

BOOK REVIEW

THE WORLD AS SEEN BY A FILIPINO ARCHBISHOP, by Msgr. Jose Ma. Cuenco. Iloilo, PI: Catholic Publishing House 1968: Pp. 396

The World As Seen By A Filipino Archbishop is a fourth book of colorful impressions recorded by the globe-trotting prelate, Msgr. Jose Ma. Cuenco, during his extensive travels through the Far East, Europe, Holy Land and North America. It is packed with delightful descriptions of far off places, valuable historical notes of famous and important cities, biographical data of interesting people, and accounts of candid personal experiences — all told with a spell-binding quality of a master story-teller.

These travels were made on and off for five years and they may be divided generally with the late Pope John XXIII and with Generalissimo Franco in 1960, and a detailed account of a travel through the Middle East and Europe, undertaken the following year by reason of health as well as of private research into the pastoral activities of the last Spanish bishop of Cebu, Msgr. Martin Garcia Alcocer. The second part is made up of three journeys undertaken in 1962, 1964 and 1965 by way of North America to Rome in connection with the Second Vatican Council. This is the first time in history that bishops of the only Catholic nation in the Orient attended an ecumenical council, and observations recorded by Msgr. Cuenco on the pomp and splendor of such a universal gathering of high ecclesiastical dignitaries from all over the world, the solemn and sometimes informal sessions, the author's own speeches and those of others, and, of course, the everyday down-to-earth lives of the Council Fathers are worthwhile reading, if only to be present at, and to witness and experience, the great event vicariously.

The World As Seen By A Filipino Archbishop is indeed an excellent journal of cultural and religious interests and is to be recommended as a useful source of information and reading pleasure.

● JOHN D'AQUINO, O.P.

TREASURY OF THOUGHT. Observations over Half a Century. By Dagobert D. Runes. New York: Philosophical Library, c1966. 395 pages.

This is a book written by a Jew.

Dr. Dagobert D. Runes wrote this book as a revision of a previous one, narrower in scope and milder in tone. The book contains "observations" made over half a century on topics which ranges from Abnormal, abhorrence, forgiveness, love, Pope Paul VI, Zen and Zero, which are arranged alphabetically. These observations are barbed, epigrammatic, highly subjective and prejudiced, sarcastic and philosophically shallow. What is worth noting are the morbidly anti-Christian tone of the whole book and the bitterly fanatic and hateful observations on any religion, Christian, non-Christian and especially the Catholic religion. The entries written on the Roman Church ranges from King Constantine to Pope Paul VI and occupies more than 10 pages. Strange to say, these observations were as if an effect of a mental twist following the Vatican II's declaration on a more salutary relationship with the members of the race of Christ.

To read the book soberly and understand its impact and heavy tone against anything not Jewish, one needs to know the author, his life and personality. For the book is the author's and part of him is much in there. Dr. Runes is a Jew who saw "German Christians beat my poor old mother to death" and "shoot my four young cousins in front of their chained and bleeding parents." (p. 34) Surely that is one reason that made him hate to use the words "united in love" and "love." (p. 231) He is a man "who cannot bless the heavenly hand that sent a Son to this world in whose name my people were bleed to death." (p. 34) And in his deep bitterness he would advice poets to "sing not a song of God, His son... but (to) sing a song of bitterness, of man's bestiality with man, of vicious demagoguery and hateful purposes of the weak, the innocent and much abused." (p. 280)

Pity the author; abhor the book, which contains more things that seem to invite hatred for the man.

Despite the epigrammatic entries on various more topics, epigrams whose meanings hide skin-deep truths but which in reality are half-truths and which therefore easily catches the unwary, this cynical book by a man to be pitied and excused has no redeeming value whatsoever to merit its being placed in a serious, human, not to say, Christian reading list.