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THE ARCHITECTURE OF OUR REFORMED CHURCHES

I

THE Reformed Church has been subject to a good deal of criticism in recent years on the ground of its supposed opposition to beauty, its joyless attitude to life. This has led to a re-examination of the attitude of the Reformers to Art. Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, in spite of their theological differences, all agreed in deprecating senseless popular iconoclasm.

"What you speak of Mr. Knox preaching for the pulling down of churches is like the rest of your lies," wrote Baillie the Covenanter. But even Presbyterians have unduly emphasised the negative side of the Reformers' teaching on Worship: they have now been recalled to the true principles of their Church by Dr. W. D. Maxwell in *John Knox's Genevan Service Book 1556* and in his lucid *Outline of Christian Worship* (Oxford, 1936). Calvin was essentially a Churchman, anxious to retain a weekly Communion and to give to the Lord's Supper the central place that it held in the Early Church. While one can give this a one-sided interpretation, it is a position that is difficult to disprove. Calvinist Churches in Britain and America have in the past often unwittingly identified the views of Calvin with the superficial opinions and lax practices of the sects and of popular evangelicalism.

It is of interest, therefore, to ask, Was there a Reformed type of church building, *sui generis* in architecture and plan? If Gothic may be described as "Scholasticism in stone" and Baroque as "the crystallisation of the Counter-Reformation", what is the Reformed equivalent? Before we discuss the problem of new buildings erected after the Reformation, we must glance at mediaeval churches in Protestant hands. In Germany the Dominicans of the later Middle Ages had promoted the erection of spacious churches without transepts and other structural complications, designed to aid preaching (*Hallenkirchen*).

The Lutherans made as few outward changes as possible apart from building galleries and concentrating attention on the part of the nave nearest the pulpit. I have before me an old engraving of Strasbourg Cathedral as it was before Louis XIV seized it and restored it to the Romanists in 1681. The symbolism is unspoilt; only the essential furnishings are altered. German texts and the date MDXXXI are inscribed above the chancel arch. The pulpit remains at one of the pillars in the nave. The rood screen remains, but the Communion Table stands in front of it with seats for elders and ministers behind. The ordinary services, like Communion, were conducted by the minister standing behind the table—a significant fact, considering that from the Strasbourg Liturgy of 1537–9 are derived the Genevan and the Scottish Reformed rites. If modern Presbyterian ministers feel that it is unworshipful to conduct the whole service from the pulpit here is their precedent—the ancient "basilican position" behind the Communion table, not the Anglican position at lectern and prayer desk (associated with the choral offices of Mattins and Evensong).

In Elizabethan England, Calvinist influence resulted in the removal of the altar in favour of a table which could be placed in the nave, at the front or in the centre of the chancel, surrounded by a wainscoted enclosure with seats on four sides (as at Hayle, Gloucestershire). "God's Board," resembling the handsome domestic tables of the age, with their massive legs connected with a band of carving or texts, was intended to be brought out and "spread" in the midst of the faithful, gathered to partake of a common meal of fellowship. That the Evangelical party in the Church of England remembers with affection the Reformed rite in spite of the effacing influence of the Oxford Movement—is indicated by the excellent illustrations of pre-Laudian tables in *A Protestant Dictionary*, by C. H. H. Wright and C. Neil (London, 1904). I think that most of us could approve of much ancient symbolism in English cathedrals and parish churches but for the altar, the essential sign of priesthood and eucharist-cult.

In Switzerland, many of the pre-Reformation churches have been well preserved, and in recent years restored, while maintaining their Reformed character with the Communion Table either in front of the pulpit or at the front of the chancel. German Reformed churches, which in recent years have admitted

