

Notes and Comments

READERS will be interested in the article on the Liturgical Movement in the Dutch Reformed Church by the Secretary of the Liturgical Society, Mr W. Vos, of Groningen, who some time ago paid a brief visit to Scotland, and is greatly interested in the work of our kindred Society.

Our vice-President, Dr W. D. Maxwell, recently visited Holland under the auspices of the Liturgical Society and the Universities, and spent three most interesting weeks there. He lectured on Liturgics at the Universities of Groningen, Amsterdam and Leyden, and to interested groups of ministers and laymen in a number of the principal towns. He found the movement very active, and, although it is in its early beginnings, it is gathering force and vigour under wise leadership. Its members are men of standing, scholarship and growing influence in the life of the Church.

It would appear that in the larger churches in the cities, where a number of ministers from several parishes preach in rotation in the one central church, it is no easy task to effect reforms in worship and maintain a settled tradition, because of the variety of outlook. In the few parishes where there is one church and one minister, however, fruitful advance in this direction is possible, and is being accomplished.

Dutch architects are taking a keen interest in the movement, and under its inspiration are doing some extremely competent work, as opportunity offers. None of the ancient historic churches in the cities has, as yet, been "restored" in the liturgical manner; but in the country towns some beautiful work has already been done. When the work on the great church at Breda is completed in the next few years, it will be a fine restoration, comparable with some of our cathedral churches in Scotland.

In the course of his visit Dr Maxwell met many of the leaders of the Reformed Church, including Professor van der Leeuw of Groningen, famous for his learning, broad culture and truly ecumenical mind. He was the first Minister of Education after the Liberation, and is an influential figure in the Liturgical Movement, supported by

such eminent scholars as Professor Bakhuizen van den Brink of Leyden, who with Professor Kooiman of Amsterdam recently published a valuable book on modern church architecture.

Dr Maxwell also preached to the Scots congregation at Rotterdam, where, under the ministry of the Rev. Muir Haddow, M.C., a new Scots church is being built which will more than worthily replace the old building, destroyed in the blitz of 1940.

Four hundred and twenty-five years ago (16th February 1524) Divine Worship was conducted in the vernacular for the first time after the Roman Church had supplanted the Celtic and Gallican Church of Western Europe. The service at which the reformation of worship began was conducted by Diebold Schwarz, in St John's Chapel, in the Cathedral of St Lawrence, Strasbourg. To mark the occasion a Service of Commemoration, under the auspices of the Irish Presbyterian Church Service Society, was held on 16th February last in McCracken Memorial Church, Upper Malone. The prayers, based on the Strasbourg and Genevan rites, were prepared by the Secretary of the Society, the Rev. John M. Barkley, B.D., Ph.D. The Moderator of the General Assembly, the Right Rev. Robert Boyd, B.A., B.D., conducted the service, assisted by members of the Society, and the Sermon was preached by our own immediate past-President, the Rev. John Wilson Baird, D.D., of St Machar's Cathedral, Old Aberdeen, who specially travelled to Ireland for this purpose.

A member of the Society who visited Switzerland last summer thus describes a Baptism which he witnessed in a Reformed Church, in Grindelwald, a German-speaking district. "The baby was carried into the church apparently by a friend of the family (a woman), who was accompanied by the mother, the little procession being headed by the minister, the congregation upstanding. At the font, situated in the place normally occupied by the Holy Table in our churches, the group was joined by the father. After exhortation and prayer the baby was handed to the minister, who held him as he was baptized by triune effusion. The baptism over, the minister handed the infant to the father, who in turn handed him back to the mother.

"The baptismal font was a massive one, apparently cut out of two blocks of native stone. The water was

brought into the church in a silver laver from which it was poured into a silver basin placed within the font. The baptismal service was immediately followed by the ordinary morning service, at which the congregation sat to sing, and stood to pray.

“ Amongst the arrangements for the orderly conduct of the rite was one which might well be followed by our congregations here. Throughout the ceremony the baby lay in a light cradle made of spars of wood arranged in semi-circular fashion, the spars being swathed in white cloth. By this means he went through the ceremony without being disturbed, as too often happens with us.”

In press reports of marriages in Scotland it is not uncommon to read that the bride was “ given away ” by her father, or other male relative. There is, of course, no provision for this in the Scottish marriage service ; although this “ giving away ” forms part of the service in the Church of England.

In his book, *The Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church*, Dr M'Millan makes no mention of the custom. There is, however, an interesting reference in Wodrow's *Analecta*, where it is stated that James Guthrie, the covenanting minister of Stirling (1650-51) undertook the duty on at least one occasion. James Couie, Reader in the church there, was being married to one of the servants at the manse, and Guthrie, instead of performing the marriage ceremony himself, arranged for his colleague, Robert Rule, to do so. “ He put,” says Wodrow, “ that note of respect upon her, to present her himself to the bridegroom.” The date is uncertain, but Rule was colleague to Guthrie for a few months only, in 1655. He had been inducted by the Protesters, but was removed by the Synod, in which the Resolutions evidently had a majority, as they had in most places.

The conclusion of our services of worship might well receive considered attention. Too often the solemn act of Benediction is hurried and perfunctory, and is followed too quickly by the immediate dispersal of the congregation. A few moments of *complete* silence, while the minister kneels with worshippers in private devotion, *before* the

organist begins the closing voluntary, guards against this suggestion of hurry, and forms a fitting completion to the service.

In churches where the ancient tradition of bringing in the elements at Holy Communion prevails, the desirability of following the rubric in the *Book of Common Order* 1940 should be considered: "As the elements are being removed from the church *Nunc Dimittis* (Hymn 716) or Para. XXXVIII. 8, 10, 11 may be sung." Failing that, the congregation should at least stand reverently while the minister and elders retire from the church in orderly procession, bearing the sacred elements. A few simple words of explanation should suffice to dispel prejudice in this regard.

The question of what dress a minister should wear when officiating at divine service is not merely an academic one, but a problem of some practical urgency in these days of soaring prices. One hears of congregations which have been somewhat startled in this connection when considering arrangements for the settlement of a new minister.

It is interesting to note Dr M'Millan's remark, in these pages, that canvas, or some such material was used in Scotland for this purpose. Few would welcome that solution of a pressing difficulty, least of all our congregations.

In his recent book *Concerning Worship*, Dr W. D. Maxwell observes, regarding the cassock, that the material of which it is made "can be of any dark cloth." "Silk," he adds, "is widely used in Scotland, but this is unnecessary and even extravagant. A light serge or Russell cord is equally, if indeed not more reasonably priced, and can be more economically renewed." As to the gown he remarks: "Silk is not essential, and a lighter and more inexpensive material is to be recommended."

Neither ministers nor congregations would willingly dispense with silk for this purpose. It is, however, rather odd that ministers of the Church of Scotland and its daughter communions appear to be unique amongst the churches of Christendom in wearing full silk for all services.