

an impressively thorough knowledge of the primary and secondary literature (no mean feat when one is writing on Rahner)—and a lucidly written one. It contains a great deal of reliable and clear exposition; what is disappointing, however, is that it fails to go much beyond this. Nevertheless, because of the thoroughness of Marmion's scholarship and the clarity of his prose, it is a book that advanced students may find useful. Marmion begins with a chapter on the notion of 'spirituality' in general, tracing the development of the term and attempting a definition. He then turns to Rahner's understanding of spirituality in particular. His thesis is that theology and spirituality are closely allied in Rahner's thought, and this is perhaps substantiated by the fact that in his exploration of Rahner's understanding of spirituality Marmion in fact touches on many of the central themes of Rahner's work, including his understanding of God as mystery and his theories of religious experience, of grace and of the anonymous Christian. Marmion also examines the Ignatian dimension of Rahner's spirituality, and summarizes some of the most prominent critics of Rahner. Throughout his treatments are thorough and sensitive to the developments in Rahner's thought.

KAREN KILBY

**AGAPE, EROS, GENDER** by Francis Watson, *Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000. Pp. x + 268, £37.50 hbk.*

This book is advertised in the preface as an 'attempt to develop an interdisciplinary approach to biblical interpretation', and in both conception and execution it achieves this aim admirably. Part of its success lies in the fact that, though it is clearly a work of biblical scholarship, it cannot be ignored by moral and doctrinal theologians working on questions of theological anthropology, who will find their work enriched both by engagement with its central arguments and by its example. Standards of production are excellent; real footnotes, and indexes to persons, subjects and biblical references.

The title will set certain obvious questions running in the mind of a potential reader. How does the author understand the relation of *agape* and *eros*? In an important sense the whole work is an answer to that question, but it is noteworthy that the meaning of *eros* is drawn somewhat more narrowly here than in a number of contemporary treatments. The 'project' of the book, and (if the argument is correct) of Pauline ethics — Paul's work constitutes the book's primary textual focus—is the resolution of the problematic of *eros*, understood paradigmatically in sexual response. The narrow understanding of the erotic (or of *eros*, personalised as 'he' throughout) leads eventually to a sharp differentiation of marriage from other forms of human relating. This constitutes an alternative, if not in itself a challenge, to the contemporary association of *eros* with friendship; if marriage is a 'species of friendship' at all, it seems to be one marked off, significant more for its distinctness than for any 'continuity' with other 'species'. 'Desire' where it is treated of in this book, is desire of a particular

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character; Paul is, after all, not negative about everything which may be termed desire (eg. Phil. 1:21-26, 4:4), and the centrality of desire-for-the-prohibited is brought out on p.154. Readers may also want to know that the word 'gender' in the title does not signal any established commitment to a 'constructivist' programme; it seems, in fact, that the choice of word is determined every bit as much by the diminishing of 'sex' to a synonym for 'sexual intercourse' (see pp93ff) as by any constructivist or essentialist concerns.

The form of the book is three parts, each containing two chapters, the second of which is a 'commentary' on a particular Pauline text—in turn 1 Corinthians 11, Romans 7 and Ephesians 5. (There is a defence of Paul's authorship of Ephesians in note 3 on p223, where the important point is made that questions of authorship cannot be regarded as irrelevant in the light of a 'canonical' approach to Scripture. This is a particularly interesting point to bear in mind when considering how to proceed with a theological reading of the early chapters of Genesis; see, for example, n.15 on p. 250f, on Barth and the 'P' and 'J' creation accounts, compared with Professor Watson's own treatment.) Chapters 1, 3 and 5 constitute 'placements' of the themes to be handled in each partnering chapter, through a discussion of the work of (respectively) Virginia Woolf, Freud and Augustine, and Luce Irigaray. In Irigaray's case the approach is through a reading of part of *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, though demonstrating a wide knowledge of her other works; in the others a range of texts serves to generate the reflections and arguments which will prepare us for a handling of the biblical text.

