

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.

Later, when treating of Augustine's teaching on the sacraments, the Epistle to the Hebrews VI, 4-6, is cited as typical of a Puritanism which was at the origin of the Donatist view. But the Apostle is not dealing here with the remission of our sins by sacramental Penance, as the author of this book suggests; he only tells us that Baptism cannot be repeated.

The concluding chapter shows how Saint Augustine's thought dominates ages after him: the pre-Reformation period being typified in Saint Thomas Aquinas and Nicolas of Cues: the post-Reformation in Richard Hooker and Bishops Pearson and Hall. This latter part will of course be of interest chiefly to Anglican readers—though all must admire the strong, lucid prose of Hooker extensively quoted in the footnotes.

DESMOND SCHLEGEL, O.S.B.

RELIGIOUS SISTERS: (Blackfriars Publications, 15s.)

The religious orders have their share in the lasting life of the Church, and are living members of that organic body. Yet there is a profound conflict between the old way of putting the religious ideal into practice and present-day needs. The result is a dearth of vocations and the inability of many aspirants to stand up to the requirements of a life which they were ready to embrace with enthusiasm. The fact has to be faced that the contemporary world is undergoing a sudden and very profound evolution, which calls for adjustments and adaptations within the sphere of religious life.

This book attempts to offer suggestions regarding the details of observance and methods of formation. As Fr Victor de la Vierge, O.C.D. observes, it would be most undesirable that a religious should be given 'the impression of not being a good religious unless he were dispensed more or less habitually from observances that would crush his spirit'. (p.249.) And he goes on to say that 'this question of adaptation is a question of life or death for the religious orders'. Assuredly, then, this matter is of great concern for those in responsible positions. There must be change while that which is essential remains. This is a sign of life and not of laxity.

This volume, translated with adaptations from two volumes in French, will be most valuable to any experienced religious sister, and especially to Superiors. One feels that the reading might have been made a little lighter if less matter had been compressed within the same covers.

The work is divided into five main parts, entitled The Theology of Religious Life, The Office of Superior, The Knowledge Required by a Superior, The Vocation and Training of Religious, Adaptations in Modern Religious Life. The various subsections have been written by different authors.