

theological literacy, such research can make for a deeper understanding of the needs of the faithful. I believe that we need more research that is as professionally competent as this, and research in depth which would stand up as well to critical scrutiny. To have added so complete, competent and readable a contribution to the sociology of religion is no small achievement, and one for which we should be grateful; all we need now is the 'creative minority' who can make use of it.

MONICA LAWLOR

THE MEANING OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE, edited by Enda McDonagh;
Gill, 18s.

In the summer of 1962 nine speakers, a bishop, seven seminary professors and a doctor, came together at Maynooth to discuss Christian marriage and the fruit of their work is this symposium. Professor Enda McDonagh, who edits this book, points out in the introduction that the present day decline in sexual morality has created a crisis in marriage and the family life. The practice of contraception, pre-marital and extra-marital intercourse and divorce are clearly evil but modern man has more to offer the Church in regard to marriage than such problems and the Church has a great deal more to offer modern man on marriage than condemnations, however necessary, of evils. The biological, psychological and sociological advances are not dealt with in detail; the scriptural and theological issues receive what is undoubtedly the most detailed and up to date treatment in the English language.

Again and again the various authors point out the strictly juridical treatment of marriage in the theology manuals and the virtual absence of any detailed inquiry into its sacramentality. This is not surprising, as Professor Donal Flanagan pointed out, when it is realised that for St Thomas at the end of the thirteenth century it was still under discussion whether matrimony gave grace, a matter not finally settled for another couple of centuries. Since then, as moral theologians became increasingly isolated from the great theological, psychological and other scientific movements of the ages, particularly those of our own day, marriage has been treated by the moralist in purely legal fashion. Professor McDonagh and Professor Häring removed these fetters by two brilliant papers in which Christian marriage was examined in turn as a source of life and as a community of love. From both there emerges a clear picture of marriage as a union of two people complementing each other in their bodies, minds and hearts in love, drawing their ultimate source of inspiration from the divine model of love in the Trinity. There is too a very valuable revaluation of the narrowly defined primary and secondary ends of marriage, a source of much contemporary misunderstanding. The majority of the papers are thoroughly scriptural in their background with a whole paper devoted to this topic, *Marriage in Scripture*, by Professor W. Harrington.

His Grace Bishop Beck, who opened the meeting with some of the disturbing contemporary facts about divorce, contraception and abortion, had this to say

in the discussion when asked the role of preaching in helping people with their marriages: 'My impression is that most preaching on marriage is concerned with morals and the moral aspect of marriage. I think there is a great opportunity for more doctrinal teaching on marriage; marriage as the expression of love, as the means of expressing God's love too, as a means of completing the Mystical Body and particularly as a reflection of Christ's relationship with His Church. All these things we hear about in conferences like this; I doubt if anybody hears about them from the pulpit. We are told about marriage in terms of what you ought to do or ought not to do, and we are not given the basic thing of the ideal of marriage as the state of holiness that it is meant to be for most people in the world.' Dr Marshall outlined in his paper and in the discussion the work of the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council in this country in promoting suitable educational, medical and counselling services for engaged and married couples to enable them to achieve the aims and ideals expressed in the conference.

J. DOMINIAN

THE BIBLE AND THE UNIVERSE, by Evode Beaucamp; Burns Oates, 30s.

Scriptural studies at the Pontifical Lateran University achieved some three years ago an unfortunate notoriety because of the obscurantist activities of Mgr Antonino Romeo. It is reassuring to discover that at the same time one of his colleagues was publishing a book that evidences a proper willingness to discuss scriptural matters in a modern way. Fr Beaucamp's work is enlightening not only in various marginal insights about etymology and archaeology, but in its presentation of the central theme of Israel's growth in understanding of God through his material creation.

There is a pluralist conception of theological studies which makes the distinction between natural and supernatural sciences, between the arguments of philosophers and the songs of the psalmists, extend even to the objects of their speech. The God of Philosophers is somehow in parallel with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This produces odd results. Men begin to think of the relation between natural theology and scriptural revelation as that of a rigid essentialist 'ergo' followed by an exhortatory 'dixit dominus'. Beaucamp shews that this is not the way of scripture. Any new knowledge of the world about them told the Jews something about God who made the world for them, and entered into a covenant with them. And God's revelation of himself taught them the proper value of the material universe. As they grew in knowledge of their physical environment so they grew in knowledge of God. Thus before the Exile no need was felt for Yahweh's power to extend beyond the confines of the promised land, but the political upheaval and consequent geographical knowledge gained produced a realisation of God's greater power. Evidence for this is shewn by, for example, a comparison of the genealogies in Genesis 10. Further, the dispersal of the Jews all over the world brought them to understand God as Lord of the entire universe, and therefore the Jewish understanding