

not mean anything like the stature of Moses, who was taken up into the holy mountain, or Isaias, whose lips were touched with the burning coal: he was speaking of the prophetic or preacher's office in the sense explained by St Paul and St Thomas as a purveyor of the truth. The prophet is one who explains what is latent in divine truth. It is the truth that persuades and converts.

Fr McNabb himself has written: 'There is a subtle fallacy in the saying, "It is not what we preach or do, but what we *are* that saves souls." The truth in this difficult matter is not to be expressed by such a superstition of humility. The thing should be stated accurately if stated at all, lest in our efforts to safeguard the fervent we should mislead the wicked or lukewarm. The truth is that we save souls neither by what we do nor by what we are, but by what God does and by what God enables us to do.'

And so it is that the whole story of such a life as Fr Vincent's is known neither to Fr Vincent nor to you or me, but only to God.

BERNARD DELANY, O.P.

ST AUGUSTINE: TREATISES ON MARRIAGE AND OTHER SUBJECTS.
(Fathers of the Church Inc.)

A COMPANION TO THE STUDY OF ST AUGUSTINE. Edited by R. W. Battenhouse. (O.U.P. Inc., New York: London, G. Cumberlege; 32s. 6d.)

'Fathers of the Church Inc.' continue to bring out their useful and painstaking, but somewhat pedestrian, translations. Augustine's treatises on marriage should be useful to priests faced with the work of explaining Catholic marriage doctrine, for as one of the contributors to the other volume reviewed here remarks, 'If one wants to know why the Roman Catholic Church holds that the chief end of marriage is procreation, that divorce and birth-control are inadmissible, and that continence is the ideal of sexual self-discipline, the reasons are all given by the Bishop of Hippo in his discussion of marriage'.

A Companion to the Study of St Augustine is an excellently planned and executed volume. It is a pity it should be marred by too many misprints and some erroneous references in the notes, and that a contributor should lapse at times into careless writing (p. 157), or make a misleading half-true statement ('the clergy often married', p. 66), or show that he has misread a text (p. 309); the old and quite unfounded bogey of double predestination also turns up again (p. 361).

But apart from these odd slips all the contributors bring to their learning a very fair judgment, one not always perhaps so shrewdly aware of Augustine's mind as could be wished, yet instances of this quality are not lacking here and there. Most of them feel called upon to

find fault with Augustine on one point or another. It is noticeable that where his doctrine is criticized it is often identical with subsequent Catholic doctrine, and this fact is usually noted by the writer; there is no attempt to claim Augustine for the Reformation. But it is not appreciated, it seems, that in many cases the point at issue was common doctrine in Augustine's day, too, and not just a personal theological opinion of his own.

The contributors by no means have all the same point of view. Some tend to make too much of the opposition between his neoplatonist and his biblical thought; others realize that this opposition is a construction of commentators rather than a reality in the mind of Augustine, for whom orthodoxy was large enough to comprehend philosophical truth and was not felt to be at odds with it. One contributor remarks that Augustine's was an existentialist cast of mind, while another considers that he never broke loose from the Platonic pre-occupation with natures and essences, and that his moral doctrine in consequence never came to grips with the concrete, the particular, the historical, or with individual personality. Such differences of opinion are all to the good in a book like this one, because they oblige the student to use his own judgment, and to turn to the originals for material to base it on.

The first section of the volume is introductory, with three articles on Augustine's significance today, his life and his work as a pastor. The third has five articles on special aspects of his thought, while the main central section is of seven articles introducing the student to his writings. All his works are covered, either individually or in groups, with the deliberate exception of his sermons and his scriptural commentaries. This omission is all the more regrettable because it seems so unnecessary. Two extra articles would not have added much to the volume's bulk, while the lack of these two topics make a real lacuna in the presentation of the subject. Augustine preaching is Augustine at his very best, and an invaluable example for all preachers; and when he is meditating on the Scripture he is doing the work he had most at heart, and his manner of doing so, though strange to modern minds, would serve well to offset the bias of present-day critical exegesis, if his principles were sympathetically understood and explained.

EDMUND HILL, O.P.

THE FRENCH BIBLICAL EPIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. By R. A. Sayce. (Geoffrey Cumberlege, Clarendon Press; 35s.)

By this exhaustive and scholarly investigation Dr Sayce has illuminated one of the least-known aspects of what is perhaps the most-studied century of French literature. Not only has he read (in itself a formidable undertaking) and analysed those long-forgotten epics on Judith or