

The Free Church Tradition and Worship*

I ASSUME that it is corporate and public worship that is primarily in mind. Our fathers used to call it "social worship" and I wonder whether any significance attaches to the fact that we now call it "public worship." At this point, as with our doctrinal inheritance, we are part of the fruit of the great Reformation movement of the 16th century and the heirs not of one but of several of the great reformers of that century. Our heritage is a varied and complex one. It is this which accounts both for its strength and its weakness.

First and foremost comes our debt to Luther. For the mediaeval Church the Mass was the centre and climax of worship. It had become by the 16th century—in the words of W. D. Maxwell—"a dramatic spectacle, culminating not in communion but in the miracle of transubstantiation" (*An Outline of Christian Worship*, 1939 edition, p. 72). The service was said inaudibly in a tongue of which few even of the priests remained really masters. Many of the latter were illiterate and the sermon had long fallen into general disuse. The great contribution of the dynamic Luther was to restore the vernacular as the medium of worship. His German Bible and his German Mass set the pattern for many other lands and races besides the German, among them our own. But Luther did more than that. He revised the Roman service of Mass in the interests of gospel purity and then, perhaps less soundly in the long run, as a medium of instruction. He gave centrality to the sermon, and the other great reformers followed him. The pulpit was made higher than the altar, for Luther held that salvation is through the Word and that without the Word the elements of bread and wine are devoid of sacramental quality. Moreover, the Word (in itself perhaps an ambiguous and contentious conception) is sterile unless it is spoken. But Luther did more than this. The Roman Church of his day did not encourage people to communicate more often than once a year and then only in one kind. At one time Luther held that the Supper should be celebrated daily. Later he accepted the practice of a celebration each Sunday. More important—in the words of Bainton—the common man was "invited to drink the wine at the sacrament, to take the elements with his own hands, to commune without previous confession, to hear the words of institution in his own tongue and to participate extensively in sacred song" (*Here I Stand*, 1950, p. 202).

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This last point proved specially significant, for Zwingli and Calvin had not only no interest in music but regarded it as dangerously worldly. Luther's love of music not only opened the way in due time for the chorales of Bach, but also gave a lasting and glorious impetus to the hymnody of the Church. His doctrinal approach to the Supper was also of decisive importance for our own as for other traditions. Bainton declares that his "principle was that the mass is not a sacrifice but a thanksgiving to God and a communion with believers. It is not a sacrifice in the sense of placating God, because He does not need to be placated; and it is not an oblation in the sense of something offered, because man cannot offer to God, but only receive" (*ibid.*, p. 202). Maxwell defines Luther's attitude more closely and for our purpose more satisfactorily.

"Luther . . . sharply attacked the mediæval view of the sacrifice of the mass, which taught that the mass was a repetition of the sacrificial death of Christ. But he did not make the mistake of discarding altogether the idea of sacrifice. He transformed it, giving it a truer interpretation. In the eucharist, he declared, we do not offer Christ; He was offered once for all on Calvary. But we enter into His sacrifice, 'offer ourselves up together with Christ; that is, we cast ourselves upon Christ with faith in His covenant.' We offer ourselves, our souls and bodies, in fellowship with Him; and we offer a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving as we identify ourselves with Him. In this sense, the Lord's supper is a sacrifice, but it is not a veritable re-enactment of our Lord's sacrificial death" (*op. cit.*, p. 75).

Basically our Free Church worship follows the main lines laid down by Luther.

Zwingli did not regard the Supper as the norm of Christian worship, nor did he favour frequent communion. The actual content of his services was far barer than Luther's. His doctrine of the Supper—often described as memorialism—came to have considerable influence on Independents and Baptists in the 18th and 19th centuries, though not nearly so exclusively as has sometimes been suggested. It is, however, to Zwingli—later supported by John Knox—that we apparently owe our practice of sitting at the communion service (*cp.* Robert Baillie on 17th c. Independents, quoted by Maxwell, p. 126n.).

