

logians have worked out, but it seems certain that until the faith of ordinary Catholics is conceived and expressed in biblical terms rather

than in an ill-understood residue of abstract theology, no union will be possible.

Paulinus Milner, O.P.

THE DYNAMIC ELEMENT IN THE CHURCH, by Karl Rahner; Herder/Burns and Oates, 18s.

The present ferment in the Church springs, in the end, from the tension between two complementary – if at times conflicting – attitudes of mind. On the one hand are those who see the Church as a more or less complete structure, the lines of which were laid down in the early decades of her history, subsequent elaborations being little more than the addition of decorative elements, in the shape of new doctrines defined, new devotions developed, new laws laid down. Over against these stand those who think of the life of the Church as a continuing growth, an ever-richer fulfilment of her members through a deeper understanding of Christ's unfolding revelation.

In this book – the latest in the series of *Quaestiones Disputatae* – Fr Rahner has collected three articles which have already appeared as separate units, though bearing directly on one common theme. In the first of these – 'Principles and Prescriptions' – he wrestles with the difficult problem of the relationship existing between individual duties in concrete situations and the general principles enunciated by the Church. He is well aware of the danger of developing a 'situation-ethic' but argues that, since the Church cannot possibly, in the nature of things, legislate for every case – 'the Church does not administer all reality' – the individual must make up his own mind about his duty in a very large number of political, social and other practical matters.

Moving on from this position, Fr Rahner next

discusses the 'charismatic element in the Church', reminding us that 'Ultimately only one thing can give unity in the Church on the human level: the love which allows another to be different, even when it does not understand him . . . Patience, tolerance, leaving another to do as he pleases, so long as the error of his action is not established . . . are therefore specifically ecclesiastical virtues, springing from the very nature of the Church'.

Finally, in a chapter on 'The Logic of Concrete Individual Knowledge in Ignatius Loyola', Fr Rahner invokes the teaching of that great Counter-Reformation figure to support his general thesis about the importance and authenticity of the individual's contribution to the Church's growth. He recalls to our notice the undoubted fact that, for all his insistence on the need of absolute loyalty to the teaching of the Church, St Ignatius was not less emphatic about the need to allow the individual full liberty in his personal relations with God.

The relevance of all this to the contemporary debate in the Church is manifest. Whilst we are grateful to the translator for having made this work accessible in English, we may perhaps be allowed to plead that many readers would have been helped by a bolder recasting of the structure of the lengthier sentences. But those who are ready to give close attention to this book will find the reading of it a most rewarding experience.

T. Corbishley, S.J.

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