

his critique of religion as a model for dealing with other fields. And this was only to be expected given the atmosphere of rapid secularization in which the Young Hegelians lived. But it goes no way to show that Marx viewed religion as anything but a product of specific and transitory socio-economic conditions. His phrases about religion as the halo above the valley of tears, etc., are too well-known to need quotation. This misguided interpretation of Professor Delfgaauw's is due no doubt to a desire to render Marx's ideas more acceptable (cp. the completely unfounded notion on page 105 that Marx espoused some form of natural right theory). But a genuine dialogue cannot be founded on a misunderstanding of one's interlocutor.

Secondly—and this is a criticism that applies so the whole book—Professor Delfgaauw evidently thinks that he can extract a coherent doctrine from any and every one of Marx's early writings and that they are all of equal value to illustrate Marx's thought. But in a thinker who developed so rapidly and who held such contradictory opinions in the space of a few years this is clearly impossible. Indeed, it is this approach that is responsible for the misinterpretation criticized in the previous paragraph. The point is highlighted by the inclusion, at the end of the book, of the translation of a letter of Marx to his father. Why this letter was chosen is baffling: most of it consists of unimportant chit-chat and lists of the lectures Marx was attending while the few interesting passages show Marx as an immature idealist and are completely uncharacteristic of his later writings almost any of which could have been more usefully included. Marx is a thinker whose writings must be viewed as a development and who cannot be quoted without explicit reference to this development.

Thirdly, it is a pity that the only books in English to which Professor Delfgaauw alludes are those by Bochenski and Wetter that deal exclusively with dialectical materialism as Soviet ideology. The books by Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* and Kamenka,

*The Ethical Foundations of Marxism* deserve a mention, if only in the bibliography. (It is possibly significant that some Catholic writers feel most at home when they can deal with a (parallel?) dogmatic system.) This leads Professor Delfgaauw to misdescribe Marx's own ideas as 'dialectical materialism', and he even has a chapter entitled 'Marxism as a Theory of History: Dialectical Materialism'. This is inaccurate, for Marx himself never used these terms which were popularized by, I think, Plekhanov at a later date to describe ideas considerably different from Marx's.

Professor Delfgaauw seems to have evaded such crucial questions as the precise meaning of the word 'alienation' or the relationship between the causes of a belief and its truth-value. He does nothing to substantiate his claim that religion does not entail an alienation from the world and what seems to be his basic criticism of Marx, to the effect that 'he failed to see that an insight into man's own determined status was already a victory over this determined status and in consequence put man in a position to influence the direction his determined status might take' (p. 122), is refuted by the explicit allowance by Marx for just that kind of freedom in his third thesis on Feuerbach: 'The materialist doctrine of the changing of circumstances and education forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that the educator must himself be educated.' The basic message of the book (which is addressed explicitly to Christians) is that religion should lead to a concentration on the world, not to an evasion from it. But this admirable message seems not to have been fully appreciated by the author himself when, for example, he writes that 'the final struggle will not be on economic or political but on spiritual territory' (p. 13).

In short, this is a book on a subject of vital importance that as such is well worth while reading. But its many deficiencies lead me, for one, to hope that it will not be long before we see the book that this might have been.

DAVID McLELLAN

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE, by J. Dominian. Darton, Longman and Todd. 35s.

Doctor Dominian's book is the result not only of much study, but of long experience, both interpreted by a sympathetic and sensitive mind. The result is a book which is pleasure to read, which is more than can be said of many books about marriage. They are so often either

incredibly euphoric, depressingly technical, or so anxious to avoid rashness that they end by saying nothing at all.

The aim of the book is to give a realistic and thoroughly Christian assessment of the meaning of marriage, and especially sex in marriage,

in the light of developments in the understanding of human psychology and physiology, and also in the light of development in the Church, in pastoral practice and in moral theology, since the Council. But present understandings grow out of the past, and a great part of the book consists of a careful and interesting summary of the evolution of Catholic thought (including Papal thought) on marriage, sexuality, and women. Some of it makes fairly nauseating reading, though I suppose one ought by now to be accustomed to reminders of those smug and sweeping prejudices that once passed for Christian teaching. There is also a very illuminating chapter on 'the Reformation and the Protestant Position' on marriage, sex and celibacy. This is a very useful balance, because Catholics are inclined to suppose that there is no theology of marriage of any significance outside the traditional Catholic one. Both in their insights and in their limitations the ideas of Reformed theologians help to clarify the Catholic position, and 'loosen' one's thinking a little. This less one-sided view of all the questions raised is a help in reading the second part of the book, which is an examination of current practices.

The outstanding achievement of this second part is to talk about the sexual act, children, and sex education, in a way in which physical experience, emotion, daily life, morality, social life and life with God are not separated into compartments. Many Catholic books on marriage, for instance, begin by describing a perfectly ordinary and authentic human activity, and then reflect on it in terms of, say, moral theology, in such a way as to make the situation suddenly quite unrecognizable as a possible way for humans to behave. It is interesting that sex-enthusiasts like Doctor Comfort do the same thing, in another direction. A description of sexual intercourse by this school of anti-theologians makes it appear almost as inhuman a proceeding as the curious antics described by some scholastic theologians. Doctor Dominian uses whatever point of view serves to give a clearer appreciation of what is going on. One may not always agree with his conclusions; at least he is clearly talking about people.

The chapter on 'Birth Regulation' is inevitably one of the longest, and it begins with useful historical survey of the development of thought on the subject. Doctor Dominian

considers all the usual methods of birth-control, and although he does not reject them in all circumstances his own feeling is that 'rhythm' is after all the most Christian way of controlling conception. '... contraception does in fact ensure that what the husband and wife offer to one another is not an intact person. . . . What is presented is an altered body, which would otherwise be a threat to one another.' Whereas the use of rhythm encourages 'self-control and sacrifice . . . they can certainly exist in those who use contraceptives but contraceptives in themselves do not encourage this possibility'. I am not sure myself that this view goes deep enough. I am inclined to think that the assumption present in so much Catholic teaching on marriage, that the sex relationship itself is the natural *focus* of efforts at self-sacrifice, is a false emphasis. The proper focus of Christian married love is God, and that love is worked out both in love and service of the marriage partner, and in love and service of others—children, and anyone else who needs help. If the focus of effort is clearly God, then sexual activity falls into place as an expression of it. It will find its right level, in kind and quantity, according to the needs of the couple in their search for a more and more complete self-giving. Self-sacrifice and self-control are not ends, and when they are made to serve as ends they lead to the kind of tension and smugness and coldness that, at its worst, made nineteenth-century sexual morality something we reject with unbelieving disgust. But self-sacrifice and self-control *happen*, when people are looking beyond themselves at something they love better than themselves. It seems to me that this is implicit in much of what Doctor Dominian says about married love. But some of the chapter on the 'Nature of Marriage' seems to encourage the concentration of married people on the marriage itself, as something they have, rather than on marriage as a way of loving—loving God, finally, even if people don't know that is what they are doing.

In spite of my reservations about bits of it, this seems to me the best book of its kind that I have seen. It gives plenty of information, but does not stun one with irrelevant statistics. It is useful for reference, it is clear and complete and helps to form one's own opinions. Above all it is thoroughly human, and Christian through and through. ROSEMARY HAUGHTON

THE DIVERSITY OF MEANING, by L. Jonathan

Cohen. *Methuen*, 1966. 55s.

This is an important and profound book, but unfortunately by no means an easy one to read.

This is mainly because of the author's scrupulous fair-mindedness, and his determination,