

The Second Vatican Council and Religious Freedom

COLUMBA RYAN, O.P.

One important issue that confronts the third Session of the Vatican Council is the question of religious freedom. With the recent publication of a number of the speeches made at the second Session¹ we are able to follow something of the lines along which the discussion is likely to proceed, and to understand something of the issues at stake, issues of great significance to the ecumenical movement. The matter arises in fact from the Schema on ecumenism with which the Council was concerned at the end of the second Session. That Schema comprised five chapters—on the principles of Catholic ecumenism, on the practical applications of ecumenism, on the separated Christians, on the Jews, and on religious liberty. Bishop Schmedt of Bruges introducing the fifth chapter expressed his hope that 'it will be possible to complete the discussion and the approbation of this very brief, but very important decree before the end of this second session'.² 'The whole world' he said 'is waiting for this decree. The voice of the Church on religious liberty is being waited for in universities, in national and international organisations, in Christian and non-Christian communities, in the newspapers and in public opinion—and it is being waited for with urgent expectation'.³ His hope was not in fact fulfilled, and though this was to many disappointing it is surely better that in so difficult and controverted a matter the final decisions should be seen to have emerged from slow and mature reflection rather than by what might have appeared a snap-decision reached under the pressure of a guillotine procedure.

The importance of the decree to the ecumenical movement was well put by Père Le Guillou, O.P., in a conference given at Rome at the time of the discussions. As reported by *Le Monde*⁴ he made four points: (i) religious unity will be the outcome of a convergence of reflections con-

¹*Council Speeches of Vatican II*, ed. by Y. Congar, O.P., Hans Küng, Daniel O'Hanlon, S.J. (Sheed and Ward). I shall refer to this as C.S.

²C.S., p. 167. ³*ibid.* ⁴*Le Monde*, 19 Nov. 1963.

ducted in all liberty; (ii) the Church should ensure the juridical status of such liberty; (iii) to preserve the ideal of the unity of men at the level of faith, involves getting beyond 'l'unité clericale du vrai' which rests on compulsion; (iv) the Church's affirmation of religious liberty will be the test of its ecumenical orientation and openness. So basic, indeed, to ecumenical procedure is religious liberty that there were those at the Council who pressed for changing the order of the schema's chapters, and putting the last chapter first.⁵

In point of fact there seems to be two rather different meanings of religious freedom to be encountered in the discussions to which the schema gave rise. The first is freedom for variety of expression within fundamental unity—a freedom which is the opposite of uniformity and over-centralised control. The second is the freedom of conscience in religious matters, even where such conscience must be regarded as in fact erroneous; this freedom is opposed to any kind of physical or moral compulsion to conform to truth and orthodoxy. Of course, these two freedoms are closely connected, but they are not quite the same thing. It would, for example, be possible to admit a large measure of freedom in the first sense, without allowing that men had a right and duty to follow an erroneous conscience. The chapter of the Schema on Religious Liberty appears to be concerned mainly with the second meaning, but since both measures of freedom are relevant to ecumenism and since the first meaning came under discussion in connection with the earlier chapters of the schema, this paper will be concerned with each meaning in succession.

I

In his opening address at the second Session, Pope Paul VI spoke of the four aims of the Council—the renewal of vigour in the Christian life, adaptation to today's needs, the promotion of unity between Christians, dialogue with all men (the four aims which are in fact enumerated in the opening sentence of the Constitution on the Liturgy). Speaking of the third point, he insisted on the room for variety within unity: 'The Church of Christ is one alone and therefore must be unique . . . This mystic and visible union cannot be attained except in identity of faith, and by participation in the same sacraments, and in the organic harmony of a single ecclesiastical direction, even though this allows for a great variety of verbal expressions, movements, lawful institutions and pre-

⁵e.g. Bishop Sergio Mendes Arceo, *C.S.*, p. 119.

ference with regard to modes of acting'.⁶ Several speakers at the Council gave vigorous development to this point. Bishop Elchinger, Coadjutor Bishop of Strasbourg, in the course of enumerating 'conditions without which . . . ecumenism will not flourish in our present Roman Catholic Church', commented:

Up to now, especially in the most recent period of our Latin Church, we have very frequently confused uniformity, both in liturgical rites and in theological doctrines which express revelation, with unity of faith, love and the worship of the Christian religion. Now the time has come, remembering the teaching of Paul the Apostle that there are varieties of graces (I Cor. 12, 4-11), to recognise, honour and cultivate the freedom of the children of God in the Church of Christ, whether it be freedom of individual persons or of communities.

