the jungle of conflicting ecclesiologies to the heart of the matter.

In 697 AD the ninth abbot of Iona, Adomnan mac Ronain, devised and promulgated 'the first law in heaven and earth for the protection of women', newly translated from the original Gaelic and Latin text: ***Adomnén's 'Law of the Innocents'*** , translated with an introduction by Gilbert Márkus OP (Blackfriars Books, 36 Queens Drive, Glasgow G42 8DD, 1987, 26 pp., £2.50). Enforced by dozens of kings, bishops and abbots in Ireland, Scotland and Pictland, this law is one of the earliest attempts to limit the effect of war by protecting those who were non-combatants: women, clergy and children. While relying on Meyer's edition (1905), and directing us to the critical edition expected from Professor Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha, Fr Gilbert hopes — surely rightly — that this version will recall an important stage in the long history of trying to save the most vulnerable people from the horrors of war.

The second edition of Fergus Kerr's ***Theology after Wittgenstein*** has appeared (SPCK, London, 1997, 225 pp., £14.99). 'Scholarly, refreshingly clear and often droll', as Janet Martin Soskice said in her review in this journal (*New Blackfriars* , March 1987), this new edition of the book carries the original text together with a postscript in which the author concedes a good deal to criticisms made by Francesca Murphy and Russell Reno, and adds to the debate on Wittgenstein's fragmentary reflections on religion. The Stanton Lectures which Kerr delivered in the University of Cambridge in 1994-95 have appeared as ***Immortal Longings: Versions of Transcending Humanity*** (SPCK and University of Notre Dame Press, 1997, 213 pp., £12.99). Examining in turn the work of a variety of modern philosophers, Martha Nussbaum, Martin Heidegger, Iris Murdoch, Luce Irigaray, Stanley Cavell and Charles Taylor, the author contends that they all, to a greater of lesser degree, include distinctively theological issues in their projects. The thesis is framed, so to speak, by the great controversy over the relationship between nature and grace that divided Reformed theologians such as Karl Barth from Catholic theologians like Karl Rahner and Hans Urs von Balthasar.

Book Notes

HEAVEN IN ORDINARIE: PRAYER AS TRANSCENDENCE by Noel Dermot O'Donoghue, T&T Clark, **Edinburgh, 1996, 201 pp., £12.50 paperback.**

First published in 1979, drawing on deep knowledge of classical and modern philosophy as well as on poetry and the Carmelite school of spirituality, this 'treatise on prayer as transcendence within the "ordinary" of human life', as the author calls it in his brief preface to this new edition, is, as Rowan Williams says on the back cover, 'a wonderful and visionary account of orthodox Christianity'. At one level it contributes to the great nature/grace controversy which dominated Catholic theology in the mid-twentieth century: for the author, as for St Thomas Aquinas, the human being is certainly *capax Dei* . Focusing on such features of life as responding, pathos, loneliness, belonging,

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playfulness, listening, etc., he explores their particular significance in relation to the ever-deepening openness to the infinite which the transformation of these everyday experiences entails. Well aware of the 'darker side of mysticism', O'Donoghue can also be very critical of theologians — deploring Aquinas' apology for Old Testament ethics and Karl Rahner's doctrine that 'all decent folk from the first *homo habilis* to Martin Heidegger are anonymous Roman Catholics' (but is that quite fair to Rahner?). If there were an index it would be easier to trace the texts and controversies to which the author alludes; but then the reader in search of theological illumination of ordinary life might be put off if the decades of study and reflection that inform the book were to be revealed.

EVER YOURS AFFLY: JOHN HENRY NEWMAN AND HIS FEMALE CIRCLE by Joyce Sugg, *Gracewing Fowler Wright Books*, Leominster, 1996, 325 pages, £15.99 paperback.

