

scientific work that aims at opening up new experiences,' writes Noth; yet at the same time intuition is not enough: 'There is a very real danger of a subjective and unacceptable viewpoint. Any view expressed must prove its correctness by demonstrating that it makes a large number of recorded occurrences more understandable, and shows them in a convincing new light.'

It is precisely this scientific combination of intuition controlled and verified by empirical application that distinguishes Noth's work, and this is impressively demonstrated in the extended essay 'The Laws in the Pentateuch' which occupies more than a hundred pages in this collection. This essay was first published in 1940, and one can see in it the kind of thorough investigation of the Old Testament community which lies behind his later book 'The History of Israel'. The essay is a fundamental examination of the relationships between law and community as the Israelite society developed from the early confederation, via the changes produced by the introduction of monarchy, into the complex structure of the post-exilic situation. The early, undifferentiated society remained the ideal, but in the course of time the essential dependance of law on the covenant community was reversed, and in its final stages 'the law' became an absolute entity with an authority that was

independent of the community which had produced it: 'The law became a power in its own right. If it did in fact stand in a historical relationship to a particular human community – the post-exilic community at home and in dispersion – the old, obvious relationship was now reversed; it was not now this community which formed the prerequisite for the being and application of the law, but rather it was the law, as the unprecedented primary entity, which fashioned this community, which was nothing but the union of those people who submitted to the law on all points.'

It is from this realisation that we can begin to understand why the Christian community had to break with Judaism, and why St Paul was so concerned that the new covenant community, initiated by Christ and formed and maintained by sharing in his risen life, must never again be chained by the law which emerged within it. The relevance of this insight is immediate and obvious as we continue the process of examining the Church afresh, for there is always a tendency for societies to petrify into rigid institutions in which the proper relationship between the living community and law becomes reversed.

Mr Ap-Thomas is to be congratulated on giving us Martin Noth's work in such readable English.

JOSEPH RHYMER

THE WIDE HORIZON

'*Christian Ashram*' by Bede Griffiths. Essays towards a Hindu-Christian Dialogue. *Darton Longman and Todd*

It was Albert Schweitzer, himself a lonely pioneer, who said that anyone who is called to an extraordinary mission should first make sure that he is willing to do anything that is the will of God, however ordinary. Only so can he hope for real stability in what he undertakes. This book is a proof, if proof were needed, that Fr Bede Griffiths' monastery in Kerala is no airy dream. One of the illustrations shows him standing before the mountain range near Kurisumala Ashram, a range which may not yet be fully mapped, but which corresponds well with Fr Bede's vision of the human territory of the world awaiting transformation in Christ. For any who think that the trumpets of doom are already sounding, with only a quarter of the Church's task done, Fr Bede gives the alternative. And it is expressed with no false optimism or emotional challenge, but with the positive wisdom of faith. Here and there we read 'This is difficult

but . . .' and we realise the many frustrations which this form of Christ's gospel must meet, and which Fr Bede must know better than any.

The book is in five parts, one of which describes Kurisumala Ashram and its place in the long and interesting history of Christianity in India; another entitled 'Towards a Non-violent Society', deals with the message of Gandhi and his spiritual successor Vinoba Bhave, which is seen as a challenge to our so-called Christian society with its practical denial of the Sermon on the Mount. The other three sections deal with the broad and deep issues of Hindu-Christian dialogue, and although at first the reader may think he will be subjected to some repetition, since the chapters are essays and addresses written on different occasions, this does not happen more than a few times. They are more like separate petals of a flower, each drawing towards Fr Bede's central thought, but com-

plementary, and all necessary.

'Towards an Indian Catholicism' points out without rancour the serious mistakes of the past from the Indian point of view, and shows the real needs of the Indian soul.

'In Hinduism . . . there is a most profound sense of "mystery" and "sacrament". No people on earth has gone further towards the penetration of that ultimate mystery which lies beyond all words and thoughts . . . Here we have perhaps the deepest expression which can be found of the primeval revelation of the presence of God in nature.' Fr Bede would not have Hinduism dismissed as so-called 'natural religion' (as if there was nothing 'supernatural' in it) but regards it as one form of the same revelation given to Noah, Melchisedeck and Job, a true preparation for the coming of Christ. 'God has not left the people of the East outside the sphere of his providence.'

Considerable information, founded on experience, is given in the sphere of liturgy and sacrament, to show how deeply the Hindu is susceptible to his own cultural expression of religion. And Fr Bede insists that we Christians need to recover the sense of mystery and sacrament in our own liturgy. 'We must try to see our faith as our forefathers saw it, not as a system of rational and moral concepts, but as a divine mystery, an economy of grace totally transcending the reach of reason . . . If the Hindu could learn to see in the Christian Church the true temple of God, where the living God dwells among his people and makes them one body with himself, if he could be brought to realise the mystery and wonder of the sacramental presence, whereby we are able to touch and taste God as he himself has sought to do throughout his history, would not the Church then be a living witness to Christ which would touch the Eastern soul?' It is clear that the Hindu must have his own liturgical form also, and Fr Bede recommends the West Syrian rite of Antioch, which dates from the fourth century, and has not suffered from latinisation.

This emphasis on liturgy is not a substitute for intellectual understanding. Anyone who has made an attempt to penetrate the intricate obscurity of Hindu thought will be grateful to Fr Bede for doing this work for him, disentangling its riches and hidden 'signs' of Christianity, while preserving true distinctions and noting the shortcomings from a Christian point of view. The chapter which deals with a meeting of Christians held at Rajpur in 1962, at the invitation of Dr Cuttack, to discuss the Christian

approach to Hinduism, is particularly valuable in giving short but penetrating commentaries on the spirituality of four representative types of Hinduism in confrontation with Christianity. The one which follows it 'The Unknown Christ of Hinduism' (which is the title of a recent book by Dr Raymond Pannikar) contains perhaps the kernel of Fr Bede's thought.

