

God, and the human experience of being an embodied agent—and shows that both analogies can assist understanding of God's action in, with, and under the processes of nature

C argues, however, that God's action is not to be seen as simply general and uniform. There are special and particular divine acts—in providence and in response to prayers—that occur only through natural processes and are limited by God's respect for the proper freedom of other persons and for the proper autonomy of natural processes. Thus C offers a view that thoughtfully combines the idea of God's self-limitation with the possibility of special divine acts in appropriate circumstances.

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BEYOND THE NECESSARY GOD TRINITARIAN FAITH AND PHILOSOPHY IN THE THOUGHT OF EBERHARD JUNGEL By Paul J DeHart Atlanta Scholars, 1999 Pp xi + 195 \$19.95

A charitable description of Eberhard Jungel's *oeuvre* would have him executing the philosophical theology which Karl Barth explicitly eschewed. Where Barth preferred to amplify the Christian narrative in a fashion which confronted philosophical pieties, Jungel feels compelled to offer a "philosophical reconstruction" of the God whom Jesus reveals, so that moderns will better apprehend that God. Barth would find that description oxymoronic, of course, for any such "reconstruction" will inescapably reflect presumptions from modernity alien to the God of revelation. As if to confirm Barth's fears, the author describes how "Jungel's own path out of the cul-de-sac of the metaphysical death of God involves a reconstruction of that divine absoluteness and simplicity questioning the way in which an abstractly conceived divine essence is allowed to dictate the terms of divine existence. The proper way of conceiving the simplicity of God's being will in turn allow God's existence to call decisively

into question the absoluteness of God's essence" (67).

Critical scrutiny of the key terms of that description will quickly reveal the baroque displacement of key medieval terms, but Jungel eschews retrieval to pursue a reconstruction along the lines suggested by Barth's understanding of God's trinity. "God's trinitarian being is understood as a free, loving self-affirmation. God's 'Yes' to God's self, [while] God's creative act (grounded in the eternal covenant) is understood as a free, loving affirmation of human being. God's 'Yes' to us" (102–3). Yet, as if to anticipate Barth's objections to the ensuing "philosophical" assistance, as well as this reviewer's dissatisfaction, the author acknowledges that Jungel's "treatment offers a mixture of very abstract theorizing and highly metaphorical language" (108). The resulting mixture offers shaky support for a construction

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DOCTRINES OF THE TRINITY IN EASTERN AND WESTERN THEOLOGIES A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO K BARTH AND V LOSSKY By Alar Laats Studies in the Intellectual History of Christianity New York Peter Lang, 1999 Pp 171 \$39.95

The leitmotiv of Laats's argument is that, in the theological debates over the *filioque*, things are always "more complicated" than they seem (11), because the differences in trinitarian language between Eastern and Western Christianity are only the surface manifestation of fundamental theological differences in pneumatology, christology, revelation, soteriology, grace, creation, and worship. L suggests that these theological differences are themselves rooted in different religious sensibilities; the Eastern sensibility he labels "ascetical" and the Western "communional" (164).

L prudently refrains from attempting to demonstrate this comprehensive suggestion. Instead he focuses on presenting a technical sketch of two "typical" "representatives" of Eastern and Western trinitarian theologies: the Russian