Calvin, to whom we next turn and who obviously at many points, doctrinal and practical, has influenced our Free Church tradition, decreed that the elements be received either standing or kneeling. I was interested at the Baptist Church in Paris in August to find that we stood around the table as we received the bread and wine. Though he favoured weekly communion services, Calvin was unable

to get the Geneva magistrates to agree with him and there developed in the Reformed and Presbyterian tradition the practice of quarterly communion, carefully prepared for and with the table, as it was said, properly "fenced." When Knox got his way in Scotland, he not only followed Zwingli rather than Calvin at this point, he also forbade kneeling and made the people come forward and sit at a long Table placed in the quire or nave of the church. This practice continued on into the 19th century and is still to be found in a few Scottish churches and in certain parts of the continent. For the Communion Service held in the New Kirke in Amsterdam in 1948 during the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches long tables were set up in the centre of the church and the hundreds of worshippers sat down in relays and passed the elements from one to another.

We can recognise features from all these reformers—Luther, Zwingli and Calvin—in our Free Church worship. But we have also an inheritance, and not its least part, from the left wing of the Reformation, or what G. H. Williams has recently called "the Radical Reformation." Whether or not he influenced the main Anabaptist movement the fiery Thomas Müntzer certainly provoked Luther at a number of points and deserves remembrance for his hymns, his strong social sympathies and his challenge to paedobaptism. Indeed, for Müntzer outer baptism is unnecessary for inclusion in the church; what is important is inner baptism, understood in the light of the Fourth Gospel as "the whole discipline of the God-bestowed cross which leads to the revelatory descent of the Holy Spirit" (*The Radical Reformation*, 1962, p. 52). Müntzer's attitude to outward ceremonies and his emphasis on the Holy Spirit was taken up by a number of the radicals of the 16th century and passed over into the individuals and groups whom Rufus Jones calls "the Spiritual Reformers". Our debt to the Swiss Brethren is even clearer. They were the pioneers of the "gathered church" tradition, and there was an apostolic simplicity in the way they administered believers' baptism, celebrated the Lord's Supper and gathered for Bible study (see G. H. Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-124). To this should be added their readiness—often, of course, under compulsion—to hold services in the open at night; their eager evangelistic zeal, making them preachers in the market-place; "lay" evangelists we should be inclined to say, though that is not perhaps a really happy way of expressing it. The consciousness of being prophets and apostles in the N.T. sense had broadened to include a considerable proportion of the male members of the community. But it is important to note that the 16th century Anabaptist manuals make it clear that none could take such tasks upon himself without the ratification of the community. Riedemann's

Rechenschaft, which dates from c. 1540 (and of which an English edition appeared in 1950), states explicitly:

"It is not for all and sundry to take upon themselves such an office, namely that of teaching and baptising. . . . None must take upon himself or accept such power unless he be chosen properly and rightly by God in His Church and community. . . . If the Church needeth one or, indeed, more ministers, she must not elect them as pleaseth herself, but wait upon the Lord to see whom He chooseth and showeth them. . . . If there be many of them we wait to see which the Lord showeth us by lot . . . this appointment to the office is then confirmed before the Church through the laying on of the elders' hands" (*op. cit.*, pp. 80-81).

