

Book Reviews

Christ and the Bible: by JOHN W. WENHAM. Tyndale Press 1972.
Pp. 206. Price £0.75 p.

Opening the Bible: by THOMAS MERTON. Unwin Books 1972.*
Pp. 84. Price £0.65 p.

Christ and the Bible is a brief, lucid, and largely non-technical statement of the conservative evangelical view of the Bible. The author hopes to write three more books on different aspects of this theme. 'This first book tries to show what Christ's view of Scripture was, why we should regard his view as authoritative, and what books and texts should be regarded as Scripture' (p. 8).

Wenham claims that, taking the evidence of the Gospels as substantially reliable, it is clear that Christ treated the Old Testament historical narratives as straightforward records of fact (p. 12), that he used the Old Testament as the final authority in matters of faith and conduct (p. 23), and that he regarded God as its ultimate author. He refers to 'the remarkable interchangeability of the terms "God" and "scripture" in certain New Testament passages' as affording further evidence of this last point (p. 27). Thus to Christ, what Scripture said, God said. This is the lynch-pin of Wenham's argument and all else follows from it. He goes on to say that Christ claimed an authority for his own teaching similar to that which he attributed to the Old Testament, and that he 'in principle authenticated the New Testament', for he 'directly appointed and trained the apostles as the authorised teachers of the New Covenant, and they were recognised as such by the church'. Further, 'The Holy Spirit guided the church in its recognition of certain "apostolic" writings as being in fact additional scriptures' (pp. 109-110). The last two chapters deal with the growth of the Old and New Testament canons, and with the challenges to the argument raised by the issues of textual criticism.

This book raises two sets of questions: first, do the arguments which the author puts forward necessarily lead to his conclusions?—namely that the Bible is infallible and verbally inspired, that 'God so guided the authors that the words they wrote were his words'? Surely all Christians would agree that the Bible is authoritative, inspired and in many parts historically reliable, but just what *is* authority? What *is* inspiration? What *is* history? There is much more to each of these three words than Wenham seems ready to allow.

This leads to the second set of questions: simply to ask whether or not the doctrine of verbal inspiration is true is to discuss the question within the author's framework, but that framework itself needs to be

* Available from Blackie & Son (India) Ltd., Publisher's sole Representatives in India.

challenged, for is not this doctrine based on a profound misunderstanding of the way in which the God of the Bible reveals himself and his ways to men? For surely God reveals himself not through infallible words, but through events, and ultimately through a Person whose significance is interpreted through the words of inspired and prophetic men. To claim finality for supposedly infallible words is to impose serious limitations on our understanding of the Bible, and leads to grave distortion of its message.

Further, the author claims that on the basis of the presumed attitude of Christ to the Old Testament we are required to accept the historicity of the book of Jonah (p. 74), 'the essentially Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and a sixth century date for the book of Daniel' (p. 127, note 5). The man who is prepared seriously to argue those three cases in 1973 can only do so on the basis of certain presuppositions about God and the way he reveals himself to us. It is these presuppositions that one wants to challenge.

Thomas Merton's understanding of the Bible was based on a very different understanding of divine revelation. On page 8 of *Opening the Bible* he writes: 'The basic claim made by the Bible for the word of God is not so much that it is to be blindly accepted because of God's authority, but that it is recognised by its transforming and liberating power' (his italics). To read the Bible properly is to be caught up in the dialogue between God and man which it enshrines. Some people are prevented from having this experience because they think of the Bible as a 'religious' book which is unrelated to their real concerns, and so they never open it. Others are so used to reading or hearing it in a familiar ecclesiastical setting that they cannot recognize its true message. But thanks to the ecumenical perspectives of our time we can now recognise that 'the Bible is everybody's book, and the unbeliever can prove himself as capable as anyone else of finding new aspects of it which the believer would do well to take seriously (p. 28)'. Merton illustrates this point by extended references to a film of St. Matthew's Gospel made by an Italian Marxist, a novel by William Faulkner and another book by the psychoanalyst Erich Fromm. He also suggests an intriguing parallel between the Bible and Zen Buddhism—and let him who regards such a thing as impossible first read the book! Merton encourages us to expose the Bible to people of other traditions, and to expose ourselves to their Scriptures.

One could perhaps sum up the difference between these two books by saying that while *Christ and the Bible* is based on a theology of impregnability, *Opening the Bible* springs from a theology of vulnerability.