In the Council Hall, my dear brothers, we have by now often experienced what a great diversity there is among us, not of language (for the only language has been Latin) but of opinions, of aspirations and desires, and, even more profoundly, of theological teachings. And yet we have experienced more than ever the deep unity of our faith, love and worship of God.

When we come to the differences between us and our separated brothers—differences not of faith in divine revelation but of legitimate theological doctrines in which this faith is expressed: not in the communion of brotherly love, but in legitimate ecclesiastical structures: not in baptism and the Eucharist and other sacraments of faith established by the Lord, but in rites and prayers which better promote their piety and the glory of God—our separated brothers have a strict right in the Lord that we, far from rejecting or ignoring these differences, should foster them in a spirit of brotherhood, admiration and harmonious zeal.⁷

One can hardly suppose that Bishop Elchinger, in the final paragraph, meant that all our existing differences are in fact at the secondary level at which they should be accepted and fostered, but only that where they are at this level they should not be confused with more fundamental differences, nor be excluded from the prospect of any ultimate unity. But the significant thing is that he should insist upon discriminating between matters of faith, and the theological doctrines in which faith is expressed. For this opens the way to the acceptance of a humility that we shall later find described by other speakers as not merely moral but doctrinal.

⁶C.S., p. 95. ⁷C.S., p. 146.

Cardinal Leger of Canada took up the same theme: 'My first suggestion concerns a more accurate presentation of the mark of unity of the Church. We all know that many Catholics and non-Catholics think the Catholic Church favours too monolithic a unity. And perhaps we could admit, actually, that the Church, especially in recent centuries, has cultivated an exaggerated uniformity in doctrine, in worship and in her general discipline. For frequently we have somewhat neglected certain legitimate demands of freedom and diversity within the bounds of unity.' After appealing to the witness of other Fathers, especially from missionary countries, to the need of 'a strong statement that unity in the Church of Christ can never stand in the way of legitimate liberty and diversity', he applied this to the ecumenical context:

The importance of such a statement for ecumenical activity is clear to see. For the separated Churches and communities also possess their traditions, their institutions, their spiritual heritage, and they have a legitimate desire to preserve them . . . We should not fail to explain more fully and clearly how in this concept perfect obedience is compatible with supreme freedom, true unity with great diversity'.⁸

Joseph Tawil, Patriarchal Vicar in Egypt, helped the understanding of such variety, by showing how it derived from the centuries old inheritance of 'positive traditions', from the 'different group psychologies which come from the structure of different communities' who have lived apart for centuries, and, in the case of Catholic Easterners, from different degrees of Latinization.⁹

Now, from the point of view of Catholic ecumenism, it must be clear that if we are to recognise the varieties that may be contributed to any eventually achieved unity, we must begin with a clearer recognition than hitherto of the positive values enshrined in separated communities. This has been difficult as long as we have concentrated, in more polemical times, on the breach of unity effected at the Reformation, and laid the blame for that breach entirely at the door of the Reformers. And it is a hopeful sign that voices were raised at the Council to remind the Fathers that not only have such positive values been preserved, but they have been fruitfully developed outside the Roman Church. The Pope himself made this acknowledgement: 'We devote ourselves with proper reverence to that religious heritage which we have received from the ancient past and which we all have in common, which our separated brethren

⁸C.S., p. 147. ⁹C.S., p. 128.

have preserved, and parts of which they have even refined and improved'.¹⁰

The schema, even as it stands, points to the elements which we have in common—in relation to the Oriental churches their venerable apostolic origins, in relation to the Reformed Churches their having the same faith and love in Christianity, the same cult of the Gospel, the presence of the Word of God ever living, the same missionary activity, the same Holy Spirit.¹¹ But there were speakers who asked for more than this. Thus the Italian Archbishop Pangrazio of Gorizia suggested: 'It is a good thing to list all those elements of the Church which by God's grace have been preserved in these communities and continue to produce saving effects. But to express my honest opinion, it seems to me that such a catalogue is too "quantitative" if I may use the expression . . . We should point to the centre, to which all these elements are related, and without which they cannot be explained. This bond and centre is Christ himself, whom all Christians acknowledge as Lord of the Church, whom the Christians of all communities unquestionably want to serve faithfully, and who graciously accomplishes wonderful things even in separated communities by his active presence through the Spirit . . .'¹²

