

Editorial

Church of South India

IT IS GOOD TO KNOW that the General Synod has passed a motion requesting the House of Bishops 'to consider how the Church of England and the Church of South India can now be joined in a relationship of full communion'. In the twenty-fifth year of the existence of this pioneer united church it is encouraging to see the timid and equivocal attitude of one of the parent churches to her at last being overcome. The prospect of a new relationship here holds out hope for progress towards church union in England on a more acceptable basis than the recent Anglican-Methodist scheme.

American Theology

TWO recent volumes are instructive as showing which way the theological wind is blowing among American Evangelicals. While it is true that many new movements in British Christianity have their origin across the Atlantic, this is much more the case in church life than in academic theology. Nonetheless it is of interest to see the general trends over there, while remembering that the conservative-liberal cleavage has usually been greater in America because controversy within denominations and theological seminaries has often led to groups breaking away and starting new ones which do not engage in dialogue but in polemic with the old. *Toward a Theology for the Future*, edited by Clark H. Pinnock and David F. Wells, Creation House, Illinois, 329 pp., \$4.95, is a symposium by eleven writers some of whom are British but working in the U.S. or Canada, and one of whom is working in England. The tone of the essay is somewhat uneven and varies between the rather doggedly defensive and the more forward-looking. Some are well geared to the subject, while others do not really deal with the question implied by the title. Much can be

learnt from the way in which American Evangelicals are facing up to the challenge of working through rather than simply against modern movements. In the other book, *Issues of Theological Warfare: Evangelicals and Liberals*, Eerdmans, 206 pp., \$3.45, Richard J. Coleman seeks to show why Evangelicals and Liberals react in different ways to different matters of faith and practice and to show what they can learn from each other. He seeks to be fair to both sides and there is no doubt that those engaged in theological controversy in America would benefit greatly from reading this book. It cannot simply be transplanted to this country but in our new situation of 'dialogue' it offers some significant pointers.

Biblical Who's Who

JOAN COMAY and Ronald Brownrigg has recently produced two splendid volumes under the titles *Who's Who in the Old Testament* and *Who's Who in the New Testament*, both Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 448 pp., £4.75. Neither volume is concerned with critical questions, though Mrs. Comay, who is an Israeli, accepts the current majority views among biblical scholars about the main literary problems in the Old Testament. Both are really concerned to put into easily assimilable form the information that there is in the biblical text about the various characters. There is a certain amount of overlapping in each volume, but on the whole the exercise is admirably done and the books lavishly illustrated.

Two Church Leaders

THE Church of England has lost within the space of a month a distinguished former Archbishop of Canterbury and another bishop who was widely expected to become the next holder of that office. Geoffrey Fisher died eleven years after retirement at a ripe old age but without having lost his vigour of mind, as an article in the Summer 1971 edition of *The Churchman* shows. He succeeded William Temple at a difficult time for the Church of England and his considerable powers of organisation, together with his warm humanity, helped the Church of England to put her house in order and to remain in reasonably good heart in the post-war period. He also opened up some new perspectives particularly in the ecumenical field which have helped to provide a basis for much that has recently been achieved in this area. Yet by and large his style of primacy was appropriate to the state of the church at a time when change was relatively slow and a basic conservatism marked most aspects of its life.

Since the early 1960s the pace of change has quickened enormously

and the situation today is extremely fluid. The recent meeting of five hundred church leaders at Birmingham with the object of discovering God's will together rather than of dealing with a specific agenda demonstrates this clearly. With this new situation there has come a new style of leadership and it was of that style that Ian Ramsey, Bishop of Durham, was perhaps the foremost representative on the bench. His background and temperament qualified him well to speak out on many issues of social and moral concern and to demonstrate that the episcopal role is not simply to care for the faithful flock but also to turn its eyes outwards to its responsibilities to the world. Many of his utterances were controversial and some should be seen as sort of prophetic insights, pinpointing the evil in society though not always providing a practical remedy for it. Very few conscientious diocesan bishops seem able these days to make their voices heard at a national level and the sudden death of Dr. Ramsey at the age of fifty-seven is a serious blow to the Church of England. Christian people should be praying now about the next round of senior episcopal appointments in the Church of England, beginning with that to the See of Durham and remembering the vacancy at Canterbury which will occur before long. The perspective shown in Bishop Neill's article in this number should be borne in mind and we should pray that, as so often in the past, God will raise up his men for this challenging hour in the church's history.

Book Reviews

THIS issue contains a considerable number of short book reviews, which have been held over due to lack of space, and many of which date from Mr. Duffield's editorship. Some appreciative comments have reached me about the general standard of the signed reviews by our contributors, to whom we are always grateful. Any comments about the scope and size of our reviews which discerning readers might like to make will receive careful attention.

Our Next Issue

WE are intending occasionally to devote an issue of *The Churchman* largely to one particular theme. It is hoped that the winter number will contain several theological articles relating to the Pentecostal movement. Other possible subjects are being considered for future issues and again I am glad to receive readers' views about this policy.

R.E.N.