

'post-face' written after the events of May-June, 1968, Father Congar himself freely recognizes this fact and gives his first reactions to it.

This being said, one might well wonder about the value of republishing today a work which is so clearly marked by the spirit of its time. Certainly it can awaken nostalgic feelings in the middle-aged. Perhaps it can instruct the young in how a large-minded theologian saw things at that time, revealing the things one could say and the things one could not say, the things one could see, the things one then could not see. But will it have any more immediate relevance and importance than that?

I believe that it will. One has here something of more permanent value; the work of one whose theology is lived as well as thought, who speaks with a certain authority in these matters because he has been prepared to suffer in and with the Church which he loves, who has himself borne witness to the truth that true reform must come from within. Despite all its limitations, the questions which it does not ask, the caution of its manner (how easily understandable in the circumstances of 1950, *Humani Generis*), to read it is to gain a lesson in sanity and balance, in charity and wisdom, a lesson which the Christian thinker today more urgently than ever needs to learn.

One of its particular virtues is the way in which its author uses both historical and theological material, in a study which touches at once the Church's structures and its life. It is a complex study and a very rich one. One of its weaker points, as Père Congar freely acknowledges in his preface, is its handling of the sixteenth-century Reformers. In the light of all that has happened in the last ten years, we can see that the relationship of that Reformation to Catholicism is much more intimate than even a pioneer of ecumenical thinking could see in 1950.

For the question now is, what *is* Catholicism, what *is* Christianity? Certainly Père Congar is right in insisting that there are things which are given, indeed God-given, in the life and faith of the Church. But could we be quite so sure today that we know what they are, and all that they imply? How do the structures and the life relate to another, and how do they interact? The possibilities which are open now are greater than we ever thought. So also are the dangers. From superficiality, haste, polemic and one-sidedness, from over-tidy schemes of reform and anxious stances of defensiveness, from letting ourselves be pushed into parties labelled 'conservative' or 'progressive' (how could a theologian not be both?) may the good Lord deliver us. Père Congar will help in our deliverance. A. M. ALLCHIN

FROM SHADOW TO PROMISE, Old Testament Interpretation from Augustine to the Young Luther, by J. S. Preus. *Belknap/Harvard*, Cambridge, Mass., 1969. 301 pp. (Price removed.)

SPIRIT VERSUS STRUCTURE, Luther and the Institutions of the Church, by Jaroslav Pelikan. *Collins*, London, 1969. viii + 149 pp. 30s.

Some scholars have said that Luther's future theology can be found in his *Dictata super Psalterium*, the literary remains of his Psalms course, 1513-1515, probably his first at Wittenberg University. Others have dismissed it as pre-reformation. The truth is less simple.

The first half of this book is entitled 'Medieval Hermeneutics to 1513'. It studies Old Testament exegesis from Augustine through numerous medieval exegetes up to Faber Stapulensis (*d.* 1536). The important point is that they all regard Old Testament events as exclusively significant of the New Testament. Apart from an occasional piece of *lex* and an occasional piece of *doctrina*, the literal sense of the Old Testament is simply a matter of seeing what the words mean so that the other figurative senses may be established. Cassian established the three figurative senses which became de rigueur for all exegetes up

to the sixteenth century: the allegorical, the tropological (moral application), the anagogical. This first half of the book, then, provides the material for an understanding of the matrix of Luther's own first attempts at exegesis. Without such an understanding a historian or theologian almost inevitably gets a wrong impression of Luther's meaning. What Luther says can only be properly interpreted if the medieval tradition within which he worked is understood. The tradition was both still in existence and in the process of breaking up; the fifteenth century had already provided numerous insights into the coming break-up and the author records the realistic admission of Gerson that 'the Old Testament never has had any proper literal sense'.

Part two of the book is entitled 'Luther's First Psalm Course, 1513-1515'. Luther at first uses the medieval method, but selecting

the tropological as the only sense in which he was really interested, and in this itself confining and driving everything towards conformity of the self with Christ. It was just at this point, so Preus thinks, that Luther began to realize that the text of the Psalms was expressing something 'real' in itself, not just significant for our conformity with Christ. He 'discovered that the Old Testament faith and religion was so much like his own that they could become exemplary for his own faith and the Church's self-understanding'. 'The "Word" has come in for a qualitative change from its use in the fourfold exegesis.' Luther begins to speak of the 'faithful synagogue', a breakthrough phrase, for the author has found no previous occurrence of this phrase in the traditional handling of the texts concerned. Luther begins to say that the Church should take the faithful synagogue as a model and norm of faith.

The author sums up the change: 'The *sensus propheticus* of the Psalms has changed from Christ to the Old Testament text itself as *testimonium* and promise, and the application has moved from "tropological" identification and conformity with Christ to a "moral" identification with the Old Testament faithful—not in "morality, but in the quality of their faith".' In this way Luther gradually finds an effective power in the 'Word' of scripture which undermines the medieval idea of the need for grace available through the sacraments—so the author argues in a number of places. Here he is venturing out into a theological area in which I think he is not quite so skilled as in the specifically scriptural area. The author's point is that for Luther the New Testament, the gospel, is a promise to us, and that the Old Testament, the Psalms particularly, provided the way in for his understanding of this, enabling him to see much of the medieval scheme as expendable. The book is extremely well documented, but difficult to read, and somewhat repetitive. It is a work of original research on the source documents. According to the blurb, Oberman says it is 'the best Luther study since World War II in any language'.

