

obedience in the excavations at Wadi Far'a, the public can see it in the Scrolls.

But this is not the end. There is no one less likely to pose in his laurels than Père de Vaux; one feels that he has thrown them aside already, impatient to be on with other work. For there are no intervals in his continuous performance; indeed one act overlaps the next. His few days of holiday this Christmas were spent in passing the second volume of his *Institutions de l'Ancien Testament* for the press. These volumes are as near to popularization (though inevitably scholarly) as he has ever come; time and the level of his learning have kept him in the engine-room. The *Institutions*, however, is one of the *Études Annexes* to the *Bible de Jérusalem* of which he is the Old Testament editor; and in this function, too, nobly yielding to the persuasion of Père Chiffot, he has served the Catholic public immeasurably.

Nevertheless, grateful as we are for his past we are looking forward eagerly to what is to come. We trust it will be a monumental Theology of the Old Testament. Twenty-five years of the rigorous life at the *École Biblique* has left its mark on a strong but not stout frame, and yet we have good hopes and earnest prayers that he may live till ninety. Certainly his astonishing faculty of surprise will keep him young till then. Only let him take no more trucks to Naples.

ECUMENICAL SURVEY

Prospects of the coming Council

THE chief preoccupation, from the Catholic point of view, of an ecumenical survey at the present time can hardly fail to be the effect that the coming Council will have upon the progress of Christian unity. When Pope John XXIII, very early in his pontificate, told his Cardinals of his intention to summon a General Council he connected the announcement closely with the theme of unity, as being very near his heart. The news was received in many quarters, Catholic and non-Catholic, with joyful anticipation and no little speculation. It was a new and original move which promised much.

What part would non-Catholic Christians be given in this Council? Would representatives of the Eastern Orthodox Churches be invited to sit together with the Catholic Bishops to witness to the faith of their respective Churches, as they did at Florence in the fifteenth century? What would be the place, if any, of the spokesmen of Anglicanism and the other leaders of

world Protestantism whose voices are heard through the World Council of Churches organization?

During the summer of 1959 it was widely broadcast by press and radio that a conference preliminary to the Council was being planned to be held in Venice the following year, between Orthodox and Catholic theologians. Its purpose was the discussion of theological differences, and a similar conference was to be held at Assisi in which Catholic and World Council theologians would be engaged. Not long after, however, it became known that these two projects had been abandoned in circumstances which appeared, at the least, somewhat mysterious.

As usual the exaggerated inferences and sensationalism of modern publicity were partly to blame. They seem to have raised suspicion on the part of the central committee of the World Council of Churches which was holding its meetings that August at Rhodes. In this island of course the predominant religion is Eastern Orthodoxy and many delegates from numerous autocephalous Churches in the Near East were present at these meetings as observers. The directors of the World Council seem to have concluded that the Venice initiative was a subtly organized scheme on the part of the Catholic Church to draw the Orthodox away from the World Council.

The tension of the situation was made worse when a commentator on Vatican Radio spoke of the Venice conference as an official organization of the authorities in Rome. In fact neither the Roman nor the Orthodox authorities were concerned. It was no more than an unofficial initiative of Catholic ecumenists. But the suspicions of the World Council central committee were not allayed, they thought it their duty to suspend their relations with the Catholic ecumenists, and the Assisi conference, due to take place that October, was indefinitely postponed; the Venice conference was abandoned at the same time by the Orthodox and presumably for the same reasons. (*Unitas*, Autumn 1959; 'Ecumenism and Reunion', page 221.)

One is reminded of the fate of Pius IX's pressing invitation to all Bishops of the Churches of the Eastern rite not in communion with the Apostolic See to attend the Vatican Council. Unfortunately the text of the invitation got into the press before it was formally delivered to the Eastern Bishops, and when the Vicar Apostolic presented it officially to the Patriarch of Constantinople he was told that His Beatitude had already read it in the newspaper and knew its contents. The letter was handed back unopened, and no Eastern Orthodox Bishop attended the Vatican Council.

