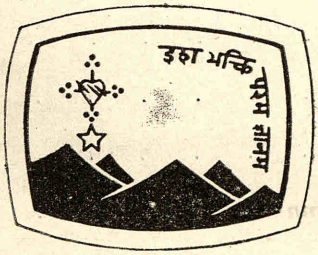
DHARMARAM

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Dharmaram has come out with its second number. The postal strike in Kerala and the continued go slow policy of the departments have considerably affected the communication between the editor and the printer and this situation has caused the unexpected delay in bringing to light this bulletin.

We are happy to put on record here the warm reception Dharmaram had at all quarters. One of our Superiors having received the copy of Dharmaram wrote to us: "Dharmaram brings to us not only the home news of the College but also enables the *ex alumni* and others to refresh their ecclesiastical studies". One of our old students wrote: "This is the publication we are looking for from the time we bid farewell to our *alma mater*. The *ex alumni* are provided with a forum to communicate mutually and to share their experiences with those in the field and with others still in preparation.

We have received new suggestions too from many. Some have expressed the idea to publish more articles in the column of the Current trends. Others have expressed their wish to separate the chronicles and the home news from the articles. There are yet others who have suggested to change the name from Dharmaram to **Dialogue**.

All these suggestions are being considered. Dharmaram was started with the idea of commencing a dialogue with our *ex alumni*. Hence Dharmaram is in truth a Dialogue. But there is no reason to restrict this dialogue to the *ex alumni*. Let us hope Dharmaram will eventually develop into a **Dialogue** in which Theologians and Scholars, catholic and non-catholic, may share their opinions and discoveries for the benefit of a wider public. Even then the homely features of Dharmaram will be preserved though in a different shape.

EDITORS

Form Criticism and Recent Documents of the Church on the Formation of the Gospels

— J. M. PATHRAPANKAL, C.M.I.

The Gospels are written "from faith for faith" and we the believers of today have to approach them as the concrete expression of the understanding the early apostolic Church had about Jesus Christ, transmitted to us with its challenging and existential message.

The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation promulgated by Vatican II has given certain important guide-lines regarding the formation of the Gospels, and they are of great significance in our understanding of the meaning and message of the Gospels. The relevance and uniqueness of this teaching become obvious when we take into account the circumstances, adverse and favourable, which were leading towards the drafting of this document. As early as 1961 the Holy Office, now called "Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith", released a *Monitum* which gave some strict warnings to those who call into question the genuine historical and objective truth of the Scripture, not only of the OT, but also of the NT, specifically in regard to the words and deeds of Jesus Christ. Although the scope and purpose of this *Monitum* was not very clear, it appeared as though Catholic exegesis was going to suffer a set-back after it had prospered ever since the Encyclical *Divino Afflanto Spiritu*, and the fear was all the more increasing when in 1962, in the First Session of the Second Vatican Council,

an ultra-conservative scholastic type of theological approach was presented to the discussions in the Council "On the Sources of Revelation". The story of confusion lashed by that *schema* is too well known to be touched upon here [1]. Once the *schema* was put aside by the positive intervention of Pope John XXIII for further improvements, the atmosphere began to cool down, and it took two more years for the Pontifical Biblical Commission to prepare an "Instruction on the historical truth of the Gospels" (14th May 1964) [2] This document cleared up many misunderstandings that had gathered around the aforesaid *Monitum* and the *schema* "On the Sources of Revelation". In fact, this may be considered as a landmark in the study of the Gospels for years to come, for it opened up new vistas of research and investigation for the Catholic exegetes, particularly regarding the problems connected with the "truth of the events and sayings" of Jesus as they are recorded in the Gospels. For it specified the type of history the exegetes have to look for in the Gospel narratives, and gave certain principles which exegetes, professors of S. Scripture, preachers, popular writers and directors of Biblical Associations should follow[3].

The official approbation of this doctrine by the teaching office of the Church was once again made clear in the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (ch. V), where the detailed exposition of the Instruction of the Biblical Commission is summarized in the following words: "....after the ascension of the Lord the apostles handed on to their hearers what he had said and done. This they did with that clearer understanding which they enjoyed after they had been instructed by the events of Christ's risen life and taught by the light of the Spirit of truth. The sacred authors wrote the four Gospels, selecting some things from the many which had been handed on by word of mouth or in writing, reducing some of them to a synthesis, explicating some things in view of the situation of their churches, and preserving the form of proclamation, but always in such fashion that they told us the honest truth about Jesus" (par. 19). What we have here in these words is the positive acknowledgement of the method of 'Form Criticism' *(Formgeschichte)*, a method which was so far viewed with suspicion by many Catholics. Before, however, we proceed to see the significance of

this document in our understanding of the Gospels we shall briefly review the origin, method and positive contributions of Form Criticism[4].

Origin and Method of Form Criticism

Form Criticism is a product of German scholarship. At the close of the First World War, German scholars Rudolf Bultmann, Martin Dibelius and others tried to open the Gospels to agnostics dominated by Heideggerian philosophy. As zealous army chaplains, these men had come into contact with soldiers whose philosophy denied all divine intervention in the world of man. They worked within the same philosophical framework, and devised a means to make the Gospels meaningful to men who could not envision the supernatural. M.Dibelius in 1919 wrote *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums (The Form History of the Gospel)* and R. Bultmann in 1921 wrote *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition (The History of the Synoptic Tradition)*.

Upto the emergence of these studies the main aim of the Gospel studies had been to determine the nature of, and the mutual relationships between, our Gospel texts as they stand now, and to examine their historical value from that angle. Till then the attempt was to build from them a "Life of Christ" and thereby they tried to place Jesus Christ in his full historical perspective. The new method pointed out the deficiencies of these attempts and began to go deeper into what lay behind the text of the Gospels and to see the stages through which the components of the Gospels happened to crystallize as our present Gospel texts. It was a search for the pre-history, for the original factors of our present Gospel texts. Moreover, attention was given more to the Synoptic Gospels as they were considered the only valid sources for a study of Jesus[5].

Two principles are fundamental to this method of Form Criticism: 1. The Synoptic Gospels are essentially works which give witness to the primitive Christian community. Their aim is to instruct that community on the redemptive acts and teaching of Jesus Christ. The emphasis is on the preaching (kerygma) of the apostles concerning Jesus Christ rather than on what Christ himself preached. This explains how poor in details the Gospels are in matters of chronology, topography and geography. 2. The

Synoptic Gospels are not compositions of three individuals who can be called authors in the now accepted sense of that term. The evangelists did not work on a shapeless mass of traditional materials but collected materials already rather well shaped by oral tradition. The work of the evangelists was to give a literary framework for these units. Only the Passion narrative seems to have been, from the beginning a continuous narrative, whereas the other units were originally independent.

The next step was to determine the historical growth of these Gospel traditions which the evangelists compiled. In order to see this the different elements were dissociated from the framework wherein they have been fixed by the evangelists and were classified according to their form or literary category. The classification varies from author to author. It starts by comparing the Gospels and their constituent elements with the popular literary forms of antiquity. The most obvious classifications of the Gospel materials are the "sayings" and the "narratives." The latter may be compared with certain Greek literary genres called "paradigms" (Dibelius) or "Apopthegems" (Bultmann), namely accounts which lead up to some memorable statement of Jesus (v.g. Mk 2, 23-28) and "Novellen", namely accounts which normally tell of a miracle of Jesus. The rest of the narrative material is designated as "Legend" not in the sense of 'fictitious', but pious stories having a religious and edifying character. Side-by-side with these simple narratives which have each a specific nucleus of words at their centre, came groups of "sayings" with moral teaching. They are the *logia* or oracles of Jesus. At the end there are narratives which show Jesus as a divine being, as the Son of God who came into the world from heaven, which they call the *Christ-myth,* a theme present in the accounts of Jesus' baptism, temptations, and transfiguration; this *Christ-myth* has influenced some of the "Novellen" such as Mk 6, 47-52 and some of the sayings such as Mt 11, 25-30.

Once the component elements of the Gospels are thus dissected and classified, these scholars started at explaining the genesis of these different literary forms and the evolution which the concept of Christ underwent in this process. For this they applied the laws of mass-psycho-

logy, that the materials owe their origin to the creative activity of a community which had come to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead. This faith created a message about Jesus for the sole purpose of helping man achieve authentic understanding of himself before God. Here we note that the centre of gravity for the faith and the message was not the past but the present; the point of interest was not the "Jesus of history" who was almost shrouded, but the "Christ of faith" whose words and deeds were created to meet every human need.

The first and most important context in which this creative activity of the community was expressed was the preaching of the apostles, a resume of which we have in 1 Cor. 15, 1-8, and in the discourses of Peter in the early chapters of Acts (cf. Acts. 2, 14-40; 3, 12-26; 4, 8-12; 5, 29-32; 10, 34-41). Then there arose other needs of the community, such as the cult offered to Christ, the needs of the apologists and the polemists, the need to substantiate such and such a narrative from Scripture, teaching needs, propaganda needs, which all helped to produce other narratives and sayings. So in order to understand these narratives and sayings we have to place each of them in the life of the community *(Sitz im Leben)* which gave them birth. This effort to analyse and reconstruct the formation of the Gospels and their component elements as coming from their life-situations is called *Form and Tradition Criticism (Form – und Traditionsgeschichte)*.

Form Criticism and Demythologization (Entmythologiesierung)

A word must be said here about the too well known theory of "Demythologization" of which again R. Bultmann is the author and originator[6]. There is an unwarranted confusion in the minds of many that Form Criticism and Demythologization are one and the same. To start with, Demythologization as a theory and method has its origin in 1941, when R. Bultmann wrote an article *Neues Testament und Mythologie (The new Testament and Mythology)* which became the most celebrated and discussed piece of NT theology in our generation. The purpose of the article was to meet the prevailing post-Christian agnosticism; as at the time of his investigations into the history of the formation of the Gos-

pels. R. Bultmann believed that contemporary indifference to the gospel comes from the difference between modern thinking and New Testament thinking. Whereas modern man has a scientific approach to the universe and thinks scientifically, the NT thought, as Bultmann says, is a "mythological" one. By mythology he means the three-decker concept of the universe of heaven, earth and hell, the incarnation and the resurrection, the virgin birth, the eschatology of the NT, and the miracles. Bultmann says, if the modern man can find interest in the gospel, the NT must be 'demythologized' As we see it this theory has its origin and inspiration in the method of Form Criticism; but they are not identical. Demythologization has for its aim the preaching of the gospel to modern man in intelligible terms.

According to Bultmann modern man can be reached only by the categories of existentialist philosophy. The NT must answer the question raised by man about the meaning of human existence, an existence which, in existentialist terminology, is characterized by anguish and despair. Does the NT answer this question? Bultmann says that the NT answers this question in exactly the same categories of existential thinking, only that it speaks it out in mythological language to which modern man will pay no attention. The meaning of human existence is found precisely in the proclamation of the decisive eschatological act of God in Jesus Christ. Whereas human life left to itself and lived by us in its anguish and despair is meaningless, the life and death of Christ have made existence meaningful by the fact that in his death Jesus transcended the power of death. The proclamation of this salvific event confronts each man and compels him to a personal decision. If he accepts this message through faith, he also enters into a realm in which he can find meaning for his existence. It is, in the terminology of existentialist thinking, an encounter which issues in a personal commitment, for we know from the proclamation that Jesus became obedient unto death, even death on a cross, and thus fulfilled the highest possibilities of human existence. If he refuses to accept the meaning of the cross, he can find no meaning for his existence and he will once again fall back upon his meaningless existence "in the flesh" characterized by anguish and despair.

