

most strongly to do so are those who ceaselessly hinder me by imposing other obligations upon me'.

It would be possible to draw attention to many factors which, both theoretically and historically, would seem in the designs of Providence to be paramount in Church reform, but of which this book seems to take too little account. It should be stressed that, alike in the Old Dispensation and the New, it is by the scourge of persecution, war, pestilence and heresy, and by the inspiration of new patterns of sanctity to meet changing needs, that God himself purges his people and refashions his temple. But to wish for fuller treatment of these things is to wish for a still longer book and a more exhaustive treatise than Père Congar has given us; we shall be well content if it is given the serious attention which it deserves. VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

ST GREGORY THE GREAT, *Pastoral Care*. Translated by Henry Davis, S.J. (Ancient Christian Writers, Vol. XI. Newman Press, Maryland; \$3)

One of the great formative books of Western Christendom was St Gregory's *Pastoral Care*. Begun perhaps even before he was Pope, immediately it was published it gained a wide circulation, first in Spain, later in Carolingian Gaul, and was one of the books King Alfred arranged to be translated for the benefit of his somewhat disreputable clergy. The last edition published in England was Bishop Hedley's famous *Lex Levitarum*, and it was certainly time we had a translation in good readable English. This, with an excellent introduction and notes that are learned without ever being pedantic, Fr Davis has now provided. The translation is perspicuous and elegant, and inspires confidence in the point of accuracy. (St Gregory is by no means as easy to translate as he sometimes looks at first sight.) We are grateful to him for this admirable edition of a spiritual classic.

Fr Davis observes that St Gregory probably intended the *Pastoral Care* (*Regula Pastoralis*) to be the counterpart for the secular clergy of St Benedict's *Regula*. That certainly seems to be so, yet one is struck by the essential incompleteness of St Gregory's book. It is true that he sets out in a broad and general way the qualities required in a pastor (he seems to have bishops in mind principally) and his general mode of life. But the emphasis is so very different from what it would be today. It is essentially a moral treatise, deeply scriptural and contemplative, and there is no consideration of the Mass and the Liturgy, for instance, in the pastor's life. The longest section of the book could indeed well be called, 'A Safe Guide for the Director of Souls', and it is perhaps here that St Gregory reveals his genius. Again and again one is struck by his understanding of almost every kind of soul. The psychology may be homely, but the penetration is acute. So far as the director is concerned, understanding, forbearance, compassion, though with firmness, are the

keynotes of St Gregory's teaching. It is all so *sane*, one feels, very *terre-à-terre* but ever conscious of the heights of Christian sanctity.

But always and everywhere what gives the book its special flavour, its sanity and calm, is its closeness to Holy Scripture and its undertone of contemplation. Some of the scripture interpretations are bizarre by any standard and we, no less than St Gregory, are harassed by a multitude of anxieties and cares, but the message of the book is as cogent and fresh as when it was written, and will repay many a reading.

J. D. CRICHTON.

ST AUGUSTINE AND THE DONATIST CONTROVERSY. By Geoffrey Grimshaw Willis. (S.P.C.K.; 15s.)

When, in 395, Augustine, an already popular preacher who was attracting large audiences to his fluent Latin sermons, was consecrated co-adjutor Bishop of Hippo, he found that upon him devolved the pastoral responsibility for an area far wider than that of his own diocese. 'Whether Augustine be the greatest writer or not, he is the greatest man who ever wrote Latin', a distinguished latinist of our own time has said, and to this 'great man', who so outshone his contemporaries 'on the bench', the North African Church, torn by the schism of Donatus, looked for guidance and leadership. The campaign against Donatism which he undertook occupied Augustine for longer than any other controversy during his episcopate, and, in the course of it, three fundamental doctrines were expounded by him. Not only did he put the Donatists right on the question of the administration of the sacraments (they maintained that the value of the sacrament depended on the sanctity of the ministers) but he gave clear expression to the Catholic teaching on the Church, as well as his views on the relations between that Church and the State. This was Saint Augustine's way. He was not a systematic theologian who could sit down in his study and write a *Summa Theologica*, but a pastor of souls concerned with answering questions as they are forced on his attention by circumstances.

From what has been said may be gauged the importance and interest of the subject-matter of the work under review. In his treatment of it the author has given us a well-documented and, what is almost more important, a readable book which can ill be neglected by Church historians, even though his interpretation of certain of Augustine's phrases may not universally be admitted. After three chapters on the history of the Donatists up to and during Saint Augustine's episcopate the author devotes three further chapters to a careful study of his teaching on the great Christian doctrines we have mentioned. Of these perhaps the most original is the one on the Church, followed by an excursus on 'Saint Cyprian and the Roman Primacy'—where the author follows Benson and Koch against Chapman and Bévenot.