. O how hard it is to be shallow enough for a polite audience."⁹¹ One is amazed that this scholar-gentleman should be much more at home in addressing the world's humble and despised than among the men and women of his own social class. It is equally surprising that Wesley should expect a higher standard of both intelligence and integrity in the lower than in the higher classes. As in their preaching techniques, so in the groups to which they preached, Whitefield and Wesley were essentially complementaries, not competitors.

6. *The Criticisms of Their Contemporaries*

Hitherto, our attempt to see Whitefield and Wesley clearly has been chiefly by the approach to their own writings. This has, at least, prevented us from wilfully republishing either stereotypes or caricatures of two great and controversial figures. If, however, we are to see them as they appeared on the stage of their time, we must also view their distorted lineaments as they appear in the sight of their critics, whether adulatory, or, more often, condemnatory.

Wesley comes in for much less condemnation than Whitefield, as his restraint warranted. Two predominant impressions were made on his contemporaries: his scholarly bearing and his graciousness. George Osborne of Rochester said that his first impression was: "This man is a scholar."⁹² This struck him because it was such a contradiction of the stereotype of the critics who had labelled him a fanatic. Yet, how could this man, who quoted the New Testament texts in the original language, who was restrained, modest, and natural in manner, and simple in expression, be an enthusiast? A Swedish professor, Dr. Liden of Uppsala, commented on the preacher thus: "He has not great oratorical gifts, no outward appearance, but he speaks clear and pleasant." He added: "He is a small, thin old man, with his own long and straight black hair, and looks as the worst country curate in Sweden, but has

mouth, *Methodism and the Common People of the Eighteenth Century* and *Methodism and the Working-class Movements of England*.

⁹¹ *Journal*, entry for September 25, 1771.

⁹² This citation is from Doughty, *op.cit.*, p. 104f.

learning as a bishop and zeal for the glory of God which is quite extraordinary. His talk is very agreeable, and his mild face and pious manner secure him the love of all right-minded men."⁹³ Thomas Rutherford, a travelling preacher, was first captivated by "his apostolic and angelic appearance" and by the authority and perspicuity of his utterances.⁹⁴ Old Dame Summerhill of Bristol told Adam Clarke how, in her fifties, she had walked one hundred and twenty-five miles to hear Wesley and had taken the same long road back with peace in her heart.⁹⁵ Whitefield, too, had his devoted supporters, like John Newton (whose eulogy was cited earlier in this chapter) and the Countess of Huntingdon. Methodism had many critics whose chief objections were to the imagined fanaticism of the movement and to the irregular competition the leaders were offering the Anglican Church. These charges were repeated in episcopal charge after charge, but they afford us no direct contact of critical minds with the preachers, since, presumably, the bishops had not heard them.⁹⁶

There is no doubt, however, that the London stage made a determined effort to laugh into obscurity Methodism in general, and Whitefield in particular. For one thing, Whitefield's denunciations of stage-shows and stage-players had cut to the very quick of the profession. For another, this orator was gathering thousands to witness his own dramatic preaching in the Tottenham Court Road Tabernacle, only a short distance from London's theatres, so that he constituted a veritable competition in himself. Smollett might sneer at the Methodists in *Humphry Clinker*, and Hume might dismiss them in the continuation of his *History* as "obscure preachers," and Hogarth might caricature them in the cartoon "Credulity, Superstition and Fanaticism," but no bones were broken by the strokes of a quill pen or the acid of the etcher. When, however, Samuel Foote, the great comic actor of his day, wrote a play on the Methodists, introducing Whitefield as "the Reverend Doctor Squintum" (in allusion to his being cross-eyed), and the play called *The Minor* ran for ten years at the Haymarket, it was clear that such adverse publicity would either make or break Whitefield. In fact, it elicited even greater curiosity about Whitefield. Foote followed it with another play, *The Methodist*, in which Dr. Squintum became a major character, and with a third satire, *The Orators*. John Bee, who

⁹³ This citation is from *ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 104f., where both testimonies to Wesley are cited.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ See Arthur P. Whitney, *The Basis of Opposition to Methodism in England in the Eighteenth Century*.

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edited the works of Samuel Foote, says: "If we are to suppose a formal opposition, or enmity, existed between that cant and the histrionic muse, most certainly Whitfield [sic] drew first blood, by calling the Theatre the devil's own house; and, in return, Methodism caught a clinker in the Minor, it probably will never get over, but which the Saints would gladly sink in the shades of forgetfulness."⁹⁷ This is proof positive that a feud went on between the theatre and the tabernacle, and that Foote caricatured the appearance, the gestures, and the favourite phraseology and doctrines of Whitefield.

To perpetrate the kind of pun Whitefield delighted in, we must now look at him as he appears in the glare of the Foote-lights. Foote criticized the doctrine of justification by faith as a very convenient way of accepting a superficial salvation without transformation of character. This he demonstrates in *The Minor* by making a supposed convert of Whitefield's, Mrs. Cole, the keeper of a bawdy-house, and by using to the full the ambiguities which the term "new birth" suggests in such a sordid context. Dick speaks of Mrs. Cole to an old reprobate and rake, Sir George: "She bad me say, she just stopt in her way to the Tabernacle; after the Exhortation, she says, she'll call again." The play proceeds:

SIR GEORGE: Exhortation! Oh, I recollect. Well, whilst they only make proselytes for that profession, they are heartily welcome to them. She does not mean to make me a convert?

DICK: I believe she had some such design upon me; for she offer'd me a book of hymns, a shilling, and a dram to go along with her.

SIR GEORGE: No bad scheme, Dick. Thou hast a fine, sober, psalm-singing countenance; and when thou hast been some time in their trammels, may'st make as able a teacher as the best of them.

DICK: Laud, sir, I want learning.

SIR GEORGE: Oh, the Spirit, the Spirit will supply all that, never fear.⁹⁸

He has already stressed the hiatus between faith and morality and the gap between charismatic gifts and culture in Methodism. Foote now continues by ridiculing the jargon of the "saints" in the mouth of Mrs. Cole: "I am worn out, thrown by, and forgotten,

⁹⁷ *The Works of Samuel Foote, Esq. with Remarks on each play and an essay . . .*, p. 4.

⁹⁸ *The Minor*, Act I.

like a tatter'd garment, as Mr. Squintum says. Oh, he is a dear man! But for him I had been a lost sheep, never known the comforts of the new birth."⁹⁹

Mrs. Cole later offers another encomium of Whitefield: "Oh, it was a wonderful work. There had I been tossing in a sea of sin, without rudder or compass. And had not the good gentleman piloted me into the harbour of grace, I must have struck against the rocks of reprobation, and have been quite swallow'd up in the whirlpool of despair. He was the instrument of my spiritual sprinkling. —But, however, Sir George, if your mind be set upon a young country thing, tomorrow night I believe I can furnish you."¹⁰⁰

Foote's own explicit comment on Methodism appears in the words of Sir George: "How the jade has jumbled together the carnal and the spiritual; with what ease she reconciles her new birth to her old calling! No wonder these preachers have plenty of proselytes, whilst they have the address to blind hitherto jarring interests of two worlds."¹⁰¹

His full catalogue of charges against the Methodists is described in Act III, Scene VII of *The Methodist*:

- SIR WILL: An Enthusiastic Rascal!—That frightens the ignorant out of their wits, and afterwards picks their Pockets.
 RICH: A set of People who imagine they have a Right to commit any Crime they please all Day, provided they go to the Tabernacle in the Evening.
 SIR WILL: Who think Works of no Manner of Service.
 Y. WEAL: What do you think of a Pillory, Mr. Squintum?
 SIR WILL: What do you think of a Cart, Mrs. Cole?
 Y. WEAL: Of being brought before your Superiors, Mr. Squintum?
 SIR WILL: And heartily flogged, Mrs. Cole?
 RICH: Come, Brother, they are not worth your laughing at: any Man of Sense must despise their Doctrine and detest their Principles—Let it be our Business to put the Laws into force against these Scandals to Society.

In sum, Foote has made four serious indictments of the teaching of the Methodists: the chief charge is that of antinomianism and a faith without ethical transformation; the second, cultural Philistinism and Puritanism; the third, the laziness of those who will depend upon God to provide, instead of providing for themselves; the fourth, that of canting hypocrisy in the preachers. All in all, it is a formidable accusation.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

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Undoubtedly, however careful Whitefield usually was to guard against a faith that did not issue in good works, he was so antagonistic to a salvation by works that he occasionally ran into the opposite error or, at the least, might be misunderstood in this way.¹⁰² His extreme aversion to "rabbis" of Latitudinarian Anglicanism, the Deists, and the Arminians, tended in this direction. Moreover, it was inevitable that many of the people who flocked to his preaching and claimed an emotional experience of the "new birth," and were without that constant supervision and discipline which Wesley had provided in the class-meetings and the bands, should quickly relapse into their unregenerate state ethically.

Again, Whitefield's occasional philippics against book-learning and his pietistical and puritanical assumption that pleasure itself was a pursuit unworthy of a Christian, deserve censure. Whitefield was a fideist of the same brand as Tertullian, despite his Oxford education, or else he could never have said: "Our common learning, so much cried up, makes men only so many accomplished fools,"¹⁰³ nor, "And what is it, but this human wisdom, this science, falsely so called, that blinds the understanding, and corrupts the hearts of so many modern unbelievers, and makes them unwilling to submit to the righteousness which is of God by faith in Christ Jesus?"¹⁰⁴ Such a Philistinism was unthinkable to Wesley, for whom reason, after Scripture, was an avenue of the knowledge of God. For Whitefield, as for Tertullian, the usual assumption is that there can be no commerce between Jerusalem and Athens, between the Academy and the Church.¹⁰⁵ Yet he is not consistent and, in one place at least, makes the unexceptionable statement, "Christianity includes morality as Grace does Reason."¹⁰⁶

While Foote's criticism of converts who sponged upon others is probably exaggerated, there were others who thought that the doctrine of particular providences was akin to superstition. Wesley, indeed, warned against its abuse in his sermon on "The Nature of Enthusiasm." At the same time, when neither Scripture, nor experience, nor reason gave a clear answer to a problem, he resorted to the use of lots, believing this to have Biblical authority. Whitefield cites a belief in particular providences, apparently with entire ap-

¹⁰² See particularly anti-moralism exhibited extremely in Sermon XXXIV ("The Pharisee and the Publican"), yet there are specific warnings against antinomianism, as in Sermon LX ("Soul Prosperity").

¹⁰³ Sermon XLIV ("Christ the Believer's Wisdom . . .").

¹⁰⁴ Sermon XLV ("The Knowledge of Jesus Christ the Best Knowledge").

¹⁰⁵ For anti-cultural remarks see Sermon XXXII ("A Penitent Heart, the best New Year's Gift").

¹⁰⁶ Sermon XLIX ("Of Regeneration").

proval, otherwise he would not have repeated the anecdote. A husband who attended the Tabernacle to hear Whitefield once asked his more orthodox Anglican wife who attended St. Giles' Church to accompany him. She replied: "Well, come put up your walking-stick—if it fall towards St. Giles's, I will go there; if to the chapel, I will go there." Whitefield adds, "The stick fell towards the chapel, she came, and was converted to God."¹⁰⁷

Foote's fourth charge of canting Pharisaism would be much more difficult to prove. Whitefield certainly used religious jargon, and on occasion he used the very language that South had hoped to banish from the pulpit. For example, he says that believing is "a coming to Jesus Christ, receiving Jesus, rolling ourselves on Jesus; it is a trusting in the Lord Jesus." As to hypocrisy, the ready answer lies in the unequalled devotion of Wesley and Whitefield to the cause of the Gospel. Ronald Knox, who has other criticisms to offer, insists that both men were free from personal ambition.¹⁰⁸

One other critic who styled himself "the learned Mr. John Harman, Regulator of Enthusiasts" wrote a brilliant account¹⁰⁹ of Whitefield's preaching, claiming that he was representing him fairly by putting together characteristic passages from his sermons as he had heard them. While, of course, he selects examples of those doctrines he dislikes and of those expressions to which he takes exception, his parody reads as if it were the author of the later sermons himself.¹¹⁰ This pamphlet is so subtle an imitation of Whitefield and so rare that the citation of a lengthy excerpt from it is warranted. After an account of six major doctrines, and an example of his praying, there follows "A Short Specimen of the Rev. Dr. Squintum's Extemporary Sermons" which begins thus:

"If we are inspired (say you) with the spirit of God—Why don't we raise the dead to life?—Now, if I raise the dead to life, will you believe our mission then?—Speak, speak;—What! nobody speak!—Then I'll speak for you—Now if I was to raise the dead to life, half London would not believe it; but all London would come with constables and staves, to take me before a Justice of the Peace, and then carry me away to Newgate, and say I was a *conjurer*, and that I dealt with the black art;—but I'll take care to keep out of their clutches;—[claps his chin down on the pulpit cushion, humming by

¹⁰⁷ Sermon LXI ("The Gospel a Dying Saint's Triumph").

¹⁰⁸ R. A. Knox, *Enthusiasm, a Chapter in the History of Religion, with Special Reference to the XVII and XVIII Centuries*, p. 492.

¹⁰⁹ The short title is *The Crooked Disciple's Remarks upon the Blind Guide's Method of Preaching*. . . .

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

the people to confirm it to be true]-Well, if we don't raise the dead to life, yet we can raise them to life that are dead to sin-Bring me a drunkard and I warrant you I can make him turn sober;-a whore-master and a whore to live virtuous and to leave off whoring;-Swearers and cursers to change courses. I believe I can produce some hundreds of witnesses of this; and if this is not doing of miracles, what is doing of miracles?-I think it is doing of miracles-And this is done by the power of the Spirit, for when you come to be new born again, and become of Christ's flock, you'll feel this Spirit of Christ enter into your heart;-and you must feel it enter in or else it is a sign that you have not got it:-For what is Christ's Spirit to me if I don't feel it?

"There was a young woman (about eighteen years ago) received this spirit, and she told me that she felt it to her heart:-About a year after she spoke to me again, and said,-'Sir, about a year ago I thought I received the spirit of Christ within me, but I have been very doubtful ever since about it; for I have not since been once tempted by man, nor once ask'd the question.'-'Ah! silly girl (says I) to think that the spirit of Christ would lead you into temptation whereof it doth quite the contrary.-A person may be inspired with the spirit of God and Christ, and yet commit sin.-Now I'll tell you how this is:-Why sin and grace is like a bottle filled with dirty water; when it is settled, it looks clear; but take and shake it, and it appears thick and muddy again.-Now Christ is like a bottle of clear water, without any mixture-for Christ was without any sin at all-and the more you shake it the brighter it grows.'"¹¹¹

Later the pseudonymous author gives an example of Whitefield's polemical style: "Well, I know that some of you will say now: that I am a vulgar-mouth'd fellow.-What care I for that?-Well, I love to talk of Hell and damnation, good old sterling words, like good old gold-you shan't rise up against me at the day of judgment for being a velvet-mouthed preacher, like your Church-doctors, your dunce-doctors, your book-learned blockheads, your barking dogs, that can bark and can't bite;-When they get up into the pulpit, they preach a good moral discourse, deliver it with so sweet and velvet a mouth, that you would think it was the melodious sounding of the harp;-hold forth for about forty minutes;-Hold!-I should say twenty (for perhaps their hearers don't like long sermons) and all through they never mention a bit of Christ in it; and then, good night Doctor."¹¹²

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

Whitefield's colloquial, intimate, conversational, direct approach is perfectly conveyed, the familiar illustrations, the correcting of himself as he goes along, the inner logic and drive of his ideas, the vituperation against the moral preachers, and the ironical ending—all are here. Unerringly, the critic also touches on a serious weakness in Whitefield: his execrable taste, which oscillates between the risqué and the crudely sensational, and for which evidence can be found in the sermons.¹¹³

The restrained and more gently brought up Wesley was free from all such temptations; the very passion of Whitefield and his volatility of temperament made him subject to occasional vulgarity, sensationalism, and sheer bathos. Ronald Knox has described Whitefield as having a "sacristy mind"¹¹⁴ in the artificiality of some of his extravagant references to religion, but it would, on some occasions, be equally adequate to describe it as a barrack-room sensibility. Some of his personal references are occasionally egotistical and obscure the message which he is trying to deliver. One reference is so carelessly phrased as to suggest that he regarded himself as on an equality with the first apostles.¹¹⁵

The pseudonymous "crooked disciple" pointed to another possible defect in the preachers of the Evangelical Revival: that is, in their insistence upon feeling. This was to make a very subjective criterion of religion. It brings to mind Hegel's retort to Schleiermacher's definition of religion as a feeling of dependence: that if this is indeed so, a dog must be the most religious of animals. In their revolt from the formalism of the day, the two great preachers so emphasized a religion of the heart that converts became excessively introverted and individualistic.

All these criticisms, whether justified, partly justified, or unwarranted, must in the final analysis be judged spots on the sun. The great achievement of Whitefield and Wesley was by their proclamation of the judgment and mercy of God, in their respective conceptions of their task as orator and teacher to begin a religious revolution which accomplished for eighteenth century England (and in part for America) what Puritanism had accomplished in the previ-

¹¹³ His erotic titillation (it is no less) appears also in the Sermon v ("Christ the Best Husband"), which was preached to a society of young women in Fetter Lane, and his sensationalism in Sermon LXII ("All Men's Place"), when he writes to the doting father of an only child asking "Is your idol dead yet?" and cites the answering letter saying "the child died in such agony that its excrements came out of its mouth."

¹¹⁴ *Op.cit.*, p. 490.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Sermon LXXII ("All Men's Place").

ous century.¹¹⁶ Their disciples and imitators taught successive generations of the English-speaking world the lessons they had themselves learned under the passionate and dramatic oratory of Whitefield, and the reasoned and practical discourses of Wesley. They were the originals of popular preaching and teaching in England.

¹¹⁶ Cf. J. R. Green's judgment: "Puritanism won its spiritual victory in the Wesleyan Movement, after the failure in the previous century of its military and political struggles." (*Short History of the English People*, pp. 307-08.) This appraisal may stand provided that there is added to the Wesleyan Movement the Evangelical party in the Church of England which owes more to Whitefield than to Wesley.

CHAPTER VIII

THE METHODIST UNION OF FORMAL AND FREE WORSHIP

THE ESSENCE of Methodist worship as it germinated in the fertile mind of its founder was the combination of the advantages of liturgical forms and of free prayers. John Wesley was unique in this century in being the bridge that crossed the chasm between the worship of Anglicanism and Dissent. In this respect he might be regarded with equal justice as the precursor of the Oxford Movement or as the last of the Puritan divines. His Catholic mind ranged through the centuries of Church history and raided its devotional treasures like an avid Christian pirate. In truth, not in irony, we may say of him, as Dryden of Absalom, "A man so various he seemed to be; not one, but all mankind's epitome." A mystic in his belief in Christian perfection, yet an evangelist with a burning heart for England's unclaimed millions; a pietist and advocate of warm personal religion, yet an activist and disciplinarian; an outstanding preacher, Wesley was also a pre-eminent administrator and organizer. It is no exaggeration to claim, with B. L. Manning, "In John Wesley the Methodists had a leader who, by a stroke of divine genius that puts him in the same rank as Hildebrand, St. Dominic, and St. Ignatius Loyola, combined the evangelical passion and experience of Luther with Calvin's ecclesiastical system."¹

1. *High Churchmanship and Puritanism*

The paradox in the life of Wesley was that this loyal High Churchman² was, against his will, the leader of the largest new Dissenting denomination in England. It was wittily expressed as the work of a "strong and skillful rower" who "looked one way while every stroke of his oar took him in the opposite direction."³ This combination of a convinced High Churchman's appreciation of liturgy and the Eucharist with a practical if reluctant recognition of the value of extemporary preaching, free prayer, and hymns

¹ *The Making of Modern English Religion*, p. 110.

² Wesley was a "High Churchman" in his appreciation of the Liturgy and the Sacraments, but not in his ecclesiology, either in terms of ministerial order or in his friendly attitude to Dissent; the latter developments, however, took place after the "Holy Club" days, when he was in all respects a loyal High Churchman.

³ Benjamin Gregory, *Sidelights on the Conflicts of Methodism*, p. 161.

made Wesley's liturgical contributions the most important single fact in the history of English Christianity in the eighteenth century.⁴

Even to insist that High Anglicanism and Puritanism were the formative forces in Wesley's rich amalgam of worship is to do less than justice to the many elements that were fused in his devotions, experience, and wide reading. The classical scholar of Christ Church and fellow of Lincoln was familiar with the whole corpus of Graeco-Roman literature and he lived as familiarly in the Greek of the New Testament as if it were his own study. His devotional reading took him into more remote territories, for he was intimately acquainted with the *Theologica Germanica* (as Luther had been), Tauler, Macarius, Madame Guyon, Brother Lawrence, Pascal, and Molinos; nor did he forget his countrymen, the Cambridge Platonists and William Law. He was also widely read in the early Fathers of the Church, and the High Anglicans who carried on the traditions of the Caroline divines and of the Non-Jurors. His soul had been claimed by Martin Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans during the Aldersgate meeting on May 24, 1738, that red-letter day of the Methodist Calendar. Yet in these broad references we touch only a fraction of his devotional and theological reading.

In terms of his indebtedness to ecclesiastical influences, however, there is firmer ground to tread. Here, it seems, three very different traditions played a significant part in moulding his thoughts on the nature of worship. First and foremost, he was an Anglican of the Anglicans, and the son of a High Churchman, all the higher for having renounced and even denounced the Nonconformist academy in which he had been trained for the Dissenting ministry. John Wesley claimed to live and die a loyal Church of England man, but his clergyman brother, Charles, was more certain of his own loyalty than of John's. The second influence was that of the Moravian Brethren, with whose pietism (though not their quietism) he was in great sympathy and who were responsible, under God, for changing the inflexible High Churchman into an apostle to the uncommitted who made the world his parish. The third and least obvious influence was that of Puritanism, which he owed in part to his remarkable mother, Susannah, who was the daughter of a famous Presbyterian divine, Dr. Samuel Annesley of London, and partly

⁴ Evelyn Underhill in *Worship*, pp. 303-04 corroborates this judgment: "Indeed it is difficult to say whether early Methodism as its founders conceived it, impassioned and ascetic, democratic and transcendental, determined upon perfection and yet sure of the Godward vocation of the simplest soul, was more Catholic or more Evangelical in tone."

to the exigencies of a situation where many of his new converts found the worship of the Established Church too formal and remote from their simple needs, which were met effectively by free prayer, extempore preaching, and hymnody.

2. *The Anglican Influence*

The strength of the High Church Anglican tradition at Oxford reinforced Wesley's father's influence in Epworth Church and Rectory. The most ardent young churchmen in Oxford belonged to "The Holy Club," which had been founded in 1729. It started as a gathering of three or four serious young men who decided to meet in each other's rooms on certain evenings during the week to meditate on the classics and on Sundays upon some book of devotion. With the approval of the bishop of Oxford and some of the clergy, they also engaged in philanthropic work, such as looking after prisoners under sentence of condemnation or visiting debtors. Even more important, they established a threefold Rule of Life:

"The first is, That of Visiting and Relieving the Prisoners and the Sick, and giving away Bibles, Common Prayer Books, and The Whole Duty of Man . . .

"And, 2dly, in order to corroborate and strengthen these good Dispositions in themselves, they find great Comfort and Use, in taking the opportunities which the Place gives them, as I intimated before, of a weekly Communion.

"And, 3dly, They observe strictly the Fasts of the Church: And this has given occasion to such as do not approve of them, abusively to call them Supererogation-Men."⁵

Both brothers, Charles and John, were members and, in their respective times at Oxford, leaders of the Holy Club. It was to this company that George Whitefield belonged. Respect for the Book of Common Prayer, a particular regard for Holy Communion, preparation for the great festivals by fasting and prayer—all were indispensable to the regimen. Devotion and discipline are already conjoined in the mind of Wesley. This was itself to mark the Wesleys off in Latitudinarian days as precise, over-rigorous, pleasure-hating men. A perceptive writer in *Fog's Journal* likens them to the Pietists of Saxony and Switzerland, and adds that "They neglect and voluntarily afflict their Bodies and practise several rigorous and superstitious Customs, which God never required of them. All *Wednesdays* and *Fridays* are strictly to be kept as Fasts, and blood let once

⁵ *The Oxford Methodists*, p. 8. See also Luke Tyerman, *The Oxford Methodists*.

a Fortnight to keep down the Carnal man."⁶ At dinner, the same reporter avers, "they sigh for the Time they are obliged to spend in Eating: Every Morning to rise at Four o'Clock is suppos'd a Duty; and to employ two Hours a Day in singing of Psalms and Hymns, . . . is judged requisite to the Being of a Christian."⁷ It is clear that the central concern of Wesley for "Scriptural Holiness" was in him from the days of the Holy Club onward, and was not a result of his "evangelical conversion." In these days, however, there was a rigidity which he had not shed even when he made the decision to serve as a clergyman in Georgia, for he refused to permit a pious Moravian pastor to attend the Anglican Eucharist aboard ship because the minister had not been episcopally confirmed.

Wesley was always a high sacramentalist. It is significant that in the year 1740-1741 only two years after his evangelical "conversion," and despite the great inconvenience of travelling up and down England to the remotest villages, he received the Sacrament 98 times. Forty-five years later, in 1785, he communicated 91 times.⁸ His views of the Sacrament were those of the Non-Jurors of 1688 who had insisted upon "Four Usages." Like them he believed in intinction (that is, the mixed chalice), the necessity for a prayer of oblation as appropriate for the re-presentation of Christ's sacrifice, the need for an "epiclesis" or explicit invocation of the Holy Spirit on the elements, and, finally, in prayers for the departed to be included.⁹ These four requirements had been included in the first Prayer Book of Edward VI, which was the first and most conservative edition of it ever issued. Through Clayton, one of his Holy Club associates, Wesley was introduced to the works of Deacon, *On Purgatory* and *Compleat Devotions*, and to Nelson's *Fasts and Festivals*, among others. This implanted firmly in him a zeal for fidelity to the primitive Church, which he believed was an essential Anglican emphasis.

He claimed and indeed believed that he was a loyal Anglican to the very end. In 1788 he wrote his *Farther Thoughts upon Separation from the Church* in which he makes the avowal: "Next after the primitive church, I esteemed our own, the Church of England, as the most scriptural national Church in the world. I therefore not only assented to all the doctrines, but observed all the rubrics in the Liturgy; and that with all possible exactness, even at the

⁶ Issue of Dec. 9, 1732, cited in *The Oxford Methodists*, pp. 23-24.

⁷ John C. Bowmer, *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Early Methodism*, p. 56.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

peril of my life. . . . I declare once more that I live and die a member of the Church of England; and that none who regard my judgment will ever separate from it."¹⁰

Certainly, he was consistent in having the highest possible regard for its formulary of worship, for he prepared a revision of the Book of Common Prayer for the American Methodists at a time when it might have been politic, since the American Revolution had broken out, to have suggested any form of worship other than an English one. In the preface, he again insisted on his glowing opinion of the English Liturgy. "I believe," he wrote, "there is no Liturgy in the world, either in ancient or modern language, which breathes more of a solid, Scriptural, rational piety, than the Common Prayer of the Church of England. And although the main of it was compiled more than two hundred years ago, yet is the language of it not only pure, but strong and elegant in the highest degree."¹¹

When the ugly question, "Are we Dissenters?" reared itself at the Conference of 1766 at Leeds, Wesley admitted two irregularities—preaching outside parish and diocesan boundaries, and the frequent use of extemporaneous prayers. At the same time he insisted "we are not Dissenters in the only sense which our law acknowledges, namely, persons who believe it is sinful to attend the Service of the Church, for we attend it at all opportunities."¹² It was a lay High Churchman and an intimate friend of Wesley's later years, Alexander Knox, who testified to his utter devotion to the Church of England, even though he underestimated the significance of Wesley's debt to the continuing Puritan tradition. Knox asserted that his taste for decorum and dignity in ritual and ceremony, as his type of piety, was characteristically Anglican. "Not only," wrote Knox, "did he value and love that pure spirit of faith and piety which the Church of England inherits from Catholic antiquity, but even in the more circumstantial part there was not a service or a ceremony, a gesture or a habit for which he had not an unfeigned predilection." He goes too far, however, in stating that Wesley "was not only free from any Puritanical leaning, but the aversion to those early enemies of the Established Church which he had imbibed in his youth, though repressed and counteracted, was by no means wholly subdued even in the last stage of his life."¹³ Certainly this Arminian

¹⁰ Thomas Jackson, ed., *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. XIII, p. 272f.

¹¹ *The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America, With other Occasional Services*.

¹² *Minutes of Conference, 1766*.

¹³ Cited by J. E. Rattenbury, *The Conversion of the Wesleys*, p. 207.

was no friend of Calvinism, but had not Wesley a personal experience of election in being plucked like a brand from the burning out of the flaming Epworth Rectory? Did he not go back to Joseph Alleine to find a covenant which could be made the basis of a renewal of the religious vows offered by the Methodist people to God at the beginning of each new year? And was not Alleine a Presbyterian divine, and the covenant conception itself the beating heart of Puritanism? And where should he find an equal stress on extemporary prayer and extemporary preaching but in the Dissent which was the heir of the Puritan tradition? Admitting that the Anglican influence was paramount, we must still insist that the influence of the Puritan tradition was not inconsiderable upon Wesley's planning of the ordinances of worship.

3. *The Puritan Tradition and Its Influence*

It is clear that Wesley died, as he had lived, a loyal priest and member of the Church of England. His services, in his own view, were not substitutes for but supplements to the Anglican services of Matins, Evensong, and Holy Communion. At the Conference of 1749 Wesley's assistants were definitely advised, "In every place exhort those who were brought up in the Church constantly to attend its Service. And, in visiting the Classes, ask everyone, 'Do you go to Church as often as ever you did?' Set the example yourself. . . . Are we not unawares, by little and little, tending to a separation from the Church? O remove every tendency thereto with all diligence."¹⁴ At the next Conference, in 1766, Wesley again insisted on strengthening the link with the Established Church. To the assertion that Methodism was supplying its own public services, he gave a qualified confirmation: "Yes, in a sense; but not such as supercedes the Church Service. We never desired it should. . . . It presupposes public prayer, like the sermons at the University. Therefore, I have over and over advised, Use no *long prayer*, either before or after the sermon."¹⁵

However reluctant Wesley might be to admit the fact, nonetheless the forms of service of the Methodist Societies were developing from an ancillary to an independent existence. Indeed, it was inevitable that this should be the case. Many of the members of the Societies had had no other ecclesiastical connection and they could not regard the Church of England as their spiritual mother. The

¹⁴ Cited Leslie F. Church, *More about the Early Methodist People*, p. 212.

¹⁵ *Minutes of Conference, 1766*, pp. 57-58.

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former Anglicans who joined the Societies were treated with indifference, if not downright hostility, by the clergymen of the Establishment, so that they naturally preferred to receive their spiritual diet from the hands of their own leaders. Besides, Methodist services had such warmth, sincerity, and spontaneity, as well as the intimacy of a close fellowship, that they contrasted profoundly with the formality, dignity, and coldness of the Anglican gatherings for worship. Finally, Methodism was developing its own distinctive and separate services, whether they were meant to be ancillary or not. These preaching services, class meetings and band meetings, the love-feasts and watch-nights, the prayer meetings and covenant services, came increasingly to fulfill the immediate needs of the Methodist converts. In pleading for loyalty to a Church which was trying to disown the Methodists without providing the open-air preaching and the simpler spontaneous services which Methodists needed, Wesley was trying to turn the clock back.

Where did he find the examples of these Methodist ancillary services? The brief answer is: in English Dissent and in Moravianism.¹⁶ It was certainly in Dissent that both extemporaneous preaching and extemporaneous prayers were to be found close at hand. It was in the Puritanism of the previous century that he found the origins of the covenant service. It was while reading Calamy's *Abridgment of Mr. Baxter's History of His Life and Times* that he encountered those suggestions for the revision of the Prayer Book which the Presbyterians had advanced at the Savoy Conference with the Bishops in 1661, and which Wesley himself used as the basis of his revision of the liturgy for the use of the Methodists in North America.¹⁷ It was, moreover, in English Dissent that the Wesleys found the stirring hymns of Isaac Watts and used them as the model of their own remarkably virile hymnody which fulfilled the twofold

¹⁶ The present author is already convinced of Wesley's liturgical indebtedness to Dissent, but believes that thorough investigation would reveal not only affinity but affiliation between Methodism and Puritanism in experimental theology, ethics, pastoral ideals, and ecclesiologies. John Wesley's indebtedness to Richard Baxter and Alleine, as Charles Wesley's to Matthew Henry, is already conceded. It is also significant that John Wesley's *Christian Library* gives a larger place to Puritan divines than to any other group. It is gratifying to know that Professor Gordon Harland of Drew University concurs in this view on the basis of his own research.

¹⁷ This most plausible suggestion is advanced by Frederick Hunter in an article contained in *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* for June 1942. J. E. Rattenbury presents the opposite viewpoint in the remark, "A Dissenter in Wesley's time would have destroyed the Prayer Book, not revised it." (See *The Conversion of the Wesleys*, p. 216.) As against this, it might be pointed out that the ex-Presbyterian Unitarians prepared revisions of the Prayer Book, and that Doddridge was not averse to imitating Anglicanism in some parts of Divine worship.

function of being expressions of a lyrical Christianity and, to use John Wesley's own description, "a body of practical divinity." Preaching apart from the book, spontaneous prayers, and hymnody, as well as the idea of the covenant, represent four very considerable borrowings from the Puritan tradition.

4. *The Moravian Influence*

Equally significant was the impact of Moravian example on Wesley. This was largely, though not wholly, one of spirit and emphasis.¹⁸ Wesley, who visited the European headquarters of the *Unitas Fratrum*, was deeply impressed by the sincerity of their simple faith and the joy of their Christian life. Equally was he delighted by their communal type of Christian living and the care which they took of orphans and the very old. He could not but contrast the "top of the mind" religion of so many Englishmen with this "bottom of the heart" religion of the followers of Count Nicholas Von Zinzendorf. For some years he attended their Society meetings in Fetter Lane, London, where, indeed, he was to receive that warming of the heart consequent on his acceptance of justification by faith when someone was reading the preface of Luther's Epistle to the Romans.¹⁹ Among them he discovered the meaning of experimental religion.

Wesley's organization of his Societies into sub-divisions also owed a good deal to Moravian example. Their division according to sex and marital status for mutual edification and exhortation into small "bands" was borrowed from the Moravian practice.

Possibly a greater debt was owed to their hymnody (though Dissenters could lay equal claim through Isaac Watts), but the largest debt of all was incurred by the introduction of two Moravian ordinances into regular Methodist usage. These were the Love-feasts and the Watch-night services. The former was a revival of the "Agape" of the Primitive Church, the communal meal which preceded the Eucharist. The Moravians, however, used them chiefly on private occasions, such as at weddings, or in Zinzendorf's home on Sunday evenings, when few attended. Even more significant for Methodist practice were the love-feasts which the elders of the Brethren held among themselves in which there was a combination of singing, conversing, and exchanging religious experiences. The

¹⁸ For the interrelations of Methodism and Moravianism see the exhaustive study by Clifford W. Towlson, *Moravian and Methodist*.

¹⁹ *Journal*, 24 May 1738.

meal generally consisted of rye-bread and water, and as the partakers refreshed themselves, they wished each other, "Long live the Lord Jesus in our hearts."²⁰ Wesley adopted the idea and extended it. Under his adaptation it included the whole Society, it consisted largely of testimonies to encourage fellow-Christians, and it even became a converting ordinance.

The Watch-night services were regarded by Wesley as a re-introduction of the vigils of the primitive Church.²¹ Here his debt to Moravianism is less certain, but still probable. Certainly Wesley's *Journal* mentions the custom of the Herrnhut watchman on his rounds singing a verse during each hour of the night. The actual New Year's Eve Watch-night service of the Moravians is not mentioned in the *Journal*, for the simple reason that Wesley could not witness it, since he had returned to England several months before it was due. On the other hand, he could have been present at the Watch-nights at the Moravian Meeting in Fetter Lane. There is a possibility that the custom originated spontaneously among the Kingswood Methodists and that Wesley, in approving it, remembered the Moravian equivalent and gave it the Moravian name. In his own account of the custom Wesley makes no mention of the Moravian connection, possibly because after his quarrel with Peter Böhler over quietism he wished to minimize the Methodist debt to Moravianism. "About this time," he writes, "I was informed that several persons in Kingswood frequently met together at the school, and when they could spare the time spent the greater part of the night in praise and prayer and thanksgiving." Some had, indeed, advised their discontinuance but Wesley thought it could be made more widely useful. "So I sent them word I designed to watch with them on the Friday nearest the full moon, that we might have light thither and back again." He also publicly announced on the Sunday that he intended to preach and issued a general invitation to be present. The result was that "On Friday abundance of people came. I began preaching between eight and nine; and we continued till a little beyond the noon of night, singing, praying, and praising God."²² The account is concluded with a reference to the great blessing this has proved to be, so that it has become a monthly occasion in the life of the Societies.

²⁰ Towlson, *op.cit.*, p. 209.