Such acknowledgement of the gifts of the Spirit in other communities than Rome is of cardinal importance, though it is evidently not accepted by all the Fathers of the Council—witness the fighting speech of the American Bishop Leven who found it necessary to protest against those who 'again and again in this hall . . . continue to chastise us, as if any prelate who feels compelled by clear evidence to acknowledge the gifts of the Holy Spirit in persons of other ecclesiastical bodies, were denying the faith and giving grave scandal to the innocent'.¹³ It is only when one is ready to acknowledge the gifts of the Holy Spirit in separated communities that one may hope for what one speaker called 'a theology of

¹⁰This passage from the Pope's speech was cited by the Bishop of Arras (C.S., p. 131). In *Council Speeches* the text when it occurs in the Pope's address (C.S., p. 97), is translated, 'We look with reverence upon the true religious patrimony we share in common, which has been preserved and in part well developed among our separated brethren'. The translation given above appears in *Council Speeches* when it is quoted by the Bishop of Arras, and it seems more faithful to the Latin (A.A.S. 15 Nov. 1963, LV, p. 854): '*Deinde debita, quae par est, reverentia religiosam haereditatem prosequimur antiquitus acceptam omnibusque communem, quam Fratres sciuncti servaverunt et ex parte etiam bene excoluerunt*'. 'Excoluerunt' if not quite as strong as 'refined and improved' would seem to be stronger than the rather neutral expression 'well developed'.

¹¹*Le Monde*, 20 Nov. 1963. ¹²C.S., p. 125. ¹³C.S., p. 100.

division, i.e. the attempt to understand the occurrence of division, however lamentable in itself, as falling within the providential disposition of God; and such a theology seems immensely needed for the development of ecumenism.

'Is it not our task', asked Archbishop Flahiff of Winnipeg, 'to arrive at some understanding of the meaning and significance of divisions in the history of the Church . . . ? Since God, the Lord of all events of history, has allowed schisms we must search out their positive meaning . . . Schisms are brought about as a consequence of sin, sin in which the whole Christian people shares . . . [But] there is another more positive aspect of our divisions. Just as God, the Lord of mercy who always draws good from evil, graciously extended salvation to the Gentiles . . . in a similar way, through the divisions of the Churches he wants to give many gifts of the Holy Spirit to his people in the contemporary situation' and the speaker went on to explain that what he had in mind was that from the ecumenical movement, itself begotten of the necessities of schism, 'all the Churches profit immensely, are challenged to renewal, find new ways of acting in love, and come to a deeper understanding of the Gospel,¹⁴ A deeper understanding also, one might add, of the nature of the Church. In the same sense, Archbishop Pangrazio asked that more attention should be given to the mystery of the Church's history in terms of the light shed upon it by the typical history of the people of God in the Old Testament.¹⁵ Unless there is some recognition of the working of the Holy Spirit within separated communities it is difficult to work out any theology of division, for then such communities appear simply as signs of contradiction, and pure negations of God's will.

But there are those, as we have seen, who take a more positive view, recognising the positive values both at the origins of divisions, and in their continuing embodiments. 'In most cases', observed Bishop Blanchet, Rector of the Institut Catholique, 'either in reacting against existing defects or abuses, or because of personal experience, those at the beginning of the separation were men who saw a certain aspect of religious doctrine and Christian life so fully and acutely that they were in danger of neglecting or denying other aspects'.¹⁶ And Bishop Elchinger claimed, 'Now the time has come to recognise with greater respect that there is also a partial truth, in fact often a profound truth, in every doctrine taught by our separated brother, which we should profess along with him', and he quoted with approval Professor Cullmann's remark that 'Catholics often do not see in some denial or limitations which

¹⁴C.S., p. 122-123. ¹⁵C.S., p. 124. ¹⁶C.S., p. 138.

Protestants make, that there is a positive result, a "focusing of the faith on certain really fundamental truths of divine revelations", such as for instance personal responsibility in the assent of faith, or the importance of Sacred Scripture in the divine plan of revelation, or the freedom of the Spirit which produces the freedom of the children of God'. The Archbishop of Bhopal in India instanced as the present working of the Holy Spirit in separated communities the biblical movement amongst Protestants and the liturgical movement with the Orthodox, in which 'for the principal first fruits of renewal we are heavily indebted' to them;¹⁷ to say nothing, as Bishop Elchinger frankly avowed, of the pioneer work in ecumenism effected by Protestants at a time when in the Catholic Church it met 'more often than not, with exasperating obstruction'.¹⁸

