

Notes and Comments.

THE list of the publications of the Society has received a noteworthy addition by the issue of a little volume of 'Services for Holy Week and Easter,' by the Right Rev. Dr Norman Maclean. It is the outcome of experience gained in S. Cuthbert's Parish Church, Edinburgh, where such services have been held in recent years with growing interest and acceptance. The book shows how the services may be conducted by providing appropriate prayers and indicating suitable Psalms, Hymns, and Lessons. Attention may be drawn to the rubric suggesting antiphonal reading of the Psalms as an alternative to chanting. Reading by the minister and people, verse about, has proved much more feasible than might be expected. The congregation, however, need leading by an individual voice, and the choir should assist. It is particularly helpful and impressive when on Good Friday Psalm xxii. is thus rendered with the congregation kneeling. The 'Services' follow the events of each day of our Lord's Passion, beginning with Palm Sunday. In addition, there are selections of prayers from many sources which may be used in Public Worship. As a manual for private devotion the book will be welcomed by many who are unable to attend such services in Church. 'Services for Holy Week and Easter' may be obtained through any bookseller or from the publishers—Messrs W. Blackwood & Sons Ltd., 45 George Street, Edinburgh, and the price is 2s. cloth or 1s. paper covers, post free.

The Celtic designs for the covers of 'Services for Holy Week' and the 'Annual' are the work of Miss Gladys A. Wyllie, Artist, The Outlook Tower, Edinburgh. Celtic art, which is essentially religious, has been strangely neglected by the Scottish Church. It seems to flourish most in cemeteries where Iona crosses have happily largely supplanted the Pagan urns and broken columns of a past generation. But Celtic art is not confined to monumental expression. It achieved its fullest development not in stone but in manuscript, as the frontispiece in our last number from the Lindisfarne Gospels very clearly showed. Miss Wyllie, who has made a special study of the style, has been most successful in adapting it for the purposes of our publications; but it is not less suited for Church embroideries such as covers for the Holy Table, pulpit falls, bookmarkers, offertory bags, &c. Celtic art provides a welcome relief from the conventional Mediæval *motifs* which have for too long dominated Christian art in our country.

One of the valuable activities of the Society, which does not receive much publicity, is the assistance given to members and

other ministers both at home and abroad in preparing Services for special occasions. Applications have been made to the Secretary for this help from many quarters in the recent year—from Australia, from Canada, from South and Central Africa, from South America, and other parts.

The Society's box contains much material for all sorts of Services for special occasions, and members are cordially invited to call upon these contents for their guidance and help. Members of the Society are also invited to send to the Secretary Forms of Service they may have prepared for use in their own Churches.

Among other valuable Services sent recently to the Secretary are :—

The Order of the Dedication Service to be used at the Opening of S. John's Church, Perth, after Restoration as the War Memorial of the County and City of Perth, 4th November 1928.

The Order of Service for the Dedication of a New Bell in the Parish Church of S. Andrew, North Berwick, 12th July 1928.

The Form and Order of Service for the Dedication of the Restored Choir of the Abbey of Paisley, 1st December 1928.

We are also indebted to Mr Page, the Secretary of the Joint-Committee for the Revision of the Hymnary, for a copy of the beautifully prepared and printed Form and Order of the Celebration of Holy Communion used in the Moray Aisle of S. Giles' on the occasion of the final sitting of the Committee on 7th April 1927.

'The Book of Common Order : 1928,' prepared by a Committee of the General Assembly of the United Free Church, under the Convenership of the Reverend Dr Millar Patrick, and published by the Oxford University Press, is a welcome addition to Scottish liturgical literature, if for no other reason than that it is "issued with the authorisation of the General Assembly as the official manual of public worship, for use throughout the Church." The book is worthy and comprehensive, including no fewer than three alternative Orders for the Celebration of Holy Communion, one of which, significantly, is intended for the Communion of the Sick.

Among the books which "have been before the Committee and have been of service to them in their work," we find 'Euchologion,' 'Prayers for Divine Service,' 'The S. Giles' Prayer Book,' and Dr H. J. Wotherspoon's 'Divine Service' and 'Kyrie Eleison'; but these books have been no more than guides, and have not been used as sources of prayers.

We feel sure that the hopes of those responsible for the preparation of the book will not be disappointed, and that it will prove to be a help towards "a more thoughtful, spiritual, and beautiful worship," in many churches.