It will take us too far to attempt a criticism of these methods of Form Criticism and Demythologization. For all the good intentions of the pioneers of these methods, they were bringing in a system of thought which adversely affected the meaning of the NT revelation. According to Bultmann absolutely nothing can be known with certainty concerning Jesus except that he died on the cross. The moderates among them admit a certain number of sayings and episodes as words and acts of Jesus and as narratives giving an authentic account of him. The method as such had its success because of its fascinating character. The method of Demythologization, however, met with strong criticism from many quarters, whereas the method of Form Criticism was subjected to further exploration by the moderates. From the very beginning many scholars reacted strongly against the postulates of Form Criticism. While they acknowledged that many portions of the Gospel materials were first formulated and fixed in the teaching and liturgical contexts of the early Church, they denied that the community had created these elements after the manner of other religious movements. Moreover, little place was accorded to the activity of those who had been eyewitnesses of the events. They pointed out that no one in the community could qualify as the originator of a Gospel message which contradicts the cardinal tenets of Judaism and ran counter to prevalent Jewish hopes.

Redaction Criticism (Redaktionsgeschichte)

Consequently since 1945 a whole line of Bultmann's disciples have started attacking Bultmann.[7] Thus E. Kasemann, E. Fuchs, G. Bornkamm, H. Conzelmann, E. Heitsch and others began to share this adverse reaction. On the question of the historicity of the Gospel materials, which Bultmann denied, these disciples of Bultmann took him to task. How could a nameless community create within twenty years a fully formed Christianity without basis in History? The theory of mass-psychology as explaining the Christian gospel coming to life in so short a time cannot be justified if it is made to rest on the obscure figure of a merely human Jesus. It is to be remembered that the first Christian community was made up of ignorant Jews who would have

been the last ones to turn Jesus into a "Son of God." The Gospel records themselves give ample proof for this. There should, therefore, be something objective and historical about it, rather than the laws of mass-psychology working here.

One of the main weaknesses of Form Criticism was that it attributed too little to the initiative of the evangelists and reduced them practically to mere compilers of pre-existing material. As a result the new reaction shifted its attention away from the study of individual units in the Gospels to concentrate on the Gospels as unified compositions of literary authors, thereby giving a greater appreciation of the evangelists as creative theologians in their own right; each offers his distinctive interpretation of the tradition with which he worked. According to this view, if we are to study the work of the evangelists themselves, we must pay very close attention to their editorial redactions—the connecting links they forge between the pericopes, their arrangement of the pericopes, the alterations which they make to their sources where we have them. Now it is the evangelist who has become the focal point of interest; his literary activity, his theological insight and purpose, his background of personal interests have all left a distinctive and indelible mark on his literary work. This theory is called "Redaction Criticism" *(Redaktionsgeschichte-*History of redaction) headed by scholars like G. Bornkamm, H. Conzelmann and W. Marxsen. As we see, Form Criticism and Redaction Criticism are complementary rather than fundamentally opposed.

Positive values of Form and Redaction Criticisms

The basic principles of Form and Redaction Criticisms cannot be denied. It is clear that what the Form and Redaction Critics maintain about the chronological frame work of the Gospels is to a great extent true[8]. In the majority of cases it is impossible to determine the time order of the particular events of Jesus' ministry. There are instances in which the same event is related differently in different Gospels (v. g.Mk 10, 46-52 and parallels) At times the same event is put in two different contexts. Thus St. John has the cleansing of the temple at the beginning of Jesus' ministry (Jn 2, 13-22), while the Synoptics put it at the end (Mk 11, 15-18 and parallels).

One cannot detach the Gospel documents from the faith and the apostolic preaching which gave them birth and which always remain at their bottom. The Gospel was preached and taught before it was put into writing. This affirms the primacy of Tradition with respect to Scripture. In the Gospel we have the fixing up of the Tradition about Jesus. This is also a point which the method of Form Criticism has positively demonstrated.

The breaking up of the constituent narratives and sayings in the Gospels into literary genres is a useful work, for this helps us to go deeper into the structure of these forms. We may even compare these forms with similar ones in the Jewish or even in pagan background and thereby more light may be thrown on the Gospel texts. Moreover, this classification will show that there were certain influences which somehow modified the final drafting of a narrative or a saying of Jesus, namely a "re-reading by the mind of the Church,"[9] such as by the needs of polemics and apologetics, by the cult and internal organization of the Church. Here it is not a question of distorting the truth of the original data, but of interpreting them in view of the needs of the Church in its new situations.

The personal and individual characteristics of the evangelists are even more clear, an aspect which the Redaction Criticism has so clearly demonstrated. Each evangelist as a literary artist has drawn his own portrait of Christ. Native gifts of style and personal theological interests formed the mould into which he cast his materials. Even when using common sources each evangelist reshaped the data to accord with his own aim as writer, and thinker, and presented Jesus with those characteristics which he wanted to emphasize. Thus Mark tries to show that Jesus was the Christ even though men did not receive him and he achieved this portrayal of the divine Christ by dividing his Gospel into two parts, each rising climactically to a resounding cry of faith (cf. Mk 8,29; 15, 39). At the same time Mark takes care to show the wholly human character of Jesus. For Luke geography is theological; the movements of Jesus have theological significance, especially his journey to Jerusalem, from where the Gospel will spread to the ends of the earth (Acts 1,6). His mind is fascinated by the vast sweep of Christianity's uni-

versal mission, from humble beginnings in Jerusalem to glorious consummation in Rome (Acts 28 31). Mathew has in his view the Palestinian community, and his outlook is coloured by a strong interest in ecclesiology. He arranges his logia materials into five discourses of Jesus. Full familiarity with their style and purpose, clear knowledge of their plan, painstaking analysis of the various passages - all this is indispensable if we are to arrive at the full riches of this level of Gospel study.

From what has been said it is clear that there are three levels or strata in which we can see the Gospel materials. These three strata are the result of the three stages of the formation of the Gospel traditions known as the "Sitz im Leben Jesu", "Sitz im Leben der Kirche", and the "Sitz im Evangelium." The first stage at the bottom is that where we have the words and deeds of Jesus among his apostles and disciples who were eyewitnesses to his ministry. In the second stage we have the Apostles bearing testimony to Jesus, proclaiming the message of salvation accomplished through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the community of believers living that message, as a result of which the tradition about Jesus got fixed inthe form of narratives, testimonies, hymns, doxologies, prayers etc. The apostles, as the eyewitnesses of Jesus, interpreted to them his words and deeds according to the needs of the various communities. This is the "Sitz im Leben der Kirche" of the tradition about Jesus. The Evangelists coming at the last stage took these traditions, both oral and written, and set them down in the Gospels. In doing this each of them followed a method suitable to the special purpose which he had in view. There was a selection, a synthesis of data, an explanation in view of the Churches. This we call the "Sitz im Evangelium". But in all these cases it was a question of handing down the true message of Jesus, which they did under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

The instruction on the historical truth of the Gospels mentioned above has positively welcomed these points and has exhorted the exegetes to pay attention to all these factors which have a bearing on the origin and composition of the Gospels. "The results of recent study have made it clear that the teachings and the life of Jesus were not simply recounted for

the mere purpose of being kept in remembrance, but were 'preached' in such a way as to furnish the Church with the foundation on which to build up faith and morals. It follows that the interpreter who subjects the testimony of the evangelists to persevering scrutiny will be in a position to shed further light on the enduring theological value of the Gospels, and to throw into clearest relief the vital importance of the Church's interpretation."

At the same time care should be taken not to fall into certain erroneous presuppositions of the Form-critical schools. Most important is their prejudice against the supernatural. Also they have a false notion of the community where the Gospels were born. They regard it not as the place where Christ left his message to be preached but where the message itself was invented. They identify Christian tradition with any kind of popular tradition that accumulates through a process of sedimentation over long years. They do not acknowledge the role of the apostles as the eyewitnesses and ministers of the Gospel who jealously guarded the truth of the message confided to them. The community where the tradition about Jesus lived was not a faceless crowd, but an ordered community established under the guidance of the apostles. We need only look at the sermons of Peter in the Acts of the Apostles to understand the strong emphasis the early Church laid on the witnessing character of the apostles (Acts 10, 39-42), a *conditio sine qua non* of the Apostolic Office (Acts 1, 22; cf. 2 Pt 1, 16-18; I Jn 1, 1-3).

The Historicity of the Gospels

In the light of this analysis of the formation of the Gospels we now try to present a few guidelines in understanding and evaluating the problem of historicity in the Gospels. To be sure, the common conviction that the Gospels are historical documents and the difficulty experienced by many in reconciling some of the narratives of the Gospels pose one of the major problems in our understanding of the Gospel message.

As a first step towards this we shall have to see what is meant by 'history'. Scientific historiography is that in which the historian arranges the facts pertinent to his subject in proper order of time and place, and in

which his purpose is to produce as faithful a picture of what really happened as his materials show. According to this norm, the historian is a collector and recorder of facts which he scrupulously refrains from interpreting, thus showing himself completely impartial. But this nineteenth century approach to history and historiography has undergone a great change in recent years, as a result of which a new approach to history is in vogue.[10] It is now generally admitted that there is no history in which the historian does not somehow interpret the facts which he records. To say the least, his selection of the facts which he considers worth recording and his omission of others involve a value judgement he gives to them, which is itself an interpretation. The now prevalent concept of history has been well expressed by C. H. Dodd: "Historical writing is not merely a record of occurrences as such. It is, at least implicitly, a record of the interest and meaning they bore for those who took part in them, or were affected by them,.....Thus the events which make up history are relative to the human mind which is active in those events.....We might indeed say that an historical 'event' is an occurrence *plus* the interest and meaning which the occurrence possessed for the people involved in it, and by which the record is determined".[11]

According to this view of history the task of selecting and interpreting the facts to be chronicled is an essential part of the historian's function.[12] This selection and interpretation in their turn presuppose some criterion of judgement. The very choice of sources will be governed by the type of history to be written, cultural, political, economic or religious. The historian's work will ultimately be judged by the correctness of his interpretation of the evidence he has unearthed from his sources. To be sure, interpreting data does not mean falsifying them; it does mean that the historian is presenting his interpretation as the one which gives them their true meaning.

With this new understanding of history let us try to explain the historicity of the Gospel narratives.[13] What was the norm of interpretation which all the evangelists could have? It was nothing but the belief they shared with the community that in Jesus the decisive and definite intervention of God in history

has taken place, that Jesus through his death and resurrection was the Messiah and Lord. We see the best expression of this faith of the early Church in the confession "Jesus is Lord" (cf. Phil 2, 6–11). This faith did not originate from nothing; rather it was confessed by a community which shared the faith of those who had been the eyewitnesses of the ministry of Jesus and the evangelists passed this conviction on to us through the Gospels.

Moreover, in presenting this interpreted history of the Christ-event the evangelists continued the tradition of the biblical notion of history already present in the OT, which rests upon the conviction that God had revealed himself and his plans within the cadre of human affairs. Israel understood these events as pertaining to the history of their salvation, the understanding of which they derived from their experience with the divine. The concrete manifestation of this conviction we have in the different books of the OT. The evangelists in their turn proposed to give to their readers not an exposition of Jesus' earthly ministry, but an insight into the meaning of the Mystery of Jesus Christ, namely the eternal plan of God for the salvation of mankind. This is their primary intention, to show that God definitively intervened in the history of mankind *propter nos et propter nostram salutem.*[14]

When we look at the Gospels we notice that they are the expansion of the preaching, a development of the apostolic kerygma which interprets Jesus' ministry, death, resurrection and exaltation as constituting the salvation of mankind (cf. Acts 10, 34–43). However, we note a difference. The ministry was given relatively less importance in the preaching. The reason is obvious, since the preaching was addressed to those who had not yet accepted Christ, and the main purpose of the preaching was their conversion. As a result, emphasis was laid on the great central themes of the Christ-event: the death, resurrection, exaltation, his sending of the Spirit, his glorious return. The Gospels were later written down for those who had already become believers, and they bring into prominence the meaning of Jesus' ministry for man's salvation. So in this writing of the Gospels there was the influence of the Easter faith on some of the data (cf. Jn 2, 22). At other times there was question of ad-

apting the words of Jesus to the new environments; they originally had a meaning which was directly applicable only to those to whom they had been spoken during Jesus' public life. It is not against the role and the function of the early Church that the community or the evangelists, conscious of possessing the Holy Spirit who would lead them to all truth (Jn 16, 13; cf. Mt 10, 20; Lk 12, 12), might, under the influence of this Spirit, have interpreted and modified some words, or have added to them, in order to apply them to their own new situations (cf. Mt 13, 19–23 and parallels).

