

## Notes and Comments

FROM time to time we hear of experiments in special services or liturgical events in different parts of the country, which are worthy of a wider publicity. It occurred to us that the *Annual* might usefully report on such ventures; and we accordingly invite Presbytery Correspondents and members to keep us informed about any local developments of this nature which might prove to be of general interest. A page of news and views from Presbyteries up and down the land would not only serve to stimulate local interest in the Society, but would also show that we are giving due place to our declared aim in the study and practice of the principles of worship.

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AS members of the Church Service Society we are naturally concerned not only with the reverence and seemliness of the Service conducted in the Sanctuary, but also with the attitude of the people to the place of worship itself.

The writer of this note finds himself gravely perturbed by the not uncommon practice of holding the Social Meeting following upon the Induction of a Minister, in the church itself. We are aware, of course, that many Church Extension charges have only a dual-purpose building—a Hall Church. Other congregations might have, at the best, a very small hall. Others, again, might have no hall at all. Many in the last group, however, have used a Village Hall, or even a school on such occasions. But what is particularly disturbing is the fact that some quite large city congregations—without any obvious financial difficulties—have chosen, for some reason, to have the “*Soirée*” in the church itself.

What can be done to discourage this undesirable practice? Much of the responsibility rests, no doubt, upon the Minister. A certain city charge was planning to celebrate its Minister’s semi-jubilee. Its hall was reckoned too small. The Minister’s views as to the sacredness of a church building were, however, well known. Arrangements were therefore made to borrow the larger hall of a neighbouring parish. There a suitable programme was carried through which, while thoroughly wholesome, would not have been in keeping with the hallowed place of worship.

We ministers should take a firmer line when Induction arrangements are being made ; and those who, as friends of the new incumbent, are to be guest speakers should "back him up". These matters should be seriously considered by ministers, and also by the laymen of the Church. There is a great need for careful training and patient education of our congregations, and especially of our young people, to encourage them to regard the House of God as a very special place, consecrated to His service. In our prayers for a revival of Christ's Church, must we not also pray that, in the widest sense, it be a revival of Reverence ?

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THERE is often some confusion in the minds of Ministers as to what we are actually doing in the blessing or dedication of things to the Glory of God, and the service of His Church. Can a clear distinction be drawn between blessing, on the one hand, and dedication on the other ?

This question was recently put to the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion by a very well informed Minister of a Church within the Commonwealth who himself felt the need for some helpful guidance. The Committee did some research in the matter and we have sought and obtained permission from the Secretary of the Committee to make this tentative opinion known to a wider circle.

*Blessing* : Anything which is *temporarily* set apart with the intention that it be consciously used to the glory of God may be blessed. Such blessing may properly apply to an almost endless range of objects both within and outside the Church—within the Church the Nativity Crib, or a set of hymn-books ; outside the Church the food at meal times, a school building, a bridge or a shop.

*Dedication* : The character of dedication is indicated in the *Book of Common Order*, where it applies to material things that are set apart *solely* for the special and spiritual purposes of the Church—the church building itself, the Communion Table, Sacramental vessels, Font, Church Organ, significant furnishings and memorials, as well as Churchyard or burial ground.

It would be of interest to hear from any members of this Society who in their own parishes have been uncertain of any guiding principle to follow.

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IN many parishes, more particularly in country areas, the maintenance of a pipe organ is proving a heavy burden in

these days of steeply rising costs. An even greater difficulty is to find an organist suitably qualified to play such an instrument—or even a more modest one—with edification. Unfortunately very few young people are attracted to this most essential service within the Church. It must be frankly admitted that the salary offered to trained organists in these days is, to say the least, meagre, and does not reflect the changing value of money in recent years. The popularity of “canned music” is also a formidable competitor.

We understand that any young person with an interest in music and a good basic training in piano playing can, with diligent application and expert tuition, prove in time to be a reasonably competent organist. But do our Ministers and Kirk Sessions give sufficient encouragement to young people in our congregations to devote their talents in this direction? With proper safeguards the organ should be made available free of charge to anyone who could make profitable use of it. Could the necessary tuition fees—in whole or in part—be defrayed by the congregation itself? Furthermore, the conditions of service which might open up should be made more attractive.

It seems desirable also that a satisfactory standard should be set for average competence in this field, by some examining body specially concerned with the need to enlist suitably trained personnel for this most important service within our Church. The gathering together and the maintenance of a choir is a difficult task in these days, and we should do all in our power, corporately, to encourage higher standards of church praise, and attract into the service of the Church those who in their formative years might be persuaded to devote time and skill to this ministry of worship.

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THE first number of *Studia Liturgica* has now appeared and it quite comes up to expectations. The volume is concerned chiefly with Christian Initiation, articles being contributed by distinguished scholars. The introductions are written by Professor William D. Maxwell, and the Rt. Revd. Dr. Oliver S. Tomkins, Bishop of Bristol. The annual subscription price (including postage) is 25/-. Address for subscriptions: *Studia Liturgica*, Mathenesserlaan, 301c, Rotterdam, Holland.