By 'affly' Newman meant 'affectionately', and he meant it. Readers of his letters could not fail to notice the number he addressed to women, and in particular the way that he confided in them when he was under stress. Emily Bowles, who of course had no university education and knew of him through her brothers, had converted from her adolescent doubts to Tractarianism and visited Little more to hear him preach. Afterwards, at lunch, when Newman asked 'Will you have some cold chicken?' she was too overcome to reply. Partly through reading Emily Agnew's *Geraldine: A Tale of Conscience* (a three-decker novel 1837-9) and partly through friendship with the Eystons at East Hendred, she became a Catholic in 1843, never expecting to see Newman again. She joined Cornelia Connelly's newly founded Society of the Holy Child, eventually fell out with her over financial matters, appealed to Newman who advised her to leave the Society. In later life she published several novels and a good deal of non-fiction. She was the one to whom he wrote some of his bitterest letters, about the snubs that he suffered, including the famous letter referring to himself as being 'under the lash', that is, suspected by the authorities in Rome (May 1863). But she was only one of his many women friends. He was very close to his sisters; he had longstanding friendships with women in religious life, particularly the Dominicans Margaret Hallahan and Mary Imelda Poole; and he had some aristocratic friends such as Georgiana Leveson Gower (also a novelist, whose books Newman admired). Joyce Sugg expands more about these women's lives than the splendid notes in the *Letters and Diaries* could do. She has also been able to make 'much use' of their unpublished letters at the Birmingham Oratory. If anyone thinks of him as happier in the company of men, and even of fellow clergy, he or she need only track down the letters that Newman wrote to these women: they are essential to our understanding of his character.

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UNASHAMED ANGLICANISM by Stephen Sykes, *Darton Longman & Todd*, London, 1995, 233 pages, £9.95 paperback.

All but one of these twelve essays by the Bishop of Ely have been previously published, often inaccessibly, and bringing them together certainly makes this an impressive defence of mainstream Anglicanism. The first five explore the specifically Anglican inheritance, particularly in connection with the sacraments and the ministry: the Book of Common Prayer, Thomas Cranmer, Richard Hooker and George Herbert (the newly published essay). The next five concentrate on leadership, power and authority in the Church, insisting that Anglicans have a doctrine of the Church and of episcopacy which may have failings but in that they are not 'unique to Anglicanism'. He has two splendid pages on the 'authoritarian liberal' — 'an increasingly familiar phenomenon in the modern Church' — introduced by his suspicions of himself! In the remaining two essays Sykes argues first that there is, or could be, an Anglican participation in the Decade of Evangelism which rested on the tradition of liturgical praise, rather than on 'practices strange to — or remote from — the mind schooled upon our Prayer Books' (beautifully put!). In the final essay, partly a reflection on his earlier book *The Integrity of Anglicanism* (1977), he insists on the importance of examining the past — 'A Church which has not examined its past ... is liable to misinterpret its present situation'. Anglicans will 'find many things to regret and repent of' — 'English Anglican condescension is simply intolerable'; but this book is only one of the many signs that the 'rumour of the demise of the Anglican Communion is greatly exaggerated'.

A TACTFUL GOD by Simon Bailey, *Gracewing*, Leominster, 1995, 268 pages, £15.99 paperback.

With the full cooperation of the community now at Elmore Abbey, this comprehensive study of the life and work of Dom Gregory Dix (1901-52), monk of Nashdom, author of *The Shape of the Liturgy* (1945) and much else listed in the bibliography, and a major figure in Anglo-Catholicism, could scarcely be better. It should have had an index. He was dissuaded on one occasion, in 1940, from succumbing to the temptation that afflicted him from time to time to submit to Rome, by Dom Bede Winslow, who should be remembered as a pioneer Catholic ecumenist. What he would have thought of post-Vatican II liturgical reforms it is not difficult to imagine: he celebrated the eucharist according to the Tridentine rite at a side altar in the abbey until the end of his life. In a letter in 1936 he told a friend that 'the Middle Ages effected two vast improvements in devotion — frequency of Confession and a solitary Low Mass' (he was not joking). As *The Shape* itself makes plain, Dix believed in liturgy that grew with people's use of it rather than by being imposed from above. Much remains unknown, indeed unknowable now, about his early years. None who has read his account in *The Shape* of his Wesleyan grandmother's belief that 'at the Roman Catholic mass the priest let a crab loose upon the altar, which it was his mysterious duty to prevent from crawling sideways into the view of the congregation' is ever likely to forget it. This is a valuable study of an unforgettable character.

FERGUS KERR OP

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