²¹ John Telford, ed., *Letters of John Wesley*, Vol. III, p. 287.

²² *A Plain Account of the People called Methodists*, written to the Rev. Mr. Vincent Perronet in 1748.

5. *Forms of Prayer and Free Prayers*

It was indicated earlier that Wesley was unique in the eighteenth century in desiring to combine the advantages of a Liturgy with free prayers. He loved the Book of Common Prayer, but could not convince all Methodists that it was perfect and worthy of subscription. In 1755 he expressed this sober view, esteeming the Prayer Book as "one of the most excellent human compositions that ever was," and saying that, though he approved of forms, he yet did not dare to confine himself to forms of prayer.²³ In a later letter to the same clerical correspondent, Samuel Walker of Truro, he expressed sympathy with the Nonconformists who were required to subscribe to the Liturgy in terms appropriate only to the Bible, and, he adds: "Neither dare I confine myself wholly to Forms of Prayer, not even in the Church. I use indeed all ye Forms; but I frequently add extemporary Prayer, either before or after sermon."²⁴

His conversion to the public use of extemporary prayers was slow and reluctant, as was inevitable for such a lover of Liturgy. In 1737 he visited a Presbyterian settlement in Darien, near Frederica, and expressed surprise on hearing a free prayer before the sermon, continuing, "Are not the words we speak to God to be set in order at least as carefully as those we speak to our fellow worms?"²⁵ He felt that extemporary prayers were appropriate in private meetings, but wholly unsuitable for public occasions. That is the only possible explanation for his recording on the same day in his *Journal* (the exclamation mark indicating self-consciousness and possible inconsistency): "7 3/4. Mrs. Mackintosh's supper and singing; I prayed extempore!"²⁶ It is clear that on several occasions he made this very distinction between public gatherings with set forms, and private meetings or informal occasions with extemporary prayer. For example, on March 26, 1738, he used collects at the regular evening meeting of the Methodist Society in Oxford, while the next day, when visiting a condemned man in the prison, he began with set prayers and concluded with "such words as were given to us in that hour." A few days later he throws consistency to the winds, even in the formal Society meeting, feeling that he is too much con-

²³ Telford, ed., *Letters*, Vol. III, pp. 144-47.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

²⁵ *Journal*, ed. N. Curnock, Vol. I, p. 309. See also a letter of Oct. 18, 1778: "But, to speak freely, I find myself more life in the Church prayers than in the formal extemporary prayers of Dissenters."

²⁶ *Journal*, I, p. 309.

fined by the use of set prayers, "neither do I purpose to be confined to them any more, but to pray indifferently, with a form or without, as I may find suitable to particular occasions." This became his settled purpose thereafter, for in the famous letter to America of September 10, 1784,²⁷ he recommended the use of his revised Prayer Book on Sundays for all the congregations, the reading of the Litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays, "and praying extempore on all other days." This essentially pragmatic Christian leader realized that both set and free prayers had their advantages, the former for unity and catholicity, the latter for simplicity and spontaneity, and refused to make a choice between them when none was necessary.²⁸

One most interesting innovation that Wesley used at least on one occasion was to intersperse his sermon with brief, dart-like, extemporary prayers. Henry Crabb Robinson, though only a child of fifteen at the time, heard Wesley on 11 October 1790. In a letter he wrote of this experience: "After the public had sung one verse of a hymn he arose and said, 'It gives me great pleasure to find you have not lost your singing; neither men nor women. You have not forgotten a single note. And I hope, by the assistance of God, which enables you to sing well, you may do all other things well.' A universal 'Amen' followed. At the end of every head or division of his discourse, he finished by a kind of prayer, a momentary wish as it were, not consisting of more than three or four words, which was always followed by a universal buzz."²⁹

6. *The Advantages of Methodist Worship*

Wesley, of course, was not interested primarily in the sources from which he drew his inspiration for constructing the worship of the Methodist Societies. His overwhelming interest was religion, and worship was merely an important means of its expression and communication. To the father of two of his Oxford pupils he had written a letter which gave an admirable definition of what he meant by religion: "I take Religion to be, not the bare saying over of so many prayers, morning and evening, in public or in private, not anything superadded now and then to a careless or worldly life; but a constant ruling habit of soul, a renewal of our minds in the

²⁷ *Letters*, Vol. VII, pp. 238-39.

²⁸ See also *Journal*, Vol. II, p. 404; Vol. IV, p. 286 n.; and *Letters*, Vol. III, p. 146. The whole issue is discussed with great care and in detail by C. Towlson, *op.cit.*, pp. 225-27.

²⁹ Cited Luke Tyerman, *The Life and Times of John Wesley*, Vol. III, p. 627.

image of God, a recovery of the divine likeness, a still-increasing conformity of heart and life to the pattern of our most holy Redeemer."³⁰

If he gave the mind over to the truth of the Christian doctrine, and the will over to the obedience of Christian ethics, the heart was made over to Christian adoration, and the personality wholly surrendered to God was the whole of religion. It is most instructive to compare his definition of religion with one from the previous century and from a Calvinist quarter, yet speaking in the same accents of total devotion. Lucy Hutchinson, the wife of a Colonel who was a leader in the Roundhead Army, declares: "By Christianity I intend that universal habit of grace which is wrought in a soul by the regenerating Spirit of God, whereby the whole creature is resigned up into the Divine will and love, and all its actions designed to the obedience and glory of its Maker."³¹ In both definitions the emphasis is on inner integrity, not on outward performance; in both it is full committal that matters. Yet in the Calvinist it is the divine initiative of grace that is primary, while in the Arminian an equal stress is laid on the voluntary aspects of personality, the forming of habits and the "still-increasing conformity of heart and life" as an *imitatio Christi*.

Wesley was convinced that Methodist worship was able to do this. One of the most valuable documents we have on this theme is a letter written to a friend and sent from Truro on September 20, 1757, in which he enumerates the advantages of Methodist worship.³² These are six in all: a simple, undistracting setting for worship which is neither too elegant nor too rude; the social homogeneity of the worshippers and their sincerity; the solemnity and integrity of the one conducting Divine worship; the singing, which combines sense and poetry in the hymnody and vigour in the rendering; the preaching, which is a plain, earnest proclamation of the gospel of a present salvation by a man whose life adorns his doctrine; and the Communion celebrated by a worthy minister to a holy people. These assertions are so important to an understanding of Wesley's conception of Methodist worship that they warrant closer consideration and citation.

Just as George Herbert praised *The British Church*³³ because it had avoided the gaudiness of Rome and the bareness of Geneva,

³⁰ F. C. Gill, ed., *Selected Letters of John Wesley*, p. 27.

³¹ *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson*, p. 21.

³² F. C. Gill, *op.cit.*, pp. 103-04.

³³ In a poem of this title he claimed "the mean [i.e. moderation] thy praise and glory is." See also John Donne's *Satyre*, III, lines 43-62.

so did Wesley feel that a decent simplicity and dignity should mark the Methodist setting for worship. "The Church where they assemble is not gay or splendid, which might be an hindrance on the one hand; nor sordid or dirty, which might give distaste on the other; but plain as well as clean." As the Church, so were the people. "The persons who assemble there are not a gay, giddy crowd, who come chiefly to see and be seen; nor a company of goodly, formal, outside Christians, whose religion lies in a dull round of duties; but a people most of whom do, and the rest earnestly seek to, worship God in spirit and in truth. Accordingly they do not spend their time in courtesying, or in staring about them, but in looking upward and looking inward, in hearkening to the voice of God, and pouring out their hearts before Him." The man conducting worship "may be supposed to speak from his heart," to be a man of integrity of life who "performs that solemn part of divine service, not in a careless, hurrying, slovenly manner, but seriously, slowly, as becomes him who is transacting so high an affair between God and man."

Wesley found Anglican praise seriously wanting and considered Methodist praise much superior. His dislikes included "the formal brawl of the parish clerk" giving out the psalms line by line, the singing of the choirboys which he calls "the screaming of boys who bawl out what they neither feel nor understand," and "the unseasonable and unmeaning impertinence of a voluntary on the organ." By contrast, his Methodist worshippers sing their praises with the heart and the understanding, and, disdaining to use the "miserable, scandalous, doggerel" of Hopkins and Sternhold, they sing psalms and hymns which are "both sense and poetry, such as would sooner provoke a critic to turn Christian, than a Christian to turn critic." The Methodist preacher, moreover, knows how to make the themes and moods of the hymns fit in with the whole context of the worship. Further, the Methodists do not sit and sing, they stand and praise God "lustily and with a good courage."

When it comes to the sermon, Wesley claims that the preacher will be one who practices as he preaches, who will use simplicity of speech and earnestness of manner, as he proclaims "the genuine Gospel of present salvation through faith, wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost, declaring present, free, full justification, and enforcing every branch of inward and outward holiness." Similarly, the celebrant at Holy Communion and the communicants will be holy people, and "the whole service is performed in a decent and

solemn manner, is enlivened by hymns suitable to the occasion, and concluded by prayer that comes not out of unfeigned lips."

The letter concludes, like a speech, with a peroration: "Surely, then of all the people in Great Britain, the Methodists would be the most inexcusable, should they let any opportunity slip of attending that worship that has so many advantages, should they prefer any before it, or not continually improve by the advantages they enjoy."⁸⁴

Like the worship of the Puritans, Wesley's theory of worship emphasizes the notes of simplicity, obedience, and edification. Ceremonial for its own sake is a distraction; the Christian's attendance at worship may be a privilege, but it is certainly a duty and a homage to the Divine king; and its benefit is that the worshippers may be built up in the faith and into holiness and love. The distinguishing note, which is reminiscent of Lutheranism, is that of the sheer joy of the believers who have been justified by their faith in Christ. In Puritanism the worshippers are *miseri et abiecti*, but in Methodism they are *laeti triumphantes*. The element of adoration and union with Christ in His triumph over sin, suffering, death, and the devil is provided in the praise. For this purpose Charles Wesley's hymns were superbly fitted. A religion of the heart could want no better media for its expression than "O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise" or "Hark! the herald angels sing, Glory to our Lord and King." In the eighteenth century they must have seemed to have recaptured the lost radiance of the New Testament faith itself.

7. Wesley's Special Services

His innovations are not of equal importance, since the love-feasts were discontinued after his death, and the watch-night services became annual rather than fortnightly or monthly meetings. On the other hand, the annual Covenant Service remains as one of his permanent contributions to Methodism in Britain and in the British Commonwealth of nations. This might be claimed as Wesley's distinctive contribution to the worship of the Church Catholic.⁸⁵ The original idea for the Covenant Service came from reading Joseph Alleine's *Call to the Unconverted* and his *Directions for Believers Covenanting with God*, and the decision followed to encourage the

⁸⁴ F. C. Gill, *op.cit.*, p. 104.

⁸⁵ John Bishop, *Methodist Worship in Relation to Free Church Worship*, p. 108, states: "It may be claimed that Methodism has contributed nothing more notable to the worship of the Church than the Covenant Service."

Methodists to fidelity by making such a solemn act of dedication. Wesley records that he spoke to the London Society on Wednesday, 6 August 1755, of a means of increasing serious religion which had been used by their forefathers and had issued in eminent blessing, namely, "the joining in a covenant to serve God with all our heart and with all our soul."³⁶ For several mornings he expounded the terms of the covenant. On the 11th August of the same year, he adds: "I explained once more the nature of such an engagement, and the manner of doing it acceptably to God. At six in the evening we met for that purpose at the French church in Spitalfields. After I had recited the tenor of the covenant proposed, in the words of that blessed man, Richard³⁷ Alleine, all the people stood up, in testimony of assent, to the number of about eighteen hundred persons. Such a night I scarce ever saw before. Surely the fruit of it shall remain for ever."³⁸

As Wesley planned the service it had two parts. The first was devoted to the "directions" by which members were prepared to make this covenant. Some indication of the nature of this instruction may be gained from Wesley's *Directions for Renewing our Covenant with God*, which was frequently republished. The first direction is to set aside time for secret prayer to seek God's help, to consider the conditions of the covenant, and to search the heart. In the second place, one's spirit is to be composed "into the most serious frame possible, suitable to a transaction of so high importance." Thirdly, the believer is adjured to "lay hold on the Covenant of God, and rely upon His promise of giving grace and strength, whereby you may be enabled to fulfil your promise." Fourthly, he advised a resolution to be faithful. Finally, he urged the believer to "set upon the work."³⁹

The second part of the service was the solemn taking of the Covenant itself. In its original form, it began: "O most dreadful God, for the passion of Thy Son, I beseech Thee to accept of Thy poor prodigal . . ." and ended, "And the Covenant which I have made upon earth, let it be ratified in heaven."⁴⁰

Although the first Covenant Service was held in the autumn of

³⁶ *Journal*, Vol. II, p. 126.

³⁷ An error; Wesley means *Joseph* Alleine.

³⁸ *Journal*, Vol. II, p. 126.

³⁹ All citations in the paragraph just concluded are from Wesley's *Directions for Renewing our Covenant with God*, pp. 13-14. It should be noted that this instruction referred primarily to private personal covenants, but could easily be adapted for the exhortation in a public Covenant Service.

⁴⁰ Cited John Bishop, *op.cit.*, p. 108f.

1755, Wesley soon realized that it was peculiarly appropriate for his people to renew their vows to God at the beginning of each New Year. It was used at the beginning of 1766 and of every year from 1770 to 1778, with the exception of 1774. Wesley issued his first printed edition of the service in 1780. He had always required the congregation to express its assent to the Covenant by standing; in the first printed order, however, he inserted Alleine's advice that the Covenant should be signed. In later years the service was always followed by the Holy Communion.⁴¹

It must be emphasized that this borrowing of Wesley's came from the very heart of the Puritan tradition. The Presbyterians were renowned for the national type of covenant in their *Solemn League and Covenant*, while the Independents and the Particular Baptists often founded their congregations on a covenant and required new members, on their admission, either to recite the covenant or to subscribe their names to it. In all cases where it was used it symbolized a solemn engagement between God and His people. It is important to stress, moreover, that such an engagement was more than the recital of a creed with the top of the mind; it was a committal from the bottom of the heart. In brief, it was the declaration not of *fides* but of *fiducia*. It was not only an affair of the heart but of the will. It committed the believer not only to give God the first place in his affections but also to follow His commandments. It is difficult to exaggerate the impressiveness of a vast congregation of sincere persons renewing their vows to God in the presence of all His people.

Although the two other special ordinances of the love-feast and the watch-night services were ultimately discontinued, they were felt by Wesley to be of great importance. It is probable that they were derived from Moravian sources, even though Wesley found the ultimate precedents for them in the *agapai* and the vigils⁴² of the primitive Church. Had he been inclined, he could also have found examples of their usage in the Dissent of his time, in particular, in the practice of the General Baptists, though it is extremely unlikely that he would have been looking in that quarter.

The first Methodist watch-night services were held on the Friday nearest to the full moon. The Moravian watch-nights were held on the last night of the year. It is therefore probable that the watch-nights at the end of 1739 and 1740 were Moravian occasions, and that the one held on Friday, March 12, 1742 was the first Meth-

⁴¹ Church, *More about the Early Methodist People*, *op.cit.*, p. 240f.

⁴² *The Letters of John Wesley*, Vol. III, p. 287.

odist watch-night service. The *Journal* entry for that date reads: "Our Lord was gloriously present with us at the watch-night, so that my voice was lost in the cries of the people. After midnight, about a hundred of us walked home together, singing, and rejoicing and praising God." Although in the earlier years of Methodism, Wesley had deviated from the Moravian norm, gradually he returned to the annual New Year's Eve watch-night service. Incidentally, this Methodist practice came to be adopted by most of the Free Churches in England in due time.

Wesley claims that he instituted the love-feasts in order to increase in the members of the Societies a sense of gratitude for the Divine mercies. In a letter of 1742 he writes to Perronet, an Evangelical Anglican clergyman, that, for this purpose, "I desired that, one evening in a quarter, all the men in band, and on a second, all the women would meet; and, on a third, both men and women together; that we might together 'eat bread' as the ancient Christians did 'with gladness and singleness of heart.' At these love-feasts (so we termed them, retaining the name as well as the thing, which was in use from the beginning) our food is only a little plain cake and water. But we seldom return from them without being fed, not only with the 'meat which perisheth,' but with 'that which endureth unto everlasting life.'"⁴³

The unusual hours, the romantic striding and singing through the moonlight, and the superficial resemblance to the Lord's Supper (which many Methodists received infrequently, since the number of Anglican priests who sympathized with Methodism was few) added to the attraction of the love-feasts. A most valuable account of their form and order was provided by John Dungett's memory. He recalled in 1833 that: "They commence with prayer and praise; in a few minutes a little bread and water is distributed, and a collection is made for the poor. The greater portion of the time allowed, which is generally about two hours, is occupied by such as feel disposed, in relating their own personal experience of the saving grace of God."⁴⁴

Again, the only parallel to this type of testimony-meeting could be found in Dissent in the church meetings of the Independent and Baptist Churches, and, in all probability, many had fallen into the habit of merely transacting business during the eighteenth century. Here in the love-feasts Wesley gave the opportunity for the ex-

⁴³ *Letters*, Vol. II, p. 302.

⁴⁴ J. Heaton's *Memoir of John Dungett*, p. 24, cited by Leslie F. Church, *op.cit.*, p. 240.

perience of the mutual exhortation and sharing of experience in the bands to be re-enacted on the grander scale among hundreds of Methodists. If it is asked why such a successful ordinance should have disappeared, then one answer may be that as Methodists celebrated their own version of the Lord's Supper in their own chapels, there was no further need for a sacramental meal, especially since the bands and the sermons of the local preachers offered other opportunities of giving testimonies.

The other important innovation of Wesley was the holding of evening services, which coincided with the introduction of incandescent gas lighting. Grimshaw, the evangelical vicar of Haworth in Yorkshire, a strong supporter of the Methodist preachers, is reported as saying that Wesley decided on evening services "as the poor make their want of better clothes an excuse for not coming to divine service in the day time."⁴⁵ Once again, Wesley had only to pioneer with popular success attending his experiments, and the other Churches were ready to follow.

8. Praise

The hymns, which were so great a feature of Methodist worship, fulfilled many purposes. In a predominantly rational and mannered age, they gave free expression to the warmth of the religious emotions. They had also an important pedagogical value as means of communicating doctrine and thus came to be the sung creeds of the Methodists.⁴⁶ Those whose only other experience of praise had been the sad doggerel of Sternhold and Hopkins found them a very attractive novelty. Furthermore, they made for a more democratic type of worship in allowing the people, rather than trained choristers, to make a significant contribution to common worship. All four factors must be taken into account in assessing their significance.

The publication of *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People called Methodists* in 1780 was an event of signal importance. Wesley himself recognized in his preface that the book was unique in the English language in providing so full and distinct a commentary on Scriptural Christianity and "such a declaration of the heights and depths of religion, speculative and practical." Equal-

⁴⁵ Jonathan Crowther, *The Methodist Manual* . . . , p. 44.

⁴⁶ S. G. Dimond writes, in *The Psychology of the Methodist Revival*, p. 122: "Their power of suggestion, their educational value, and the effect of the music with which they were associated contributed in a marked degree to the creation of the desired emotional experience, and to the permanent influence of the religious ideas and impulses which were the psychological centre and soul of the movement."

ly, it contained warnings against errors, and "directions for making our calling and election sure; for perfecting holiness in the fear of God."⁴⁷ It was unique, also, in being the first hymn-book in English to provide a classification of hymns in terms of speculative and practical truth. "The hymns," so Wesley writes, "are not carelessly jumbled together, but carefully ranged under proper heads, according to the experience of real Christians. So that this book is in effect a little body of practical and experimental divinity."⁴⁸ A prose parallel could be found in the influential devotional manual of Doddridge, *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul* (1744), which was written to meet the needs and psychological moods of Christians in many conditions and circumstances, whether young or mature, lethargic or over-sensitive to sin, whether in temptations or under afflictions, or facing discouragement or death.⁴⁹ Apart from this hymn-book, we shall find no poetical analogue to Doddridge's work.⁵⁰ In this collection of hymns piety takes wing and adoration becomes normative for the eighteenth century wayfaring Christian. Wesley's chief intention in commending the volume to every pious reader is, "as a means of raising or quickening the spirit of devotion, of confirming his faith, of enlivening his hope, and kindling or increasing his love to God and man."⁵¹

Wesley's plan exactly fulfills his promise. Here are hymns beseeching the return of the prodigal, describing the "pleasantness of religion," and others on the goodness of God, the crisis of judgment, and the alternatives of heaven and hell. Yet others deplore the hollowness of formal religion, and celebrate the greatness of inward religion. Others, again, prepare the soul for repentance. For believers there are hymns of rejoicing and hymns to suit their several states of "fighting," "praying," "watching," "working," and "suffering." Another group of hymns is intercessory in character, praying for England, the conversion of the Jews, the fallen in war, for parents, masters, and Societies; this section stresses the Communion of Saints and provides hymns for love-feasts and other occasions. Almost all moods and needs are reflected in this collection.

Equally, the great historic and saving acts of God are celebrated with the round of the Christian year. For Christmas there is "Hark!

⁴⁷ Preface, para. 5.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, para. 4.

⁴⁹ See H. Davies, *The English Free Churches*, pp. 124-26.

⁵⁰ It is worth noting, however, that not a few of Charles Wesley's hymns were paraphrases of passages in Matthew Henry's commentaries—a further instance of Puritan influence on Methodism.

⁵¹ Preface, *op.cit.*, para. 8.

the herald angels sing," for Easter "Christ the Lord is risen today," for Ascensiontide "Hail the day that sees him rise," for Whitsuntide "Granted is the Saviour's prayer," for Trinity Sunday "Hail! Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord," for missionary celebrations "Eternal Lord of earth and skies," for dedication "Forth in Thy name, O Lord, I go," and for the Eucharist "Victim Divine, Thy grace we claim."

It has been left to a Congregationalist to write the perfect eulogy on the hymns composed by Charles Wesley⁵² which made up the great bulk of this collection. B. L. Manning wrote: "This little book ranks in Christian literature with the Psalms, the Book of Common Prayer, the Canon of the Mass."⁵³ The same historian comes near to penetrating their secret in his percipient analysis, when he writes: "There is the solid structure of historic dogma; there is the passionate thrill of present experience; but there is, too, the glory of a mystic sunlight coming from another world."⁵⁴ There is in this century only one other hymn-writer to compare with him: Isaac Watts, who shares Wesley's first two qualities but cannot evoke the compelling mystery and attraction of the other world with his subtlety.

The great editor of the Methodist collection of hymns was as deeply concerned with the method of singing as with the content. He was careful to provide a set of directions on hymn-singing. He insisted that all the congregation should sing, and sing lustily. Yet they were not to bawl, but to sing modestly and in harmony with the rest of the congregation. His people must sing in time and be particularly on their guard against singing too slowly and drawling. Above all they were to aim at pleasing God. "In order to do this, attend strictly to the sense of what you sing; and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually."⁵⁵

It had become clear by 1797 that a great deal of the popular appeal of Methodism was due to its remarkable hymns. Alexander Disney asserted: "When the language of a hymn is practical, fluent, and intelligible, when the sentiments expressed in it are truly pious

⁵² If Charles Wesley was the sun in the firmament of hymnody, there were other Methodist stars in a veritable galaxy who deserve remembrance, including John Wesley as a translator of Continental hymns. There were among the Methodist hymn-writers: Williams of Pantycelyn ("Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah"), John Cennick ("Lo, He comes in clouds descending"), Thomas Olivers ("The God of Abraham praise"), and Edward Perronet ("All hail the power of Jesus' name").

⁵³ *The Hymns of Wesley and Watts*, p. 14.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁵⁵ Ed. T. Jackson, *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. xiv, pp. 258-59.

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and scriptural, the music solemn, and the people serious and earnest, I know of no employment better calculated to excite awful impressions of the Divinity, and to stir up our minds to a closer communion with God." He added that when the singing is conducted with respectful devotion "we shall not wonder that this form constitutes a considerable part of the service."⁵⁶

Since Wesley set such stock by common prayer and common praise, it is hardly surprising to learn that he had an intense aversion to anthems. His *Journal* records two occasions on which he expressed such acute distaste. At Neath, in Wales, in 1768 his objection was to the senseless repetition of the same words and to a dozen or fourteen singers having a monopoly on the praise. "According to the shocking custom of modern music, different persons sung different words at one and the same moment, an intolerable insult on common-sense, and utterly incompatible with any devotion."⁵⁷ Thirteen years later in Warrington he took exception to the operatic tempo of the anthem and pronounced it "a burlesque upon public worship."⁵⁸

It is hardly necessary to add that soon after his death organs and oratorios were permitted in Methodist chapels. Nonetheless, suspicion of them lingered on for a generation in the country districts, as may be seen from the laconic note of the steward of the Newchurch chapel in Rossendale, who wrote in 1811: "By silver for suffering an oratori [*sic*] of music in the chapel, 7s."⁵⁹

9. The Sacraments

For the first fifty years of Methodism, members of the Societies made full use of the Anglican provisions for marriages, burials, and even Baptisms, as well as Holy Communion.⁶⁰ Their own services were intended to be merely supplementary to those of the Church of England. In discussing the Methodist Sacraments, therefore, it will be largely a question of considering Anglican practice and the interpretation Wesley put on these two Sacraments, as this can be discovered from his sermons, treatises, the *Journal*, and, in particular, his revision of the Prayer Book for American use in 1784.

⁵⁶ *Reasons for Methodism briefly stated in Three Letters to a Friend.*

⁵⁷ *Journal*, Vol. III, p. 339.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 312.

⁵⁹ Cited Church, *op.cit.*, p. 233.

⁶⁰ W. T. Townsend, H. B. Workman, and G. Eayrs, eds., *A New History of Methodism*, Vol. 1, p. 387.

High sacramentalist as he was, Wesley did not think Baptism essential to salvation. He criticizes an ardent correspondent and Baptist minister for asserting that a particular mode of Baptism is essential to salvation, whereas he himself denies that even Baptism itself is so; otherwise, he would have to hold that every Quaker is damned, which he refuses to believe. This letter concludes acidly: "I wish your zeal were better employed than in persuading men to be either dipped or sprinkled. I am called to other work; not to make Church of England men, or Baptists, but Christians, men of faith and love."⁶¹

Wesley himself rarely baptized, since most of his converts were Anglicans who had been baptized in infancy. The few adults who asked to be baptized were exceptional cases, such as a few Quakers, or a Baptist, or a Portuguese Jew.⁶² In his own interpretation of Baptism, Wesley seems to evade the issue of baptismal regeneration, as might be expected of one who stressed the "new birth" as being proved by "assurance."⁶³ In his *Treatise on Baptism* (1756) he states that "regeneration" may be used in two senses.⁶⁴ It can mean both the washing away of the guilt of original sin by the application of the merits of the death of Christ and that interior Baptism by the Holy Spirit which is the "new birth." When Wesley produced his own shortened form of the order for Baptism in the Prayer Book in the American revision of 1784, he made some illuminating changes. Where "regenerate" appears in the original he changes it in a few significant instances. One important instance may be given. Where the Book of Common Prayer reads, "seeing now that this child is regenerate and grafted into the Body of Christ's Church," Wesley's revision reads, "Seeing now that this child is admitted into the Body of Christ's visible Church." His aim is clearly to distinguish between Baptism as a washing away of the guilt of original sin and as the Pauline rebirth of humanity in Christ. This information may be supplemented by a consideration of the Methodist Articles on Religion which he also prepared for America. Here Baptism is declared to be a sign of the Christian profession and also a sign of regeneration or rebirth. Nothing is said about Baptism as an instrument or as to its benefits. It would not be unreasonable to conclude that Wesley holds to "regeneration" as a formal principle, but his primary interest in the development

⁶¹ F. C. Gill, ed., *op.cit.*, pp. 89-91.

⁶² See *Journal* entries for Jan. 25, 1739; April 6, 1748; Dec. 5, 1757.

⁶³ Cf. article by C. Ryder Smith in *The Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. VII, pp. 97-105.

⁶⁴ *The Treatise on Baptism* may be found in the *Works*, Vol. X, pp. 181-93.

of a theology of experience was in the subsequent "new birth" of conversion. He did not deny that there was an interior change wrought by the Holy Spirit in the child, in ridding him of the effects of original sin, but he was more interested in the reality of the adult experience of Christian rebirth with its attendant sense of "assurance."

He also omitted a large part of the Anglican ordinance, which made reference to sponsors and the requirement of the signing of the Cross. Thereby he recognized as valid two of the major Puritan objections to the Anglican order for Baptism.

Since Baptism is received only once as the sacrament of initiation into the Christian community, whereas Holy Communion is available for the repeated nourishment of the Christian soul, Wesley inevitably gave the Eucharist a higher significance in worship. Wesley urged the members of the Methodist Societies in the strongest terms to receive the Communion regularly and as often as possible in the parish churches. "Let everyone," he said, "who has either any desire to please God, or any love of his own soul, obey God and consult the good of his own soul by communicating every time he can."⁶⁵

This turned out to be most impracticable counsel. Those Methodists who lived in or near the three great city centres of London, Bristol, or Newcastle-upon-Tyne were able to avail themselves of the frequent visits of the brothers Wesley and receive the Communion at their hands. Others lived far from any parish church. This was particularly so in the case of those who lived in the new industrial areas, where the Societies were most numerous and where there were not even any Anglican churches.⁶⁶ Even those who lived within easy access of Anglican churches were often discouraged by the anti-Methodist attitudes of the incumbents of these churches. Many others had had no previous connection with an Anglican church and felt no affinity with it. For a time it seemed that many Methodists had to be satisfied with a *simulacrum* of the sacrament in the love-feast. Two ways were possible for Wesley to solve the problem: either to persuade more Anglican clergy to sympathize with the Methodist movement and to invite Methodists to their communions, or to obtain ordination for some of his preachers at the hands of the bishops. A third possibility he did not seriously entertain until the other possibilities had been exhausted with-

⁶⁵ Sermon on "the Duty of Constant Communion," *Works*, Vol. VII, pp. 147-57.

⁶⁶ Maximin Piette, *John Wesley in the Evolution of Protestantism*, pp. 386-87.

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out success: to ordain some preachers himself. The "enthusiasm" ("fanaticism" is the nearest modern equivalent) which the bishops and clergy of the Church of England regarded as the dominant characteristic of Methodism, and which their own emphasis on reason and morality rendered objectionable in the extreme, made them unwilling to ordain Methodists or to celebrate the communion for Methodists. John Wesley, driven to desperation, ordained ministers for America in 1784, then for Ireland and Scotland in 1785 and 1786, and lastly for England in the ensuing three years.⁶⁷ In taking this drastic step Wesley had convinced himself that in the primitive Church presbyters had the power to ordain. Charles Wesley, however, was utterly unconvinced and taunted his brother with the devastating quip:

How easily are bishops made
By man or woman's whim!
Wesley his hands on Coke hath laid,
But who laid hands on him?

In the final analysis it was, according to Leslie Church, the relentless pressure of the ordinary Methodist people, deprived of the sacrament which Wesley himself had taught them to appreciate so highly, that drove him to this step.⁶⁸ *The Plan of Pacification* (1795) clarified the situation a few years after Wesley's death, when it was resolved that the Lord's Supper should be administered to Methodist congregations whenever the majority of the trustees, stewards, and leaders desired to have their own celebration of the sacrament and the Conference approved. As to the method of the ordinance, it was also decided that it should be "according to the form of the Established Church." At the same time, hymns, an exhortation, and extemporary prayer were to be introduced at the celebrant's discretion.

It has been shown earlier in this chapter that Wesley held the High Church view of the sacrament as interpreted by the Non-Jurors, and that he was as assiduous in attending the sacrament at the age of 86 as he was at 36. In two respects only does he seem to have modified his sacramental views slightly. In the first place, he was not as strict as he had been in admitting only baptized and episcopally confirmed persons to the sacrament. While he was not in favour of unrestricted admission to Communion, and insisted upon some evidence of genuine faith and of an intention to live a

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 387.

⁶⁸ *Op.cit.*, p. 260.

holy life, the Lord's table was as free of access as the very Gospel he proclaimed. Indeed, he believed that Holy Communion was a converting and confirming ordinance.⁶⁹ In the second place, in the earlier days recorded in the *Journal*, Wesley made a special point of communicating on saints' days, but he was no longer a stickler on such matters.⁷⁰

Wesley taught a high view of Eucharistic doctrine. This he obtained substantially from a work by Dr. Daniel Brevint, entitled *The Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice* (1673), a digest of which appeared in Wesley's preface to *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* in 1745.⁷¹ It is there taught quite explicitly that the offering of the blood of Christ must be once only and therefore an offering up of it again is superfluous. "Nevertheless this Sacrifice, which by a *real* oblation was not to be offered more than once, is by a Devout and Thankful Commemoration, to be offered up every day." He adds that the sum of it is "that this Sacrifice, by our Remembrance, becomes a kind of *Sacrifice*, whereby we present before God the Father, that precious oblation of his Son once offered. And thus do we every day offer unto God the meritorious Sufferings of our Lord as the only sure ground whereon God may give and we obtain the blessings we pray for."⁷²

While the memorial aspect of the rite is stressed, the emphasis is not exclusively retrospective or Zwinglian. It rather approximates Calvinism in its emphasis on the Holy Spirit being the agent in the Eucharist who "seals" or confirms the benefits of Christ's Passion to the believers. There is, however, an additional emphasis on Sacrifice, on Christ as the Priest-Victim who presents God to man and man to God in his divine-human nature. Further, the Sacrament is a pledge of Heaven, and this eschatological dimension looms large in the eucharistic hymns also. To this is linked the strong consciousness of the Church triumphant in heaven and the Church militant upon earth as one family, a communion of saints, divided only "by the narrow stream of death."

Apart from the Sacrament's own deep significance as a great, if

⁶⁹ See Wesley's *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 262. "But experience shows the gross falsehood of the assertion that the Lord's Supper is not a converting ordinance. For many now present now know, the very beginning of your conversion to God . . . was wrought at the Lord's Supper."

⁷⁰ J. C. Bowmer, *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Early Methodism*, p. 56f.

⁷¹ See J. E. Rattenbury, *The Eucharistic Hymns of John and Charles Wesley*. Charles Wesley's great Communion hymn, "Victim Divine," was a versified paraphrase of a section of Brevint's *The Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice*.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

not the greatest, means of grace and sustenance of the spiritual life of Methodism in the eighteenth century, it had other important effects. It was a historical sheet-anchor which stressed the continuity of the Christian Church in all centuries with the passion and resurrection of Christ and which saved Wesley from shipwreck in the quicksands of Moravian quietism, when he was under the spell of Peter Böhler. It made the Methodist movement as much a sacramental as an evangelical revival, and, in this respect, is the forerunner of the Oxford or Tractarian Movement of the nineteenth century, though this is often thought to be its opposite. Undoubtedly also the sacramentalism of the Methodists spurred the revival of the Sacrament in both Anglican and Dissenting Churches of all parties.⁷³ The potential danger of sacramentalism is formalism; the potential danger of evangelicalism is excessive individualism. The combination of the Word and the Lord's Supper in the Methodist movement meant that the strength of each emphasis neutralized the weakness of the other.

Moreover, the combination of the liturgical and the free types of worship are seen in Wesley's celebration of this Sacrament. If he was eager to use the liturgical form of the Church of England, and even to include an explicit invocation of the Holy Spirit, after the example of the Eastern Liturgies, sheer formalism was avoided by the introduction into the rite of eucharistic hymns and of extemporaneous prayers, as well as exhortations.

⁷³ These are the well-argued and carefully documented conclusions of John C. Bowmer, *op.cit.*, p. 202f.

CHAPTER IX

ANGLICAN EVANGELICALISM: THE SPIRIT AND THE LITURGY

EVANGELICALISM in eighteenth century England is a river fed by three tributaries: the Wesleyan, the Whitefieldian, and the loyal Anglican.¹ Originally each tributary intended to combine the hitherto largely separated elements of liturgy and the Holy Spirit, the traditional and the charismatic, the formal and the spontaneous. Each tributary, moreover, was almost as much a sacramental as an evangelical revival. We have already seen that this was true of both kinds of Methodism, the Arminian under Wesley and the Calvinistic promoted by the Countess of Huntingdon and Whitefield. The distinction of the third tributary, which came eventually to be known as the Evangelical Party within the Church of England, was that it alone held the balance between the liturgical and pneumatic emphases. The Countess of Huntingdon's Movement joined the ranks of Dissent in 1782, and the Wesleyan Methodists became openly Nonconformist in 1795, four years after the death of their founder. The Wesleyan Methodists, while retaining part of the legacy of the Prayer Book, squandered most of the rest almost immediately; the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, however, generally retained the Prayer Book service even when its ministers were no longer episcopally ordained. The fissiparousness of Methodism of the Arminian variety and the ultimate inclusion of the English Calvinistic Methodists within the ranks of Congregationalism meant that Wesley's balance was destroyed and that the worship of both brands of Methodism came chiefly to reflect the characteristics of the Puritan tradition in worship. The result was that Evangelical Anglicanism and, to a lesser degree, the Oxford Movement, can be regarded as the liturgical heirs of John Wesley in the nineteenth century.