The Gospels are, therefore, not to be taken as the biographies of Jesus. The task of the evangelists was to proclaim the Gospel, not to transmit a stenographic account of Jesus' words and deeds. But they were also concerned that his acts and words play a vital role in the lives of the Christians for whom they were writing. What Jesus had said and done never belonged entirely to the past. They remained perennially contemporary, full of meaning for daily life. The evangelists wrote in the Church and for the Church; they belonged to the community. As they conceived it, their task did not consist precisely in re-establishing remembrances about Jesus in their original state, separating them from the overtones they had taken on from tradition. Far from wishing to eliminate the work of elaboration brought about by tradition, they set about completing it and consecrating it.[15] As a result the Gospels belong to a particular literary genre. In their written form also the Gospels are the "Gospel", the proclamation of the Good News of salvation, announcing the definitive coming of God into our world by means of certain events in the world's history. The message of the Gospel is an historical fact and as such is conditioned by space and time. But it also has a divine quality that transcends time and is supra-historical. This combination of something historical and of something transcending time and space is basic both to the salvation event and to the Gospels which record this salvation event. Like the preaching, from which they have their origin, the Gospels attempt to express that reality of the salvation event which surpasses the limits of our time-space world and its experiences.

As a specific literary form, the Gospel combines within itself history and prophecy, prophecy understood not as foretelling, but as a message from God, explaining, interpreting, revealing to us the supreme manifestation of God in our world of space and time, initiated by the Incarnation, unfolded progressively in the earthly life and ministry of Jesus, consummated in his passion, death and resurrection. The Gospels as history and prophecy are essentially a message which transcends time, whether that time be past, present or future. They carry to us a message that reveals to us the nature and design of God himself and are perennially contemporaneous.[16]

This prophetic and contemporaneous character of the Gospel narratives is evinced by the fact that the evangelists show a strongly marked tendency to dissociate most of the episodes constituting Jesus' public life which they record, from both time and place. It shows the distance which separates the Gospels from modern historical writing. Thus the transitions are well worked in to link episodes with very vague notations, such as 'then', 'right away' 'it happened that' 'at that time', 'in those days'; and sometimes a simple 'and' is enough to juxtapose two episodes. To take these literary devices in a strict literal sense would create insoluble difficulties.

What are we to conclude from this analysis? The Gospels are primarily proclamation, the Good News of the Kingdom of God. They are based on historical events; but the events are interpreted by the apostles and the evangelists. So the history we have in the Gospels is a theologically interpreted history; it is at the same time a kerygmatic history. This history narrated, interpreted and preached in the Gospels is the continuation and definitive expression of the salvation history in the Bible as a whole.

As Luke wrote to Theophilus, the Gospels are written "in order that you may more clearly grasp the authentic character of the oral instruction you have received" (Lk 1,4). We are already believers, and it is as to believers that the Gospels are written, and it is as believers that we should read them. The Gospels are written *ex fide ad fidem*, 'from faith for faith' (cf Rom 1,17), which makes the Gospels "God's power towards salvation for everyone who be-

lieves" (Rom 1, 16). In our reading and studying the Gospels there is to be a constant dialogue between the evangelists and us, a dialogue that is guided by the Holy Spirit who inspired the sacred authors in their writing the Gospels.[17]

This approach to the Gospels is something which is recommended by the recent documents of the Church, especially the 'Instruction on the historical truth of the Gospels' and the "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation." To be sure, this may create a certain amount of uneasiness and confusion among many who brand these developments as endangering the faith of the believers. Here we should be cautious. The Instruction has given certain directions in this regard: "But it is those who *instruct* the Christian people by sacred preaching that need the greatest prudence. It is doctrine above all that they must impart, mindful of the admonition of St. Paul: 'Pay attention to yourself and to the doctrine which you teach; be persistent in these things For by doing so you will bring salvation to yourself and to your hearers' (1 Tim 4, 16). They must altogether shun what is merely new-fangled or what is insufficiently proved. New views for which there is solid support they may when necessary put forward, using discretion and taking into account the qualifications of their audience. When they narrate biblical events they are not to introduce imaginary additions at variance with the truth. This same virtue of prudence should be especially practised by those who *write* for the Christian public at popular level. They should make it their study to bring out the treasures of the word of God 'in order that the faithful may be moved and spurred on to shape their lives in conformity with it.' (DASP) Let them regard themselves as in duty bound never to depart in the slightest from the common doctrine and tradition of the Church. And whilst undoubtedly they should take as contribution whatever real advances in biblical knowledge the labours of modern scholars have brought about, they should keep altogether clear of the precarious fancies of innovators. They are

strictly charged not to yield to a mischievous itch for novelty by recklessly giving wide publicity, indiscriminately and without any previous sifting, to each and every tentative solution of difficulties that happens to be proposed; this way of acting disquiets the faith of many people"[18]

All the same, the ministers and pastors of souls should be well aware of the great fruits that can be derived from this positive approach to the Gospels. Far from weakening or destroying the historical value of the Gospels, this new approach has dispelled many a pseudo-problem and has given insights and orientations into texts whose richness had hardly previously been suspected. It was the intention of those who contributed to the formation of the Gospels that their readers should know the full meaning of what Jesus said and did, that they should grow in their faith and they should all come to eternal life through these documents of faith. This is what the author of the Fourth Gospel tells us as he reaches the conclusion of his work: "These things have been written in order that you may persevere in your belief that Jesus is the Messiah, the son of God, and that persevering in this belief you may possess life in his Name" (Jn 20, 31).

NOTES

1. The confusion created by the *schema* and the *Monitum* was all the more so because these Church documents appeared after a heated controversy between the Pontifical Biblical Institute and the Lateran University in Rome Cf. J. A. Fitzmyer, "A recent Roman Scriptural Controversy" *Theological Studies* 22 (1961) 426–444; J. M. Pathrapankal, "The problem of 'History' in the Gospels in the light of Vatican's Constitution of 'Divine Revelation' *Indian Journal of Theology* 16 (1967) 86–96.
2. "Instructio de historica Evangeliorum", *L'osservatore Romano,* 14 May 1964, p.3, The Instruction was approved by Pope Paul and dated 21 April 1964. For the official text cf: *AAS* 56 (1964); 712–718. For an English translation of the Instruction see *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 26 (1964) 305–312; *Theological Studies* 25 (1964) 402–408.
3. A commentary on the Instruction by J. A. Fitzmyer appeared in *Theological Studies* 2S (1964) 386–408. Cf. A: Card. Bea, *The study of the Synoptic Gospels: New approaches and outlooks*, London, 1965.
4. Only a brief introductory bibliography is given here. R. Schnackenburg, "Method of Form Criticism in Gospel research" *Theology Digest* 12 (1963) 147–152; A. Card. Bea, *op. cit.* pp. 17–44; P. G. Duncker, "Biblical Criticism" *Cath. Bibl. Quart.* 25 (1963) 22–33; J. L. McKenzie, *The Power and the Wisdom*, Milwaukee, 1965, pp. 40 ff. J. Bourke, "The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ" *Concilium* 1, 2 (1966) 16–26.
5. Form-Critics normally neglected the Fourth Gospel on the score that it offered a much less promising field than the Synoptics because the material in it had passed through a process of development in which Christian experience and literary purposes have played their part.
6. Cf: J. L. McKenzie, *op. cit.* pp. 268–274; L. Malevez, *The Christian message and Myth*, Westminister, 1957; D. M. Stanley, "Rudolf Bultmann: A contemporary challenge to Catholic theology" *Cath. Bibl. Quart.* 19 (1957) 247–355; O. Cullmann, "Rudolf Bultmann's concept of myth and the New Testament" *Theol. Digest* 4 (1955; J. C. Futrell, "Myth and Message". *Cath. Bibl. Quart.* 21 (1959) 283–315.
7. Cf. P. J. Cahill, "R. Bultmann and Post–Bultmann tendencies", *Cath. Bibl. Quart.* 26 (1964) 153–178; R E. Brown, "After Bultmann what ? An introduction to Post-Bultmannianism" *ibid*, pp. 1–30; J. M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus,* London, 1959; R. P. Martin, "The New Quest of the Historical Jesus" in *Jesus of Nazareth, Saviour and Lord*, ed. by F. H. Henry. London, 1966, pp. 23–45. G. Hasenhutti, "What does Bultmann mean by "Demythologizing"? *Concilium* 4, 2 (1966) 28–32.

8. The same method was used by Hermann Gunkel on the Old Testament. To him we owe the renewal of studies on the Psalms, due largely to his classification of those poems according to their genres (Gattungen) and to their place in the history of the People of Israel (Sitz in Leben).

9. Cf. P. Rigaux in *Revue Biblique*, 1958, p. 507: "There are passages where this editorial drafting was a process of adaptation, a bringing up to date under the impulse of problems arising in the growing infant Church. The authors both of the constituent elements and of the full-blown Gospels were influenced by the needs of polemics and apologetics, by cult and internal organization of the Church." Quoted from a brochure titled "Present-day tendencies in exegetical studies of the life of Christ: A Bishop's reflections" by J. J. Weber, Archbishop of Strasbourg, France published in his diocesan journal in 1962.

10. E. Dinkler, *The idea of History in the Ancient Near East*, New Haven–London, 1955, p. 172: "The concept of history has been given to us by Greek science and to this very day is employed by us in a Greek sense. From Thucydides to Toynbee the common and connecting assumption has been that history is rational intelligible continuity, an integrated nexus or concatenation, operating in a unified world, capable of investigation and illumination by historical method." Cf. A. W. Mosely, "Historical reporting in the Ancient World" *New Testament Studies* 12 (1965) 10–26.

11. C. H. Dodd, *History and the Gospel*, London, 1938, p. 37.

12. Cf. J. M. Cobinson *op. cit.* p. 67–68: "History is an act of intention, the commitment, the meaning for the participants, behind the external occurrence. In such intention and commitment the self of the participant actualizes itself, and in this act of self-actualization the self is revealed. Hence it is the task of modern historiography to grasp such acts of intention, such commitments, such meaning, such self-actualization; and it is the task of modern biography to lay hold of the selfhood which is therein revealed."

13. There is an abundance of literature on this subject. We give here a few references. D. M. Stanley, "The conception of our Gospels as Salvation History", in *A Theology Reader*, ed: by R. W. Gleason, New York, 1966, pp. 9–38; M. M. Bourke, "The historicity of the Gospels", *ibid.* pp. 9–58. V. T. O'Keefe, ' Towards understanding the Gospels" *Cath. Bibl. Quart*, 21 (1959) 171–189; A. Card. Bea, *op. cit.* pp. 45–77: J. L. McKenzie; *op. cit.* pp. 21–44; A. Stock, *Kingdom of Heaven*, New York, 1964, pp. 21–40; F. F. Bruce, "History and the Gospel" in *Jesus of Nazareth, Saviour and Lord*, pp. 87–107; J. P. Martin, "Faith as Historical understanding" *ibid.* pp. 175–198; P. Althau., "Fact and faith in the kerygma", *ibid.* pp: 199–212.

14. C. H. Dodd. *op. cit.* p. 30: "This is in fact the assertion which Christianity makes. It takes the series of events recorded or reflected in the Bible, from the call of Abraham to the emergence of the Church, and declares that in this series the ultimate reality of all history, which is the purpose of God, is finally revealed, because the series is itself controlled by the supreme event of all — the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ."

