

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Bermejo, Luis M.**

*Towards Christian Reunion: Vatican I, Obstacles and Opportunities.*  
Anand, India: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1984, pp. 316.

Pope Paul VI told the Secretariat for Christian Unity in 1967 that papacy constitutes the greatest obstacle to the reunion of the Christian Churches. The author elaborates on this greatest obstacle to unity, and on a possible way out, in the various chapters of this valuable book. The definition of Vatican I on the Papal jurisdictional primacy and on the Papal Infallibility has been consistently and firmly rejected by all the other Churches—Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant—as “a colossal lie”, “an error” and “a heresy”. Inside the Council a strong minority had been fighting tooth and nail, right up to the end, against such a definition. And today, one hundred years after the definition, Catholic theologians have started fresh discussions on Vatican I and on its definitions of Papal Primacy and Infallibility. Father Luis Bermejo, the Jesuit theologian from Pune, India, is one such theologian who writes boldly, lucidly and in a scholarly way raising serious questions against the truth and validity of the dogmas of Papal Primacy and Infallibility as defined by Vatican I.

The author points out that the First Vatican's twin dogmas of Papal Primacy and Papal Infallibility are ultimately based on the implicit dogma of *a priori* ‘Infallibility of the Ecumenical Council’ which he challenges in the light of contemporary historical and exegetical studies. The Paraclete texts, and Jesus' promise to be present in the Church, refer only to the divine guidance and protection in the Church through the ups and downs of history, and not to the so-called infallibility. The early Ecumenical Councils never claimed any *a priori* or automatic infallibility, but, according to the Fathers, the authenticity of their decrees and teachings derived from their agreement with the Apostolic Faith as attested in the Scriptures and Tradition. Unanimity in the Council was the hallmark of these decrees and teachings. This factual inaccuracy of the early Councils paved the way to the *de jure* infallibility of Ecumenical Councils, a conclusion unwarranted and often challenged by the Popes like John XXII and Clement VI in the 14th century. It was Cajetan and Bellarmine who turned this disputed question of conciliar infallibility into an article of faith during the Counter-Reformation period.