

Notes and Comments.

THE Church Service Society throughout the sixty-three years of its existence has not only devoted itself to the study of ancient and modern liturgies and the preparation and publication of forms of Service for various occasions, but it has also consistently advocated that the very best of everything relating to the Public Worship of the Church should be consecrated to the service of the Most High. It is to further such aims that the Council is issuing this Annual. The Society has always been very careful to guard against its members publishing anything in its name without due authority, and it is well to state clearly that the authors of the articles are alone responsible for the views expressed therein. Study involves discussion as well as research and exposition, and we aim at providing a forum where ideas which will further our cause may be exchanged, and so bring to light the true, the good, and the beautiful in the Worship of the Church.

In the Calendar which we publish, an endeavour has been made to recall names and events of special interest to our readers. It is no doubt far from complete and, as books of reference do not always agree, it is probable that there are errors of date. The cynical remark has been made that a book sometimes elicits more valuable information than it conveys. If the publication of the Calendar elicits corrections and additions the editor will be grateful. It has been found practicable to include only a limited selection of Celtic Saints. In some cases their personality is somewhat legendary and the dates assigned are often very doubtful. In compiling a Calendar, one difficulty that besets the task is that too many events sometimes happen on the same day for the space available, while on other days little of any general interest seems to have taken place. Thus, on the 27th November, nothing of any importance appears to have occurred since the death of Horace in the year B.C. 8.

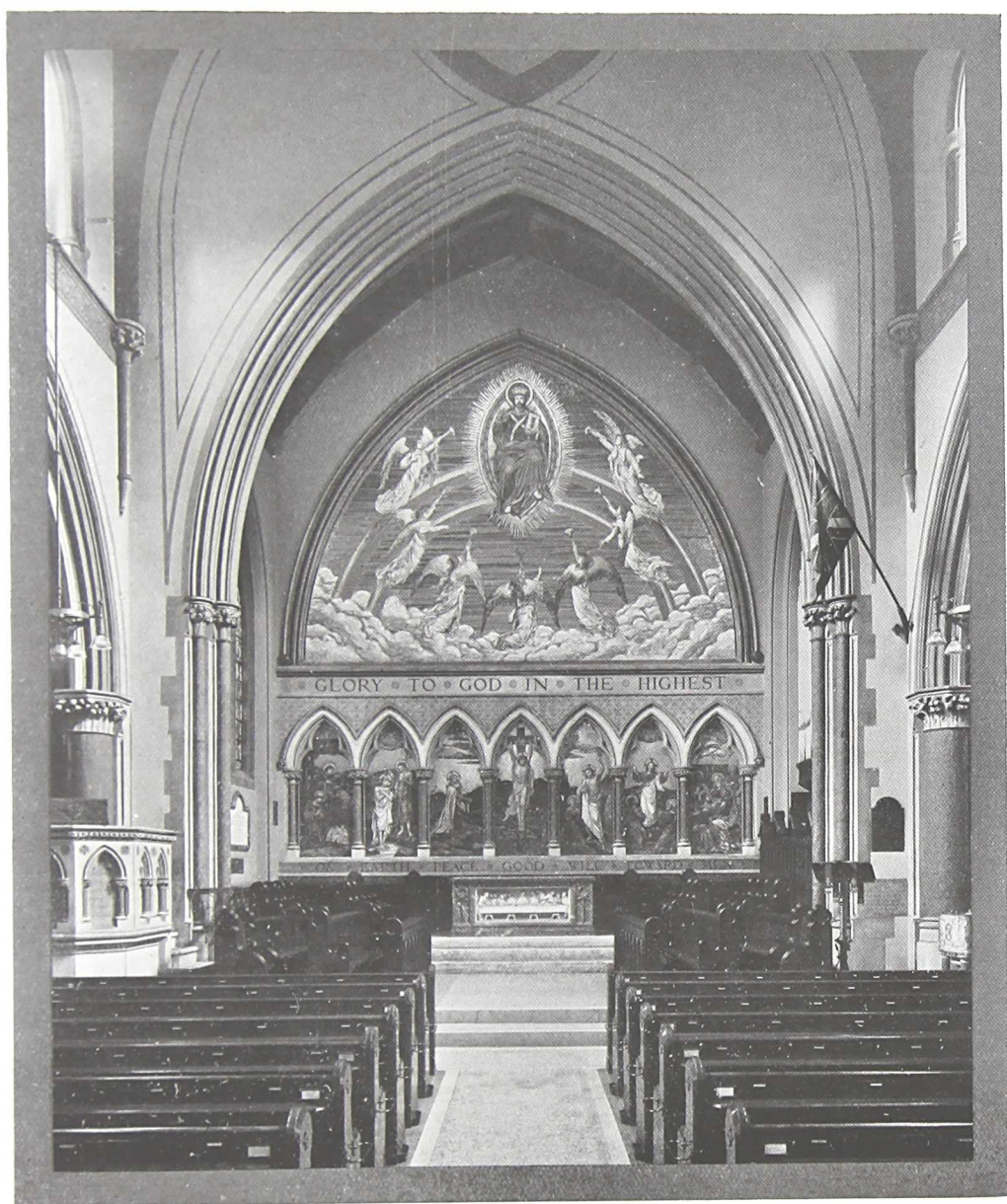
The illuminated Manuscript, known as the Lindisfarne Gospels, a page of which we reproduce by permission of the British Museum authorities, has several claims on our interest. The story is well known of how S. Aidan was sent from Iona to Northumbria, in the year 635, and how the Scottish mission evangelised the greater part of England, from Lindisfarne, now known as Holy Island. When Aidan died S. Cuthbert, then a shepherd lad in Lauderdale, saw the heavens open and heard the call to a holy life. Eventually