Varanasi

R. H. HOOKER

The Attractiveness of God—Essays in Christian Doctrine: by R. P. C. HANSON. S.P.C.K., London, 1973. Pp. 202. Price: Cloth, £3.85; Paper £1.95.

The word which springs to mind in describing this book is, 'Refreshing'! The title is somewhat misleading, for one opens the book expecting another contribution to the continuing debate on the God

who has become a best-seller; the author is at pains to justify his title in the opening essay, but both could safely have been omitted without great loss, as the subtitle is adequate, if prosaic. In fact, what the book really is, is a first-class handbook of traditional Christian doctrine in language suitable for the modern Christian reader. Thus a vast sweep of Christian Doctrine is treated—the Bible, Dogma, God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, Grace and Atonement, the Church, Ministry and Sacraments and Eschatology—but all with typical Hansonian lucidity, clarity and erudition, making a lot of good sense for the sophisticated Christian of today. It is the old wine of traditional Christian theology in the new wineskins of current categories, reminding us that ‘Christian doctrine was not invented by a series of theological back-room boys’, but rather by those who ‘worshipped God along with those for whom they wrote (so that) their theology was pastoral and rose out of a pastoral situation’. At the same time Bishop Hanson is not afraid to be forthright and critical of the Church and some of its traditional understandings of doctrine.

The author has tried to show what the Bible is *not*, and then what it *is*, and that Bible and Church (tradition) are not over against each other but rather partners in a ‘dance’, even if the Church’s partner has had to spend a good bit of time being X-rayed or on the operating table! In the essay on Dogma he goes on to show how the church, while using the Bible as a starting-point, has not stopped there, but has gone on to define its dogmas, which he affirms to be the *three* ‘necessary and fundamental’ ones of the Trinity, the Incarnation and the Atonement. The third essay proceeds to trace with much clarity the development of the doctrine of the Trinity up to 381 A.D., asserting that the essentials of the doctrine have been retained by the Church ever since. Essay No. 5 takes up the Incarnation and in particular aims at showing the inadequacy of the Chalcedonian Formula as a mere ‘declaration of good intentions’; while the following essay on the Holy Spirit emphasises the fact that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is eschatological. The Holy Spirit is not only ‘the form in which God appears to reign over his people at the last time,’ but also ‘God in whom man returns to God’. These two essays, and the previous one, are of a high standard.

The sixth essay, on the Grace and Wrath of God, and the subsequent two on the Church (including the Ministry and Sacraments) and the Last Things, are shorter and though lucid and having a show of comprehensiveness could do with some filling out. Taken as a whole, however, the book is a frank, up to date, clearly reasoned exposition of Christian doctrine, a valuable volume for theologians, clergy and laity seeking to understand or expound the Christian faith today.

*Bishop's College,
Calcutta*

R. W. BOWIE

Christ and the Younger Churches (Theological Collections No. 15):
edited by G. F. VICEDOM. S.P.C.K. London 1972. Pp. 112.
Price £1.40.

This is a collection of seven theological papers, written for various purposes and in various circumstances, by theologians of Asia, Africa

and Latin America. They have been brought together with an Introduction by Dr Vicedom of Neuendettelsau. The papers are all of high quality, but this reader was left wondering whether the fact that they all come from 'younger Churches' really provides enough theological unity for the volume. The Editor, as a professor of missions in the heart of one of the European Churches, sees them all as 'younger Churches' which must all necessarily go through the same 'apologetic stage' that the early Church did. But is this true? Does the category 'younger Churches' constitute a kind of theological unity, or is it just a phrase like 'non-Christian', merely meaning 'Churches that do not happen to be in Europe or North America'? I am not sure, but I doubt whether the perspective of a professor of missions looking at 'younger Churches' is the best one for interpreting what is really going on!

Be that as it may, we must be grateful to Dr Vicedom for bringing together a fine collection of essays, each of which repays careful study in its own right. In my estimation the outstanding papers are those of Miguez Bonino, Kosuke Koyama, and Choan-seng Song. The first takes up the popular ecumenical slogan of the 1960's about God being at work in history, and asks exactly what it means. He admirably debunks a lot of easy talk about the 'prophetic role of the Churches' and tackles a very difficult question with balance and discernment. He shows that Christians have no blue-print for world history, but that God's action in history is veiled, and yet carries signs discernible by faith of the final consummation of history.

Kosuke Koyama is, as always, fresh and penetrating. He is attacking the 'love-monism' which he sees in popular Thai theology, and interprets the *opus alienum* of God as necessary to a true understanding of history. We do not understand the love of God rightly if we do not know his wrath.