1. Three Types of English Evangelicals

By the sheer power of his personal authority John Wesley was enabled to prevent the Methodists from leaving the Church of Eng-

¹ Evangelical Methodism begins with Wesley's Aldersgate street experience in 1738, and Evangelical Anglicanism with either the conversion of William Grimshaw in 1742 or the appointment of William Romaine as Lecturer at St. Dunstan's in the West, London, in 1748.

land during his lifetime. Nonetheless, in ordaining Methodist ministers for America, Scotland, and finally England, he had taken the irrevocable step towards separation. Reluctant as he was to admit this, there were many of his followers eager to sever the umbilical cord that bound the daughter to her mother, the Church of England. Many of the most devout, able, and experienced local preachers now hoped to receive the ordination which Wesley had failed to procure for them at the hands of Anglican bishops. The many thousands who were either former Dissenters or previously unattached to any denomination, and those ex-Anglicans who had been refused the Sacrament by their rectors or vicars, genuinely preferred the vitality, warmth, fellowship, and spontaneity of their Methodist services to the unfamiliar or despised decorous, dignified, traditional, and cold services of the English Church. *The Plan of Pacification* (1795) seemed outwardly to declare that Methodist services, as Wesley had always insisted, were merely supplementary to the Anglican parochial services, especially in its request that there was to be no conflict between the hours of the Methodist sacramental services and those of the Establishment, and in demanding that a majority of the trustees, leaders, and stewards of any chapel were to seek Conference's approval before there could be a Methodist celebration of the Lord's Supper at all. Clearly, the way was left open for those who did not wish to break with the parish Communion to attend it. More than this, even when the Methodists were to have their own sacramental service on Sunday evenings, it was strictly enjoined that "The Lord's Supper shall always be administered in England, according to the form of the Established Church."² In two other respects, however, the rupture was manifest. It was assumed that the Methodists would hold gatherings of worship of a non-sacramental character even though they were to take place at the times of Matins and Evensong. Though their form might be akin to the Anglican, they were competitive and not complementary.³ Furthermore, the charismatic emphasis was not to be repressed even in the Eucharist when celebrated according to the Anglican Rite, because "the person who administers shall have liberty to give out hymns, to use exhortation, and extemporary prayer."⁴

As long as Wesleyan Methodism remained a united body, the Anglican Eucharistic legacy was preserved. When the movement

² Relevant parts of *The Plan of Pacification* as contained in Henry Bettenson, ed., *Documents of the Christian Church*, p. 359.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 360.

⁴ *Ibid.*

splintered, as it did from 1797 onward, into such fragments as the New Connexion, the Bible Christians, the Independent Methodists, the Protestant Methodists, and the important Primitive Methodists, the new groups insisted upon the charismatic elements in worship rather than the traditional. The Wesleyans, alone among the separate groups, preserved part of the Prayer Book in the Order for the Eucharist, the abbreviation of the Orders for Matins and Evensong,⁵ and the Order for Holy Matrimony. But even the choicest flowers of Anglican devotion found it difficult to retain their freshness and vigour when torn by the roots from the sturdy soil of the Prayer Book and transplanted in the fervent Methodist hothouses.

The Calvinistic Methodists seemed, at first, likelier to remain within the Anglican fold. Their aristocratic protector and benefactress, the Countess of Huntingdon, was a staunch Churchwoman, and all her preachers were ordained Anglican ministers, of whom the most notable were Romaine, her senior chaplain, and Whitefield. On the triple grounds of his Arminianism, his organization of separate societies, and his use of itinerating lay-preachers, Wesley seemed more remote from the Anglican Church than Whitefield, who preached a Calvinism more consonant with the Thirty-Nine Articles of the doctrine of the English Church and who had not inaugurated a separate organization for his converts. In the various private chapels attached to her houses in the country or at fashionable watering-places (such as Bath or Brighton) the Countess had demanded that the Liturgy should be read. Moreover, the clergy who took these services did not neglect their own parishes, for the Countess provided curates for them during the monthly attendance of her chaplains upon her. Despite her giving the appearance of an unshakable loyalty to the Church of England, its brittleness was seen in the ease with which she became a Dissenter, when her imperious will was curbed. She had applied to have the former Pantheon theatre in Clerkenwell licensed as an Anglican chapel. When this request was refused, and when she found that the only legal way to have the building opened for worship was by registering it as a Dissenting chapel, she took this grave step. Her Anglican chaplains shortly afterwards resigned *en bloc* in 1782 and she was compelled to staff the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, as it

⁵ *The Plan of Pacification* (Bettenson, *op.cit.*, p. 360) reads: "Wherever Divine Service is performed in England on the Lord's day, in Church hours, the officiating preacher shall read either the service of the Church, or our venerable father's abridgement, or at least the lessons appointed by the calendar. But we recommend either the full service or the abridgement."

was now named, with unepiscopally ordained ministers. These chapels, however, continued to use the Book of Common Prayer for some time. In due course the Connexion was united with the Congregationalists, but even so it never entirely rejected the use of the Prayer Book. Dr. Elliott-Binns claims that "By the end of the century, though the Prayer Book was still in use in Tottenham Court Road Chapel, it had fallen out of favour in most of the other chapels."⁶ In reality, however, the Liturgy continued to be read in the earliest foundation and in one of the most prominent chapels of the Connexion, that at Brighton late in the nineteenth century, as Eric Gill, the son of the assistant curate there, testified in his fascinating *Autobiography*.⁷ The distinguished Catholic sculptor is, however, erroneous in some of his statements about the Connexion, as, for example, that he doubted whether "they ever numbered more than half a dozen chapels." In fact, however, thirty-nine of them exist to this day, although only eight are extant which were founded before the death of the Countess. It is significant that the liturgical tradition is still maintained in the chapels at Tunbridge Wells and Brighton. Gill is, however, correct in stating that the chapels "did not repudiate anything officially taught in the Book of Common Prayer" and that they shared a common affection for the forms of the Church of England and conducted their services according to them. His concrete account of their worship is vivid, if not unbiased:

"But they were evangelicals primarily, and not sacramentalists, preachers not priests. So the pulpit became the centre-piece of their churches. Though the communion-table was still in the old place in the centre of the 'East' end wall, the pulpit was placed in front of it in the middle of the church and the 'curate' read prayers from the desk below.

"The service was read with great care and expression and the choir sang at the proper times, but the sermon was the chief thing and, for this, the preacher put on a special black gown, very noble and voluminous.⁸ The sermon, always entirely over our heads,⁹ lasted forty minutes or an hour, so, with 'Morning Prayer' as well, the whole 'service' lasted a good hour and half. 'Grief touched us early' therefore. You can imagine five or six small children in a

⁶ L. E. Elliott-Binns, *The Early Evangelicals: A Religious and Social Study*, p. 218.

⁷ Published in London, 1940.

⁸ This was the standard Anglican procedure in the previous century; that is, to wear a surplice for the service and to change into a Genevan "voluminous" gown for the sermon.

⁹ Note that Gill is recalling his early youth and therefore offering an adolescent's evaluation of the sermons.

conspicuous place in the front of the gallery, just over our father's reading-desk. We dared not misbehave. Quite apart from our father's displeasure, the publicity would have been unendurable. We scarcely moved; we hardly yawned; we couldn't fall asleep. But, strange as it may seem, we were proud enough of our position and keen critics of father's 'form' and the preacher's mannerisms.

"It will not be difficult after this for the reader to guess what sort of religion we learned. They had 'the Communion' once a month and a very large proportion took the Bread and Wine. 'Do this in remembrance of Me'—a good and holy and salutary practice. For the rest it was a kind of combination of Congregationalism (for the congregation was autonomous and elected and paid for its own ministers) and 'Low' Church of England."¹⁰

The influence of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion cannot have been a great one, in view of the relative smallness of the group of chapels, and the fact that many of its earliest adherents would be disaffected Anglican Evangelicals, such as the former parishioners of the Rev. the Hon. W. B. Cadogan, Vicar of St. Giles', Reading, who, on the death of that notable Evangelical minister, found that his successor was unsympathetic to their views.¹¹ With only two exceptions, the Connexion ultimately succumbed to the prevailing trends of Dissenting worship, as did the majority of the Methodists.¹² The sole remaining body of Evangelicals, though sorely tried by unsympathetic bishops, which maintained the triple emphasis on preaching, the frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper, and the use of the Prayer Book, comprised members of the Evangelical party of the Church of England.

2. *The Anglican Evangelicals*

There is now growing evidence that there was a considerable body of Evangelical ministers within the Church of England in the eighteenth century, which attained the dimensions of a party in the first three decades of the nineteenth century.¹³ Some of these,

¹⁰ Gill, *op.cit.*, pp. 60-61.

¹¹ Cf. Charles Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, p. 235f.

¹² For further accounts of Calvinistic Methodist worship in England, see Walter Wilson, *The History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches*, Vol. III, pp. 116-17; Robert Halley, *Lancashire: its Puritanism and Nonconformity*, pp. 513-14; William Camidge, *Lady Huntingdon's Chapel in York*, p. 10.

¹³ For recent studies see G. C. B. Davies, *The Early Cornish Evangelicals, 1735-1760*; J. S. Reynolds, *The Evangelicals at Oxford: 1735-1871*; L. E. Elliott-Binns, *The Early Evangelicals* . . . ; and Charles Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order: A Study of the Origins of the Evangelical Revival in Cambridge in the Eighteenth Century*.

as for instance the group in remote Cornwall, of whom Samuel Walker of Truro was the most distinguished member, appear to have become of this persuasion largely independently of Whitefield and Wesley, and certainly they are to be distinguished from Wesley by a profound regard for church order in most cases. Walker, for example, felt there was something impertinent in Wesley's intruding not only into non-Evangelical parishes but in setting up his separate societies in specifically Evangelical parishes.

It is of some importance to distinguish the Anglican and loyal Evangelicals from the Wesleyan and Whitefieldian Methodists. It is clear that the Anglican Evangelicals were inclined, on the whole, to be suspicious of giving too much power to laymen, and on this account their movement may be said to be more clerical than Wesley's, for example. In fact, they strongly disliked some of the Methodist practices, while approving the Methodist stress on conversion and experience and a life in which one of the most evident fruits of the spirit was charity of the practical kind. Walker, for instance, wanted to control his prayer-meetings in such a way that laymen might have less opportunity to vaunt their charismatic gifts, and Thomas Scott believed that extemporary prayers made laymen less satisfied with the calmer and more dignified prayers of the Liturgy.¹⁴ Evangelical ministers were doubtful of the orthodoxy of the preaching of laymen. Furthermore, although some of the leading Evangelicals, such as Grimshaw, Berridge, and Simeon, were convinced of the necessity to itinerate because they were commissioned by the risen Christ to preach in all the world; yet others among them came to recognize that this was to break their oath of canonical obedience. The greatest resentment of Evangelicals of every stripe was, in fact, caused by the intrusions of itinerants into other parishes. It is worth recording examples of both the earlier "irregular" and the later "regular" attitude towards itinerancy. The idiosyncratic Berridge was challenged by his bishop, much as Wesley had been by Bishop Butler, on the score of itinerancy. Berridge alleged that it would afford him great pleasure to comply with his Lordship's request not to itinerate if he could do this with a good conscience, urging that his labours had been blessed and that he ought not to desist. His own account proceeds: "A good conscience!" said his lordship, "do you not know it is contrary to the canons of the Church?"—"There is one canon, my Lord," I replied, "which saith, '*Go preach the Gospel to EVERY CREATURE.*'"—"But

¹⁴ Elliott-Binns, *op.cit.*, p. 211.

why should you interfere with the charge of other men?' 'One man cannot preach the Gospel to all men.'—'If they would preach the Gospel themselves,' said I, 'there would be no need of my preaching it to their people; but as they do not, I cannot desist.'¹⁵

Simeon, the second founder of Anglican Evangelicalism, began as an itinerant, but, conceiving that the practice was destructive of church order, gave it up. In his moderate criticism of John Bertridg he is also gently reproving his own earlier self, as well as expressing the later conservative attitude of second generation Evangelicals: "He was perhaps, right in preaching from place to place as he did. But I, who knew him well, was hardly satisfied that he was doing right. . . . He lived when few ministers cared about the Gospel, and when disorder was almost needful. I don't think he would do now as he did then; for there are many means of hearing the Gospel, and a much greater spread of it, and much less need of disorder. To do *now* as he did *then* would do much harm."¹⁶

A further difference between the Evangelical Anglican clergy and the Methodists was the suspicion on the part of the former of the doctrine of Christian perfection, and their preference for a moderate Calvinism as contrasted with Wesley's Arminianism. Some, though the brash Bertridg would be an exception, were to anticipate Pusey's quip that justification by faith had degenerated into justification by feeling, in their criticisms of the excessive emotionalism of Methodism. Samuel Walker, for example, wrote that "faith and feeling appear to me direct opposites, and feeling alone cannot be the witness of the Spirit."¹⁷ Furthermore, while Wesley had a profound regard for the traditions of the primitive Church of the first five centuries, the Evangelicals turned for precedents rather to the age of the Reformation and to the writings and examples of the Puritans for the theological if not the liturgical attitudes of the latter. On the whole, however, the distinguishing mark of the Evangelical Anglicans was their stricter Churchmanship, as shown by their fidelity to the Book of Common Prayer and their submission to episcopal authority. Moreover, it was the second spring of the Evangelicals under the leadership of Charles Simeon of Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge, and a Fellow of King's College, that was marked by a recognition of the need for Church order and for

¹⁵ *Evangelical Magazine*, Feb. 1794, Vol. II, p. 76, cited in Charles Smyth, *op.cit.*, p. 262.

¹⁶ Abner William Brown, *Recollections of the Conversation Parties of the Reverend Charles Simeon . . .*, p. 200, cited Smyth, *op.cit.*, pp. 255-56.

¹⁷ E. Sidney, *The Life, Ministry and Remains of Samuel Walker*, p. 214.

continuity. From this time on the loyalty of the Evangelical Party to the Church of England was never in doubt.

3. *Public and Family Prayers*

In general, the Anglican Evangelicals may be said to have hit on the happy notion of requiring the Liturgy in public prayers and extemporary devotions in informal gatherings, such as family prayers. There is no question but that the majority of them were deeply and firmly attached to the Liturgy. The leading Evangelicals of the eighteenth century were assiduous in their reading of the Book of Common Prayer. This is the unanimous testimony to divines as different as Grimshaw of Haworth, Romaine of St. Dunstan-in-the-West and of St. Anne's, Blackfriars, Scott of Aston Sandford, Newton of Olney, Berridge of Everton, and Venn of Huddersfield. Hervey, an early friend of Wesley and former member of the Holy Club, was exceptional in believing that the Prayer Book had a deadening effect upon the congregation.¹⁸ Walker of Truro, on the other hand, was so convinced of its superiority that he even arranged to make a selection from it for the more intimate devotional gatherings of the societies he had established, to which he added his own extemporary prayers. His simplified services began with sentences of Scripture; three collects ensued. Then came the lection and after it the Confession from the Communion Order, followed by the Lord's Prayer. Only at this point did Walker offer his first extemporary prayer. His second came after a Psalm had been sung and an instructive treatise read. Next came an important item—an exhortation to humility which Walker had drawn up. After further signing, all joined "in the Sanctus. The Office then terminated with the Grace."¹⁹

The second generation of Evangelical Anglicans was even more enthusiastic in its admiration for the Prayer Book. Simeon himself is the supreme example. It was a favourite saying of his: "The Bible first, the Prayer Book second, and all other books and doings in subordination to both." Simeon frequently urged his young clerical friends to "Pray the prayers, and don't read them only; adhere sacredly to the directions of the Rubric, except where they have become obsolete, and the resumption of them would clearly do harm."²⁰ On another occasion he observed that "The finest sight

¹⁸ Cf. Elliott-Binns, *op.cit.*, p. 391.

¹⁹ Rev. Mr. Samuel Walker, *Fifty-Two Sermons on the Baptismal Covenant*, pp. xxxviii-xliv. Cited by G. C. B. Davies, *op.cit.*, pp. 68-69.

²⁰ A. W. Brown, *op.cit.*, p. 12.

short of heaven would be a whole congregation using the prayers of the Liturgy in the true spirit of them."²¹ Simeon was impressed not only by the Scriptural foundation and the rational piety of the Prayer Book but also by its function as a nexus and bond of unity within the Church of England. This was particularly brought home to him when a visit to Scotland gave him the opportunity to share in Presbyterian prayers, which were not to his liking. He declared: "I have on my return to the use of our Liturgy . . . felt it an inestimable privilege that we possess a form of sound words, so adapted in every respect to the wants and desires of all who would worship God in spirit and truth. If *all* men could pray at *all* times as *some* men can *sometimes*, then indeed we might prefer extemporary to precomposed prayer." He further insisted that "the difference between the Church spirit and the sectarian spirit is very much owing to the prayers of the Church being fixed, and commanding, and full of the things requisite for every sinner."²² Similarly, Henry Venn Elliott avowed that "I have always gone to church expecting to derive greater benefits from the prayers than the sermon." After a visit to the Congregational chapel of William Jay in Bath, Elliott "returned from the *élite* of Dissent thankful to God for His mercy in assigning my place in our Church, and thankful above all for the Liturgy."²³

Great as was the respect for the Prayer Book on the part of many Anglican Evangelicals, nevertheless some of them "looked to the ministry of preaching to give it life, or at least a sort of artificial respiration."²⁴ This is clearly shown in the reasons given by Cadogan of Reading and Chelsea in defense of his substitution of a Tuesday evening lecture for the daily reading of the offices, which he confined to Wednesdays and Fridays. A digest of his reply to the bishop, to whom he had been delated by some of his parishioners and who had thereupon required his reasons, indicates the main grounds of his higher evaluation of sermons than the Liturgy for weekday use:

"Mr. Cadogan replied,—That the substitution of the lecture proved the frequency of reading prayers was not abolished through idleness or inattention—That he must be allowed to judge what

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

²² A. W. Brown, *op.cit.*, pp. 222 and 228. Cf. H. C. G. Moule, *Charles Simeon*, p. 166.

²³ Josiah Bateman, *Life of Henry Venn Elliott*, pp. 38, 141, cited in L. E. Elliott-Binns, *op.cit.*, p. 391.

²⁴ Charles Smyth, *op.cit.*, p. 229.

would be the best method of promoting the spiritual welfare of the people of his parish—That the reading of prayers every day took up too much of a minister's time, which could be better employed—That very few ever attended the prayers—That they who did might as well read the Scripture at home, if they had the spirit of prayer—That if they had not, but did it as a matter of form, on which they placed dependance, they might have reason hereafter to rejoice that their false props were removed, and a course of instruction substituted, that would lead them to Christ the only true and sure foundation."²⁵

There is implied here an invidious distinction between spirit and form, to the derogation of the latter. A further implication is that the forms of prayer are crutches for the spiritually lame, and are to be thrown away by those who can pray without them. Even more serious is the weight put upon the personality of the preacher. In Cadogan's case, which is admittedly an extreme one, we see both the strength and the weakness of Evangelicalism in respect to worship. In his ardour he is depreciating order, and his conception of the Church is that of the *heiligkeitskirche* or the *ecclesiola*, rather than that of the Catholic and Apostolic Body of Christ, upon which the Oxford Movement was so rightly to lay such emphasis. It is as if in his recitation of the Creed he shouted exultantly "I believe One Holy . . . Church" and whispered the other adjectives "Catholic and Apostolic." In himself he was loyal to the Church of England, but his ecclesiology and his conception of Liturgy were characteristic rather of Pietism than of the historic and traditional Anglican view from Jewel and Hooker onwards.

The intimate charismatic conception of prayer held by the Evangelicals is most clearly expressed in the importance which they attached to family prayers. Cunningham in *Religion in the Eighteenth Century* (1909) made the perceptive observation that while Puritanism may be characterized as the religion of the State, Wesleyanism as the religion of the Heart, and the Oxford Movement as the religion of the Church, yet Evangelicalism is the religion of the Home.²⁶ There is no institution which more clearly reveals the stamp of the Evangelicals on the Victorian age than that of family devotions. Here, too, their link with the Puritans is evident.²⁷ This was a weekday as well as a Sunday religion and there was little likelihood that the Sunday Liturgy could become an aesthetic escape

²⁵ Cited and admirably analyzed by Charles Smyth, *op.cit.*, p. 229.

²⁶ Smyth, *op.cit.*, p. 13.

²⁷ See the present writer's *The Worship of the English Puritans*, pp. 278-85.

from the claims of God upon the Evangelical. Family prayers were as meaningful for the poet Cowper as for the physician Hey of Leeds, for the statesman and reformer Wilberforce as for the household of George IV.²⁸ Family devotions were not, of course, the exclusive usage of the Evangelicals; High Church families of the period also gathered about the family altar. Indeed, High Churchmen could have claimed that Nicholas Ferrar of the seventeenth century had taken the duty of family devotions more seriously than any Evangelical, for his family monasticism at Little Gidding, Huntingdonshire, recited the offices both night and day.²⁹ Ferrar's practice, moreover, gives the clue to the fundamental difference between the family worship of High Churchmen and the Evangelicals: it was liturgical for the former and extemporary prayer, with either the exposition of Scripture or the reading from an edifying book, for the latter.³⁰ Some of the Evangelical clergy extended the family circle to include some of the more devout parishioners for at least one evening a week. This, at least, was the practice of Conyers of Helmsley, Berridge of Everton, and Cadogan of Reading.³¹

A vivid picture of an upper-class Victorian home engaged in family prayer is provided in the Farington Diary in an entry for July 19th, 1806: "Abt. a quarter before 10 o'clock, the family assembled to prayers, which were read by Wilberforce in the dining room. As we passed from the drawing room I saw all the servants standing in regular order, the woemen [*sic*] ranged in a line against the wall & the men the same. There were 7 woemen & 6 men.—When the whole were collected in the dining room, all knelt down against a chair or Sopha. Wilberforce knelt at a table in the middle of a room, and after a little pause began to read a prayer, which He did very slowly in a low, solemnly awful voice. This was followed by 2 other prayers & the *grace*. It occupied abt. 10 minutes, and had the best effect as to the manner of it.

"After prayers were over, a long table covered with cold meat, tarts, &c, was drawn to a Sopha on which sat Mrs Wilberforce & Miss Hewit.—Wilberforce had boiled milk and bread, and tasted a

²⁸ For the evidence see Smyth, *op.cit.*, pp. 20-24.

²⁹ Shorthouse describes what Charles I called the "Arminian Nunnery at Little Gidding" in his *John Inglesant* and T. S. Eliot introduces reflections on it in *The Four Quartets*. For a seventeenth century account see Izaak Walton's *Life of Mr. George Herbert*. See also A. L. Maycock's *Nicholas Ferrar of Little Gidding*.

³⁰ Smyth, *op.cit.*, pp. 30-32. It is worth noting that the Methodist preachers, as itinerants, were too often away from home to cultivate the practice of family prayers.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

little brandy & water which at night He sd. agrees better with Him than wine. Bowdler & myself made up the party."³²

The naive reporter seems unaware of the almost feudal paternalism of the family rite in Clapham, preceded by a review of the domestics which suggests the "passing out" ceremony of the cadets at Sandhurst rather than the intimacy of a home. Probably the most popular Evangelical manual of family devotion was Henry Thornton's *Family Prayers*, the work of Wilberforce's chief philanthropic colleague and Clapham neighbour, which, appearing in 1834, went through a subsequent thirty editions in the next two years. It was particularly valuable for those who, like Cowper, were diffident in the practice of extemporary prayers.

It is, of course, easier to satirize than to sympathize with family prayers. The most celebrated critical account of the exercise in modern fiction is to be found in the posthumously published *The Way of All Flesh*.³³ Butler suggests that the sadistic master of the household who conducts devotions is a hypocrite, while the listeners are simpletons, and that the whole ludicrous exercise is to teach the servants to keep their places as subordinates in the social scheme of things. No doubt many family servants regarded family prayers as they might a dish of prunes—that is, as a purgative. In the charges of prolixity and dullness there may be seen truth rather than caricature.³⁴ The father, red-handed from beating his son Ernest, pompously tells his wife "and now Christina, I think we will have the servants in to prayers." Chapter 23 then commences thus:

"The manservant William came and set the chairs for the maids, and presently they filed in. First Christina's maid, then the cook, then the housemaid, then William, and then the coachman. I sat opposite them, and watched their faces as Theobald read a chapter from the Bible. They were nice people, but more absolute vacancy I never saw upon the countenances of human beings.

"Theobald began by reading a few verses from the Old Testament, according to some system of his own. On this occasion the passage came from the fifteenth chapter of Numbers . . .

"When Theobald had finished reading We all knelt down and the Carlo Dolci and the Sassoferrato looked down upon a sea of up-turned backs, as we buried our faces in our chairs . . .

". . . My thoughts wandered . . . I heard Theobald beginning,

³² *Farington Diary*, ed. J. Greig, Vol. III, p. 285.

³³ Published in 1903; the citation is from Chapter 23.

³⁴ Even here there may be exaggeration; Wilberforce's family prayers lasted for only ten minutes.

'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ' and in a few seconds the ceremony was over, and the servants filed out again as they had filed in."

The satire conveys no hint of the benefits which, in the phrase of the period, "parlour religion" brought to the English people. To be sure, some masters of households might be knaves or fools, but it is impossible to condemn all of them in this way. On the contrary, family prayers were the power house of those upper and middle class Evangelicals like Wilberforce and Shaftesbury who used their considerable talents to the glory of God and the advancement of the underprivileged, whether slaves of Africa, or, as Charles Lamb called the pathetic child chimney sweeps who were pushed down the filthy chimneys of the rich, "those little Africans of our own breed." Prisoners, waifs and strays, orphans, the illiterate poor, and the exploited factory and mine workers of England, as well as the degraded and maltreated slaves of the British Empire, in their thousands could rise up and call the Evangelicals blessed; and the chief source of their blessedness was a conviction renewed in the offices of family prayers that the elect of God were chosen to perform unremitting service, not to bask in the light of being God's favourites. Later social reformers might despise the patronage which is satisfied with applying a plaster to the purulence of society, instead of performing a radical surgical operation in the interests of social justice; but these men believed and practised to the full the ethical concept of stewardship.³⁵ It is significant, also, that though they were men of a party (the Evangelical party) in the Church of England; they did not scruple to combine in their philanthropic work with evangelical Dissenters. Both groups founded the British and Foreign Bible Society; the evangelical clergyman, Thomas Haweis, was one of the founding fathers of the predominantly Congregational London Missionary Society; Granville Sharp, a close colleague of Wilberforce in abolitionism, was a member of the Society of Friends.³⁶

³⁵ M. Halévy rightly judged that "Evangelical Religion was the moral cement of English life." (*History of the English People*, Vol. 3, p. 166.)

³⁶ So pervasive was the influence of the family prayers of the Evangelicals that it invaded even the silent worship of the Quakers. Stoughton writes of the well-to-do Samuel Gurney, brother of Mrs. Fry, the prison-reformer: "Never to be forgotten was an entertainment he gave to officers of the Niger Expedition, in which he took a deep interest; when, after dinner, he gathered the notabilities in the drawing room and read a chapter in the New Testament, Mrs. Fry, giving an address and closing the interview with a short prayer." (*History of Religion in England*, Vol. III, p. 333.)

4. The Sacraments

In the light of the sacramental and ecclesiological emphases of the Oxford Movement, it is customary but nonetheless erroneous to suppose that the Evangelicals, in appreciating the pulpit, depreciated the Sacraments. So far is this from the truth that the Evangelicals can rightly be claimed as pioneers in restoring the Sacrament of Holy Communion to its central place in the Anglican cultus. Wesley's high conception of the Sacrament of the Eucharist on Non-Juror lines, and his constant attendance at it on an average about twice a week throughout his life, has been noticed in a previous chapter.³⁷ Whitefield assures us that this was the case in the circle of Lady Huntingdon, when he writes: "Good Lady Huntingdon goes on acting the part of a mother in Israel. Her house is indeed a Bethel. We have the Sacrament every morning, heavenly conversation all day, and preach at night."³⁸ The Anglican Evangelicals maintained the same tradition and even strengthened it.

In part this was done by the provision of treatises on the Sacrament. In 1761 Samuel Walker had published *A Short Instruction for the Lord's Supper*, while Thomas Haweis produced, on the basis apparently of the catechetical lectures he had given in his parish in Oxford, his *Communicants' Spiritual Companion* in 1763.³⁹ In part the emphasis on the Sacrament was due to the vigorous insistence by Evangelicals that this was not only a Christian's privilege but his absolute duty.⁴⁰ So well had the redoubtable Grimshaw of Haworth succeeded in impressing this view on his congregation that not even menacing storm-clouds would keep them away from the Holy Table. Both Wesley and Whitefield testify to Grimshaw's achievement. The former writes: "A December storm⁴¹ met us on the mountain, but this did not hinder such a congregation as the church could not contain. I suppose we had near a thousand communicants, and scarce a trifter among them."⁴² Whitefield, more prosaically, notes that thirty-four bottles of wine were needed for

³⁷ Cf. Chapter VIII.

³⁸ Letter printed in Luke Tyerman's *Life of Whitefield*, Vol. II, p. 235.

³⁹ Cf. J. S. Reynolds, *op.cit.*, p. 28.

⁴⁰ A second generation Evangelical, Edward Bickersteth, insisted in the preface to *A Treatise on the Lord's Supper* that it was incumbent on Christians to obey "The dying charge of Their Redeemer." (p. v.) I owe this reference to my colleague, Professor R. B. Y. Scott.

⁴¹ The storm and drang of *Wuthering Heights* owes not a little of its realism to the parish of Haworth, for the Brontës were daughters of the rector of this Yorkshire village, with its solid houses hewn of stone, astride the bleak hilltops.

⁴² *Journal*, entry for May 22, 1757.

one celebration of the Holy Communion at Haworth.⁴³ Another Evangelical clergyman, Thomas Jones of Cleaton, held Communion on the first Sunday of each month, and for years the attendance never fell below eighty-five, which included the whole adult population of the little village.⁴⁴

Further proof of the value the Evangelicals attached to the Sacrament was the frequency with which it was celebrated. In 1800, in his second charge to the clergy of Rochester, their High Church bishop, Dr. Horsley, insisted on a minimum of four celebrations each year. Five years later the Rev. Mr. Legh Richmond, an Evangelical clergyman, had established a monthly Sacrament preceded by a monthly communicants' class held on the eve of Sacrament Sunday.⁴⁵ Moreover, the Evangelicals were particularly concerned to provide Communion at hours that were more convenient for the working-classes. For example, Daniel Wilson, as vicar of Islington, instituted an early morning Communion service there shortly after his arrival in 1824. The Evangelicals were also responsible for arranging evening Communion, sometimes in concert with High Churchmen (as with Dr. Hook at Leeds). The custom was begun in Birmingham and Leeds in 1852. It spread so widely that in 1869 sixty-five London churches adopted it, while ten years later the number was almost exactly quadrupled, and in 1881 100 out of a total of 291 churches in the diocese of Rochester had taken it up.⁴⁶

Yet another proof of the esteem in which the Evangelicals held the Sacrament may be adduced from the comments they made upon its value to them. Wilberforce wrote, on January 1, 1812: "I have been detained long at Church, according to a custom which I have observed for twenty-six or twenty-seven years, of devoting the New Year to God by public worship in a Sacrament on the 1st of January."⁴⁷ Equally significant are the following reflections of Henry Hutton in 1833, on the eve of his ordination to the priesthood:

"I hope and trust that the FATHER of mercies will give ear to our united prayers, and that He will vouchsafe to me a more abundant supply of His HOLY SPIRIT to make me more faithful and diligent to execute the sacred office of priest to a congregation of His people. It will be a source of unmixed gratification to me, if I am spared to

⁴³ G. R. Balleine, *A History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England*, p. 71.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁴⁵ J. J. Overton, *The English Church in the Nineteenth Century* . . . , p. 128.

⁴⁶ Balleine, *op.cit.*, p. 244.

⁴⁷ Cited George W. E. Russell, *A Short History of the Evangelical Movement*, pp. 33-34.

administer the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Blessed Saviour to the many devout and faithful worshippers who are wont thus to approach the Lord."⁴⁸ Were this affirmation not known to be that of a decided Evangelical, it might easily be mistaken for the tribute of a Tractarian.

The supreme test, the theological, has yet to be applied to the Evangelical evaluation of the Eucharist. Where memorialism, or what is commonly called a "Zwinglian" doctrine of the Sacrament is held, the Holy Communion is apt to be regarded in didactic fashion as an emblem of the Divine sacrifice on the Cross rather than as conveying the benefits of our Lord's Passion and Resurrection. The evidence points to the fact that the earlier as well as the later Anglican Evangelicals believed that the Lord's Supper was a communicating as well as a commemorating and covenanting ordinance. There is here no doctrine of the "Real Absence."⁴⁹ Neither, of course, is there any trace of a doctrine of a transubstantiation of the elements, or of the "medicine of immortality." It is chiefly a "Receptionist" doctrine that can be discovered in which Divine grace is received by faith, not in any *ex opere operato* or mechanical fashion.

Early evidence for the Calvinist type of "Receptionist" doctrine can be found in the writings of Samuel Walker of Truro. He states specifically that this is a covenanting ordinance and "that which is granted in God's covenant is Christ in all his benefits."⁵⁰ He insisted, of course, that these benefits were appropriated only by faith. The agent of the Communion is the Holy Ghost. Walker explicitly denies that this Sacrament is only a memorialism in the emphatic words: "There is in the Lord's Supper both a *remembrance*, or showing forth of Christ's death, and a *receiving* of his body and blood *by faith*."⁵¹

The Evangelical doctrine of Holy Communion remained substantially the same throughout the nineteenth century, though it was more clearly elaborated in the course of controversy with the Anglo-Catholics. The discussion was focussed on three issues: the nature of the "Presence" of Christ in the Eucharist; whether it is a Sacrifice or a Sacrament; and what is to be understood by "feeding on"

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20. Russell also cites similar testimonies from a distinguished clergyman, Edward Bickersteth, and a distinguished layman, Lord Mount Temple. See also the remarks of Daniel Wilson, later primate of the Anglican Church in India, cited in J. S. Reynolds, *op.cit.*, p. 68.

⁴⁹ A term used, for example, by Gregory Dix in *The Shape of the Liturgy*.

⁵⁰ Cited G. C. B. Davies, *op.cit.*, p. 162.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

the Body and Blood of Christ.⁵² On the first issue the Evangelicals hotly denied that their doctrine implied an absent Christ. The Presence could not be said to be dependent upon consecration and, as to its *locus*, they preferred to say that Christ is present *at* His Table, not *on* the Table. On the second issue, the proponents of the High Church view held that the Communion was a Sacrifice, the Evangelicals that it was a Sacrament. The former, holding that in the Eucharist the one Sacrifice of Calvary is represented by Christ to the Father as a propitiation for the sins of the world, considered it more appropriate to speak of an altar and to adopt the eastward or sacrificial posture when celebrating. The Evangelicals, insisting that the Sacrifice once made upon the Cross could not be renewed, and that the Lord's Supper was an invitation to a Holy Meal in which the Host was Christ, preferred to speak of a Table and to adopt the westward posture. The third question to be debated was whether "the feeding" on the Body of Christ was to be understood as a literal or a spiritual manducation. The Evangelical view was that as bread and wine feed the physical body, so do the Body and Blood of Christ feed the soul. On the whole, then, the Evangelicals by their exhortations to frequent Communion, their provision of celebrations on Sunday mornings and evenings, their doctrinal treatises on the matter, their fervent and solemn attendances at the Sacrament, and their theology of the Sacraments raised the level of sacramental theory and practice in the Church of England until the Sacrament was to be even more highly elevated (sometimes in both senses of the term) by the Tractarians and their successors, the Anglo-Catholics.

Two differing views of the Sacrament of Initiation, Baptism, were held by the Evangelicals. Some few began by believing as eagerly as the Oxford Movement in the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Others, however, denied that the Divine grace conveyed by Baptism could be instantaneously appropriated, holding that the ordinance was proleptic and anticipatory in its meaning, a kind of charter of Gospel privileges to be appropriated fully on attaining maturity. Those Evangelicals who were convinced of the universal need of conversion were, naturally enough, those who denied baptismal regeneration. Some Evangelicals who had accepted the theory came to deny it later, when it had become the rallying cry of the

⁵² Thus G. R. Balleine, *op.cit.*, pp. 285-91 distinguishes the three major issues in the controversy.

High Churchmen, after the celebrated Gorham Judgment of 1850.⁵³ In short, the "peculiar" came to deny it because the "apostolics" affirmed it.⁵⁴

The views of Gorham were not greatly different from those held a century before by another Evangelical Anglican, Samuel Walker. The latter adduces four reasons for practising infant Baptism. He believes there is God's command for it; the children of professing Christians are federally a holy seed and are entitled to receive the sacrament; by this they are made members of the visible Church; and they make a true profession of faith by their proxies. Though such children are spoken of as true believers and regenerate persons, Walker is careful to state "not that they actually are so, or indeed can be, till the gift of God, namely Faith, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, through the hearing of the Word, shall be granted unto them; *when* (and not before, though baptized), they are effectually made living members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of heaven."⁵⁵ In short, children of Christian parents have a "charter-title" to Christian privileges, which they may plead when they attain to true faith. Very few Evangelicals could write with such cogency, clarity, Biblical perceptiveness, and reason as Walker, but his was the doctrine of the nature of Baptism which most of them accepted. His thinking is permeated with his own hope, expressed to his readers, "that you have heard nothing which is not as consistent with reason, as it is with Scripture."⁵⁶

5. Preaching

All the Evangelicals were convinced of the primacy of preaching. In contrast to the moral preaching of Tillotson, their theme was the Cross in which, with St. Paul, they showed that the folly of God was profounder than the wisdom of men. Faith, so they believed, came to men chiefly from hearing the proclamation of the Word.

