

## E D I T O R I A L

It is a daunting thought, and one which has haunted me ever since I tentatively agreed to become editor of "The Record" - in one hundred years when a member of the Society leafs through back numbers and asks: "What on earth was that fellow Longmuir doing/intending/meaning/up to during his time as editor?" It may be that after a few issues of "The Record" I may be somewhere along the lines of answering that question myself.

Weak moments assail us all - dare I say even in the preparation of worship?

As one of two Ministers of a United Reformed Church in England for seven and a bit years, I always valued my connection with the Society. Now, in my fourth year as Church of Scotland Chaplain in an independent school, and again in a "precious" situation, I have continued to value contacts through the magazine with those who see in worship an opening of windows into Heaven - man celebrating his place in creation, taking bread and wine and offering it to the Lord and God of our fathers, and man receiving bread and wine, a gift from the King of the Universe, in the context of meaningful music and the interpretation of God's word which is as true and as relevant to our contemporaries as it was to those who went before and will be to those who come after.

I have inherited some interesting material from our outgoing editor, The Reverend W G Neill, and for that I am grateful. The format of "The Record" will, for the time being, continue unchanged, save, perhaps the legibility of some texts. There will continue to be three issues: the first early in the New Year, the second over the Easter period, and the third before Advent. It is hoped that each issue will contain material suitable for consideration before the appropriate season of the Church's Year. (What would be the point of having Advent material appearing in Lent?)

What would be most useful would be unsolicited material or suggestions from members of the Society: including what you might consider to be banale suggestions: e.g. "too light-weight"/"too heavy"/"more practical suggestions" "more theological implications" - in other words, whatever

comes to your mind. At the very least you'll receive a polite acknowledgement, at the most, your material will be used and your suggestions implicated.

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Soon the Lenten season will be upon us, and in our churches the colour will change to the sombre violet of the penitential and preparatory lead-in to Easter. It seems a contradiction in terms to talk about the "joy of penance". Everyone knows that confession is a burden. It is something to be endured. Perhaps for that reason many Roman Catholic confessionals are almost deserted and there is now a communal rite of penance. Nevertheless, the confessional is the last place we look if we want a pleasant experience. And yet, in the Gospels we find the Good News of the Kingdom constantly coupled with a call to repentance. The repentance in question is not an examination of conscience, but a conversion; not sadness at having sinned, but a celebration; not a verdict of guilty, but an announcement of pardon.

Jesus spent his life honouring, respecting, and raising up sinners. He recognised in each of them the child who did not mature for lack of sufficient love. He restored their innocence to them. He freed Zacchaeus from his greed, Mary of Magdala from her lovers, Matthew from his unfortunate and despised profession. And his love - freely and generously given - made flower in all of them that which all the world's justice would have forever stifled.

Have a happy Lent!

Lenten Collects:

O Christ, Son of God,  
you suffered agony on the Cross.  
By your goodness grant us the grace of your perfect  
love.

You loved the world, giving your life for it,  
so that the example of your passion might help us  
to support our own trials.

May we, encouraged and strengthened by your example,  
become with you, as Head, true members of your body,  
for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy  
Spirit

in glory for ever. AMEN.

Almighty and everliving God,  
who by the passion of Christ your Son both raise  
and save us.

Keep us always in your mercy;  
and by the celebration of this mystery complete in  
us the work you have begun,  
and awaken in our hearts a new fervour and joy;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

O Lord, all our love is for you.  
Increase in us the gifts of your grace.  
Through the death of your Son you gave us the hope  
of freedom.  
May we, through his resurrection, attain the full  
glory of his life,  
as we fervently follow in the footsteps of our  
victorious King,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

T.G.L.