

Loneragan's clearest and most convincing discussion—better than anything he wrote in English. Consciousness can be conceived as *perception*, as not a few theologians, to say nothing of phenomenologists, have done; or it can be conceived instead as *experience*, which is Lonergan's position. At issue is the very reality of the psychological subject, and bound up with it are central questions not only of Christology but of Trinitarian theology. Without attempting to explain the distinction Lonergan draws between the two conceptions, suffice it to say that the (mistaken) notion of consciousness as perception leads, for example, to the quasi-Nestorian opinion of the incarnation as involving an "assumed man," or to the conclusion that it was not really God the Son who suffered on the cross.

But to acclaim this book, or for that matter dismiss it, because it reinforces an orthodoxy would be to miss its primary point. The theology Lonergan offers here is not dogmatics or apologetics. It is what his *Method in Theology* he would call the functional specialty "systematics"—or at least it is moving in that direction. Its one and only intention is to shed light, to make connections, to promote orderly, intelligent insight. For reasons of pedagogical necessity, Lonergan had to work within an idiom that, since he wrote, has all but vanished. Some of the problems he addresses have perhaps vanished along with it. Certainly the questions that give Christology its momentum today seem far removed from many of the questions Lonergan was asking fifty years ago. Possibly, though, the way he goes about answering them in this book can nevertheless contribute to current discussion by suggesting why they might be important questions to ask.

CHARLES HEFLING

WOMEN AND CHRISTIANITY, vol.2, THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD AD 1000-1500 by Mary T. Malone, *The Columba Press, Dublin, 2001, Pp.298, £9.99 pbk.*

This volume looks at the history of women in relation to Christianity and it discusses many of the issues important for women's history in the medieval period. Questions of marriage and celibacy, authority in the Church, heresy, prostitution and the many different forms taken by women's spirituality during the years 1000-1500 are studied. To address these issues, Malone's chapters are either concerned with a general overview of particular themes, or deal more specifically with particular individuals and places. The book begins with a very helpful dateline and introduction, and ends with a select bibliography that would prove useful to the general reader in search of further information.

One of the primary issues during the first two centuries of the millennium was the question over who wielded administrative control within the Church. Malone points out that at the beginning of the period, the Church was still primarily lay-owned, by feudal lords, aristocratic lay monks and nuns, and that bishops were not necessarily in administrative

control. Indeed, she argues, the ecclesiastical reforms between 1000 and 1200 were primarily aimed at the restoration of clerical powers and the freedom of the Church from lay control. This was accompanied by an attempt to define the exact authority of the papacy and, through this, the wider authority of the Church.

Malone argues that within this struggle, women were mainly sidelined, defined only by their bodies and their usefulness both in their availability for marriage alliances and child bearing. Of equal importance was the parallel debate about the question of clerical celibacy, plus a need to clarify Church law as regards clerical marriage. During this debate, she suggests, women were demonised and vilified in order to make marriage less attractive to the clergy. This affected the way in which women in general society were viewed, and influenced the subsequent treatment of women religious. The following chapter highlights how these issues impinged on the world of Eleanor of Aquitaine, and touches on the lives of Abelard and Heloise, the internal political realities of Europe at that time, and the effects of the crusades on Church and state.

In her next four chapters, which I found more interesting, Malone proceeds to discuss issues more deeply related to women's spirituality. She focuses on twelfth-century visionaries, Beguine spirituality, the convents of Helfta and Assisi, and finally, through the lives of Catherine of Siena and Marguerite Porete, on how women challenged the Church itself. In some ways Malone's linking of Catherine and Marguerite in this way is problematical. Although both women presented a challenge to reform, they did so from very different starting points. Marguerite, coming from outside the official structures of the Church and with little support within it, was always going to be in a vulnerable position in a time of increasing orthodoxy, and her challenge ultimately ended in her death. Catherine's challenge to Church reform, even though it involved pressure at the highest level, as her letters to popes and secular leaders testify, was mounted from within a reputation for holiness and a recognised position in, and with the support of, the Dominican Order.

Chapter 8, 'Women on the Edge', deals with two of the perceived sins committed by women, heresy and prostitution, although once again this conjunction seems rather strange. However, in dealing with recluses and pilgrims, particularly in the persons of Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe, Malone achieves a more natural grouping because it is known their lives overlapped. Indeed, Margery met and consulted with Julian. The penultimate chapter argues that throughout the medieval period two models were offered for the nature of 'woman'. One was Our Lady, mother, virgin, queen, bride and advocate. The other was Mary Magdalene, repentant prostitute, lifelong hermit penitent, apostolic preacher (southern France), and model of prayerful meditation. Both models are still recognisable in parts of Church teaching today.

In conclusion, what Malone sees as important in these medieval women was their momentous encounters with the God in whose image

they were created, and their identification with the person of Christ. This in turn meant that, against all prevailing custom, they were called to write, proclaim and preach their discoveries to any who would listen. She finally states that it is a tragedy and almost irreparable loss to our Christian tradition that this wisdom was not at the time allowed to modify the mainstream development of Christian teaching. She goes on to argue for medieval women's voices to become meaningfully present in today's Church.

This book is a clear and interesting exposition of many of the issues and of the voices of medieval women. It will appeal particularly to anyone who is looking for a sound and well-written introduction to the subject.

ANTONIA LACEY

THE CONCEPT OF NATURE by John Hapgood, *Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 2002, £10.95 pbk.*

This book, based on the Gifford Lectures for 2000, aims to do a job of what Mary Midgley calls 'philosophical plumbing': to check that the concept of nature, which we use so often without reflection, is in good order and able to do its job. The first chapter identifies what Hapgood sees as the three main senses of the word: 'the essential characteristics of a thing'; 'a force which makes things what they are'; and 'the entire physical world'. He then discusses five areas of study or practice in which 'nature' is an important concept: the natural sciences, conservation, ethics, technological development and theology.

The second chapter argues that we need to study nature as a whole at a range of levels. It is not enough to 'explain' the whole by reference to fundamental mathematical formulae. The third chapter explores the way in which the countryside and wilderness that many of us wish to conserve is both given and socially constructed. Hapgood goes on to argue for a 'sensible middle ground' between anthropocentric exploitation and treating all species, including ourselves, as equal. The chapter on ethics outlines and defends a natural law ethics interpreted along the lines of John Finnis', but with an emphasis on its potential for development over time. The penultimate chapter focuses on questions of the genetic manipulation of human beings and food crops. Finally, Hapgood sets the physical and human worlds in their theological context, and explores their 'potentiality' for 'ever-increasing complexity in response to the open-endedness of their environment' as a witness to 'God's continuing creativeness'.

The project is a worthwhile one, but I was disappointed by its execution. The comparison may be unfair, but Hapgood's analysis of the uses of the word 'nature' does not approach the subtlety or precision of C.S.Lewis' in *Studies in Words*. Moreover, he often fails to show clearly or rigorously how his analysis of 'the concept' applies to his later arguments. His underlying problem may be one that Lewis revealed: there is no one concept of nature, but a loosely connected bunch of concepts, which