15. "The development in Scriptural testimony is explained by the reflection of faith and needs of an apologetic. To become clearly conscious of something and to make it precise is not to invent or fabricate. Thus the belief in the divinity of Jesus consisted of a slow understanding of what had been given at the first onset in an obscure initial instant." V. T. O'Keefe, *art. cit.* p. 188.

16. Cf. O. Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, London, 1962, (3 ed) p. 98.

17. "Our faith assures us that the Holy Spirit presided at the birth of the tradition and its consignation in Scripture. This did not prevent all growth. On the contrary, the Holy Spirit aroused the necessary development while guiding it. For this he chose and directed certain interpreters in the living milieu that was already the Church. His guarantee of inerrancy helped them, not so much in transcribing facts or words without change, as in interpreting them without error." V. T. O'Keefe, *art. cit.* p. 188.

18. Instruction on the historical truth of the Gospels, para. 4.

A Select Bibliography in Sacred Scripture

1. A. Card. Bea, *The Study of the Synoptic Gospels: New approaches and outlooks*, Geoffrey Chapman, London — Dublin, 1965.
2. R. Schnackenburg, *The moral teaching of the New Testament*, Burns and Oates, London. 1965.
3. *Contemporary New Testament Studies*, ed. by Sister Rosalie Ryan, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 1965.
4. D. M. Stanley, *The Apostolic Church in the New Testament*, The Newman Press, Westminister, 1966.
5. R. Schnackenburg, *God's Rule and Kingdom*, Herder and Herder, New York 1963:
6. R. Schnackenburg, *New Testament Theology*, Geoffrey Chapman, London–Dublin 1963.

7. *The Bible in Current Catholic Thought*, ed. by J. L. McKenzie, Herder and Herder, New York, 1962.
8. W. J. Harrington, *The Record of Revelation: The Bible.*
„ „ *The Record of the Promise: The Old Testament*
„ „ *The Record of the Fulfilment: The New Testament.*
The Priory Press, Chicago, 1965.
9. A. Robert and A. Feuillet, *Introduction to the New Testament*, Desclee Company, New York, Rome 1965.
10. J. L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible*, The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, 1965 (A paperback edition is also available)
11. R. W. Gleason, *A Theology Reader* (edited), The Macmillan Company, New York, 1966.
12. R. E. Brown, *New Testament Essays*, The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, 1965.
13. L. Alonso-Schokel, *Understanding Biblical Research*, Herder and Herder, 1963.
14. J. L. McKenzie, *The Power and the Wisdom*, The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, 1965.
15. A. Stock, *King of Heaven: The Good Tidings of the Gospel*, Herder and Herder, 1964.
16. G. Auzou, *The Formation of the Bible*, Herder Book Co., Saint Louis and London, 1963.

(N. B. Only a few books by Catholic authors are given in this list)

Faith as Existential Encounter and Total Commitment

Rev. John B. Chethimattam

The Problem of Faith Today

The Spirit of Renewal inaugurated by Pope John XXIII and Vatican II has reached the very depths of Christian existence and thrown its light on the very foundations of Christian Belief, not indeed to question our Faith, but rather to understand better its scope and meaning. Often taken for granted, it tends to lose its relevance to actuality and influence on the lives of men of our day.[1]

Against the onslaught of Materialism and Rationalism in the 19th century, Vatican Council I defended and defined the reasonability and rational meaning of Faith as the submission of the human intellect under divine influence to the truths revealed by God not for their intrinsic intelligibility but for the veracity of God who reveals them.[2] Such a submission is not an abdication of reason, but its movement to regions naturally inaccessible to its unaided powers.[3]

Valid as this concept was, the overemphasis on reason in Faith even in its submission to the higher light, occasioned several reactions. The movement known as Modernism tried to present an irrational, immanentist and evolutionary notion of Christian Faith. Though it was temporarily suppressed by the strong condemnation of Pope Pius X, the points raised were too important to be ignored and too explosive to be repressed. *Humani Generis* of Pope Pius XII spoke out against some of the later expressions of the same movement. In recent times Existentialistic Atheism has denied all faith in God as an abdication of human autonomy, and the Death of God theology has rejected faith in a personal God as irrelevant and outdated.

Biblical Notion of Faith

The right reaction to these movements was initiated by a deeper examination of the notions of Revelation and Faith in the Bible. Even in the O. T. faith is not a mere intellectual acceptance of certain divinely enunciated propositions, but stands for a total and complete response of the Chosen People to Yahweh. It meant full confidence in and recognition of God as Saviour of his people, total reliance on his promises and perfect obedience to his will.

New Testament places greater emphasis on the intellectual aspect of faith, acknowledgement and acceptance of the Good News of salvation effected by God; but it in no way minimises the importance of total surrender. For the Synoptics Faith is the confidence in the power of God and acknowledgement of the Messiaship of Christ. In the Acts it stands for adherence to the *Kerygma* and to Christ announced in the *Kerygma*. St. Paul places the accent on the acceptance of Christ's resurrection by the power of God. Obedience to the Divine Will manifested in Christ is important. But, confidence emerges in the Pauline writings as a virtue distinct from faith, namely Hope. For John the point of preference is the confession of the divinity of Christ. But for all. Faith is faith in Christ, and Christ is our Faith. "Faith in Christ Jesus" is a metaphysical principle of life by which Christ lives in us and as it were believes in and through us. His faith is at the same time the manifestation of the fidelity of God to his people as well as its effective response to the divine call.

Faith according to Vatican II

According to Vatican Council II, Revelation is God's sharing of his treasures with us, communicating himself and the eternal decisions of his will regarding the salvation of men, and he brings about an ever deeper understanding of this communication through the internal working of the Holy Spirit.[4] To indicate Faith, the Council uses the simple expression: "an obedience by which man entrusts his whole self freely to God."[5] It is clear that the Council did

not want to present a purely intellectualist conception of faith. For, faith is a total response to God, who by his presence and works as well as by verbal prolamation manifests His will and his personality. A mere assent to a few propositions is too inadequate to express a total response. Christ is the centre and culmination of the Divine Revelation, not merely by his words, but by the deeds, signs, and wonders which revealed his intentions and personality, and especially by his death and glorious resurrection, and the sending of the Holy Spirit.

Revelation is in a way God's total involvement in the human situation Faith too is, therefore, a total commitment in an existential encouuter. Christ, the God-made-man, spoke to particular groups, using their language, observed the methods of reasoning and exposition of his time, adapted himself to the mentality of his hearers and in that way he became one with the group to which he was communicating the message of the Father. The Apostles preaching Christ communicated their message faithfully and reverently to a larger community and adapted themselves to the mode of expression and mentality of their hearers. Finally when the Christ event was committed to writing by the Evangelists and other Sacred Writers the Good News was being proclaimed in the wider context of the whole Church, each one of them adapting himsrlf to the particular mode and mentality of the Church for which he was writing, but at the same time bearing in mind the rules and requirements of the literary form he made use of.[6] In these three steps the Word of God sank deeper and deeper into the concrete human situation. The response to the Word in Faith also has to assume the same direct involvement in the community of Christ's Church.

Existential Encounter in Faith

Acceptance of the *Kerygma* from Christ himself, or from the Apostles or from the Church implies a total act of commitment. Faith assumes the reliability of the one who announces the Good News. The Apostles had

to accept the Divine Mission of Christ; the primitive Church, the true mission of the Apostles by Christ and their fidelity to him; and the ordinary Christian, the sanctity of the Church as well as her fidelity to the Gospel of Christ entrusted to her. But, this acceptance is not a mere rational evaluation, a scientific historical investigation and a historical conclusion derived therefrom. Such a historical investigation into Christ's divine mission, the faithful reporting of the Apostles and the fidelity of the Ecclesial transmission of the Gospel can be very helpful for such acceptance. But at best this kind of rational evaluation can be only a preparation to a subsequent decision to commit oneself. This practical commitment is not itself a rational conclusion but rather an existential procedure involving one's whole being. The commitment of faith far exceeds the limitations of a mere rational investigation. Only an existential encounter can justify the existential commitment of faith.

For the Apostles it was a concrete experience of the personality and work of Christ. They did not stop to formulate an inductive reasoning to deduce the divinity of Christ as a conclusion. It was the total impression that convinced them that Christ was the Messiah. Not flesh and blood but the Father of all light illumined their minds to see the Son of God in the Jesus of Nazareth. Even for history this existential encounter with the personality of Christ is more important than all the sundry details of time and place that research can gather about Christ. Similarly for the primitive Church the Apostolic College was an existential phenomenon with the outpouring of the Spirit on them on the day of Pentecost and all the manifestations of the divine power which accompanied their preaching.

In the post-Apostolic era the Church is the sacral community announcing the Good News that brings about the existential encounter with Christ. She is not a mere messenger of Christ. She belongs to the very content of the message. Or rather, there is no distinction between the medium and the message. Her message is not an abstract doctrinaire

to be conveyed through the communications media. The Church is the living reality of salvation that has to be communicated to all men. Hence any amount of abstract philosophy or any elaborated system of theology cannot substitute for the existential encounter of the Church with the world. She is the restored humanity, the fullness of the Word-made-flesh, the body of Christ through integration in which by faith every man has to attain salvation.

This is a big privilege and a great responsibility for the Church. She is the garment of Chirst through which power goes forth and heals all ills and instills the life of faith. But she can fail and become an obstacle in the vivifying activity of Christ if she remains aloof and does not get involved in the actuality of the life of this age. If she remains with her dry and outdated formulas, however theoretically true they may be, she will not existentially present Christ to men of our age.[7] She has to make herself present to every human heing in every situation. In the salvific community of the Church the divine promises are fulfilled; as an extension of her reality the world appears filled with the divine presence; in her one comes face to face with Christ.

Psychology of Faith

This existential encounter with Christ in the Church through faith embraces the whole reality of the believer. Yet, this faith cannot be conceptualized or defined as one would the proof of a geometrical theorem, or the causal connection between the premises and conclusion of a syllogism in *Barbara*. So faith appears obscure and almost a leap in the dark. All the same, it is an intellectual assent to what one realizes to be the greatest good of one's own being. It is a light that does not need to be illumined by another light to be seen; it is its own proof. For, faith is the response to man's deep seated quest for salvation, namely to be freed from his ignorance and limitation that block his way in every direction, and to become his own authentic self. He knows that his liberation cannot come from himself.

Faith brings in the first ray of hope, the salvaging rope that man grasps instinctively with all his strength. It is a total commitment to the saving hand.

But, in its immediate experiential aspect, faith deals with the concrete and the particular. There is no direct vision of God. Yet, it is a judgement of the particular in the light of God. In faith, I deny the absoluteness of the particular and realize that this particular object, and likewise all that I have and all that I am, can find meaning and fulfilment only in God. This is precisely the saving message of Christ: The Son of God has become the son of man that the sons of men may become the sons of God. We have not received the spirit of slavery, but the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of freedom, that makes us all sons in the one Son, and cries in us to the Father "Abba." The Good News is the plan of the Father to reintegrate all things in Jesus Christ, the one head.

Conclusion: Thus Faith is not a mere intellectual assent to certain propositions. Nor is it a merely blind commitment with a fatalistic self-surrender. We know whom we believe. First and foremost it is a judgement of the world in conformity with the Will of the Father, and a knowing and willing self-surrender to him in the Church, through Jesus Christ. In brief it is "a total obedience, by which man entrusts his whole self freely to God."

