

Editorial Notes

THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

It is a matter of immense joy for discerning Christians everywhere that the Roman Catholic Church is now holding its second Vatican Council in Rome. The first Vatican Council met a little less than a century ago, and since then many significant things have happened both in Christendom and in the world at large. It is with an awareness of this fact that the present Council has been convened.

The first Vatican Council made an historic decree concerning the faith of the Roman Catholic Church, namely the dogma of Papal Infallibility. This decree has had two noteworthy consequences. In the first place, a body of Christians belonging to that Church in western Europe found it so unacceptable that they gave up their allegiance to Rome and continue as the Old Catholic Church. Secondly, this decree constitutes one of the greatest hurdles in the way of reunion between the Church of Rome and the rest of Christendom. The second Vatican Council which is now in session, it is hoped, will endeavour to remove, in effect, the obstacle to reunion seen in the decree by those outside the Roman Catholic fold by interpreting it in the context of a clear definition both of episcopal authority and of the role of the laity in the Church. Whether this will satisfy the non-Roman Catholic Churches is a matter which cannot be prophesied. But the fact has to be admitted that if the Council addresses itself to face at least the question of Papal Infallibility with an understanding of objections to it from Churches outside the Church of Rome, that will be a definite step forward in the direction of Christian unity.

There are many hopeful signs about the second Vatican Council which should be specially noted. As soon as the idea of convening it was announced, the World Council of Churches expressed satisfaction over it and promised to delegate official observers when the Council actually met. This Council is, in fact, the first official gathering of the Roman Catholic Church where observers from other Churches have formally been invited.

This and several other facts connected with the Council are indications of possible developments within the Roman Catholic Church to favour Christianity not merely on its own terms as hitherto has been done, but also with due consideration and sympathy for emphasises on the faith and discipline cherished by Churches outside that body.

We are glad to publish in this number an article on 'The Second Vatican Council' by the Reverend Ian Travers-Ball, S.J. May we take this opportunity to assure him that we are indeed grateful to him for the article, particularly for the spirit with which he has sent it to us for publication.

SEMINAR ON THE DOCTRINES OF CREATION

Under the joint auspices of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society and the Indian Christian Theological Association a seminar was held at the Gurukul Lutheran Theological College, Madras, from 18th to 20th July, 1962. A report of the seminar is published below.

One of the papers read at the seminar is included in this number. A few more of them also have been sent to us, which we are looking forward to publishing in the ensuing numbers of the *Journal*.