Riedemann lists among the different ministers (1) apostles or evangelists, who travel; (2) bishops and shepherds, who remain in one place; (3) helpers, who have the gift of exhortation; (4) rulers "who order and arrange the home or the Church" and are also called "ministers of temporal need"; and (5) elders, who help the local pastor "to bear the burden" (p. 82). The office of "pastor" was already defined in the Schleithem Articles, drafted in 1527, probably by Michael Sattler, who shortly afterwards suffered a martyr's death (see G. H. Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 184). For Riedemann "the meat, or the partaking of the bread and wine of the Lord, is a sign of the community of his body, in that each and every member thereby declared himself to be of the one mind, heart and spirit of Christ" (*Rechenschaft*, E. T., p. 87). These Anabaptists forsook the church buildings of their day in much the same manner as George Fox did in England a century later. But they believed in singing, as the *Ausbund* shows, though their emphasis was on "singing in the Spirit" (*ibid.*, p. 123), often it would seem solo fashion. They met at night or early in the morning to escape the attention of their enemies and to avoid interference with their working day. These gatherings are probably to be regarded as the prototypes of our week-evening services and meetings for Bible study and prayer. The radicals took the Bible in the vernacular into their own hands, read it for themselves and exercised their own judgment upon it. Those they chose as ministers and teachers were after the first generation often, indeed usually, without University training. "These gatherings of study and mutual exhortation grounded the 16th century nonconformist in the fundamentals of his faith," says G. H. Williams, "opened to him the awesome vistas of other times and nations, exercised him in Scriptural accountability (1 Peter 4: 5), and promoted in him that Scriptural

cunning and inspired readiness of answer (Luke 12 : 11) that alternately baffled and impressed the magistrates and divines before whose tribunals he was summoned to appear" (*op. cit.*, p. 816).

That, as you will recognise, is an equally good description of the 17th century nonconformists of this country, of men like Bunyan and others who suffered for conscience sake under both the early and the later Stuart kings.

This radical tradition became part of our inheritance by way of the little congregations of Separatists. A description of the worship of a company ministered to by Henry Barrow in 1588 has come down to us and is very like what we know of the worship of the exiles ministered to in Amsterdam by Smyth and Helwys. The letter sent in 1609 to a kinsman in England by Hugh and Anne Bromehead has been often quoted and can be read in the pages of Champlin Burrage or my *Fellowship of Believers*. The earlier account is less familiar.

"In the summer time they met together in the fields a mile or more about London. There they sit down upon a bank and divers of them expound out of the bible so long as they are there assembled. In the winter time they assemble themselves by 5 of the clock in the morning to that house where they made their Conventicle for that Sabbath day men and women together. There they continue in their kind of prayer and exposition of Scripture all that day. They dine together, after dinner making collection to pay for their diet and what money is left some one of them carrieth it to the prisons where any of their sect be committed. In their prayer one speaketh and the rest do groan or sob or sigh, as if they would ring out tears. . . . Their prayer is extemporal. In their conventicles they use not the Lord's Prayer, nor of any form of set prayer" (see Burrage, *Early English Dissenters* II, 27, Matthews in *Christian Worship*, pp. 177-17).

The only surprise is the absence of any reference to singing, but the English are not by nature a very musical race, nor indeed are the Dutch. When Helwys returned to his native land and Baptist church fellowships began to multiply, they were subject to wider Reformation and Puritan influences. There is plenty of evidence of how Cromwell's soldiers enjoyed singing metrical versions of the Psalms and holding prayer-meetings. It was but a short step to the congregational singing of human—often all too human—compositions like those of Benjamin Keach. So far as prayer was concerned most Puritans had come to reject what they called "stilted forms" in favour of free extempore prayer. They even objected to the public use of the Lord's Prayer.

When we come to the end of the 17th century and the Toleration

Act, a fairly uniform pattern of Nonconformist worship is discernible, indebted as we have seen to Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and the Radicals, with its variations due to the relative strength of the different influences. For most of the Presbyterian, Independent and Baptist congregations there was a common simplicity, even bareness in both "the liturgy of the Word" and "the liturgy of the Upper Room," to use Maxwell's distinction. It is difficult to be sure how many congregations observed the Supper weekly. Certainly a number of the Baptist ones did. Others favoured the monthly observance of the Independents or the quarterly one of the Presbyterians. In all the congregations the members sat to receive the elements, the Presbyterians being careful that the minister and elders were served first. When it became possible to build meeting-houses the Baptists were the ones who emphasised the family character of the Supper by placing the table in a central position surrounded by a table pew from which the elements were passed backwards to those in the remoter seats.