NOTES

1. Pope Paul VI declared on Feb. 22, 1967, an Year of Faith to commemorate the 19th centenary of the martyrdom of the Apostles Peter and Paul. In that document he said: "We recommend particularly to Exegetes and Theologians to contribute, in union with the hierarchical magisterium of the Church to preserve the faith from all error, to scrutinize its unfathomable depths, to give correct explanation of its content and to propose sound principles for its study and its diffusion."
2. Denz. n. 1789.
3. Denz. n. 1799.
4. *Dei Verbum*, nn. 5 & 6.
5. *Dei Verbum*, n. 5.
6. Cf. *Instruction on the historical Truth of the Gospels*, issued by the Pontifical Biblical Commission on May 14, 1964, n. 2.
7. Cf. Michael Novak. *Belief and Unbelief, A Philosophy of Self-knowledge*, New York: Macmillan, 1966, pp. 181–182. "The very activism of the clergy can be an impediment." 'When in doubt, build' — building, ever building, and collecting funds. Catholicism, one is often told in conversation, seems to be an efficient shell without spirit; its churches seem to be stone boxes more like supermarts than homes of the human spirit; its moral code seems more Jansenist than evangelical.....

   "A high proportion of its bishops, the faithful complain, seem characteristically timid, prudent, cautious men whose great ideal is not to step out of line, not to offend ecclesiastical proprieties, not to cause trouble, not to be tempted by a new idea.....Is this the community of the believers of which the Gospels speak ? Have the blood and suffering of the ages come to this?"

Liturgical Adaptation

—Rev. Sylvester Pudussery

Acharya Vinoba Bhave, the friend, guide and Philosopher of the contemporary Indian villager and the true living representative of the authentic India recently made a remark: *The Indian Christians should give an orientation to their faith. I, for myself, can say on behalf of the whole Indian culture that Christ is acceptable to India.* He was only giving expression to a fact which is clear as day light. According to him the misundrstanding of christianity by a large number of the people in this country can be attributed to the very approach it made to Indian life. This misunderstanding is, indeed, partly due to the fact that christianity in India has got entagled with the political seesaw of foreign powers and partly due to the intolerance of the Indian mentality. Consequently it could not occupy the pedastal it ought to have had in India. An orthodox Hindu, nay even an educated Christian, is forced to think of Christianity as a foreign import.

The question posed now is about the extent and possibility of making a full-fledged Indian liturgy. But how? when? by whom? These are the problems to be solved through prolonged discussion and cordial interchange of ideas. It needs patient and serious study, and careful experimentation with a good deal of wisdom and prudence. To forge a new liturgy all on a sudden is a Herculian task. It has to take place in various phases with the rhythms natural to the law of liturgy itself. It must not be carried out artificially in a deuced hurry. The problem of adaptation in liturgy is one of serious

proportions. It is one very delicate too. However now it is the time for the spade work to be done. Only then can we hope to evolve a liturgy that is fully christian and genuinely Indian, a liturgy that can appeal to the mind of modern India and win her to God in Christ Jesus.

While thinking of an Indian liturgy the crux of the problem seems to lie in the fact that we christians in India and especially the clergy, the oriental christians not excepted are educated against a western background. We are not in a position to respond to Indian symbols and modes of worship. Hence our prime duty is to prepare the ground by studying and meditating on the genius of the Indian religious approach and the relevance of Hindu religion to Christian liturgy.

The following are a few suggestions

1. Well trained personnel is essential. The fundamental prerequisite for solid and creative liturgical adaptation is a highly professional research programme, systematically exploring the resources of modern psychology, anthropology and sociology. An authentic Indian liturgy must not be identified with the adaptation of some Hindu gestures. It requires a group of men well-versed in Theology and in Hindu thought, firm in their christian faith and capable of avoiding dangers of syncretism.

2. First we should aim at a structure of the liurgy against the Indian background. Then symbols, signs, and gestures proper to the structure must be adapted. This demands a kind of process consisting of assimilation, sublimation and combination.

3. Para-liturgies could be experimented in Seminaries and other Institutions.

4. Simplicity should be the note of the Indian liturgy in keeping with the simplicity of the Gospel and of the Indian religious thought.

5. Greater emphasis could be placed on the role of mysticism in Christian life.

6. Concepts of grace sacraments and other points of similarity between Christian thought and Hindu religious practice must be taken into account.

7. Many verses from the Hindu vedic books could find place in the new Indian liturgy.

8. Indian way of accosting *Namasthe* for peace greetings and the doctrine of *prasada* can be easily adopted. Indian colours

oil lamps, lotus flower, fire, oils, ablutions, Indian music, church buildings etc. are to be taken into account.

9. Indian festivals eg. Holi, Pongal and Deepali (feast of lights) etc. could be adapted.

10. Hindu scholars too must be consulted.

The Gospel will have its sway all over India when the Church will become fully Indian and when every Indian feels that he has given something that is Indian, ie. his own, to the community of Christ. Let us hope and pray for the gracious dawn of that day.

In the Liturgy the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not involve the faith or the good of the whole community. Rather she respects and fosters the spiritual adornments and gifts of the various races and peoples. Anything in their way of life that is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy and, if possible, preserves intact. Some times in fact she admits such things into the lttlurgy itself, as long as they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit.

(*Vatican II, Liturgy, n. 37.*)

BOOKS

The Ecumenical Revolution

ROBERT MC AFEE BROWN, DOUBLEDAY, NEW YORK, 1967, PP 388; $5.95.

Robert Mc Afee Brown, the famous American Ecumenist and well-known observer at the second Vatican Council, in his book *The Ecumenical Revolution*, makes a general survey of the ecumenical movement from its beginning to the present-day ecumenical revolution started with the Vatican II. The author traces the milestones on the road to Christian Unity, telling us the story of the World Council of Churches and that of the Vatican II and the hopes they have given for the future. The book aims at the average Christian reader to make him aware of the new ecumenical fact and to decipher certain indications of the presence of an ecumenical revolution. Indeed, it would be shattering, says the author, to wake up some morning and discover that a revolution had taken place without our even knowing it. One cannot do full justice to this book with a brief review.

The book contains five parts. The part I, entitled, "From Diatribe to Dialogue", is the story of the rediscovery of Christian unity. The author, at the very start, points out the change in climate. The Christians today feel that it is a great tragedy that in the name of Christ men are divided. The spirit of the New Testament is explicitly the spirit of unity. Hence divisions are not only unfortunate but scandalous and sinful as well. But the author makes a distinction between unity and uniformity. He insists that cure for division is not unity in an

oppressive and monolithic uniformity in which every vestige of diversity and differentiation is removed. There must be room for different ways of expression. The author then takes the reader "From Edinburgh to Uppsala", tracing the development of Protestant ecumenism. He also refers to the ecumenical concern of the 16th century reformers. Their demand was, in fact, the reform of the medieval church to retain its unity and continuity with the Apostolic church. This he points out "neither to justify 400 years of division nor to suggest that all virtue in the sixteenth century lay with the reformers. It is however to suggest that continued division among Protestants is a violation of those and spirit of Reformation". The Edinburgh World Missionary Conference in 1910 was to plan a common strategy for the Protestant Missions avoiding the overlap and competition. This common move gradually grew and developed into the World Council of Churches (W. C. C.). The author gives an account of the W. C. C., its work, achievements and the problems it faces today. The achievement of the W. C. C. is that it made the various Christian denominations conscious of their common heritage which, in fact, overwhelms their differences.

It is the second Vatican Council with Pope John taking the lead, that really made the ecumenical revolution. The author discusses the ecumenical impact of the council in the latter half of part I. Immediately after the election of Pope John many said that John already an old man was only a "caretaker Pope". Caretaker Pope indeed! "He took more care of the Church in four years than had been taken care of it in the preceding four hundred". Protestants heard in Pope John the voice of the Good Shepherd: The author here shows in brief the change of climate the council has made. This is later elaborated in part III. The church in council began to look the so called "schismatics and heretics" as the "separated brethren". He concludes the part I with some ground-rules for the dialogue. The hardest part of the dialogue, according to the author, is the continual willingness to revise one's understanding of the faith of the other. Here dialogue becomes a shattering experience, for it forces us to give up our most cherished caricatures.

Dialogue leads Christians "from contention to contrition" or to the reform of the Church. The part II is a historical survey of the development of this contrition from the part of both catholics and Protestants which necessitates reformation. This part opens up with a quotation from Hans Kung: "The ecumenical task of the theology of both sides is seriously to consider the truth in the error of the others and the possible error in their own truth". The author, in fact, tries to show how far this task has been carried out. He points out the contemporary catholic re-assesment of the Reformation made by Bouyer, Lortz, Kung and others. The Reformation of the 16th century was, to some extent, a historical necessity. The Roman Catholic church has co-responsibility in that tragedy in so far as the church was reluctant to carry out reformation. Luther wanted a reformed Church but not a separate Church The only Church he wanted to reform was the One Holy Catholic church. So reformation is an ongoing process and so long as there are divisions in the Church the objective of the reformers is not achieved. The author gives the various public statements of contrition made by Protestants and by the Catholic Church and shows that *Ecclesia semper reformanda* is the watchword of the Roman Catholics as well as the Protestants. Reformation is possible, the author says, only to the degree that the Churches and the members there of give their allegiance to Christ as Lord, rather than to some one or something else as Lord. The test of Protestant sincerity is the courageous steps to reformation and reunion. The author dispels the view of some Protestants that no visible organic and structural form is needed, but only a spiritual unity is enough. He says: "Christ was not just spirit, he was flesh, a creature of time and space, manifested historically and concretely; similarly the church which is his body must manifest the unity he desires for it historically and concretely. Nothing less than visible, concrete unity can finally suffice as the answer to his prayer 'that all may be one' ".

In part III we have the story of Vatican II and an appraisal of it from an ecumenical point of view. The whole thing can be summarised in three sentences: "Pope John opened new doors for Roman Catholicism. The council kept those doors open. It remains to

be seen how far the Church will walk through them". According to the author an important achievement of the council is the liberation of Catholic theology from a static framework. But it becomes a new kind of enslavement when everything said or done is justified by citations from the council documents even at the expense of the spirit of the texts. This could hamper the onward development of Catholic theology. The documents are pointers to the future rather than summations of the past. They must not be used to build fences around present activity but to build bridges toward future activity. The latter half of this part is a more elaborate discussion on the decree on Ecumenism. In conclusion to this the author points out that the decree manifests a tension between Christologically-centred and Rome-centred ecumenism. The decree admits the "ecclesial reality" of the non-Catholic Churches; but at the same time claims that the Catholic Church is the "all-embracing means of salvation". So, the author says, the non-Catholic Churches have to wait still to know how far the Catholic Church accepts the reality of the Church beyond its own borders.

The question of religious freedom in its ecumenical implication is discussed in part IV. The author describes the historical development of the concept of religious freedom. The World Council of Churches was the first to make certain important statements as regards religious freedom which, in fact, influenced Vatican's Declaration on Religious Freedom. Both of these documents are analysed. The latter half of this section deals with the jewish question. As an appendix to this part the author deals with the question of "Christianity and conversion of Jews". With Paul Tillich the author says that Christianity needs the leavening presence of Judaism to bear witness against idolatry. "You shall have no other gods before me", Yahweh thundered from Sinai and it has been the contribution of the jews ever since to echo the noice of this thunder. The institutional Church has a peculiar tendency of creating man-made gods and the prophetic existence of Judaism is a constant check on this.