a good deal of colour and symbolism into the sanctuary and its worship, have generally been careful to emphasise the simplicity of the Lord's table (e.g. the University Church, Marburg). The pictures of the Dutch Masters reveal interiors bereft indeed of colour and statuary, but demonstrating the power of pure Architecture. Great traceried windows with clear glass light up spacious vistas unencumbered with pews; whitewashed walls form a cool background for burnished brass and richly-carved woodwork. Here is no tawdry ornament but the clean austerity of the Reformed faith. The pre-Reformation churches of Holland are still noble buildings, spoilt only by concert-hall chairs arranged too often as if the church were an amphitheatre. The chancels, which are separated by a handsome screen from the nave, might easily be utilised for the Lord's Supper, as in the larger churches there is ample space for the people to actually sit down in fellowship at tables (this is actually done at Linton-in-Teviotdale, Scotland, and also, I believe, in the Grosse Kirche, Emden, Germany). To abandon the chancel as place for monuments to the dead is a very negative way of protesting against the errors of Popery!

Scotland did not enter into such a rich inheritance of mediaeval shrines as her southern neighbour. Her country churches had always been simple enough, but in the towns many a beautiful sanctuary in Protestant hands was needlessly defaced by neglect, parsimony and utilitarianism. We may freely admit that for nearly three centuries after the Reformation Gothic was considered obsolete throughout Europe. Representative English men like Evelyn and Wren spoke of " the imbecility of pointed arches " which ought to be " banished from judicious eyes, among the reliques of a barbarous age ". " Classical taste " was so much in the ascendant that even Roman Catholic dignitaries on the continent re-modelled Gothic churches in the fashionable Baroque of the period—plaster vaulting, white glass, plenty of gilt and colour. The fact that Gothic was unfashionable did not, however, lead to the decay, abandonment and demolition of old churches as in Scotland. Mediaeval churches, cruciform and vaulted, are ill-adapted to the Hearing of the Word, but that is no excuse for barbaric treatment, even in a poor country. After a transition period in the nineteenth century when Romanticism preferred a picturesque ruin to an unsuccessful restoration, there was a movement to re-condition

old abbeys and cathedrals, inspired by the Scottish Ecclesiological Society. Restoration was certainly called for, but has in some cases been carried through at a sacrifice of Reformed principles, the altar-like " holy table " being removed from the people to a distant "east end", and the chancel furnished with stalls for a surpliced choir. Prayer desks and eagle lecterns have been freely introduced,—not furnishings in the reformed Anglican tradition but the type standardised by the Oxford Movement.

Psychologically, the over-emphasis on ritual characteristic of our Scottish Cathedrals is a reaction from the deadness and neglect of former days. There does not, however, seem to be anything objectionable in the idea of a Presbyterian Cathedral, if by that we mean simply the most important church of a city or area. For the word " cathedral ", meaning " bishop's seat ", only became common in the late eighteenth century. In the Middle Ages men spoke of *Ecclesia mater*, *Ecclesia major*, and *Domus Dei* (whence—*Duomo*, *Dom*, *Domkyrka*). Even in a new country like the United States the need has often been expressed for a non-episcopal equivalent to the mother-church of an Anglican diocese. And Australian Presbyterianism has now its St. Andrew's Cathedral in Canberra, the Commonwealth capital.

II

We are mainly concerned, however, with the evolution of a Reformed type of church adapted to the preaching of the Word and in keeping with the " ethos " of the Gospel. The Reformation occurred long after the decline of Gothic, which was perhaps a blessing as Gothic developed in response to the intoning and chanting of the Mass. The classical style, in the ascendant in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was much better adapted for the acoustics now so important. This was recognised by the Jesuits, who on the Continent built pretentious but economical churches, theatrical yet awe-inspiring, appealing both to eye and ear. Broken cornices, curved façades, twisted columns, gesticulating sculpture . . . this was the Southern and Romanist interpretation of Renaissance Architecture, as opposed to the Northern and essentially Protestant restraint that prefers symmetry and simplicity. The first tendency is Baroque, and can be seen anywhere in Italy and Austria: the second is Palladian, and may be seen at its best in the London

City Churches of Wren and their "children" in New England. This brief comparison must suffice for the present.

In countries where the National Church became Reformed there were any number of mediaeval churches available, and few new churches were needed. But in countries like France, where the Reformed Church was a strenuous minority among a hostile majority, churches of a new and radical type were required. These differed from the traditional cruciform type, not merely out of preference but because the law required a "temple" to be a building that could not possibly be mistaken for a Catholic church.

