



DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

● BY VICTOR J. POSPICHIL

Burns and Oates/Herder and Herder, London, 1957, 218 pp.

This is a thought-provoking work. Following the trend of contemporary thinkers, questioning many a traditional teaching like birth control and original sin, Father Pospichil has devoted this scholarly work to a re-thinking of the traditional tenet on divorce. It is his view that the Church possesses the divine authority to dissolve all kinds of marriage, and thus permit remarriage.

When Christ said, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder"; He was not really promulgating a law, but simply the ideal desired by nature and God. "If one were to assume", comments Pospichil, "that this (text) is condemnation of dissolubility in general and of all its forms, then how could one justify the dissolutions the Church permits or grants today. Pauline Privilege and Privilege of the Faith, and of non-consummated sacramental marriages?"

It is similar with regards to the Council of Trent. The Council's decree runs as follows: "If anyone shall say that the Church errs when she taught or teaches, in accordance with evangelical and apostolic doctrine, that the head of marriage cannot be dissolved because of adultery of either spouse; and that neither of them, not even the innocent one who was not the cause of the adultery, can contract another marriage while the other spouse is living; and that he who has taken another after dismissing the adulteress; and she who has married another after dismissing the adulterer, commits adultery, let him be anathema."

If one interprets in the strict sense the wording of the definition, says Pospichil, it is obvious that Trent did not define that the Church *cannot* dissolve marriage; what is stated is that the *Church has not erred* in refusing permission for divorce, in accordance with evangelical and apostolic doctrine. The direct object of the definition was the infallibility of the Church

(*Ecclesiam errare*); indissolubility is only the indirect object of the canon. As a consequence, the indissolubility of marriage is not a dogmatic proposition *de fide*, but solely a proposition *fidei proxima*. Father Pospichil then cites some few theologians who share his opinion.

These and many other questions raised by the author merit attention and careful study. Is indissolubility with regards to sacramental consummated marriage really a dogma of faith or not? We hope an expert comes about to examine well Pospichil's allegations.

Be it dogma or not, we have to comment, nonetheless, that all explicit teachings of the Fathers and the Popes point to indissolubility. Father Pospichil has the disadvantage of running counter to the teachings of the Church's ordinary magisterium.

Father Pospichil propounded this thesis, moved by pity for those millions of men and women, who have been divorced or abandoned in solitary living by their marriage partners.

● P. SALGADO O.P.

WE AGNOSTICS: On the Tightrope to Eternity. By Bernard Basset, S.J.
New York: Herder and Herder, 1968. Pp. 139, \$3.95.

This book by Fr. Basset, S.J. is written in an autobiographical style through his main character, Harry Dawes. It touches on this post-conciliar period the ways of which are apt to upset and confuse Catholics of the type of Harry's wife, Margery, who prefer their 'old style—Pius XII' religion. Harry is not to be upset by either group whether pre-or post-conciliar. He has come to the realization that reality, especially Christ's reality in whatever trappings is the stuff of spirituality.

How Harry Dawes came to this conclusion, he relates to the reader, from the vantage point of his sixty-odd years. He traces how he, at the age of 38, after suddenly becoming troubled about his existence, began to look for God in earnest. How he finally found God, accepted Christ as God, accepted Christ's Church with the help of such diverse souls as St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, Aldous Huxley, Marcus Aurelius, William James, Paul Claudel and even Dag Hammarskjold, is told in the engaging and inimitable style associated with Fr. Basset and it all makes for fascinating reading.

● P. C. PASCUAL

SELECTED PHILIPPINE SERMONS, Christian Leaders' Series no. 6, National Council of Churches in the Philippines, 1967. 110 pages. P2.00

This book which is made up of sermons contributed by local prominent Protestant theologians, is primarily intended "to provide a record of the place and direction of preaching among Protestants after sixty-eight years of Protestant history in the Philippines..." Notwithstanding this purpose and the book's understandable peculiarities, the sermons could easily serve as a handy guide and reminder to both pastor and faithful of any denomination.

Out of the many, two striking examples lead us to profess such applicability. Cirilo Rigos' critical observation of Christian life within the walls of Protestantism finds similar situations with the rest of Christianity. He says: "Thus changes are taking place in the church and outside the church. But we wonder whether there is any change in the way Christians live. And if there is a change, we are not always sure it is for the better. On the contrary, if facts can be weighed in the balance, the setbacks of Christianity can be said to be more than its gains and the Christians whose mission is to help transform society into a community of God-loving and the God-fearing, are usually corrupted by the decaying social order."

Benito Cabanban's "Seminary Graduation Sermon" follows the same tenor of argument. His warnings and the following advices regarding the difficulties in the ministry are signposts which neophytes as well as oldtimers in the ministry will be grateful for having ruminated repeatedly.

Not all the sermons in this book however, belong to the same category. Nacpil's sermon and even that of Gravador would not be as effective when delivered as they would be in their written form. In passing, Mr. Nacpil's statement about the nuns would not altogether hold water and much less pass as a proverbial saying.

Though small a volume and modest in presentation, the reader is caught by surprise at the wake of very encouraging possibilities — the catholic priest learning the protestant pastor's eloquential technique and mechanics, and, we hope, a book of this kind to be produced by the collaboration of both leaders.

● HONORIO CASTIGADOR, O.P.