In part V, and this is the last, the author makes a review of

the contemporary Catholic-Protestant dialogues and of the areas of common action and worship. He points out some immediate irritants in the Catholic-Protestant dialogue as the question of mixed marriage and birth control. Apart from these there are some serious theological issues which deeply divide Catholics and Protestants Papal infallibility, the role of Mary, and the relationship of Bible and Tradition. The author discusses these problems briefly and shows that contemporary theological scholarship has shed much light on them with the concept of collegiality, of the ecclesial dimension of Mariology and with the inclusive concept of Bible and Tradition. Whatever may be the doctrinal differences the Christians have much in common as to undertake joint action in certain areas. He emphasises the idea of Christian involvement in the secular world, quoting the documents of W.C.C. and of the Vatican, especially its pastoral Constitution, *The Church in the Modern World.*

Speaking about Catholic-Protestant common worship, the author narrates his own painful experience as an observer at Vatican. During the closing weeks of the council he daily participated in the Roman Catholic Mass. He joined the service singing all the hymns, saying all the prayers and sometimes reading the epistle. He could also receive the "kiss of peace" and hand it over to the next. But when the Communion came he could not receive the Body of Christ. He describes the paradox of this in two sentences; "I have never felt closer to my Roman Catholic brethren than at those services. I have never felt more cut off from my Roman Catholic brethren than at those services". As an appendix the book also contains Vatican's decree on Ecumenism and a good ecumenical bibliography. This book is dominated by the Vatican Council. The author does not make any apology for it but only underscores it because he feels that "our period of the ecumenical revolution is the period of the Council and any contemporary report that did not reflect the fact would be, to that degree, false".

Fr. K. Pathil, C. M. I.

The Christian Vision

DONALD J. THORMAN.
PUBLISHED BY DOUBLEDAY & CO., INC. NEW YORK 1967.
PRICE $ 4. 50.

Centrifugal tendency in the realm of spirituality is dead and gone. Instead, aspirations for a centripetal approach grows stronger and stronger day by day. Today, more than ever, it becomes clear that world is not something to be eschewed, but is to be appreciated, integrated and sanctified, for it is the creation of God. "And God saw that it was good". Consequently, an intrepid involvement in the affairs of the world is a necessary preamble to everyone's spiritual life. What we mean by involvement is a concern for other people, and a subsequent attempt to do something for their spiritual and material welfare as well. Love of neighbour is love of God in practice; by loving our neighbour who is God present to us, we love God who has ascended. And it is precisely this point that is central in Thorman's "The Christian Vision". He says, "I do not believe we can reconcile non-involvement with love of God in any case, though. Today, sanctity is to be achieved through an acceptance, recognition and utilization of our humanity — in other words, by relating ourselves positively to God's world".

Donald Thorman who is also the author of 'The Emerging Layman', in his present volume, explores the basic concepts of spirituality and the religious needs of the most recent developments in the Church and provides the reader with a fresh viewpoint on the problems that confront all modern Catholics. The view points may not be all original, but his is a scholarly synthesis of the prevalent thoughts in the contemporary theological discussions in the Church. Besides, we should say that Thorman is cent per cent correct specially about himself,

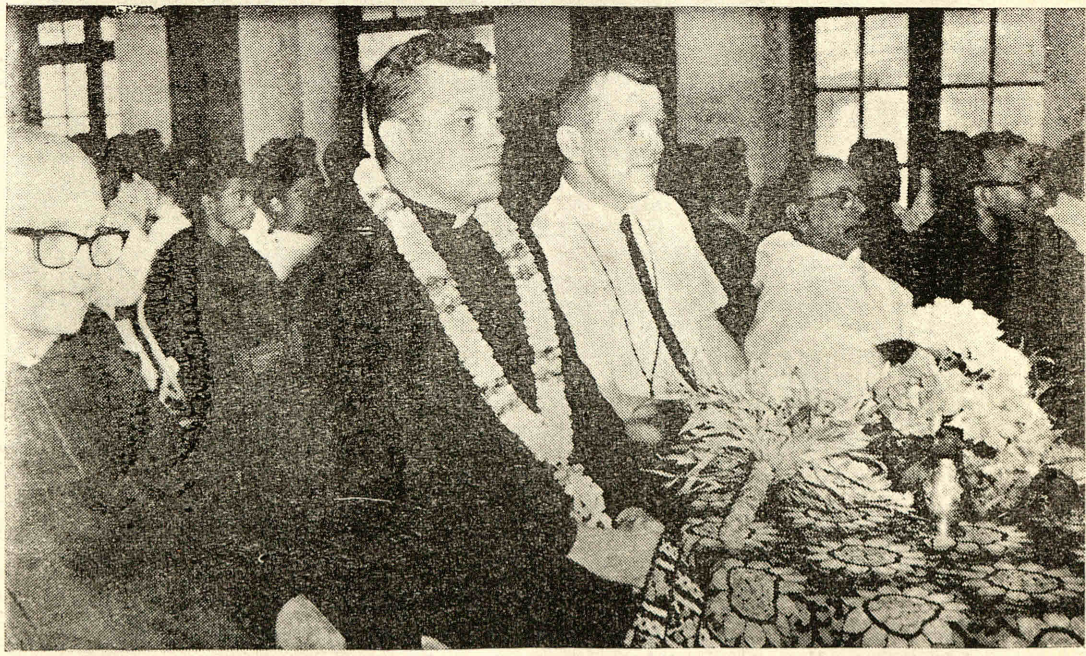
in saying that, "Perhaps what is most needed today for lay persons who are both married and theologians is to begin more actively to write about theological varities in terms of their experience as married persons."

The most basic concept in Thorman is a deep conviction in man's potential to live a life in which religion is not merely an accompaniment, but it is the very foundation of it, permeating all the life-activities. This view he has vividiy illustrated by bringing new meaning to such topics as, the compatibility of freedom and obedience, humanness and holiness, sanctity in a changing world, the place of Mary in Christian life, the Sacraments as an encounter with God and one's neighbour, the sanctity in marriage and the family, and lay apostolate in contemporary society. Though he brings forward new dimensions in understanding these concepts, his 'healthly modern attitude' is always quite in tune with the Pastoral Constitution on the 'Church in the Modern World' of Vatican II. "The Church also maintains that beneath all these changes there are many realities which do not change and which have their ultimate foundation in Christ, who is the sameYesterday and Today, Yes and forever." This is the Christian Vision we all need for a spirituality in an age of Change.

REPORTER

January 6: Very Rev. Mgr. Nolan, Secretary to the Near East Welfare association during his tour in India visited our College on 6th Jan. In the talk to the students he conveyed the great hopes cherished by our benefactors, most of whom are from among the working class. He emphasized our bounden duty to respond to the demands of the Divine Call whole-heartedly and to give the lead to build up the Body of Christ.

January 21: The Kerala Catholic Samaj had their annual get-together on the 21st of January. This year too the venue of their meeting was Dharmaram.



Mgr. Nolan with his Secretary in the assembly hall

Compared to the previous year the attendances was almost double. More than 800 persons participated in the Social. His Grace the Most Rev. Lourdeswamy joined the gathering at 12.30 p.m. In his paternal address he expressed his great appreciation for their attempt at identifying themselves with the people of the locality. He recalled the nomination of Messrs Kora Chandy and George Thekkekara as members of the Archdiocesan Committee: And he praised them for their unreserved cooperation in the common concerns of the archdiocese.



March 17: This was a much expected day- the closing of the academic year. Having thanked the good Lord for his blessings throughout the year we entered the summer holidays of the year.

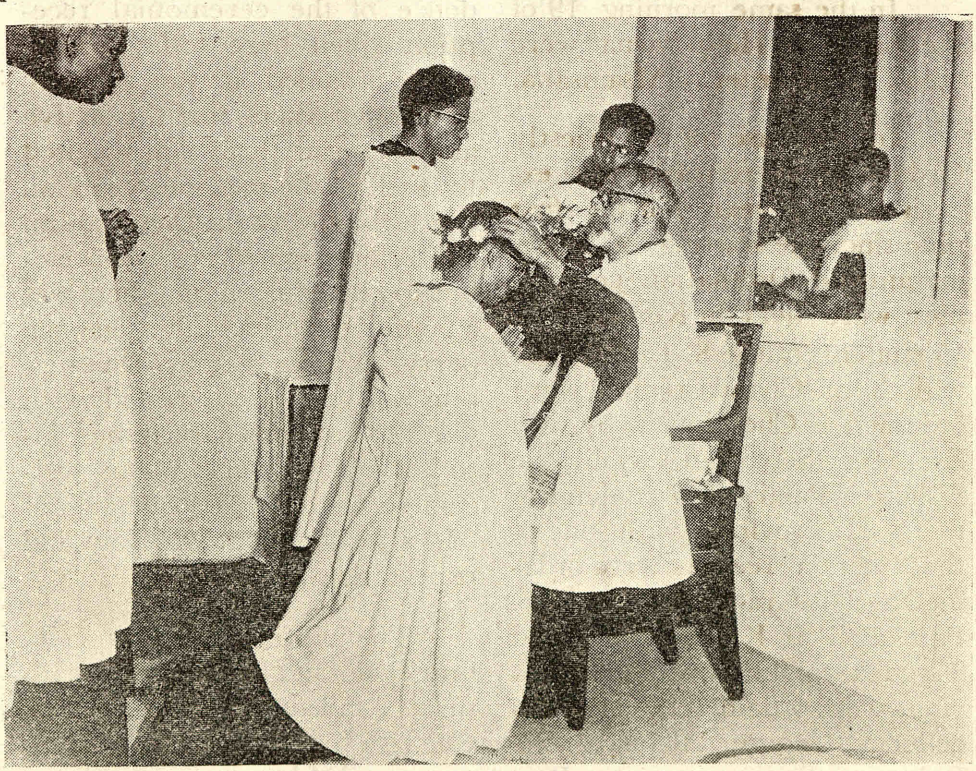
March 19: The thirty six student-fathers of the IV Theology, bid farewell to their *alma mater* this evening. On behalf of the College Rev. Cherian Kochupurakal congratulated them on their laudable achievements during the past seven years and thanked them for their personal efforts and hearty cooperation in promoting the better interests and well-being of the Institution.

Rev. Varghese John, representing the outgoing students, expressed their heart-felt thanks to one and all and requested our continued assistance through prayers for the success of their future ministry.

A spectacular as well as impressive Bible Service composed against the Indian background was conducted on this occasion.

May 15: May 15 witnessed the ordination of 19 students of II Theology to the grade of Heupdiacna. On the same day 32 students of the I Theology received the order of Qaroya. His Grace the Most Rev. Joseph Parekattil conferred the Orders.

May 16: Early in the morning the 55 students of I Philosophy made the renovation their vows in the presence of His Paternity the Very Rev. Fr. Prior General, and another group of 43 of the II Philosophy made their final profession. Their parents and relatives were present at the ceremony. Most



of the guests were staying here the previous night, lullabied by the melodious music of the mosquitoes. Their inconveniences were turned into overwhelming joy when they took part in the touching ceremony of their sons' total dedication for the service of the Almighty the next morning.

In the same morning 19 of the order of Heupdiacna were raised to the order of Msamsana.

In the case of the Priestly Ordination there was a new experiment this year. For the first time since the starting of Dharmaram the Ordination ceremonies were held in Kerala. The 15 students of the S. J. Province with 3 of Chanda region were ordained at Chethipuzha by His Excellency Sebastian Vayalil, the Bishop of Palai; the 7 students of the S. H. Province with one of the Chanda region were ordained by His Grace the Most Rev. Parekattil at Kalamassery; and 9 students of the Devamatha Provincc were ordained by His Excellency George Alappatt the Bishop of Trichur, at the Provincial House, Trichur.

The ceremonies at Trichur, both music and commentary, were broadcast over the TCR station of the AIR.

June 1. Another academic year has elapsed and we are on the threshold of a new. Having participated in the Divine Liturgy, the students and staff assembled in the auditorium for the *Lectio Brevis.*

June 2. Whatever the resplendence of the ceremonial reception given here today to the newly ordained, it was scarcely a compensation for the active and recurring thrill that we used to feel in the previous years on the 17th of May in Dharmaram. All of them joined in a concelebration in the morning. There was a family gathering and a garden party, in their honour. Dharmaram was further enthralled when the freshers were entertained into her fold. A very warm welcome was extended to a batch of 62, all brimming with joy and expectations.