Choan-seng Song of Taiwan sees Christology as the fundamental issue for the mission of the Church in Asia. He looks at the ways in which Indian and Chinese thought have evaded a direct meeting with the real Jesus—the former by seeing him as one of the *avatars*, the latter by seeing him as one of the moral teachers. He pleads for an understanding of the unity of Christ as Being and Act, and says—rightly I think—that 'the direct and decisive encounter with Jesus Christ with Eastern Religions has not yet taken place'.

Adeola Adegbola, in a paper read at a W.C.C. meeting in January 1965, also deals with the question of God's action in history, and undertakes an examination of Max Warren's thesis in *Caesar the Beloved Enemy*. The other African contributor, John Mbiti of Kampala, drawing on the evidence of African preaching collected in H. W. Turner's book *Profile through Preaching* shows how the African churches, especially the Independent Churches, have interpreted Jesus. In Mbiti's view the centre of African interest in Jesus is in the resurrection. Jesus is above all the conqueror of death and of the negative elements in life. Mbiti says that traditional African thought, which has a rich mythology of the past, has no mythology at all of the future. Into this vacuum, he says, Jesus has come as the one who creates the possibility of a victorious future.

Kazo Kitamori, in 'The Problem of Pain in Christology' examines and compares the relationships of the concept 'Lord' and the concept 'pain' in the Apostles' and Nicene creeds. He finds that, in this respect, the Nicene Creed has taken 'a step backward' from the firm connection between the two established in the Apostles' Creed.

The final paper in the series is by Mark Sunder Rao, entitled 'Amanyatva, the Realisation of Christian Non-Duality'. The starting point of the paper is the statement of an analogy (which seems to the present reviewer very questionable) between the relation *darsana-siddhanta* in Hindu thought and the relation *kerygma-didache* in Christian thought. Taking the Christian doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation and the Holy Spirit, the writer seeks to show from the teaching of the early Church Fathers that these doctrines are intended to interpret the divine-human relationship in terms of non-duality. Reading the paper reminded me of a recent conversation with a Brahmin friend who said—angrily—to me: 'You Christians have failed to recognise that your Gospel is something radically different from Hinduism or any other religion: it is a radically new interpretation of personality and of history. You have turned it into another religion. We do not need any more religions in India'. I confess that I have more sympathy with this protest than with the essay under review, which seems to me to miss completely the radically different understandings of human personality which are involved in the Hindu-Christian dialogue. From the Introduction one gathers that the original German edition contained two comments on this essay by Fr Britto and Dr L. S. Rouner, but these are unfortunately not included in the English edition.

Dr Vicedom in his comment on Sunder Rao's paper acknowledges that the question 'How God's relationship to men takes place in concrete terms' has been sadly neglected in Protestant theology. Perhaps the great value of this book lies in the questions which it poses—implicitly or explicitly—to the theology of the Churches in Europe and North America. In this sense the book is to be judged as a valuable contribution to the ecumenical conversation. I remain convinced, however, that the real theology of the Asian and African Churches will be a theology wrought out in their own languages and in the context of the deepest convictions and desires which those languages express.

*LESLIE NEWBIGIN
Bishop in Madras

Asian Christian Thinking: Studies in a metaphor and its Message: by Cecil Hargreaves. I.S.P.C.K., L.P.H. & C.L.S. 1972. Pp. 183. Price Rs 7.50.

The author of *Asian Christian Thinking* does not claim to present any intensive still less exhaustive study of the writers selected. His main purpose is to draw the attention of his readers to a very familiar pattern of thought in current use among Asian thinkers. To say that the use of symbols, images and metaphors is characteristic of the 'Eastern mind' would add little to our general knowledge, but to single out a symbolic expression that keeps recurring in the writings of Asian religious thinkers would certainly give us an insight never possessed

before. It is here that the author can claim originality for his work. Following the first intuition, he takes the reader along a varied path, with an ever widening perspective in which the symbolism of the 'living tree' recurs with consistent familiarity.

The first two chapters examine in detail the use of this biblical symbol by various thinkers of Asia to express the loftiest religious ideals. Deservedly, considerable attention is paid to the writings of Tagore on this point. 'Rootedness', 'growth', 'relatedness', are key concepts conveyed under the symbol of the tree, and these are essential for a proper understanding of the whole book.