⁵³ G. C. Gorham, vicar of St. Just-in-Penwith, was refused institution to Brampford Speke vicarage by the Bishop of Exeter on the ground of heresy, after answering 149 questions on Baptism. Gorham believed that the Baptismal blessing was conditional upon the keeping of the promises, and the Privy Council upheld his view against the Bishop's stricter view of Baptismal regeneration.

⁵⁴ The jocular terms are Newman's. Cf. Y. Brilioth, *The Anglican Revival*, p. 307: "In Newman's personal development this question was decisive; his acceptance of the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration indicates his defection from Evangelicalism."

⁵⁵ Walker's baptismal doctrine may be found in *Fifty-Two Sermons on the Baptismal Covenant*, p. 7f.

⁵⁶ *The Christian: being a Course of Practical Sermons*, p. 41.

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Their own use of preaching was threefold: to awaken men from apathy or formality and thus to convert them with the aid of the Holy Spirit; to build men up in the faith—edification; and to teach men how to manifest the fruits of the Spirit—sanctification. The extreme Calvinists (of whom Whitefield was a conspicuous example, as was also Rowland Hill) had reacted so strongly against the prevalent Pelagian moralism of the day as to run dangerously near to the quagmire of antinomianism. *The Spiritual Quixote* of 1773, a satire directed against Whitefield, asserts: "Mr. Whitefield . . . usually made choice of a different text at each meeting; but whatever the subject was, it always ended, like Cato's in the senate-house, with 'Delenda est Carthago,' 'Down with your good works!' with a denunciation against self-righteousness, and a recommendation of faith alone in its stead, as if virtue were inconsistent with the belief of the Gospel; though as a great Divine observes, 'this doctrine of renouncing their own righteousness has generally been found most agreeable to those who have no righteousness of their own to renounce.'⁵⁷ Thus while all Evangelicals preached conversion and edification, the note of Christian perfection or sanctification was sounded chiefly by the Arminian Methodists and the moderate Calvinists, respectively.

No more striking proof of the importance for all Evangelicals of preaching for conversions can be provided than in the following citation from Charles Wesley, in which he recalls a visit he paid on August 6, 1744 to the church of Mr. Bennett, Vicar of Laneast in Cornwall who became an Evangelical when he was a septuagenarian. Also present in the congregation were two other Evangelical clergymen, Meriton and Thomson. Wesley wrote: "It should not be forgot—the concurrent testimony which my brethren bore with me . . . in Mr. Bennett's church, against harmless diversions, on my declaring that I was, by them, kept dead to God, asleep in the devil's arms, secure in a state of damnation for eighteen years; Mr. Meriton added aloud, 'And I for twenty-five'; 'And I,' cried Mr. Thomson, 'for thirty-five'; 'And I,' said Mr. Bennett, 'for above seventy.'⁵⁸

In fact, John Wesley claimed that although there was true Gospel preaching in a few Evangelical parishes in the Church of Eng-

⁵⁷ *The Spiritual Quixote; or, The Summer's Ramble of Mr. Geoffrey Wildgoose. A Comic Romance.* The reputed author is the Rev. Mr. Richard Graves. Re-issued in a two-volume edition in 1926, ed. Charles Whibley. The citation is from Vol. II, p. 8. The "divine" referred to is Chillingworth.

⁵⁸ Cited from Charles Wesley's *Journal* in G. C. B. Davies, *op.cit.*, p. 39.

land, yet only one of them, the Truro parish of Samuel Walker, was providing conversions as his justification for the irregularity of itinerant preaching.⁵⁹

There is probably no more vivid account of the technique of Evangelical Anglicans as applied to preaching for conversions than that supplied by Berridge of Everton in a letter to the young Charles Simeon. Its vigorous language and attention to detail justify its citation:

"When you open your Commission, begin with ripping up the Audience, and Moses will lend you a Carving Knife, which may be often whetted at the Grindstone. Lay open the universal sinfulness of nature, the darkness of the mind, the frowardness of the tempers,—the earthliness and sensuality of the affections:—Speak of the evil of sin in its Nature, its rebellion against God as our Benefactor, and contempt of his authority and Love:—Declare the evil of Sin in its effects, bringing all our Sickness, pains, and sorrows, all the Evils we feel, and all the Evils we fear:—All inundations, fires, famines, pestilences, brawls, quarrels, fightings, Wars,—with Death (to close) these present sorrows,—and Hell to receive all that die in Sin.

"Lay open the spirituality of the Law, and its extent, reaching to every thought, word and action. . . . Declare Man's utter helplessness to change his nature, or make his peace. Pardon and Holiness must come from the Saviour. Acquaint them with the searching Eye of God, watching us continually, spying at every thought, word, and action, noting them down in the Book of his Remembrance, bringing every secret work into judgment, whether it be good or evil."⁶⁰

Berridge evidently insisted as thoroughly as Whitefield that the preacher must be a Boanerges before he becomes a Barnabas, preaching the terrors and judgments of God before offering His mercy. After the thunders came the consolation: "When your Hearers have been well harrowed, and the clumps begin to fall, (which is seen by their hanging down the head) then bring out your CHRIST, and bring him out from the heart, thro' the lips, and tasting of his Grace while you publish it. Now lay open the Saviour's Almighty Power to soften the heart, and give it true repentance: to bring Pardon to the broken-heart, and the Spirit of Prayer to the prayerless heart; Holiness to the filthy heart; and Faith to the

⁵⁹ *Letters*, Vol. III, pp. 149-52.

⁶⁰ *Arminian Magazine*, Sept. 1794, Vol. XVII, pp. 496-98, but conflated with an earlier unbowdlerised text by Smyth in *Simeon and Church Order*, pp. 276-78.

unbelieving heart. Let them know that all the Treasures of Grace are lodged in Jesus Christ, for the use of poor needy sinners; and that he is full of Love as well as Power; that he turns no Beggars away from his Gate, but receives all Comers kindly,—loves to bless them, and bestows all his Blessings *Tythe-free*; Farmers and Country people chop at that. Here you must wave the Gospel-Flag, and magnify the Saviour proudly; speak with a full mouth, that his Blood can wash away the foulest stains, and his Grace subdue the stoutest corruptions. Exhort the people to seek his Grace directly, constantly, and diligently: and acquaint them that all who thus seek, shall find the Salvation of God."⁶¹

The compulsion to aim at conversion was also responsible for the simplicity of their language and the directness of their approach. Grimshaw of Haworth, for example, used a homely, rough, and proverbial style which he called "market language." Once when Whitefield was occupying his pulpit and had begun the sermon, as courtesy demanded, in telling the congregation how fortunate they were to sit on other Sundays beneath a Gospel minister, the direct Grimshaw interrupted him from the reading desk: "For God's sake do not speak so. I pray you do not flatter them. The greater part of them are going to Hell with their eyes open."⁶² Berridge, as we have seen, was in the same succession which could be traced back as far as the Marian martyr, Hugh Latimer. Samuel Walker, like Wesley, is a master of the plain and vigorous style of preaching; neither ever degenerates into the grotesque as Berridge and Whitefield can.

As the formality of Augustan religion had driven first Whitefield and then Wesley into field-preaching, so the zeal for conversions forced the later Evangelicals to look for unusual preaching-places. John Cale Miller, Rector of Birmingham (1846-1866), began open-air preaching. Thomas Richardson preached from the steps of the Royal Exchange in London, and E. H. Bickersteth gathered crowds to hear him on Hampstead Heath. It also became common to use unconsecrated buildings for Evangelical services after the Religious Worship Bill, introduced by Shaftesbury, had been passed by Parliament in 1855. (It should be noted, however, that the nineteenth century Evangelicals were forestalled by Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the great Baptist preacher, who had taken the Surrey Gardens Music Hall for services, while his tabernacle was being rebuilt to accommodate his ever-increasing congregations.)

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² G. R. Balleine, *op.cit.*, p. 68, citing J. Newton, *Letters to H. Foster*, Vol. III.

The Evangelicals held services in Exeter Hall in the Strand, in which they aimed to reach the non-churchgoers. These consisted of the Litany, three well-known hymns, and an address. Others among the Evangelicals held services in the London theatres, where a motley congregation gathered. A witness describes the concourse thus: "It was a strange sight, from floor to ceiling the vast house was thronged: in boxes, stalls, pit, and gallery were costermongers, street cadgers, and labourers, women in fluttering rags, many with babies in their arms, boys in shirt sleeves and corduroys, young men and maidens in their Sunday best. The people listened with extraordinary attention, as if they had never heard the subject before."⁶³

The same zeal for souls tended to make the early Evangelicals prefer extemporary to read sermons. But as preaching without notes came to be identified with Methodism and was regarded as evidence of "enthusiasm," both loyal Anglicans and orthodox Dissenters dissociated themselves from any taint of guilt by association through writing their manuscripts out in full and reading them. This, as it happens, was a return to the practice of the great Puritan Divines, except that the latter had conned their sermons so thoroughly that they could preach them without manuscript. It is significant that Simeon warned his intending ordinands in the University of Cambridge not to preach extemporaneously until after they had written out and read their sermons for a period of three or four years. "Let him speak, meanwhile, extempore, in his workhouse or schoolroom addresses, the same sermon which he has delivered in church from writing. He will thus acquire the habit of speaking easily and efficiently. After a few years, let him drop the fully written sermon for copious notes, and then gradually pass to extempore preaching." To this eminently practical advice, he added the caution: "Evangelical preachers too often take routine texts, which they may easily prate about, but comparatively seldom choose texts which require study and thinking over."⁶⁴ The Broad Church wit, Sydney Smith, writing several years later, deplored the reading of sermons instead of preaching them, as a refusal of the duty of sacred oratory. He asks why Anglican preachers should "call in the aid of paralysis to piety." He contrasts the poorly attended churches with the crowds "feasting on ungrammatical fervour and illiterate animation in the crumbling hovels of the Methodists."⁶⁵

⁶³ Balleine, *op.cit.*, p. 248.

⁶⁴ Charles Smyth, *The Art of Preaching, 747-1939*, p. 178.

⁶⁵ The context of the criticism is a pejorative account of Methodism in a lengthy article reprinted in W. H. Auden's edition of the *Selected Writings of Sydney Smith*, pp. 75-100. Cf. also J. H. Overton, *op.cit.*, p. 139.

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As in so many other ways, so in preaching, it was the practical genius of Simeon which united ardour with order. He was typically an Evangelical in his concern for passionately sincere preaching that evinced a true love for souls. Brown records the following as characteristic of his statements to those who attended his conversation parties: "*Let your preaching come from the heart.*—Love should be the spring of all actions, and especially of a Minister's. If a man's heart be full of love, he will rarely offend. He may have severe things to say, but he will say them in love. People soon see whether a Minister is speaking in his own spirit, or merely declaring God's message."⁶⁶

Such ardour was a commonplace among all ministers concerned for the revival of religion in England. Simeon's real distinction was to combine with this a recognition of the practical need for instruction in the art of sermon-construction and to supply that need both by his written work and by his oral instruction to successive generations of Evangelical undergraduates in Cambridge. He saw that Evangelical preaching needed a system as well as the Spirit. He trained the Evangelical clergy in the lost art of sermon composition according to a definite system, and thus restored to the English Church the tradition of the mediaeval *Artes Praedicandi*.⁶⁷

The fruit of Simeon's literary labours were published first in an interesting treatise which he edited and afterwards in the monumental *Horae Homileticae* (1832-1833) which ran to twenty-one volumes and which contained 2,536 sermon outlines. The treatise which he edited has a fascinating history, for it was written by a seventeenth century Huguenot, Jean Claude, with the title *Traité de la Composition d'un Sermon*, and translated with copious and tendentious notes by the eminent but mercurial Baptist divine, Robert Robinson of Cambridge, who was earlier a Methodist and who ultimately became a Unitarian.⁶⁸ In 1796 Simeon produced a new edition of the Robinson translation of Claude, in which the controversial and voluminous notes were excluded, and to which he added an appendix of a hundred skeletons of sermons as exemplifications of the Claude theory of sermon construction. The theory required that each sermon should be based on three parts:

⁶⁶ A. W. Brown, *op.cit.*, p. 188.

⁶⁷ Smyth, *The Art of Preaching*, p. 181.

⁶⁸ His immediate successor in the Cambridge Baptist Church was the most renowned Evangelical preacher of his day, Robert Hall (1764-1831), described by Coleridge as "the master" of the best style in English.

the exordium, the discussion, and the application. Possibly even more significant was the demand that preaching should subject the minister to the prolonged discipline of studying the text within the context (thus to avoid "eisegesis") and lead him into an exposition of Biblical theology.⁶⁹ The massive *Horae Homileticae* contain some admirable sermon-outlines, which illustrate Simeon's three principles of "unity in the design, perspicuity in the arrangement, and a simplicity of diction." Their defect was, however, their extreme intricacy, and it is arguable that Simeon's greatest contribution to the improvement of Evangelical sermons was given in oral instruction to his undergraduate friends in Cambridge at his "conversation parties" and in his own assiduous submission to the discipline of Biblical study preparatory to preaching.

While Evangelical sermons, as a whole, are clear in outline, simple in diction, and passionately individual in their application, they do not make any significant contribution to the sum of English sacred oratory. Richard Cecil alone among Evangelicals appeared to have the gift of fertile illustration, and although Berridge could produce the occasional ingenious outline of a sermon,⁷⁰ he excelled rather in ingenuousness. The sermons fulfilled their purpose of revitalizing the faith of the congregation until a later generation of Evangelicals came to rely on catch-phrases and clichés that represented experiences that had served their fathers and grandfathers well but were later largely second-hand and wholly inadequate to communicate the Christian faith to an age which had been rocked to its foundations by the bombs of Comte, Marx, and Darwin. By this time fervour itself had been displaced by moderation issuing in only a "decent debility." In the interim Simeon had served his generation well in raising the standard of pastoral duty, canonical obedience, loyalty to the Prayer Book, and practical theology for the whole party of Evangelicals within the English Church. In preaching he had one fault: he was excessively prolix.⁷¹

⁶⁹ For detailed citation and consideration of the Claude-Robinson-Simeon treatise, see Charles Smyth, *The Art of Preaching*, pp. 178-201.

⁷⁰ Cf. the sermon "Ye are our Epistles," an invented allegory, in which the paper is the human heart, the pen the minister of the Gospel, the ink the divine grace, the writer Christ, and the inscription repentance, faith and holiness, cited, pp. 199-200, Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*.

⁷¹ In 1830 Venn Elliott wrote: "The Rev. Charles Simeon (dear and excellent old man!) preached an admirable sermon from I Corinthians 1:30. He was fifty minutes." Cf. George W. E. Russell, *A Short History of the Evangelical Movement*, pp. 64-65, who also notes that Henry Venn never preached for less than fifty minutes and that Edward Bickersteth once preached for an hour and three quarters at the Anniversary service of the Church Missionary Society.

6. *Evangelical Hymnody*

In the first three decades of the nineteenth century the standard of congregational praise was deplorable.⁷² Some congregations insisted on sitting for praise; others had to be discouraged from making the cacophony which only the combination of religious enthusiasm and musical ignorance can produce. Tate and Brady were synonyms for mediocrity and dullness, taking a slight precedence over the metrical versions of Sternhold and Hopkins. The very success of Methodism in its hymnody was sufficient argument for the conservatives to be suspicious of hymns. The much-needed introduction of hymnody into Anglican services was the contribution of the Evangelical Party.

The leading Evangelical Anglicans, following the example of John Wesley, issued their own anthologies of praise. In 1760 Martin Madan's *Hymns and Psalms* appeared and Berridge issued his *Collection of Divine Songs* in the same year.⁷³ Others who joined in the rush were Conyers of Helmsley (1767), Romaine (1775), De Courcy (1775), Toplady (1776), Simpson (1776), Joseph Milner (1780), Cadogan (1785), John Venn (1785), Cecil (1785), Woodd (1794), and Simeon (1795). Romaine's volume was most conservative, limiting itself to metrical psalms. Cecil's collection is interesting in drawing upon Milton and Addison. Simpson's book is remarkable for its size, for it included over six hundred hymns as well as some anthems. Basil Woodd's collection is unique in providing special hymns for every Sunday in the Christian Year "adapted to the Epistle and Gospel of the Day." Soon almost every Anglican Evangelical clergyman had adopted one or other of these books and had restored to the people the right to sing the praise which either the clerk or the choir had filched from them.

The most considerable group of Evangelical Anglican hymns in terms of quality was to come from the friendship of the converted master of a slave-ship, John Newton, with the gentle and melancholy poet, William Cowper, at Olney. Between them they wrote more than three hundred hymns. Essentially they were songs of individual experience, marking the successive stages of penitence,

⁷² Cf. J. H. Overton, *op.cit.*, pp. 131-36.

⁷³ How bad the situation was before the introduction of hymns may be judged from Berridge's words: "Psalm-singing is become a vulgar business in our churches. The tax of praise is collected from a solitary clerk of some bawling voices in a singing loft: the congregation may listen if they please or talk in whispers or take a gentle nap." (Preface to *Collection of Divine Songs*, 1760.)

conversion, justification, pardon, and sanctification in the life of the Christian pilgrim through this vale of sorrow to eternity. The single notable exception is Newton's fine hymn on the Church, "Glorious things of thee are spoken, Zion, City of our God." (Even so, it is to be noted that this was only the Church of the Elect.) The predominant note is that of joy in believing, as in Newton's "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear" and Cowper's "Hark, my soul, it is the Lord." In Cowper, in particular, there is also a wistful desire to recapture the first vitality of the encounter with God, as in "O for a closer walk with God." As the bass ground to the treble of joy, there is the stress on Christian submission and patience in suffering, as in Cowper's "God moves in a mysterious way" and in Newton's "Quiet, Lord, my froward heart." These hymns are marked by deep intensity and sincerity, but their individualism and introspection are not linked sufficiently with the objectivity of the mighty acts of God accomplished in the Creation and the Incarnation, as are the hymns of Charles Wesley. The most popular hymn of the Evangelical Anglicans, one might almost say their theological signature-tune, were it not for the extreme Calvinism of the writer, Toplady, was "Rock of Ages." Morbid in its sense of sin, it was a powerful expression of the doctrine and experience of justification by faith, even despite its mixed metaphors. At times it reaches a classic depth and simplicity in expressing man's utter inadequacy before God and his desperate need of grace as in the famous quatrain:

Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy Cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;

While it is probably true that the contribution of the hymnody of the Oxford Movement, especially in the translations of John Mason Neale and Edward Caswall of the ancient hymns of the Western and Eastern Church, with their emphasis on Christian tradition and the corporate experience of the Church, have been of greater permanent value than the individualistic and often introspective hymns of the Evangelicals (excluding Charles Wesley), yet the Evangelicals can claim two accomplishments. As pioneers they brought back lyricism in praise and gave a place to the religious affections in an age of rationalism and formalism. Moreover, they enabled the people to take a larger part in worship than had hitherto

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been their right, and, incidentally, it may well have been the hymns rather than the sermons which popularized the doctrines of the Evangelicals.

7. *The Liturgical Arts*

Where the Oxford Movement was strongest, the Evangelicals were weakest: on the aesthetic side. The Evangelicals, like the Puritans, exalted the ear-gate at the expense of the eye-gate of the soul. This was true of all three groups of Evangelicals. Though Wesley delighted in architecture, his final comment on the decaying glory of Beverley Minster is: "But where will it be when the earth is burned up and the elements melt with fervent heat?"⁷⁴ The remark is comparable to Bickersteth's, after viewing Lincoln cathedral and calculating that it would cost half a million pounds to build, "Well, the religious societies of England are doing far better than if they built such a cathedral every year, in raising that sum to scatter in every direction the light of Divine truth."⁷⁵ The ethical takes precedence over the aesthetic, and sanctity over sublimity.

Their appreciation of music was also deficient. Cowper, for example, delivered himself of the following extreme judgment: "I believe that wine itself, though a man may be guilty of habitual intoxication, does not more to debauch or befool the natural understanding than music, always music; music in season and out of season, weakens and destroys the spiritual discernment, if it is not done in an unfeigned reverence to the worship of God, and with a design to assist the soul in the performance of it, which cannot be when it is the only occupation."⁷⁶

Art played singularly little part in the lives of the Evangelicals, probably because most of them regarded it as a delusive snare—as the siren of the senses. Wesley had no understanding of the achievements of the great Masters or he could never have written, after his visit to the famous collection of paintings at Seaton Delaval, that he had viewed "such pictures as an honest heathen would be ashamed to receive under his roof, unless he had designed his wife and daughters should be common prostitutes."⁷⁷ The "penny

⁷⁴ Wesley's *Journal*, Vol. v, p. 176. On a visit to Cologne (*Journal*, Vol. II, p. 8) he writes: "We went to the cathedral, which is mere heaps upon heaps: a huge, mis-shapen thing, which has no more of symmetry than of neatness belong to it."

⁷⁵ T. R. Birks, *Memoir of Edward Bickersteth*, Vol. II, p. 53.

⁷⁶ Cited by Elliott-Binns, *op.cit.*, p. 81.

⁷⁷ *Journal*, Vol. v, pp. 69ff.

plain" austerity of the Evangelical cultus was the outcome of this aesthetic insensitivity or fear of the sensuous. Even when the Oxford Movement and the Cambridge Ecclesiological Society recovered a sense of symbolism and beauty in the English Church, the purblind Evangelicals refused for a long period to learn the lesson. Ruskin held that they even took delight in degrading their worship, and for this he took them severely to task in the following words: "The group calling themselves Evangelicals ought no longer to render their religion an offence to men of the world by associating it only with the most vulgar forms of art. It is not necessary that they should admit either music or painting into religious service; but if they admit either, the one or the other, let it not be bad music nor bad painting."⁷⁸

Not all Evangelical Anglicans were deserving of such censure. It is a pity that the saintly missionary Henry Martyn (1781-1812) was not able to convert some of the English aborigines (artistically speaking) to his own viewpoint, when he declared: "Since I have known God in a saving manner, painting, poetry, and music have had charms unknown to me before. I have received what I suppose is a taste for them; for religion has refined my mind, and made it susceptible of impressions from the sublime and beautiful."⁷⁹

The ecclesiastical architecture of the first three decades of the nineteenth century is the sorry reflection of a Philistine attitude. The style of the buildings vacillated flamboyantly between sham Gothic and the theatrical Greek revival. Ugly, inconvenient, and expensive, they are a permanent reproach to the taste of all parties in the Church at that period, and, since the Evangelicals showed most vitality at this time, they must take their considerable share in the blame.⁸⁰ It is certain that for the Evangelicals there was an infinite distance between the beauty of holiness and the holiness of beauty.⁸¹ It was the distinction of the Tractarians and their successors to cross that vast if unnecessary chasm.

⁷⁸ *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Ch. IV, para. 23.

⁷⁹ G. W. E. Russell, *op.cit.*, p. 80.

⁸⁰ Cf. J. H. Overton, *op.cit.*, pp. 155-56.

⁸¹ Contrast the Catholic view of the inter-relation of the visible and invisible worlds in Claudel's lines:

Salut donc, ô monde nouveau à mes yeux, ô monde maintenant total!
O credo entier des choses visibles et invisibles, je vous accepte
avec un coeur catholique
où que je tourne la tête
J'envisage l'immense octave de la création.

(From *Cinq grandes Odes, L'esprit et Peau*.)

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8. *An Evaluation*

The time has come to take stock of the contributions made by the Evangelicals of all three types to English religion in general, and to English worship in particular. This reckoning-up will inevitably show both profit and loss, for, however absolute the claim even of a divinely originated movement, it is nevertheless finite in its adherents and therefore fallible. What, then, were its "treasures," and what its "earthen vessels"?

The chief contributions of the Evangelicals have already been considered in detail and their cumulative impact on English religious life was impressive. To them chiefly is due the revitalization of religious obedience when it had become formal, rational, cold, and prudentially calculating. To them is also due the gaining of the uncommitted thousands in the industrial areas which the official Church did not reach. If the Methodists reached the lower classes, the Anglican Evangelicals had an equally profound effect on the middle classes. For them the chief if not the exclusive means of grace was preaching, which they proved to be "the power of God unto salvation" by the transformation of lives that it effected. The examples of Wesley and of Simeon taught all the Evangelicals the primacy of systematic exposition of the Scriptures after submitting themselves to a rigorous discipline of Biblical studies. Their sermons are rarely examples of refined rhetoric or of an exploring philosophy or speculative theology: for them the aim was the humbler and more practical one of applying the Gospel in judgment and mercy, in reproof and in consolation. They united with the elevation of the Word in preaching a great respect for the two Dominical Sacraments. True as it is that the stress on conversion tended to make less of the importance of the Sacrament of initiation than the Prayer Book demanded, they yielded to none in their concern for Holy Communion. Never since the time of the Non-Jurors had there been such a demand for more frequent celebrations of Communion. It was the Evangelicals who made the Eucharist available in the early morning and on Sunday evenings, chiefly for the benefit of working people. Such joy as their intense and introspective religion permitted is found in their hymnody. They restored the Bible to its primary place in the religious life of Protestants, both in their preaching and in the meditations of their laymen. So much was this so that there was a danger of the Evangelicals becoming *homines unius libri*. The Bible was read and often expounded in that dis-

tinctively Evangelical institution by which religion penetrated the home: family prayers. Here the Evangelical layman was not only the father, but the father-in-God of his household. Not only was he taught to pray, with or without the book, but also to regard his time and talents as lent by God, not given, and that he must give an account of his stewardship at the Great Assize. Consequently, it is to the Evangelicals that England owes the efflorescence of Christian philanthropy during and after the Napoleonic wars, dedicated to missionary work and the abolition of slavery abroad and to the eradication of public evils at home, such as the degradation of men by the inhuman conditions in the prisons, the mines, and the factories.

Great as were these achievements, there were also corresponding defects.⁸² These may chiefly be attributed to a defective theology. In their abounding concern for individual salvation, they neglected the communal aspects of the Christian faith, an emphasis which led them to a one-sided doctrine of the Church which stressed Holiness but ignored Catholicity and Apostolicity, and to an unsatisfactory doctrine of Creation and Incarnation through their overwhelming emphasis on the Atonement as effecting a salvation *out* of this world. Their Biblical exposition was contracted to a reduced Paulinism and needed the Synoptic and Johannine expansion. The very value which they rightly attributed to the Bible made them excessively suspicious of culture,⁸³ which has to be reprimanded rather

⁸² For a series of penetrating and just critiques of Evangelicalism, the reader should consult Dean Church, *The Oxford Movement*, pp. 11-13; Elliott-Binns, *op.cit.*, pp. 394-95, 432-41; J. H. Overton, *op.cit.*, pp. 100-02; and Charles Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, pp. 228-30, 250-56. For a less just but amusing evaluation, see Sydney Smith on Methodism in ed. W. H. Auden, *Selected Writings of Sydney Smith*, pp. 75-100.

⁸³ R. S. Thomas, a clergyman in present-day Wales, criticizes Protestantism (by which he means Calvinism) in Wales in his *Song at the Year's Turning*:

Protestantism—the adroit castrator
Of art; the bitter negation
Of song and dance and the heart's innocent joy—

This reference I owe to Professor W. D. Davies of Union Theological Seminary, New York City. The Evangelicals were suspicious of pleasure itself, quite apart from its expression in novels or drama. Their attitude was like that of Leslie Stephen's father to the one cigar he smoked "and found it so delicious that he never smoked again." (N. G. Annan, *Leslie Stephen*, p. 14.) Edmund Gosse's mother declared that "to 'tell a story,' that is, to compose fictitious narrative of any kind, was a sin." (Edmund Gosse, *Father and Son*, p. 22.) Pollok, who wrote that the theatre must be shunned "as the favorite haunt of sin" was equally censorious of novels, for they are

Oft cramm'd full
Of poisonous error, blackening every page;
And oftener still, of trifling, second-hand
Remark, and old, diseased, putrid thought:

than excluded. This, too, made them (with the exception of Milner) neglectful of Church history and the corporate experience of centuries of Christian understanding. The rightful stress on the religion of the heart made them despise the proper claims of reason. The concentration on the instantaneous change from darkness to light,⁸⁴ which they called conversion or regeneration, caused them to lay insufficient stress on the continued and maturing response to revelation and the upbuilding of Christian character, and made them indifferent to the many other avenues by which the soul may come to an understanding of the revelation of God's truth and love. Their very enthusiasm could turn to an unlovely bigotry, when they condemned those who did not share their presuppositions as mere "worldlings." Their constant insistence upon conscious response to the Gospel and the inner peace or assurance that it brought made them oblivious to the subtle and often unconscious impact of symbols and rites, ceremonies and gestures; even worse, this subjectivity was a species of mental Pelagianism. But since *Ecclesia semper reformanda*, their defects were to be made good by the traditional, corporate, sacramental, and aesthetic emphases of the Oxford Movement, and the social justice springing from the Incarnation itself expounded and exemplified by the "Christian Socialists" of the Broad Church school. The later developments, however, would have been unlikely but for the new life brought into the dry bones of the English Church by the heroic endeavours of the Evangelicals. In the age-old tension in the history of Christianity between the institutional and the charismatic, between the Spirit and the Form, they were far from yielding to all the blandishments of the enthusiasts which could have led only to sectarianism, schism, spiritual pride, and the jettisoning of continuity, unity, and order in the Church of God, as expressed in the Liturgy, the parochial system, and episcopacy. In a most remarkable way they tried, and largely succeeded, in blending the Spirit and the Liturgy.

Yet charming still the greedy reader on
Till, done, he tried to recollect his thoughts,
And nothing found but dreaming emptiness.

(Robert Pollok, *The Course of Time*.) I owe this reference to Hoxie Neale Fairchild, *Religious Trends in English Poetry*, Vol. IV, p. 21.

⁸⁴ Theirs was a salvation for the "twice-born"; they did not consider that the "once-born" whose life in the Christian community was a gradual illumination, as from dawn to noon, was "saved" at all.

PART THREE

1830-1850: THE DOMINANCE OF
TRADITIONALISM

CHAPTER X

THE OXFORD MOVEMENT: THE RECOVERY OF CATHOLIC TRADITION

IF THE EVANGELICAL REVIVAL was the most significant religious movement in the English nation in the eighteenth century, the Oxford Movement was the most important factor in the deepening of the religion of the English Church in the nineteenth. The former had stressed personal holiness and the religion of sentiment; the latter was to emphasize corporate holiness within the context of an independent Divine Society that spanned the centuries and transcended national boundaries. Each movement reacted against and responded to the major thought currents of its time. Evangelicalism reacted against the prevalent rationalism of its day, in the interests of feeling, and in so doing was part of that wider continental movement which was variously expressed in the sentimentalism of Jean Jacques Rousseau, in the pietism of Lutheranism and Moravianism, and in the Roman Catholic Church in the popularity of the cult of the Sacred Heart which had originated in the latter seventeenth century in the visions of a French nun, the Blessed Marie-Margu rite Alacoque.¹

The Oxford Movement reacted against the liberalism of the day in its humanist and political manifestations. At the same time, it shared in the enthusiasm for tradition which was so marked a feature of English thought after its disillusionment with and later revulsion from the French Revolution. Burke's anti-revolutionary views proclaimed a new appreciation for the past and a view of society as an organism. The same view fashioned the Romantic Revival of which the most typical representatives were Sir Walter Scott and William Wordsworth. The former opened the magic casements of popular imagination onto the mediaeval scene; the latter rediscovered the eternal freshness of nature and the fundamental simplicities of human relationships, views which made him welcome Revolutionary France as "standing on the top of golden

¹ The insularity of English thought at this time must account for the curious fact that the Oxford Movement owed so little to the important French movement which began with Chateaubriand's *G nie du Christianisme* and developed with Joseph de Maistre's *Du Pape*, and the German Catholic movement stimulated by Schlegel's conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1808.

hours and human nature seeming born again," but he also came to appreciate those permanent and traditional values of which he claims, "Deep in the general heart of man their power abides." Thus the Oxford Movement reflected the larger movement of European thought: its concern for the historical continuity of the past with the present, its idealization of the principle of authority in both Church and State which the Revolution had denounced, and, in its later stages, its stress on organic growth and development. In its earlier stage, however, its static conception of tradition showed all too clearly that it knew nothing of Hegel.

It has been customary to define the relationship between the Evangelical and Tractarian parties as an antithetical one and, indeed, the later so-called "Ritualistic Controversy" (which was, in fact, a controversy about ceremonial) was sufficiently embittered to lend colour to this view. On the other hand, ceremonialism was a later development of Tractarianism, and not expressive of its early genius, at least as discoverable in the first Tractarian leaders who had a very minor and subsidiary interest in ceremonial matters.² Furthermore, this mutual suspicion and partisanship may be regarded as deflecting attention from the basic loyalties shared by the Evangelicals and the Tractarians *within* the same Church of England. The view will be maintained that ultimately the Oxford Movement is not so much an antithesis or opposition to the Evangelical wing as it is a supplementing of it with elements of thought and practice that were lost or forgotten. Certainly, there could have been no Tractarian or Oxford Movement unless the Evangelicals had revived personal religion in the Church of England, and to this extent at least the latter movement is indebted to the earlier. Equally, the Evangelicals of today are much more concerned to make their worship reverent and the appearance of their churches comely, and to express a deepened interest in scholarship, which was rarely the case before the advent of the Oxford Movement. The present demand that party cries and partisanship itself be dropped in the Church of England is a proof that contributions of each movement were mutually fructifying.

The influence of the Oxford Movement, as will be seen in later chapters, is by no means limited to the Anglican Communion. In three ways its impact can be discerned on the Church of Scotland and on the English Free Churches in the later nineteenth century.

² "Do tell us what a cope is," Pusey is reported to have said when vestments were being discussed. Cf. J. R. H. Moorman, *A History of The Church of England*, p. 364.

Communion which hitherto had regarded prayers and praises as merely the preliminaries to preaching began an anxious revaluation of worship as such; others, more daring, introduced liturgical elements in their services and, in some cases, entire liturgical forms. A second influence, hardly less significant, was the new interest in and inquiry into the nature of the Church on the part of denominations or fellowships, which increasingly begin to think and pray in terms of the *Ecclesia* instead of *ecclesiolae*, and who even began to look forward to the coming of the Ecumenical or Re-united Church of God. Sometimes, however, the very exclusiveness (not to say arrogance) with which the High conception of the Church was put forward tended to make some Free Church leaders more determined to insist on their Nonconformity, while others were more disturbed about the "dissidence of Dissent." The negative reaction, however, had one positive result: it often made the Free Churches look to their own traditions and the genesis of their denominations. Nonetheless, the very concern for tradition and the corporate witness of the Church is a tribute to the stimulus of Tractarianism. Thirdly, Tractarianism's correlation of Christianity with culture³ (and particularly its use of music and the visual arts as handmaids in worship) has also left its mark in the building and furnishing of sanctuaries in which symbolism, rather than mere functionalism, increasingly came to play a more significant role. Thus, while the chief influence of the ecclesiastical and ecclesiological revival is inevitably to be found in the Church of England, the worship and theology of English Dissent is also its debtor.

On the other hand, it can also be shown that Evangelicalism also made its contributions to the Tractarian expression of worship. Did not Evangelicalism's insistence upon the sovereignty of God prevent the so-called sacramental principle from running into a mysticism of nature that might have become a thinly disguised pantheism? More certain, however, is the fact that the stress on personal religion and faith as the response to the Divine favour served as a permanent warning against a tendency to a quasi-materialist conception of grace which a traditional institutionalism is prone to foster with its *ex opere operato* insistence upon the validity of the Sacraments being independent of the faith of the recipient. In practical as well as theological ways, the Evangelicals made their impact on Tractarianism. Apart from the important exception of the non-jur-

³ With the exception of the natural and social sciences, where the Unitarians always and the Congregationalists often led the Anglicans until recent times.

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ing Bishop Ken, the High Church tradition had clung to the use of psalmody in praise; it was the Evangelical use of hymns which provided the precedent for the Tractarian composition of hymns, though with a much greater traditional content and emphasis. Perhaps the most conspicuous example of Tractarian borrowing from Evangelicalism is seen in the provision of evangelical missions in which passionate preaching and sacred songs predominated, after the example of those invincibly Protestant American evangelists, Moody and Sankey. It was the High Church bishop, Dr. G. H. Wilkinson of Grahamstown, Truro, and St. Andrews, who initiated the imitation while Vicar of St. Peter's, Eaton Square, London (1870-1883).

