

superstition are gross. It would be a pity nevertheless if the whole indictment were shrugged off on account of them. The Church is not consistently 'priest-ridden', yet authoritarianism does so easily breed a type of mind voluntarily *prone* to leave initiative and responsibility to tutors and clergy, where the Encyclicals say that responsibility and initiative are ours. The core of trenchant criticism lies there, though Mr Blanshard obscures it by too much theatricality of the Galileo and Inquisition types. On one pioneer experiment he is indeed to be congratulated by all, Catholic apologists and non-Catholic critics alike. His chapter on 'the Catholic Plan for America' reviews the fundamentals of Catholic social teaching as set out in authentic Catholic sources, singles out as basic legislative issues the schools and divorce and birth-prevention, and then, in terms of these, drafts the Amendments to the United States Constitution that can be expected when the birth-rate-differential shall have enabled a Catholic majority-population in the U.S.A. to pass them by ordinary democratic means. This chapter, excluding its sections on the 'Plan' as already operative in Quebec, Latin America and elsewhere, is technically first-class controversy, and worthwhile debate.

Nevertheless (finally) Mr Blanshard is a dubious asset of the cause he champions, and that cause is essentially negative and emerges nowhere clearly. If you lambast the Church for tyranny and superstition and obscurantism, and allow it to be inferred (by many readers, no doubt) that the loyalty and devotion and training and self-sacrifice to be found among the faithful are not so much the spiritual strength of the Church (which your treatment has neglected) as parts of the 'machine' for world power; and if you set all this up in baleful contrast to a (never-described) democracy, and as 'un-American', you may be suggesting to ordinary readers (the less subtle ones—the great majority) that they should throw out the baby with the bathwater. The liberalism from which Mr Blanshard stems has been doing precisely this for four hundred years. How much longer?

A. C. F. BEALES.

VRAIE ET FAUSSE REFORME DANS L'EGLISE (*Unam Sanctam*, XX). By Yves M.-J. Congar, O.P. (Paris: Editions du Cerf.)

The sheer bulk of this volume may deter all but more leisured and hardy readers, and the ardour even of these may be somewhat damped by the announcement on page 1 that it is only the first of a series of seven such volumes of *Essais sur la Communion Catholique*. It would be unfortunate if the mere quantity of the work, and the time and attention which it demands, should put it out of the reach of those whom it most concerns. For while the thinker and the scholar will find it of the greatest interest, its practical applications are mostly the affair of those busy and

often harassed administrators who, in different ways and degrees, are called to guide and rule the Church of God.

But Père Congar is rightly convinced that this matter of the Church's self-criticism and self-reformation admits of no superficial and slapdash treatment: he is too painfully aware of the havoc wrought by enthusiastic but unprincipled or false-principled reform movements in the past or present. (Incidentally this book might well be read as a constructive counterpart to Mgr Knox's *Enthusiasm*.) Efforts at reform which consist in the mechanical application of external norms—in a Pharisaic literalism which confuses means with ends—also demand, and here receive, thorough theological criticism. But most of all it is the complacent ecclesiastical conservatism which virtually denies altogether the Church's constant need for self-reformation, and inclines to doubt the loyalty and orthodoxy of its advocates, which has stimulated the more critical sections of Père Congar's book.

He is, however, less concerned to criticise 'false' reforms than to establish 'true' reform on firm theological foundations. To this task he has brought together the fruits of his immensely wide reading and many years of painstaking and sober reflection. The teachings of Scripture and the Fathers, Popes and Councils, theologians and controversialists, both ancient and modern, are employed with intelligence and effect, and the patient reader may soon conclude that the author has allowed himself too little rather than too much space. That he has been allowed too little time in which to polish his work he himself acknowledges. For all its learning and scholarship, it remains an essay rather than a treatise, and he makes it plain that it is evoked less by any purely scholarly curiosity than by the vital needs of the various movements towards self-criticism and self-reform which at present activate many circles in the Church on the Continent, and particularly in France.

A work of this sort was badly needed, and few could be better equipped to do it than Père Congar. His discussion of the rôle of prophecy in the Church is especially stimulating and opportune, and his final section, that on the principle of reformation in Protestantism, is admirably done. Even where, in points of detail, he will not command general agreement, he should be thanked for raising so clearly and dispassionately many acute but delicate questions. Sometimes, however, he may arouse misgivings concerning more fundamental matters of principle: more especially perhaps could we wish for a clearer elaboration of his section on the 'two aspects of the Church'. He himself acknowledges the inadequacy of this chapter, but promises to treat of its contents more thoroughly in a work which (he pathetically tells us) he would already have produced 'were it not that those who urge me

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