

Editorial

Synodical Government

WHEN SYNODICAL GOVERNMENT was introduced in its present form in the Church of England there were a number of voices raised to say that it would not work. There are now a number of voices raised to say that it is not working and the General Synod for one has been getting itself into a number of tangles of late. Democracy is a cumbersome and time-consuming process and there could easily be a reaction against its exercise in the church when so much paper is produced and so many words spoken and things have to be referred up the line and back down again. We live in one of those periods of history when everything has come under the microscope. The coincidence of this process of self-examination in the church with the introduction of synodical government has accordingly produced a mountain of business for the synods and it is not surprising therefore that even the most vigorous bulldozing does not seem to move it very fast. Almost certainly there need to be reforms in procedure but it is most important that the church should not lose heart and nerve at this stage and resort to leaving it to the experts, episcopal and otherwise. One of the most urgent tasks facing the Church of England is that of becoming a genuinely lay church where laymen feel that they are responsible and that bishops and clergy are there to provide a vital supporting role. Abdication of this responsibility because of the present problems of synodical government would in the end be disastrous for the church.

Books about the Bible

EVEN if the Bible is less widely read than once it was in this country, there seems to be no lack of books being produced to help those who do want to read it. One firm, Lion Publishing, have recently produced a magnificent colour spectacular *Handbook to the Bible* (680 pp., £3.75).

It is edited and produced by the directors of Lion Publishing, David and Pat Alexander, and the consulting editors are David Field, Donald Guthrie, Gerald Hughes, Howard Marshall and Alan Millard. Thirty-two Evangelical scholars contribute to its pages. It deals with all sorts of aspects of the Bible at a largely non-technical level and would make a beautiful present. Another attractively illustrated book, this time in black and white, is *The Bible and Archaeology*, by J. A. Thompson (Paternoster, 474 pp., £3.40). This is the third edition of a book by a lecturer in Biblical Archaeology in the University of Melbourne and it has already proved its usefulness over the last ten years.

On a rather wider canvas, but including a certain amount of material about the Bible and the history of the church, is the *Readers' Digest History of Man* entitled *The Last Two Million Years* (488 pp., £7.50). This is beautifully illustrated in colour and contains a great deal of interesting information on all sorts of topics. It suggests that Neanderthal man buried his dead in a way that expressed simple religious beliefs.

The British and Foreign Bible Society have produced *The Translators' New Testament* (579 pp., £2.75). The intention of this is to provide something which can be used by Bible translators for whom English is a second language and who have no access to the Greek text or limited command of Greek. Thirty-five scholars (whose names do not seem to be listed) have been working on the project for nearly twenty years under the direction of Professor W. D. McHardy. They draw often on R.S.V., N.E.B., T.E.V., J.B. and William Barclay. The translation is accurate but on the whole lacking in sparkle for the English reader. What will be of considerable help is the series of translational notes on various verses which show why they have made a particular rendering. There is a useful glossary at the end. Coming with much more vividness is the latest edition of J. B. Phillips' *The New Testament in Modern English* now in paperback form (Collins, Fontana Books, 558 pp., £0.75).

Other Books

THOSE who are called to preach on the lectionary recently authorised in the Church of England will find much useful material in *Commentary on the New Lectionary* Volume I by John Gunstone (S.P.C.K., 230 pp., £1.95). This volume goes from Advent to Easter 3 and a second volume is due in March, covering the period from Easter 4 to Sunday next before Advent and Holy Days. There are no potted sermons here but plenty of material designed 'to spark off ideas'. It deserves discriminating use. Devotional material of a different kind is supplied in *Faith Triumphant*, an anthology of verse by the late Bishop Frank Houghton (O.M.F. Books, 164 pp., £0.60). This is steeped through with the lifelong piety of a modern Evangelical saint.

Two interesting lectures have recently been published as short booklets. In the Ethel M. Wood Lecture, *A Word for Our Time?* (Athlone Press, 24 pp., £0.50) Professor Hubert Cunliffe Jones examines the use of Zechariah 9-14 in the New Testament and concludes with a call for the appointment of lecturers in universities who will bridge the gap between biblical studies and theology. *Piety in Queen Victoria's Reign* (Dr. Williams' Trust, 23 pp., £0.30) is the twenty-seventh lecture of the Friends of Dr. Williams' Library and includes some interesting illustrations of its theme by Lady Longford.

The article by Roger Beckwith published in our Spring issue under the title 'The Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine' has been reprinted in slightly amended form as *Christ's Presence and Sacrifice* (Church Book Room Press, 24 pp., £0.25). It represents the response of a team of Anglican Evangelicals to the *Agreed Statement*, and is necessary reading for all those involved in this debate.

Future Plans

IN the Spring issue we hope to carry an important article on the Limuru principle for uniting ministries and a reply to Charles Napier's critique of the A.C.C.M. report on the ministry published in our Summer number. A series of articles on modern theologians and their message for Anglicanism today is also planned. There will unfortunately have to be an inevitable price rise and from 1974 *The Churchman* will cost £2.00 for home subscribers and £2.50 for overseas with special rates for theological students in training. The costs and price of the journal are being kept to the minimum and even with this increase it will be hard to break even. The best service which subscribers can do for us is to introduce their friends and their libraries to *The Churchman*.

Apology

IN view of a criticism made of its price, Cambridge University Press have asked us to point out that the volume on Isaiah 1-39 in the Cambridge Bible Commentary reviewed in our Autumn number is available in paperback form at £1.40. The volume on Amos, Hosea and Micah in paperback sells at £1.10. We apologise for not including that information.

R.E.N.