It is certain that there were important divergences between the Oxford Movement and Evangelicalism, but now that the smoke of the ecclesiastical battle has dissipated with the winds of the years, it would seem that both parties were closer together than they knew and that their ultimate significance in the life of the English Christianity is rather that of complementaries than of competitors or antagonists. To be more specific, the initial unity in the concern for the revival of holiness had been expressed in a balanced appreciation of both the Word and the Sacraments in the early years of the Oxford Movement as in the virtual refounding of Evangelicalism by Charles Simeon. The balance was lost by partisanship. Each side seemed, if not to deny, at least to undervalue, what had hitherto been a part of its heritage and the result was lop-sidedness. If the High Churchmen stressed the importance of the sacramental life, then the fear of approximation to Roman Catholicism caused the Evangelicals to exalt preaching the more, to make less of the Sacraments, and to refuse to make any change in their Prayer Book worship. Similarly, the Tractarians who had spread their distinctive tenets more effectively from the pulpit of St. Mary-the-Virgin, Oxford, the University Church, than in their increasingly lengthy, erudite, and tendentious *Tracts for the Times*, were inclined in time to depreciate the subjectivity of preaching because the Evangelicals had made much more of it.⁴ The possibility of an immediate fruitful

⁴ Cf. Tract No. 87. "If people in general were now asked what was the most powerful means of advancing the cause of religion in the world, we should be told it was eloquence of speech or preaching. . . . Whereas, if we were to judge from Holy Scripture, of what were the best means of promoting Christianity in the world, we should say obedience. . . . Not that we should be thought entirely to depreciate preaching as a mode of doing good: it may be necessary in a weak and languishing state . . . [of the Evangelicals]. Their principle is to speak much and loud, because it is to man; that of the Church is founded on this 'that God is

cooperation between the two wings of the Church of England was, in fact, ruined by two events.

The first was the coalition of fear into which the Evangelicals were driven with the Broad Church Liberals, which was enough to make the Tractarians see red, because they had diagnosed the "national apostasy" as a condition caused by the invasion of the Church of England by that malignancy, liberalism. The second factor was the "conversion" of Newman and of a considerable number of his followers to Roman Catholicism, which brought the very concept of "Catholicity" into suspicion.

It would be many years in the future before an irenic approach between the parties would become possible. The historian does, however, have the advantage of writing from the perspective of distance in which it may prove possible to discern an overall pattern in the tapestry, where the partisans see only opposed designs and the confusion of broken threads; or, to change the figure, in which apparent dissonance resolves itself into a contrapuntal harmony. It is appropriate, in this context, to begin our consideration with the common concerns of the two parties.

1. *The Unity of Evangelicals and Tractarians*

At the outset it should be stated that it is proposed to consider the dependence of the Oxford Movement upon the Evangelical Revival only in the most general terms. A thorough consideration of the problem would involve a satisfactory reply to a number of related questions. How far, to take one example, were Pietism, Romanticism, and German Idealism interrelated, and how much did Evangelicalism and Tractarianism owe to each of these influences? Moreover, the initial question itself may be falsely posed, as implying a simple direct relation of causation which a multi-factoral analysis might prove untenable. Furthermore, such a hypothesis presupposes that all the Evangelicals, on the one hand, and all the Tractarians, on the other, were uniform and alike. This is far from being warranted, as the most superficial study of the individual leaders would show, for the difference between the Evangelicals Berridge and Simeon was hardly more pronounced than that between Hurrell Froude and Pusey among the Tractarians. For these reasons it is more profitable to consider the affinities, rather than the independence, of each party.

in Heaven, and we on earth'; therefore, 'Keep thy foot in the House of God,' and 'let thy words be few.' " *Tracts*, Vol. v, pp. 74-76.

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The first and most clearly marked point of unity was the overwhelming concern of each party for the undeviating pursuit of holiness, sanctity, salvation. There was also an underlying difference, for the Oxford Movement was "a rediscovery of the historical mediation of salvation, just as the Evangelical Movement had been the discovery of the immediate relation of the individual soul to its Saviour."⁵ In this search for holiness, which is the chief mark of the pilgrimage of John Wesley and John Henry Newman and the chief incentive of the movements which they led, there is a reaction against the apathy of the slumbering Church of England in their respective times, which had become conformed to this world. The foes in Wesley's time were Latitudinarianism and Rationalism (and the latter had expressed itself chiefly in Deism). The enemies in Newman's time were not very different—namely, Erastianism and Liberalism, which manifested themselves in the Church's supinely accepting the dictation of the State in its proposal to reduce the number of Anglican archbishoprics and bishoprics in Ireland⁶ and, later, in denying the *successio apostolica* of the English Church and interfering with Orthodox jurisdiction in the east by establishing a joint Prussian-English bishopric in Jerusalem. The remedies proposed were, indeed, different. For Wesley the sovereign medicine was the proclamation of the Gospel in its pristine purity and vigour and the disciplined organization of converts into societies within the Church of England which would prevent the evaporation of good intentions. For Newman, who had grown up as an Evangelical and who had sat under the preaching of Romaine, and who had read Thomas Scott and marked as his own the author's dictum of "Holiness rather than peace," the remedy was corporate holiness, in which the historic Church was the channel of grace through its Sacraments, the validity of which was guaranteed by the apostolical succession of its bishops and through the examples and encouragement of the saints. In both an unworldly passion for holiness was the paramount concern. Wesley had defined Christianity as "Scriptural Holiness." Newman had written on March 30, 1841, a few months after the appearance of Tract 90: "It is sanctity of heart and conduct which commends us to God. If we be holy, all will go well

⁵ Yngve Brilioth, *Three Lectures on Evangelicalism and the Oxford Movement*, p. 58.

⁶ The Irish Anglican Establishment served the spiritual needs of no more than 850,000 Anglicans—that is, a little more than a tithe of the population, which included 6,400,000 Roman Catholics and 64,000 Presbyterians. *The Church Temporalities Bill* of 1833 proposed to suppress two of the four archbishoprics, and eight of the eighteen bishoprics, and to redistribute the income thus saved among the poorer benefices.

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with us. External things are comparatively nothing; whatever be a religious body's relation to the State—whatever its regimen—whatever its doctrines—whatever its worship—if it has but the life of holiness within it, this inward gift will, if I may so speak, take care of itself.⁷ While Newman was to insist upon the historic and ecclesiastical mediation of grace, holiness was primary over ritual and ceremonial. In this view the Evangelicals and the first generation of Tractarians concur.

It is also significant that in the early days of the encounter of both movements there was a balanced stress in each on the importance of the Word and the Sacraments. On the Evangelical side this has already been seen. It is not always recognized as having been an early emphasis on the part of the members of the Oxford Movement. It is interesting to note that R. W. Church, while insisting that the Tractarians "taught people to think less of preaching than of what in an age of excitement were invidiously called forms—of the Sacraments and services of the Church,"⁸ yet declares that it was Newman's preaching which aroused a greater sympathy with the Tractarian ideals than did the entire series of Tracts.⁹ It should not be forgotten that the eight volumes of Newman's *Parochial and Plain Sermons* have attained classical distinction in the history of English preaching, nor that Keble produced eleven volumes of *Sermons for the Christian Year*. Perhaps, even more significant, is the fact that Liddon, Church, and Scott Holland were three distinguished High Church exemplars of the Tractarian preaching tradition in the later nineteenth century. It is also instructive to recall that Pusey's preaching made the Cross as central as did the Evangelicals. It is of the greatest importance, when looking for parallels, to recall that Pusey himself recognized the Tractarian debt to Evangelicalism in the *theologia crucis*. In his preface to the translation of Surin's *The Foundations of the Spiritual Life*¹⁰ Pusey refers to this debt to the great "revival of the previous century," because it was through Evangelicalism that "a vivid and energetic, however partial, preaching of the corruption of human nature, and of the Cross . . . by the Providence of God broke in upon an age of torpor and smooth easy ways in religion." The qualification "however partial" is introduced because Pusey believed that Wesleyan Methodism did not sufficiently stress the need for penitence and came to rely upon feelings rather than habits of holiness.

⁷ Republished in the *Via Media*, Vol. II, pp. 395-424.

⁸ *The Oxford Movement, Twelve Years, 1833-1845*, p. 110.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 113. ¹⁰ Edition of 1874, p. vi f.

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The important fact is, not that Pusey's mysticism of the Cross is deepened by his reading of the Fathers, ancient and medieval, eastern and western, nor even that his Christ seems to be less the personal Saviour and close friend of the Evangelicals than a symbol of the nadir of the God-man's descent in humility, but rather that it had its root in English Evangelicalism and this Pusey brought over into Tractarianism. Sometimes its expression is markedly close to the Evangelical mode, as when he says: "It would bring but despair to renew our sins at the foot of His Cross . . . deepen thy penitence since thy sin nailed Him there, and thou perhaps hast crucified him afresh, and wasted thyself the Price of His Blood."¹¹

Both the Evangelical and the Tractarian religion was supremely a matter of the heart and the will, though for the latter, as Oxford dons, there was no Philistinism, no despising of the intellect, while giving the primacy to faith and insisting upon submission to the teaching of the Church in matters of doctrine. A true faith required the devotion of the heart and the obedience of the will, and this held good for both parties. The difference was one of emphasis. The Evangelical wore his heart on his sleeve; the piety of the Tractarians was deep, but reserved and quiet, as perhaps befitted clergymen living in ivory towers of the university or in the solitude of country and ivy-covered rectories.

There was also a subtle difference in the explication of their understanding of the nature of obedience. Each party believed profoundly in the sovereignty of God, in the corruption of man, in the necessity for faith in the merits and mediation of Christ, and in the living proof of faith as a life of sanctity. Weber has called Evangelical obedience an "intramundane asceticism" and has traced its origin to the Reformation conception of *Beruf*, that is, serving God in one's calling, to which the Wesleyan parallel to the Reformers' conception of "vocation" is "stewardship." The Tractarians aspired to a much greater extent to an extramundane asceticism, for which the proof is their high evaluation of celibacy and concern for the revival of the community life in the Church of England, ideas which had occurred independently to the minds of Newman and Pusey in the year 1839. The first postulant, Miss Marian Rebecca Hughes, made her vow of dedication to Pusey in St. Mary's, Oxford, on Trinity Sunday, 1841. When Newman retired to Littlemore in 1842 it was with the intention of building a monastery and found-

¹¹ Cited Y. Brilioth, *The Anglican Revival*, p. 243, from *Sermons during the Season from Advent to Pentecost*, p. 169.

ing a religious community; here he and his colleagues and friends lived a voluntary community life, though not bound to any rule.¹² Despite the different emphases on the expression of the religion of the heart, and on the expression of Christian obedience, religion for both Evangelicals and Tractarians was located in the heart and the will, as it was in the intellect for the Broad Church.

A third area of unity between the parties is found in their loyalty to the Prayer Book of the Church of England, though extremists on both sides, either by puritanical emphasis or by papistical innovations on rare occasions, put the matter in doubt. The nexus of affinity between the parties might perhaps be found in that remarkable eighteenth century layman, Alexander Knox, the friend of Bishop Jebb, who was strangely sympathetic to both the High Church tradition and the Methodists. He had declared: "I know nothing settled in the whole Reformed body but the Liturgy of the Church of England. To the Liturgy, therefore, . . . I adhere, as the . . . silver cord . . . which unites us to the great mystical body. . . ."¹³ The sentiment was one which both Wesley and Simeon would have endorsed, and Simeon would have been as eager as Knox to stress the importance of order and continuity in the Church. Differ as the two might on the true interpretation of the rubrics of the Prayer Book, yet according to their lights they were loyal to its traditions.¹⁴

In the fourth place, both Evangelicals and Tractarians were eager to use hymns for the expression of the adoration of English Christians. The Evangelicals, following the examples of Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley, were the pioneers of hymns within the Establishment, it is true; but the *English Hymnal* is a tribute to the Anglo-Catholic zeal for glorifying God in hymns. It is even possible to overstress the difference in the tone and temper of their respective hymnodies, as, for example, to claim that the Evangelicals were primarily subjective, individualistic, and introspective, while the Tractarian hymns were objective and corporate in their emphasis. The statement is not far wide of the mark, and the thesis could be proved by opposing citations; on the other hand, it is the distinction of Wesley's hymns, for example, that they combine historic doctrine with a personal lyricism, and that of much Anglo-Catholic

¹² S. L. Ollard, *A Short History of the Oxford Movement*, pp. 244-45.

¹³ *Remains of Alexander Knox, Esq.* (Vols. I and II, 1834; Vols. III and IV, 1837), Vol. I, p. 61, a letter written originally in 1812.

¹⁴ It is worth recalling that the Rev. Mr. H. J. Rose, "the Cambridge originator of the Oxford Movement," convened a meeting of High Churchmen in his Hadleigh rectory from July 25-29, at which it was resolved to defend "the apostolical succession and the integrity of the Prayer Book."

hymnody that traditional dogma becomes devotional because it is bathed in the light of a tender love for Christ. The important fact is that neither party would have its devotions confined in the crabbed coffins of metrical psalmody, and insisted upon recourse to hymns. Perhaps the characteristic difference was the preference of the Evangelicals for present religious experience, and of the Tractarians for hymns which sang the glories of the Christian experience of the centuries. Certainly, in John Mason Neale¹⁵ and in Edward Caswall,¹⁶ the second generation of the Oxford Movement had superb translators of the hymns of the ancient Church. What is equally interesting is that Tractarians included Evangelical hymns in their hymn-books, and, some considerable time later, the Evangelicals repaid the compliment. Today it is doubtful if many members in any parish congregation know which hymns are by Evangelicals and which by High Churchmen, and sing them with equal, indiscriminating zeal. If this is in fact so, it indicates how complementary the apparently competitive emphases of the two parties have become.¹⁷

2. *The Distinctive Characteristics of the Oxford Movement*

In correcting the conventional view of the two parties as antagonistic and antithetical, we must not fall into the opposite error of underestimating their distinctiveness. It is therefore important to attempt to discover those distinctive emphases of the Oxford Movement which gave it character and momentum on the English scene.

Evangelicalism by the time of the Reform Bill of 1832 was losing its impetus and looked like a spent force.¹⁸ What was needed

¹⁵ Neale was remarkably Catholic in range, providing translations from the medieval Latin and the patristic Greek. They include "Jerusalem the golden," "For thee, O dear country," "Art thou weary," "O happy band of pilgrims," "The Day is past and over," and "Tis the day of Resurrection." *Mediaeval Hymns and Sequences* appeared in 1851 and *Hymns of the Eastern Church* in 1862.

¹⁶ Caswall followed Newman into the Roman fold in 1850 and provided many translations of Latin hymns from the *Roman Breviary* which were second only to Neale's in popularity.

¹⁷ I have discovered an unexpected supporter of this view in the High Church Bishop W. H. Frere in his *English Church Ways*, pp. 79-82.

¹⁸ Dean Church's evaluation of Evangelicalism in the third decade of the nineteenth century is most penetrating. He asserts (*op.cit.*, pp. 11-13): "What it had failed in was the education and development of character; and this was the result of the increasing meagreness of its writing and preaching. . . . The circle of themes dwelt on by this school in the Church was a contracted one, and no one had found the way of enlarging it. It shrank, in its fear of mere moralising, in its horror of the idea of merit or of the value of good works, from coming into contact with the manifold realities of the spirit of man: it never seemed to get beyond

was a different kind of revival, an ecclesiastical and corporate renewal which would supplement the achievements of Evangelicalism. The older pietistic individualism needed the support and discipline of a complementary stress on the corporate nature of the Church. The older insistence upon immediacy of access to God which could degenerate into sentimentality required a traditional and historical undergirding. The older theology of the Cross, with its stress on the discontinuity between nature and grace, between creation and regeneration, demanded the supplementation of Eastern theology and its rediscovery by the Caroline Anglican divines, so that the Atonement would be seen as part of the cosmic restoration that the Incarnation and the Resurrection had inaugurated.

Society and culture needed re-pristination, as well as individuals. The white-washed church-buildings of the Establishment and of Dissent cried out for color. Their noisy pulpits uttering the same well-worn phrases and clichés and employing the same old rhetorical fashions needed to be moved from the center of the churches to the side, that in the unaccustomed quietude the wonder of symbolism, pointing through the forms of time to the realities of eternity, might grow and the churches might remain open for meditation throughout the week. In this unrhetorical atmosphere the responsive prayers and the succinct collects, hallowed by centuries of usage, could be given their belated opportunity to form the aspirations of the worshippers. Above all, it might be possible to build churches which evoked the ages of faith with their cruciform shape and their high, pointed Gothic windows and steeples, with their central altars half hidden by rood-screens and gates, and all the colored dapplings and pencillings of light on the walls and time-honored symbols carved in wood or stone or shaped in glass. It was high time to turn away from Renaissance architecture, whether Neo-Roman Georgian or Neo-Grecian Victorian, which was so clearly anthropocentric in its celebration of man's dignity, to a more theocentric architecture. This was the Gothic, first produced by the men of faith in the ages of faith.

the 'first beginnings' of Christian teaching, the call to repent, the assurance of forgiveness: it had nothing to say to the long and varied process of building up the new life of truth and goodness: it was nervously afraid of departing from the consecrated phrases of its school, and in the perpetual iteration of them lost hold of the meaning they may once have had. . . . Claiming to be exclusively spiritual, fervent, unworldly, the sole announcer of the free grace of God amid self-righteousness and sin, it had come in fact, to be on very easy terms with the world." Compare also F. D. Maurice's assertion that Evangelicalism believed in a doctrine of justification by faith, not in Christ the Justifier, and Newman's criticism that Protestantism was a faith in faith, not in God.

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The Oxford Movement's contribution to the understanding of Christian faith and life differed in five important respects from Evangelicalism. (1) It attached a profound value to sacred tradition and the history of the Christian Church in both East and West in the first five centuries. (2) It conceived of the Church itself as an independent divinely originating and divinely sustained society, characterized by the notes of unity, catholicity, and, above all, apostolicity. While it also emphasized holiness, it was not different from the Evangelicals in this respect. (3) Its understanding of faith was more objective, for it concentrated on the acts of God accomplishing human salvation in history and upon the dogmas of belief rather than on their subjective appropriation. (4) It gave sacramental life and liturgical worship an even higher place than the Anglican Evangelicals had given them. (5) Finally, although this was chiefly characteristic of the second generation of Tractarians, it emphasized the value of ceremony in worship, as appealing to the mixed nature of man, spirit, mind, and body, which had been hallowed in the Incarnation. Each of these characteristics must be studied in more detail because of the remarkable influence the complex of emphases was to have on the revitalization of worship in nineteenth century England.

3. The Importance of Sacred Tradition

The primary mark of the Oxford Movement is its recognition of the thrill of sacred tradition. Inevitably the retrospective look was in part engendered because the condition of the Church in England in a cataclysmic time appeared dire and the future threatening. As the Tractarian marked "change and decay in all around I see" he naturally interpreted the decadence of the Church as evidence of its apostasy. The only possible conservative response to revolution is restoration. The Church of God must repent, therefore, and turn to the old ways and respect the ancient landmarks. To the mind of the Tractarian the most glorious period of the life of the Church was when it was the Church militant, not the Church quiescent or somnolent. That was in the first five centuries when the apologists had defended the Church against the pagans by out-thinking them and the martyrs had witnessed to the power of the Resurrection by out-dying their opponents. It was the period when, although the Roman Empire fell into decay, the *imperium in imperio*, the Christian society, triumphed over its grave. This was the era when the Councils of a united Christendom delivered their judgments on the

nature of orthodox doctrine, and when the great ascetical saints proved that a man in Christ could be more than conqueror over the world. Primitive Christianity was magnificent, because it was Christianity at war with the world.

Even if this was a rose-colored view, it must be admitted that the Tractarians used every scholarly endeavour to reconstruct it. In this they were encouraged by the pioneer labors of the Caroline divines of the English Church who had inaugurated intensive patristic labors in England. *The Library of the Fathers*,¹⁹ conceived by Newman in 1836, begun in 1838, and carried to its triumphant conclusion in forty-eight ponderous tomes by 1885, testified to their assiduity in research. Keble had planned its counterpart, *The Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology*, in 1846 and was himself responsible for an excellent edition of the works of Hooker, the great Elizabethan apologist of the Church of England. The third proposal for historical scholarship was mooted by Newman in his retirement at Littlemore, under the title of the *Lives of the British Saints*. Significantly, no Reformation or post-Reformation saint was to be included in the collection, for in Newman's view apostasy had begun not long before, and schism with, the Reformation.

If it be remarked that this was to take a very arbitrary criterion of tradition—the first five centuries and the seventeenth only—then it could be retorted that the Evangelicals were even more cavalier in their rejection of the Christian tradition. In effect, the Evangelicals had reduced significant tradition to the first and the sixteenth centuries; presumably the intervening fourteen centuries were traitors to the Truth and for all practical purposes the importance of the century of the Reformation was that it was a re-publication of the century of the foundation of the Church. Both were static views of the Church and of tradition, but the view of the Evangelicals was far the more restricted.

It was, of course, in their view of the Reformation that the two parties were most at variance. Hurrell Froude, brash and brilliant, had a positive loathing for the Reformation, as was apparent to the scandalized gaze of such Protestants as looked at his literary *Remains* published by his tactless Tractarian friends. There they would have read such an exceptionable statement as the following: "The Reformation was a limb badly set, it must be broken again to be righted."²⁰ Even more monstrous was it for the Evangelicals

¹⁹ Brilioth, *op.cit.*, p. 141, describes it as "the *monumentum aere perennis* of static Anglicanism."

²⁰ *The Remains*, edited by friends, Vol. 1, p. 433.

to read in the same volume: "Really I hate the Reformation and the Reformers more and more, and have almost made up my mind that the rationalist spirit they set afloat is the *ψευδοπροφήτης* of the Revelation."²¹ Froude and Ward were perhaps exceptional among the early Tractarians in taking such a rose-colored view of the medieval period, but not unusual in holding a dismal conception of the Reformation. But to their minds its fatal error was that instead of issuing in a correction it resulted in a section of the Church.

Even if the Tractarian view of tradition was a stereotype and static, and the Evangelical view of tradition myopic, the Tractarians had the advantage in three respects. In the first place, the Tractarian evocation of tradition captured the imagination. Romanticism was already beckoning the British public in the novels of Sir Walter Scott to take a long, appreciative look at their ancestors, whose lives were committed to faith or chivalry—in short, to high adventure and risk, where churchmen played significant parts in the medieval *mise-en-scène*. G. K. Chesterton²² has suggested that a century is attracted by the saint who contradicts it most, as an explanation for the interest of the prosperous Victorians in *Il Poverello*, the St. Francis who took the Lady Poverty as his bride. It may well be that for the same reason the Industrial Revolution and the pursuit of success prepared the way for a deepened understanding, if an idealized one, of an agricultural milieu where men were citizens of two correlated realms, heaven and earth, and where the spiritual took precedence over the material. It is certain that the imaginations of at least three of the Tractarians were stirred by Romanticism.²³ Keble, when he became Professor of Poetry at Oxford, had the delight, in presenting the Lakeland poet for an honorary doctorate, of recognizing his indebtedness to Wordsworth by reading an eulogy on the poet whose nature mysticism and glorification of the deep simplicities of life had served as partial inspiration for *The Christian Year*. Charles Marriott's father had been a great friend of Scott's, and the latter had dedicated the second canto of *Marmion* to him.²⁴ Newman eagerly devoured the Waverley novels, when as a boy he lay awake on summer mornings before the family rose from their beds.²⁵ We can only surmise the nature of the at-

²¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 387.

²² In his *Thomas Aquinas*, p. 19f.

²³ R. W. Church wrote: "I was very early a Coleridgean (in poetry) and a Wordsworthian, and I learned my liking for Coleridge and Wordsworth from those typical Movement men, Charles Marriott, Moberly . . . and F. Faber." Cf. B. A. Smith, *Dean Church*, p. 27.

²⁴ R. W. Church, *op.cit.*, p. 71.

²⁵ Newman greatly admired the Ode "On the Intimations of Immortality," and

traction of Scott for the Tractarians.²⁶ But can it not have been, in part, that his novels were peopled with so many and such varied churchmen? The austere hermits contrasting with the jolly friars, the humble and faithful priests contrasting with the proud prelates and the stern inquisitors, wove a spell of wonder about their imaginations. It made them the more eager to ride again on the magic carpet of history to that enthralling past when the Church had had pride of place in the affections of men. Even the Rome which the Evangelicals regarded as the blood-stained harlot of the Book of Revelation was viewed by the Tractarians as a wayward mother who could boast that she had nourished many saints in her bosom. Perhaps, too, there was also the attraction of venturing into that forbidden territory which Newman was eventually to find the Promised Land. However short of the truth our surmises may fall, it is indisputable that tradition for the Tractarians, far from being the dead hand that appeared to the eighteenth century rationalists, was alive and alluring. Even more, it was intensely encouraging, for what men had once been by the grace of God in that Christian Community they might again become: the Church Militant.

The second advantage that tradition brought was that it liberated the Tractarians from bibliolatry, that is, from an exclusive dependence upon the letter of the Scriptures as the only source of revelation. Because the Tractarians had placed the Fathers of the Church beside the Bible as its authorized interpreters and because they made the Church itself the chief teacher and reserved for the Bible the humbler task of proving what the Church thought, they were the readier to recoil from the onslaught of historical criticism later in the century.²⁷ Higher Criticism of the Bible gave the later Tractarians only a glancing blow on the side, but the Evangelicals, for whom the written Word of God was the sole criterion of Christian belief and practice, received the full shock of a head-on impetus.

The third advantage which the sense of sacred tradition brought to the Tractarians was also one that the future would make increasingly significant. It enabled them in stressing the Catholic side of their mixed Catholic-Protestant heritage to be linked with the

frequently referred in his writings to Walter Scott's novels for moral as well as aesthetic reasons. See Wilfrid Ward, *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman*, Vol. II, pp. 354-55, and also F. Tardivel, *La personnalité littéraire de Newman*.

²⁶ Dr. and Mrs. Pusey visited the Southseys and Coleridges on their honeymoon in the Lake district and stayed at Abbotsford. (Cf. A. M. Allchin, *The Silent Rebellion, Anglican Religious Communities, 1845-1900*, p. 39.)

²⁷ C. C. J. Webb, *Religious Thought in the Oxford Movement*, p. 147.

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larger section of Christendom; that is, with its own earlier history as a communion of the great Western Church and also to affirm its spiritual kinship with the Eastern Orthodox autocephalous Churches. A Church which had been firmly planted by the Elizabethan settlement, or compromise, was now budding into the *Via Media*, and would come in our own day into exotic bloom as the "Bridge-Church." Who could have guessed that this bridge would have attained to full communion with the Old Catholic Church and had its orders recognized as valid by the Orthodox Churches, on the one hand, and participated, on the other, in the re-union of the Church of South India, in which it united with Presbyterians, Methodists, and Congregationalists? If the Tractarians had agreed with Chesterton's dictum that the Church votes by tombstones, then, in despising the Protestants on the Continent and in North America, they were casting in their lot with the untold millions of the East and the West, past as well as contemporary with them. Certainly it was an exciting break with the almost uninterrupted insularity of the post-Reformation Church of England.²⁸ In this process, however, the Anglican right hand (Catholicism) practically excised its left hand (Protestantism).

4. *The Conception of the Church*

It will already be clear that the Tractarian conception of the Church was essentially the patristic one. That is, the Church was viewed neither as the "gathered community" with the Puritans, nor with the Latitudinarians as a branch of the State responsible for morals and morale, nor as a fellowship with the Pietists, but, with the Church Fathers, as the Divine Society, bearing the commission of Christ, whose mystical Body the Church is. With the Evangelicals the Tractarians recognized that the Church must be holy, but its holiness came, not primarily from the regeneration of conversion, but from the life of God conveyed by the Sacraments, and its effects were seen in works of spirituality and charity and, particularly, in asceticism. Far more than the Evangelicals the Tractarians stressed the three other traditional "notes" or marks of the Church, as expressed in the Athanasian Creed, or in St. Augustine's Anti-Donatist writings; that is, the Unity, the Catholicity, and, especially, the Apostolicity of the Church. Unity and Catholic-

²⁸ But see the trans-confessional contacts of Archbishop Wake in an earlier century with French Catholics and Prussian Protestants in Norman Sykes, *William Wake Archbishop of Canterbury, 1657-1737*.

ity presented problems, to be sure, since Christendom was divided. At least it can be said that Protestantism was more content with its fissiparousness than were the Tractarians and their successors. Moreover, the latter were well aware that heresy created schisms. They also perceived that a rigorist emphasis on holiness could also break the bonds of Catholicity. Like most of the Tractarians, Newman thought at the outset that the departures of the post-Tridentine Roman Catholic Church²⁰ from the faith and the practice of the so-called Undivided Church of the first five centuries meant that the unhappy division between Rome and Canterbury was tolerable. The implication was that the *Via Media* was on the right lines in keeping faithful continuity with the primitive Church. His investigation of the North African Donatist controversy, however, led him to believe that the position of the Church of England was analogous to the "holier-than-thou" attitude of the Donatist schismatics.

The real strength of the Tractarian conception of the Church was its emphasis on apostolicity. As there had been a strong practical reason for reminding the Churchmen of their day of the sacred tradition of Christian truth and piety, so there was a strong strategic reason for the emphasis on apostolicity; in each case the reason was to make Anglicans proud of their heritage and valiant in the defence of it, particularly against the encroachments of a sacrilegious State. The apostolicity of the Church was its mandate received from the Head of the Church, Christ, and transmitted by His apostles to their successors, the bishops. This task, it must be emphasized, was committed to the Church by the ascended Christ, not by the State. Newman believed the Oxford Movement had begun on July 14, 1833, because that was the day when Keble had preached his famous sermon on *National Apostasy* in the University Church of St. Mary-the-Virgin, Oxford. There he had sounded the apostolical note like the summons of a trumpet to rouse the Church of England to battle. "Disrespect to the Successors of the Apostles, as such," he had declared, "is an unquestionable symptom of enmity to Him who gave them their commission at first and has pledged Himself to be with them for ever." In Tract 2 Newman had succinctly questioned the right of the State over the Church, challeng-

²⁰ A typical view is that of Isaac Williams, Pusey's faithful henchman, as expressed in his poem, *The Church of England*:

When the infatuate Council named of Trent
Clogg'd up the Catholic course of the true Faith,
Troubling the stream of pure antiquity,
And the wide channel in its bosom took
Crude novelties, scarce known as that of old. . . .

ing an Erastian subservience to the State in the words: "Did the State make us? Can it unmake us?" The Tractarians, in massing their defences against the proposed *Church Temporalities Bill*, saw that an emphasis on canonical obedience to the bishops as the successors of the apostles would provide the discipline needed by the Church in the immediate campaign they had to wage.

The doctrine and practice of apostolical succession was affirmed, in addition, because bishops were believed to be the guarantors of the orthodoxy of the teachings of the Church.³⁰ In Tracts 54 and 57 the point is made negatively, that where there is no episcopacy, as in the national or majority Churches of Holland, Germany, and Scotland, there is unorthodoxy.

Even more significant is the view that the function of bishops in an apostolical succession is to be the guarantors of the validity of the Sacraments. This is of particular importance, on the Tractarian theory, since the Christian life and hope of each individual depends upon his participation in the Eucharist, which is the Body and Blood of Christ, and this Sacrament is communicated to individual Christians only by the hands of the successors of the Apostles and by those to whom they have delegated the necessary authority. The successors of the Apostles are those bishops who descend in straight line from the Apostles by the imposition of hands at their consecration, and their delegates are the priests whom each bishop has ordained.

This rigid and static theory of the Apostolical succession is open to certain serious theological and historical objections, but its allure to the Tractarians can never be understood in such legalistic terms as "validity" (however they may be defended intellectually). We must listen to Newman as he speaks on the theme of "The Visible Church, an Encouragement to Faith" to catch the thrill of his appeal:

"The royal dynasty of the Apostles is far older than all the kingly families which are now on the earth. Every Bishop of the Church whom we now behold is a lineal descendant of St. Peter and St. Paul after the order of a spiritual birth—a noble thought, if we could realise it. . . . He, Christ, has continued the line of His apostles onwards through every age, and all troubles and perils of the world. Here then surely is somewhat of encouragement for us amid our loneliness and weakness. The presence of every Bishop suggests a long history of conflicts and trials, sufferings and victories, hopes

³⁰ Keble reiterates this teaching in his *Sermons for Saints' Days and Holy Days*. See also Tracts 4, 5, 7, 12, 15, 24.

and fears, through many centuries. His presence at this day is the fruit of them all. He is the living monument of those who are dead. He is the promise of a bold fight and a good confession and a cheerful martyrdom now, if needful, as was instanced in those of olden time. We see their figures on our walls, and their tombs are under our feet; and we trust, nay we are sure, that God will be to us in our day what He was to them."³¹

These words suggest no dry-as-dust doctrines, but the onward march of the army of the living God, with golden trumpets sounding and pennants flying.

There was only one non-Patristic novelty in the Tractarian theory of the Church. This was the assertion of the independence of the Church from the State as a Society of Divine origin.³² In fact, Brilioth has argued that the doctrine of the apostolical succession was used as a lever for asserting the spiritual independence of the Church from the State, for it was due to "the necessity of finding a firm and unshakable foundation for a theory of the Church which could defy the assault of the age, something objective in the deepest sense to put as a breakwater against what was regarded as the inundation of Liberal subjectivism, and also a strong watchword as a signal and a standard. . . ."³³ The origins of this belief in the spiritual independence of the Church came from Whately, the Oriel "Noetic," who impressed Newman with the idea that might well have come from Coleridge, and had found earlier expression in the left-wing Puritans.

A Benthamite political radical might have interpreted the stress on Apostolical succession as a mere resuscitation of the vested (and vested) interests of the clergy, who were becoming increasingly irrelevant in the new age of industrialism, if not obstacles in the way to political reform. This would, however, be to impugn the conscious motives of the Tractarians quite unwarrantably, and to forget that their primary obligation to holiness made their first citizenship in heaven, not on earth. On the other hand, it must have seemed that the Tractarians were trying to turn the clock back with their static

³¹ Preached on August 14, 1834, published as the seventeenth sermon of Vol. 3 of *Parochial and Plain Sermons*.

³² The same anti-Erastian point was being made, with the sacrifice of their livings, by the Seceders from the Church of Scotland at the same period, 1841-43. (See Hugh Watt, *Thomas Chalmers and the Disruption*.)

³³ *Op.cit.*, p. 183. Edward Irving, a Church of Scotland minister who was later to found the Catholic Apostolic Church, anticipated the Oxford Movement in his assertion of the Church's independence of the State, and shared its respect for the Primitive Church and its Liturgy, except that he united a charismatic emphasis with the institutional. Irving died in 1834. Gruntvig in Denmark also insisted upon the independence of the Church at this time (1825-1832).

conception of history, and that the immediate future seemed to lie with those who were meeting the liberalism of the day constructively in an attempt to establish a juster social order. This was, in fact, the aim of the "Christian Socialists" and their three leaders, Maurice, Ludlow, and Kingsley, who used the doctrine and fact of the Incarnation of Christ and His establishment of the Kingdom of God as the plan and motivation of the new order.³⁴ Had the early Tractarians been faced with this charge, they might have retorted that this was to presuppose that a strong and just social order could be built without a faithful Church, and they would have claimed that renewal of the Church's life could come only from restoration, not from revolution. Moreover, they were, as conservatives, incapable of seeing the necessities of change. It was sufficient for them as Churchmen to aim to restore the corporate spiritual life of the Church in England. Moreover, if the conception of the Church was static, it was by no means narrow, for it linked the contemporary Anglican Church not only with Catholicity (in its historical and geographical connotations), but its mystical conception of the Body of Christ linked the Church Militant upon earth with the Church Triumphant in Heaven.³⁵

The richness and complexity of the understanding of the Church in the minds of the Tractarians is also shown in their conception of the Anglican Communion as the *Via Media*. They revived this virile emphasis in Hooker (though it was Bancroft, not he, who held that bishops were of the *esse* of the Church) by which he had made the Elizabethan compromise seem like a glorious dispensation of Providence. The Tractarian position was not dissimilar to that of the Non-Juror Bishop Ken, who had written in his will: "I die in the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Faith, professed by the whole Church before the division of East and West; more particularly I die in the communion of the Church of England as it stands distinguished from all papal and puritan innovations, and

³⁴ Cf. Charles E. Raven, *Christian Socialism: 1848-1854*. It is also worth noting that the mantle of the Christian Socialists fell upon the later Anglo-Catholics, such as Gore and Headlam. Furthermore, the Tractarians were generous to the point of sacrifice in their almsgiving. See George Eliot's account of Dr. Kenn, the Tractarian clergyman in her novel, *The Mill on the Floss*. In Book VI, Chap. II, a character remarks of him: "he's the only man I ever knew personally who seems to me to have had anything of the real apostle in him—a man who has eight hundred a year and is contented with deal furniture and boiled beef because he gives away two-thirds of his income."

³⁵ The Communion of Saints is finely expressed in Bishop How's hymn "For all the saints" which is nowadays chiefly sung to the Vaughan Williams tune *Sine Nomine*—itself a proof of the way the successors of the Tractarians unite good doctrine with good aesthetics.

as it adheres to the doctrine of the Cross."³⁶ It is from this view of Anglicanism, reaching out hands to both Catholics on the right and Protestants on the left, as a Reformed Catholic Church, that so much of its ecumenical significance has been derived in modern times.

