

EDITORIAL

Last year saw two long-awaited and important productions in the field of Liturgy in the Church of Scotland. The first was the publication, in co-operation with others, of *The Church Hymnary* – Third Edition: the second that of *The Divine Service* – containing three revised Communion Services. Comments on both are available in this number and more are planned. The Editor will also be happy to consider printing further comments from members and readers relating to these two publications (or to other matters within the scope of the Journal).

While sharing in the general welcome given to these two volumes and also in the relief that they have at last made their appearance, we must echo the reservations felt about both and give expression to the view that somehow neither is just what is needed in its own particular field. Having said this, one soon feels it is much less easy to be articulate about just what is required.

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There is much confusion and misunderstanding about the meaning of the Christian Faith and its significance for the life of man in our time. In part this misunderstanding is due to the faults of our liturgy as a means of communication, which is assuredly one of its secondary functions. Many who have no systematic training in theology – and this will apply to 90 per cent of our church members – gather their ideas from the hymns and prayers of the church.

CH 3 has got rid of a lot of junk, but far too much of its content is blessed with those Victorian (and earlier) picture images which reflect an outworn theology. Poetic perhaps and interesting as poetry, but the whole effect on the Christian life of the users is the production of a kind of cushion which ‘transubstantiates’ or ‘spiritualises’ the picture of the faith till it shares the condemnation of the famous ‘Dewarism’ – ‘some people are so heavenly minded that they are no earthly use’.

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It is now being announced that copies of the 1927 *Revised Church Hymnary* no longer wanted will be welcome overseas. It is to be hoped that this scheme will be strangled at birth as a disgraceful piece of ‘unchristian stewardship’. Our obsolescent tractors, buses and everything else are good enough for those who have none –No,

sir! If we think the RCH 3 is what Christians should be using today, let us dip in our pockets and export it – not the cast-offs.

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The First Communion Service in 'The Divine Service' is, in some ways a very fine thing which has served the Church well for a generation, but participation in a recent service where it was in use was so disappointing that it made me want to place this service with Arthur Negus for valuation as an antique. If I may take a parallel from industry, the Fruehof crane undoubtedly utilises many features which appeared in the older types of crane, but today we put the older versions in industrial archaeology museums and use the Fruehof!

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A reawakened interest in liturgy has relieved us of much liturgical 'nonsense' and architectural frippery together with some of the 'capers' of high churchmen. The liturgical 'emasculatation' which is going on has undoubted value, but the time has come to take stock. Mere 'emasculatation' may only leave us with a worthless shadow of past glories. Yet too many modern experiments (mercifully not all) suggest the need for the assertion of a new type of contemporary liturgical 'virility', and much more thought is needed about its content and patterns. The answer lies in a new creation, not in imitation, and the birth will be much more painful than anything we have yet experienced!

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Churches must face that many organs are of an age for drastic overhaul, modernisation or replacement – costly at any time. One newcomer in answer to this problem is the so-called 'computer-organ' which claims that its sounds have been created by reproduction of the work of traditional organ pipes. It is hoped to produce a professional report on an instrument of this class in a future issue. Played softly and well it is a great improvement on previous substitutes and might even lead some to believe that it was in fact a traditional organ, but when the volume reaches beyond a certain level it becomes quite clear that the producers have a lot of research in front of them – the effect is little better than that of a 'juggernaut' lorry trying to cope with a steep gradient!

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The 1973 report of COPWAD (The General Assembly's Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion) makes a plea for the Holy Communion as the norm for Morning Service in the Church of

Scotland in keeping with the practice of much of the rest of the Church. This might at least be the death-knell of 'communion cards' and also of 'pew-cloths' with their sham and ridiculous pretence that we are sitting at a table. Even if laundered by the pious, they are often ill-fitted, crushed up and 'fiddling' out of all proportion to anything they achieve by way of atmosphere. Let's have done with them and with tail coats.

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The current restrictions have stressed the need for economy in lighting and suggest a point not often faced in those churches where it is customary to turn down lighting during the sermon. One would not wish to commend the practices of some pulpit exhibitionists who insist on their being floodlit at the same time – but there is nothing more disconcerting to the man in the pew than to watch a face continually moving in and out of shadow during the delivering of a sermon because no one has given thought to sensible lighting arrangements.

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Whether the Church of Scotland is ready for closer relations with the Church of England is still a very open question on both sides of the Border. One thing is fairly certain, namely that the Border is still enough of a reality for both Churches to know very little about how their opposite number functions. Apart from anything else the Church of England is not the Episcopal Church by which it is often judged in Scotland. As a small contribution to closing the 'knowledge-gap' we have asked one or two officials to participate in a series about their jobs in the Church of England and how they see them fitting in, more particularly in the field of worship. The contributions will not be published in any special order but will appear largely as they become available. Archdeacon Perry has kindly written a general introduction and in this number says also something about his own job and its functions. We express our gratitude for his willing co-operation.

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Now that the Journal appears half-yearly there is still ample room available for contributions from readers and members of the Church Service Society. Contributions from those engaged in the daily or weekly services of any denomination will be very welcome as will also the views of interested lay men and women. For convenience of production it is a help if scripts are produced in double-spaced typing and in multiples of 450-500 words. There is no restriction on length, but over-long articles might have to be modified. There is also a place for brief letters on the part of those who may not wish to venture into full-scale articles.