he became Bishop of Lindisfarne, and the Gospels were written in his honour by Eadfrid, who succeeded him in the See from 698 to 721. The book, though said to be written by a Saxon, is second only to the Book of Kells in the richness and elaboration of its Celtic design. After passing through many vicissitudes, the Manuscript has found a resting-place in the British Museum. (See frontispiece.)

The Right Rev. Dr Norman Maclean has found time, amidst the many pressing duties of his Moderatorial year, to prepare the draft of a series of Services for Holy Week and Easter for the Society, which it is intended to publish early next year. It is hoped that the publication of these Services will tend to promote the observance of this sacred season. A foreword explains the object in view thus :—

“In former days the sacramental fasts and services which extended over the most part of a week were seasons of waiting upon God, and they proved to be true means of grace. They lifted both minister and people out of the ordinary routine, and the cumulative effect of the services led them to realise vividly the greatness and power of God’s redeeming love. Those days have passed beyond recall and our Church life is poorer. Mission Weeks, wherever held, have emphasised the value of special services for the quickening and deepening of the spiritual life, but such Missions are mostly of a sporadic nature, and do not usually form part of the regular work of the Church. There is one week every year which is pre-eminently suitable for a Mission Week : it is the Holy Week of the Christian year. The shadow of the cross then passes over the whole of Christendom, and men are ready to listen to the preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified as at no other time. When the story of His Passion is retold from day to day, souls are born into newness of life and the consecration of believers is deepened.”

In spite of the injunction of the ‘Directory’ that “the minister is publickly to solemnize it in the place appointed for publick worship,” there are still people who associate the solemnisation of Marriage in Church with elaborate flowers and music, red carpets, awnings, and all manner of expense. It rests with the clergy to dissipate this idea, and to point out that for plain folk who desire (as so many do) a “quiet” wedding, there is no quiet like that of the House of God. No doubt it may take some trouble to revive the custom of Marriage in Church in parishes where it has fallen into disuse. But the tradition, once established, is nearly always welcomed. In some parts of the country—as in Shetland, for example—it has never died out. Most of us know the difficulty of preserving a religious atmosphere during a marriage service in a crowded cottage, packed with guests whose thoughts are wholly of the festivities and pleasantries to follow. Contrast this with an orderly solemnisation in Church, as simple as desired, where words of kindly counsel can be given, and prayer offered that the wedded life begun in God’s House may continue to be hallowed



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S. Columba's Church, London.

by His presence and blessing. It is not necessary to ask which of these is the really "quiet" wedding.

Within the last few years the interior eastern end of S. Columba's Church in London has been greatly beautified. It has been furnished with a marble Holy Table bearing on the front a carved representation of Leonardo da Vinci's well-known "Last Supper," so suggestive of our Scottish Communion Service. This was given by the late Baroness Strathcona and Mount Royal in memory of her distinguished father, the first High Commissioner for Canada. Another Canadian Scot, Miss Jessie Dow of Montreal, who has been a generous contributor to many of our Church schemes, provided for the cost of filling in the arcading of the east wall with mosaics, the subjects being the Nativity, Baptism, Agony, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord, and the descent of the Holy Ghost. Above, in the tympanum of the gable, the space has been adorned with a great mosaic representing our Lord in glory—a fitting sequel to the lower series. Against a blue sky spanned by a double rainbow is the central figure of our Lord enthroned, with the right hand uplifted in the attitude of blessing, while in the left hand is the everlasting Gospel. Beneath are ranges of white cloud, through which rise seven adoring angels, each holding to his lips a golden trumpet. The gift of this mosaic was made by Miss Charles-Fairfax of Sydney, Australia. Thus all these adornments of the chancel are the outcome of the pious offerings of devout church-women in the Dominions. More than ever will S. Columba's be a place of pilgrimage for visitors from overseas.

The decoration of the eastern end of the church presented many difficult problems, and Dr Fleming and all concerned are to be heartily congratulated on the success of their labours. The subjects have been treated in a thoroughly dignified manner, and the colour scheme is light and suggestive. A famous glass factory in Venice executed the mosaic work to designs supplied by Messrs Heaton, Butler & Bayne, London, and the whole work was carried out under the directions of Mr H. L. Anderson, Honorary Architect of S. Columba's. (See illustration facing p. 57.)

