

associated with a scientific 'theory' dealing with matters infinitely more complex than simple heat-exchanges). Earlier biologists thought of evolution as progress in some real sense. It has been left to biologists of this century to look on evolution as no more than a special branch of physical science, subject always, in particular, to 'the second law of thermodynamics'. Ignorance of this law, it will be recalled, is regarded by C. P. Snow as a shortcoming in the 'literate' to be compared with frank illiteracy in the 'numerate'. The law has to do, of course, with the inevitable increase in entropy, or 'sameness' in respect of energy-levels, in any closed physical system. There may be arts-men today who were stimulated by Snow to look the matter up, but even in the days when it would have been hard to find non-scientists who could say anything very sensible about the 'second law', its implications were in fact well-understood by many playwrights and novelists. The scientists' message, based on this law, that man's future is ultimately of the bleakest kind (however enthusiastic might be an individual scientist's advice on how best to pass the time away before the species goes the way of others to degradation and annihilation), is surely at the root of much of the sick pessimism

to be seen in twentieth-century culture.

The book under review consists of a collection of Teilhard's articles and addresses written over a period of thirty-five years. They are devoted to the implications of a new scientific law, which he ultimately formulated (again with strict demonstration on the basis of observation) as the 'law of increasing complexity-consciousness'. In such a collection there is bound to be a certain amount of overlap and repetition; the quality varies, partly according to whether the article was published in his lifetime or not. But the total effect is very impressive: the law which bears his name will in time be found to be as valid as the 'second law', and as far more significant for man. Its implications will revolutionize our understanding of nature, and give new hope to a world that has suffered too much from earlier and less adequate understandings.

I predict that this work will establish Teilhard even more firmly in this country as a thinker and writer of genius. Those who found *The Phenomenon of Man* difficult to understand, will find here the essential meaning of the former work, expressed in a way that cannot fail both to excite the imagination and appeal to the intellect.

Bernard Towers

ECUMENICAL DIALOGUE AT HARVARD. The Roman Catholic – Protestant Colloquium, edited by Samuel H. Miller and G. Ernest Wright; *Harvard University Press and Oxford University Press, 40s.*

This Harvard Colloquium is an important exemplar of ecumenical dialogue. It took place in March 1963, between the first and second sessions of Vatican II and before the death of Pope John XXIII. It was essentially a meeting of academics, scholars and specialists, some one hundred and sixty of them, divided about equally between Protestants and Roman Catholics; among the

participants however were Greek Orthodox (including Dr Georges Florovsky) and Episcopalians. The public addresses were roughly divided between biblical studies, the nature of reform in the Church, word and sacrament in Protestant worship, and morality and the exercise of conscience in a pluralistic society.

The colloquium was divided into four seminars,

in which, for three mornings, the invited scholars explored many problems in biblical studies, in the definition of symbol and sacrament, in the reform of the Church and in morality and conscience. Three Stillman Lectures on the Unity of Christians, by Cardinal Bea, served as an introduction to the colloquium on the principles of ecumenism as they affect Roman Catholics. These lectures are of primary importance, in particular because they are highly authoritative in setting out the terms on which Roman Catholics can and do enter into ecumenical encounter with their separated brethren. The remaining papers and addresses include one by Fr Gregory Baum who, in 'Theological Reflections on the Second Vatican Council,' gave a survey of the field of ecumenism from the Catholic point of view.

There has been some polite but stringent criticism of late on the part of non-Catholic ecumenists, questioning whether it is possible for Catholics, on account of their unique presuppositions, to enter with reality into the ecumenical encounter as the World Council of Churches understands it. I believe such suspicions reflect a deep misunderstanding of Pope Paul VI's words, and, surprisingly, a verdict which is not really consonant with the basic ideas underlying the work of Faith and Order in the ecumenical movement. A patient study of this Harvard colloquium will convince anyone making it, that real ecumenical encounter, as opposed to a new technique for communicating one's own convictions, is not only possible but actually in

existence between Roman Catholics and their non-Catholic counterparts.

Nevertheless a considerable part of the book is stiff reading. This is so in the biblical section where Professor J. M. Robinson on *Sola Scriptura* and the hermeneutical principle as the formal constitutive of the Church, and Professor W. D. Davies' brilliant analysis of the Reformation understanding of the issue between Gospel and Law, must be read with close attention and with constant reference to the biblical text.

Stiffer still, for another reason, are the papers on morality and conscience, especially that of John L. Thomas, S.J. There is an unrelieved density of abstract reasoning and description in some of these papers, together with the use of words and even idioms to which we are unused here in England. The reader is compelled to stop and think out his own concrete illustrations to elucidate this array of closely worded principles, and it makes heavy going. Yet the material in the book is said (at least on the dust cover) to be both for initiated and uninitiated. The editor's introduction and the reports of the four seminars, have a much greater lucidity and vitality. One is inclined to advise readers to study these first, before embarking on the body of the book.

However, these criticisms should not convey the impression that the account as a whole does not succeed in showing the Harvard Colloquium as a quite excellent model for the similar meetings which ought before long to be characteristic of the English ecumenical scene.

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