

language ought, surely, to be at least systematic enough to make this distinction clear. The older creeds and confessions certainly did so; but much modern re-interpretation of them brings them to the point where the distinction is obliterated. I think it is a serious fault of this book that it shows no awareness of this distinction or of the problems which it raises for contemporary theology.

If we can really be sure of God in a way in which we cannot be sure of theology we surely ought to be able to state, if only in the most general terms, what it is that we are sure of. If it is of the availability of religious experience, our assurance is relatively trivial. If it is that a new order of creation is being brought into existence wherein the dead will be raised, the hungry filled, and the mourners comforted, our certainty of it is the most important of all possible certainties. But if all of the traditional religious language which seemed to state or to presuppose this certainty is to be reinterpreted in terms of present religious experience, contemporary theology ought at least to make this clear. If it is not to be, then some kind of boundary should be laid down, beyond which, when a putative reinterpretation is ventured, it may be re-classed as a statement quite different from that statement or statements of which it claims to be the reinterpretation.

The book is most stimulating and full of interesting detail, which makes me regret the proportion of this review which I have had to devote to adverse criticism.

HUGO MEYNELL

CORNELIA CONNELLY: A STUDY IN FIDELITY, by Mother Marie Therese; S.H.C.J.; Burns and Oates, 35s.

The life of Cornelia Connelly is surely one of the strangest studies in how sanctity is achieved—if indeed sanctity was achieved by her, and the volume under review presents a most persuasive case for thinking so—but it also gives an extraordinarily comprehensive picture of the strengths and weaknesses of Catholicism in the nineteenth century, and of the position of Catholics in England after emancipation and later with the restoration of the hierarchy. Cornelia had not only to contend with her own personal problems, which were agonising in the extreme (though the evidence seems to indicate that the decisions here were largely taken out of her hands). She was also the victim of the Catholic situation in England at the time, in which the old Catholics, the converts and the Irish mistrusted and disliked each other, and everyone was terrified of the effect of their actions upon their Protestant neighbours. The whole story is a most instructive object-lesson in how good people can behave abominably from what they take to be the best motives.

Cornelia's own character emerges as composed of contrasts which were understandably disconcerting to those around her. Following her husband's initiative in first studying Catholicism at all, obedient (though protesting) to

his decision that it was their vocation to break up their marriage and become a priest and a nun—in which, it must be remembered, every cleric whose advice she sought seems to have concurred—always intensely anxious to do God's will as manifested in the commands of her superiors and to lay aside her own wishes and feelings, she seems a model of what was then thought of as 'feminine' goodness. It naturally came as a shock to her husband when, once having embarked on her new life and begun her work, she refused to let him dictate the Rule of her new society, refused to let him interfere in any way. And throughout her life, however much she refused to defend herself personally against attack and misrepresentation, she fought tooth and nail to keep her society united and independent, to defend her educational theory and practise, and to win acceptance of her original Rule.

It seems to me, as an outsider reading the story, that she would have faced fewer dissensions within the society if she had in fact been more ready to defend herself, to make clear for instance that unpopular legislation was not her doing but that of her superiors. But this seems to be such an accepted mark of sanctity that perhaps it is simply a weakness of the twentieth century to fail to see its value. And it is wonderfully refreshing to find her writing to Bishop Grant *à propos* the lengthy and complicated dispute over the property of St Leonards:

I took your letter received by the 3 o'clock post. . . and read it to Our Lady of Sorrows asking her in her own sweet meekness to listen to it—and the interior answer I got was to 'burn the letter and tell the Bishop to forget what he wrote and to come and tell you what more you can do than you have done'. I have burnt it, my Lord, and now will you come down and tell me what more I can do than I have done?

One cannot imagine a nun writing to a bishop today in such a tone. Nor, come to that, can one imagine a priest today issuing a statement describing a religious foundress as 'one who is ready, on every occasion, to defy any and all ecclesiastical authority if such should suit her purpose'. It was certainly an age of plain speaking with forceful personalities clashing almost one feels because they were simply too large to leave room for each other.

This book leaves one rather breathless from it all: the numerous schemes and foundations, the legal wrangles which drew in so many of the great names in Victorian Catholicism, the violent switches of loyalty both inside the society and out, the tremendous benefactions which so often turned out to be almost the reverse, and above all the letters that, in true Victorian style, poured forth from all concerned in an unending stream (What a hard task the biographers of the telephone age will have by comparison!) As a history of the founding of the Holy Child Order it could not be bettered. It is to my mind less successful in conveying the earlier part of Cornelia's life—describing rather than actually bringing alive the charm and persuasiveness that must have been Pierce Connelly's, for instance, and leaving Cornelia's attitude towards her children as much of an enigma as ever. (An earlier study, *The Case of Cornelia Connelly*, by Juliana Wadham, Collins, 1957, seems to me far better in this respect, as well

as making some of the disputes that arose later rather easier to follow—perhaps because it gives them in less detail).

But on the whole I would warmly recommend the book to anyone interested in this particular period in the Church, as well as to those who are drawn to Cornelia Connelly herself.

ROSEMARY SHBED

BRINGING YOUR CHILD TO GOD, by Xavier Lefebvre, S.J., and Louis Perin, S.J.; Geoffrey Chapman, 18s.

The authors of this book have attempted to formulate a programme of religious education for very young children. In the first section of the book they examine the development of a child's personality between the ages of about three and five and then relate it to his religious training. In order to make this both intelligible and satisfying to the child's needs, each aspect of his growing personality, such as his sense of exploration and his imagination, has to be understood and made to play its part in his spiritual development. On the whole this is worked out in an interesting and helpful manner and it is mainly on the question of emphasis that one could disagree with the authors. Love and security are considered as merely one aspect instead of the very base from which exploration of both reality and the imagination can take place constructively. On the basis of the child's desire to grow it is suggested that the child should first be taught the greatness and majesty of God and the respect due to him rather than his love and loving care. 'So that when the child seems capable of silence and respect we tell him that now the time has come when he can begin to learn about God' (p. 128). But one cannot 'introduce' God at a particular stage. Fortunately it is more usual for the child to hear about God long before this age, and at an age when majesty means nothing, but love, egocentric as it may be, is already demonstrated by signs of affection and so has some meaning.

As the child grows feeling that he has always known God the extension of this knowledge should be given gradually, bringing it into normal conversation, by introducing such concepts as greatness and majesty as the child's widening experience makes this more comprehensible. To set a time apart, to insist on a silent reverential atmosphere, to talk in serious tones as suggested by these authors could easily deter a normally lively child from interest in God as well as encouraging the view that spiritual life has no connection with day to day living. Most English parents can only hope to achieve the calmness, silence, orderliness and respect insisted on by these French authors for a very brief moment at prayer-time.

The second part of the book deals with a summary of the principles governing religious training deduced from section I, and apart from additional details of methods and some well chosen themes, it is repetitive. The gestures proposed to accompany prayers are somewhat theatrical and would not be acceptable in