Early in October 1959 Cardinal Tardini, the Papal Secretary of State, gave a press conference to three hundred journalists. This did much to allay speculation about the nature and procedure of the Council. He told his hearers that at least three years must elapse before the General Council opened, in order that all preparatory work might be organized in such a way that the time during which the Council actually sits will not be unnecessarily prolonged. About a thousand Bishops and Prelates would be taking part in it. It would be a family affair of the Church and would include no negotiations with separated persons or groups.

But though no special invitations would be sent to the dissident Churches, anyone wishing to attend as an observer would be warmly and affectionately welcomed. The idea that the Council will be a family affair of the Church was further emphasized by Cardinal Tardini, who said: 'This Council is not directed against anyone. Those who have written that it plans to condemn someone or something are mistaken.' Its purpose is to foster the growth of the Faith, to renew Christian manners and to modernize ecclesiastical discipline according to the needs of the times. Cardinal Tardini then added: it will also 'provide such a marvellous spectacle of truth, unity and of charity as to constitute, even for those who are deeply alienated from the Holy See, an invitation to achieve that unity to which many of them sincerely aspire'. (*Tablet*, November 7, 1959.)

Some of the information given at this Press conference had been previously foreshadowed by the Holy Father himself on several occasions, notably in some remarks he made in the Summer of 1959 on one of his Sunday appearances to give his blessing to the crowds visiting Castel Gandolfo. He spoke of the long and complex preparation necessary for the Council, which is primarily for the good of the Church. It would be concerned, in the main, with modernizing the administration, discipline and law of the Church in order to cope more effectively with the needs of the times. He hoped that those outside the Church would be enabled to see its essential divine origin and be drawn to return to the house of their Father. (*Unitas*, Autumn 1959, page 221.)

Inevitably perhaps there has been some feeling of disappointment amongst those preoccupied with ecumenical thought. Whereas Christian unity was clearly envisaged at first as primary in the purpose of the coming Council, it has now, it would seem, receded into the background. The foreground meanwhile has come to be occupied by the work of setting in order the day-to-day apostolate of the Catholic laity and priesthood, by the modernizing of the machinery of its regulation. There appears to be little or no space left for any concerted approach to the deep dogmatic and cultural differences that divide Christians.

Towards the end of last year an article in *The Times*, by its Roman correspondent, with the title 'Thorny Path to Unity', hinted somewhat gloomily at the possibility that reactionary Italian curial Cardinals, whose mentality is that of canon lawyers rather than true theologians, static rather than dynamic, have got possession of the Vatican machinery and are stifling the prophetic gesture of the new Pope in convening a General Council by the rigidity of their ideas in conducting it. This, even if it contains perhaps a grain of truth, would surely be an enormous simplification of the complex causality of the working out of ideas in the minds of the many engaged in the Council's organization.

When we view the vastly complex nature of work for unity, with the hundred and one non-theological factors, let alone the many theological ones, which underlie disunity, it is not difficult to guess that responsible authority in the Church, including of course that of the Pope himself, may well question the wisdom of dealing directly with these problems at so high a

level as that of a General Council. A great deal of small-scale preparatory work must first be done on either side, work which deals not only with theological differences, but with differences of outlook, ethos and idiom of thought. These hinder fruitful contact between Christians of different allegiances and their removal can only be fully effected by long and persevering effort to establish, by personal contact, a spirit of friendship and understanding between ourselves and our separated brethren.

This spirit must have as its first aim the recognition of truth wherever it is to be found by the understanding of each other's language and ways of thought. During the past half century this spirit has been growing amongst Christians of all allegiances, ourselves not excepted, and in 1949 it received among us not a little encouragement in the Instruction of the Holy Office to Local Ordinaries on the Ecumenical Movement. But it is not yet very widespread, and it may well be that until it becomes so reunion efforts at high level are out of the question. We have the example of what happened at the Council of Florence. There, external circumstances brought the two sides together, and despite differences of language and culture these circumstances enabled dogmatic unity to be reached by subscription to formulas. But there was little spirit of unity even at the highest level and none at all amongst the rank and file on either side. For that reason the patched-up unity soon fell apart again into division.

