

- 5 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-drama* Volume III (Ignatius Press 1992), p 287.
- 6 *Theo-drama* III, p 284.
- 7 *Theo-drama* III, p 284.
- 8 *Theo-drama* III, p 283.
- 9 *Theo-drama* III, p 284.
- 10 *Theo-drama* III, p 285.
- 11 *Theo-drama* III, p 285.
- 12 See Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* (The Athlone Press 1993), pp 34-55.
- 13 von Balthasar, *The Christian State of Life* (Ignatius Press 1983), p 202.
- 14 von Balthasar, *Elucidations* (SPCK 1975), p 71.
- 15 Adrienne von Speyr, *The Handmaid of the Lord* (The Harvill Press 1956), p 84.
- 16 David L. Schindler, "Catholic theology, gender, and the future of Western civilization" in *Communio* 20 (Summer, 1993), pp 200-39.
- 17 von Balthasar, "Women priests? A Marian Church in a fatherless and motherless culture" in *Communio* 22 (Spring, 1995), p 169.
- 18 Paul McPartlan, "The Marian church and women's ordination" in William McLoughlin and Jill Pinnock (eds.), *Mary is for Everyone—Essays on Mary and Ecumenism* (Gracewing 1997), p 45.
- 19 Roten, "The Two Halves of the Moon," p 66.
- 20 "The Two Halves of the Moon," p 75.
- 21 "The Two Halves of the Moon," p 66.
- 22 "The Two Halves of the Moon," p 73.
- 23 "The Two Halves of the Moon," p 74.
- 24 von Speyr, quoted in von Balthasar, *Theo-drama* III, p 241, fn 43.
- 25 Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, p 5.

Reviews and Book Notes

THE ENVIRONMENT AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS by Michael S. Northcott, *Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp 379, £35 hardback.*

This is a good book. The author, who lectures in Christian ethics in the University of Edinburgh, argues that the environmental crisis can be understood and negotiated only by a recovery of respect for the harmonies of nature and that the Hebrew and Christian traditions, and especially natural law ethics, offer a more productive response than any.

The first two chapters recall the main features of the environmental crisis (ozone depletion, global warming, pollution, soil erosion, etc.) and the cultural and religious factors at work in the background (Luther's doctrine of creation 'reduced the whole world of nature to a

repository of goods for the service of man'): this could not have been better done in the space. The divorce between scientific rationality and knowledge of the good associated with Kant's philosophy heralds the conflict between 'natural ecology' and 'technological society' but growing public concern about the ethical implications of genetic engineering, animal husbandry, nuclear energy etc., shows the urgency of bringing morality and nature back together. Chapter 3 surveys environmental ethics: utilitarian views (Peter Singer), Kantian views (Eugene Hargrove, Tom Regan, Holmes Rolston), 'ecocentric' approaches (Aldo Leopold, Baird Callicott, James Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis, Arne Naess) and approaches that insist on relationality, community and care (feminism and virtue ethics). Christianity is often regarded as an anti-ecological religion but, as chapter 4 shows, in such thinkers as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Francis Schaeffer, Robin Attfield, World Council of Churches thinking since the Vancouver Assembly of 1983, Philip Sherrard, Paulos Gregorios, John Paul II, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Jürgen Moltmann, James Nash, Stephen Clark, Andrew Linzey, and many others, there is a remarkable 'flowering of ecotheology' — even if some of it is a 'rich brew' and much of it licenses 'explicit departure from traditional Christian theism' (as in Matthew Fox, according to Northcott). Ecotheologians increasingly rewrite Christian doctrine to deal with the environmental crisis but, Northcott says, this is often because they misconceive the Christian tradition and overlook its potential for redirecting post-Christian civilisation towards a 'more harmonious relationship with the non-human world'. There is no need to buy into 'the new ecotheological pantheistic orthodoxy'; on the contrary, as chapters 5 and 6 show, the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament offer a perspective on the created order and its relationship to our moral and social practices, which is more than enough to sustain the kind of ethics that an environmentalist seeks.

In chapter 6 and finally in chapter 7 Northcott develops traditional natural law ethics as providing 'the strongest conceptual base within the Christian tradition for an ecological ethic'. It is an advantage that this biblically grounded natural law ethics has similarities with the wisdom in other religious traditions. It needs, however, to be firmly based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead — 'the pivotal doctrine of Christianity in relation to the Hebrew understanding of the created order' (here following Oliver O'Donovan's *Resurrection and Moral Order*). Pope John Paul II's messages on environmental questions have been fine, but, according to Northcott, the pre-modern natural law tradition involved an understanding of the moral significance of *all* the orders of life from material to animal as well as human, and the Pope's radically anthropocentric conception of natural law is only one more endorsement of the fatal Kantian divorce between nature and morality. The main argument in Northcott's book, in a nutshell, is that this 'humanocentric revision' of natural law ethics,

which is now so dominant in Catholic moral theology, needs to be rejected in favour of an 'ecologically informed reappropriation of the pre-Enlightenment natural law tradition', precisely because it was focused 'not just on human life and human moral goods but on the moral significance and moral goods of the natural created order'.

Chapter 6 contains a fine exposition of the natural law ethics of Thomas Aquinas, as giving expression to 'the Hebraic ideas of created order, natural justice, natural wisdom and the relationality of human and non-human life, and at the same time to the Christian belief in the restoration of natural created order from the ambiguity of fallenness and sin, of human evil and natural evil in the Christ events'. It would be difficult, again, in the space, to provide a better account. One advantage, again, is that this natural law tradition is found in Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism and the primal religions, as well as in Judaism and in pre-modern Christianity. This will not recommend it to some Christian theologians. The Reformation, Northcott contends, completed the late-medieval rejection of the traditional natural law ethics by reducing it to just one conceivable philosophy instead of something that is manifested in the inherent order and relationality of the cosmos. The influence of natural law ethics continued, all the same, particularly in England, in the plays of Shakespeare and in the theology of Richard Hooker. Indeed, Hooker's version of natural law ethics turns out to be 'even more suggestive of an ecological ethic' than that of Aquinas himself!

Never overwhelming, always discriminatingly presented, the wealth of information about the environmental crisis provides the context for a well documented and rigorously worked out contribution to theological ethics — a very good book indeed.

FERGUS KERR OP

THE LADIES OF ZAMORA, by Peter Linehan, *Manchester University Press*, 1997, xvi + 192 pages £25.

This book, dealing with aspects of early Dominican history, contains two puzzles, a liberal sprinkling of wit and a great deal of refined scholarship. It is vintage Peter Linehan, the Cambridge don who has made the study of medieval Spanish history sparkle.

The two basic puzzles are these. Surviving documents tell of scandalous behaviour in the town of Zamora (near Salamanca) involving some Dominican friars and nuns before the summer of 1279. It is a tale of sexual improprieties, cross-dressing, general mayhem inside the nunnery and other irregularities. The records are definitely evidence of something, but of what? The first puzzle therefore concerns the nature of these allegations. Do they record an actual scandal or are they the record of a deceitful campaign to discredit mendicant friars trying to establish themselves in a world dominated by bishops and secular clergy? Linehan tends to favour believing that