

All this is evidence of his wide reading and irenic understanding of the Protestant position. If there is a 'liturgical renewal' in the Protestant churches today then it is also a 'return' to Reformation teaching and practice about worship aided by the present ecumenical experiences of which Fr Taylor's book is so welcome an example.

CECIL NORTHCOTT

THE WORD OF GOD ACCORDING TO SAINT AUGUSTINE, by A. D. R. Polman, tr. by A. J. Pomerans; Hodder and Stoughton, 35s.

Dr Polman is a professor at the John Calvin Academy in Kampen, Holland. His learned and exceedingly thorough study gives welcome support to those right-minded students of St Augustine who think that his so-called neo-platonism has been very much overworked. The Calvinist theologian vindicates against many Catholic writers St Augustine's character as a Christian, and his vigorous independence of mind as a 'Bible Catholic Christian' from any philosophical *a priori*'s. He was one who had grown up in and always used neo-Platonist language, but soon grew out of the neo-Platonist world view. In this assessment of his subject Dr Polman is in closer agreement with St Thomas than are the Catholic authors he criticizes; more strength to his elbow.

One hopes too that his investigation of St Augustine's preaching will prove stimulating to Catholic theologians. In these days of dialogue it is on the theology of preaching that Catholics have most, perhaps, to learn from Calvinists, and there are indeed signs that they have begun to do so. Our debt to Dr Polman is that he shows us here how we can learn on this subject from St Augustine about the irreplaceable value of preaching as a means of salvation and of grace. But in his eagerness to make his point he does less than justice to the value that even Catholics allow to preaching in principle, and is not quite fair to the appreciation that a writer like Fr Van der Meer has shown of Augustine's preaching in particular.

On the debit side must be mentioned first of all faults of presentation and translation, which are not the author's responsibility. He does not indeed quote Augustine too much, as he fears in his Introduction that the reader might think; but the reader's eye is given no help whatever to distinguish between his quotations and his own comments. A little more judicious paragraphing would have made all the difference. The quickest way of telling when you are reading Dr Polman and when St Augustine is by noting the quality of the English; when it becomes noticeably stiff and awkward, it is the saint, not the doctor, that is being rendered. In one place a curiously conflated reading of the prologue of St John is produced: 'and without him was not anything made that was made. That which was made is life in him . . .' (p. 14). Augustine, like the most modern critical editions, but unlike the current Vulgate and standard English versions, always read this text punctuated thus: *et sine ipso factum est nihil. Quod*

*factum est in ipso vita erat . . .* The translator has it both ways. Here is perhaps the worst example of translation:

'Hence St Augustine admonished the congregation: "If you should have any friend stern and wise, how would you say? He has spoken these things, there must needs come to pass that which he has spoken: the man is stern, no levity he used, not easily from his resolution is he moved aside, that which he has promised is steadfast. But nevertheless a human being he is that sometimes will to do that which he has promised and is not able. Of God there is not anything that you may fear; that truthful He is, is certain; that all-mighty He is, is certain: to deceive thee He is not able, He has means whence He may perform".' (p. 219).

Presumably 'likes' has the sense of 'is like' (a 'Dutch-ism'?) in this sentence: 'He (Faustus) likes men displeased with things of which they do not know the use' (p. 116). Is it being rather mean to have some cheap fun like this at the translator's expense? Perhaps, and if so we tender our apologies; but translating is serious and exacting work, and doing it into a language not one's own should only be undertaken with extreme reluctance and caution. Do neither Dr Polman nor Mr Pomerans know, for example, any minister of the Church of Scotland to whose careful correction the translation could have been submitted?

The chief criticism of the author that has to be made is that as he progresses with his work he becomes more and more polemical in a negative sort of way, until in the last chapter he is engaged in constant shadow boxing with some rather sinister figures called 'Neo-Catholic theologians'; what the epithet signifies is not very clear—but it is most certainly not being used as a compliment. It is not Dr Polman's occasional misunderstandings of Catholic doctrine to which we are taking exception; they are incidental and not particularly serious. What is reprehensible is his dragging St Augustine straight into Reformation controversies. There is nothing wrong in arguing those controversies by appeals to Augustine's authority or to any representative of tradition; Catholics do it and cannot object to Protestants doing it. But we must object when either Catholic or Protestant controversialists so use this authority as if Augustine were discussing these precise issues. He was not, and indeed he lacked the necessary narrowness of mind to pose the rigid questions which preoccupy Dr Polman. It is particularly in his chapter on 'The Word of God and the Church' that he sets up and reads into Augustine a whole series of false antitheses. To give only two examples: 'To him the Church was not an objective and impersonal entity, not above all the sacramental apparatus, nor the Church hierarchy, nor the empirical Church, but the bride of Christ' (p. 203); 'The *regula fidei* rests not on the active faith of the Church, but on plain Scriptural texts, and all Scriptural interpretations are bound to this *regula fidei* as their *normata*' (p. 214). St Augustine, so Catholic in his cast of mind, cannot be squeezed into a series of not/buts. He uses not only the dialectic of 'not . . . but . . .', but also, and predominantly, the dialectic of 'not only . . . but also . . .'

EDMUND HILL, O.P.