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Eccelesiology: The Catholic Church

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Land of the Morning will do no harm to the American Protestants to which it seems to be addressed. They will enjoy it and will quite likely be moved, as the author wishes, to a love of the Philippines and of the Filipino people. Except in the points to which we have taken exception above, the book will give them a fairly accurate picture of the places visited by Mrs. Stevenson. The book will likewise do no harm to readers otherwise acquainted with the Philippines, but it will scarcely add anything to their knowledge of the country. It might possibly be the remote cause of some slight damage to Catholicism in the Philippines, in that it will motivate American Protestants to make further financial contributions to Protestant endeavour in this country. Mrs. Stevenson agrees with somebody's observation that in the Philippines "Protestantism and happiness go hand in hand." She is even inclined to think that one "can spot a Protestant by his happy look." Frankly, the present reviewer has not been able to spot them by that characteristic. Strangely enough, the author praises the Philippines as "the only Christian nation in the Orient"; she appears to have found it a friendly, hospitable, happy country, its people "a very wonderful people, both loving and lovable." A little reflection might lead her to discover the explanation of these pleasing traits. Surely she can not believe that her 600,000 Protestants have left these marks upon a nation of 20,000,000 souls?

JAMES J. MEANY

ECCLESIOLOGY

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. By George Vromant. C.I.C.M. Introduction by the Most Reverend Lino Gonzaga, D.D. Baguio. Catholic School Press. 1955. Pp. ii, 86.

As Bishop Gonzaga, the Chairman of the Episcopal Commission on Education and Religious Instruction, writes in a brief but well-conceived introduction to this book "...it will add another splendid service to the long list of offices which its author has performed for the cause of Christ and His Church in this country." That long list contains such works as Father Vromant's scholarly *Jus Missionariorum* and the several volumes

which comprise a course in religion for students of the higher grades. In fact this volume is an expansion of one section in the first in the series, namely *Creed and Apologetics*. Some of the matter running between pages 170 and 223 of that work is taken over verbatim into this new and more thorough study.

The first part, treating of the Church as the kingdom of God on earth, is excellent. In addition to a clear presentation of such truths as the visibility and indefectibility of the Church and a brief treatment of the great Petrine texts, we find an excellent description of the papal election and conclave, a good account of the major events surrounding the Lateran Concordat and a neat summary of Church government. The last point includes an outline of the Roman congregations and a few remarks on the diplomatic service of the Church.

The greater thoroughness over the treatment in *Creed and Apologetics* is especially noted in Part II which is the best of the book. We have here an excellent justification of the Church as a perfect society with its own special domain independent of and superior to the State. The concrete corollaries of this dogmatic truth are clearly drawn and pointedly stated. The rights of the Church are established and well defended against the secularist objections current today. The relation of the Church to the family and the Christian education of youth is beautifully portrayed, with a constant dependence on Papal teaching, especially that of Pius XI. There is also a brief and illuminating description of the *privilegium canonis*, the *privilegium fori* and clerical immunity from military service.

The very vexed question of the relation between Church and State is handled well. Since the baptised person is a citizen of two cities, the Church and the State, naturally his duties and rights overlap in such a way that complete separation of the two perfect societies is impossible in the concrete. Their mutual cooperation in a complex world which finds society pluralistic and not monistic is open to many difficult questions. Father Vromant follows the guide of most theological manuals in applying principles which he distributes variously depending on whether the state in question is Catholic, Christian or non-Christian. He defends an obligation of the State as such to offer public worship to God which is not universally admitted by Catholic theologians. However, his opinions are sound and solid and can be followed in practice.

This second section is the best and most thorough part of the study. We regret that Part III, the study of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ, is not as well done as the juridical study. It suffers badly by comparison. Moreover, in our times, it would seem that Papal statements are more insistent on the necessity of developing the doctrine of the Mystical Body rather than that of the juridical hierarchy. The threat from communism which is an attack on the hierarchical nature of the Church can be met successfully only by a more generous participation in the life of the Mystical Christ. The lack of emphasis on this point of our present Pontiff's teaching is one defect which needs to be mentioned here.

Other points which might be improved or corrected in future editions are rather small. In the graphic map (p. 49) presenting various denominations we might note that the Waldensians are still very much alive in Italy. The World Council of Churches might be included on page 39. In treating of Peter's successor no mention is made of the Great Western Schism during which even Saints were confused as to who was Peter's legitimate successor.

A final corection of some importance revolves around what might seem like a contradiction. On pages 47-48 it is stated that the Church can achieve her purpose which is spiritual without any territory of its own, whereas earlier in the section proving the Papacy's independence of any civil authority it is concluded that "the freedom of the Church is guaranteed only by a free Pope in a free territory." A student reading these two statements would be perplexed. Must the Church have territory of its own?

But the reader's few perplexities will not overshadow the clear knowledge and profound love of the Church which Father Vromant's book should engender. The Filipino reader will find here some excellent examples culled from life in the Philippines with which the writer is so familiar. His work should continue to bear fruit for the Mystical Christ in the Philippines.

JAMES T. GRIFFIN