

En resumen, una excelente obra que debe servir de modelo para que pronto poseamos otras similares, único modo de conocer y utilizar los fondos documentales españoles.

ALBERTO DE LA HERA

*Die Christentumsgesellschaft in der Zeit der Aufklärung und der Beginnenden Erweckung.* Texte aux Briefen, Protokollen und Publikationen. Ausgewählt und kommentiert von Ernst Staehelin, Basel, Fr. Reinhardt Verlag, 1970 (Theologische Zeitschrift, Sonderband 2), VIII and 582 pages.

Professor Staehelin, Basel, is known to theologians above all through his valuable anthology in 7 volumes, entitled "Die Verkündigung des Reiches Gottes in der Kirche Jesu Christi". The work under review is also a collection of texts, though devoted to a much more limited subject than the former, viz. to a particular aspect of the Evangelical — pietistic movement in the German — speaking countries around the year 1800. It is thus the question of an interesting, though complex phase in European Church history, characterized not least by many societies for religious, missionary and social purposes.

"The German Society for the promotion of pure doctrine and true godliness" was founded in 1779 and soon got branches in all the parts of the German-speaking countries. The bulk of the present volume (pp. 95-523) consists of letters, minutes and publications from that period of the Society's history, which more or less was dominated by the German pastor Johann August Urlsperger. In the 1. chapter (pp. 3-13) Staehelin presents the most important dates and events in the pre-history and history of the Society up to that day in 1808, when Christian Friedrich Spittler became the secretary of the Society. In the 2. chapter (pp. 17-83) the correspondents and other persons mentioned in the documents are shortly presented. Indexes of persons and places conclude the volume.

Staehelin thus offers much material for further studies of the Society, its works and ideas, but he has abstained from interpreting himself the material he has collected. Some words in the short preface indicate, however, the estimation of the author. It is clear, he says, that the piety which animated the Society, despite the stress laid on "pure doctrine" and "true godliness", failed to present the full biblical message and even contained "questionable elements". Nevertheless, he adds, it should be recognised, that in the Society one fought in an earnest way, without being at all influenced by the tendencies of the day ("unbeeinflusst von allen Zeitströmungen"), to fulfil a pure Christian existence (p. VIII).

This statement, of course, raises more problems than it solves. Not only is it true, that in the light of historical research most movements in the Christian history have failed to present the *full* Christian message. It is equally true, that most movements if not all have indeed, for better or for worse, been influenced by the ideas of their time, and in many cases even by those very ideas which they were intended to combat. However, it is only through a thorough examination of the vast material

presented by Staehelin that in would be possible to lay down in what way and to what extent this is true also of our Society. Already a cursory study of the work before us shows clearly, that the fight of the Society against the enlightened "neology" was conducted in a spirit sharing many characteristics of the age. So, to mention but one feature, the very importance laid on organizing societies over and above the visible church shows on, the one side, that the visible church was considered as nothing but a coming together of likeminded — but not necessarily like-believing — men, and, on the other side, that the church as the body of Christ was thought to be a purely inward entity.

The anthology therefore has value not only for the study of this particular Society but also for the study of a far wider movement of religious feeling, thought and practice.

ALF HÄRDELIN

Roger AUBERT, *Vaticano I*. Vitoria, Ed. Eset., 1970, 371 pp.

La clarificación operada por el Concilio Vaticano II en la comprensión del ser y de la acción de la Iglesia —quizá fuera más exacto decir en el ser y en la acción de los cristianos— está teniendo —y tendrá más aún— muy beneficiosas consecuencias en el dominio de la Historia de la Iglesia.

Por lo pronto, ha permitido arrumbar formas periclitadas e insuficientes de tratar estos temas. Tal es el caso de la historia apologética que, si parcialmente justificada en sus orígenes y casi siempre poseída de una excelente buena voluntad, no es menos cierto que acabó por producir —por lejos que esta consecuencia estuviera del ánimo de sus autores— reprobación y despego, tanto en el campo de la historia civil como en los espíritus más finos que cultivaban la historia eclesiástica.

La verdad histórica, referida a la Iglesia, sólo puede escandalizar a los pusilánimes. Es cierto que no hay que olvidar la virtud reguladora que es la prudencia. Ni tampoco la acción de un Espíritu que traspasa, configura y en muchos casos precede a los tiempos, roturándolos. Pero por lo mismo que la Iglesia es realidad encarnada, viva, que se realiza en la Historia como en su ámbito propio, resulta absolutamente necesario proceder a su estudio, sin olvidar las cautelas apuntadas, con los métodos históricos ya bien comprobados de una disciplina científica.

Es la obra *Vaticano I* del canónigo R. Aubert la que ha actualizado estas simples y generales reflexiones. Conocemos de antiguo la obra del profesor de Lovaina. Hemos tratado siempre de seguir con interesada atención su abundante producción científica. Quizá por esto podemos decir que no nos sorprende la calidad de su estudio sobre el Concilio Vaticano I que hoy nos ofrece Editorial Eset, de Vitoria. Falta de sorpresa en un doble sentido: en primer término, porque el canónigo Aubert lleva ya años dedicado a la investigación histórica de ese período clave de la Historia contemporánea de la Iglesia que se desarrolla en torno a 1870. Y en segundo término, porque la ponderación de R. Aubert hacía esperar lógicamente de él una obra como la que es objeto de este