

THE CHURCH SERVICE SOCIETY NOTES

Regional Conference, 1974

The publication of *The Divine Service* (Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion) in 1973, was an event of considerable importance, so much so that in 1974, for the second year in succession, attention was turned to that Booklet at the annual Conference, held at St. Vigeans Parish Church, Arbroath, in September last.

After Holy Communion, celebrated by the President, the Rev. John B. Logan, B.D., S.T.M., members gathered in the Church Hall to hear, from the Rev. A. Stewart Todd, B.D., of St. Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen (and present Convener of the Aids to Devotion Committee) an annotation of the second Order in the Booklet. Mr. Todd was completely at home in explaining the rationale of that Order, as befitted one who has played a large part in its compilation. His comments, completely unscripted, were fresh, incisive, and apposite, and received the approbation of those present, judging, at least, from the discussion which followed.

At the lunch interval members took the opportunity to visit the St. Vigeans museum with its selection of Pictish sculptured stones, and later heard from the Minister, the Rev. H. Russell Ferrie, the story of the parish and its Church, so beautifully restored in 1872.

Mr. Todd's theme in the afternoon related to another notable event in 1973, the publication of *The Church Hymnary: Third Edition*. Concentrating his survey on the contribution of CH 3 to Communion hymnology, Mr. Todd, himself at the piano, had us singing many of the fine new Communion hymns in the Book; and we were reminded that since the norm of the Sunday morning service is a Eucharistic pattern, some of the Communion hymns could be sung on any Sunday, when the service is a Communion in intention, stopping short only of the action leading to the consecration. For many present, the session was an enriching experience, pointing the way to a better and more informed use of the new hymn book.

Hospitality was excellent; the fellowship, as on all these occasions, was most cordial, and a characteristically scintillating vote of thanks by the Rev. George Hunter at the close, sent everyone home in happy mood.

The visit to St. Vigeans recalled the Society's links, from earlier days, with that parish whose minister, Dr. William Duke, became a member in 1870, was Secretary from 1873 to 1887, and Vice-President from 1905 to 1909.

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The **1975 Conference** will be held in **Edinburgh**, at the Kirk of the Greyfriars on **Tuesday 21 October**. 'The Marriage Service' will be the subject of a paper by the Rev. A. K. Robertson, B.D., Ph.D., Vice-President of the Society. At the afternoon session, Mr. Alexander R. Mowat, the Treasurer, a solicitor by profession, will speak on the relevance of the marriage service in a modern non-Christian Society.

Notices will be sent to members in Edinburgh and the immediately surrounding area, and, on request, to any other members who wish to attend.

Centenary Lecture

On 28 and 29 October 1974, members gathered in Edinburgh and Glasgow to hear the third Centenary Lecture, delivered by the Reverend James M. Todd, M.A., Minister of the United Reformed Church at Leatherhead, Surrey.

The foundation meeting of the Society, on 31 January 1865, had agreed that 'the object of the Society shall be the study of the liturgies, ancient and modern, of the Christian Church . . .' What more appropriate then, that the Lecture (instituted to mark the Centenary of the Society) should have as its study one of the most modern of liturgies, the *Book of Order for Worship* of the United Reformed Church, published in 1974.

Mr. Todd, as a member of the Doctrine and Worship Committee of the newly united Church, and previously Chairman of the Worship Committee of the former Congregational Church, spoke with personal knowledge of, and involvement in, the subject, and proved an excellent choice as Lecturer.

As the text is printed in full in *Liturgical Review* (see pp. 1 ff.), we confine ourselves to one or two brief comments.

How useful it was to have, at the outset, a catalogue of the various service books, since 1892, in the English Presbyterian and Congregational Churches, and also of those books privately produced within the same period. One also learned with interest that the two Churches, which traditionally had allowed a large measure of freedom in worship, were now, in union, calling for a book which members could have in their hands. In that context it was perhaps right that the problem of language – a continuing dilemma for present day liturgists – should be solved by printing traditional and contemporary language in parallel columns on the same page. For our own situation, however, the current policy of our Committee on Aids to Devotion of providing, within each new service booklet, an alternative Form and Order in contemporary language, seems entirely practical.

The discussion at both centres, in which Mr. Todd himself played a large part, was lively and well sustained, and, at the close, the votes of thanks were proposed by Dr. R. Stuart Loudon (at Edinburgh) and the Rev. George Hunter (at Glasgow).

W. J. R.