The joint anniversary celebrations of the literary and cultural Academy, the Social Service (DSS) and the Mission Activities (DMA) were held on December 14, 1967. Rev. Sr. Ivons Marie, Principal Jyothi Nivas College and Vice Chairman of the all India Communication media Commission, presided over the functions. The

Secretaries presented the reports of the activities of the academic year 1967-68. The President, in her speech, stressed the need for people specialized in humanities and literature for imparting Christ to India. The students of Theology staged an English one-act-play "The Devil's Bridge" on the occasion.

On April 3, 1968 we put up a Bible exhibition in the parish hall of the S. H. Church. "God in lhe world" was the theme we selected. His Grace Mgr Lourdeswamy and many others who saw the exhibition, which lasted for about a week, expressed their great satisfaction. Many devout people found here matter for thought and meditation.

Pastoral Ministry

If *aggiornamento* adaptation to modernity, was the spirit of Vatican II, we find, it has echoed all through the conciliar decrees, perhaps more resoundingly in the decrees on Priest and priestly formation. This is because the council Fathers were well-aware of the momentous role to be played by the priests in the renewal of the entire Church. Taking into consideration the social and economic revolution of our age they found that the training of a priest must undergo a thorough change, namely, his training should be at once doctrinal and pastoral so much so that the theology he is taught should be a dynamic reflection of the Church both in its mission and nature and that it should exercise in the world at this moment of history. The decree on the priestly formation *Optatam totius* reads: "The pastoral which should thoroughly penetrate the entire training of Seminarians also requires that they be carefully instructed in those matters which have a special bearing on the sacred ministry, especially catechetics, preaching, liturgical worship, conferring of the sacraments, works of charity, the duty of seeking out the straying sheep and unbelievers, and other pastoral obligations ..... . Seminarians need to learn the art of exercising the apostolate not only in theory but also in practice. They have to be able to pursue their assignments both on their initiatives and in concert with others. Hence even during the course of their studies and also during holidays they should be introduced into pastoral practice by appropriate undertakings."

It is with these new insights of Vatican II in mind that the Seminaries all over the world, despite the severe criticism from many a conservative front, have slowly begun to adjust themselves to the pastoral needs of the day. And Dharmaram is no exception to this. This year's summer programme was one of the major steps she has undertaken to implement the idea of Vatican II.

That happy lot of being the first to go for the pastoral ministry fell on the first and second year theologians. Although they could not know earlier the exact details of the pastoral programme, they had, however, a vague idea of the ministry that would be required of them and so could prepare themselves for it sufficiently earlier. When the annual exams were over by the middle of March, they got some days for intense preparations, after which, towards the end of March, they left for Kerala, to set about joining the real pastoral work.

The pastoral programme lasted for about a month. For the sake of convenience and efficiency, it was in small groups of two to five that they worked. The main centres of their ministry were the parishes of Pullamkandam, Parpookara, Manimooly, Thalore, and Ampazhakad of the Diocese of Trichur, the parishes of Idapally, Kottamom and Neeliswaram of the Archdiocese of Ernakulam, the Kothamangalam parish and the new Chethipuzha parish. The main facets of the work were catechetics retreats, symposia, and socio-economic surveys. after a month's successful pastoral ministry, they returned to Dharmaram with abundance of experience. They felt themselves far more mature and responsible than before and they found their hearts really burning with zeal for souls. Let us listen to some of them.

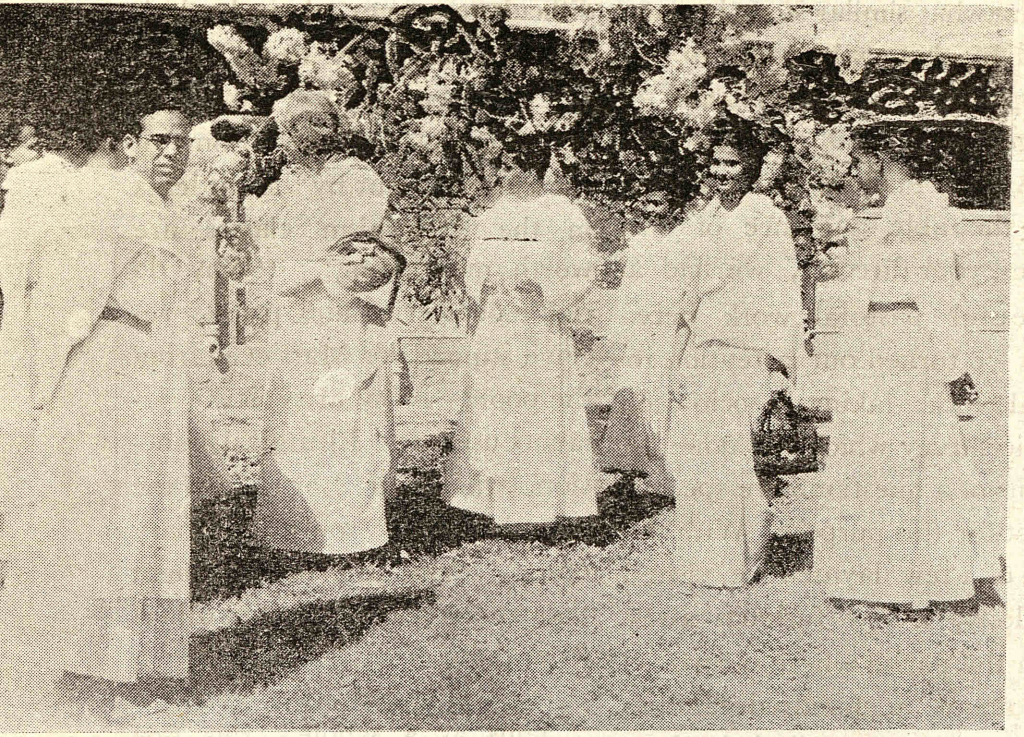
"Two of us went to Pallamkandam at the call of the pastor", writes a group, "and conducted an intense programme of house visiting, Bible service, sermons and dialogue in which many non-catholic Xtians also took active part. It was really a thrilling missionary experience and had we more days to spare, we could do much more useful apostolate among these simple but ignorant Christian folks. Another group writes: "We remember with great pleasure the useful days we spent at

Neeliswaram; thanks to the pre-planning and the spirit of dialogue evinced by Fr. Zeno, the Prior of the Monastery, who was one of the first fruits of Dharmaram, it proved to be one of the best camps where we could adjust our programme quite smoothly and successfully. The first few days we spent in visiting the parishioners in their houses, taking the census and sympathising with them in their many burning existential problems and noting down those who deserved any help, persuading children to Sunday school and intense courses in Catechism etc. We prepared a good number of youngsters for their first Communion; coached up the sodalists and Vincet De Paul Society members in some cultural programmes connected with their anniversary celebrations. After Easter we conducted an intensive course in Catechism at two centres, one at the parish of Kottamom and another at Neeliswaram. The parish priest of Kottamom, and other seminarians there, had been a great help and encouragement for our programmes. As a whole, we feel that our pastoral ministry was a real success and the rich experience we had during these days are of immense help to our future career."

The Group worked at Thalore has this to say: "An house survey was conducted among the two hundred or more Catholic families situated within the radius of two miles around the monastery, Thalore. Meanwhile we discussed with the people the possibility of introducing some small scale industries on a co-operative basis. We also held a symposium on "Liturgy and Christian life"—for the various pious associations attached to the monastery and helped present many colourful cultural programmes for the anniversary celebrations of these associations. Further, we gave coaching to a group of boys and girls in Church Music, which conducted the choir in a superb manner for the ordination ceremonies of Rev. Vincent Alappat and Co.

A somewhat similar story is narrated by those who went to the Idappally Parish. "Thanks to the good will and generosity of Fr. Antony Pudussery, the pastor and the able guidance of Fr. Moses, our director, we had a successful pastoral work here. First we turned our attention to social work, taking a socio economic survey which was done by means of a questionnaire specially set for this purpose. With the help of a few laymen we visited a colony, a few furlongs away from the parish where we picked out about a hundred families who were financially helped to thatch their houses which were in a dripping condition. We also conducted an intensive course of Catechism with a new scheme covering themes like the Old Covenant, its break, the new Covenant, and the establishment of the Church, the means of grace or Sacraments, the Bible and the documents of Vat. II etc." Those who taught Catechism had unique and interesting experiences. They always found it difficult to convey their bookish theology, not only to the children but even to the grown-ups in a digestible fashion. Some of the questions put by the students in the Catechism classes are worth mentioning: "Why do rich monasteries and priests receive stipend for Mass even from the poor? Why are costly vestments used for Liturgical function, when our Lord and the Apostles used only ordinary ones? Why do priests frequent theatres, while they forbid others from doing so?

Thus as a whole, this first practical attempt in the pastoral training of the Seminarians was a great success beyond expectation. It is always felt now-a-days in Seminaries that whatever be the subject taught it should have a pastoral orientation. And the experience stands to reason that the pastoral programmes like these will help the students themselves for the future priestly career in a better way than from mere books in the class rooms.



Father Proksch being welcomed to the College

Apostolate through fine arts

Rev. George Proksch S. V. D. of Bombay is a man who has dedicated his life for the spread of the kingdom of God through fine arts. On April 29, 1968 Dharmaram had the proud privilege of witnessing the dance programme of Rev. Proksch and of his company. The tuneful songs and heart-warming themes were really a source of inspiration for us all. Biblical themes such as creation, Salvation history, Magnificat and the life of Christ are the master pieces of that missionary who preaches the Gospel through music and dance.

Rev. Proksch is a German by birth but an Indian by culture. He has been in India for about 35 years. How to present christianity to India? This was the question he asked himself often in the biginning of his missionary life in India. He was speaking



Fr. Proksch with his party

about the media of communication even before Vatican II came fourth with its official document. "Music and Dance" this was the media he took up. He formed a group of young artists. We may recall here that four of our Students: Rev. Peter Muringathery, James Aerthayil, Isaac Mathew Peedikapara and John Karipai, were trainees in his school of arts for one year. At present he has a group of 32 young men and women in his school. Two of his students are studying Theology in the University of Munich where Karl Rahner is the professor of Christian *Weltanschauung*.

Proksch is busy now translating the book of pslams into music and dance. This book of psalms will be published shortly.

Inter-Seminary Dialogue

The third meeting of the ISSCD for the year 1967-68 was held in the United Theological College, Bangalore, on December 8, 1967. Rev. D. S. Amalolbhavadas, an inspired liturgical organizer of the Archdiocese was in the Chair. We discussed the important subject "Cultural adaptation in Liturgy". About 30 students from our College participated in this meeting. Besides most of the students of the UTC and some members of the staff of the same College, there were 60 students from the St. Peter's Seminary, 25 students from the Christujyoti College (Salesians), 13 students from the Franciscan Scholasticate, and 5 from the Redemptorist scholasticate. This was the last gathering of the year.

The task of convening the ISSCD for the academic year 1968-69 was entrusted with Rev. Gabriel OFM.

Dharmaram in the Literary field

Literature and arts are in their own way of great importance to the life of this Church (Vatican Council, Church in the modern world, n. 62). Dharmaram, staff as well as students, is fully aware of the might of the pen. This awareness has come in the form of literary contribution to periodicals. A general picture of the work done by the students alone will prove this. From November 1966 to July 1967 our students have contributed 134 articles, poems etc. to 15 journals. From the period between August 1967 and February 1968 151 articles were sent for publication to 21 journals, christian and non-christian. Most of these contributions are from neophytes in the field. Editors have come out with requests for our help and have often shown their high appreciation of our apostolate.

There is at present an office set up here for the coordination of the literary activities of students. This office has among its goals fostering of good relations with the editors of various periodicals, catholic and non-catholic, and meeting false propaganda by writing in the form of *letters to the Editor* and so on. Thus our students are preoccupied with revealing man's place in the history and in the world with illustrating his miseries and joys, his needs and struggles, and with forshadowing a better life for him.