All this is of course only one side of the picture. The speakers quoted represent only the more 'progressive' wing, and it would be a mistake to forget that conservative elements have also a positive role to play in the tension of forces from which the final decree will result. Nor should it be forgotten that the very exponents of these progressive views must always be understood to be speaking against the background of continuous Catholic teaching. Not one of them would wish to deny the Catholic claim to have maintained in the unity of the Catholic Church the fulness of Christian truth. The Archbishop of Bhopal explains what to those outside the Church may seem rather puzzling: 'It is right', he said, 'for the Catholic Church to say that she has received the fulness of truth and of the means of grace, but it seemed that from this the false conclusion was drawn that she was practically guiltless . . . It is altogether certain that only the Catholic Church has integrally preserved the deposit of faith; and in the presence of our separated brothers we humbly bear witness to this fact in the Lord. In no official document, indeed, never in the exercise of her ordinary teaching office has she denied any revealed truth or taught error. But when asked whether she has always kept the proper balance, whether she has explained everything appropriately, whether Catholic theology and spiritual teaching has always maintained the proper emphasis, an objective observer would have to answer that she has not'.¹⁹ And the Archbishop went on to plead for humility and a confession of shortcomings, total humility which should include 'what I will call intellectual humility, or even doctrinal humility'. The same plea was made by Cardinal Leger: 'The desire the Church has shown to confess her sins is very important. But now the Church, especially in our time,

¹⁷C.S., p. 142. ¹⁸C.S., p. 144. ¹⁹C.S., p. 141-142.

also needs intellectual humility. We frequently hear it said that the Catholic possesses the full truth revealed by Christ. This statement can be correctly understood, of course, if the proper distinctions are made. However I am afraid that for many, such a statement covers over our radical inability, while on this earth, completely and exhaustively to understand the truth revealed by Christ. Let us adopt the words of the Apostle: to us who are the least of all "he has granted of his grace the privilege of proclaiming the unfathomable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3, 8). Therefore the doctrine of the transcendence of God and his mysteries does not contradict the doctrine of infallibility. Indeed by reminding us of our weakness it keeps that doctrine within proper limits. Furthermore, this transcendence of God makes intellectual immobilism completely impossible for Christians'.²⁰ And he reminded his hearers of the Pope's use of St Augustine's dictum that the Christian is one who must always be seeking the things of God. The contrast between the preservation of the whole truth of Christ and the Church's realisation of it at any given time and in any given detail, which these speakers were calling attention to, has been treated more than once by Karl Rahner, who writes of 'truths in the Church which, although they are not indeed disputed in their explicit (*in thesi*) formulation, are being silenced to death by the fact that no one takes any notice of them any longer in the practice of their religious life'.²¹

To sum up, then, what we have so far seen: (1) there is room for a wide variety, a true religious freedom, within unity; (2) if this is to be achieved fully, and with the contribution of all Christian communities, it is necessary that we should recognise the positive values enshrined in Christian communities separated from us; (3) this is not incompatible with the Catholic claim to possession of the integral truth and means of salvation; but this claim must be advanced with humility, and a genuine recognition of where we have failed (and others may have succeeded better) in giving full realisation to this or that truth.

II

We have now to turn, rather more briefly, to the other meaning of religious freedom, the right to follow one's conscience in religious matters. This, as we have seen, is the subject of the fifth chapter of the schema. Bishop Schmedt, introducing the chapter to the Council, gave four reasons why the Council should proclaim such a right: because it is

²⁰C.S., p. 148. ²¹*Theological Investigations*, vol. II, p. 175.

a matter of truth; because religious freedom is menaced by the totalitarianisms of our world; because our pluralistic society needs directives for the co-existence of different religious groups; and to clear up a misunderstanding. The last point will serve to lead us to the heart of the matter. 'Many non-Catholics', said Bishop Schmedt, 'harbour an aversion from the Church, or at least suspect her of a kind of Machiavellianism, because we seem to demand the free exercise of religion when Catholics are in a minority in any nation, and at the same time refuse and deny the same religious liberty when Catholics are in the majority'.²² Not only does this suspicion exist, but it appears well enough founded, partly because of earlier papal pronouncements not always clearly understood, and still more because of express statements by some Catholic authors.

