

Reviews

TRUE WORSHIP—the fifth Downside Symposium, edited by Lancelot Sheppard; Darton, Longman and Todd, 16s. (paperback), 25s. (hardbound).

There are perhaps three distinct categories into which books on liturgy fall—or at least should fall. First there are the scholarly works, written for specialists, and providing us with the fundamental ideas and insights which, in the end, become public property. Such books are Jungmann's, Dix's, Bouyer's. Secondly, there are works of *haute vulgarisation* which do the work of making known and acknowledged the pioneering efforts of the first group. The work of Clifford Howell, or of Charles Davis in *Liturgy and Doctrine* exemplify this species. Finally, there are works designed to make intelligible to those who may be outside the faith altogether the significance of the liturgy as the Christian activity *par excellence*, which they must look to if they are to find what faith is all about.

A problem arises when we come across a book like *True Worship*: for, despite its many and various merits, and its conspicuous lack of serious weaknesses, it does not fall into any of these categories. We are not quite sure how to evaluate it. It consists of the papers read at a symposium held between English and French groups at Bec early in 1962. Some of these are by English contributors—Fr Crichton, Lancelot Sheppard and two Anglicans, Gabriel Hebert and Basil Minchin. From France come essays by Dalmais, Bouyer and Dom Paul Grammont (Abbot of Bec).

Perhaps the doubts I have about the book can be pointed by comparing this symposium with its predecessor at Bec—*Problems of Authority*. In that book a topic which was of immediate practical as well as theological importance was discussed from various angles, in such a way that people outside the Church, as well as those inside, came to realise (as the reviews made clear) that there was an approach to authority possible within Catholicism which they had not previously discovered. The book did something that had never been seriously tackled before by anyone. In the present case, however, this is not so. None of the papers discusses a subject not already discussed at greater depth elsewhere: but on the other hand, none of them is such that it will bring a genuine sense of novelty and refreshment to the outsider or the Catholic-in-the-street. I am not sure, therefore, how good it is *as a whole*. One feels that, delivered 'live', many of the papers must have stimulated very valuable discussions. But as a collection, they lack single-minded attention to a particular audience.

However, this is only a criticism of the collection taken as a unity. As separate pieces, designed for different purposes, these essays have many merits. The papers by Hebert (*Worship in the Old Testament*) and Bouyer (*Jewish and Christian Liturgies*) are the most likely to offer something unfamiliar, at a scholarly level,

to the specialist as well as to the 'general reader'. Fr Crichton's paper (the longest in the book, 38 pages) is a first-class piece of clear and purposeful compression called *An Historical Sketch of the Roman Liturgy*, and will appeal to many who might be daunted by Dix or Jungmann. It is historical, not theological, and gives a concise account of developments from the formative period to the nineteenth century, concentrating on those features which are relevant, both to a theological understanding, and to the contemporary liturgical movement and its origins. Dom Grammont attempts what is perhaps the most unusual task, in *Liturgy and Contemplation*. Referring to the fact that, among contemplatives from the desert fathers to St John of the Cross, the liturgy has often taken a minor, or even false, role in their thought, he tries to show why this was so, and to establish the deep connections which they missed. Unfortunately he does not always avoid the kind of jargon which gives religious writing a bad name. I am not clear what 'desecrated "sacrilization"' means, or 'spiritual "density"'. In the end, I feel that the connection has not been made, but only asserted; though one feels that the connection is there, lurking, ready to be seized upon by a more precise and rigorous thinker. Basil Minchin contributes a very clear and useful piece on the historical development of buildings for worship, in which he demonstrates how some of our present difficulties arose, and points to the need for a better theological grasp if we are to solve them. The problem of combining the sense of God's transcendence (his being 'up there' suggested by a vertical emphasis in design) with that of his immanence (his being 'out there' in the world into which we can see through the East window) is given a practical importance. The tension between the theological needs and legal obstacles is noted, and not only in the Roman Church is it a difficulty.

The editor's contribution—*Liturgy—the Present Predicament*—is, in some ways, the most important. It is the only one which deals, throughout, with contemporary issues. He finds the attitude of the English hierarchy to the problems involved thoroughly discouraging; the forward-looking moves that have come from Rome have been treated as if they were just another set of limitations. But bishops come and go: the more intractable problems concern the very content of the Roman liturgy in its present form. The symbolism is unfamiliar, and often seems inappropriate. 'The flickering Paschal candle has difficulty, not in dispelling darkness but in competing with the reflections from the glare of light in the street'. If we think of the 'biblical and patristic elements that constitute a very large proportion of our worship . . . we encounter again the unreality of any symbolism, any rite, that does not speak immediately to the worshipper'. Precisely: but unfortunately we do not find an answer to these problems. Mr Sheppard no doubt knows, and rejects, the answer so often given before—namely, get back to the pre-industrial age, back to mediaeval Ditchling. Is there an answer to be had? Are the traditional liturgies just 'currencies' to be changed at will, as the Bishop of Woolwich seems, at certain moments, to believe? If not, is there any answer other than that of education? That is to say, having realised that we cannot achieve an immediate, unmediated understanding of symbolic

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