

/88/ p 87 'We have become aware of the historical conditioning of the documents of the magisterium itself ~~and~~ -- with regard to language, mental categories, a framework of concerns affecting the whole approach to certain questions. An entire historical hermeneutic is called for in relation to conciliar documents, and to those of the ordinary magisterium, popes and others in authority. We should need a philological, historical, and canonical commentary on Denzinger. Nothing less could restore the exact meaning and force of the texts. Pius IX's Syllabus is only honestly to be understood in terms of the historical, and in large part the Italian, context in which it was written; the documents referred to in this list are full of allusions to the social and political scene in Europe.'

p 88 '... the Church to be credible, trustworthy.... should get rid of ~~many of its~~ numerous fictions which clutter it, and lift taboos which have fallen into disuse and are anyway unacceptable to intelligent people.'

'Thanks to history we take proper stock of things, we avoid the mistake of taking for "tradition" that which is only recent and which has altered more than once in the course of time.'

p 89 'Speaking quite generally, H. I. Marrou has pointed to the cathartic value of historical awareness as a liberation from the burden of the past. For centuries with inadequate knowledge both of history and of the /90/ diversity of local situations, people have judged and anathematized each other without a thought for the validity of anyone else's point of view.'

'It is my own personal experience that every time (or practically every time) that I have gone back to the original facts and documents I have discovered something different from what I had been led to believe.'

p 94 'Not only is the Word of God (gesta et dicta) in itself possessed of infinite depth, it is above all offered to men at many different times ~~and~~ and places, experiences, problems, and civilizations. Human history with its perpetual newness and undisclosed future, on the one hand ceaselessly demands a response to questions still unknown, and on the other hand brings with it means of expression which had not been invented previously. History, in the sense of that which confronts what has not yet come to pass,

becomes in this way part of the building up of that future of Christ which is the life of the people of God (cf p 93). The people of God receives from it "the very conditions of its witness" and "the means to give its message its relevance in God's present" (Chenu). This, if we get past the rather timid terminology used, is the meaning of article 44 in Gaudium et spes (cf art 58 #2) and of the idea of "signs of the times".'

Roger Aubert, "Church History as an Indispensable Key to Interpreting the Decisions of the Magisterium" pp 97 -

C 67 1971 History: Self-Understanding of the Church

Emile Poulat, "History and the Church: A Mutual View"

p 17 'The best thing that can happen to a neatly turned formula is for it to enter the public domain and gain the sort of currency there that cuts it off completely from its original function.'

'Representing the history of the Church as the Church's self-understanding is to use one of these synthetic formulas which can lead astray as well as stimulate thought, and which tend /18/ to attract a whole range of interpretations. To intervene in this debate is to add another response to a whole collection of them.'

p 22 '... it is not by being the Church's man that the historian can best serve his Church, but by being a scholar and a scientist as rigorously as the discipline requires.'

p 24 'When the theologian speaks of the Church's self-understanding, the historian records a plurality of understandings, ~~one~~ of which one -- that which is dominant ~~one~~ -- tends to impose itself as the only valid one.'

p 25 'Above all, what has occurred before our eyes during the last ten or twenty years should teach us a lesson: out of all the ~~historians~~ dominant ~~histories~~ "histories", none has been able to ~~with~~ resist the onslaught of new situations, ~~which~~ which have precipitately forced us into a revision of all that we had previously learned.'

p 25 'Confronted with the image of its origins offered to it by history, the Church began by ~~refusing~~ refusing to recognize itself. The image did not merely seem disagreeable or distorted, but ruinous as far as its foundations were concerned.'

p 27 'If only the ~~is~~ believer can talk about faith, it must also be true that only the unbeliever ~~is~~ can talk about atheism.

p 28 'Only the Frenchman could talk about France, the peasant about the countryside, the Catholic about the Roman division of the Church, and the Jesuits about the Society of Jesus.'