One example of a papal pronouncement of the kind meant may be taken from Pius IX's Encyclical *Quanta Cura* of 1867. The Pope there condemns 'that erroneous opinion which is especially injurious to the Catholic Church and the salvation of souls, called by our predecessor Gregory XVI *deliramentum*, namely that freedom of conscience and of cult is the proper right of each man'.²³ And the kind of Catholic statement which appears as a conclusion drawn from such teaching could be illustrated by the reported remark of one Conciliar Father in the debate on the ecumenical schema; he found it untimely, indeed bad, and complained: 'Proselytism increases. We must ask our separated brothers to cease all proselytism in Catholic countries, but insist on the Catholic Church's right to preach the gospel everywhere on earth'.²⁴ An even more explicit statement is to be found from the unlikely pen of Mgr Ronald Knox, who wrote that it is certain that the Catholic Government of a nation would claim the right to insist on Catholic education being universal, even though it would probably not, from reasons of prudence, exercise such a right; and further that such a government 'will not shrink even from repressive measures in order to perpetuate the secure domination of Catholic principles among their fellow-countrymen'.²⁵

²²C.S., p. 157.

²³Quoted by Bishop Schmedt, C.S., p. 163, from *A.A.S.* 3 (1867), p. 162.

²⁴Cardinal Arriba y Castro, according to *Le Monde*, 20 Nov. 1963.

²⁵R. A. Knox, *The Belief of Catholics* (1927), p. 241-242. This passage is quoted by Eric d'Arcy in *Conscience and its Right to Freedom* (Sheed and Ward), p. 240. Fr d'Arcy writes that Knox 'who was liable to consider that his lack of formal theological training counted against his own judgment' was persuaded (wrongly) that the view was an 'official' view . . . ; but that subsequently he came to regret having submitted to 'over-persuasion' and that it was withdrawn in later editions. Fr d'Arcy's book is a painstaking, if controvertible, enquiry into the whole question of the freedom of conscience.

The doctrine of the right to religious coercion is an all too old one in the history of Christendom, and even if it were never invoked in practice, it hangs like a sword of Damocles over those who may suffer from it. The important decision for the Council is whether the Church will once and for all declare not only that it will not wield that sword, but that it lays no claim to the right to wield it.

Now the question is by no means a simple one; it constitutes, in Bishop Schmedt's words, 'a most difficult problem'. Let us first very briefly indicate the difficulty.

Let us admit right from the beginning that a man's conscience is his immediate guide in conduct. By conscience, following the traditional theology of Catholics, we do not mean some mysterious intuitive faculty, but simply a man's responsible judgment that in a given situation he should do such and such or avoid such and such a line of conduct. This is not to say that a man is free to make up his own mind in any way he likes, at random. His conscience must be informed by the principles of divine or natural law, it must take into account in its reckoning the legitimate laws of men, whether they be those of the Church or the State; his conscience is not autonomous, it does not throw up its own laws at random. But it is the function of his conscience to bring such laws as he may recognise down to a practical and immediate application to the situation in which he finds himself. He has therefore a double responsibility—to inform himself about the general principles of right and wrong, and to assess his existential situation and determine whether and how this situation comes under this or that principle. No man may, or indeed can, escape this human responsibility. Whatever the temptation, he may not substitute for his own personal decision the authority of another, whether of the Church or State. And indeed the temptation is illusory, for even if he does apparently shirk his task, he is in effect making a decision, namely that it is his duty here and now to accept and implement the ruling of authority.

The conscience then is the immediate and inescapable guide to action; this is what we mean by the human condition of responsibility. And Catholic theology is absolutely agreed that a man has the obligation to follow his conscience. But supposing that in reaching his decision a man has made a mistake, whether in his recognition of principles, or in his assessment of the situation. Two questions arise: Is the obligation to follow such an erroneous conscience on all fours with that of a man to follow his conscience when it is in fact right? And, given an erroneous conscience, what is the attitude to be of those who know it to be

erroneous, and who may, in one way or another, be responsible for the welfare either of the man who entertains it, or of the society in which he lives?

Of these questions the first involves too many difficulties to be gone into here; and in some ways it remains an academic question, since *ex hypothesi* the man who has made such an erroneous decision remains unaware of his error, and the fact of his being in error cannot alter, for him, his line of conduct. But the second question is highly relevant and practical. Are we to say, of those who are in authority, that, since the man is in good faith and, as far as he himself is concerned, conceives an obligation to follow his conscience, they must therefore respect it; in short are they to allow not only that he has an obligation, but also a right to follow his conscience even in error?

