

He is so eager to repudiate the notion that we can speak 'neutrally' of God, that God could be an object for investigation and intellection, that he leaves no room for any kind of unity between intellect and will, or knowledge and love, and so belittles the significance of vision and consent in both faith and morality.<sup>11</sup>

If this is the case then our task becomes very urgent. We must find some way of being religious which does not divide us, which does not allow us to simply exist within the dislocations of modern society, which is not an expression of our dislocation, but is actually an expression of who we truly are.

- 1 Rowan Williams, *The Truce of God*, Fount, 1983, p. 23.
- 2 Ibid. p. 23.
- 3 Don Cupitt, *Taking Leave of God*, SCM, 1980, p. 161.
- 4 Ibid. p. 155.
- 5 Don Cupitt, *The World to Come*, SCM, 1982, p. 6.
- 6 I am greatly indebted, at this point in the argument, to an important article by Rowan Williams— 'On Not Quite Agreeing with Don Cupitt' — which appeared in *Modern Theology*, Vol. 1, No. 1.
- 7 Cited by Williams.
- 8 Thomas Traherne, *Centuries of Meditations*, 1.41.
- 9 Nicholas Lash, *A Matter of Hope*, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1981, p. 182.
- 10 Williams, op. cit.
- 11 Ibid.

## Response

### Luis Bermejo SJ on Rome and reunion

The ecclesiology of Fr Bermejo SJ, as reported by Bede Griffiths in his article 'The Church of Rome and Reunion' in the September 1985 number of *New Blackfriars*, strikes me as wholly fanciful and as incompatible with any orthodox Catholic view of the nature of the Church. I am not a theologian, but as an historian by profession perhaps I might be permitted to allude to two considerations which go unremarked in the article. Perhaps Fr Bermejo discusses them in his book; I hope so, for they are crucial.

The fact is that the Fathers of the Church from St Clement of Rome and St Ignatius onwards (not to go back any earlier) regarded the Church as essentially One and Indivisible. Schisms which concerned disputed elections to the episcopate could be healed, but once a division became inveterate the schismatic body was held to be outside of the Church. This did not apply merely to groups which, like

the Gnostic sects, the Marcionites and the Montanists, held beliefs quite other than those of the Church, but also ‘churches’ like those of the Donatists and the Novatianists, which in doctrine, liturgy and structure resembled the Catholic Church of their time to a far greater extent than, say, the various Protestant groups resembled the Catholic Church in 1600 or even today. However we understand the nature of the continuing relationship between the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church today—and it has to be observed that the Orthodox, like us, insist that the Church is indivisible—it is surely illegitimate so to interpret the affirmation by the Second Vatican Council of the authenticity of the Tradition of the Eastern Orthodox Churches (and therefore its implicit acknowledgment that the schism between the Churches in communion with Rome and those of the Eastern Orthodox communion was never fully consummated) as to abolish visible unity of communion as one of the essential notes of the Church. Vatican II must, as Pope John Paul II has repeatedly maintained, be interpreted in the light of tradition and not employed to subvert it.

The second consideration concerns Fr Bermejo’s contention that ‘the only councils that can claim to be ecumenical in the full sense are the first seven ecumenical councils’. The Church of the East, sometimes called the Nestorian Church, rejects the third ecumenical council, Ephesus, which condemned Nestorius, and all subsequent councils, while the numerically much larger group of ‘Monophysite’ Churches, comprising the Coptic, Ethiopian, Armenian and Syrian Churches, reject Chalcedon, the fourth ecumenical council, and all succeeding ones. Since both the ‘Nestorians’ and ‘Monophysites’ are well represented in South India, this is the more curious, and I am at a loss to understand how Fr Bermejo could have failed to deal with this *problem*. We may count ourselves lucky, I suppose, that Arianism did not survive in some out of the way corner of the world, or else Nicaea I and Constantinople I, the first two ecumenical councils, would have to go as well.

There are further paradoxes in Fr Bermejo’s theology and inaccuracies in his history—the only council from which the Eastern Churches were ‘excluded’ was, in fact, Vatican II, since Orthodox episcopate was invited to both Trent (to which one Greek bishop came) and Vatican I, but declined to appear—but I leave these to others to discuss.

**Dr William Tighe**  
9 Margaret Street,  
Beaumaris, Isle of Anglesey  
Gwynedd LL58 8ND  
Great Britain

As I cannot lay claim to any high degree of theological sophistication I was the more surprised to find, in the September number of *New Blackfriars*, Dom Bede Griffiths' gloss of Fr Bermejo's book presented as some startling novelty. Several years have passed since the publication of Fr J Derek Holmes's *More Roman than Rome*; from which I learnt, without much surprise, that doubts were expressed from the first as to whether Vatican I was 'truly ecumenical, properly conducted or finally concluded'.

The query over 'truly ecumenical' is dealt with in Dom Bede's interesting article. As for 'properly conducted', Fr Holmes writes:

The special deputation *de fide* which was in charge of amendments to the *schemata* was not the neutral or mixed tribunal which it should and was expected to have been. Manning seems to have been largely, though not wholly, responsible for the disingenuous trickery by which inopportunist were deliberately excluded. Manning secured a block vote for or against a list of names chosen by himself and his supporters, and was reported as saying that heretics came to a Council to be heard and condemned, not to take part in formulating doctrine.

And on 'finally concluded': it is a well-known fact that the Council was brought to a premature end by the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war, and broke up before the proposed *Constitution on the Church*, of which the question of papal infallibility formed only one section, could be discussed and promulgated (the failure to define the limits of papal *jurisdiction* seems particularly disastrous).

To all of which Dom Bede's article adds a fourth query or objection: that concerning 'reception' by the whole Church. Can it be seriously denied that the 'critical reassessment of Vatican I' suggested by Fr Bermejo is not only needed but long overdue?

**Keith Mitchell**  
4 Cambridge Street  
Tunbridge Wells  
Kent, TN2 4SJ