5. *Tractarian Faith*

It is tempting to use Luther's distinction between *fides* and *fiducia* (between assent to a doctrinal deposit and confidence in God) to illustrate the difference, respectively, between the Tractarian and the Evangelical understanding of faith. In actual fact, however, it would be truer to say that the Tractarians came by way of *fides* to *fiducia*, from dogma to devotion. It was their particular concern to stress the objectivity of faith rather than its subjective appropriation, for they thought the Evangelicals had unnecessarily emphasized the latter. This aversion from the stress on experience and sentiments led them rather to concentrate on historic Christian doctrine and the discipline of the spiritual life. The correction was most perceptively made by Newman, though in exaggerated form, when he wrote: "A system of doctrine has risen up during the last three centuries in which faith or spiritual mindedness is contemplated and rested on as the end of religion instead of Christ. . . . Stress is laid rather on the believing than on the Object of belief, on the comfort and persuasiveness of the doctrine rather than on the doctrine itself. And in this way religion is made to consist in contemplating ourselves instead of Christ; not simply in looking to Christ but in ascertaining that we look to Christ, not in His Divinity and Atonement, but in our conversion and our faith in those truths."³⁷ This was undoubtedly a dangerous tendency in some Evangelical Pietists, but not by any means in all of them.

In consequence of this apparent depreciation of sentiment, lest it should degenerate into sentimentality or into "justification by feeling," the characteristic note of Tractarian piety was a tender, if sober, devotion to Christ, avoiding both an excessively intellectual or notional understanding of faith and an ecstatic, enthusiastic

³⁶ Cited Brilioth, *op.cit.*, p. 5. Dr. Martin Joseph Routh, the venerable President of Magdalen College, Oxford, who is a link between the old High Church tradition and the Oxford Movement, and who, according to Newman "had been reserved to report to a forgetful generation what was the theology of their fathers," requested that his epitaph might say of him that he lived and died, "attached to the Catholic Faith taught in the Church of England and averse from all Papal and sectarian innovations." Cf. G. W. O. Addleshaw, *The High Church Tradition*, p. 69.

³⁷ *Lectures on Justification*, pp. 324-25.

one. The contrast between Evangelical and Tractarian piety can be expressed in two poetic citations, the first from Cowper and the second from Keble's astonishingly successful *Christian Year*, which first appeared in 1827 and ran through ninety-five editions during its author's lifetime. Cowper, in characteristically introspective mood, murmurs "Lord, it is my chief complaint, that my love is weak and faint." In revulsion from both the strong feelings and the excessive individualism of Evangelicalism, the reverential awe, chastened joy, and trembling reserve of Tractarianism is reflected in Keble's lines:

God only and good angels look
Behind the blissful screen,
As when triumphant o'er his foes,
The Son of God at midnight rose
By all but heaven unseen.³⁸

The Tractarians were also convinced that the Evangelicals (and the ultra-Calvinists in particular) had laid so excessive a stress on justification by faith *alone* (*sola fide*) that they were in danger of undervaluing good works. It was not, of course, proposed to maintain that salvation could be accomplished by man, apart from the aid of the Holy Spirit, nor that good works gained salvation for him. It was rather that the Tractarians were suspicious of holy attitudes that did not produce holy actions. An over-emphasis on holy actions could lead to Pelagianism, but neglect of them led straight into antinomianism. That was the dilemma. If the extreme Calvinistic Evangelicals were susceptible to anti-nomianism, a true emphasis on sanctification (as in Whitefield) was the remedy, as the doctrine of Christian Perfection or Perfect Love had been the correction Wesley applied. But not all the itinerant preachers kept the balance of the leaders. The opposite danger of Pelagianism in the Tractarians was guarded against in Newman by his profound sense of the sovereignty of God and the hopelessness of man apart from grace, concepts which he took over from his evangelical background, while in Pusey a mystical doctrine of the Cross was the safeguard. At all events, the Tractarians tried to supplement the Epistle to the Romans with the Epistle of James. Their primary concept was never "merit"—they spoke chiefly of obedience and submission to the will of God and, above all, of the empowering of His grace. This is clearly expressed in Newman's ser-

³⁸ As C. C. J. Webb notes, in his *A Century of Anglican Theology and Other Lectures*, p. 31, it was Oliver Wendell Holmes who first drew attention to this verse in Keble as symptomatic of Tractarian reserve in the expression of feeling.

mon on "Crucifixion": "Let us pray to God to give us all graces; and while, in the first place, we pray that He would make us holy, really holy, let us also pray Him to give us the beauty of holiness, which consists in tender and eager affection toward our Lord and Saviour; which is, in the case of the Christian, what beauty of person is to the outward man, so that through God's mercy our souls may have not strength and health only, but a kind of bloom and comeliness; and that as we grow older in body, we may, year by year, grow more youthful in spirit."³⁹

Nothing could show more clearly how Newman, the classical scholar, means us to understand by "grace" a combination of the New Testament and classical senses of *Xáρις*, a blending of the sheer generosity of God with gracefulness or comeliness. Our holiness is the reflection of and participation in God's holiness, our graciousness is the divinely initiated response to His grace.

The major difference with the Evangelicals was, however, in the Tractarian stress on objectivity as contrasted with subjectivity. For them the chief considerations were loyalty to the Sovereign Triune God; fidelity to the Church as the authoritative institution established, commissioned, and empowered by Christ its Head, and respect for His officers; and regular participation in the Sacraments instituted to transmit by outward and visible signs an interior grace which may be hindered but not wholly obstructed by lack of faith. The real point is that God, the historic Revelation, the ministry, and the Sacraments exist and are efficacious in their operation independent of moods or of theories. Similarly, faith is only the subjective appropriation of the objective truth as revealed by God, supremely in the God-man, and conserved by the Church. Such faith is strictly subordinated to the truth that it is enabled to grasp and is manifested in the works of charity and spirituality, which are the living fruits of grace. Faith, in brief, is not the existential daring trust in Christ of a Luther; it is rather "a spirit of affectionate submission" which "speaks among the generality of Christians; not through inquiry and investigation into the principles and intentions of the Church, so much as by imbibing day by day its devotional and practical character."⁴⁰ It is not too much to say that this is a faith that is tamed by authority, and that, in losing its spontaneity and joy, it is remarkably like resignation. In fairness, however, it must be remembered that this emphasis on obedience came at a

³⁹ *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, Vol. VII, No. 10.

⁴⁰ Isaac Williams in Tract 86 (in Vol. V of *Tracts of the Times*, covering the years 1838-1840), p. 36.

time when the fissiparousness and sheer subjectivity of so much Protestantism could be interpreted only as due to disobedience and liberalism.

6. *The Liturgy and Sacramental Life*

While most Anglican Evangelicals were faithful in their reading of the Liturgy, many of them seemed, by the informal character of their extra-liturgical worship at least, to suggest that their support of it was less than ecstatic. For the Tractarians the Liturgy (and the Sacramental services which it exalted) were almost equated in importance with the Scripture. Tract 86 bears a title which is itself sufficiently indicative of the highest respect and admiration in which the Liturgy was held by the Tractarians. This reads: "Indications of a Superintending Providence in the Preservation of the Prayer Book and in the Changes which it has undergone." Its author, Isaac Williams, claims: "In our Reformation we differ from other Reformations, and as a Church we differ, I think, from other Churches as now existing, in retaining more purely and entirely the three-fold cord which is not easily broken, Scripture, Tradition, and the Sacraments."⁴¹

While the Evangelicals might have defended the use of the Liturgy as a convenient and hallowed medium of Christian devotion, Williams takes much higher ground. He believes that God is as clearly the author of the Liturgy as He is of the Scriptures, and hence that "impressed with this awful sense of the sanctity of the ancient forms of worship, a reverential mind will naturally shrink from the idea of their being remodelled and altered by man."⁴² He further believes in the substantial unity of the ancient liturgies and cites Hooker for his assertion that "if the Liturgies of the ancient Churches throughout the world be compared amongst themselves, it may be easily perceived they had one original mould."⁴³ He has, however, to explain the fact that there has been some tampering with the Liturgy, especially in England. His argument is that there is evidence of a Divine overruling in the history of the alterations in two respects. First, the language of the Prayer Book has been changed from that of sons into that of servants. By this he means us to understand that the ancient Liturgies began with the Lord's Prayer, which presupposed that those who recited it, being disciples and in the state of grace, began the service with confidence; the

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 6, citing Hooker *Eccl. Politie*, Book v, cap. 25, sec. 2.

Reformation divines, however, felt it more appropriate to begin with sentences and an exhortation preparatory to a Confession of Sin, and that this spirit of penitence on the part of servants was more suitable than the confidence of adoption. It is still, he maintains, more soberly suitable for the present humiliated state of the Church of England. A further proof of the suitability of the Prayer Book to the contemporary state of the Church of England may be seen in the fact that the prayer for the King precedes that for the Church, and this Erastianism is a warning to the Anglican Church, so Williams speciously argues, of how far the world has penetrated into the Christian community. In the second place, he insists that the whole tenor of the prayers is to inculcate obedience and submission to the Church of Christ. This is a further need of which the Prayer Book perpetually reminds the Church.

Leaving aside such glosses upon the embarrassing history of the Prayer Book, Williams then states the positive case for the necessity and value of the Liturgy. To his mind Liturgies have four chief functions: as divinely instituted channels of access from man to God; as charged with associations that are hallowed incitements to worship; as Christ's instruments for the healing of the soul; and as tutors in spirituality for the Christian. Williams deserves citation because his thought is positive, concise, and interpretative of the liturgical concerns of the Tractarians:

"For rituals and forms of prayer, however unimportant in human eyes, assume a very high character and value when considered as the appointed means of access from man to God; as methods of approach to Him which we are bound to make use,—for as individuals we have no choice:—as moreover objects of sacred association to which the affections of good men will naturally become attached from use, and the more attached the better they are; as instruments, however mean in man's estimation, which serve as vehicles through which healing and virtue go forth from CHRIST to restore our souls' maladies; as moulds of thought and expression to those suits which in the majestic words of Hooker, 'the ALMIGHTY doth there sit to hear, and angels, intermingled as associates, attend to further.'"⁴⁴

In such a passage is revealed the great understanding the Tractarians had of the capacity of a sacred ritual to mould both Christian thought and expression by a process of which the worshipper is almost unconscious, yet is powerful in the persistence and unity of its effect. Protestantism, in its frequently unliturgical and often appar-

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

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ently formless worship, has been so afraid of familiarity breeding contempt that its unceasing search for freshness and variety in public worship and its constant urge to activism have frequently failed to produce that quiet, meditative, and obedient temper that the reiteration of the mighty acts of God in the Liturgy, renewed with every round of the Christian Year, practically guarantees.

It was a further distinction of the Oxford Movement to help the Church of England to regain the Benedictine sense that worship is itself the *opus Dei*, and not a mere preparation for action. To this very day Protestantism has still, in many of its forms, to learn that the adoration of God is man's highest privilege. For without this sense of the absolute priority of worship, God will be served as a means to an end, not for Himself alone, even if the end in view be as admirable as service to the community, or building the morale of a nation, or the making of individuals with greater integrity, health, or sensitivity. Furthermore, even self-denying service is practically impossible apart from the gifts of humility and sympathy which spring from the judgment and forgiveness of God exhibited and conveyed in Christian worship, and, supremely, in the commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ and the re-appropriation of His benefits.

Another important clue to the understanding of the Tractarian emphasis on the Sacraments is to be found in their exaltation of the doctrine of the Incarnation upon which they based the sacramental principle. The whole universe was, to the eyes of faith, a symbol of the Creation, for the visible things bear witness to their invisible Creator, and it is by meditation on these mysteries that men mount to God. Thus far, we might seem to be speaking in Platonist or Neo-Platonist terms, especially when we add that such insight as faith grants requires moral preparation for its development. It is necessary, however, to add that the key for the understanding of the symbolical interpretation of the universe is provided by an event which is historical, and yet of meta-historical or cosmic import: the Incarnation of the Son of God, who is the Logos made flesh. In the words of St. Athanasius, that doughty champion of orthodoxy so much beloved by the Tractarians, "He became man that we might be made divine."⁴⁵ The Incarnation not only demonstrated in visible, historical form what the invisible and eternal God was like but

⁴⁵ "Deified" would be closer to the Greek than "divine," but less appropriate as an illustration of the Tractarian interpretation of the Incarnation. In the *De Incarnatione*, LIV, 3, St. Athanasius wrote: "Ἀντὶς [ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ Λόγος] γὰρ ἐνθρώπων ἦν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν."

also assured man that by incorporation with Christ he could attain to unity with God and share eternity with Him.

Now, whereas the Evangelicals, in making the Atonement the centre of their theology, had stressed the utter unworthiness, even depravity of man, and the corruption of the world from which a converted being was to be saved, the theology of the Incarnation stressed the possibility and the intention of the Divine restoration of man's whole nature, soul and body, and potentially the redemption of his social context.⁴⁶ In brief, a theology of the Incarnation stressed the continuity between nature and grace, while the Evangelical theology of the Atonement stressed the radical discontinuity between nature and grace. In consequence, the physical and the aesthetic side of man's nature, and therefore the Sacraments which minister to these, were given a higher status in the life of the Church by the Tractarians. If the Son of God took flesh, then flesh might be hallowed, not suppressed. If He was Himself *the* sacrament of God, the supreme *Verbum visibile*, the sacraments that He instituted must also convey the grace which He conveyed. Furthermore, these "means of grace" are the appointed channels for our spiritual growth.

Is the Tractarian emphasis on the Sacraments to be attributed only to the recovery of Sacred Tradition, to the stress on objectivity, and to the sacramental principle? Is it not rather that they believed that the sacramental life nourished the sacrificial life? They saw the transcendent God stooping immanently to conquer the world in the Incarnation and the Cross, and this was rehearsed and renewed in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Evelyn Underhill says of the Tractarians, "The greatest thing they did for their Mother Church is not to be found in the sphere of expressive ceremonial; but in the restoration of this other-worldly temper, and with it the essential link between adoration and sacrifice. The spiritual world to which they looked, and which they believed to be revealed in sacramental experience, was a world charged with mystery and awfulness; and made an unmitigated demand upon the soul."⁴⁷ The Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist were both efficacious and incorporative. Neither was a *signum nudum*, that is, a bare representation or illustration of a truth, and each was a *signum efficax* which conveyed the transforming grace of God, as well as being

⁴⁶ F. D. Maurice was to stress the redemption of man as a social being through the Incarnation of the Son of God more strongly than any of the Tractarians, as in his *The Kingdom of Christ*.

⁴⁷ *Worship*, pp. 330-31.

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the mystical sign of a real incorporation into the death and resurrection of Christ.

The Tractarians believed, in the fullest sense of the words, in Baptismal Regeneration, that is, that a child or adult lost the stain of original sin in Baptism by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Evangelicals, with their stress on regeneration in the conversion experience, were forced to take a lower view of Baptism, so that some of them considered that the regeneration of Baptism was prophetic and proleptic, and not at all tied to the moment of the rite itself. The Tractarians, with their higher conception of the nature of Baptism, took a much graver view of post-Baptismal sin, and this produced in their piety a profoundly penitential and often introspective note.

The Sacrament of the Eucharist was given a pre-eminent importance by the Oxford Movement. This is made abundantly clear in Tract 81, which has an expository introduction followed by a *catena* of the writings of the chief Anglican divines on the doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The writer of the tract insists that in the Early Church "in the Eucharist, an oblation or sacrifice was made by the Church to God, under the form of His creatures of bread and wine, according to our Blessed Lord's holy institution, in memory of His Cross and Passion."⁴⁸ The task of the Church throughout the ages is therefore to offer the memorials of the One Sacrifice which Christ, our great High Priest, unceasingly presents before the Father, the representation of which He has commanded us to make. It is, in technical terms, an "impetratory sacrifice." The Eucharist has two essential parts: first, a commemorative sacrifice; secondly, a communion, or a "feast upon a sacrifice." In sum, the Fathers "first offered to God His gifts in commemoration of that His inestimable gift, and placed them upon His altar here, to be received and presented on the Heavenly Altar by Him, our High-Priest; and then, trusted to receive them back, conveying to them the life-giving Body and Blood."⁴⁹ This ancient view of the Eucharist is still maintained by the Anglican Church, as the *catena* of authorities purports to show. The deviations from this doctrine are represented, on the right, by Roman corruption, which has misled the layman into the belief that the One Sacrifice of the Cross is offered up again, bolstered by the theory of Transubstantiation and its linking with Purgatorial benefits, and, on the left, by Protestant

⁴⁸ Tract 81 (*Tracts for the Times*, Vol. IV, pp. 4-5).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

rationalizing of the mystery, in which Zwingli is the chief culprit. In this reverent restraint in their interpretation, the Tractarians were wise; they contented themselves with insisting on the Real Presence, without any detailed probing of the mode of the manifestation of the Presence, except that they located the "presence" on the altar. They were chary, and rightly so, of explanations that explained away the residuum of mystery that necessarily exists in the dealings of the Holy and Infinite God with finite, fallible, and sinful men.

7. *The Value of Ceremonial*

In the mind of the public, the cultivation of high ceremonial was the distinctive emphasis of the Oxford Movement, even though it was quite erroneously described as "Ritualism." Our object in considering it last in the order of distinctive emphases in Tractarian teaching and practice is quite deliberate: it is to make it clear that this was not the only, nor even the primary, emphasis of the Oxford Movement, and to underscore the fact that an insistence upon ceremonial is characteristic of the second generation of the Oxford Movement or of secondary figures in the first generation.⁵⁰ The point might be made, a little captiously perhaps, by declaring that this was primarily the contribution of the Cambridge movement—specifically, of the Cambridge Camden Society, later renamed the Ecclesiological Society. At the same time, it might also be said that the emphasis of the Oxford Movement on the restoration of the Catholic tradition was bound to issue in the restoration of the Catholic (though not necessarily the Roman Catholic) ceremonial.

The original Tractarians were, in fact, very conservative in all outward and public observances. Keble and Newman preached in black gowns, according to the custom of the time, and celebrated Holy Communion in surplice and hood at the north end of the altar. The distinctive Anglo-Catholic customs—the eastward posture for celebration, the wearing of Eucharistic vestments, the lighting of candles on the altar, and the use of wafers—these were not observed by the leaders of the Oxford Movement. Nonetheless, as Moorman indicates, "though these men were apparently satisfied with the liturgical standards of the day, they were teaching a doctrine of the Eucharist and the Real Presence which demanded a greater rever-

⁵⁰ As Sir Geoffrey Faber observes of Pusey: "Aestheticism indeed was conspicuously absent from his world. . . . For the ritualistic preoccupation of some of his followers he had an instinctive contempt" (*Oxford Apostles*, pp. 378-79).

ence for the altar and all that surrounds it."⁵¹ This was, indeed, to involve a restoration that looked like a revolution in ceremonial and in architecture, which was prepared for by an intense study of Christian liturgiology and antiquity, pursued with alacrity and erudition in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The Oxford Architectural Society was founded in 1838, and this was followed in the next year by the Cambridge Camden Society, which in 1841 published a learned monthly magazine called *The Ecclesiologist*, entirely devoted to the study of worship and its architectural setting.

The real founder of the Cambridge Society was John Mason Neale, when an undergraduate at Trinity, with the support of Thomas Thorp as President (a Fellow of Trinity and Archdeacon and Chancellor of Bristol cathedral). One of its most meritorious works was the collection and publication of *Hierurgia Anglicana*, or, "Documents and Extracts illustrative of the Ritual of the Church in England after the Reformation." The endeavour of the Society in such publications was not only antiquarian, but intensely practical: "Let us endeavour to restore everywhere amongst us the Daily Prayers, and (at the least) weekly Communion; the proper Eucharistick vestments, lighted and vested altars, the ancient tones of Prayer and Praise, frequent Offertories, the meet celebration of Fasts and Festivals (all of which and much more of a kindred nature is required by the ecclesiastical statutes) . . ."⁵² The preface to this volume also provided a ceremonial programme, consisting of the eastward posture, the mixed chalice, the use of a credence table, flowers, crosses, and incense, and the full Eucharistic vestments.

If the study of ceremonial went on inside the universities, its practical results were to be found chiefly outside the academic precincts, though not wholly so. The most enthusiastic Oxford ecclesiologist was Dr. John Rouse Bloxam, who returned to reside in Oxford as a Fellow of Magdalen in 1836, where he remained until 1863. From 1837 to 1840 he was one of Newman's curates, and his special responsibility was for the cure of souls in the village of Littlemore, where he began the ceremonial revival. The chapel

⁵¹ J. H. R. Moorman, *A History of the Church in England*, p. 352. S. L. Ollard, *A Short History of the Oxford Movement*, p. 152, says: "The revival of ceremonial was a direct result of the Movement, but not a result at which the original leaders aimed." Brilioth, *op.cit.*, p. 325, insists that only one ritual change was made by Newman and that was to increase the number of celebrations of the Eucharist. He made no ceremonial changes in public worship.

⁵² Cited N. P. Williams and Charles Harris, *Northern Catholicism*, p. 427. Sir Kenneth Clark (*The Gothic Revival*, p. 238) says of the leaders of the Ecclesiological Society: "For fifty years almost every new Anglican church was built and furnished according to their instructions. . . . It is doubtful if there is a Gothic church in the country, new or old, which does not show their influence."

at Littlemore had a stone cross behind the altar, to which were added four candlesticks, two contemporary and two reproductions. Imitating Caroline practice, he had a Bible bound in two crimson volumes which also stood on the altar, with a wooden alms dish. This arrangement was greatly admired and Frederick Oakeley reproduced it in Margaret Chapel in London in 1839. Bloxam also introduced innovations in liturgical dress which led to some trouble in his own diocese of Oxford, through others imitating him more extremely. He had himself worn a wide stole of black silk over his surplice, but Pusey's assistant, Charles Seager, embroidered his stole with a small cross at each end, which eagle-eyed Evangelicals reported to Dr. Bagot, the Bishop of Oxford, who expressed his displeasure in a public Charge in 1838. Pusey, it is interesting to note, advised against any attempt to restore richer vestments of an earlier age, on the score that they were unsuited to the present humiliated state of the Church of England.⁵³

Several of the friends of Bloxam made their churches liturgical centres for the expression of the ideals of the Oxford Movement. Bernard Smith, another Fellow of Magdalen, was the incumbent of Leadenham in Lincolnshire. In 1842 he was using a processional crucifix, an altar-cross and lights, and he had caused the roof of the chancel to be painted blue with gold stars. Sibthorp, another of Bloxam's friends, held the proprietary chapel of St. James's, Ryde, and the choir were vested in surplices and cassocks as early as 1839. Evidently Magdalen had contributed its quota to the ceremonial side of the Oxford Movement; Worcester College was to leave its mark in the person of William Palmer, whose *Origines Liturgicae* was a fine pioneering study of the history of the Christian Liturgy. It also contained an appendix on vestures, maintaining that the alb, chasuble, and stole were ordered to be worn by the Prayer Book, and it provided plates illustrating these vestments.

Pusey's influence was seen in the consecration of St. Saviour's Church, Leeds, in October 1845, only two weeks after Newman's secession to Rome. It was built in the midst of a growing industrial area as an attempt to demonstrate what a model parish church should look like. Its ceremonial and ornaments are, therefore, particularly important, as being representative of the first generation of Tractarian leaders. It was deliberately simple. There was only one altar frontal, a violet one, which was unchanged until 1848,

⁵³ S. L. Ollard, *op.cit.*, pp. 161-69 for information on Bloxam.

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when the other liturgical colors appropriate to the Christian Calendar were introduced, at which time the choir members were vested in cassocks and surplices. Eleven years later the eucharistic vestments were first used, and an altar-cross and altar lights also. It seems that ceremonial was secondary to doctrine in the mind of Pusey, and that even desirable innovations (or, as he would have considered them, restorations) were introduced gradually.

Meanwhile, Cambridge was not to be outdistanced by Oxford in the ceremonial race. As Warden of Sackville College, East Grinstead, Dr. Neale had placed in the chapel a stone altar, an altar-cross, two candles, flowers, a large cross above the screen, and coloured frontals, as early as 1846. Four years later, he was wearing a chasuble for the celebration of the Eucharist.

The ceremonial revival had proceeded even further in 1856, by which time the supporters of Tractarianism were, in some places, even using incense, while the eastern posture, eucharistic vestments, an altar-cross and altar lights, and even a processional cross, were not unusual in advanced churches. It was manifested by the demonstrations of episcopal displeasure and outbreaks of mob violence.

Both types of animosity were occasioned partly by the unfamiliarity of this kind of ceremonial, partly by the defection to Rome of Newman and a considerable number of sympathizers, mainly former Anglican clergymen, and chiefly by a suspicion that Tractarianism was a plot to win over the entire Anglican Church to the Roman obedience. Perhaps no better picture of the general suspicion of "Puseyites,"⁵⁴ as the Tractarians were called, can be found than a lampoon in verse published by Sydney Smith, the Broad Church wit and Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, which hit off some of the chief Tractarian characteristics, while insinuating that these men were double-dealers:

Pray tell me what's a Puseyite? 'Tis puzzling to describe
This ecclesiastic genius of a pious, hybrid tribe.
At Lambeth and the Vatican he's equally at home.
Altho' 'tis said he rather gives the preference to Rome.

Voracious as a book-worm is his antiquarian maw,
The "Fathers" are his text-book, the "Canons" are his law,
He's mighty in the Rubrics, and well up in the Creeds
But he only quotes the "Articles" just as they suit his needs.

⁵⁴ Cf. the anecdote recounted by Pusey himself, as reported in Geoffrey Faber, *The Oxford Apostles*, p. 373. It appears that Pusey sat next to a garrulous lady in an omnibus, who told him that Dr. Pusey was in the habit of sacrificing a lamb every Friday. "My dear madam," he replied, "I am Dr. Pusey, and I assure you that I do not know how to kill a lamb."

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The Bible is to him almost a sealed Book,
Reserve is on his lips and mystery in his look;
The sacramental system is the torch to illuminate his night,
He loves the early candlestick more than the heavenly light.

He's great in punctilios, where he bows and where he stands,
In the cutting of his surplice, and the hemming of his bands.
Each saint upon the Calendar he knows by heart at least,
He always dates his letters on a "Vigil" or a "Feast."

But hark! With what a nasal twang, betwixt a whine and groan,
He doth our noble liturgy most murderously intone;
Cold are his prayers and praises, his preaching colder still,
Inanimate and passionless; his very look does chill.

He talketh much of discipline, yet when the shoe doth pinch,
This most obedient, duteous son will not give way an inch;
Pliant and obstinate by turns, whate'er may be the whim,
He's only for the Bishop when the Bishop is for him.

Others as weak, but more sincere, who rather feel than think,
Encouragingly he leads to Popery's dizzy brink,
And when they take the fatal plunge, he walks back quite content
To his snug berth at Mother Church, and wonders why they
went.

Such, and much worse, aye worse! had I time to write,
Is a faint sketch, your worship, of a thorough Puseyite,
Whom even Rome repudiates, as she laughs within her sleeve.
At the sacerdotal mimic, the solemn Would-Believe.

Oh, well it were for England, if her Church were rid of those
Half-Protestant, half-Papist, who are less her friends than foes.
Give me the open enemy, not the hollow friend;
With God, and with our Bible, we will the truth defend.⁵⁵

Smith's caricature of the Tractarians was the deadlier in its effect because it exaggerated so many of their tenets, and appealed to a latent Protestantism that is more remarkable for its detestation of Rome than for its adherence to Martin Luther, John Calvin, or even to the 39 Articles of the Church of England. So very often Protestantism has been kept away from Catholicity because this has been confused with Roman Catholicism. As the Presbyterian

⁵⁵ W. H. Auden, ed., *Selected Writings of Sydney Smith*, pp. 123-24. See also Browning's scathing reference to a "ritualist" in "Bishop Blougram's Apology":

"All Peter's chains about his waist, his back
Brave with the needlework of Noddledom."

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liturgiologist, D. H. Hislop, has acutely pointed out, "the dread of superstition became itself a superstition in Reformed circles."⁵⁶ The tragedy both for the Church of England and for the Free Churches was that this significant restoration of Christian tradition in worship was traduced as a mere concern for externals in worship, such as ecclesiastical millinery, or as another Popish plot, and that the persecution of the second generation of Tractarians on the grounds of ceremonial gave to this secondary issue an importance which clouded the far more significant contributions which the Movement had to give to the renewal of the liturgical life of English Christianity and delayed their delivery. So many years after the events, it is not easy or profitable to apportion the blame either to the legalistic stubbornness of the Tractarians or to the unlovely bigotry of the Evangelicals. It also meant that the pendulum swung from one extreme to another, that the Protestants became more Protestant and the Catholics more Catholic.

It may, however, be profitable to attempt to understand the reason why the minor members of the first generation and majority of the second generation of the Tractarians were so concerned for a richer and more meaningful ceremonial. Its chief aim was, surely, to give religious value and significance to the whole of the nature of man: his body, mind, and spirit. In the words of Evelyn Underhill, ceremonial worship "uses rhythm and gesture, contact, sight and speech, not only the bit of us we call spiritual in the approach to God. Whilst we are in this life we can never, of course, get rid of the close partnership of body and spirit; and in the doctrine of the Incarnation Christians find this partnership blessed and endorsed by God."⁵⁷ Ceremonial was the means for restoring reverence and beauty and the sense of mystery to the worship of God, at a time when the theo-centric emphasis was desperately needed by earth-bound, rational, pragmatic Englishmen. Ceremonial re-introduced the element which Otto has distinguished as the "numinous" and defined as frightening and fascinating mystery.⁵⁸ It must include a rational dimension, otherwise God would not be able to communicate to man's understanding; it must also have a moral element, otherwise man will not be able to serve God with his will; it must have an affective element, otherwise finite man will not dare to ap-

⁵⁶ *Our Heritage in Public Worship*, p. 189.

⁵⁷ An article in the *Hibbert Journal*, Vol. xxx, "The Spiritual Significance of the Oxford Movement," p. 405.

⁵⁸ A free translation of *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. Cf. *Das Heilige* (English tr. *The Idea of the Holy*, Oxford, 1925).

proach the Holy God Whom he meets in worship, Who is majestic as well as merciful, awesome, and mysterious. This was the very element which ceremonial stressed, because the Tractarians believed that the understanding of God had been sentimentalized by the Evangelicals and rationally over-domesticated by the Broad Church. Such symbols and ceremonies, hallowed by centuries of usage, many of them taken from older religions and baptized into Christian usage, have a potency which is quite inexplicable in terms of common sense. Moreover, the five senses, not only the rational part of man's nature, are by them made into the avenue of the Supernatural.⁵⁹ Their danger is, of course, that they may become mere ceremonial, a meretricious adjunct to worship to give it ornateness or a merely external repetition which has lost its significance. But, as Luther so frequently insisted, *abusus non tollit usum*, and the Evangelical emphasis must be there as the corrective, as long as it does not degenerate from a warning to a mere negation. Saints have been produced by both traditions and, as we have so frequently urged, they are complementaries, needing each other.

8. *Tractarian Architecture*

The most remarkable external evidence of the impact of Tractarianism (whether of the Oxford Movement or the Cambridge Ecclesiological Society) was to be seen in the proliferation of Neo-Gothic church architecture. To be sure, the revulsion from the French Revolution, with the consequent revaluation of tradition, and the Romantic movement had prepared the way, but it was the Tractarians who followed the road back to the fourteenth century.

There were four major considerations which moved the Tractarians to build in the "Gothick" manner. In the first place, this was an architecture characteristic of the ages of faith, when the cruciform cathedral or parish church had dominated the skyline of the mediaeval city or town, as an outward symbol of the inward rule of God in society. In the second place, it was a revulsion from the rational, neo-classical church architecture of the previous age, believed to be a time of apostasy. In strict logic, the men who appealed to the tradition of the united Church of the first five centuries should have gone behind the Gothic and Romanesque styles to the basilica, but that would have cut them off from English tradi-

⁵⁹ On the other hand, there was also a danger of trivializing the Supernatural, of seeking a Supernatural cause for events which secondary causes could satisfactorily explain, which makes some of the conversations of Newman and Pusey so archaic and stuffy. Cf. Geoffrey Faber, *op.cit.*, p. 414.

tion, for there were no ancient basilicas in England, while there were superb mediaeval cathedrals, abbeys, and parish churches still standing. In the third place, the symbolism of Gothic architecture and its "storied windows richly dight, casting a dim, religious light" seemed consonant with the mysterious holiness, the sense of the "numinous" they wished to instill into worshippers. Finally, Gothic architecture harmonized with the status of the clergy, as the ordained delegates of bishops in the apostolical succession with a divine commission. In all probability the last two factors were decisive.

Addleshaw and Etchells rightly insist that the adoption of neo-Gothic reflected on the part of the ecclesiologists a changed conception of the function of liturgical worship. They maintain that in the eighteenth century churchmen generally thought of worship as a sharing of minister and people in the liturgy. The ecclesiologists, however, "speak as if worship was the peculiar work of the clergy and choir, in which there are certain parts, as, for instance, the lessons, which are peculiarly concerned with the laity."⁶⁰ This emphasis was maintained by a raised chancel dividing the clergy and choir from the people who sang or recited the divine office in their cassocks and surplices, without any apparent concern for the people, as if their words were meant for the ear of God alone. The thought of the successors of the Tractarians is "on the glory of God, and the mystery and reverence which should surround this worship; they are anxious that the church services should make an impression on the minds of the people by the mysterious and by what appeals to a great more than a man's understanding."⁶¹ In consequence, the impression derived is less that of worship as a corporate offering of priest and people than of services being offered by clergy and choir in such fashion as to elicit from the people the attitude of adoration.

Their use of symbolism was seen in the preference for the cruciform church, and in the placing of the font for infant baptism (or "christenings") near the door, because the rite of Baptism, like the door, was the entrance to the church. Their Trinitarian symbolism was seen in the three-fold division of the church into a nave, a chancel, and a sanctuary. They also employed many other accessories and emblems for their symbolic significance, such as candlesticks to symbolize Christ the light of the world, the eagle-lectern

⁶⁰ G. W. O. Addleshaw and F. Etchells, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship*, pp. 208-09.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

because those who "wait upon the Lord" are to rise up as eagles, elevated in spirit (or because this was the ancient symbol for the most "spiritual" Gospel, that according to St. John). Indeed, when it comes to the use of colors the symbolism becomes not only suggestive but even positively esoteric at times. The sacramental principle received great use in both architecture and decoration, as well as in furnishings.

A dominating conception was the dramatic altar, emphasized by the removal of a screen and the elevation of the chancel several steps above the nave of the church. As Wren's auditory church had stressed the pedagogical, with its dominating three-decker pulpit, often placed in the middle of the church, so the Tractarian church stressed the sacramental, the sacrificial, and the mysterious with the central high altar. Moreover, in accentuating the position of the altar it drew attention to the sacerdotal and distinctive function of the priest. As the tiled floor of the sanctuary, the carved reredos, the brass ornaments, and the flowers all emphasized the pre-eminence of the altar as the most sacred object in the church, so did the eucharistic vestments emphasize that the sacred and distinctive function of the priesthood was to offer the memorials of the Passion of Christ to God the Father, and after their consecration to present the sacred Bread and Wine to the people. If the earlier tradition of the Anglican Church had been characterized as common worship, the ecclesiologists desired their worship to be distinguished as uncommon, for it was the worship of the supernatural God, inhabiting eternity as the High and Holy One.

9. *The Results of the Oxford Movement*

Although the so-called "ritualistic controversy" prevented the Oxford Movement from changing the face of worship in England immediately, its long-term effects on theology, sacred scholarship, liturgy, and the religious life were considerable, both within and beyond the Anglican Communion. For the present, our concern is only with the impact of the Oxford Movement within the Church of England. Here it must suffice, in the baldest summary, to describe its general effects. The emphasis on sacred tradition enabled men to overcome the insularity of their geographic position and the tyranny of the merely contemporary, as their enlarged horizons beckoned them to despoil the treasure-house of the Fathers of the Ancient and Mediaeval Church both for their theological thought and their devotional understanding. It restored the Caroline tradi-

tion of patristic scholarship, which is a feature of ecclesiastical scholarship in England to this day. It led to a desire to re-unite the Church of England not only with its mediaeval or earlier ancestors, but with the modern successors of the Primitive Undivided Church, such as the Eastern Orthodox Churches. It led to the rediscovery of the Church as the independent Divine Society, executing an apostolical commission from which neither Caesar, nor Demos, nor the gates of Hell can ultimately deflect it, a concept fraught with power for the twentieth and totalitarian century. In its corporate emphasis it transformed individuals into a body.⁶² It re-emphasized the glorious condescension of the Incarnation and of the Cross, and saw in the Incarnation of Our Lord an "encouragement of all the higher human activities as capable of sanctification through the taking of our manhood into God."⁶³ On this it based the sacramental principle by which those earthen vessels mediated the treasures of grace. As eagerly as Evangelicalism, though in a different manner, it strove to recall the nation to holiness and it established the religious orders for the edification of saints.

