

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

many homes, especially where there are also older children, but may have some use in school.

It is undoubtedly the third section which is the most valuable part of the book. Here the authors give a detailed programme for religious education either in the home or the school, and base it on the liturgical year, and on biblical material. A series of excerpts from Old and New Testaments has been carefully selected and adapted to the child's understanding. The content is invaluable, but the methods are perhaps more suited for classroom than home. We have few classes for three and four year olds in Catholic schools in this country, but for the reception class, the five year olds, it would be difficult to find a better introduction to religious training.

MARY BROGAN

GOLDEN LEGEND OF YOUNG SAINTS, by Daniel-Rops; Geoffrey Chapman, 12s. 6d.

This book is in the worst tradition of hagiography. The florid style is objectionable in that it is entirely foreign to the best children's books, and indeed is absent from any children's books written in the last thirty years. This immediately strikes an alien note. Both situations and characters are grossly overdrawn. Incidents are not allowed to speak for themselves, the moral is rammed home with exaggeratedly pious and sentimental comments. The saints are portrayed as too perfect. In some cases scanty incidents are embedded in shoals of words extolling their virtues. Holiness apparently comes without effort, without setback and in its completeness. These saints are so unreal that no normal child could identify himself or herself with the hero, with the possible exception of the martyrs. Moreover they are unattractive and the child may not even wish to resemble them.

The worst aspect of the book is the way sanctity is divorced from humanity. Apart from St Paul, Marcellus, and the martyrs, the only criterion of sanctity is the number of hours spent in prayer in church and the patient acceptance of illness. Do we want our children to think that this is all God requires of them? There is little joy and almost no human affection; this is a complete denial of humanity. It is implied that life is evil, perhaps it is better to die young. Despite the statement in the last chapter that 'Holiness does not mean living differently from others, it does not mean that we have to leave everything and shut ourselves up in a cloister or that we have to face ravenous lions on the sand of an arena' all the saints described by the author do precisely this. With the exception of St Louis and St Paul all either die young or enter a monastery or convent. And why at fifteen should Louis be 'already loved as a saint'? Why not as a good king?

The stories of St Paul, Marcellus, and St Brendan are exceptions; St Paul in particular emerges as a real person. The accounts of the early martyrs are also more successful, possibly because they are mainly limited to the occasion of their martyrdom, although these are not necessarily bloodthirsty and brutal