It is well to remember that these little companies consisted almost entirely of those who were already believers, even if in the case of churches whose theology was Calvinistic not all those present at preaching services could be presumed to be among those elected to salvation. A service that was intelligible and rational was still something of a novelty and this, as John Whale has pointed out, helped to mitigate if not eliminate the bareness and coldness which we suspect (see *Christian Worship*, pp. 162f.). When they met for worship it was with a deep sense of awe. Of this tradition in its classic or ideal form Bernard Manning's description is, I think, a not unfair or over-painted one :

"When we think of our forefathers in the Faith, we think of men whose services offered little satisfaction to the æsthetic sense, whose buildings had no mystery and often no beauty, who did not interest themselves in what was the decent or complete behaviour of a gentleman. . . . The quality of intensity put them in another plane. What they looked for from religious exercises could not be picked up conveniently in a neighbouring wood. The neighbouring wood might speak of the Creator. It had but a dim word of the Father and no word of the Saviour, of the Cross, of the Resurrection, of sanctification, of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and the communion of saints" (*Essays in Orthodox Dissent*, p. 89).

With the American scene in mind Professor Perry Miller writes of the 17th century and 18th century Puritan: "He spoke of his church polity, his bare crude churches, without altars or choirs,

foursquare and solid, as lovely; they were so to him because they incarnated the beauty of the one polity Christ had ordained. His conception of the beautiful was, like Plato's, the efficient order of things; in that sense, he held indeed that beauty is truth, and truth beauty, though he did not think that was quite all he needed to know in life" (*The Puritans*, Miller & Johnson, 1936, p. 62).

Or you may take R. H. Coats's description in *Types of English Piety*, which appeared in 1912:

"The Nonconformist is . . . well content to do without imposing adjuncts to his religion, being satisfied with the sheer majesty and truth of the gospel's own appeal. As for the alleged bareness of his worship, he feels that it is more seemly to approach God in a homely dress than in a gaudy one, and that his soul has something more urgent and appealing to say to God than the language of artifice and convention can express. Being a son of the Father, he will speak as the spirit moves him, not as state or bishop may direct, for he is assured that his spontaneous exclamations of love and praise, however stammering, will be more acceptable to the Father than the most chastely ordered ritual that remains cold and formal. Nor does he feel that he is missing anything in not surrounding his worship with the mystery of chiselled stone and painted glass. Enough if, within bare walls and out upon the lone and windy moor, he can soar into those chambers of celestial imagery, all tapestried with the counsels of the Eternal Father, which sufficed for the writer of *Grace Abounding* on Elstow Green, or the author of *Paradise Lost* in Bunhill Fields" (pp. 85-86).

A description of Free Church worship in its classic or ideal form! It has never been like that very widely or very long, though you may still go into a country chapel in the remoter parts of England, Scotland or Wales, or into a Strict Baptist prayer meeting, and find something approaching it in quality. By and large 18th century Nonconformity, though it produced those astonishingly great hymn-writers Watts and Doddridge, turned in upon itself and lost its spiritual power, until challenged and renewed by the Evangelical Revival. It could call for Days of Fasting, Prayer and Humiliation, but much of its time was spent in theological controversies or in disputes over the disciplining of church members. It was at this time that English Nonconformity became by and large suspicious of the repetition of the ancient creeds of the Church—partly because they used in certain of their phrases other than Biblical language, partly because subscription to them was used as a test for office. The 16th century Anabaptists, as Riedemann's

