

rests on man's unshakable adherence to God's grace, by which he is delivered from the agony of insecurity and fear that is the product of a religion of self-sanctification. The problem is a real one and the Lutheran reply to it is basically a rejection of the tendency to equate holiness with self-effort and ritual exercises. Father Pfürtner argues that there is no flat contradiction between the decrees of Trent and the Lutheran view since each has a different understanding of what is meant by terms like faith, knowledge and cer-

tainty. The most interesting part of the book is his attempt – largely successful – to show that the values for which Luther contended can be rendered in the language of St Thomas by speaking of man's absolute assurance of God's mercy given in the theological virtue of hope. Father Pfürtner is to be congratulated on writing a little book that will, without doubt, have an important role to play in the ecumenical dialogue.

*Ian Hislop, O.P.*

OBEDIENT REBELS, Catholic Substance and Protestant Principle in Luther's Reformation by Jaroslav Pelikan. *S.C.M.*, 25s.

There is a growing literature in English concerning Martin Luther, and a knowledge of his thought and the circumstances of his reformation are increasingly recognized as important in ecumenical discussion. The aim of ecumenism is a return to origins; there is considerable ground for hope that such a return is bearing, and will bear fruit, among divided Christians in the West, in a process of slow convergence towards unity in belief. This is illustrated in a number of trends among the Christian Churches, including our own. These are to be seen in the work of the Vatican Council, especially in new thinking in ecclesiology and in liturgical reform. They are to be found too in studies of the Faith and Order Commission, especially for example in that on *Tradition and Traditions*, presented to the Montreal Conference in 1963, after more than eight years of preparatory work by a joint Commission of European and North American Sections.

Professor Jaroslav Pelikan was closely associated with this work, and there can be no question of his competence and expertness in the field he has chosen in *Obedient Rebels*. Luther's whole career as a reformer was a paradox, and, in consequence, the interpretation of what he said and did is open to either/or treatment in several directions, Catholic and Protestant. Professor

Pelikan is not either/or, he presents Luther and explains him in terms of a combination of Catholic substance and Protestant principle. Catholic substance signifies the body of tradition, liturgy, dogma and churchmanship developed chiefly by the ancient Church and embodied in the Roman Catholic Church of his day, but there overlaid with much that Protestant principle rejected. Luther never ceased to believe the Roman Church to be a true Church, in spite of his fierce antagonism to the papacy as he saw it. Protestant principle was simply fidelity to the supremacy of the Bible as constitutive of revelation, God's Word to men.

Professor Pelikan himself holds that these two principles belong together not only in Luther's reformation but in the life of the Church and in the very message of the New Testament. However that may be, his, and what he holds to be Luther's, critical reverence for tradition is a valuable point of contact in the present ecumenical dilemma, and the sympathetic dialogue with which it must be approached and frankly discussed. His book is a valuable introduction to why this is so, especially his three final chapters on the relevance of the two principles to contemporary ecumenical theology.

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