

lending nor ear to those who cry 'peace, peace' when there is no peace." (p. 32.) Perhaps the Catholic "Non possumus" towards some contemporary reunion movements has had no more striking vindication than from this Calvinist.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

DISCIPLINARY DECREES OF THE GENERAL COUNCILS. H. J. Schroeder, O.P. (B. Herder Book Co.; 25s.)

The General Councils of the Church are only twenty in number. Eighteen of these are here dealt with, and all these were held before the great European revolt from the Church in the sixteenth century. To one not well versed in ecclesiastical literature it therefore comes as a shock to be told that the results of these Councils cannot be obtained in any one volume, or any ten volumes for the matter of that. Until recent years they could be secured secondhand, and at a fabulous price, in the vast tomes of Labbe-Mansi. Since 1900 Père Lequercq has translated into French and augmented the nine volumes of Bishop Hefele in fourteen 4to. volumes, totally altogether 11,500 pages. Father Schroeder has confined his work to one 4to. of 669 pages. From a merely material point of view we can see how much he has put us in his debt.

But there is a qualification to be made; the volume under review is confined to the disciplinary decrees of the Councils, ignoring those on dogmatic questions. Yet we should indeed be ungrateful did we complain. Father Schroeder has done a sufficient service as it is; perhaps some other scholar will be found diligent enough to do the dogmatic part as he has done the canonical one. Had he not gone to the pains of writing up the historical background of each Council he would have found space and to spare for the inclusion of the doctrinal decrees, but he decided this background was necessary and I cannot but agree with him. "For, after all, the full scope and import of a conciliar decision, whether of a dogmatic or disciplinary nature, can be grasped only when studied in the light of the conditions and forces that produced it."

The plan of the work is simple. First we have the history in brief of each Council, then the text of each canon or decree, followed by a commentary. At the end of the volume are given the canons or decrees, 401 in number, in their original language, Greek or Latin. Some students will probably wish that the decrees in their original language were placed in the body of the work, immediately before the author's translation of each. At times the translation appears cumbersome and perhaps even

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crude, but this would seem to be due to the translator's desire to get as close as possible to the exact meaning and value of each decree. Free translations in matters of Canon Law and discipline are not welcomed by a student. Father Schroeder recognizes this when he says in his Introduction: "Decrees are not always easy to translate and to interpret. That I have everywhere succeeded in doing so correctly, is a claim which I am not conceited enough to make." Nevertheless he is to be congratulated on what, as far as a reviewer can judge without testing anything like the whole work, seems a very successful achievement.

It would be a mistake to think of General Councils as assembled only when the Faith was in question, six of them dealt only with some crisis threatening the Church from schism, lay encroachments on ecclesiastical rights, Moslem invasions, and abuses in Christian life. But it is true to say that every General Council dealt with matters of discipline, and it is chiefly on this account that the present work of Father Schroeder is so welcome. Some of these decrees are well known, some are of archaeological interest. As examples of the latter we may instance the regulations concerning clerical dress. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) forbade ecclesiastics to wear "red or green garments or curiously sewed together gloves, or beak-shaped shoes." A century later the Council of Vienne (1311) prohibited the use of "red or green shoes in public." After the lapse of another hundred years the Council of Constance (1415) found it necessary to suppress the use "of gloves extending to the elbows," worn even by prelates, and "long, sumptuous garments separated at the back and sides and adorned with furs." Few if any abuses escaped the notice of these Councils. The recitation of the divine office with due decorum, insistence on the necessary pauses to be made in the middle of each verse of the psalm, the suppression of laughter in choir by canons and chaplains, the presentation and examination of the accounts of money-lenders are all found in the decrees of Basle and Vienne, also the discontent of some bishops with the poor food provided for them when visiting Cistercian monasteries. The Third Lateran Council (1179) deserved the gratitude of all charitably disposed persons by providing that groups of lepers should have their own churches and priests to administer to them.

Very interesting is the comment by Father Schroeder on the celebrated canon of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), *Omnis utriusque sexus*, commanding all who had attained the use of reason to "confess all their sins at least once a year to their own parish priest. (proprio sacerdoti.)" "What the Council required" he says, "was confession at least once a year to the *parochus proprius*. No matter how often the faithful confessed to other priests during the year, once a year at least, unless they have the

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permission of their own pastor to go to another, they must go to their own parish priest. This is the *raison d'être* of the decree. By this action the Council established no new rights and imposed no new obligations, but merely gave ecumenical sanction to, or made universal, a discipline already in existence; being prompted thereto by the fact that that discipline had in some measure, and under certain influences, fallen into desuetude." This legislation is now obsolete as regards confessing to any particular priest—Catholics are free to make their confessions, even the annual one, to any priest approved by the bishop as a confessor. The obligation of making the annual confession of course remains.

From these few quotations some idea of the interest of the book and its usefulness may perhaps be gathered. Father Schroeder has placed ecclesiastical students under a debt of gratitude.

WALTER GUMBLEY, O.P.

SORROW BUILT A BRIDGE. By Katherine Burton. (Longmans; 7s. 6d.)

Few modern biographies can offer so varied an appeal as this history of the life and labours of Nathaniel Hawthorne's second daughter, Rose, known in later life as Mother Mary Alphonsa, O.S.D. There are those, for instance, whose interest in literary history will respond to the vivid re-incarnation of nineteenth century writers, like Hawthorne himself, as well as Emerson, Thoreau, Longfellow and the Brownings, friends of the family during Rose's early years. There are others who will find their attraction in the gradual, almost inevitable, conversion of this daughter of New England Calvinism to the Catholic Faith. Those, again, who can appreciate a work of art will be grateful to the author for her simplicity and restraint which has enabled her to use with true dramatic effect, shorn of heroics, the splendid material at her disposal. Social workers, and particularly those in the Catholic ranks, will find a practical object-lesson of Christ-like charity exercised in the most repellent circumstances; whilst Tertiaries, and others directly or indirectly concerned with the many-sided apostolate of St. Dominic's Order, will rejoice to have this fitting memorial of a holy and model Dominican Tertiary. But there is no one, unless he retain no spark of humanity, who could fail to be moved profoundly by the simple recital of this heroic woman's almost incredible work, especially in her first lonely efforts, for the abandoned and unspeakably horrible cancer cases amongst the destitute of New York.

The character of Rose Hawthorne, from her earliest years, is finely and sympathetically drawn and the difficulties of her