Moreover, the Huguenot power was concentrated in certain cities where there was a large community and considerable sitting accommodation was required. The earliest of these "temples" was Lyons ("Paradis" 1564), a polygenal building with galleries—a quaint engraving of the interior with a service in progress may be seen in Fritsch's *Kirchenbau des Protestantismus* (Berlin, 1895). Under the Edict of Nantes, the following were erected:—La Rochelle, seating 3,500 (1603); Dieppe, seating 6,000 (1601); Caen, which reminded people of a *godiveau* or *pâté* (1612). The leading architects of the period were evidently interested in the problems of Reformed Architecture; de l'Orme designed the Tuileries as well as the La Rochelle church; Dr. Pannier reproduces many "fancy" sketches and plans of "Temples" (*L'Eglise Reformé de Paris sous Louis XIII*, 1932). But the *chef-d'oeuvre* that was to serve as a model in France and abroad was the Temple de Charenton, on the outskirts of Paris, designed in 1623 by Salomon de Brosse, architect of the Luxembourg Palace (where the Senate now meets). The Charenton Temple was destroyed by order of Louis XIV in 1685, but with difficulty, so solid was the construction. There are a considerable number of engravings and contemporary descriptions which give a faithful idea of its design.

Reformed Worship not being permitted in Paris, there was a general exodus to Charenton at week-ends, the temple accommodating over 5,000 hearers. It was the fashion for intelligent foreigners to make the "visite de Charenton" by boat, and later to record their impressions. There they would find quite a community within a surrounding wall, sheltered by elms—hotels, restaurants, offices, and bookshops. Rostagny, a

Romanist, gives valuable detail in his entertaining but controversial "pelerinage du petit troupeau" (1695).

> " Plusieurs grands piliers tout auteur,
> Soutiennent cet amphithéâtre,
> Rempli de bancs dans son contour,
> Pour voir au bas comme au théâtre.
> Trois portes, huit grands escaliers,
> Pour monter aux deux galeries,
> L'une sur l'autre, par piliers."

Dr. Pannier points out that this temple was certainly inspired by the secular "basilica" of the Roman Empire. The plan was a simple rectangle. There were two tiers of galleries, supported by stout Doric columns. The timber ceiling was in the form of a barrel-vault, on which the Decalogue was inscribed in gold on a blue background—a pleasant contrast to the white walls. The windows were of "verre fin de France", decorated with fleur-de-lys and armorial bearings (forbidden in Temples by royal decree, 1672). Rostagny, used to "dim religious light", has his joke at the expense of the worshippers:—

> " De tous côtés on voit le jour;
> Mais qui pourra être assez fous
> Pour dire ici qu'une tanière [=den]
> Ne renfermant que des hibous
> Ait besoin de tant de lumière!"

The canopied pulpit stood in the middle of the far end, in front of which was a plain Communion table covered with an embroidered cloth. An important feature of the "east end" was the "parquet" before the pulpit, a balustraded platform with seats of honour (the *only* pews with backs!); here sat elders, peers, *dames de qualité*, ambassadors and other distinguished strangers. In spite of Presbyterian polity, there was much rivalry over precedence. There was even a different cemetery for the privileged and the *menu peuple*. An excellent account of Church life is given in De Félice's *Les Protestants d'autrefois* (Paris 1897).

Between the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) and the French Revolution the very existence of the Reformed Church was denied by law. It is amazing how in the Desert the Huguenots preserved their faith, their ministry and even their Calvinist Liturgy. When Napoleon "established" (in order to control) the Reformed, he allotted to them a number of

Catholic churches—mostly plain but substantial classical buildings, of which the most notable is the Oratoire du Louvre, Paris. But the Bourbon Restoration of 1815 brought new restrictions. In villages, "temples" had to resemble private houses; in towns, they might resemble schools or law courts, but not "churches". Since 1870 full liberty has been taken advantage of to build temples with towers and belfries. Romanesque Architecture, with the plan a Greek Cross (galleries in three arms, pulpit and Communion table in the fourth) has become common—e.g. Temple des Brotteaux, Lyons, 1884. The new church at Auteuil (1932) with its great fresco of the Crucifixion in the chancel marks a new departure. But temples at Algiers (1843) and Marseilles (1926) profess to take Charenton as model. And the French Churches of the Dispersion throughout Germany have faithfully kept that precedent in mind. The Französische Kirche at the Gendarmen-Markt in Berlin (1701) indeed combines the rectangular lines of Charenton with the polygonal tendency of the earliest French temples!

