

work is but one of a whole series dealing with many aspects of religious life and that these questions were studied in earlier volumes, most of them translated into English, as, we may surely hope, this work will be.

This is unquestionably a book that is more than

interesting; it is of capital importance. Revolutionary? For some, yes; for others, just encouraging. It should not be missed by any nuns or sisters in a position of authority.

M. Emmanuel, C.R.A.

THE QUESTIONING CHURCH by Julius Cardinal Doepfner; *Burns and Oates, 7s 6d.*

PRIEST AND LAYMAN by Albert Dondeyne; *Sheed and Ward, 8s 6d.*

MISSION AND GRACE, Vol II, by Karl Rahner, S.J.; *Sheed and Ward, 11s 6d.*

Many people are frightened. It is not simply that, within the Church, new and surprising things are being said and done; it is rather that, for many people, the whole Church seems to have disappeared. We still have a Pope, it is true, and mass is still celebrated (after a fashion); but the whole of the old 'thing', as they have always known it, seems to be rapidly crumbling away. If the urgent need in the Church a few years back was for prophets to wake her from her torpor (and such voices are still necessary in many places), perhaps there is an equal need today for a new 'Book of Consolation', a need to help people, gently, to see that the 'new theology' is calling us to a deeper understanding of the old Church. The six essays that make up Cardinal Doepfner's book would be an important contribution to this programme of reassurance, whoever had written them. But, coming as they do from one of the most influential men in the Church today, they have a particular significance. Clear, incisive and balanced, they reveal the mind of a man who is not so much a theologian as a leader – and a shepherd. The most satisfactory essay is the second one: 'Reform – an essential element in the Church', while the title-essay is a little disappointing (one would like to know the date of its original delivery: the date given, 8 December, 1964, is a little unlikely in view of the fact that the English translation was available in September 1964).

One distinctive element in the 'new theology' is a fresh insistence on the dignity of the layman and a deeper grasp of his essential role in the building-up of the Church. Any attempt to 're-

valuate' the layman, however, that is not at the same time an attempt to understand the *whole* structure of the Church is in danger of producing an imbalance that is itself a form of clericalism. As the Revd Charles Davis has said '... the discussion about the laity has got into a tangle by an over-emphasis on the distinction between the clergy (or religious) and the laity. It has fallen into an inverted clericalism, unconsciously assuming the dichotomy of the past but now looking at it from the layman's side' (*America*, 110, 1964, p. 91). The layman's role can only be grasped in the light of a prior understanding of the *Christian* vocation common to both priest and layman and this, in turn, must result in a deeper understanding of the priesthood. As Canon Dondeyne says in this outstanding little book, '... the remarkable reappraisal of the role of the lay apostolate has not been accompanied by a parallel reappraisal of the office of the priesthood. And this is of the greatest importance indeed for the building up of the Church' (p. 28). The ordering of the material in this book is almost as important as the content of the individual chapters. First, Canon Dondeyne discusses the 'Building up of the Church' in general, giving a thumbnail sketch of that deepened vision of the People of God which has found expression in the Council's Constitution *De Ecclesia*. Then he has a chapter on 'The Priest' and, finally, a long chapter on 'The Layman in the Church'. There is more in this book than would seem possible in so few pages, but at times this may produce difficulties of digestion in somebody unfamiliar with the theology that underlies

it (this is true, in particular, of the compression of a 'Schillebeeckx-type' sacramental theology into one paragraph on pp. 71–72).

In terms of influence, Karl Rahner stands head and shoulders above his fellow-theologians in the Church today. Everything that he writes is constructive, searching, relevant, incomplete. He has something to say, and something that is important, on almost every contemporary Christian problem. But this inevitably means that his writings are of very unequal value; there is nothing in this second volume of 'Mission and Grace' that measures up to the magnificent essay on 'The Position of Christians in the Modern World' that opened the first volume. The essay on 'The Layman and the Religious Life' is one stage in an argument with Hans Urs von Balthasar on the precise ecclesiological status of secular institutes; the essay on 'The Student of Theology' is considerably more relevant to the German situation than our own; the 'essay' on 'The Scholar' is a collection of epigrams, many of them brilliantly perceptive. The opening essay on 'The Episcopate and the Primacy' has already appeared in English (in the same translation) as the first part of the *Quaestio Disputata* of that title. This essay was originally written in 1958, and on at least one important point (whether a bishop receives his power from the Pope or from his sacramental consecration) Rahner's treatment has been superseded by the teaching of the Council, but this is

merely an indication of the rapidity with which the doctrine of the episcopate has matured. The essay on 'The Parish Priest', originally written in 1943, contains much that is both beautiful and important but, reading it today, one could wish that there were a greater emphasis on the 'ministry of the Word'.

But all these essays are representative of the best in the 'new theology', presenting that theology at a level that is genuinely popular without ever being superficial. They are all concerned, in one way or another, with the mystery of the Church, and it is a profound, personal reassessment of that mystery which is the most urgent task confronting the contemporary Catholic. 'To many people the Church may appear as a great, mysterious, holy, ancient, important and indispensable organization, with a large number of prescriptions, authorities, offices, jurisdictions and dogmatic decisions. They may be convinced that all this is necessary, intended by God, and salutary. But this simply means that they think constraint is salutary and indispensable. They cannot then see the Church as the sacrament, the perceptible sign of the fact that the most real, the most essential, the most effectual freedom, the only genuine freedom in the ultimate sense, has entered the world' ('The Christian Teacher', in *Mission and Grace*, Vol. II, p. 135).

Nicholas Lash

THE ATHANASIAN CREED by J. N. D. Kelly; *Adam and Charles Black, 18s.*

Since the seventeenth century it has been recognized that the Athanasian Creed has no connection with St Athanasius; nor is it technically a creed, its rhythms may suggest that it was composed as a canticle. It is clearly a Western document, close linked with the *De Trinitate* of St Augustine, but until 1931 there was no certain evidence of its existence before the eighth century. In that year Dom Morin discovered it in a manuscript of Caesarius of Arles who was born about 460 and died in 542. Dom Morin was in-

clined to believe that Caesarius was the author. But the context seems to suggest that the Faith of St Athanasius is being cited as an already authoritative doctrinal exposition. This interpretation would also explain the many echoes in the writings of the African Fulgentius, Bishop of Ruspe (c. 467–533). The recent discovery of the *Excerpta* of Vincent of Lerins brings the problem a generation earlier, since it is clear that either the *Excerpta* were a source for the Creed or the Creed was a source for the *Excerpta*. Dr Kelly is inclined