S. Paul's, Greenock, is one of the most beautiful churches in the West of Scotland. It was designed by Sir R. Rowand Anderson, and built in 1892 during the incumbency of the Rev. Thomas F. Johnstone. It contains some fine stained glass. The east window was designed by Sir E. Burne-Jones and executed by the firm of Morris. The great west window has recently been filled with a gorgeous example of Dr Douglas Strachan's art depicting the Magnificat. The Holy Table, of which we give an illustration facing p. 41, is covered with an embroidered cloth which quite takes away the feeling of bareness and unfurnishedness that is sometimes caused by an uncovered table. The cover, which was

designed and wrought by a member of the congregation, is of sage-green face-cloth with a heavy super-frontal, relieved by facing of Saxe-blue velvet and fringe of blue and gold. The lettering is in gold embroidery. The redos of Austrian oak is part of the War Memorial, and was designed by Dr MacGregor Chalmers. The Jubilee of the congregation is being celebrated by further gifts for the furnishing and adorning of the sanctuary.

A passage in a Pastoral Letter by Bishop Ken "to his Clergy concerning their behaviour during Lent" in 1688 has a far wider application and may well be recalled to-day. "Do not be discouraged," he writes, "if but few come to the 'solemn assemblies,' but go to the 'House of Prayer,' where God is well known for a sure refuge; go, though you go alone, or but with one besides yourself; and there as you are God's 'Remembrancer,' keep not silence, and give Him no rest till He establish, till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

Ministers are sometimes asked to preach a sermon on kindness to animals. Here is a collect which may be used on such occasions.

O God, whose tender mercies are over all Thy works and for whose pleasure they are and were created; Grant unto us discerning eyes to see Thy glory in all Thy creatures, and compassionate hearts to feel for Thy dumb animals, so that we, remembering that we have a Master in heaven through whose bounty we live, may by Thee be enabled to supply their needs and protect them from all cruelty and ill-usage; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

'The Westminster Directory' states, "Let the Minister dismiss the congregation with a solemn blessing." In recent years a practice has grown up in some congregations after the Benediction has been pronounced at the Evening Service for the Choir to sing in a subdued voice one or more verses of a hymn which is called a *Vesper*. The Vesper Hymns of the Christian Church are the *Magnificat* in the Western, and the *Nunc Dimittis* in the Eastern Churches, and why what is sung in some of our Churches should be called a Vesper is not clear.

The question of including a selection of such Vespers in the new Church Hymnary was carefully considered by the Revision Committee, and the proposal was rejected by a considerable majority. It was urged that the Vesper appeared to supply a need which was felt by many of expressing some response to the Benediction, and hence the practice had arisen and spread. On the other hand, it was said that the congregation could not follow what was being sung, that the words and music were often of a very sentimental

character, and that it disturbed private devotions. In the end it was decided that it is best to let the solemn blessing of the Congregation by the Minister be the last word in the Service.

A useful little booklet was published in Cambridge a few years ago bearing the arresting title of '65 Don'ts for Organists.' They apply very largely to the Services of the Church of England, but the first "Don't" is not less needed in the Church of Scotland. It runs thus, "Don't you know that many people are driven away from Church by the music? Maybe music should not *attract* people to Church, certainly it should not *repel* them, but it does frequently. The first step to make things better is to recognise how bad they are."

With the broadcasting by wireless of really good Church Music, the man in the pew is beginning to discover how bad things are in many places. It is no remedy to put in a new organ. The fault often lies in the lack of training in the professional, or semi-professional, musician in charge. In former times when there was little singing in the Services it was not of so much importance, but since the advent of the Scottish Hymnal the Service of praise has developed enormously, and many congregations have five or six items, including anthems and the chanting of Psalms and canticles. Some years ago the General Assembly's Committee on Psalmody and Hymns saw what was needed, and after consulting a number of experienced musicians a course of instruction for musical students and organists was instituted. These classes have been conducted with much acceptance in Edinburgh by Mr Herbert Wiseman, M.A., Director of Music under the Edinburgh Education Authority, and in Glasgow by Mr T. C. L. Pritchard, M.A., Mus.Bac. The United Free Church has recently joined in this scheme, which it is hoped to extend to other centres. The history of Church Music is unfolded, and the whole field with its resources surveyed. But an essential part of the scheme is the lectures given by Ministers on the use and function of Music in the worship of the Church. Without a full understanding by the organist of his part in the Ministry of praise, all his skill and dexterity adds nothing to the worship of the sanctuary. On the contrary, any display of "fireworks" is not only out of place in the House of Prayer, but is destructive of the spirit of reverence. Self-assertion is always to be deprecated but never more so than in the House of God, whether in the pulpit or on the organ bench. There is a steadily increasing roll of organists who have taken the course of instruction and hold the Diploma or Certificates of competency, and Committees charged with the duty of making appointments will be well advised to give very favourable consideration to applicants who possess these qualifications.