Germany was influenced in many ways by the Huguenot exiles who were gladly welcomed after 1685. The kings of Prussia, Calvinist rulers of a Lutheran people, were glad to have allies in their crusade against altars and other vestiges of Catholicism. Lutherans, finding that the cruciform type of church was ill-adapted to acoustics, were often ready to adopt a more concentrated, logical plan whereby preacher and people could be brought into closer touch. Jacob Furttembach had (after the Thirty Years War) proposed that altar, pulpit and font should be closely grouped together. But there is no doubt that the *Zentralbau*, or "concentrated", church (square, round or polygonal) advanced to favour largely through the German Reformed Church, which was closely linked with exile Huguenot congregations. From the eighteenth century onwards there was a steady output of German books on Protestant Church planning. The most notable of these writers was Leonard Sturm (1669–1729). "Purity rather than Pomp, Form rather than Ornament" should be the means of expression. The pulpit should be centrally placed, with the Holy Table directly in front of it. Halls, classrooms and libraries should be grouped in an organic way round the *Predigtraum*.

Sturm was a pioneer in many ways; his mistake was the elevation of the organ pipes to the most conspicuous position

in church. This may be seen on a huge scale in Bähr's Frauenkirche at Dresden (1722), a sort of white-and-gold religious opera-house seated for 7,000 with seven tiers of balconies. The organ has always played a considerable part in Lutheran Church worship. But what are we to say of Presbyterian churches which for centuries held the "kist o' whistles" in contempt and within the last sixty years have exalted the organ pipes into the most conspicuous position—a Dagon in the sanctuary?

In the early nineteenth century the Romantic Movement in Germany resuscitated Gothic Architecture and the cruciform plan. Neo-Catholicism secured an ardent supporter after 1840 in Frederick William IV of Prussia, whose aim it was to throw a veil of glamour over Lutheranism by magnifying the altar and minimising the pulpit. By 1891, however, opposition to mediaevalism crystallised in the "Wiesbaden Programme" which sought to restore "the lost tradition" of concentrated planning, a central pulpit and altar in front. This tendency is well illustrated in an inexpensive survey—O. Schönhagen's *Stätte der Weihe* (Berlin, 1919). It is interesting to notice how Architecture has acted like a bridge in bringing the Reformed and Lutheran Churches closer, just as the worship-traditions of the two confessions have almost blended in the Rhineland and Wurtemberg.

III

Turning to Holland, we find Huguenot influence strong in the seventeenth century. During "the Classical Period" of Dutch Art, the mediaeval instinct persisted in spire, lofty roof and aisles. But the disadvantages of the cruciform plan for new churches were obvious. Even the Arminians of Amsterdam chose the Calvinist temple of Charenton as their model! Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries this influence worked in favour of concentrated planning without leading to undesirable standardisation. The Greek cross, the square, the circle and the polygon were used with variety and originality. Even those who do not read Dutch can examine with pleasure and profit the innumerable illustrations and plans in Dr. M. D. Ozinga's *De Protestantsche Kerkenbouw in Nederland* (Amsterdam, 1929). The National Church of Holland still maintains its austere simplicity in public worship, yet its post-Reformation churches (till the nineteenth century at least)

are sanctuaries of which any country might be proud. Puritanism and parsimony have not made here an unholy alliance. Those who are content with a bare hall for the public worship of God, when they could afford better, are imitating the sects rather than walking in the true Reformed tradition.

