

they also sometimes attempted to speculate more generally on the nature of the political realm itself. . . ."

The monk Hugh of St. Victor saw in his *Didascalion* of the late 1120s, according to Nederman, that "where ethics treats of personal virtue and economics of the material circumstances of the household, politics is concerned with its own special end, namely, the good of the public sphere. The study of politics thus requires different principles and yields different sorts of conclusions. . . ." And in John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* (1159), a central assumption, notes Nederman, is that "political questions may be treated in separa-

tion from moral and theological issues, even if there exists an ultimate interconnection among them."

If the Latin translation and circulation of Aristotle's *Politics* about 1250 thus really had no *revolutionary* impact on medieval thinking, that is not because Aristotle's ideas had no effect. On the contrary, Nederman says, his thought "exercised a far more pervasive influence upon philosophical inquiry into politics during the Middle Ages than has hitherto been suspected." The lessons of Aristotle's *Politics* were readily absorbed after 1250, not because they were new but because they reinforced existing beliefs.

The Limits of Toleration

"On Toleration and Tolerance" by Maurice Cranston, in *Quadrant* (Mar. 1991), 46 George St., Fitzroy, Victoria, 3065, Australia.

Voltaire (1694–1778), battling religious extremism in France but lacking any influence on government or politicians, sought to persuade his countrymen to exercise more personal tolerance. English philosopher John Locke (1632–1704), by contrast, championed *toleration* as public policy—but thought it had limits. Locke's biographer, Maurice Cranston, believes that both men's views are relevant today.

A revival of anti-Protestant fanaticism among French Catholics—"not entirely unlike the fanaticism we observe in Islam today," Cranston says—prompted the elderly Voltaire to write his *Treatise on Toleration* (1763). Posing in the work as an obedient Catholic, Voltaire argued that man is unable fully to understand events in his own life, let alone know the mind of God. As no church can prove it has the true religion, it is best to put up with the other sects, however mistaken they may seem. Voltaire hoped to change people's attitudes, and in that way "to shame their rulers, and especially the religious authorities, out of the practice of persecution," Cranston writes.

Locke, on the other hand, appealed directly to government leaders. In a paper he wrote in 1677 for the Whig leader, the first Earl of Shaftesbury, the philosopher

argued that all Protestant dissenters should be tolerated because their beliefs and forms of worship, however offensive to England's ruling Anglicans, did not disturb the nation's tranquillity. Roman Catholics, however, were another matter, Locke insisted. England was being brought to the edge of civil war by the question of whether King Charles II's Roman Catholic brother, James, should be allowed to accede to the throne in the event of Charles' death. Catholics, Locke claimed, did not merit official toleration because their opinions were "destructive of all governments except the Pope's." They were, in effect, a subversive political movement.

Today, Cranston maintains, "[T]he Islamic faith has become the sort of subversive positive force, and menace, that the Catholic church was, rightly or wrongly, in Locke's eyes." The death sentence imposed on novelist Salman Rushdie by the Ayatollah Khomeini and "accepted as authoritative by the Muslims living in England," Cranston says, provides "an example of what Locke called 'obedience to a foreign prince.'" Muslim leaders in England have even demanded a separate parliament. In these circumstances, Cranston says, Locke's message, as well as that of Voltaire, remains pertinent. "We must cul-

tivate the spirit of tolerance in our hearts; but we should not allow the policy of toleration to be exploited and abused by

fanatical sectarian groups which are subversive political movements in ecclesiastical disguise."

Religion As Therapy

"Saving Therapy: Exploring the Religious Self-Help Literature" by Wendy Kaminer, in *Theology Today* (Oct. 1991), P.O. Box 29, Princeton, N.J. 08542.

Millions of Americans read religious self-help books. M. Scott Peck's first tome, *The Road Less Traveled* (1978), was on the best-seller list for years, and works by such authors as Charles (Grace Awakening) Swindoll and Gordon (*Renewing Your Spiritual Passion*) MacDonald also have worldwide audiences. Such books, reports Kaminer, a lawyer and visiting scholar at Radcliffe, "are marketed as primers on personality development and psychotherapy, child rearing, spouse abuse, depression, and despair, as well as the search for love, happiness, and salvation." The books portray God as a loving parent, and advise readers to acknowledge their dependence on Him, to reject individualism, and to love themselves as well as their neighbors.

Nineteenth-century liberal Protestantism, for all its faults, at least encouraged people to act to shape their environments, Kaminer says. "Now popular religion, like a 12-step [recovery] group, [tells] us that we're powerless." Most of the pop religious literature is devoid of "thoughtful discussion of moral behavior." The writers provide "a laundry list of moral wrongs—abortion, homosexuality, adultery, athe-

ism, and rebellion—but no guidance in resolving moral dilemmas."

The writers usually "claim a fellowship with their readers, admitting their own fallacies, sins, and neuroses." MacDonald devotes a whole book to his own repentance of adultery. But they also set themselves up as authorities, even as they disclaim any higher expertise. Peck, for example, "bemoans our tendency to 'let our authorities do our thinking for us,'" but clearly regards himself as an authority. He speculates that people who "slip away" from his workshops "just cannot bear that much love." Individuals who challenge him, Kaminer says, are almost always presented in his books as wrong.

Peck and the other Protestant writers all stress strongly the need to surrender one's self to God. Peck maintains that "only two states of being [exist]: submission to God and goodness or the refusal to submit to anything beyond one's own will, which refusal automatically enslaves one to the forces of evil"—a proposition Kaminer finds "chilling." In people's "eagerness to submit," she remarks, "not everyone can distinguish God from the devil."

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

Crying No Wolf

"Biodiversity Studies: Science and Policy" by Paul R. Ehrlich and Edward O. Wilson, and "Extinction: Are Ecologists Crying Wolf?" by Charles C. Mann, in *Science* (Aug. 16, 1991), American Assoc. for the Advancement of Science, 1333 H St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

Ecocatastrophe is not too strong a word for the specter raised by biologists Paul Ehrlich of Stanford and Edward Wilson of Harvard. The destruction of tropical rain forests and other natural habitats, they as-

sert, is accelerating the extinction of precious species of animals, plants, and microorganisms. Tropical deforestation alone, they calculate, now causes the loss of at least .2 percent of all species in the