It was in the realm of worship that its theology was most profoundly emphasized. How difficult it now seems to believe the fact that on Easter Day of 1800 there was a single celebration of the Holy Communion in St. Paul's Cathedral, and there were only six communicants present!⁶⁴ Yet the difference in present-day attendance at the Eucharist is almost entirely due to the impact of the Oxford Movement. The re-introduction of daily services into Anglican churches, the training of surpliced choirs, and the abolition of high pews (with their temptations to concealed chattering) and the preference for chairs or low-backed pews, the decent care for all the appurtenances of worship from architecture to ceremonial, the reverence, dignity, beauty, and order of Anglican worship—all owe an incalculable debt to the Oxford Movement. It is hardly too much to say that the restoration of reverence to English worship is the unpayable debt that the Church of England owes to the Oxford Movement and to the Anglo-Catholics who succeeded to its mantle.⁶⁵

That was, indeed, a great heritage and the price was paid for it

⁶² Evelyn Underhill rightly remarks that it killed religious isolationism and individualism of the "holy-cat-that-walks-by-itself" type. Cf. *Hibbert Journal*, Vol. xxx (1932-33), p. 404.

⁶³ C. C. J. Webb, *A Century of Anglican Theology and Other Lectures*, p. 39.

⁶⁴ E. Underhill, *op.cit.*, p. 408.

⁶⁵ The achievement of the Tractarians may be gauged by the condition of worship before their arrival. Newman describes it thus:

"The author of the *Christian Year* found the Anglican system all but destitute of this divine element, which is an essential property of Catholicism—a ritual dashed

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in calumny, misunderstanding, and litigation. Even so, it was not a flawless heritage. The very disputes between the affrighted Evangelicals and the stubborn Tractarians and ecclesiologists forced each party in its opposition to extremes which would not otherwise have been contemplated. Before the Oxford Movement the Evangelicalism of Simeon, for example, did not elevate the pulpit to an importance greater than the Holy Table, nor did it make the Evangelicals disloyal to or unappreciative of the Prayer Book. Before Tractarianism had met the brunt of the Evangelical party's opposition, its ex-Evangelical leader, Newman, made the pulpit of St. Mary's Church the scene of a prophetic ministry as well as a teaching vocation. But in the mutual suspicion and growing hostility, the Evangelicals made less of the Sacraments as the Tractarians made the more of them, and many Tractarians decried preaching the more the Evangelicals exalted it. In this both parties were driven off their true course and balance by the foul winds of controversy.

There was a deep danger in Tractarianism's very fear of liberalism, and in the desperation with which it fixed its backward glance on an idealized Primitive Church. The fine line between creative traditionalism and desiccated antiquarianism was not always drawn, and sometimes the ecclesiologists seemed to believe in the plenary inspiration of Elizabethan legislation, so bogged down were they in the tracks of the past. In their zeal to resuscitate the apostolical succession, they expressed the view in a mechanical, legalistic, and utterly impersonal idea of grace.⁶⁶ Even in their concern to beautify the Church of God and to wear vestments extolling the service of

upon the ground, trodden on, and broken piecemeal;—prayers clipped, pieced, torn, shuffled about at pleasure, until the meaning of the composition perished, and offices which had been poetry were no longer even good prose;—antiphons, hymns, benedictions, invocations, shovelled away;—Scripture lessons turned into chapters;—heaviness, feebleness, unwieldiness, where the Catholic rites had the lightness and airiness of a spirit;—vestments chucked off, lights quenched, jewels stolen, the pomp and circumstance of worship annihilated; a dreariness which could be felt, and which seemed the token of an incipient Socinianism, forcing itself upon the eye, the ear, the nostrils of the worshipper; a smell of dust and damp, a sound of ministers preaching Catholic prayers, and parish clerks droning out Catholic canticles; the royal arms for the crucifix; huge ugly boxes of wood, sacred to preachers, frowning on the congregation in place of the mysterious altar; and long cathedral aisles unused, railed off, like the tombs (as they were) of what had been and was not; and for orthodoxy, a frigid unelastic, inconsistent, dull, helpless dogmatic which could give no just account of itself, and resented every attempt to give it a meaning—such was the religion of which this gifted author was—not the judge and denouncer (a deeper spirit of reverence hindered it)—but the renovator, as far as it has been renovated.”

(“John Keble,” a review of *Lyra Innocentium*, 1846, in *Essays Critical and Historical*, Vol. II, pp. 443-44.)

⁶⁶ One is reminded of Canon Sydney Smith's acid remark that he believed in the Apostolic succession because there was no other way of accounting for the descent of the Bishop of Exeter from Judas Iscariot.

God, they often lost a sense of proportion in their concern for the trivia of ecclesiastical millinery or stage craft. Some ceremonial and furnishings were feeble imitations of the contemporary Italian mode, ill-suited to the more sober Anglican tradition. Even in extolling the worship of God, they tended to make it an affair of the experts, and thus their raised and removed chancels, their sung matins and evensong, and their distinctive vestments, were not adequate compensations for the people's sense of being left out in the cold nave, chiefly as spectators and listeners in a supremely dignified exercise of elevated worship. The Church was insufficiently distinguished from clericalism on many occasions.

Furthermore, the Tractarians, in their fear of Liberalism, left to their successors the task of correlating the life of worship with the redemption of human society, and in this endeavour the Anglo-Catholics owed more to Maurice than to Pusey. Apart from this correlation, later Tractarianism would have seemed an antiquarian asceticism. All this, however, and more, was of little permanent consequence in comparison with their major and most desperately needed achievement of reviving the Catholic tradition of divine worship, with its notes of objectivity, order, dignity, beauty, and, supremely, of adoration.

CHAPTER XI

F. D. MAURICE AND THE LITURGY AS THE SYMBOL OF UNITY IN CHURCH AND STATE

IT MIGHT have been preferable to title this chapter in such a way as to suggest that the Broad Church had its own distinctive interpretation of worship, as had the other two parties in the Church of England, the Evangelicals and the Tractarians. Instead, however, the name of F. D. Maurice appears in the title in conjunction with his distinctive understanding of the Book of Common Prayer as the symbol of unity in Church and State. It may be objected that this is to claim too little for the Broad Church and too much for Maurice. Important as were the contributions of the Broad Church, yet that fortuitous association of men who were dissatisfied with both Tractarians and Evangelicals was never organized in such a way as to constitute a "party," and it is, therefore, more properly regarded as a tendency or a movement.¹ It contained so many individualists that it is impossible to define it with any precision without at the same time excluding some of its members. If it can be said to have had a specific attitude towards the Liturgy, this was almost wholly negative, for its central claim was that religion must not be tied down by the theological articles or the liturgical formulae of the past but must be expressed anew and relevantly in terms of the *Zeitgeist*. An intellectual cave of Adullam is hardly the place where one would look for an agreed theological or liturgical platform.

There is, however, a very important reason for drawing attention to the contributions of Frederick Denison Maurice to religion and worship. In retrospect he, rather than Newman, seems the dominating figure of the Anglican Communion in the nineteenth century. After all, Newman was a lost leader to the Anglicans when he sought the security of the Roman obedience; Maurice, on the other hand, though he was at first regarded as a heretic within the fold, has come by later generations to receive remarkable tributes.

¹ Hugh Walker in *The Literature of the Victorian Era*, p. 81, divides the theologians of the period into the Evangelicals; "Noetics and their Successors of the Broad Church," the followers of Coleridge, and the Tractarians. This, however, is to give the second and third groups a separate category unwarranted by the fluidity of their ideas.

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It is significant that in the last decade no less than three important revaluations of him have appeared, each of them deeply appreciative.² The historian turns to Maurice with admiration because, like Richard Baxter, he was *in* the conflicts of the competing ecclesiastical parties of his century but also *above* them. Indeed, he might easily have described himself, like that earlier apostle of unity and a comprehensive Liturgy, as a "meer Catholick."³ His most perceptive *Kingdom of Christ* sees the weakness and strength of the Roman Catholic, Tractarian, Evangelical, and Liberal viewpoints, and tries to provide in an older and yet less rigidly time-bound orthodoxy a standing-ground for them all. In him, if anywhere, can be found the central meaning of churchmanship in the nineteenth century Church of England. What is even more astonishing is that he alone combines a profound understanding of the Incarnation, the Church as the Divine Society, and the importance of Sacramental life with a deep concern that these convictions and powers shall also be the levers to raise the level of the physical, spiritual, and social well-being of the poor, the unemployed, and the sweated labourers in the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution. The Tractarians had divorced orthodoxy in doctrine from social justice; Maurice mated them again, and it is not the least of his contributions to the Church of England that after his death it was seen that Tractarianism and Christian Socialism belonged together. Without Maurice, the work of Stewart Headlam, who first combined the roles of High Churchman and Christian Socialist, would have been unthinkable.⁴ It was an influence which was to rescue the Anglo-Catholics from the doldrums of antiquarian ceremonialism and the incessant litigation of the "Ritualistic Controversy." The present unity of the three parties in the Church of England is in part to be explained by Maurice's insistence that the nexus of unity in the Church of England could not be the sixteenth century Thirty-Nine Articles but must be in the inclusive Prayer Book, which drew its comprehensiveness and strength from many centuries and from Hebrew and Hellenic, Mediaeval, Reformed, and Modern sources.

² Alec R. Vidler, *The Theology of F. D. Maurice*; the present Archbishop of York (A. M. Ramsey), *F. D. Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology*; and H. G. Wood, *Frederick Denison Maurice*.

³ For an account of Richard Baxter as liturgist see the present author's *The Worship of the English Puritans*, pp. 142-61.

⁴ See A. M. Ramsey, *op.cit.*, p. 106.

1. *The Broad Church Movement*

If Maurice did not formally align himself with the Broad Churchmen, at least he shared many of the convictions of these Liberal Anglicans. So far was this from being an organized party within the English Church that there is even doubt as to the origin of the description and as to what its meaning was. According to the Oxford New English Dictionary, Benjamin Jowett, the Master of Balliol, claimed that he first heard the poet Clough use it in a conversation some years before 1850. Its first literary appearance was in the year 1850 in an article in the July issue of the *Edinburgh Review* in the course of which A. P. Stanley insisted that the Church of England was "by the very conditions of its being, not High or Low, but Broad."⁵ Its general use should, according to C. R. Sanders,⁶ be dated from 1853, when the same journal published in its October issue an unsigned article (written by W. J. Conybeare) entitled "Church Parties." A significant description of the new party was given in the article as "Moderate, Catholic or Broad-Church by its friends; Latitudinarian or Indifferent by its enemies."⁷

A description will not replace the need for a definition of the Broad Church Movement, yet, difficult as the latter is, it must be attempted. The outstanding concern of the movement was the conviction that the Church of England should be a comprehensive institution, marked by charity and toleration. For this purpose its Articles should be interpreted as generously as possible: that is, neither in an exclusively Calvinistic direction, as the Evangelicals tended to do, nor in the tendentious Roman Catholic way that Newman had tried to interpret them in Tract XC. Party cries were a curse because they divided instead of uniting men. The real basis for unity was not in the intellect but in the heart and in the will. Theological agreement was unlikely, but unity in worship and charity were easily conceivable and practicable. As far as doctrines were concerned, the Broad Churchmen believed that the essential doctrines throughout history had been affirmed by Catholic and Protestant alike. Like the Tractarians they believed in the necessity of a "Visible Church," but they disliked the antiquarian, authoritarian, and ascetical delineation of the Church by the Tractari-

⁵ No. XCII, p. 266.

⁶ *Coleridge and the Broad Church Movement*, p. 7.

⁷ No. XCVIII, p. 330f.

ans. They regarded themselves as essentially a party of inquiry, while others were the parties of authority. They rejected the anti-quarianism of Tractarianism in favour of the Transcendentalism and Immanentism of the nineteenth century. Like the Evangelicals they were firm believers in family religion rather than in celibacy.⁸ They were far more concerned with the social implications of their faith than either of the other two parties, and they took credit for urging the education of the poor. Perhaps the best succinct definition of the Broad Church temper was provided by Bishop Connop Thirlwall, who had said that the proper antithesis to Broad is not High or Low, but Narrow, and who thought the movement had men in it with a clearly distinguishing characteristic of mind: "I understand it as signifying a certain stamp of individual character, which I would describe as a disposition to recognize and appreciate that which is true and good under all varieties of forms, and in persons separated from one another by the most conflicting opinions."⁹ The Bishop further declared that he considered Jeremy Taylor and Archdeacon J. C. Hare (Maurice's Cambridge tutor) as typical Broad Churchmen.

The most noteworthy Broad Churchmen of the century were Archbishop Whately, Dr. Thomas Arnold of Rugby, Archdeacon J. C. Hare, Dean A. P. Stanley, Charles Kingsley, and, of course, F. D. Maurice, although the last denied the affiliation. Tennyson was their most distinguished poet.

Undoubtedly the great progenitor of the movement had been another poet, namely Coleridge, who had left his mark in particular on the Cambridge Broad Churchmen. Several of his famous *Aids to Reflection* proved seminal thoughts that found lodgement in the minds of his followers. In particular, the Broad Churchmen accepted the obligation to follow truth wherever it might lead them and thoroughly corroborated the sage's ringing declaration: "He who begins by loving Christianity better than truth, will proceed by loving his own sect or Church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself better than all."¹⁰

⁸ In the preface to his poetic drama, *The Saint's Tragedy* (pp. 12, 15) Kingsley attacks the followers of Pusey as "those miserable dilettanti who in books and sermons are whimpering meagre second-hand praises of celibacy . . . nibbling ignorantly at the very root of that household purity which constitutes the superiority of Protestant over Popish Nations." Earlier he had charged Roman Catholics with "the Manichean contempt with which a celibate clergy would have all men regard the names of husband, wife, and parent."

⁹ *Remains, Literary and Theological*, Vol. III, p. 481.

¹⁰ *Aids to Reflection* in W. G. T. Shedd, *The Complete Works of S. T. Coleridge*, Vol. I, p. 273.

Equally would they have subscribed to Coleridge's view that "Christianity is not a theory, or a speculation; but a life—not a philosophy of life, but a life and a living process."¹¹ Maurice, in particular, would grasp with both hands at the assertion that Christ and a truly Catholic Church are the unity of the human race: "But man is truly altered by the co-existence of other men; his faculties cannot be developed in himself alone, and only by himself. Therefore the human race not by a bold metaphor, but in sublime reality, approach to and might become, one body whose Head is Christ (the Logos)."¹²

From Coleridge, too, Maurice was to imbibe his eschatological ideas and to learn that the greatest misery of Hell is exclusion from God, and the greatest felicity is union with God, to be enjoyed not merely in the future but from the time when the union begins.¹³ Even more important for our purpose is Coleridge's firm loyalty to the Prayer Book, a loyalty which he was also to implant in Maurice: "Enough for me, if in my heart of hearts, free from all fear of men and all lust of preferment, I believe (as I do) the Church of England to be the most Apostolic Church; that its doctrines and ceremonies contain nothing dangerous to righteousness and salvation; and that the imperfections in its Liturgy are spots, indeed, but spots on the sun, which impede neither its light nor its heat, so as to prevent the good seed from growing in a good soil, and producing fruits of redemption."¹⁴

Maurice had other and existential reasons for accepting the guidance of the sage of Highgate. Like himself, Coleridge had been an Unitarian who, while admiring the intellectual integrity of Unitarianism, found its rationalism too rigid, negative, and cold to provide the fuel his imagination needed.¹⁵ Maurice had learned the bitterness of sectarian difference in his own home, where his father alone remained resolutely of the old Unitarian convictions, while the daughters turned to the Baptists or the Methodists and he himself went on to Anglicanism. At Cambridge, too, he had the good fortune to study under J. C. Hare, who was himself an ardent Coleridgean. Even the younger and Utopian dreamer in Coleridge found in the Christian Socialist, Maurice, a devout disciple.¹⁶

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

¹² E. L. Griggs, *Coleridge's Unpublished Letters*, Vol. I, pp. 357-58.

¹³ Shedd, *op.cit.*, Vol. v, pp. 447-48.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 347.

¹⁵ For his appreciation of Unitarianism, see *Theological Essays*, pp. 78-79.

¹⁶ There is an affiliation of enthusiasm between Pantisocracy and Christian Socialism.

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Many Broad Churchmen looked to Coleridge as their leader, but none more ardently than F. D. Maurice.

2. *Maurice and the Church Parties of His Day*

Yet, for all this, we cannot make Maurice into a satisfied Broad Churchman. If he had affinities with any party in the Church, it was with this one. Nonetheless his difference from the movement can be clearly seen by comparing him with another member who had many of the same concerns at heart, Dr. Thomas Arnold of Rugby. Both had the question of the needed unity of religious people deeply at heart; both believed firmly that the Church of England should emphasize its comprehensiveness as a move to end its party divisions. Yet the methods by which they proposed to do this were entirely different in two ways. Arnold believed that the chief obstacle was the idea that the form or polity of the Church had been fixed from the beginning; as a historian he recognized the element of development in all institutions, the Church being no exception. Furthermore, he wanted to make the Church wide enough to include the Trinitarian Dissenters, though not the Unitarians, and he proposed to do this by allowing "great varieties of opinion, and of ceremonies, and of forms of worship." Only thus could there come into being in England a "thoroughly national, thoroughly united, thoroughly Christian" Church.¹⁷ Maurice, for his part, did not wish to bind the faith of the Church of England with the sixteenth century fetters of the Thirty-Nine Articles, but he was far from giving up the use of the Prayer Book for the sake of comprehensiveness in the Church. In fact, his defence of the Liturgy was very largely due to his admiration of its comprehensiveness, and he was afraid that Tractarian or Evangelical revisers of it might make it the worship of a sect by their alterations. "Except the prayers for the Sovereign and Royal Family," he insisted, "our daily Service contains nothing that belongs to England more than to any other country in the world."¹⁸ Nor would he agree that there was no single unalterable form of the Church: on the contrary he regarded it as a matter of profound gratitude that the nature of Christ's true and spiritual Kingdom was discoverable by the essential signs that the Church of England manifested, and these were the possession of the Scripture, the Creeds, the Liturgy, the Sacraments, and the

¹⁷ For Arnold's views see *Miscellaneous Works*, p. 509, and A. P. Stanley, *The Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold, D.D.*, Vol. 1, p. 346f.

¹⁸ *The Prayer Book and the Lord's Prayer*, p. 2.

Episcopate. Furthermore, he disagreed with Arnold in the latter's desire to provide a comprehension for orthodox Dissenters which would only make the Unitarians more aggrieved by being excluded.

Apart from these differences, there were other objections which Maurice had to raise against the Broad Church Movement. His chief criticism of the Broad Churchmen was that they were forever discussing the nature of God, instead of loving God: "But which seems to me the great disease of our time, that we talk about God and about our religion, and do not confess Him as a living God; Himself the Redeemer of men in His Son; Himself the inspirer of all right thoughts, the guide into all truth by His Spirit, is characteristic of no School so much as of this. (I mean when it resolves to be a School.)"¹⁹ Yet Maurice is fully aware of the strength of the Broad Churchmen, and has the greatest respect for them "so far as they protest against any cowardice and deceit in handling the Word of God, against any misrepresentation of sceptics . . . against traditional hardness or formality. . . ."²⁰

His second objection is that to form a party or to become a member of one would run counter to his life's work of claiming that the Church of England exists to be above all parties and, indeed, to unite them all. He knows only too well the danger of eclecticism, that peril of reducing all distinctive doctrines to a dull, flat, trite agreement. He writes: "Oh, there is nothing so emasculating as the atmosphere of Eclecticism! Who that has dwelt in it has not longed for the keen mountain air of Calvinism, for anything, however biting, that would stir him to action?"²¹ He confessed that "I knew also that I was in danger of attaching myself to a party which should inscribe 'No Party' on its flag."²² That, he recognized, would also be a schismatic rather than a uniting tendency, and so he resisted its blandishments. His serious convictions were never better expressed than in the following statement: "The English *Church* I look upon merely as one branch of the true Church; and every *system*, whether called Evangelical, Liberal, Catholic or purely Anglican, which has been invented by members of that Church in former times and in our own day to express their notion of the Church, I look upon as 'of the earth, earthy,' and as much carrying in it the seeds of destruction as the systems of the various sects which have revolted from her."²³

¹⁹ *The Life of Frederick Denison Maurice chiefly told in his own Letters*, ed. Sir J. F. Maurice, Vol. II, p. 359.

²⁰ *Ibid.* ²¹ Maurice, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 339.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 239. ²³ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

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His final criticism of the Broad Church Movement was that it was more concerned for theology than for worship, and that it had no conception of the devotional riches and relevance of the Book of Common Prayer. He asks: "Why do they appear only to treat it as an old praying machine, which in the course of centuries gets out of order like other machines, and which should be altered according to the mechanical notions of our time?"²⁴ One suspects, too, from Maurice's criticism of eclecticism, that much of the vagueness of the teaching of the Broad Churchmen was unacceptable to him. He may have sympathized with the aristocratic poet who wrote that the Broad Churchmen merely:

Frame some mild creed with neither back nor bones
A mist of genial benevolences
To please all round . . .²⁵

If Maurice was unable to go all the way with the Broad Church Movement, he found that he could accompany the Tractarians and the Evangelicals a very short way indeed along their distinctive paths. Maurice objected to the antiquarian attitude of the Tractarians and to the emphasis laid on the ceremonial externals by the second generation of Tractarians, the so-called "Ritualists." Of the former he wrote: "Their error, I think, consists in opposing to τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου the spirit of a former age, instead of the ever-living and acting Spirit of God, of which the Spirit of each age . . . is at once the adversary and the parody. The childlike spirit of the Fathers, say they, must be brought in to counteract the intellectual spirit of these times—the spirit of submission to Church authority against the spirit of voluntary associations. Nay, I contend, but the spirit of earnest and deep reflection is that which God would cultivate in us to oppose the superficial intelligence of the day, the spirit of Christian or Church liberty (the service which is freedom) to counteract the lust for independence, the spirit of unity to overthrow the spirit of combination."²⁶

His particular objection to the "Ritualists" was their attempt to emphasize not the "Real Presence" of Christ in the Eucharist, but to locate that "Presence" on the altar, and thus deny the reality of the Ascension and the universal union of Christ with His people. This objection is expressed in the strongest terms: "They scandal-

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 358.

²⁵ *The Cardinal's Lament* from Baron De Tabley's *Collected Poems* cited in H. N. Fairchild, *Religious Trends in English Poetry*, Vol. IV, p. 429.

²⁶ Maurice, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 225-26.

ize me by practically and habitually denying what I have always regarded as the glory of the Eucharist, that it testifies of a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction, which has been made for the sins of the whole world; that it testifies that there is an access by the Spirit through the ascended Christ to the Father. Their attempt to bring Christ back to the altar seems to me the most flagrant denial of the Ascension, and therefore of the whole faith of Christendom, that can be imagined."²⁷

He had parted company with Pusey on the Tractarian view of the Sacrament of Baptism. He felt that both the Roman Catholics and the Tractarians had tied the efficacy of Baptism down to a moment in the rite itself. Their very insistence on a doctrine of the *opus operatum* implies that a man can lose the baptized state and the inevitable consequence is that this state must be interpreted as "one of independent holiness and purity." Maurice repudiates the view that because we are disobedient children, we therefore lose the status of children. The Romanist (and the same is true of the Tractarian) transforms the Sacrament into an event: "He supposes the redemption of Christ to be exhausted by a certain gift, while the Bible represents it as bringing men into an eternal and indissoluble fellowship."²⁸

Evangelicalism he criticized because its preaching had been too man-centred and subjective, too deficient in reverence.²⁹ His stronger objection is to the fact that the axis of their theology turns on sin, and not, as Maurice believes, that "the living and holy God is the ground of it, and sin the departure from the state of union with Him, into which He has brought us."³⁰ Such a belief is virtually an assertion that the devil rules the universe, a belief which Maurice utterly rejects. He also feels it necessary to repudiate the individualism of Evangelicalism, which requires for membership in the Church not the covenant of Baptism but the essentially solitary experience of conversion.³¹

The most comprehensive criticism that he offered of the three Church parties of the day was, of course, in his *magnum opus*, *The Kingdom of Christ* (second and revised edition, London,

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 627.

²⁸ *The Kingdom of Christ* (all unspecified references will be to the American edition of 1843, published by Appleton of New York and Philadelphia based upon the revised London edition of 1842), p. 267.

²⁹ Maurice, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 335.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 450.

³¹ See Maurice's sermon-essay "On the Unity of the Church," Chap. 15 of the *Theological Essays* (edn. of 1957 with intro. by E. F. Carpenter).

1842). He summarized his views in this statement: "I cannot see what Church Liberalism reduced to a system is, but the denial of anything as given to men either in the shape of Tradition or Revelation; what Church Evangelicalism reduced to a system is but the denial of the very idea of Church fellowship or Unity, and the substitution for it of a combination of individual units; and what Catholicism reduced to a system is, but Romanism; that is to say, the direct denial of the distinction of National Churches, and the implicit denial of the Church as a spiritual body holding a spiritual Head."²²

This statement is, of course, polemical: it is intended to show that a system is an exaggeration of truth in isolation from the whole. In fairness to Maurice himself, it must be recognized that he saw positive values in each of the systems he criticized. The Liberals, for example, he approved in their affirmations that the Church cannot be fettered to the past and that the Church must be an inclusive and comprehensive society. The good in Evangelicalism was its insistence upon the primacy of faith and the power of the Creator, who has intervened to save His creatures enslaved by sin. In Tractarianism he finds three admirable tenets: the assertion that God has established a Church in the world, that He has given us permanent signs of its existence, and that the Church is not the servant of the State but has powers of its own.

His fascinating and profound capacity for disentangling the enduring insight within the ephemeral system has never been seen to better advantage than in the famous passage which speaks of the true meaning of the differing emphases of the denominations which have their place in the forms of the English Church. Such analytical and synthetic insight amounts to theological genius and warrants a full citation:

"The idea of men as constituted in the Divine Word, of a Kingdom based upon the constitution, of a Spirit working to bring him into conformity with it, of a perpetual struggle with an evil and sensual nature, this is the idea of Quakerism, and it is the idea of our Liturgy in every one of its forms and services.

"The idea of a divine Will going before all acts of the human will, the primary source of all that is in eternity, and all that becomes in time, to which everything is meant to be in subjection, to which every creature must attribute all the motions to good which he finds within him, the primary direction of his thoughts, the

²² Pp. 551-52.

power of perseverance, this is the idea of Calvinism, and it is the idea which is implied in all the prayers of our Litany, which is formally set forth in the words of our Articles.

"The idea of a man struggling with his evil nature, discovering in it nothing but a bottomless pit of evil, grasping at a deliverer, finding that in union with him only is his life; this is the idea of Lutheranism, and it is the idea which is involved in all our prayers and Creeds, which our Articles reassert in logical terms.

"The idea of an unity which lies beneath all other unity; of a love which is the ground of all other love, of Humanity as connected with that love, regarded by it, comprehended in it, this is the idea that has hovered about the mind of the Unitarian and which he has vainly attempted to comprehend in his system of contradictions and denials."³³

The idea of the importance but partiality and fragmentariness of all the sects and parties never left Maurice, nor the hope that a genuinely Catholic Church would be an unity of comprehensive truth, worship, and the service of humanity. That is why his greatest book ends with a challenging prayer, which is also a heartfelt plea: "Let all thine enemies perish, O Lord"; all systems, schools, parties, which have hindered men from seeing the largeness, and freedom, and glory of thy Kingdom; but 'let them that love thee' in whatever earthy mists they may at present be involved, 'be as the sun when he goeth forth in his strength.'³⁴

3. *The Theology of Maurice*

So rooted in theology were Maurice's liturgical convictions that they are unintelligible apart from a brief study of his theology. The perceptiveness and independence of Maurice, as well as his understanding of the social problems of his day, would lead us to expect him to formulate—even in an age of strife—a sound and comprehensive theology. Nor shall we be disappointed in our hope, unless we are looking for a radically new theology of a reconstructionist type. Maurice did not envisage his task as that of a revolutionary in the realm of doctrine; rather was he a man who wished to dig through the accumulated layers or strata of tradition to the Divine foundations of the Gospel, the Church, and the intentions of God for the race. Or, to vary the metaphor, he was a renovator rather than a revolutionary; his duty was to remove the encrustations of

³³ *The Kingdom of Christ*, pp. 530-31.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 569.

time and compromise, that the resplendent truth might shine in all its pristine glory and the Christian life be revived. Like the loving and prudent yacht-owner, his task was to clear the hull of the Ark of Salvation of the barnacles and seaweed that impeded its progress through the waters of the nineteenth century.

His conception of his theological task was expressed in a letter to his fellow Christian Socialist, Ludlow, written late in 1852: ". . . my business, because I am a theologian, and have no vocation except for theology, is not to build, but to dig, to show that economy and politics . . . must have a ground beneath themselves, that society is not to be made anew by arrangements of ours, but is to be regenerated by finding the law and ground of its order and harmony, the only secret of its existence, in God . . . The Kingdom of Heaven is to me the great practical existing reality which is to renew the earth and make it a habitation for blessed spirits instead of for demons.

"To preach the Gospel of that Kingdom, the fact that it is among us, and not to be set up at all, is my calling and business."³⁵

Maurice insists that he can work only "by proclaiming society and humanity to be divine realities, as they stand, not as they may become." He concludes the letter thus: "This is what I call digging, this is what I oppose to building. And the more I read the Epistle to the Corinthians, the more I am convinced that this was St. Paul's work, the one by which he hoped to undermine and to unite the members of the Apollos, Cephas, Pauline, and Christian (for those who said 'we are of Christ' were the worst canters and dividers of all) schools. Christ the actual foundation of the universe; not Christ a Messiah to those who received Him and shaped Him according to some notion of theirs; the head of a body, not the teacher of a religion, was the Christ of St. Paul. And such a Christ I desire to preach, and to live in, and die in."³⁶

This exhilarating letter will show that Maurice was fundamentally an establisher of Christian orthodoxy rather than the leader and founder of a new party. It also provides evidence of a second distinguishing mark of his theology, namely that God in His reality and power is to be differentiated from all theories about Him.

He felt that in the nineteenth century there was far too much talk about God and far too little worship and service of Him. Moreover, he could not sufficiently condemn the partisanship of the age, which

³⁵ Maurice, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 137.

³⁶ Maurice, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 138.

caused men to provide in their parties a substitute for the absolute primacy of faith. Some insisted upon a system of Church dogma as their substitute; others demanded a belief in an experience of conversion or justification; still others considered religion as if it were an attitude manipulated by men rather than a gift of God. In Maurice's assertion that the primary need was a recognition of man's utter dependence upon God or need for obedience to God, rather than theories about Him, the English theologian was closely akin to the basic conviction of Schleiermacher.³⁷

The third distinctive development of Maurice's theology is the assertion that Christianity is a life in God with the people of God; Christian truth is essentially personal and communal rather than assent to propositional truth,³⁸ though even the personal truth may more adequately be expressed in some formulae rather than in others. (For example, the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds are more satisfactory than the sixteenth century Articles of Religion of the Church of England.) Maurice was to turn away from the Western and Augustinian insistence that the basis of man's relationship to God was the Fall, and to insist with the theologians of the Eastern Church, such as St. Athanasius, that Christ's redemption of man is best understood as a *restoration* of man's relationship to God in Creation. Thus grace rather than sin becomes normative for understanding the true nature of the encounter between God and His creation. Dr. A. M. Ramsey vividly and cogently expresses Maurice's view: "The world was made through the Eternal Son; and in the Incarnation He comes not as an alien invader into an unknown foreign land, but as man's own maker into human lives of which He is the indwelling principle."³⁹ Maurice's is a theology of *Christus Consummator*, of Christ as the Head of the Race, the principle of its ultimate unity, the One who restores human society and harmonizes all the diverse activities of men beneath His gracious rule and in His spiritual kingdom. As Maurice himself wrote: "The truth is that every man is in Christ; the condemnation of every man is that he will not own the truth; he will not act as if this were true, he will not believe that which is the truth, that, except he were joined to Christ, he could not think, breathe, live a single hour."⁴⁰

³⁷ See the English translation of the second German edn. of *Der christliche Glaube* ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart, *The Christian Faith*, pp. 5, 12, and *Speeches on Religion* (Engl. tr.), pp. 28ff.

³⁸ The point may be clarified by the distinction between *fides* (*depositum fidei*) and *fiducia* made by Luther.

³⁹ F. D. Maurice and the *Conflicts of Modern Theology*, p. 21.

⁴⁰ Maurice, *op.cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 155.

THE DOMINANCE OF TRADITIONALISM

If Maurice had learned of the Church both as a community sharing in the love of God in Christ and as existing above every assertion of partisanship, in the Epistle to the Corinthians, he had also drunk deeply of the living waters of St. John's Gospel. For him the Incarnation was the supremely important fact of human history,⁴¹ expressive of the deep concern of God for humanity and simultaneously a revelation of what God is and what man might become. Christ was the Logos for Maurice, the "light that lighteth every man coming into the world." Also, in truly Johannine fashion, salvation was a knowledge of God that brought life eternal here and now as well as hereafter; the Kingdom of Christ was established wherever and whenever the Lordship of Christ was acknowledged. With this view of the cosmic Christ, he also combined the emphasis of the Synoptic Gospels on the Fatherhood of God. This he contrasted with the easy and almost amoral divine benevolence, the conception of God held by the Universalists, and with the arbitrary sovereign Deity of Calvinism. Moreover, while insisting on the Fatherhood of God, he never lost sight of the complementary truth of the Holiness of God.⁴² In a letter to Hort he wrote in November 1849:

"Such a Being was altogether different from the image of mere good nature I had seen among Universalists. He was also very different from the mere sovereign whom I heard or amongst Calvinists, and who it seemed to me was worshipped by a great portion of the religious world. But I thought He was just that Being who was exhibited in the Cross of Jesus Christ. If I might believe His words, 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father'; if in His death the whole wisdom and power of God did shine forth, there was One to whom I might fly from the demon of self, there was One who would break his bonds asunder. This was and is the ground of my faith. The starting-point of the Gospel, as I read it, is the absolute love of God; the *reward* of the Gospel is the knowledge of that love."⁴³

Maurice believed that a Second Reformation was necessary in the nineteenth century and that it had two especially important tasks to perform, as correctives of current Churchmanship. Christianity had been conceived too intellectually and too individualistically. In his judgment the eighteenth century had been responsible

⁴¹ See the sermon-essay "On the Incarnation," which is Chap. 6 of the *Theological Essays*, esp. p. 85.

⁴² Maurice insisted that God's power was essential to keep man humble.

⁴³ Maurice, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 16.

for a deification of the intellect; having rejected the idea of a spiritual kingdom, it had sought to provide a comprehensive system of its own by the use of empiricism and the understanding as limited to reflection upon sensation (to use Lockean terminology). In the second place, while Protestantism had rightly insisted on the responsibility of the individual conscience, this emphasis had been carried so far that it had become "unfavourable to the worship of God, as well as to the fellowship among men."⁴⁴ Protestantism's error was that it had tended to consider spiritual blessings as "the property of an exclusive body, or of the individual elect; not as treasures like the light and air of which all may partake together."⁴⁵

In consequence, he saw his task as having three main branches or parts: theological, social, and national. The first required the reassertion of central Christian truths apart from any Calvinistic or Tractarian distortions or limitations. These truths were: "God's Absolute Fatherly Love, of the Incarnation, of the Sacrifice for all, which are the great elements of Christianity as the Revelation to mankind and the universe."⁴⁶ The social part of his theological program for the Church required the recognition, on the basis of these truths, that the Body of Christ was "an actual living community under Christ in which no man has a right to call anything that he has his own but in which there is spiritual fellowship and practical cooperation."⁴⁷ In the national sphere he believed that it was his duty to teach, as in fact he did teach working men, that "Law and Christianity are the only protectors of all classes from the selfishness which is the destruction of all."⁴⁸ He believed and also taught that there was an inevitable union "grounded not on alliances and compromises, but on the constitution of things, between this Universal Community and the State of which the principle is Personal Distinction and the symbol Property."⁴⁹

Perhaps the most perceptive insight in his whole theology, which would have offered an ecumenical relief to the divisive theological tendencies of the age as well as release from its incorrigible penchant for designing new Utopias, was the assertion that no new constitution for religion needs to be sought, for God has already laid down the signs of His spiritual Kingdom. All that is necessary, therefore, is for denominations to cease proliferating and for parties to cease proclaiming their fragmentary insights as if they were the whole of truth, and to accept the constitution of the true Christian

⁴⁴ *The Kingdom of Christ*, p. 28.

⁴⁵ Maurice, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 9-10.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 92 and 620-21.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

society, identifying it by its manifest signs in history. The question upon which the entire theological endeavour of Maurice rests, and which he believes is the answer to the problem of Christian Unity, is the central one posed in his *Kingdom of Christ*: "The question then which we have to examine is, are there any signs in the present day of the existence of a spiritual and universal body upon the earth? Do these signs identify that body with the one spoken of in Scripture?"⁵⁰ The rest of the book and, indeed, of Maurice's life was a patient sifting of the evidence as he examined all the Church systems and parties of his day. His conclusion, which seems to be borne out in a remarkable way, by the most striking advances in Christian re-union (such as the Church of South India), is that such signs do exist and that they are: Baptism, the Creed, Forms of Worship, the Eucharist, the Episcopate, and the Scriptures.⁵¹ These are the marks of the society, founded by God, wherein God may liberate men from the fetters of man-made schemes of religion.

