

the relegation to convents of girls unmarried. To establish a *tradition* condemning contraception supports its existence as an *issue*. How little it was an issue seems to be proved by the silence of Holy Scripture, except for the very disputable case of Onan. There is the same silence in the saner writings of other world-religions, and for the same reason.

The author would presumably commit India to follow Gandhi's lead on what is most fundamental to Gandhi's view – that the only justification of sexual intercourse is the breeding of children. A whole chapter might be filled with statements by early Christian writers in precisely the same sense, all ruling out what the Church today admits as the further end of 'companionship': the expression of married love in the way lawful within marriage. This is usually called the 'secondary' end of marriage, and has been regarded as strictly subordinate to the primary end of offspring. The *Schema* presented to us last October at the Third Session of the Vatican Council lays great stress on this secondary end, and several speeches questioned whether the secondary end was strictly subordinate at all.

On page 110, Gandhi is quoted as wanting to attach to Hindu scriptures a strictly authoritative character such as we claim for the Bible, or the Muslim for the Koran (the comparison is mine, but does no violence to Gandhi's thought).

On page 112, Father Nevett quotes Ramakrishna as regarding women as did some early Christian ascetical writers, as a danger to the spiritual life. Gandhi's views are called 'not so severe', though he does insist on 'intercourse only for procreation'. Gandhi insists that in the Hindu scriptures 'the sole object of sexual intercourse is the desire

for progeny . . . simple gratification of the sexual instinct would be counted . . . as lust'.

Father Nevett's only concession is to say that 'Catholic moral theologians would not be so severe; quite reasonably, they would not consider as sinful the normal use of marriage for the purpose of fostering mutual love.'

If you read Dr Messenger's *Two in One Flesh*, published seventeen years ago, or the New American Library's *What Modern Catholics Think of Birth Control* you will find page after page of quotations from the Fathers – both Greek and Latin – taking precisely the same view as Gandhi's. I find it exceedingly revealing that a modern Jesuit, often regarded as an official spokesman of the Church's social doctrine in India, should quote Gandhi as authoritative for India in much the same sense as St Augustine or St Gregory the Great for Catholic theology. It is this question that we must face up to.

There is a further significance in this book, to which I must refer even at the price of hurting the author's modesty. As a priest, he is even better known as philanthropist than as an author. Many British Catholics have read reports about his work in India by Father Bernard Basset, S.J. To most non-Catholics with intimate knowledge of poverty in India – especially of the suffering among women – the Catholic attitude is not merely unnatural, but extremely harsh and cruel. Perhaps it is providential that the exponent of the traditional view is a man so much admired and loved for his dedicated love of humanity.

India is not the only country where the difficulty exists. It is being met now, please God, by Rome, and at the highest level.

✠ T. D. Roberts, S.J.

THE EXPERIENCE OF MARRIAGE. Edited by Michael Novak *Darton, Longman and Todd*. 25s and 12s 6d (paper-back).

MARRIED LOVE by Emile Joseph de Smedt. *Chapman*, 15s.

Michael Novak wanted to know what intelligent lay people really thought and felt about Catholic marriage as a way of life and love, as opposed to

what moral theologians thought they ought to think and feel.

Did it work? Was it a success as a human way

of living? Did it help them to grow up?. Above all, did it help them to love?. The thirteen contributors are couples of all sorts of ages from the three-years-married to the middle-aged, and from various backgrounds and professions. They had to be thoughtful and articulate if their ideas were not to be distorted by inflexible habits of thought that made objective truth impossible, so this is not in any way a 'representative' sample, for which reason some people may dismiss it as the opinions of an over-sophisticated minority. This could only be disproved by studying the lives of people who are less able to express themselves and seeing if in fact their reactions and behaviour did correspond to the feelings expressed by those more able to make language serve rather than command them.

All the contributors were given a completely free hand, but asked to make their contribution personal, a record of experience and achievement (or failure), not a treatise on matrimony. Some suggested questions to be answered were concerned with the influence of Catholic education on sex in marriage, the relevance of the concepts of indulgence and control so beloved of celibate writers on marriage, the use of rhythm, difficulty in achieving a co-ordinated climax, the significance of sex for moral growth, the rival claims of family and profession.

At this particular moment in the history of the Church it is inevitable that the question that will loom largest in the minds of readers will be the question of birth control, and the use of the much lauded 'rhythm' method. Even a cursory reading of his book shows that it seemed overwhelmingly important to most of the contributors as well.

