

THE RECORD

THE CHURCH SERVICE SOCIETY

EDITORIAL NOTE

This is by no means the first occasion on which I have stepped into the shoes of Dr Henry Sefton since first I came to know him as a student more than half a century ago. Whether it is wise on the part of the Society to have me do so at this stage of life is, as yet, undecided, but I have always counted it a privilege to succeed him for he brings to every enterprise he serves deep loyalty, a richly-stocked mind, and balanced judgement and these leave their welcome traces in what he passes on. I would record here both my own warm thanks, and those of the Society, for his period in the editorial chair.

Next year will see the 75th anniversary of the appearance of the first issue of the *Church Service Society Annual*, forerunner of *The Record*. It is my intention to revisit some of the earlier issues and, it may be, to draw from them appropriate extracts for quotation or comment, or ideas of subjects worth reconsidering.

To some extent the current issue already reflects that intention. In 1931 Dr Alexander Hetherwick ('pioneer missionary and empire builder'! – to quote his memorial in the Kirk of St Nicholas) wrote on "Training a Primitive People in Christian Worship". Two years ago I visited Dr Graham Duncan (also with a St Nicholas connection), then in Fort Hare and now in Pretoria, where he teaches Church History and Liturgics, with a special responsibility for candidates, mainly black, for the ministry of the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa. It seemed to me that a further report from that part of the world, now so differently regarded after the changes of 70 years, might be of interest.

Another regular feature of early issues was a series of reports on church restorations and re-orderings – with a strong emphasis on medieval buildings. Changing attitudes to (or fashions in) worship has led to much re-ordering in recent times. The whole Church must surely benefit from John Hume’s readiness to devote his talents, encyclopaedic knowledge and wide experience of historic buildings to the convenership of the Assembly’s Committee on Artistic Matters, where they can be greatly influential in the area of one of the concerns of this Society. We are grateful to him for so readily agreeing to review Richard Fawcett’s important book, *Scotland’s Medieval Churches*.

We also offer the fruits of some of Ian Gough’s studies (for his D.Min) on funeral rites (which he also dealt with at the October Study Day); and the paper given by Bishop Maurice Taylor after the A.G.M. on the question, "What is Good Liturgical Language?" – a question surely deserving careful consideration by everyone responsible for leading worship in a branch of the church such as ours, where so little is prescribed, so much is left to the individual practitioner, and the ‘floating liturgy’ of a former generation has sunk, almost without trace.

It is a mixed bag and, in that, it reflects the state of thought, on worship and on its setting, in the Church at large. For the present, we shall make no pronouncements on whether a greater measure of cohesion in each issue of our publication, or of ‘common order’ in the Church’s liturgical practice, would constitute an improvement.

J.C.S.

SECRETARY

After six years in office Rachel Dobie indicated to the Council, to its great regret, that she intended to leave the Secretarial desk at last year’s AGM. Rachel, free of the overweight of society tradition which cumpers some of us, shares a deep conviction of the importance of worship in the life of the Church and has the subtle blend of persistent