It would be a mistake however to conclude that the author is only concerned with the symbolic. The next few chapters take one deep into the problem of indigenization or adaptation, something basic to evangelisation. The difficulty of expressing the Gospel message in human terms in any culture is always present, but the challenge is all the more intense when the good news faces the world religions of Asia. Part Two explores the possibility of ensuring that the Gospel is proclaimed in such a way that it will have lasting roots in Asia. The need for a relevant theology in this context is emphasised. The Word of God is not tied down to any one culture, nor bound to any one kind of formulation, hence the Christian Church must finally express its life and growth among the Asian peoples in such a way that it can become fully Asian without thereby ceasing to be Christian. The reader is reminded that the message of the Cross does have a special meaning for the developing nations of Asia. The author rightly points out that indigenization is not an end in itself, but only a means to assure permanency to the Christian Church in Asia. For our Indian readers, he might have mentioned, in the company of A. J. Appasamy, Yesu Das Tiwari and Mark Sunder Rao, the pioneering attempts of the Jesuit Father Robert de Nobili in Madurai among the high class Brahmins in the seventeenth century, and the magnificent efforts of the Belgian Jesuits Georges Dandoy and Pierre Johanns in the second and third decades of this century, through their publication 'Light of the East', now unhappily discontinued.

Chapters 6-8 give us a deep and extensive view of the various efforts made to exploit—in the service of the Gospel—the spiritual and mystical traditions of Hinduism, and provide adequate references and bibliography for anyone interested enough to delve deeper into these fields. I personally find that the author is at his best here, and this is certainly the richest section of the book.

Chapters 9-11 treat extensively of the penetration of the Gospel message into the social field, so urgent today. Secularisation in all its forms is shaking the very foundations of Asian society, and the Gospel must respond to this upheaval if it is to have any relevance at all.

The chapters which follow draw our attention to the dangers of exaggerated organisation, and to the topheavy structures of an institutional church. Once again the symbol of the 'living Tree' is more apt to express the Gospel message than our images of brick, stone and mortar. The reader is also reminded of the tremendous importance

of the layman in the Christian community. Protestant theology has always recognised this, and the informed Catholic will warmly welcome the proposals made to assign to the layman his proper role in witnessing to the Gospel message in Asia, where the dearth of ministers is acutely felt. The proclamation of the Gospel should ultimately culminate in worship, and this is the main theme of chapter 14; while the following chapter is an attempt to form a synthesis of contemplation and action. Love of God in the Christian community is fully expressed in service to our fellow men, and the author encourages the Christian to enter into a fruitful dialogue with Hindus to unify knowledge, devotion, asceticism and service.

The book concludes with a poignant appeal not to water down the Gospel so as to ignore the message of the Cross, symbolised by the tree. Historical Redemption or Atonement is at the heart of the Christian life and message, and this must be proclaimed fearlessly even at the risk of being a 'scandal' or a 'stumbling block'. The Cross stands at the centre of history and leads beyond the grave to final fulfilment. It is only when the tree can adequately express this reality that it will finally blossom fully and bear fruit a hundredfold.

The I.S.P.C.K. has rendered an invaluable service to the Christian Church in Asia by placing this original work within the easy reach of all. In these days of rising prices, the modest sum of Rs 7.50 for a high quality work of scholarship, penetrating insight and a wealth of information is certainly a very good buy.

*Morning Star College
Barrackpore*

ALAN DE LASTIC

The Go-Between God: by JOHN V. TAYLOR. S.C.M., London 1972.
Pp. 246. Price £1.95.

A bridge, spanning a gap, or a road going off into the distance are so evocative and eye-catching that in photography or painting it is almost considered cheating to include one in the composition. A bridge assures us that the two sides of our experience can be linked, and a road beckons us to follow it to wherever it may lead.

John Taylor in this book does not mention bridges or roads, but he himself is a bridge between worlds of thought and experience. His writings are like a road that leads the reader on and on to fresh discoveries. The subject of this book is the Holy Spirit and the Christian Mission, a subject he has been teaching on from time to time in recent years in the C.M.S. News Letter. The book is written in a simple, attractive style, and is nowhere heavy. But such is the depth of his perception that sometimes the reader will turn back the page and go over a section again; and will frequently be led to thoughts of his own, down tracks hitherto unexplored, but enticed by this book's frequent poetry and eloquent prose.

Some years ago, in 1958, J. E. Fison (now Bishop) presented us with a little book on the Holy Spirit in the scriptural traditions; entitled *Fire upon the Earth*. There, he invited us to taste the impact of the Spirit of God, and warned us that we should be taken out of our depth.