p 30 'The historian is aware to what extent his discipline is uncertain of itself.. how it advances with difficulty, and that it is not always clear how it progresses. But he also knows that the ~~is~~ taken is ~~is~~ irreversible. The history of history, for a century and a half, leaves no room for doubt on this ~~is~~ point. Even disa gree--ments between different schools cannot prevail against the reality which constitutes the community of historians~~x~~ today. All historians today -- whether in the history of re~~l~~igion or not -- practice a radically secularized approach which can call upon various types of understanding.... The historical approach cannot function appropriately on this ("ecumenical" vs "Marxist") ideological level. A close analysis would soon show, on the contrary, that each type of understanding... also has its own truth and lucidity: the historian can describe the curves of influence of the liberal C_atholicism and the ultramontane Catholicism of the last century, but he cannot allow one to be right and the other wrong. Such ~~x~~ Manichaeism would have to suppose that one of the two, and only that one, had a right understanding of "modern society".

p 31 'The historical understanding of the Church cannot be of the same order as the ecclesial understanding of history.'

'It is not at all necessary to be an exegete to see that the Church began in incomprehension. The disciples could not hear what Christ said to ~~is~~ them: it was too much for them; they had to wait for the coming of the Spirit. After Pentecost, their horizons were arrested first of all at the notion of the Jewish community; the intervention of Paul was necessary to change that. Then there was the question of the imminence of the Parousia. And so one could go on: history, in this view, has never stopped. Will that be the countence of the Church for all time to come? Perhaps it is only the law of its development, as of all human societies. But it is true that this particular collection of phejomena, whose continuity is so impressive, has been effectively taken into account by Christian historiography but less by reflective theology.'

p 32 'It can be seen why, beyond that point which is common to their disciplines, and therefore where they partially coincide, history and theology are not identical. More than for any individual subject, the lack of approximation is constant and irreducible, between the self-consciousness of a group on the one hand -- its identity -- and its expressive form on the other. The theologian starts with the identity, and the historian with the written, institutional, lived, and other expressions. The second can grasp the consciousness which is mediated by all these extremely diverse manifestations, but he has not, by himself, any means of grasping the identity to which they bear witness. And the theologian can never deduce the consciousness of the Church from what he knows ~~ix~~ of its identity: it is in seeing it deploy itself in time that he seizes in practice the mystery of this identity.

'Historians and theologians are intermediaries and interpreters. Do the theologians really think that they are on sure ground in talking of the Church's self-understanding? In the eyes of the historians, such an understanding can never be more than a symbolic expression of a hope: they see the reality as consisting of a plurality of localized self-understandings. The best that they can aspire to do is to understand themselves as agents of intercomprehension.

'However the historian can never ^resign himself to this plurality as if it were the last word on his research and his responsibilities. There is an immense amount of comparative work, terribly neglected until now, waiting for him in conjunction with the representatives of the other social ~~sciences~~ sciences, in order to construct appropriate models, develop a typology, and in this way to pass beyond the banal implications of the old formula of a Christianity one and undivided.'

Norbert Brox, "Forms of Christianity in the Primitive Church" p 33 ff.

p 43 'WE may therefore conclude that the first Christians ~~and~~ differed very widely and ~~at~~ at a very early stage and above all not simply about the question of the Jewish law. They understood their historical links with the origins of the Church in very different ways and they developed very different Christologies.'

H. I. Marrou, "The Church and Greek and Roman Civilization"

p 53 'But one might really say that the alliance between Christianity and classical culture which was to prove indissoluble later was already firmly sealed from the end of the second century.

'Like any human product, this alliance showed itself to be ambivalent. It enriched Western civilization and allowed the magnificent blossoming of classical medieval culture, but we have to ask nowadays whether it did not also obliterate the universalist character of the Christian religion and harm its expansion in other cultures.'

Georg Denzler, "Basic Ecclesiological Structures in the Byzantine Empire" pp 61 - 69

Split with oriental church over universal papal jurisdiction.

Giacomo Martina, "The Contribution of Liberalism and Socialism to a Better Self-Conception of the Church"

Cf. G. Martina's La Chiesa nell'età del l'assolutismo, del liberalismo, del totalitarismo, Brescia 1970.