It was a good idea for Jaroslav Pelikan when invited to lecture at the time of the 450th anniversary of 1517 in Bratislava, and Warsaw, to follow up five main issues on which Luther challenged the Church of his upbringing. The author describes Luther's reasons for disagreement and goes on to see how Luther coped with

Patterns of Reformation

Gordon Rupp

The book describes Oecolampadius's drastic scholarship and teaching about the Eucharist, particularly his support of Zwingli against Luther. Karlstadt was a pioneer of later Puritanism who was to some extent a precursor of seventeenth-century English Puritan piety. Thomas Müntzer was a rebel who grows in historical stature. Vadianus lived in St Gall and as Burgomaster guided the Reforming movement into peaceful ways. 63s net

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A survey of Newman's intellectual background and of his discussions of the problem of faith, in unpublished as well as published writings up to 1870, is followed by a searching analysis of his definitive study of faith, *The Grammar of Assent*. This analysis shows that, in spite of certain criticisms, Newman provides a way of understanding the assent of faith which is of major importance today. 50s net

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Gordon S. Wakefield

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the situation which resulted from his success in challenging the received view, that is what he did when he was himself faced with the need to legislate. Pelikan refers to his five topics as 'structural' and adverts in his opening words to the present crisis in Protestantism and Catholicism which are experiencing again the matter of Luther's crisis of 1520 described by Pelikan in the words he takes as the title of his book and his first lecture, *Spirit versus Structure*. The five issues are: Priesthood and Ministry, Monasticism, Infant Baptism, Church Law and Divine Law, The Sacramental System.

It was in 1520 that Luther became convinced that much of the system in which he had been brought up was a betrayal of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* he gave his reasons for believing that the papal Church was only a great man-made machine. He also wrote particular pieces dealing particularly with the five subjects. Pelikan quotes very perceptively and extensively from these sources, and yet provides us with a beautifully easy text. He says at the end of his first chapter: 'No trial oppressed Luther's spirit more often in his later years than this recognition that structure was inevitable, combined as the recognition was with a candid awareness that the institutions now being erected were not necessarily superior to those which had (often against Luther's advice) been swept away.' This is not to say that Luther ever regretted his own initiative; it was entirely Spirit-inspired, and he could never have denied the insights so many of which have in fact been taken up widely since his time by other Christians. He really did believe, as Pelikan quotes that: 'While I was drinking beer, God reformed the Church'—though it is a very dangerous quotation for us,

since no other self-confessed 'beer-drinking' public figure can have done, written, achieved and suffered so much.

But the organizational problems remained. Organizational strategy was not Luther's strong point, and above all not the political tactics. But his thought on these points always comes strongly from his biblical and theological insights, and is still important for us today. On infant baptism Luther is perhaps weakest—or strongest; he takes refuge in the fundamental ambivalence of his theology (of all theology?). The sacraments achieve nothing automatically, but only through the faith of the recipient, so surely infant baptism is a nonsense. Not so, because all sacraments are exclusively the work of God, not our work; in infant baptism God is working as he wishes to.

This is an admirable little book and is a good antidote to the fulsome books which Luther scholars still seem to think they should write, *con amore*. Let us end with a useful quotation, from the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, ten years after Luther had burnt the book of Canon Law, a quotation the author uses to show how Luther himself was coping with the fundamental organizational problems: 'We gladly keep the old traditions set up in the Church because they are useful and promote tranquillity, and we put the best construction on them, excluding the opinion which holds that they justify. Our enemies accuse us of abolishing good ordinances and Church discipline. We can truthfully claim that in our churches the public liturgy is more decent than in theirs, and if you look at it correctly we are more faithful to the canons than our opponents are.' This was not an empty boast.

JOHN M. TODD

EMPEDOCLES' COSMIC CYCLE, by D. O'Brien. *Cambridge University Press*, 1969. 459 pp. £5.

Dr O'Brien's work on Empedocles has been awaited with great interest by students of Ancient Philosophy who have found references to it in Guthrie's *History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol. II, and in Dr O'Brien's own articles in the *Journal for Hellenic Studies* for 1968. They will not be disappointed. This is a notable contribution to the study of one of the most important of the Presocratic philosophers.

The physical theories of Empedocles have always presented difficulties. He clearly introduced the theory of the four elements, or 'roots' as he called them, and maintained that these

were united by Love and separated by Strife, but the exact details of the process have been the subject of controversy. Most scholars have accepted that there were four phases. Initially all four elements were united by Love in the Sphere (this stage we shall call A). There followed a period of transition in which Strife increased in power (B), and this led to a state of complete separation dominated by Strife (C), after which there came a period (D) in which the elements were united again under the increasing influence of Love, until Stage A was reached, and the whole process began again.