Is it often realised that Sir Christopher Wren was the pioneer of the Anglo-Saxon type of Protestant church? England was well supplied with mediaeval buildings, so there was little opportunity of experiment till the Fire of London (1666) called for fifty new parish churches as well as a new St. Paul's. Here was an opportunity for impressive town-planning, with new churches at the head of vistas. Wren was thwarted by innate English conservatism, but made the most of the narrow streets by not wasting money on elaborate façades, reserving it rather for the steeples that with delightful variation still break the City's skyline. An irregular site he regarded as a stimulus to an original solution. The rectangle, with a gallery in the aisles and at the back, was employed when possible. Otherwise, a square would be transformed by the ingenious disposition of classical columns and cupola into a charming and surprisingly spacious interior, e.g. St. Stephen's, Walbrook (behind the Mansion House). Wren recognised even in the reign of Charles II that there were certain permanent effects of the late Puritan supremacy as regards the English attitude to public worship. He started with the essentials of the meeting house—the need of hearing and seeing. But he was not content till he had expressed these essentials in noble architecture. He reduced or even dispensed with the chancel so that the Communion table could be brought near the people; the choir and organ he placed in the back gallery. The high box pews were carefully panelled; the pulpit and reredos were richly carved. Light was admitted through large windows, and the plaster walls, ceilings and cupolas were cool and white. During the Victorian period, these restful, dignified City churches were shamefully treated by "restorers", who thought they could improve Wren's work by making it "more ecclesiastical". They aimed at removing every trace of Protestantism, by installing Gothic Revival choirstalls and eagle lecterns, frescoing the walls, and "reversing revelation" by crude "picture windows" which made a virtue of "seeing through a glass darkly".

Godwin's *London City Churches* (1839) reveal their condition before these innovations. Some of the Wren churches, still unspoiled, are—St. Mildred, Bread Street; St. Mary-at-Hill; Christ Church, Newgate; and St. Bride's, Fleet Street. But since Birch published his monumental *London Churches of the XVII and XVIII Centuries* (1896) there has been some attempt to undo the mistakes of the nineteenth century.

Wren's successors carried on his tradition in an attenuated, meagre form during the eighteenth century till it expired in the "proprietary chapel" of the early Victorian period satirised by Thackeray. This was the period of the "three-decker" pulpit, often centrally placed (a definite departure from Anglican tradition). But the steeple-and-portico type, as represented by St. Martin's-in-the-Fields (Gibbs, 1724) served as a model that could easily be reproduced in New England and even gain in flavour by being built in brick or timber painted white, with green shutters. The carpenter could not go far astray if he followed directions as to classic proportions. The "Colonial" church still stands on many a village green shaded by elms, the centre of parish life, exerting a very real influence on the taste and the religious affections of the community. The simple, rectangular interiors (with clear glass in the windows) would be generally restful if they had not been interfered with in the nineteenth century and the dignified pulpit, with its carved sounding board ripped out to make way for a secular platform, fitted with a desk and three chairs. Too often the wall behind the pulpit (left blank by the builder) has been filled with an array of gilded organ pipes. About the middle of the nineteenth century the old craftsmanship of New England was killed by industrialism. Gothic, Romanesque and other dead styles were resurrected and incongruously combined with semi-circular pews of the auditorium type. Since the Great War this disregard of ecclesiastical propriety has by reaction led to exaggeration in the opposite direction—the building of cruciform Gothic churches that are often beautiful buildings but are ill-adapted to a Presbyterian or Congregational service. It is almost axiomatic with architects like Dr. Cram that the Communion table be placed at the back of a deep chancel, as altar-like as possible. Curiously enough, Unitarians eagerly adopt this Catholic scheme. Extremes meet.

It may surprise many people to know that in England there are a number of dissenting meeting houses of architectural value.

