

modes of expression in the technical-industrial world, must we not trust in the educational possibilities of this new situation for deliberately implanting this kind of understanding in people's minds by using the techniques of literary and artistic criticism? For just the moment when we have lost the capacity to see the world symbolically by a process of intuition, we have perhaps gained the capacity to create, in a literate world, a widespread capacity to handle symbolism as it appears in literature and art, and so indirectly to grasp its meaning in the greatest art of all—liturgical activity.

BRIAN WICKER

THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF VIRGINITY, by Lucien Legrand; Geoffrey Chapman, 15s.

Fr Legrand has produced a book in which difficult and often debased words like 'celibate', 'chastity', 'virgin', and 'purity', which so often have the air of Canon Chasuble or the Pre-Raphaelites, are placed in a theological context and given their proper status.

Legrand's method is to consider a particular text in detail and then to shew how his interpretation is consonant with the broad general sweep of biblical thought. The close examination of individual texts is done with such competence and excitement that a trusting confidence is engendered preparatory to his theological generalisations. He writes with a fresh vigour of the rabbinic background of Colossians 1. 24, or the source of Luke 14. 26, or the historical setting of I Corinthians 9. 5.

From such discussion emerges his contention that, like the temporary continence of the Old Testament, Christian celibacy has a cultic emphasis; it aims not at physical or moral cleanliness but at consecration. A consecration which extends to the whole life of the Christian. Christian life is a life of praise, a liturgy of the temple of the Holy Spirit, 'the perfect cult of the living God' which is part of the whole liturgy performed by the risen Christ in his whole body. It is a sanctification, like Christ's sanctification, which prepares for death as an entrance into the fulness of glory.

Christian celibacy is, with martyrdom, the most radical way of sharing in the death of the Lord. But the death of Christ leads to his resurrection. We rise free with the freedom of the Sons of God. Marriage, Legrand remarks, for all its sacramental value, is partly bound up with the present times. Virginity can be understood only within the theology of the last things. It looks forward to the coming of the Bridegroom to his feast. The Christian who has not the worrits of a family has 'the care of the things of the Lord', he is at the centre of the New Creation, the Kingdom which is the community of those who wait for him, and while waiting have a care for one another.

We wait in a paschal time, and the Christian pasch is foreshadowed in the birth of Christ of a virgin, Mary. Legrand presents a careful parallelism of St

Luke's thought on Mary and on the cross. He suggests that the first two chapters of Luke's gospel are designed to figure forth a progress to a manifestation of Christ in Jerusalem, which hints at a later progress. As the death of Christ on the cross would be nothing without the resurrection, Mary's virginity would be mere wretchedness without the incarnation. Like the cross, Mary represents the weakness of the flesh, a weakness made strong by the vivifying action of the Spirit. The cause of contempt, the lowly condition of the servant, is made a universal wonder, 'this divine weakness is stronger than men' (I Corinthians i. 23). In Hebrew thought the woman's part in conception was totally passive. According to the flesh the womb that bore Jesus was inert. In Mary human capacity was totally renounced. In her weakness the Spirit created a new order. Mary's surrender shews us that our surrender to the will of God will produce a new glory in our lives.

I once asked a Sixth Former who could at most times be expected to give an honest reply, 'What do you think of priests?' He said, 'Well, some of them obviously do useful work, and doubtless we must have someone to say mass for us, but on the whole they appear to have escaped life. When I think of my father and the way he has to work and worry to bring us up, the priests often look like second class citizens'. I think that now, having read Legrand's book, I might make, in replying, at least a better explanation of what Christian virginity means.

HAMISH SWANSTON

ON BEING SURE IN RELIGION, by Ian T. Ramsey; the Athlone Press, 12s. 6d.

'We can be sure of God, yet tentative about our theology' (p. 23). Well, what is it to be sure of God? Is it mainly a feeling of present security and devotion, or does it include as an essential ingredient the conviction that God has acted mightily on our behalf in the past, and will do so again in future? If it is the latter, the theology in which we give rational articulation to our faith must not be so tentative as to gloss over this conviction.

As the author sees it, there are three major lessons to be learned from F. D. Maurice, the great nineteenth century Anglican theologian (on whose thought this book is largely a commentary), on the question of the nature of theological certainty. Of these, the first is the 'need to peg back all our assertions into an awareness of God', the second 'the need to be circumspect of any too extensive systematization, of any cut-and-dried theology' (p. 16). But however great an evil systematization may be, it is impossible that any department of language should at least be systematic enough to avoid radical ambiguity. Are theological statements to be evaluated wholly or chiefly in proportion to their expression or evocation of religious experience—as seems to be assumed by the first of these lessons? Or do they state matters of objective fact to which religious devotion and its attendant feelings are the appropriate response? Religious