

Editorial

Gospel and Spirit.

We have much pleasure in printing in this number of *Churchman* (together with almost simultaneous publication by our Charismatic contemporary *Renewal*) the joint statement entitled 'Gospel and Spirit'. This will also be on sale soon as a separate pamphlet. As the statement indicates, it was the product of a series of meetings which spanned some fifteen months. There was a great deal of detailed discussion on many of the points at issue and the end-product represents, as well as can be expected in a document of this kind, the true mind of the participants. It was originally intended that we should call it an 'Agreed Statement' but in the end the cause of truth demanded that we should be a little less pretentious (for the 'some' and 'others' at various places in the text indicates points where we were not entirely agreed). We believe that the statement will be all the more valuable for being thoroughly honest and that it will provide a basis for further discussion of a number of complex issues. The exercise was originally conceived as an attempt at reconciliation amongst Anglican Evangelicals who had been at times sadly divided on the issues. We were however glad to have with us the Rev. Tom Smail, Director of the Fountain Trust, who is a minister of the United Reformed Church. His sober Scots judgment, allied to considerable theological acumen, was a factor of major importance in the successful outcome of the discussions. It is to be hoped that the statement will be widely studied, not just within the borders of Anglican Evangelicalism. It is vitally important that informed Christians of every persuasion should have a clearer idea of what makes so many Christians (particularly the younger generation) 'tick' today. It is hoped also that a group may be able to follow up further some of the pastoral implications of the statement.

Authority in the Church.

The third of the statements planned by the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission has now been published. The first dealt with the Eucharist and the second with the ministry. This one deals with the even more difficult subject of authority. It is hoped to give proper treatment to this in our next issue. Commentaries on it include *Agreement on Authority* by Julian W. Charley (Grove Books, 28pp., £0.30) and *Truth and Authority* by E.J. Yarnold S.J. and Henry Chadwick (CTS/SPCK 61pp., £0.70). As

questions of authority are usually the most important ones that confront the church in each generation, it is of the utmost importance that this document is very carefully studied and in an atmosphere far removed from the 'Anglicans Swallow Pope' type of headline.

Religion and Theology 2.

This is the title of the latest select book guide published by SCM Press. In view of the distinction of the publishers and the amount of trade which they do through their bookroom, it might be expected that this would be a thoroughly objective selection. The 1976 guide aroused a certain amount of protest because of its stating that it would 'be found less sympathetic to those works in the evangelical and fundamentalist tradition of Christianity which assume a gulf between the activity of God or the Holy Spirit (and the way in which this is to be judged) and past and present human experience'. On the basis of this it omitted most of the heavyweight writings of recent Evangelical scholars. It seemed anomalous to some that the press then published John Robinson's *Redating the New Testament* which drew freely upon the conservative literature which had been largely omitted from the guide. This year the phrasing is absent but only a few of the omitted books have appeared. For example the *New Bible Commentary Revised* appears, as does F.F. Bruce's commentary on the Greek text of Acts, but there is no reference at all to the New London series of commentaries which includes Bruce's commentary on the English text of Acts and his commentary on Hebrews, which stands head and shoulders above those listed. All those interested in the study of the Bible and of theology owe a great deal to the SCM Press for its work in the last generation or so. May we ask that in 1978 they produce a guide which is truly worthy of them?

Churchman.

We apologise to readers that we ran into a number of teething troubles with our January issue. The general impression created seems to have been good though there were inevitably a number of mistakes. We hope to have production going more smoothly later this year and we are always glad to have criticisms and suggestions from our readers.

R.E.N.