Rechenschaft and the *Ausbund* show, treasured and made use of the Apostles' Creed, as did Lutherans, Zwinglians, Calvinists and Anglicans. In the 18th century Baptists began a long drawn out but highly significant controversy on "terms of communion." Should those only who had been baptised as believers be allowed to come to the Lord's Table or should the invitation be to all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth? Or in what form should the invitation be extended and what does it imply for the doctrine of the Church? Though our tables are almost all now open, the issues underlying this old controversy are still with us, the shoe pinching now on the question of what recognition we should give to forms of baptism other than our own; on which note the provocative remarks of Neville Clark and Beasley-Murray. Under the combined influence of the Evangelical Revival, the Industrial Revolution and the sudden increase in the population there came a number of important changes in the pattern of worship and the general life of the churches. The change from standing for prayer and sitting for hymns to the reverse postures was but the least of the changes. There had been two diets of worship on a Sunday, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, with some attempt in between to catechise the children. Sunday Schools suddenly became an almost universal feature of Christian activity, schools which drew their attendants not so much from the children of the members as from outside the Christian community. Their textbook, from which reading and writing were taught, was the Bible. Then it gradually became evident that there were a large number of adults, particularly in the new urban areas, who were quite outside the fellowship of the church and ignorant of the Christian faith. The social and political changes that came with the 19th century gave new confidence and vigour to Nonconformity. Many new churches were formed. An evening service replaced that of the afternoon and was directed towards the outsider. The pattern with which we are familiar begins to emerge.

The Free Church minister acquired a higher status in the community and was often regarded as feeding the saints in the morning and fishing for sinners in the evening. At the same time the part taken in the leadership of worship by elders and deacons began to decline, and weeknight meetings for prayer and Bible study to fade away. Increased congregations required larger buildings and these were erected with the primary aim of a large seating capacity and the secondary one of apeing or out-doing the new Anglican place of worship. Reaction against the Oxford movement provided the main influence on the theory and practice of Free Church worship during much of the Victorian age. The changes

are being well traced by Professor Horton Davies in the series of volumes he is now producing, and may also be seen by dipping into the novels of Mrs. Gaskell and Mark Rutherford, which are safer guides than the caricatures of Dickens. Any real structure in worship became less and less clear, particularly after "revivalist" influences from America made themselves felt, that is, from 1873 onwards. Though the prayers at public worship in the second half of the 18th century were probably a good deal shorter than was usual in the preceding century, yet "the long prayer" became a fixed feature of most services and the sermon came to be regarded as the principal act, whether expository, ethical, evangelistic or, as was frequently the case in the evening, a commentary on public affairs or a lecture. Organs and choirs were added, often operating completely independently of the preachers. The appointment of church officers and their conception of their duties sometimes owed more to current political notions than to the study of the New Testament or the history of the Church. By the end of the 19th century we are not only far from the Reformers in time, but worlds away in thought and outlook, whilst yet retaining a number of practices which stemmed from them. As for the freedom and spiritual spontaneity often claimed as our special characteristics, it had either virtually disappeared and been replaced by a sandwich-like structure even more rigid than that of the *Book of Common Prayer*, or Bishop Newbiggin's words described the state of things: "It is one of the tragedies of the situation that the churches which have given their ministers the maximum of liberty of liturgical improvisation are those which have given them the minimum training in liturgical principles." Freedom in other words had become licence. Gone was any sense of hallowed ground.

Some of you will know Mr. Betjerman's poem, "Beside the Seaside" on the Briton's annual holiday.

"So evening sunlight glows on Sandy Cove,
The same as last year and the year before.
Still on the brick front of the Baptist Church
SIX-THIRTY. Preacher: Mr. Pentecost—
All visitors are welcomed."

Lest we feel too distressed and humiliated by all this, we should remember that Lutheran and Anglican worship has not been spared its periods of decline, lifelessness and casualness, and that the Free Churches led the Established Church in the use of hymns and have contributed richly to the Church universal at this point, as well as here first consciously drawing again on the traditions of other generations and other denominations. Bernard Manning and

others have claimed that Congregationalists and Baptists, like Methodists, have their liturgy in their hymn-books. But this does not really excuse us for our other lacks. Since the last decades of the 19th century, however, a revival of liturgical concern has made itself felt in wide circles and in many different traditions and it is good that there are signs that we are sharing in it.

