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A History of the Theology of Marriage: The Theology of Marriage

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the creation, through its influence on public policy, of the 'welfare state' in which the government assumes the responsibility for meeting the essential rights of every citizen. This detailed and sympathetic account is of particular value for American and Philippine readers—both perhaps prone to shy away from socialism. But the result is that almost half of the readings in this part are from socialist writers or official Labour Party publications, which crowd out other topics. Other political developments are left shadowy in comparison. There is little to illustrate the gradual achievement of affluence by the working class, matching in many ways the 19th Century rise of the middle class. Finally, the two most crucial aspects of the post-war scene are only lightly touched on: the economic difficulties caused by the conflicting needs to maintain full employment, prevent inflation, balance external trade and keep the pound stable as an international currency; and the shifting of class barriers brought about by the redistribution of wealth and universal education. Passages on these, perhaps from Andrew Shonfield "British Economic Policy since the War" and Richard Hoggart "The Uses of Literacy" (both in Pelicans) would be useful and revealing.

In brief, this book tells the story of England from 1780 to 1960 in a vivid and readily intelligible manner. Despite crowding and some lack of balance towards the end, it is a valuable work in its entirety.

NICHOLAS BAYNE

A HISTORY OF THE THEOLOGY OF MARRIAGE

THE THEOLOGY OF MARRIAGE. By Joseph E. Kerns, S.J. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964, xiv, 302 pp.

Among the many titles coming off the press today on the subject of marriage, the study of Fr. Kerns holds a unique place. It could be more aptly captioned, A History of the Theology of Marriage, for that is what it is. Eschewing the philosophical *a priori* approach so characteristic of many treatises on the subject, the author chose to follow the more favored historico-theological method of modern scholarship. The result is an informative and stimulating kaleidoscope of the experience of the people of God in the marital state, and how this has affected their relationship with God, and we may also remark, how their relationship with God has affected their understanding of the experience of marriage. For both aspects of the question are pertinent and appear interwoven throughout the course of this study.

The author states in his preface that he is trying to find out if the state of marriage demands any basic change in a man's dealings with God or in other terms, what connection is there, if any, between man's individual spiritual life and his life with his partner in marriage. How does the light of revelation illuminate the manuscript of human marriage?

In attempting to answer this question, the author divides his work into three parts: The teaching of the Old Testament, Salvation in Pairs, and the Holiness of Matrimony. Each of these parts is in turn subdivided into further sections, in which a variety of topics pertinent to the question are marshalled. Under each topic a typical pattern is followed. First the evidence of the inspired writers is adduced, to be followed in chronological order by the testimony of the Councils, the Fathers and theologians of the Church and its more eminent spiritual writers. The research has been painstaking and thorough, as is evidenced by the myriad quotations from authors as well-known as Thomas and Augustine to some of the most recondite such as St. Philastrius and Hatto of Vercelli. All of them have been combed for every possible crumb of useful knowledge they may have to contribute to the subject. Sometimes instead of pursuing one topic, the author initiates a comparison between the divergent ideas and using the same methodology, runs them down through the centuries by opposite quotes in chronological orders from the Revealed Books and the teachings of the Church right down to Pius XII. Each chapter ends with the author's own summary of the doctrinal content set forth in the sources he has quoted.

The method used by the author is indeed a helpful one for displaying a wide variety of texts. It has this defect, however, that the topics do not always seem clear-cut; often they overlap and there appears to be a strained effort to arrange them in suitable form.

The diffusive tendency which results from the extensive display of texts is not satisfactorily counterbalanced by the brevity of the syntheses at the end of the chapters. After such a comprehensive coverage of original source material, it would have added much to the value of the work to have been given a perspective evaluation of the thought of the Church on marriage at the conclusion of each age of its theological development. Perhaps this is asking too much of an author in a single work and no doubt with the material now at his disposal, he could devote a subsequent study entirely to synthesis.

Amid such an array of sources, it is not surprising that at times the author himself slips into opinions which to the casual reader may seem to be somewhat contradictory. Thus on p. 174, he writes that: "Marriage is not the ideal way to God. And yet this is the life He provides for the vast majority of Christians.... He never intends any other state for them but marriage." Such a statement would seem

to imply that the majority of Christians are not in the state that God ideally wants for men; for an ideal state should be theoretically at least, accessible to all men. Does God ideally in His plan of creation and redemption want all men to be celibates. Far from criticising the author's apparently self-contradictory opinion, it seems rather an evidence that within the Church itself, the knowledge of the meaning of the marital relationship, its place in God's original plan of salvation and its relevance to personal sanctification are still imbedded below the surface of the Church's conscious awareness and are in the process of being brought up to the surface of her explicit consideration. Indeed if there is one truth to be gleaned from this study, it is the fact of the development within the Church of her understanding of marriage and virginity and of the relationship between the two. For this reason it is wise to heed the warning of the author in his preface: "The reader should be reminded not to interpret any particular view as representing the full teaching of the Church."

It is stated on pp. 138-9 that there has been a tendency toward equating habitual sexual intercourse in marriage with the placing of road-blocks along the physical union of marriage as not just a sheer quest for pleasure but rather as a symbolic gesture expressing the entire relationship the spouses have to each other. This is but one of the interesting insights into the manner in which the understanding of a dogma develops through the reflective meditation of the entire Church, as theologians drawing upon the existential experience of the married Christian, are forced to look more deeply into the profound depths of revealed truth. This is perhaps the most essential value in Fr. Kern's book. No better recommendation could be given than to say that it provides the reader with an excellent background for understanding the current discussion on the purposes of matrimony which has and will continue to occupy the attention of the conciliar Fathers during the sessions of Vatican II.

SAMUEL R. WILEY, S.J.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MEDIEVAL MIND

THE DISCARDED IMAGE: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature. By C. S. Lewis. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1964. x, 232 pp.

In the Preface to *The Discarded Image*, C. S. Lewis says that his book "cannot boast that it contains much which a reader could not have found out for himself." When one has finished reading this introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature, and re-