Our Villa Records

The College closed on March 17. We had two months and a half for the recoupement of the spirit and refreshment of the body. Since a group of the students (I & II Theology) was called to Kerala for ministry, Fr. Rector had less of headache this year to organize our villa programmes.

Sangam: Not all the Deacons did go to the Villa camp. Some preferred to spend their holidays at Dharmaram itself. How many letters, do you think, they might have written during this time ! This was also one of the reasons why they kept back without enjoying the holidays. Sangam was the beautiful spot selected for the villa holidays. The credit goes to Rev. Cherian Kochupurakal. Fr. Bertram had no plan to spend his holidays with the sixteen Deacons, though he willingly joined them for a trip to Sangam. But having witnessed the spot jutting into cross lines of two Cauvery Rivers and lined by trees all around with the gentle breeze from the East and the mild current of waters runn'ng about, very similar to those of his native land, he decided to stay back. Sangam is a sacred spot of the Hindus where they scatter the ash-remains of the dead. It is also one of the tourist centres of India. Fishing, though we did not get anything, was our favourite hobby. Baths in the River were a novel experience to some. When the holidays ended (we could stay there only for two weeks) we were only sorry that the end came so soon. But we profitted by those days both mentally and physically.

Susaipalaya: The thirty five Students of the III Philosophy had a warm welcome at Susaipalaya in the evening of March 22. Almost the whole village headed by their pastor, Fr. Menacherry the spirit and life of the parish, was at the Bus stop to receive us as our special Bus stopped at Susaipalaya Church gate. This is a small village along the valleys of Nandi Hills, the famous tourist centre of Bangalore. An hour's walk is enough to reach the forest. We had not many servants with us to help us. What-

ever little work we had to do we divided among ourselves and this helped us greatly to sense a few concrete human situations and problems. Hunting expedition was one of the most interesting items of our villa days. Our entertainment programmes in the evenings attracted many of the local people, and they in their turn got up on the stage on certain days to entertain us. The boys joined us every day in the Rosary. The majority of the villagers are catholics, others Hindus. The catholics themselves are of two different classes and the tension between castes is greater with these men than that existed between the Jews and the Samaritans. The people are mostly illiterate, and the soil, though very fertile, mostly uncultivated. Brewing liquors is a private hobby of most of the people here. Our contacts with the people made us realize the need for constructive social work. The few days we spent in this village brought home to us that these are the fields about which our Lord said: "Harvest is great, but labourers are few."

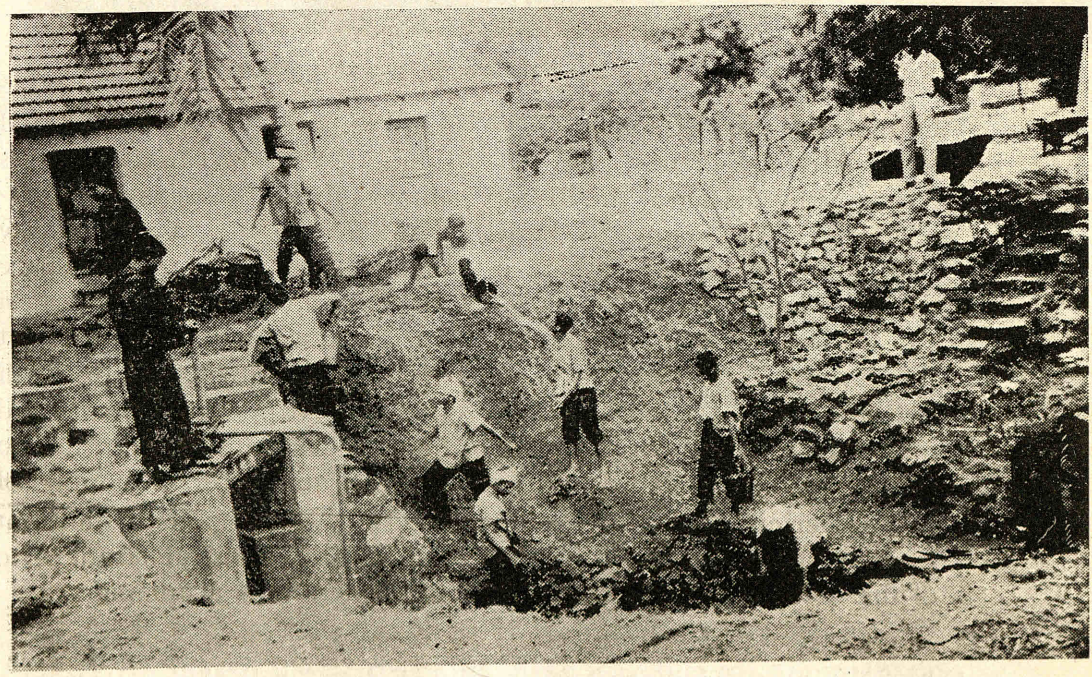
Sivasamudram: This was the place chosen for the 53 students of the II Philosophy. With our Prefect Fr. Philip we reached this lovely spot on the 21st. None was there to welcome us except a few starving children. They remained with us till late midnight helping us or trying to help us. Our continuous contacts with these people revealed several facts contrary to our first impressions. The people are very kind and noble and they appreciated our presence in their midst. The Cauvery River which surrounds our camp was dry in most parts; yet it presented excellent spots here and there where we could enjoy the cool waters and revive our experiences in swimming. Fishing was an interesting hobby for us.

All felt and experienced the villa days with a special social significance. Just one example: Narain was a very poor boy, crack-brained. He was mercilessly rejected by his parents and relatives from their company. A sympathetic and loving approach was enough to make him a normal man. We could do nothing more for him than to provide him with food, to get him clean clothes and to help him have a well-groomed appearance. Two weeks after our departure he requested the parish priest to give him baptism. The priest could not refuse him.

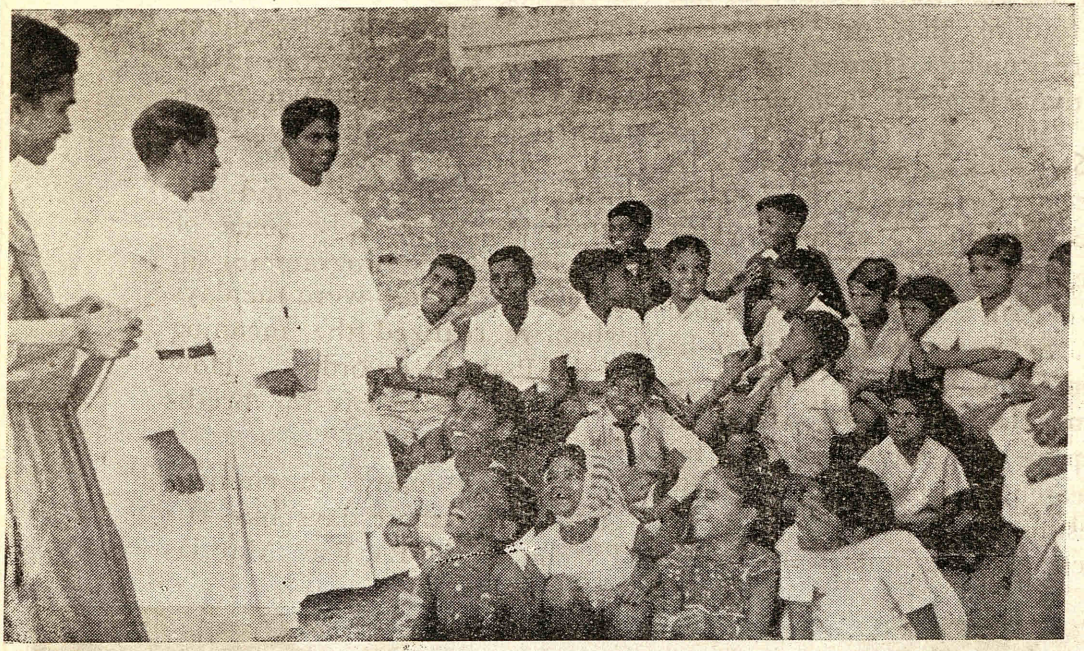
On this glad news we are inclined to think that the villa days were a unique chance for a collective witnessing in addition.

St. Paul's Carmel Eventide: A special Bus was ready early in the morning of March 25 to take the 55 Philosophy students to St. Paul's Carmel Eventide. Fr. Sylvester was holding his whistle of direction and in no time the Bus was packed to capacity. After a long but pleasent journey we reached the destination in the evening. In fact our programme at the new camp was an active one. For a few it was an occasion to exhibit their skill in cooking; for others to have a nodding acquaintance with such home sciences, Fishing, constructing roads and cleaning up the well and the compound were only some of our interesting programmes in the villa. These were the days when we realized the meaning of the Psalmist's words: "How sweet and pleasent is for brethren to live together."

We had many an eminent guest during these days like His Excellency the Rt. Rev. Mathias



We cleaned the slums



Make the Religion class interesting to children

Fernandez, the Bishop of Mysore, His Excellency the Rt. Rev. Antony Padiara, the Bishop of Ooty. We came to know that there were still others in the town and suburbs who actually wanted to come to us, but they were impeded for one reason or another. So we determined to meet them ourselves rather regularly. It was quite a new experience for many of us to understand the sad condition of the people around staying in small huts in thickly populated slums. We distributed sweets among them, arranged film-shows for them. We had a few blankets and old sandals to spare for them. Foregoing a part of our food, we managed to collect also some money for them. With these few experiences of the real human situations we returned to Dharmaram after a couple of weeks. We regained sufficient energy and physical strength to welcome a new academic year.

OLD STUDENTS' COLUMN

Rev. Joseph Thottil writes from Alleppey :

"... ....While I was working in the Meenachil Taluk I came across an enthusiastic young man. He is an accepted leader of the communist party in that locality, though he is not a member of the communist party nor an atheist himself. We had long discussions on the socio-economic conditions of the country and the contributions of the Church to solve the social problems facing the people at large. I found him very sincere and open. During our conversation he began narrating to me his whole history - the circumstances that led him to the communist camp. What surprised me most was that no priest in the last 15 years had met him nor even given him a smiling look. "Do you think Father," he asked me, "that an intelligent man can be a communist? If you priests are sincere and open and have a positive human approach and keep the normal social relations with the so called communists instead of stamping them as outcastes and down trodden, I believe there would not be communists in our country".

We went on like this for a long time. He is financially well off. He was constructing a new house. One evening he came to me requesting a crucifix. I gave one. The next day invited me to his new house. I accepted their invitation. Himself and his wife took me round the house to the various apartments of it. To my great surprise in one room in the heart of the ground floor I found the crucifix which I gave the other day encircled with a plain used Rosary. He asked me to be with him for the night prayers and we prayed together for

15 minutes. At the end of the prayers his wife read out a piece from the Holy Bible, the scene of Lazarus from John's Gospel and then sang a beautiful hymn. I came off thanking the good Lord. He does not go to Church. But he is the "just man" for the people of the locality. Is he a Christian? Shall he be saved? I leave this question to you Theologians and Moralists.

Here is another experience

I was tired of the day's work and I wanted to get to bed as soon as possible. At this unwanted moment I was woken up by some knocks at the door. I got up in a bit of resentment. The brother who knocked at the door informed me that a man wanted to see me immediately at the parlour. Having worn the habit I rushed to the parlour. A troubled man was waiting for me outside. I accompanied him for a small walk. It was about 11-30 p.m. He complimented me on my sermon as reported to him by some one else, and then poured out the long story of his life, in the course of which sometimes I noticed him in moments of hatred, at other times in tears. We walked for some time and then from the pockets of his under-wear he took out a rosary and told me, 'You see, Father, for the last 30 years I have never slept without praying at least a decade of the rosary'.

I was all sympathy for him and began cursing the social conditions which had brought him to this condition, and felt sad for the hypocricy of Christian leadership. He went away in peace. We do still have contacts. This man was a Minister in the communist cabinet of 1957 !