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On Questions of Ecclesiastical History: Historical Investigation

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ON QUESTIONS OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY

HISTORICAL INVESTIGATIONS. Edited by Roger Aubert. *Concilium: Theology in the Age of Renewal*. Vol. 17. New York: Paulist Press, 1966. 184 pp.

Unlike the previous church history volume in the *Concilium* series, the one under review possesses no unified theme running through any number of its articles. This heterogeneity in subject is paralleled by considerable heterogeneity in the articles both as to excellence and as to level of audience. Such articles as Heiko Oberman's survey of recent historical studies on 14th and 15th century religious thought, or Johannes Van Laarhoven's "The Origin of Luther's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms", though competent scholarship, are rather too technical and specialized to be of much interest to any but the specialist. On the other hand, Petzold's "The Nature of Orthodoxy and the Medieval Serbian Church", besides its extremely limited interest, is somewhat deficient from a scholarly point of view. It would seem that the editors of *Concilium* have not yet resolved the problem of what the precise orientation of their series should be.

Nonetheless, there are a number of articles which are of interest and value both to the general, educated reader, and to the professional scholar. The bibliographical survey of recent literature on the Modernist movement of the early twentieth century by Aubert will be of great help to the theologian or church historian. Of more general interest is the useful summary by Francis Dvornik of the tendencies and events which led up to the unfortunate schism between the Eastern and Western Church in 1054. The resultant schism between Catholics and Orthodox, now many centuries hardened, only recently experienced the beginnings of a thaw when Pope Paul and the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Athenagoras mutually revoked the sentences of excommunication of 1054 that their medieval predecessors had leveled against each other. These documents, together with the joint declaration of Paul and Athenagoras of 1965, are reproduced together with the article of Dvornik.

Among other competent and worthwhile articles, that of Fr. Victor Conzemius, "The Necessity of a Scientific Treatment of Contemporary Church History", deserves attention. Conzemius attempts to answer the objection of some professional historians against the legitimacy of "contemporary history". Admitting the dangers of it becoming mere scandal-mongering or panegyric, he argues cogently for the need, particularly for the Church, that the issues of the recent past (he refers particularly to the relation of the Church in Germany to the Nazi regime, but there are many other such issues) be given a scientific treatment based on documents, and not left to the propagandist or the journalist. Had there been more willingness to make

available the documents and let true historians treat honestly and scientifically the events of the Nazi era, such travesties of history as Hochhuth's *The Deputy* and the evil legends it created around the pontificate of Pius XII would never have been possible. Acknowledging the special difficulties offered by contemporary history, the Ciceronian motto proposed by Pope Leo XIII for the historian still needs to find its fulfillment in the writing of the history of the modern Church: "Let him not dare to speak any falsehood; let him not be afraid to speak any part of the truth." One who has real faith will not fear that the Church may be hurt by the truth, and the Church is greater than any ecclesiastical official.

In brief, though this Volume of *Concilium* contains much of interest and of value, there is still considerable need for the editors to define for themselves more precisely the purpose of the series and the audience for which it is intended.

JOHN N. SCHUMACHER, S.J.

HISTORY IN AN ECUMENICAL PERSPECTIVE

ISLAND UNDER THE CROSS. By Peter G. Gowing, Th.D. Manila: National Council of Churches in the Philippines, 1967. xvi, 286 pp.

The celebration of the fourth centenary of the Christianization of the Philippines in 1965 and the various historical essays occasioned by the celebration, called attention to the fact that there is still no comprehensive history of the Church in the Philippines. The book under review, though by no means the "comprehensive and scholarly survey of Christianity in the Philippines" its publishers (not the author) advertise it to be, is a praiseworthy attempt to do something about this lack. Dr. Gowing, Professor of Church History at the Divinity School of Silliman University, modestly presents his work "as a kind of 'first aid'" hoping to fill the need until a definitive history can appear. The author notes that his work is based almost wholly on secondary sources, and these only in English. It is in the light of the limited purpose of the author that the book should be judged.

A second characteristic of the book is that it consciously aims at being an "ecumenical history", "a history which acknowledges fairly the witness and contribution of the many Christian bodies which have been at work in the Islands." The total lack up to the present time of such an ecumenical history, surely something demanded in the present age, is even more evident than the inadequacy of what historical writing there has been on the Church in the Philippines. In the light of Vatican II, it is high time that Roman Catholic writers