The overall treatment of the themes covered may appear superficially to have quite 'conservative' implications (in the relationship of marriage to cohabitation, for example), but this would be to underplay the radical demands which might be constitutive of 'marital *agape*'. The nuanced, gently critical but ultimately positive handling of the theme of veiling (chapter on 1 Corinthians 11, but then episodically throughout) serves both as a marker of the danger of *eros* and as a kind of affirmation of the statement which opens chapter one, and which might serve as a text for the whole: 'Neither is man apart from woman, nor woman apart from man, in the Lord' (1 Cor 11:11). It is a sign of the richness of the book that minor issues which function almost as asides—try the question of gender-reference to the third person of the Trinity, p. 210 and footnote—should be capable of sparking lively and fruitful debate. If the debate which this and other aspects of the book raise are handled with anything like its own honesty and elegance, the work may be a landmark in biblical reflection on human sexual existence.

Two points in conclusion. First, the honesty of the author extends to a quite explicit willingness to relegate 1 Cor 14:34-5 to secondary status (see footnote on p.72f), and certainly there is a problem here ('at odds with its immediate and broader contexts'). Yet the wrestling with this issue, at least on the printed page, seems dominated by a particular set of presuppositions as to what ought to be said, and the 'clearly' which

accompanies the (otherwise delightful?) game of 'good' and 'bad' texts on p. 230 might properly be questioned. Connected with this is a slight sense that Barth and von Balthasar had lost some of the arguments before they even had their chance to make their points in the closing pages. And secondly, whilst it is excellent to see the preface to the marriage service of the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Church of England presented positively, it is not quite clear that its revision in the 1928 prayer book resulted from 'moral fastidiousness and reticence about sexual matters' (p. 96,n.2). Their point might simply have been that, contra the 1662 rite, marriage was not originally given as a 'remedy against sin'; and in making that point they are surely being good Augustinians!

DAVID LEAL

**THE GROUND OF UNION: DEIFICATION IN AQUINAS AND PALAMAS**  
by A.N. Williams *Oxford University Press, OXFORD & NEW YORK, 1999.*  
Pp. 222, £34.99 hbk.

Thomas Aquinas (1225?-1274) and Gregory Palamas (c.1296-1359)—'Thomism' and 'Palamism'—are definitive for Western Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christianities respectively. They have long been regarded, on both sides, as incompatible. In this brilliant book, Anna Williams sets out to show that, since each holds to the doctrine of sanctification as 'deification', they are not so far apart after all. *The Ground of Union* started life as a dissertation supervised by George Lindbeck at Yale, where Williams has been teaching Anglican theology: she takes up an appointment in Cambridge this autumn.

What first needs to be cleared away are the standard views. Well into the 1960s, following Martin Jugie in the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* (1932), Catholics believed that Gregory's distinction between God's essence and energies (God's essence remains unknowable; God's uncreated energies can be directly experienced as deifying grace) ruined the doctrine of divine simplicity (no difference between being and doing in God) and was little better than outright heresy. Thomists were equally suspicious of hesychasm (the prayer of 'quiet' that might issue in physically seeing the light that surrounded Christ on Mount Tabor), long practised on Mount Athos (where Gregory was a monk).

On the Orthodox side, in major theologians like Paul Evdokimov and Vladimir Lossky, as well in much more widely read books by Philip Sherrard, Aquinas and Thomism have been regarded as hopelessly rationalistic, the product of admitting Aristotelian philosophy into theology at Paris (where of course Thomas was a professor).

Jugie's hostile account of Palamism should have been discredited years ago. As long ago as 1927 the great Jesuit scholar I. Hausherr published the first of his explorations of hesychast spirituality. In 1935 Yves Congar welcomed M. Lot-Borodine's epoch-making series of articles on divinization in Greek patristic literature (1932-33; reprinted 1970). Clement Lialine (monk of Chevetogne), in *Eastern Churches Quarterly* (1945-46),