

The discussion of the nature of the Catholic Church is closely bound up with the question of what God has appointed, how He works through His appointed means, and in what sense He is bound by His own appointment: the question in short of Authority and Validity. Almost every line in this pamphlet is evidence that the underlying foundations of these primary questions are not fully explored.

Again, Apostolic Succession, grace and its transmission are current terms both for ourselves and for Anglicans, but there is no security that we mean the same thing by them. There is much in this pamphlet to show, for example, that Bishop Headlam credits the Catholic Church with holding a theory of the transmission of grace by the laying on of hands which appears to involve the handing on of some kind of personal possession, and he remarks that this is not to be found either in the Patristic or Mediaeval period. Nor is it to be found in any other period, for Catholic Theology holds no such fantastic theory which, as the Bishop himself points out, is contrary to the true idea of a Sacrament.

All this goes to show how urgent the need is of theological contact between Catholics, Anglicans and Free Churchmen, in small groups meeting for the purpose of a radical examination of the theological presuppositions underlying their beliefs. A mistake has been made in the recent past of trying to collaborate without any attempt at this radical understanding of each other's positions, and such collaboration is now proving abortive, owing to the misconceptions to which it must of necessity give rise. There is a danger that the whole idea of collaboration will now be abandoned because of this false start. This small book affords ample evidence of the great need for true collaboration.

HENRY ST. JOHN, O.P.

CHURCH CONTINUITY AND UNITY. By H. Burn Murdoch. (Cambridge University Press; 15s.).

UNITY AND REUNION. A Bibliography. By H. R. T. Brandreth. (A. & C. Black; 12s. 6d.).

Dr. Burn Murdoch has written a most attractive plea for Christian unity. He bases his contention on the New Testament doctrine of the Church as sacramental, a reality possessing "a humanly perceptible one-ness". Moreover this "one-ness" is realised not only in the Apostolic Age, but is also clearly evident in the "continuous and unbroken life" of the Church in the world.

Much of the first part of the work is stimulating, but when Dr. Burn-Murdoch begins to deal with particular historical issues and theological problems, his argumentation is less happy and some of his premises seem ill-founded. To take two examples; his treatment of the origin and history of the episcopate is interesting, but far too little attention is given to the data which points to some form of "polyepiscopacy" in the first century. Certainly the in-

terpretation of this data is not easy, but it calls for vigorous treatment; nor can the issues raised by some current theories be by-passed as easily as they are in this book. To take our second example from a point of Theology, Dr. Burn Murdoch sees some contradiction in the attitude of the Catholic Church towards schismatics and those outside the Church, some of whom, he contends, are allowed to act as if they were "in" the Church. Much of this confusion would have been removed if the question had been studied, not from the point of view of disciplinary legislation, but in its dogmatic context. It is by Baptism that we are made members of the body of Christ (Decree for the Armenians quoted in Denziger 696 cf. Canon 87 in the Code). This is the point from which all theological speculation must commence. For a clear and adequate treatment of the subject we cannot do better than refer Dr. Burn Murdoch to the articles by Fr. Victor White, O.P., in the 1941 and 1942 volumes of **BLACKFRIARS**.

Mr. Brandreth's bibliography is most valuable and timely, though a few important works are omitted. On the Catholic side alone the present Pope's Encyclical *Orientalis Ecclesie* is not mentioned, and surely Dr. Dvornik's works on the relation of the East to Rome are far too important to be passed over. A study of the bibliography serves to re-inforce the reviewer's opinion that too much "Reunion" literature is ephemeral in character, concerned with personal viewpoints, and minor controversies. Real progress towards a united Christendom can only take place if Truth and Love, centreing on the person of Christ, directs all our efforts. This will involve a resolute sacrifice of self in the form of national and sectarian prejudice, and the ability to concentrate on the great theological issues at stake. The Catholic theologian or historian—and it is a work for qualified and approved experts—must turn his attention to the historic non-Catholic theologies with sympathy, and attempt to see how they express some element in the tradition of the Church. At the same time he must provide a clear and authoritative statement of Catholic doctrine on the points in question, pointing out its harmony with and criticism of Protestant doctrine. It would be uncharitable to deny understanding sympathy to those who are separated from us, but it would be equally so to obscure in any way the deposit of Faith. Nevertheless it is our conviction that many misunderstandings and even repugnances, can be removed by a careful examination of terminologies, by an analysis of concepts which will show how various thinkers have concentrated—often too exclusively—on different aspects of Scripture and tradition. Above all let all who call themselves Christians pray for the enlightenment of the Spirit, and the saving grace of God, that we who are baptised with one baptism, may show forth to the world clearly and unmistakably our unity under one Head, the Shepherd of souls, Jesus Christ.

IAN HISLOP, O.P.