It is, in particular, the high regard which Maurice has for the Forms of Worship and the Sacraments, that makes him so important a figure in the history of English worship in the nineteenth century.

4. *The Forms of Worship*

It is a central conviction with Maurice that the real unity that men have is to be expressed only in worship, where they make their common acknowledgment that God is their heavenly Father and that they are therefore brothers. Moreover, it is an acknowledgment of fealty by the heart, in which men are one, rather than in the intellect, in which they differ.⁵² While this is true of worship in general, it is especially true of that part of worship which is the Christian's highest privilege and chief solace to attend, where God, in redeeming action rather than in words, focusses His holy love and grace in the Eucharist. Maurice maintained that the principles of Christianity could be expressed fully only in terms of this Sacrament, for it expressed them in a deep practical and universal way. He requested the communicant to ask himself: "Can I find Christianity—the Christianity I want—a Christianity of acts not words, a Christianity of power and life, a divine, human Catholic Chris-

⁵⁰ P. 240 of the American edition of 1843 (and of the London edn. of 1842).

⁵¹ But Maurice's thinking seems both uncritical and insular in assuming that the historically given is necessarily Divinely donated, and the English Church is the pattern for all national churches.

⁵² *The Kingdom of Christ* (Everyman edn.), Vol. II, p. 308f.

tianity for men of all countries and periods, all tastes and endowments, all temperaments and necessities so exhibited as I find it in this Sacrament?"⁵³ Here in a moving drama is pictured the Divine descent to man, the cost of human reconciliation to God and of man to man, and here also is the token and proof of the promised consummation of the Kingdom of Christ at the end of history.⁵⁴

Maurice also held that the Forms of Prayer are peculiarly the poor man's protectors from the fads and logic-chopping of the theologians, and from the party cries of the sectarians. There is deep feeling in his expression of his conviction: "Thanks be to God, that He has not left eternal truths which concern all men, to the custody of the wise and prudent of the earth; that He has embodied them in forms which from generation to generation have been witnesses of His love to the humble and meek, and which all the contradictions of pride and self-will only help to illustrate and interpret."⁵⁵

He felt that the permanent provision of public forms of common prayer was a witness that worship is a normal and regular human activity. He objected strongly to the view of English Dissent that a man could not pray aright until he had waited for some peculiar influence or inspiration to visit certain persons at certain seasons.⁵⁶ This was, indeed, to turn a leader of devotions into a dervish. Forms of worship manifested that man is a spiritual being and that the right and power to pray must be claimed for him as integral to his nature and status as a human being made in the Divine image. It was equally important that forms of common prayer should be provided for him, "not special prayers adapted to special temperaments, and moods of character, but human."⁵⁷ Furthermore, forms of prayer are a safeguard against egotism in prayer: "Prayer is meant to be an expression of the wants of humanity, uttered through the one Head and Lord of man; individuals, if they would pray really and spiritually, must learn to take part in the speech and music of humanity, and not to isolate themselves in phrases and discords of their own."⁵⁸ It is the peculiar value of forms of prayer that they "draw us out of that individuality which is our curse and ruin, and lead us, one and all, to take up our position on the same ground of being justified and redeemed in Christ."⁵⁹ More-

⁵³ *The Kingdom of Christ* (1838 edn.), Vol. I, p. 287.

⁵⁴ *Sermons preached in Lincoln's Inn Chapel*, Vol. I, p. 73.

⁵⁵ *The Kingdom of Christ* (1843 edn.), Vol. II, p. 263.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* (1838 edn.), Vol. II, p. 24f.

⁵⁷ *The Prayer Book and the Lord's Prayer* (1880), p. 43.

⁵⁸ *The Kingdom of Christ* (1838 edn.), Vol. II, p. 218.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

over, a Liturgy, based on the Christian year, brings the whole scope of the Gospel to bear on the minds of men, and this frees them from dependence on the sudden inspiration or doctrinal peculiarities of individual ministers.⁶⁰

His chief defence of set forms of public common prayer was that they were a challenge issued to the nation and all the kingdoms of this world, reminding men that a universal and spiritual Kingdom of Christ has been set up on earth, basing its authority on the will of God and not upon the whims of a transitory sect. He could not sufficiently emphasize that the universal and Catholic Church of Christ did not originate from a voluntary organization of men who were like-minded, but that it came into being as the instrument of the revelation of God and His grace. He believed that only by having such permanent and universal forms of prayer and worship could the Church withstand the pressure of the contemporary, whether in the world of philosophy or of politics. He believed that the Church could withstand the exploitation of the Liberal statesmen of his own age by the rigid refusal to give up its Liturgy: "But this they complain of—that men by their *Te Deums* and *Gloria Patris*, by their steeples going up towards heaven in every parish, by their outward sacraments, should proclaim that the Lord is God of the whole earth, and should call upon us to fear Him and give glory to Him. This is very insolent; this affronts men whose feelings ought to be respected; of this, therefore, liberalism, by its creed of tolerance, is bound to be intolerant. And intolerant we know she will show herself; the wolf's hide will come forth out of the fleece of wool; people will be permitted to have as much religion as they please, only they must not speak of a living and true God, and declare that He and He only is to be worshipped."⁶¹

No Tractarian could have brandished the Prayer Book as a standard against Liberalism more fervently than Maurice, and he realized how dangerously liable to the dilution or distortion of their faith and worship were those religious communities, particularly the English Dissenters, without the panoply of a Prayer Book.

Worship was the throbbing heart of the Christian life for Maurice, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the magnificent apostrophe to worship which he includes in *The Kingdom of Christ*: "The worshipper has found that object to which the eyes of himself and all creatures were meant to be directed, in beholding which they attain the perfection of their being, while they lose all the feeling

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 41f.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

of selfish appropriation which is incompatible with perfection. They gaze upon Him who is the all-embracing Love, with whom no selfishness can dwell, the all-clear and distinguishing Truth, from which darkness and falsehood flee away; and they are changed into the same image, and their praises are only the responses to the joy with which He looks upon His redeemed Creation and declares it very good."⁶² From this Empyrean Maurice descends to earth to remind his readers that if the Being they worship were to be removed, so would the statesman's law and the philosopher's hope. The thought of worship can lead Maurice from theological polemics to the Alps of inspiration.

5. *The Book of Common Prayer*

The chief glory of the Book of Common Prayer for Maurice was its marvellous inclusiveness, which was the ultimate refuge from sectarianism. In an important letter to the Bishop of Argyll, written in December of 1867, he accounted for his personal appreciation of the Prayer Book. He contrasted the narrow and sectarian outlook of Dissent in which he had been brought up with the "largeness and freedom" of the declarations of the Prayer Book. The Unitarians had severed God from His creatures and the Calvinists had made Him only the Saviour of the elect and the Destroyer of the majority of mankind. In the Prayer Book Maurice declared that he found the amplitude of the Catholic faith: "I believe the Catholic Faith—the Faith in a Father who so loved the world as to give His Son for it—in a Son, who, because He is one with the Father, and came into the world to do the will of His Father, offered Himself freely as a sacrifice to redeem men from sin and bind them to God—of a Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son to bind all kindreds of men into a Divine Unity—has been underlying Christendom, expressing itself in the "Universal Baptism, in the Holy Communion, in prayers that carried men above all their notions and their dogmas."⁶³

Moreover, Maurice had seen that the essential difference between the Elizabethan settlement of English religion and the unsuccessful national establishment attempted by the largely Presbyterian Westminster Assembly of Divines lay in the fact that the former was a liturgical and the latter a theological conception of unity. The saving nexus of Anglican unity had been the Prayer Book: "It was

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 300.

⁶³ Maurice, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 570-71.

due then to the providential action of God and not to any particular glory or excellence in the members or teachers of the Church of England that worship and sacraments, and the signs of the Kingdom of Christ, were put into its polity before doctrinal definitions as the Acts which directly connect man with God."⁶⁴ It was in worship that the nation would find itself at one, and the chief channel of the unity in worship was the Prayer Book, for it enshrined not only the prayers of the English people but of Christendom itself in its anthology of devotions from many hallowed centuries. It seemed to him that the very fact that unsophisticated English people were summoned to use forms of prayer which they owe to Hebrews, Greeks, and Latins was a clear sign of the universality of God's family in space and time. He appeared to share the Tractarian *traditio quinquesaecularis* when he affirmed, in addition, that "the prayers written in the first ages of Christianity are in general more free, more reverent, more universal, than those which have been poured forth since."⁶⁵

With all his admiration for the Prayer Book as the bond of unity of the English Church and Nation, as a testimony to the universality of Christ's Body, and as providentially ordained for England, he did not treat it as so excellent as to be beyond improvement, even though he disliked the idea of ecclesiastical parties tampering with it. In a letter to Strachey, early in 1849, he had written: "I do not want to force anyone to like it; nor do I care a sixpence for it as a piece of fine composition. I never called it 'an excellent liturgy' in my life and I hope I never shall. But it has helped me to see more of the love of God and of the bonds by which men are knit to each other, and to feel more hope as to those whom I should naturally regard as foes, than any other book except the Bible. It is my protection, and the protection of the Church against Anglicanism, and Evangelicalism, and Liberalism, and Romanism, and till these different evils cease to torment us, I will, with God's help, use this shield against them."⁶⁶ It is clear that there is no trace of anti-quarianism or of aestheticism in Maurice's appreciation of the Prayer Book.

The Kingdom of Christ represents the best defence of the Liturgy of the Church of England, since Book v of Hooker's classical apology, *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. As faithfully as Hooker

⁶⁴ *The Kingdom of Christ* (Everyman edition based on the second revised edition of 1842), Vol. II, p. 296f.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁶⁶ Maurice, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 512.

stated and controverted the Puritan objections to the Prayer Book, so did Maurice expound and answer the cavils of the Quaker, the Dissenter (whom he calls "the Pure Protestant"), the Philosopher, and the Roman Catholic.

For the Quaker a Liturgy was an expression of the utterance of the reason and will of man, not a dependence upon the undetermined and incalculable Holy Spirit. Maurice agrees that the essential spirit of prayer is to acknowledge the Divine will, but he argues that since the reason of man is now illumined by the Divine Logos, such a belief "is incompatible with excitement, with any distortions of manner or voice, with the notion that we are unconscious animal utterers of certain sounds which are imparted to us, instead of the living, conscious, voluntary rational agents of Him who, when He promised the Spirit to his disciples said, 'Henceforth, I call you not servants, but friends. . . .'⁶⁷ Apart from the apparent confusion of Quakerism with glossolalia, the answer is a valid one, since the Spirit of God can be the inspiration of deeply pondered worship more easily than of unpremeditated and impulsive prayers.

A more formidable objection was raised by the "Pure Protestant"—the heir of the Puritan tradition. This was that forms of prayer cannot suit the varied and voluntary wants of men, and that the minister can best pray in his own words for the particular needs of his congregation since he knows their circumstances. Maurice implies that such prayers can never be a corporate offering of worship, but he had surely forgotten that the doctrine of election in Puritan gatherings of worship, the Biblical phraseology, and the covenant conception of the relationship to God in Puritanism were strong safeguards against the individualism of the minister. But he has a truth of emphasis, if not an absolute truth, in insisting that the meeting of individual needs is secondary in worship, for the Christian congregation worships within the context of a universal family. Furthermore, he affirms that humanity's basic needs are not of an age or a country. To the further objection: why have ancient rather than contemporary forms of prayer? Maurice replies that prayers written in the early centuries of Christianity have more freedom, reverence, and universality than those which have been composed since. The reason for this is that recent times have been concerned more with self-analysis or with the world of nature, "while the Fathers were providentially ordered to concern themselves with the nature and plans of God."⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Edn. of 1843, p. 289.

⁶⁸ *The Kingdom of Christ* (1843 edn.), p. 295.

His next group of objections are those put forward by the Utilitarian thinkers of his time, from the standpoint of a rather faded Deism. The Liturgy implies that the perfect and unchangeable Being is to be swayed from His purposes by our petitions and that He, the Sum of perfections, is delighted to receive the commendations of His imperfect creatures. They believe, says Maurice, that evil will be overcome by better government, as the Rationalists believe that education is the solution of the problem of evil. Christians, by contrast, follow the example and ideal of a Living Person. Maurice takes the Utilitarian thunder away by declaring that the ancient litanies are not grounded on the belief that God's will is mutable; their petitions are "cries for the vindication and preservation of His immutable order."⁶⁹ Maurice flatly denies that flattery and praise are interchangeable terms. On the contrary, Christian praise has no admixture of falsity, meanness, or impudence; it is simply the glad acknowledgment of man's gratitude to God.

His final complex of objections are those which might be raised by an Evangelical or a Roman Catholic, such as that the Anglican Liturgy is essentially a Roman Catholic Liturgy. Maurice insists that it would be very difficult to determine exactly when Catholicism ends in history and Popery begins. Even if this could be determined, he would not readily reject a prayer by Bernard, by A Kempis, or by Pascal. Indeed, his complaint is not against the Roman Liturgy but against the mediators introduced into the Roman cultus, against the continual regression from Church worship to hero worship to natural worship, due to the first fatal step "of doubting or denying that the communion between God and His creatures is really established in the Incarnate Son, that the union of men with their Lord has been completely cemented in Him."⁷⁰

Having defended the Liturgy from its critics, he is free to expound its positive values, which he did both in *The Kingdom of Christ* and in *The Prayer Book and the Lord's Prayer* (1880), a group of sermons he had preached as Chaplain of Lincoln's Inn during the year of revolution, 1848, when he had also been busy founding the company of Christian Socialists. Turning, for the time being, to the latter volume, one is impressed by the clarity with

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 296. For a modern Deistic criticism of the Prayer Book, see W. Somerset Maugham's *Summing Up*, where the author tells of an eccentric friend who "had crossed out in pencil all the passages in the Book of Common Prayer that praised God. He said there was nothing so vulgar as to praise people to their faces and, himself a gentleman, he could not believe that God was so ungentlemanly as to like it."

⁷⁰ *The Kingdom of Christ* (1843 edn.), p. 305.

which he expounds the assumptions of the teaching of the Prayer Book. The first assumption and the noblest distinction of these prayers is that "they set out with assuming God to be a Father, and those that worship Him to be His children."⁷¹ In the second place, Maurice is impressed by the comprehensiveness and universality of the Prayer Book. He is gratefully amazed that "the compilers claimed for themselves and for us a fraternity with other ages and other countries, with men whose habits and opinions were most different from their own, with those very Romanists who were slandering and excommunicating them."⁷² The third assumption of the Prayer Book is that religion is intimately related to life. Here was a medium of worship which was eminently suitable for the practical English. "What Englishmen chiefly want," he wrote, "is a clear recognition that the spiritual is also the practical—that it belongs not more to the temple than to the counting-house and the workshop. This the Reformers provided."⁷³ His refusal to call the English Liturgy "excellent" may perhaps be explained by the ensuing sentence: "They [Cranmer and his assistants] were not equally concerned to provide us with a satisfaction of that love of art and symbol, which, though genuine and human, is not characteristic of all nations in the same degree, of our own perhaps less than any."⁷⁴ Englishmen valued order, not ardour, and while more ardent spirits like Maurice himself might have liked more art and symbolism, yet this very aesthetic limitation in the Prayer Book commended it to the sober English. Maurice recognizes a real value in the conception of worship as a duty. He draws particular attention to the Preface of the Consecration Prayer in the Service of Holy Communion, which reads: "It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, at all times, and in all places, to give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God." After remarking that this is a language which excludes ecstasy and rapture, and seems extremely cold, he insists "but duty is grounded upon a truth; and truth lifts us above incidents of feeling and moods of mind." Furthermore, "God does not cease to be the Holy Father, the Almighty, the Everlasting God, because we are low or sad, and feel physically or morally unfit to sympathize in the utterance of exulting spirits. He is and abides; and if Christ has made us meek

⁷¹ *The Prayer Book and the Lord's Prayer*, p. 10. Yet Isaac Williams had declared the contrary to be true in *Tracts of the Times*, No. 86.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *The Prayer Book and the Lord's Prayer*, p. 12.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* For a particularly interesting expression of Maurice's views on Protestantism in relation to art, see Maurice, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 502-03.

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and lowly of heart, we understand that our glory and privilege consist in confessing Christ and His love, not in feeling very happy in ourselves."⁷⁵

Perhaps the best tribute Maurice ever paid to the practical spiritual benefits to be obtained by the use of the English Liturgy is the dedication of his volume, *The Prayer Book and the Lord's Prayer*, which reads: "To those who understand the Prayers of the Church best, the sufferers on sick beds; to those who often feel the need of them most, men toiling in the daily business of the world; to those who turn from them with the greatest aversion, persons harassed by doubts and confusions which seem to be mocked by their tone of calmness and trust; these sermons are affectionately dedicated by one who has learnt more of the inner meaning of the Prayer-Book from the first class⁷⁶ than from all the instructions of divines; who never appreciated its practical substantial character till he felt that the callings of the second class were as sacred as those of the recluse and the devotee; and who, by converse with the last, by experiencing their difficulties, by seeking to sympathize with them, by discovering his own incompetency to help them, has been led to know what guidance and comfort there is in it for such as never have found or expect to find a home in any religious party, rest in any religious theory."

6. *The Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist*

Maurice was grateful to the Tractarians for pointing out the importance of the Sacraments, and for teaching him quite unintentionally that if these are in reality the channels of grace and revelation, then dogmas cannot be so. In a letter to Charles Kingsley in 1865 he declares: "For if sacraments express the purpose, and the relation of God to man, *dogmas* cannot express it. To dogmatise about sacraments is to destroy their nature. To dogmatise about God is to assume that man does not receive the knowledge of God from Him, but imputes the forms of his own intellect to Him."⁷⁷ His statement that Sacraments are the *organon* or necessary form of a revelation would be substantiated by the argument that "they discover the Divine nature in its union with the human, and do not make the human the measure and standard of the Divine."⁷⁸ The

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

⁷⁶ Maurice is here referring to his tenure of the office of Chaplain of Guy's, the famous London hospital.

⁷⁷ Maurice, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 452.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 453.

inadequacy of the *Verbum* without the *Verba visibilia* of the Sacraments is proved from the inadequacy of prophecy to win the chosen people to God's allegiance, so that new Sacraments are necessary to expound and convey the New Covenant in Christ. In the Sacraments the life of God is conveyed, whatever be the theory of the Sacraments, thus teaching us that religion is more than affirming theological propositions and the Christian life more than theories. Here is God in transforming *action* amongst His people.

His teaching on the meaning of Baptism was at variance with both the understanding of the Evangelicals and that of the Tractarians. The former virtually negated the status of the child within the Christian and universal family by setting so much store by conversion, rather than Baptism, as the real source and moment of regeneration. The Tractarians and the Romanists made the mistake of regarding Baptism as an event rather than a status of union between Christ and His own. His own positive teaching on Baptism was, in Dr. Alec Vidler's words, to regard it as "the Sacrament of constant union."⁷⁹

Baptism was the first of the signs to the true state of mankind as a fellowship of Christ bound together in the Holy Spirit. Man's true unity was found, not in Adam so much as Western theology, Evangelical and Roman Catholic, implied, but in Christ. The fact that this sacrament of initiation is given to infants is the witness that humanity's union with God in Christ and the basis of men's brotherhood consequent thereon are grounded in the grace of God and not in their own belief. Maurice was very suspicious of the current subjectivity of the age and believed that external, objective Divine signs and tokens, such as the sacraments are, have great worth. The reason is "that they attest the reality and universality of God's gifts, as in the case of water in Baptism and the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper. They prevent men from fancying that their thoughts and impressions and beliefs create the blessings which are bestowed upon us by God's free grace."⁸⁰

Maurice, therefore, thought of Baptism as bringing a man into the new creation which is his true state, rather than as imparting something to each individual, for the work of the Holy Spirit is always to bring a man out of separation into union with God. In addition to asserting man's union with God on the ground of the forgiveness of his sins, Baptism is also the sacrament of constant union with the whole people of God. No one insists more strongly

⁷⁹ Alec R. Vidler, *The Theology of F. D. Maurice*, pp. 100, 110.

⁸⁰ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 188 cited Vidler, *op.cit.*, pp. 100-01.

than Maurice that Sacraments are *social* ordinances of God: "Baptism asserts for each man that he is taken into union with a Divine Person, and by virtue of that union is emancipated from his evil *Nature*. But this assertion rests upon another, that there is a society for mankind which is constituted and held together in that Person, and that he who enters this society is emancipated from the *World*—the society which is bound together in the acknowledgment of, and subjection to, the evil selfish tendencies of each man's nature. But, further, it affirms that this unity among men rests upon a yet more awful and perfect unity, upon that which is expressed in the *Name* of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Loss of sight of this last and deepest principle, and both the others perish."⁸¹

While Maurice is always deeply suspicious of the attitude that seems to imply that truth is not truth until it is truth for me, or that Baptism is no Sacrament until I can make a conscious response to it—for these are the subjectivities of an age that made the human mind the measure of God—yet he concedes that although the primary truth is that God is a giver, still there must always be a recipient. His ultimate answer to the antipaedobaptists is that Baptism presupposes Confirmation as its completion. Moreover, he argues that those parents who conceive that Baptism is only for those who have renounced sin and become consciously converted are not prepared to follow the logic of their position, by refusing their children the right to say the Lord's Prayer or to attend Divine worship with them.

Baptism is chiefly, then, a declaration that there is a constant union between Christ and the human race, that the ground of human community is such unity, and that the ultimate basis of God's union with man and of men with themselves is the Unity of the Holy Trinity. For Maurice this is not a matter of dogma, or of ceremonial; it is the Gospel of the good news of God about the real status of mankind. It is the proclamation of *Christus Victor*, for this Sacrament "has been testifying to high and low, to men of all countries, languages, customs, that they have a common friend and a common enemy; but that the enemy has been vanquished, has been declared to have no right or property in any human creature, in any corner of the universe; that his power is conferred by our faithlessness; that while we are claiming our true position we may despise and defy him."⁸²

⁸¹ *The Kingdom of Christ* (Everyman edn.), Vol. I, p. 290f.

⁸² *The Kingdom of Christ* (American edn. of 1843), pp. 262-63.

To the subject of the Eucharist, Maurice devotes thirty-four concentrated and lucid pages of *The Kingdom of Christ* which are an admirable conspectus and critique of various denominational views of the chief Sacrament. The Quaker argument that the sacrifice required of Christians is real and personal, not the formal and, as they hold, even the fantastic sacrifice of the Eucharist, receives short shrift as an example of disobedience to the Scriptures and the Christian tradition and of preference for their own conceits.⁸³

He is impatient with the Zwinglian memorialists in their contention for the ubiquity of God as against a "localized presence": this is a mere pantheism and "everywhere" is as much a metaphor of locality as "somewhere." Moreover, it is a fearful contradiction of the great assertion that a personal God takes flesh in the Incarnation.

He is critical of the Calvinist doctrine of "receptionism" on the ground that to assert that no object is present unless faith perceives it is perilously near the next step of asserting that faith has not so much a receptive as a creative power, thus almost creating the object of belief. This seems more like rhetoric than argument in Maurice, but he seems more reasonable in the assertion that "receptionism" is a result of the doctrine of Election, so that the God-manhood dwindles into a stratagem for favouring certain chosen members of the race.

He sympathizes most with the Lutherans, for they really assert that Christ is the ground of faith; but their mistake, in his view, is that they are not able to account for the Divine Presence in the Sacrament, and they forget that we are to hold communion with Christ as He is—that is, with His body exalted at the right hand of God.⁸⁴

Maurice next devotes himself to considering Rationalistic objections to the Eucharist. The Rationalists chiefly urge the consideration that the Christian mysteries are merely a continuation of the old heathen mysteries. In a remarkably candid reply Maurice admits the continuity, acknowledges that both heathen and Christian priests have often deceived themselves and others, and declares they are liable to the same temptations at the present time. On the other hand, he asserts that the heathen mysteries kept alive a sense of the true and unchangeable, and argues that the principle of every

⁸³ Maurice would have concurred with Maritain in condemning such views as "angelism."

⁸⁴ The exposition of the Quaker, Zwinglian, Calvinist, and Lutheran views will be found in *ibid.*, pp. 317-19.

faith and society must be mysterious. While not alluding directly to the Tractarians, he says that he understands the desire to get back to the primitive age of the Church as a determined resistance to the Spirit of the present age. He refuses, however, to yield to such antiquarianism because it involves the acceptance of the logical systems of old and of the infant ideas of the nature of the physical universe. Moreover, "in doing so, we show we are not free from the spirit of the age, but are infected by it; because in doing so, we show that we are not impressed by the permanence and reality of God's Sacraments, but have yielded to the prevailing scepticism regarding them."⁸⁵

His objection to the Roman Catholic system is that the Romanists are purchasing a future benefit, not claiming a benefit already purchased for them. He well understands the mediaeval longing behind "Transubstantiation" for a "signal proof" of Divine condescension to our low estate, the sense of which could be met only by a "mighty act of divine humiliation." But with the pure gold of this intention was mixed the dross of a demand to see God in visible things and under earthly conditions rather than the craving to see Him as He is—glorified. Thus "Transubstantiation" (a fresh act of descent by Christ) replaced real faith and spiritual perception.⁸⁶

On the positive side, Maurice expounds a rich and subtle account of the central significance of the Eucharist for the life of the Church and the world. He sees the primary importance of the Eucharist as a universal witness to the Gospel of God's reconciliation with men, accomplished in the Cross. This rehearsal of God's mightiest act for man is a far more effective symbol than mere words can be. It is a clear sign that the Kingdom of Christ has been set up on earth, for it announces that "a living and perpetual communion has been established between God and man; between earth and heaven; between all spiritual creatures; that the bond of this communion is that body and blood which the Son of God and Son of Man offered up to His Father, in fulfilment of His will, in manifestation of His love; . . ."⁸⁷ Its import is so joyful, though the means of its accomplishment so agonizing, that it should be a celebration to attend it, not a religious duty. It is, in fact, "the celebration of a wedding which the Son of God has made with our race."⁸⁸

⁸⁵ *The Kingdom of Christ* (American edn., 1843), p. 336.

⁸⁶ The Roman Catholic teaching on the Mass is criticized in the same work, p. 339f. See also Maurice, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 627, and *The Prayer Book and the Lord's Prayer*, p. 5.

⁸⁷ *The Prayer Book and the Lord's Prayer* (1880), p. 230f.

⁸⁸ *The Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven* (1893), p. 227.

Maurice makes it universality the primary note, but its social character is stressed hardly less. These two notes are sounded with equal clarity in his treatment of Baptism. It is intended for all mankind, not merely for pious individuals, not for the elect only, but for all. "To each man we say, 'Christ died for thee,' so Maurice affirms, but he immediately insists that "the language which speaks to him as an individual claims him as the member of a family. He is eating the one bread which is to sustain all as well as himself; he is drinking the Divine universal life; he has no property in Christ which all men around him have not. . . ."⁸⁹ The comprehensive nature of salvation is stressed most marvellously by the Sacrament itself, for it is food for men's bodies as well as their souls, and it is the sacrament in which the true nexus of society is found. It teaches men "that God is as careful to nourish their spirits as their bodies; that as He provides for the strength and life of the one, so in this body and blood of His Son is the strength of the other; the Sacrament of His continual presence with His universal family."⁹⁰ This Sacrament manifests that "Christ is the quickener of humanity and therefore of the body and soul of each man."⁹¹ This meant that the Eucharist itself was an inspiration to that social order which Maurice and the Christian Socialists were endeavouring to make their contemporaries aware of in their double task of socializing Christianity and Christianizing the socialists.

The Sacrament has also a strong eschatological reference. It is both a reminder that man has, in addition to an earthly citizenship, a heavenly one, and that the complete establishment of the Kingdom of Christ is not an Utopian fancy but certain of consummation in eternity. It is, then, a reminder both of Good News that *was*—Christ's reconciliation of the alienated race with God the Father—and a prophetic anticipation of the Good News that *is to be*—when Christ shall be all in all. In both senses it is a Gospel. The Sacrament affirms that a perfect atonement has been made for the whole world and that men are invited to share in the humanity which Christ has taken within the veil as High Priest, and that in Him men are admitted to the knowledge of His Father and their Father. In fact, the glorified body of Christ is the permanent bond between men and God.⁹² It is "the witness that we are not dreaming a dream but expecting that which . . . must be, when we look for

⁸⁹ *The Prayer Book and the Lord's Prayer*, p. 276.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 230f.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

⁹² *The Kingdom of Christ* (1838), Vol. I, p. 205.

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a coming of Christ in the glory of His Father and the Holy Angels, for a day of Redemption, when He shall claim the universe which He has purchased. This is the voice coming to us all out of the depths of sorrow and anguish: 'Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice.'⁷³

He frequently returned to the claim that it is the Eucharist itself, not doctrines about it, that is the centre of unity, since it "keeps doctrines from perpetually clashing with each other, and men from being the slaves of doctrine."⁷⁴

Nonetheless, however Maurice might dislike the partial nature of the doctrines which the various denominations held on the nature of the Divine presence in the Holy Communion, he could not avoid the necessity of defining his own teaching on the matter. What he offers us is a combination of the Patristic doctrine (as also re-affirmed by the Tractarians) with a Calvinist modification. The Patristic doctrine of the Eucharist was that it is essentially a feast celebrating a sacrifice already completed. He phrased it thus: "I have maintained that because the sacrifice had once for all accomplished the object of bringing our race, constituted and redeemed in Christ, into a state of acceptance and union with God, *therefore* it was most fitting that there should be an act whereby we are admitted into the blessings thus claimed and secured for us."⁷⁵ There was, therefore, no question of repeating the sacrifice of Calvary; that was impossible without admitting that the sacrifice of the Cross was incomplete. It was rather that the Church on earth joined the Church triumphant in Heaven in claiming the merits of the Eternal Sacrifice by which they gained access to the Father.

The Calvinistic modification comes in his insistence that the Body of Christ is not upon the altar; it is the glorified Body which is in Heaven. Instead of thinking, with the Tractarians, that Christ descended into the Eucharistic elements anew at each consecration, Maurice thought that they were taken up into and identified with the glorified body of Christ, with the result that the worshippers are taken within the veil and claim their privilege of union with the ascended Lord.⁷⁶ There is, however, a "Real Presence" in the Sacrament, and this is an actual communion between the Living Head of the Church and His members.⁷⁷ This presence is not cre-

⁷³ *Sermons preached in Lincoln's Inn Chapel*, Vol. I, p. 73.

⁷⁴ *The Kingdom of Christ* (1838 edn.), Vol. I, p. 315.

⁷⁵ *The Kingdom of Christ* (Everyman edn.), Vol. II, p. 56.

⁷⁶ *The Kingdom of Christ* (1838 edn.), Vol. I, p. 309f.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 266.

ated by faith, but it is certainly apprehended by faith. The words of the institution are to be taken literally, but their reference is to be the glorified Body, and it was at the Ascension, not at the Last Supper, that the disciples came to understand what their Lord meant.⁹⁸ In his Sacramental doctrine we again see Maurice at his best in combining quite consistently views taken in part from the different denominations, retaining their truth, rejecting what he took to be their errors, and providing a clear and consistent synthesis.

7. *The Influence of Maurice*

One of the major justifications for including this chapter has been the central position of Maurice and his non-partisan, mediating theology, which refuses to take the extreme Evangelical view that would have made the Scriptures and the Reformation so dominating as criteria for doctrine and worship as to relegate the Prayer Book to a secondary place, or to take the Tractarian view in an extreme form so as to find it necessary to interpolate additions from the Breviary into the worship of their Churches. The point is that Maurice's view tended to produce loyalty to the Prayer Book, while each of the other views in extreme form led to a disloyalty to the accepted medium of Anglican worship. This was an influence which has continued into the present day, when it is regarded as improper to stress "party cries" within the Establishment. No one insisted upon this with more urgency and conviction than did Maurice, and this may account in part for a renaissance of interest in his theology at the present.

His influence was even more significant in another direction: namely, in the correlation of the Gospel, the Church, and the Social Order. The Evangelicals indeed preached the Gospel, but limited its availability to the elect, while atomizing the Church as a collection of converted individuals; their concern for philanthropy did not long outlive Wilberforce and Shaftesbury. For the Tractarians the Church was, indeed, understood, as the Apostolic, Holy, and Universal society, the Body of Christ, in social terms, but the Gospel was too exclusively interpreted in the Patristic mould, and so afraid were the Tractarians of liberalism in thought as well as in politics that they completely jettisoned their responsibilities for working for social justice in the name of Christ. It is to Maurice's credit that he insisted that the Gospel was universal in its scope, that theology

⁹⁸ A. R. Vidler, *The Theology of F. D. Maurice*, p. 137f., has a clear account of the technical Eucharistic theology of Maurice.

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must be unafraid of truth wherever it is to be found, that the Church bears unmistakable signs of its Divine institution in the Scriptures, the Creed, the Liturgy, the Sacraments, and the Episcopate; and that the Kingdom of Christ requires a social order that recognizes God's claim in politics and economics, as well as in the Church, and that human brotherhood in Christ demands a juster social order as its correlate. Thus it is that in him theological, ecclesiastical, and sociological concerns unite, and after him the Tractarians, who might otherwise have been lost in antiquarianism and "ritualism," take up the responsibility for a juster Christian social order.

As Dr. A. M. Ramsey so rightly points out, the proof of the influence of Maurice is seen in the life of Stewart Headlam, the first combined Tractarian priest and Christian Socialist. Headlam, who had come under Maurice's influence as an undergraduate in Cambridge when Maurice had held the professorship of moral philosophy there, carried his teaching into his parish work, his duties with the Church-and-Stage Guild, and into the foundation of the League of St. Matthew. The very articles of the League tell their own story of Maurician theological synthesis. They were: (1) To eliminate the existing prejudices, especially on the part of secularists, against the Church, her sacraments and doctrines, and to try "to justify God before the people." (For the Tractarians, this was none of the people's business!) (2) To promote frequent and reverent worship in the Holy Communion and a better observance of the teaching of the Church of England as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer. (3) To promote the study of social and political questions in the light of the Incarnation.⁹⁹ Many a funeral eulogy exaggerates, but Dr. Montagu Butler's spoke only the sober truth when he said of Maurice: "Whenever rich and poor are brought closer together, whenever men learn to think more worthily of God in Christ, the great work that he has laboured at for nearly fifty years shall be spoken of as a memorial to him."¹⁰⁰

Maurice's contribution to the understanding of the Liturgy was enough for one man's life, apart from all the rest that he did. He recognized that the Liturgy was the channel of the new life in Christ and of men's reconciliation with God and with each other; this Liturgy was neither romanticized as aesthetics nor fossilized as antiquarianism; it was witness to the proclamation to all mankind of a universal Gospel that united the race in Christ and was the ancient

⁹⁹ A. M. Ramsey (the Archbishop of York), *F. D. Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology*, p. 106.

¹⁰⁰ Maurice, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 643.

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yet ever relevant symbol of the union of Church and State, of heaven and earth, of worship and work; it was the token of the Communion of saints, a witness to the mighty succession of prophets, apostles, martyrs, and saints in the past, as well as the inspiration in the present for all who worked for the improvement of social and industrial conditions and the consolation of those who were its victims; it was also the promise for the future of a consummation of the Kingdom of Christ. It was a magnificent liturgical legacy of interpretation and inspiration to leave to the Anglican Church of the future and it constituted, in an age of acrimonious partisanship, a blood-transfusion of loyalty to the national Church.

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(The two authors above provided vivid pictures of Evangelical and Latitudinarian Anglicanism, and the latter of Methodism.)

John Betjeman, *Mount Zion, Or, in Touch with the Infinite* (n.d.), *New Bats in Old Belfries* (1945), and *A Few Late Chrysanthemums* (1954)

(This architect-poet evokes the Georgian and Victorian eras with a mixture of nostalgia and satire in relation to religion.)

DRAMA

Samuel Foote, *The Works of Samuel Foote, Esq., with Remarks on each play, and an Essay on the life, genius, and writings of the Author by John Bee, Esq.* (3 vols., London, 1830). The following plays satirizing Methodism in general and Whitefield in particular were used: *The Minor* (1760), *The Orators* (1762), and *The Methodist*

JOURNALS

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NOVELS

Samuel Butler, *The Way of all Flesh: A Novel* (1903), was used for its satirical account of Evangelical family prayers

Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell, *Ruth* (1853), was used for its sympathetic account of Unitarianism

Mary Anne Evans ("George Eliot"), *Scenes from Clerical Life* (2 vols., 1858), and *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), were used for their accounts of Anglican clergy and Dissenting ministers

John Henry Newman, *Loss and Gain* (1848), was used as a supplement to the *Apologia*, as expressing the ardour of a neophyte Catholic

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William Hale White ("Mark Rutherford"), *The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford* (1881), and *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane*, were used for their pictures of Dissent, Congregational and Unitarian

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