So far as the Free Churches are concerned, a renewed awareness of need may be said to have begun with Dr. John Hunter, minister of Trinity Church, Glasgow, and later of the King's Weigh House, London. A brochure of 28 pp. which he produced in 1882 became in 1901 the well-known book *Devotional Services* which had in 1920 reached a 10th edition and may, I suppose, be rightly described as a modern devotional classic. Dr. Orchard maintained and developed a liturgical interest at the King's Weigh House, which, though it was highly individual and even eccentric, was far broader than Hunter's. The Congregational Union issued a *Minister's Manual* in 1920. Knox's *Book of Common Order* had long since ceased to be used in Scotland, but in 1928 a new one appeared, which at once became influential far beyond the Church of Scotland. Individuals like Henry Bonner of the Hamstead Road Baptist Church, Birmingham, whose *Service Book* first appeared in 1884, F. C. Spurr whose revision of Bonner's book appeared in the 1920s but made little impact, D. Tait Patterson, whose *The Call to Worship* was first published in 1930, and the more individual but at the same time influential C. E. Watson of Rodborough, whose *Bede Book* was privately printed in the 1930's and publicly in 1943, had prepared books of services for their own congregations. A new *Minister's Manual* prepared for the Congregational Union in 1936 provoked a storm of criticism on both theological and liturgical grounds—a clear sign of growing interest in such matters. Within Congregationalism the part played by Dr. Micklem deserves mention. Winward and I broke quite new ground when in 1960 we were able to get the Carey Kingsgate Press, without serious question, to publish *Orders and Prayers for Church Worship*. It has many of the weaknesses of a pioneering effort in which one of the partners has no liturgical expertise, but it is the first time Baptists have been offered such a book and beside it we can now place the new *Baptist Hymn Book*, which by common consent is a better book than even the notable *Congregational Praise*, and certainly better than the *Church Hymnary* (1928) of the Presbyterians.

But these efforts to guide and enrich the worship of the Free Churches have on the whole been based on a rather vague sense of the poverty of customary worship. They have not resulted from any serious study of Christian worship as a whole, though W. D.

Maxwell's well-known book should have been in the hands of most ministers since 1936 and Gregory Dix's volume *The Shape of the Liturgy* has been available since 1945. At the 1662-1962 Commemoration meeting in the Royal Albert Hall, Mr. Howard Stanley said that "both Anglicans and Free Churchmen are convinced about the need for the most appropriate and efficacious ordering of the worship of God" (see *British Weekly*, 8th November, 1962), and urged mutual consultation on new experimental services. Careless borrowing from one another will not greatly help us, however, nor what the Germans call *Gleichschaltung*, the forced matching or fitting into a common pattern of what are different in spirit and intent. I take it that this conference desires to go deeper than this and is an indication of a widespread desire to look carefully at the New Testament, at the history of Christian worship, and at the modern "liturgical movement" which is confined to no one Church or land. I take it that another more particular purpose here is to examine what Neville Clark has said in his *Approach to the Theology of the Sacraments* (1956) and his *Call to Worship* (1960). "Our need," he has rightly urged, "is nothing less than a pattern of worship true to the nature and fullness of the Gospel, expressive of the wholeness of tradition, related to the living stream of denominational experience, relevant to the life of twentieth century man, freed from the efforts of a false individualism, no longer tied to the thought and practice of the middle classes; a structure through which God may speak clearly and act redemptively, and man offer fully and effectively" (*Call to Worship*, p. 13). That is well said, but it asks a great deal, and I take it that you have come here to consider how far Mr. Clark himself or any others can help towards its accomplishment.

I venture only four brief final comments.

(1) In the front of his deeply interesting book *Phoenix at Coventry*, Basil Spence prints a quotation from Bartok.

"Only a fool will build in defiance of the past. What is new and significant always must be grafted to old roots. The truly vital roots that are chosen with great care from the ones that merely survive. And what a slow and delicate process it is to distinguish radical vitality from the wastes of mere survival, but that is the only way to achieve progress instead of disaster."

