

THE FATHER'S WILL: CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION AND THE GOODNESS OF GOD
 by Nicholas E. Lombardo OP, *Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013, pp. xi + 270, £ 65.00, hbk*

This is a book about the theology of ransom and its claim to be taken seriously in an age when the 'rehabilitation of the Devil's ransom argument' may seem like uphill work. It begins with an introduction giving a brief historical survey of the history of the problem, followed by Part I's five chapters setting out clearly the *Philosophical prolegomena*: 'intending and willing'; 'moral value and moral obligation'; 'double effect reasoning'; 'the ethics of self sacrifice' and 'God's will, moral evil and the crucifying of Christ'.

Part II looks at the 'New Testament evidence', in two chapters on 'Jesus' attitude towards his death' and 'The crucifixion in God's plan of salvation' respectively. The author argues in the first of these that the gospels are consistent in portraying Jesus as knowing and accepting that he will die and regarding his death as fulfilling his mission. In the second he sets out the case for saying that 'God gave Jesus over to his death, and in doing so obtained something for our benefit and salvation'.

The culminating chapters of the book come in Part III, with its analyses of Anselm's argument in the *Cur Deus Homo* and Peter Abelard's response, and its substantial final chapter 'The Devil's Ransom revisited'. This chapter argues that the exchange between Anselm and Abelard shifted the focus away from the 'ransom' theories which had been the familiar stuff of the patristic debate. The reader is taken in detail through the varieties of the patristic arguments of the millennium before Anselm and Abelard took their opposing positions. The 'ransom' theories, as Anselm realised, depend both on a strong theory of Satan and an acceptance of his 'Devil's rights' and power over sinful humanity. Dr. Lombardo's conclusion is that the 'Devil's ransom' 'interpretation of the Crucifixion' deserves to be rescued from its 'eclipse' and a 'warm welcome back into the fold of mainstream theological reflection'. It gives a 'role to evil' in the drama.

This is asking a good deal, but the book makes its case throughout with care, erudition, thoroughness, modesty, clarity and elegance. And even for those who may not wish to accept its conclusions it offers a tempting invitation to revisit many corners of the discussion of this central question of the purpose and achievement of the Crucifixion.

G. R. EVANS

OBEYING THE TRUTH: DISCRETION IN THE SPIRITUAL WRITINGS OF SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA by Grazia Mangano Ragazzi, *Oxford University Press, New York, 2014, pp. xvi + 197, \$ 45.00, hbk*

Dr Grazia Mangano Ragazzi is an independent researcher with an international academic formation in theology. She brings to this very accomplished study of St Catherine of Siena (c.1347–1380) the kind of passionate engagement that characterised the saint herself. The quip, that mysticism begins with mist and ends in schism, is not applicable to Catherine, and from Mangano Ragazzi's book we can see why in scholarly detail. Catherine's works are available in modern English translation by Suzanne Noffke, and now we also have an up-to-date and reliable point of entry in English into the life and thought of a most remarkable saint with the focus on a single, pivotal term.