Here there must evidently be some limitations, and there are in fact limitations which any society which is civilised and ordered maintains. To use Bishop Schmedt's words: 'If a human person carries out the dictates of his conscience by external acts, there is a danger of violating the rights and duties of another or of others. Since a man is a social being, and since in the human family men are subject to error and to sin, the conflict of rights and the conflict of duties cannot always be avoided. From this it is evident that the right and duty to manifest externally the dictate of conscience is not unlimited, but can be, at times must be, tempered and regulated for the common good'.²⁶ The whole problem lies in the question how, and within what limits, public authority is to carry out its duty, in the face of an erroneous conscience, to protect the rights and duties of others against whom it may offend. And in particular, in the context of religious belief, teaching and worship, the question is what latitude is to be allowed to those who one supposes to be in error.

Having thus indicated the difficulty of the question, let us see how, in the particular context of religious freedom, the sponsors of the schema attempt to meet it. They seek first to define exactly what religious freedom is. It is not a pretended right to consider the religious problem according to whim, nor as if there were no objective law by which in this matter the conscience should attempt to inform itself. Nor is it a right to claim equality for falsity with truth, nor to maintain that it does not matter that there should be some standard of truth. In other words it is not the claim that conscience is absolute, autonomous, independent of divine authority. But true religious liberty is on the positive side the right of the human person to the free exercise of religion according to

²⁶C.S., p. 160.

the dictates of his conscience; and on the negative side, immunity from all external force in his personal relations with God, which the conscience of man vindicates to himself. In other words, 'religious liberty implies human autonomy, not from within, but from without',²⁷ i.e. not from God, but from men. A man may not be compelled by any other men, or any institution, not even by the church itself, to confess or to teach a faith not freely accepted. And Bishop Schmedt puts the reason succinctly: 'What is the reason why non-Catholics can be forced by no one to admit the Catholic doctrine against their conscience? This reason is to be found in the very nature of the act of faith. For this act, on God's part, is a supernatural gift which the Holy Spirit most freely gives to whom and when He will; and on man's part it is and must be an assent which man freely gives to God'. And the Bishop went on to support his explanation of the schema by appeal to the teaching of Pope John's *Pacem in Terris*, in which, he said, there were especially developed these two points of doctrine: (1) by the law of nature, the human person has the right to the free exercise of religion in society according to the dictates of a sincere conscience, whether the conscience be true, or the captive either of error, or of inadequate knowledge of truth and of sacred things: (2) to this right corresponds the duty incumbent upon other men and the public authority to recognise and respect that right in such a way that the human person in society is kept immune from all coercion of any kind.²⁸

What then are we to make of the earlier papal pronouncements already mentioned? The answer given is that we must distinguish clearly between philosophical teachings, and the endeavours and institutions to which these teachings give rise. Or, more simply, we must distinguish between error, and the person who is, in good faith, in error. What those pronouncements were denouncing must be understood in the context in which they were delivered. It was not the personal freedom of individual consciences that was declared false, but the theories of the period according to which the human conscience as such is under no law but of its own making, and freedom of worship is based on religious indifference. What was being condemned was the autonomy of the human conscience from within, not its autonomy from without. And this is where the conclusions drawn from these papal pronouncements by some Catholics go wrong. To argue from the condemnation of a theory to the necessity of condemning, and coercing, persons who act upon such theories is illegitimate; as it is also to argue from the condemnation of

²⁷C.S., p. 158. ²⁸C.S., p. 162.

the interior autonomy of conscience to the rejection of its external autonomy.

The problem of religious liberty is only barely outlined in what we have said. That men should be free in their interior relations with God, and in their worship of Him, however erroneously they may interpret these obligations, appears clear; and to declare this formally perhaps would mark the final step in a freeing of the question from a politico-religious confusion that began with the Constantinian association of the Christian Church with secular power. But the practical problem of where to draw the limitations of this liberty when it extends to external manifestation (in public teaching and policy) which may disturb the security in faith and morals of the community at large has not, and perhaps never can be definitely solved. But enough may have been said to show at once the importance and the delicacy of the decisions confronting the Council.

Colour Bar or Community

REFLECTIONS ON RHODESIA

HENRY G. TOWNSEND, S.J.

The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland is dead. It was buried in January of this year, just ten years old. For its epitaph some would write 'A Great Experiment That Failed'; others, nearer the truth, 'The Unwanted Partnership.'

Economically the Federation was a great success. Each of the constituent territories—Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland—benefited much in its own way. Southern Rhodesia enjoyed a remarkable boom, years of extraordinary expansion in industry, commerce and immigrant population, the most striking memorial of which is the present skyline of Salisbury with its soaring buildings. In Northern Rhodesia too there was rapid development and the Copper Belt lived through years of fantastic prosperity. Even Nyasaland, the poor relation, experienced substantial if less spectacular gain. Now all that is over.