John Taylor also follows this same line, but more inductively and from a wider set of sources. Often our experience of 'Bible Study' groups is that the group, after admiring the exposition, flounders around for an 'application' to daily life, or this world. A more inductive approach is required, weaving present experience, growing conviction and scriptural models into a deeper encounter with God. This book is an extremely good example of this. The writer quotes many examples from contemporary experience, events, literature and drama, apart from other theological writers. His quotations are deep, the choice wide.

The chapter headings are evocative rather than describing the actual subject. 'Part One' contains *Annunciation, Conception, Gestation, Labour, Birth and Breath*, under the heading 'Facts of Life'. It would be quite inadequate to say that this part was about the life of Christ, for it is involved also with describing how people meet and know each other, how they are moved to political struggle, how they pray, and invent the Quantum Theorem. Likewise in 'Part Two' the headings are, under the general title 'Style of Life', *Growing, Exploring, Meeting, Playing and Loving!* These words describe the mood of Christian encounter in mission, rather than an isolated department of life. Pastors engaged in counselling rely on the basic principle that they are entering, as a third party, into a conversation already going on between God and the person who comes for help. People engaged in Urban Industrial Mission are trying to discern and put into words part of that dialogue which God is already having with an organisation or a society. In both these fields, the prevenience of the Holy Spirit is the essential assumption.

Taylor describes where that disclosure breaks out into words: 'The Spirit', he says, 'represents the divine action in its total impact, while the Word represents the specific direction and form which the divine action takes at one point of time. Spirit is experienced as inspiration, Word as revelation. *Ruach* is the eternal lying in wait in every moment, but *dabar* commits itself to the uniqueness of a particular moment. That is why it was not the Spirit but the Word that was made flesh and dwelt among us' (p. 62).

If you are concerned with social change and interpreting the signs of the times, Taylor has a lot to say about individuals and their ability to act. 'To say that the individual is so much a captive of the structures of society that the only way of salvation is by destroying the old structures and building new is a counsel of despair; for who is there to bring about the change if all are really being determined by the structures? The system in that case will stamp its mark even upon the revolution which seeks to overthrow it. Structures can only be changed by those who are already freed to stand back from them and inwardly transcend them. The responsible freedom which the Spirit lays upon those who are alive in Christ makes them agents of liberation through their disobedience to sociological necessity. They will not fit the theory' (p. 162).

Those readers who might be enquiring about the meaning of the present Charismatic movement will find it described under 'Playing'

in Part Two. 'What we must not do is to think and speak of the Holy Spirit as a magical power which God gives to make us "successful" Christians. This was the error of Simon Magus, and continues to be the error of some revivalist and pentecostalist preaching. We must hold on to the fact that the Spirit works by putting us in touch, making us see . . . Paul lists the gifts . . . of the Holy Spirit (and) lumps together speaking in tongues and administration, exorcism and teaching, in complete indifference to the difference we now draw between natural and supernatural' (p. 202). 'All the Spirit's gifts are wonderful; all are marked by a certain spontaneity; but none is meant to be weird. They are incalculable, not incomprehensible. And, what is more important, they are corporate' (p. 202).

Taylor describes himself as a borrower and a retailer of other men's ideas. But that is altogether too modest. He is like a skilled weaver who, from yarns gathered from a wide variety of common and rare markets, weaves for us a highly original cloth. A reviewer of this book finds himself often at a loss for the right word. J. V. Taylor has proposed to us that the Holy Spirit is the one who in every conceivable situation helps you find the right word—and action.

*Bombay Urban Industrial League
for Development*

J. R. McMANUS

*Modern Eucharistic Agreement: Introduction to Documents by RIGHT
REVEREND H. R. McADOO, S.P.C.K., 1973. Pp. 89. Price
£. 65 p.*

There are four documents as well as some commentary in this book :

1. 'An Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine' by the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission meeting at Windsor in 1971.
2. 'The Eucharist as Sacrifice'—a statement published by American Lutherans and Roman Catholics meeting at St Louis, Missouri, 1967.
3. 'Towards a Common Eucharistic Faith?'—the work of French Roman Catholics and Protestants belonging to the Group of Les Dombes and meeting together for ecumenical fellowship and dialogue over a number of years.
4. 'The Eucharist in Ecumenical Thought'—a statement of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches meeting at Louvain in 1971.