Neville Clark himself urges that "every new venture must be positively related to tradition and must in some senses stem from the practice of the years" (*Call to Worship*, p. 12). That must mean *our* tradition, the tradition I have inadequately outlined.

(2) The Reformation was, and still is, a divide in Christian

history. Catholic and Protestant must, I believe, increasingly talk to one another and learn from one another, but there remains between them a deep difference of approach and outlook. It may be illustrated by the message which the Bishop of Coventry (Neville Gorton) and the Provost (Howard) prefixed to the conditions for the competition for designs for the new Cathedral.

“The doctrine and worship of the Church of England is liturgically centred in the Eucharist. The Cathedral should be built to enshrine the altar. This should be the ideal of the architect, not to conceive a building and to place in it an altar, but to conceive an altar and to create a building.”

“In the Anglican liturgy it is the people’s altar; the altar should gather the people, it should offer access for worship and invitation to Communion.”

“With the altar—in the unity of worship—there is the preaching of the Gospel among our people of Coventry and the interpretation of the Word.”

Is that, or is that not, a right way of thinking of the table on which stand and from which come the bread and wine? Is its relationship to the pulpit there rightly stated? If not, how should the relationship be expressed? Related to these questions are those concerning the ministry. Is its main function priestly or prophetic? Or is this a false antithesis?

(3) This also obviously involves questions of architecture which are, I come increasingly to feel, far more important than we have generally recognised. A. L. Drummond’s *Church Architecture of Protestantism* (1934), and Martin Briggs’s *Puritan Architecture and its Future* (1946), Victor Fiddes, *The Architectural Requirements of Protestant Worship*, Ryerson Press Toronto (1961) and the attractive little monograph *Early Meeting Houses* by H. Godwin Arnold, issued by the Ancient Monument Society (1960), provide some interesting historical data. But if the movement represented by this Conference is to develop fruitfully I believe we have to bring together our architects and our liturgiologists. The 18th century meeting-house and the 19th century auditorium had each a real purpose behind them. A mass produced hut supplied by the cheapest local builder and furnished with a few ecclesiastical requisites, even if surmounted by an illuminated cross, is not necessarily going to provide an easy setting for what William Penn called “the supreme act of human life.” Nor is the fanciful any better than the crude. Our fathers wisely reacted against the superstitious use of things we can see and touch, but they may well have gone too far in the opposite direction. Bound up with

this is, I think, the relation to one another of the Temple, the Synagogue, and the Upper Room. On that subject I should much like to hear a thoroughgoing discussion.

(4) I am sure we must keep ever in mind that our congregations are not only now, by and large, better educated æsthetically, as a result of broadcasting and television, but that they are also far more varied in their beliefs, far less certain of the Christian framework of belief than at any time since the early Christian centuries, far less able to understand the language of the Bible and traditional Christian piety. Neville Clark's phrase—"relevant to the life of twentieth century man"—is very important and it needs to be related quite specifically to those in the more than 2,000 places of worship with which we are directly in touch. We also need to clear our minds as to the exact nature and purpose of our services. In the parish church at Bosham one Sunday I heard a sermon on Prayer Book reform in which the Vicar declared to a small congregation that he would be very embarrassed indeed if the following Sunday the church were full, as he would be quite sure those present would not understand the service, nor was it intended for them. But this is but to raise the question of the relation of public worship to ordinary daily life. There can be no doubt that behind the corporate worship of our fathers much family and private devotion was presupposed. This can be seen very clearly by a perusal of a book like Isaac Watts's *Guide to Prayer* (1715). What John Marsh says of Congregationalists is true of Free Churchmen generally:

"To be in the Church for them is more than to attend on her worship (to hear the Word rightly preached and to share in the Sacraments duly administered): it is to share in her mutual exercise of godly discipline as well. Worship is thus seen as one part of a whole way of life of God's people, gathered together in covenanted committal to Him and to one another" (*Ways of Worship*, 1951, p. 149).

Can we revive that conception of worship, of churchmanship and of life?

E. A. PAYNE