

EDITORIAL

Many interesting and significant liturgical developments are being pioneered by people who are not members of the Church Service Society. It has never occurred to some of these people that they might find it profitable to become members; others have often thought of joining, but have never got round to doing anything about it. But others still have quite deliberately chosen not to join the Society, either because they do not approve of it, or because they fear that it would not approve of them. Even among our membership there are those who feel a certain diffidence. The Editor has had the experience several times of approaching members in search of possible contributions to The Record, and being told, 'I don't think what I might say would go down very well.' It is very apparent that our Society has a dangerously narrow image even in the eyes of some of its own members.

Thinking of The Record in particular, do we want it to promote a restrictively singular 'party line', or do we want it thoughtfully to reflect the diversity which exists even within the Society's own ranks? Do we want it to stimulate informed discussion over a wide cross-section of the Church, or do we want it to be a sectarian broadsheet? The answer to these questions does not lie in the Editor's hands, for he accepted the job on the understanding that his task was, basically, to receive, collate and have prepared for distribution. He has yet to receive a contribution which was not worthy of publication, and therefore it is the input to his desk, not the output from his desk, which has resulted in a periodical of such value and potential.

If, by their silence, those who cannot bring themselves to peddle what they suppose is a 'party line' contribute nothing to The Record, our Society will continue to be ignored by a wide spectrum of opinion within the Church. But surely this need not be, for we are in a position to pioneer the kind of friendly and constructive debate which would permit the special insights which the Society has always championed to permeate through a wide cross-section of the Church, so that they are given prominence, not through a process of censorship, but through their own intrinsic value as they are viewed alongside other ideas and approaches. This would be a challenging experience for all, and would open up the prospect of quite unexpected developments, each of which would tend towards the enriching of the worship of the people of God.

THE LEE LECTURE 1984

The Lee Lectureship Fund was established last century to perpetuate the memory of the Rev Dr Robert Lee of Greyfriars. The lecture, held every three or four years, is required to deal with questions of Biblical Criticism, Theology or Ecclesiastical History or Policy, with reference more particularly to the circumstances of the time when the Lecture is delivered.

The Rev William G Neill, MA, BD, Minister of North Leith, has been invited to deliver the 1984 Lecture, and has chosen, as his subject, DIGNITY IN WORSHIP: ITS DEFINITION AND PRESERVATION IN AN ERA OF CHANGE. Among other things, he will seek to show that dignity is hard to define in any absolute sense, since the context in which the worship is being offered, and the traditions and expectations of the worshippers, must be given sympathetic recognition. The Lecture will be a plea for mutual tolerance and understanding in a contemporary situation where a wide diversity of theory and practice could all-too-easily lead to fragmentation and polarisation.

The Lecture will be delivered in Greyfriars, Tolbooth and Highland Kirk on Sunday 13 May at 7 pm, and will be preceded by opening devotions led by the Minister, the Rev David M Beckett, BD.

NOW CAP THIS!

One of our members, a student at Aberdeen, tells this delightful story:

The minister called the people to prayer, but before he had completed the first sentence he was seen to be rushing down from the pulpit in great haste, and before he had reached the door his face was well-nigh purple. The next thing the congregation knew was that great convulsions of laughter were reaching their ears from the general direction of the vestry. The session clerk took it upon himself to investigate and, if necessary, render assistance. A few moments later the laughter was redoubled, as both he and the minister were consumed with uncontrollable mirth. The explanation - Out of the corner of his eye, the minister had observed a gentleman in the front row of the gallery bowing forward for the prayer. As he did so, his wig slipped off his head and landed neatly upon the lap of a lady directly below. With manifest embarrassment she promptly placed it (or, as she would have said, replaced it) upon the bald head of another gentleman sitting in the pew directly in front.

Now cap this, please! If something like this hasn't happened to you, it must have happened to the proverbial friend of a friend, and the rest of us would like to know about it.