A prayer from the Form of Service used at the Rededication of Paisley Abbey :—

“ O Lord our God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, in the days of His flesh, was reckoned among the craftsmen ; we thank Thee for the care, skill, and devotion of Thy servants, who have laboured in the erection and adornment of this holy House : bless them, we beseech Thee, in all the work of their hands, that it may be done for Thy honour and rewarded with Thine approval ; and that, guided and inspired by Thy Spirit, they may work and live always according to Thy will ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

A new bell, by Messrs Taylor of Loughborough, has recently been presented to the Parish Church of S. Andrew, North Berwick, in commemoration of the ministry of the Rev. J. R. Burt, who has retired from the charge. At the Dedication Service, after the bell had been rung, the following prayers were offered by the Right Rev. Dr Montgomery Campbell, Moderator of the General Assembly :—

“ Almighty God, we beseech Thee to accept this offering at our hands. Bless, sanctify, and hallow this bell, and grant that, through this generation and those that are to come, it may continually call Thy faithful people to praise and worship Thy Holy Name ; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

“ Grant, we beseech Thee, that whosoever shall be called by the sound of this bell to Thy House of Prayer may enter into Thy gates with thanksgiving, and into Thy courts with praise ; and at last may sing the song of the Lamb in that House not made with hands, eternal in the heavens ; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

“ Grant, O Lord, that whosoever shall by reason of sickness or other necessity be hindered from coming into the House of the Lord, may by this bell be reminded of the prayers and intercessions of Thy Church and rejoice in the Communion of Saints ; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

“ Blessed be Thy Name, O Lord our God, that it hath put into the heart of Thy servant thus to enrich Thy House. . . . And we thank Thee for the skill and the labour of all who wrought on this work, and that Thou hast brought it this day safely to its completion ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

The expression “ A second Table ” is one that is frequently used in a loose and unsatisfactory manner when a second Celebration of Holy Communion is intended. In the old days when the congregation used to come up from the pews in relays or companies, and sit at Tables spread beneath the pulpit or down the centre of the Church, those who had partaken of Communion did not retire from

the Church, but returned to their pews until the whole congregation had partaken, after which the whole congregation joined in singing the 103rd Psalm, and received the Benediction. "A Table" was the description of one of the relays or companies. The expression is not correctly used of a Celebration at 12 noon, and another at 2.30, and perhaps another at 5.30 as in some Churches. These are not Tables but separate Celebrations, and it is perhaps well to remember this, as the confusion of the terms sometimes leads to bad custom.

The problem of deciding which is the best position in a church for the organ and choir is often a perplexing one. Unquestionably the very worst place is immediately behind the pulpit, with the console underneath surrounded by the choir. Much might, but will not, be written here of the disadvantages of this arrangement, for they are painfully well known to long-suffering ministers if not to congregations. It has vulgarised many churches, and robbed them of a simplicity and dignity which once was theirs. In recent years the erection of chancels has further complicated the problem. The Very Rev. C. L. Warr lately expressed the opinion, which is shared by many, that the choir should not be placed in the chancel. It seems, however, to be sometimes assumed that such is the proper, and indeed the inevitable, place, but for this there is no authority or historic precedent. Undoubtedly the best position from the musical point of view for the organ and choir is in the west gallery at the end of the nave. That was the usual position in England less than a hundred years ago, but with the development of choral Mattins and Evensong, chancels were in many cases enlarged or built to accommodate surpliced choirs. At present a reaction appears to be taking place, due to the substitution of Holy Communion for Mattins as the principal Sunday morning service. At Brighton, for example, in the recently erected churches of S. Thomas and S. Bartholomew the organ and choir are placed in the west gallery; and in the church of S. Michael the choir has been removed from the choir stalls in the chancel, which remain unoccupied, to the west gallery beside the organ. Something may, no doubt, be urged in favour of placing the choir in the chancel of some of our large parish churches which have sufficient resources for a highly developed musical service, but for the ordinary church in town or country it is difficult to understand why a plan which is admirably suited for choral Mattins should be thought best for our simple Presbyterian service. We will, therefore, do well to look elsewhere than the chancel for a place in which to place the choir, and if it should not be in the west gallery it may be found, as in Kippen, in the body of the church. Thus the chancel will be reserved, as is most fitting and seemly, for the Holy Table and those who serve thereat.