

God's immanence and ubiquity.

That stated, Thomas Weinandy's most recent book remains a highly instructive text. Over and against a large body of contemporary thinkers it deploys an impressively bold and independent argument that resonates with much of traditional Christian thought. It reasons in a detailed and painstaking fashion. Finally, its central thesis, that God is impassible yet passionate, is overwhelmingly difficult to resist.

PHILIP KENNEDY OF

MYSTERY AND METHOD: THE OTHER IN RAHNER AND LEVINAS by Michael Purcell, *Marquette University Press, Milwaukee, 1998*. Pp. xxxiv 394, \$ 40.00 hbk.

A SPIRITUALITY OF EVERYDAY FAITH: A THEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE NOTION OF SPIRITUALITY IN KARL RAHNER by Declan Marmion, *Peeters Publishers, Leuven, 1998*. Pp. xhv+372, £ 21.95.

Michael Purcell sets out to bring Karl Rahner and Emmanuel Levinas into conversation, to read them in such a way that they become mutually enlightening. On the face of it this is no easy task. It is not just that Levinas is a Jewish philosopher and Rahner a Roman Catholic theologian, but that at first sight Rahner seems to be getting up to exactly what Levinas is trying to get away from. Levinas wants to overcome ontology, Rahner stands firmly within the ontological tradition. Levinas' concern is with an Other who cannot be incorporated into the Same, into the self, whereas it is precisely self-presence that Rahner offers as the ultimate key to both being and knowing. Purcell argues persuasively, however, that there is room in Rahner's thought for, and the beginnings of a development of, many of Levinas' concerns with the ethical, with alterity and with desire. Moreover, he also argues that the "Being" which Levinas attacks is in fact only one understanding of being, and not one that should be pinned onto Rahner.

The juxtaposition of Rahner and Levinas causes each to be read in a distinctive way. In particular, Purcell argues for a shift in emphasis in reading Rahner, away from taking *Spirit in the World* and *Hearers of the Word* to be methodologically decisive, and towards a greater stress on Rahner's later talk of 'mystery'. This in itself is an important interpretive point, and much else in the book is interesting and insightful. Mystery and method is, however, a complex and difficult book, one which makes heavy demands on its readers. It can perhaps only be recommended to those who already know their way pretty confidently around both Rahner and Levinas. For those suitably equipped, however, and able to muster the high level of concentration demanded, it will provide real rewards.

Declan Marmion's *Spirituality of Everyday Faith* makes an interesting contrast. If the weakness of Purcell's book is that it is so wrapped up in complicated thoughts that it does not quite touch the ground, the weakness of Marmion's is that it never quite manages to get off the ground. It is both a carefully researched, scholarly book—Marmion shows

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

249