Obviously these important documents should be compulsory reading for all who are engaged in joint theological study in India. Though there must have been some cross-fertilization through the fact that some participants in the first three groups were also members of the W.C.C. Faith and Order Commission, each group worked independently and came to its own conclusions. All the more remarkable, then, are the similarities of approach and consensus of doctrinal emphasis which emerge in the four documents. The trend throughout is to stress the reality of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist and of the eucharistic sacrifice while avoiding with reverent reticence any

imposition of precise definition of the 'how' of the presence and sacrifice. The Editor, Dr McAdoo, Anglican Bishop of Ossory, is justifiably satisfied that this is in line with classical Anglican teaching and quotes the great 17th century Anglican divines to make his point. Even Roman Catholic dogma as defined by Thomas Aquinas, in distinction from the cruder popular medieval piety, can be entertained with some reservations by those who are heirs of the Reformation.

An important point made by the Anglican-R.C. statement is the use of the word 'activity' in connexion with the eucharistic presence. This is a sound biblical concept. 'Where can I escape from thy spirit? Where can I flee from thy presence?' (Ps. 139:7) and several other O.T. texts equate the 'presence' of God with his 'spirit', i.e., his active energy in relation to his chosen people. If we are to define the mode of the eucharistic presence at all, it must be primarily in terms of Christ's redeeming activity towards us in the fellowship of the church. So too with regard to the eucharistic sacrifice there is a welcome agreement on the great Augustinian interpretation of it as the sacrifice of the whole church in union with the one unrepeatable sacrifice of Christ.

Having said this with approval and rejoicing, one must also ask more doubtfully whether these remarkable agreements are not too good to be true. At least the American Lutherans were realistic and frank enough to point out that there were several points on which they could not come to agreement with their Roman Catholic brethren without a good deal of further study and conversation. We must recognize that it is one thing for theologians, fully aware of the symbolism and imagery, inherent in all theological language and not least in the theology of the liturgy, to discern substantial unanimity behind variations of vocabulary; it is another to impart this agreement at the pastoral level to clergy and people brought up in widely varying traditions of eucharistic faith and practice. Much depends on the purveying of this eirenic approach to eucharistic doctrine to the ordinands in our theological colleges and the parochial clergy and by them to their people. We are much helped by the fact that recent liturgical revision in the Roman Catholic church, the Anglican Communion, the C.S.I. and the C.N.I. has gone back to Hippolytus and other early sources and shows strong inter-church influences, with the result that we all have eucharistic rites very similar in their structure and wording and still more similar in the way they are celebrated. For all this we must thank the ecumenical dimensions assumed by the liturgical movement.

Another factor in a contrary direction is that divergent popular attitudes and concepts of eucharistic piety (no longer inherent in the new liturgies if they ever were in the old liturgies) are bound to die hard, whatever the theologians and liturgists may do to bring their people closer together. For instance a non-Roman Catholic attending Mass in a conservative R.C. congregation cannot fail to notice the heightened temperature of devotion which accompanies the recital and manual acts of the Words of Institution, still regarded as the moment of consecration and the focus of adoration. A Roman Catholic attending a non-Roman eucharist will be equally conscious of a piety alien to his own. This divergence is particularly acute in

respect of the extra-liturgical devotion to the consecrated host practised by Roman Catholics. We must also recognise that in the consultations recorded in this book the contribution to debate of the Eastern Churches is absent except in so far as their representative assented to the W.C.C. Faith and Order statement, which in any case hardly represents a full-blooded Eastern Orthodox standpoint. The renewed attention to the *Epiclesis* and the action of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist which it signifies owes much to Eastern influence; but the general implication throughout all the statements that some difference of eucharistic theology and practice is legitimate within agreed bounds might not commend itself to conservative Eastern opinion. Moreover, while the liturgies of Western origin, Roman Catholic and Reformed, have undergone much radical revision in recent years, the Eastern liturgies retain their ancient classical form and mystery.

Is this widespread though by no means complete or universal, agreement a significant step towards intercommunion and, more important, towards union? The Group of Les Dombes at least thinks it is or ought to be. The climate has undoubtedly changed in the direction of hope. No longer is it unthinkable that heirs of the Reformation should receive Communion at Roman Catholic altars. Permission is granted on certain specified occasions and under strict conditions and regulations. Perhaps Rome has moved further in this matter now than the majority of Anglicans had a generation ago. But as we in C.S.I. know only too well from our twenty five years of conversations with the Lutherans, it is one thing to achieve substantial theological agreement not only in respect of the sacraments, but in all other salient points, and even to achieve some measure of 'pulpit and altar fellowship': it is another actually to take what has aptly been called 'the existential leap' into organic union.

T. S. GARRETT
Bishop in Tirunelveli