As long as the ordinary members of the Churches, clerical and lay, are full of hostility, prejudice, ignorance and fear, Church leaders and theologians, however eirenic their attitude to each other, will never get far. That is why it is imperative that prayer by separated Christians for each other, in accordance with Christ's will, should become a commonplace of ordinary Christian life in every Christian allegiance. By concentrating on reforms which will be effective in deepening the spiritual life of both clergy and laity the Council will be taking an important step forward in increasing our sense that our separated brethren really are our brethren in Christ, and our realization of why they are so.

As to the subject matter of the Council's consideration, nothing has as yet been made public. Two thousand seven hundred questionnaires were sent out to the Bishops of the universal Church and to the heads of the Religious Orders and the results of them are in process of codification. Out of this huge mass of material the most important points will be chosen, under the direction of the Holy Father, and will be submitted to various commissions, as was done at the Vatican Council. The decrees drawn up by these commissions will then be debated and resolved upon by the plenary sessions of the Council.

From the ecumenical point of view one may hope that among the subjects chosen will be at least this dogmatic one: the relationship of the Pope to the episcopate and of his infallibility to that of the Church. This was never fully defined at the Vatican Council and is of the greatest importance in our dealings with Greek Orthodoxy and mediately with our Anglican brethren. We may hope too that another subject dealt with will be a revision of existing discipline in regard to the relation, at all levels, of Catholics with

non-Catholics; that the issue of this revision will be a new discipline which, while instituting more positive and living safeguards of the faith of Catholics than an ineffective attempt to isolate them from harm, will also positively encourage them to make apostolic contact with their separated brethren on lines that are both Catholic and ecumenical. The deepening and spread of this relationship will lead one day, please God, to another General Council which will effectively bring to pass the lost unity which belongs by right to all Christian men.

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GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN OPINION

AS elsewhere, the forthcoming General Council has been a focus of discussion in Germany and Austria ever since Pope John XXIII announced it. The monthly *Herder-Korrespondenz* continues to contain detailed information about its preparation and related topics such as the planned conversations between Catholic and Orthodox theologians in Venice. Cardinal Döpfner, the Bishop of Berlin, and Professor H. Jedin, the historian of the Council of Trent, have tried to assess the significance of the Council and to put it in historical perspective, Cardinal Döpfner with special reference to the part of the Bishops and their task, Jedin by comparison with the (First) Council of the Vatican. In Vienna, a series of lectures about the Council was held from October to December, 1959, in one of the evening Institutes. It would seem that all those writing on the Council are at pains to discourage over-optimistic as well as over-pessimistic views of its probable results, particularly in respect of Christian unity.

The Council has naturally led to an increased interest in the problem of Reunion and to increased interest in both the Orthodox and Protestant as well as the Uniate Churches. Two articles in the periodical *Ostkirchliche Studien* may be mentioned specially: *Christozentrik im russischen Gedanken* by B. Schultze and *Die Uzhoroder Union* by M. Lacko, in vol. 8 (1959). This deals with the reunion with Rome in 1646 of the Ruthenians in what was later Carpatho-Russia, the easternmost part of Czechoslovakia, and is now in the Soviet Union. It shows the protracted and difficult course of the negotiations as well as the fact that the initiative came from the Ruthenian side and that the reunion was in no way forced as was alleged by the Soviet authorities when they destroyed the Uniate Church by force after 1945.

The chief focus of attention for German Catholics in their relation with other Christians is inevitably the German Evangelical Church in which they take a sympathetic and constructive interest. This appears to be mutual and increasing as is evident from the *Herder-Korrespondenz* and other publications. E. J. Lengeling's article, *Der gegenwärtige Stand der liturgischen Erneuerung im deutschen Protestantismus* (*Muenchner Theologische Zeitschrift*, vol. 10 (1959), pp. 83, 200, shows how the forces that work for a liturgical revival are as