This is a fascinating book, one to read several times and then again, each time getting nearer to a totally new (for Catholics) understanding of what sex in marriage is for. For the really interesting thing is that the settling of the birth control question turns out to be the key to the achievement of a satisfactory personal synthesis of the various elements in married life. It is clear from these pages (and God knows it should have been clear without) that if you interfere, however piously, with the normal development of a sexual

relationship you are stirring up trouble. Some can surmount the trouble and emerge the stronger (though the heroism involved might conceivably have been put to better use), others can only keep their marriage by rejecting the present teaching on contraception. The reactions vary in this book. Some have been forced into prolonged continence, and have watched their love stretched thin by strain and irritation and a gnawing sense of futility. Some, deeply in love, have learned to live with the artificiality of rhythm, the tyranny of the calendar, and to laugh at it and keep their love young and humanly foolish and enormously strong. Others have learned to live with it, and that's about all. Some may possibly have been ill advised about the technique, for several record that the method is not only heart-breaking (literally) but doesn't even prevent conception. It seems unlikely that in a group of intelligent people with better-than-usual chances of getting expert advice their failure should in every case have been due to misuse of the technique of the 'safe period'. Some of the couples record their satisfaction with the traditional teaching, though one man admits that this may be because in his case an adequate income made a larger family little or no hardship, so a failure of 'rhythm' was not a disaster. Another finds the ban on contraceptives satisfactory to him, the idea of using them revolts him. Another can't see any sense in the traditional teaching but feels that one day it will make sense and meanwhile it is his job to be, if necessary, a fool for Christ's sake. This seems to me a consistent, human and Christian attitude, though not one I personally agree with. It is perhaps significant that the couple who find it easiest to accept the traditional teaching both in theory and in practice also testify that they do not find that sex is an enormously important part of their relationship, though their sexual relations are perfectly satisfactory and pleasurable. They feel its importance has been enormously exaggerated.

There are passages in this book, by no means all of which is concerned with birth control, that are almost unbearable in the way they evoke the agony of love torn two ways. They show a moral principle visibly destroying the fabric of a deli-

cately and courageously achieved relationship. It remains to be asked, can a principle that often destroys love, and can in any case only be made workable by arresting development at a stage when sexual desire has not been fully integrated into the whole relationship, really be a Christian principle? The question is fast becoming a rhetorical one.

The Bishop of Bruges attempted to do something similar to Mr Novak, but without demanding any special intellectual qualifications from his contributors. He had the idea of asking his people to write to him and let him know what they really thought about their experience of Christian marriage. The book consists of extracts from their letters, with the Bishop's comments. These sincere

but stilted expressions of often heroic attempts to serve God in marriage are moving and a little shaming to the slickness of the more sophisticated but less devoted among us. But the very fact that the contributors are 'ordinary' people means that most of them can only express themselves within certain categories which they have learned, among them the language of traditional Catholic moral instruction at school and from the pulpit. If they had other ideas they would lack the means by which they might be expressed. So I am afraid that the Bishop's dialogue with his flock is probably more of a monologue than he thinks. These people – and they really are marvellous people – told the Bishop what he wanted to hear.

Rosemary Houghton

THE CHURCH IS A COMMUNION by Jerome Hamer, O.P., *Geoffrey Chapman, 25s.*

During the past year or two we have had, in English, three important books, which deal from the Catholic point of view with the nature of the Church's unity. The first, published in 1962, is the Abbot of Downside's *The Idea of The Church*. It begins with, and concentrates mainly on, the structure of the Church, on the ground that this is the proper approach to the question, what kind of a thing is the Church, since structure of some sort has existed historically from the beginning, and must govern the problem of authority when it is asked, what does any Church say about its own mission to teach in Christ's name? Abbot Butler has been criticized for this approach, among others by some of his own Communion. His critics have tended to forget the reasons he gives, in his preface, for his relative preoccupation with what is a partial, though foundational and integral, aspect of the notion of the Church.

The second book is Fr Adrian Hastings' *One and Apostolic*, which appeared in 1963. This is complementary to the Abbot's book (he mentions it as such, before its publication, in a footnote to his preface). It carries on the Abbot's thesis to a fuller synthesis, adumbrated by him in his later pages; in this synthesis the Church is seen as a sacramental eucharistic communion guarded by

episcopal and Petrine authority. Both books are controversial, in the sense that they proceed by contrast with other, mainly Anglican, views of the Church's nature. Both however are eirenic and form an admirable basis for ecumenical dialogue.

The third book is by Père Jerome Hamer, O.P., *The Church is a Communion*; the original French publication appeared in 1962, the present English translation in 1964. This is a wide theological survey of the doctrine of the Church's unity. It is not controversial and makes no direct reference to the ecclesiology of other Christian Churches. Its survey is a useful and comprehensive complement to the first two books. It covers the changes of emphasis between the *Schema de Ecclesia* of Vatican I and the issue of Pius XII's *Mystici Corporis*. This leads on to a discussion of the biblical vocabulary and images used to designate the Church, of St Thomas as the theologian of the Mystical Body, his view of its relation to the Eucharist and the validity of his positions today. The growing emphasis, pre- and post-Reformation, on the governmental aspect of the Church's structure and the limitations it imposes are examined in the light of Bellarmine's definition of the Church and the conditions are thus set for a com-