Externally, they are unassuming, almost domestic in character, situated in side streets, sometimes surrounded with a graveyard. These were built mainly by the Presbyterians when a grudging toleration was accorded in 1688. They are now usually in the hands of scanty Unitarian congregations—monuments of an Age of Faith before their forefathers lapsed into Arminianism, Arianism and ultimately Socinianism. Fifty years ago, when imitation Gothic was in the ascendant, so little interest was taken in these buildings that they tended to lose their character through "improvements". But modern architects like Mr. Dykes Bower and Mr. Hope Bagenal (the latter a leading authority on acoustics) claim for the eighteenth century meeting house a special place in "the English heritage"; and, without seeking to reproduce more copies, believe that they have architectural values worth embodying in a twentieth century Protestant church that would combine convenience, inexpensiveness and dignity. Certainly, a blend of simple classical and domestic architecture avoids that pretentious ugliness so characteristic of the Victorian Nonconformist "chapel"—a confused attempt to combine an "audit-orium" with Gothic, Romanesque or Byzantine architecture.

Among the more significant interiors may be mentioned Friar Street, Ipswich (1700); Churchgate Street, Bury St. Edmonds, Suffolk (1711); Crediton, Devon (1721). The usual type is rectangular, with the pulpit on the middle of the long side. There is unfortunately a lack of organic unity. The weakness consists in having two columns in the centre of the church supporting the roof, which (externally) is twin-ridged, with a "valley" between. The gallery pillars might well have been extended so as to support the roof (as in the London City churches). The high-water mark of English Nonconformist Architecture is certainly the Octagon Chapel, Norwich (1756) supported by eight magnificent Corinthian columns—an ideal church for congregational worship without loss of architectural effect. The Church of England before the Oxford Movement also produced a number of round and polygonal churches, including St. Chad's, Shrewsbury (1794), St. Mary-in-the-Castle, Hastings (1828), and All Saints, Newcastle (1828).

IV

The Scottish type of Reformed church of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries could not boast of the mellow wood-

work, the brass chandeliers and carved pulpits of the English meeting house. The Moderates prided themselves on their culture, their advance on the barbarism of "high-flying" Calvinists. But merchants were not prepared to spend on the House of God what they readily spent on their own houses; St. Andrew's, Glasgow (1740-55) modelled on St. Martin's-in-the-Fields being a quite exceptional monument of burgher generosity. And landowners, legally responsible for the upkeep of ecclesiastical fabrics, were far more interested in mansion-building and landscape gardening than in caring for country kirks. These *heritors* left a miserable inheritance of barn-like places of worship. What their Episcopalian posterity attributed to the evil genius of Presbyterianism was due to *their* evil genius! It is no exaggeration to say that the laird's stables, in many a country parish, built of freestone, with a clock tower over a monumental archway, is a better building than the kirk. But the nineteenth century renovator has often made things worse by substituting tinted panes for clear glass, and pitch-pine for deal. Currie Kirk, near Edinburgh, is a good example of "heritor's Gothic" pleasantly restored.

The Edinburgh city churches of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century are dignified classical buildings with steeples, well related to the formal town-planning of that day. But no attempt was made to make the interiors interesting (like the houses of that period) with panelling, metal work and delicately moulded plaster. They are simply bleak. Much earlier, an example was set at Burntisland (1592) of how a church may embody the "community sense" of a sea-port and a royal burgh. This church bears the mark of trade with Netherlands; its four massive piers standing four-square, its magistrates' seat richly decorated and its "lofts" adorned with the insignia of the various guilds and crafts—all remind us of a Dutch church. It is interesting to compare it with Old Meeting (Congregational) Church, Norwich, (1693), which has definite Dutch features; like the typical Scots post-Reformation church, it has the pulpit on the long side. It was only in the early nineteenth century that the pulpit began to be placed in the centre of the "east end," and the passage from one end of the building to the other done away with. In Scotland, temporary tables were set in this passage, at which communicants actually sat down in companies—an arrangement recently restored in Iona parish church.