Beginning with St Paul's affirmation that the whole creation takes place 'in Christ' and 'in him all things subsist' (Col. I.16-17) he reminds us that 'there is no one from the beginning to the end of the world who is not redeemed by Christ'. Perhaps there should have been a clause here to provide for the free refusal of this redemption; but Fr Bede's purpose is to open our eyes to the preparation for Christ which is found in the so-called 'pagan' religions as well as in the Old Covenant, and what he says of Hinduism may also be applied to the other religions of the world. As the early Fathers of the Church incorporated Greek philosophy and Roman law into the Christian culture of the West, so it is our task now to continue the process of assimilation and cross-fertilisation into the great religions of the East, so that the Incarnation of Christ becomes present and explicit all over the world, in the forms which are natural to its different peoples.

The movement towards reconciliation between East and West is in full swing on the political and technical level, but the spiritual life of both peoples is in danger of being swamped by materialism. It therefore becomes all the more necessary that each religion tradition should be strengthened by the other. The blindness and intolerance of the West is matched by the subjectivity and syncretism of the East; so that, as Fr Bede says, a true meeting in Christ involves a 'death' on both sides, and for the Christian a great deepening of our interior life, if our wholeness and resurrection in Christian maturity is to be realised.

'As we come to the inner depth of our own tradition we find ourselves drawing near to the depths of the other traditions, and it is in that interior depth that every man will encounter Christ, because it is the mystery of Christ which lies at the heart of all religion. But he has not to impose his belief on others; he has only . . . to allow Christ to reveal himself in his own way to those who seek the truth in charity.'

Fr Bede has woven with knowledge and skill an ecumenical carpet of prime quality on which all the peoples of the world may meet in the knowledge of Christ our Saviour. But we must

be prepared, first of all, to take off our shoes.

Unfortunately the book is marred for the reader by a printer's gimmick which is anything but ecumenical. The adjectives 'christian' and 'islamic' are printed throughout without capitals, in non-alignment with 'Hindu', 'Buddhist', 'Hebrew', 'Jewish', 'Greek', so that one comes on such visual discrepancies as 'Jewish-christian thought'. And in a chapter where the words

'incarnation' and 'trinity' are used in the unique Christian sense they are also treated to small letters, which is suggestive of the way in which a Hindu would regard them. Where the thought of the author is so clear and so deeply Christian, the symbolism of print overlays it with an irresponsible confusion.

AGNES YENDELL

ROME AND REFORMATION – A stubborn problem re-examined, by James Atkinson, Christian Foundation Series. *Hodder and Stoughton*, 1966, 3s 6d net.

THE EPISCOPATE AND CHRISTIAN UNITY. Edit. Titus Cranny, *Chair of Unity Apostolat*, Greymoor

The usefulness of these two small books will be considerable in the present inchoate ecumenical situation, for they both pin-point, from their different points of view, the real crux of the problem of Christian unity. *Rome and Reformation* is a re-examination of the stubborn problem of the Reformation from an Anglican evangelical view-point. It is brief and succinct, as a preliminary study book should be. It is scholarly too, with the limitations that are inevitable in an attempt of such a kind to get to the heart of the matter. It is no harder on the abuses, in doctrine and practice, of the medieval Church which contributed so greatly to the religious revolution of the sixteenth century than are many contemporary catholic scholars, and its attitude to Rome and the ecumenical movement, especially since the Vatican Council, is sincerely appreciative and hopeful.

But it quite simply ignores the most fundamental question of all ecumenical encounter viz has episcopacy, as it developed historically within Christianity in historic Christendom, any vital role to play, by God's ordinance, in the constitution of the Church as Christ willed it to be. This leads immediately to a complementary and equally fundamental question. Either episcopacy is implicit in the apostolate established by Christ and therefore implicit in the Scriptures as of divine origin and essential to the life of the Church, or it is not. The first verdict is that of Historic Christendom in East and West, the second is that of the Reformation. The place of the Papacy in the Church is an episcopal problem, to be settled first of all between East and West, and then only when in the wider Christian context, the basic question of the necessity of episcopacy as an essential element in the Church's structure, and its function of interpreting the Scriptures under divine guidance, has been resolved.

These are the two polarities of world ecumenism to be found at work in its many local evolutions. The frank recognition of this is essential to all true ecumenical encounter. The view of Historic Christendom in East and West that there can be but *one* Church, organic and visible, and the Reformation view, taking various forms, that Christ's Church, though united in its inner life, is in fact organically a divided entity, and that reunion will be the bringing together into unity of its divided parts. These two views must have, what they do not yet enjoy in the ecumenical encounter, an equal recognition, as being the ultimate root of Christian disunity, since they spring from divergences, real or misconceived, concerning the nature of Christian faith and the Christian revelation and the means of its mediation to mankind. Apart from this recognition, work for unity is doomed to be fruitless.

It is because *The Episcopate and Christian Unity* has for its theme the vital importance of the apostolic episcopate as an essential structural basis of the Church's unity, that this small book, is useful, more perhaps in the direction to which it points than for its actual achievement. It consists of the six or seven papers read at a symposium conducted by the Greymoor Friars of Unity, in the U.S.A. Obviously such papers must have their limitations in both scope and content. They succeed however in making the main point that the crux of the ecumenical problem is episcopacy as a divinely ordained institution and as a necessary element in the Church of Christ.

The paper on the Anglican Concept of Episcopacy, while hardly clear as to how far much Anglican conception falls short of the Catholic view, emphasises as universal and of great importance Anglican insistence on the framework of the institution, even without clear