It is interesting to notice that a simple "vernacular" Gothic survived the Reformation, also the cruciform plan with short arms, e.g. Lauder. The transept behind the pulpit tended to be dispensed with and a T-shaped galleried church was evolved, an excellent auditory type that avoided the monotony of the square "barn" type. Unfortunately, this national tradition was not developed in the nineteenth century. There was the brilliant episode of Graeco-Egyptian in Glasgow under "Greek" Thomson. "Perpendicular" Gothic was introduced—which was practically unknown in mediaeval Scotland. Other mediaeval "period styles" followed—imperfectly expressed. And at the end of the century it was the ideal of the liturgical party in the Kirk to build slavish copies of Anglican churches with deep chancels. At last, those who concern themselves with Worship are beginning to realise that a choir in the Anglican and the Presbyterian traditions perform different functions, and in the latter are best placed among the worshippers or in a rear gallery where they can be heard and not seen. Before the Great War, Dr. Macgregor Chalmers used the simple round-headed Romanesque arch with distinction, and with some respect to Scottish tradition. But in recent years the numerous "Church Extension" buildings have been largely erected in a kind of shoddy "near Gothic", the cruciform plan and the chancel being axiomatic. Indeed, the tendency is to push the pulpit more and more into the corner and to reduce it in size so that it is neither conveniently situated nor expressive of the dignity of the Word; while the Communion table is too often shaped like a chest with a solid front. Some of these innovations are actually supported on the grounds that they express a reversion to the better Reformed tradition before it was disintegrated through the malign influence of English Puritanism! What the Reformed tradition *really* was may be ascertained by consulting Dr. W. McMillan's *Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church*, 1550-1638.

V

All this is a challenge to those who are proud of the Reformed heritage. We who belong to the oecumenical fellowship of the Reformed Church, whether in Great Britain, or the Continent or America, need to study afresh our own principles in their bearings on the field of worship and religious art. Calvin claimed every realm of life for God. Too often his descendants

have been timid, lax, negative, individualistic or stereotyped. In Scotland, some usages have admittedly been claimed as Presbyterian, which have really filtered in from English Nonconformity; while the liturgical party have been too ready to claim as Reformed practices that are merely Anglican. On the Continent, there is a tendency to forget that we must *create* as well as *inherit*. To standardise for all time the church furnishings and devotional methods of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is to insulate oneself unnecessarily from the needs of to-day. Why should the spirit of the age be resisted by locking up Reformed churches during the week and even on the Lord's day, except for a couple of hours? In America, the principles of the Reformed Church as regards worship seem almost to have been lost among Presbyterians. On the one hand, worship is degraded to the free-and-easy levels of Methodism, the metrical psalms forgotten, the choir exalted on a stage behind the preacher, with gilded organ pipes as background. On the other hand, Anglican models in worship and architecture are slavishly followed—as if American Presbyterians had no treasure of their own from which to bring forth things old and new.

"Modernistic Architecture" has been called in to aid church builders in financial extremity. I do not feel that there is salvation in this *deux ex machina* that would reduce architecture to engineering. Many Roman Catholic churches on the Continent are being built in the fashionable "factory style," and perhaps this is in keeping with a mechanical *opus operatum* conception of the sacraments. But the Living God delighteth not in such clever mechanism—which too often is associated with sculpture and painting of a repellent "futurist" type. It is impossible to do justice to the problem of contemporary church building at the close of this paper. I can only refer readers to the following books, illustrated with photographs and plans:—Wattjes' *Moderne Kerken* (Amsterdam, 1931), Distel's *Protestantischer Kirchenbau seit* 1900 *in Deutschland* (Leipzig, 1933), *New Churches Illustrated* (Incorp. Ch. Bld. Socy., London 1936. 3/6), R. A. Cram's *American Church Building of To-day* (New York, 1929). I feel that to break with the Christian Architecture of the past is as futile as to dabble in "period styles" that have no relation either to the life of the people or their environment. The Reformed churches must no longer be negative, but build their positive and robust theology into their Services and

Buildings as well as into Catechisms and Confessions of Faith. They must cease to regard the sanctuary as significant only in connection with a maximum number of sittings. "Beauty and strength are in His sanctuary."

Therefore let us rise up and build!

> "O, shall we never learn
> The truth all time has taught,
> That without God as Architect,
> Our building comes to naught!"
> (*John Oxenham*).

Alva, Scotland. ANDREW L. DRUMMOND