

Valuable as Lennan's recontextualisation of Rahner's ontology and theological anthropology is, it is necessary to take one step further than Lennan himself settles for, in this work at least. That is, having extracted Rahner's underlying ecclesial vision from the transcendental matrix in which it is currently set, the attempt must then be made to represent it in less controvertible form. But perhaps this is to ask Lennan to have written two books rather than one?

That being said, the standard of scholarship throughout the book is high. Lennan is thoroughly acquainted with his primary and secondary sources, both the original German texts when appropriate and the standard English language translations. He makes his own translation when none is available and emends standard translations when the need arises. In this regard it is all the more surprising that he rests content to use the Richards translation of the substantially altered second edition of *Hörer*. This is widely regarded as a poor translation of a work that owes as much to the hand of the editor, J. B. Metz, as it does to that of Rahner himself. Had Lennan not wished to conduct his own translation of the first edition he could have turned to Joseph Donceel's translation, the full text of which has been available from Continuum since 1994. On a different point, a lengthier index might have been in order. Barely more than two pages of entries seems a little out of proportion for a work of this nature. More generally, however, as always with works from the Clarendon Press the general quality of publication is high (as also, unfortunately, is the hardback price!).

In conclusion, Richard Lennan puts us in his debt by presenting us with a judicious, timely and systematic exposition of the changing face of Karl Rahner's ecclesiological vision which, as such, makes a significant contribution to the task of reclaiming that vision for the next century. All who teach or participate in courses on ecclesiology or programmes of ministerial formation would benefit from reading this book. Whilst the not inconsiderable price places it well beyond the pocket of students and, indeed, of most lecturers it is a book which all theological libraries should possess. It is to be hoped that Clarendon are able to bring out a paperback edition in time. Until then, those in charge of library acquisitions should take note and order.

PAUL D. MURRAY

ROBERT PERSONS: THE BIOGRAPHY OF AN ELIZABETHAN JESUIT 1546–1610 by Francis Edwards SJ. *The Institute of Jesuit Sources..* (Casebound): \$42.95 (paper): \$32.95. Illustrated, pp. vii + 413

This year sees the four hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the birth of a remarkable Jesuit controversialist who has a well-founded claim, along with Cardinal William Allen, to be one of the founders of modern English Catholicism. As Father Francis Edwards writes, in *Persons* 'we are dealing with a man not only of rare conviction but of extraordinary intelligence and personal gifts'. He was a formidable controversialist, a

rigidly efficient organiser, an accomplished courtier, a ruthlessly self-disciplined administrator, a prolific writer, and a fine exponent of sixteenth century English prose. As a product of the Counter-Reformation he was accustomed to drawing on a broad ecclesial canvas. He never wavered in his allegiance to the pope or his devotion to the glories of Roman Catholicism as found in the monuments of its martyrs, the canons of its Councils and the authority of its apostolic succession. Even when weighed down with complicated matters of state and burdened by the anxieties of maintaining the English seminaries in Seville and Valladolid which were committed to his care, he still found time to concern himself with the welfare of the English slaves languishing in the Spanish galleys, seeing to their religious instruction and providing for their reception into the Catholic Church. Persons's immense labours for the establishment and growth of the English mission are exactly chronicled by Father Edwards. However, given his considerable gifts and achievements why is it that he in his own lifetime he was treated with such scorn and contempt, not only by his Protestant opponents but by a party of his own English co-religionists?

Fr Edwards points out how the vilification which had followed Persons in life was intensified after his death. When told of Father Persons's death the pope reportedly observed that things "would go better in England" as a result. Persons detractors, drawn from the ranks of Protestant polemicists as well as Catholic Appellant clergy in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, have also drawn recruits in our own time. Even a Catholic author, himself a product of a Jesuit education, has referred to Fr Persons in a recent work of popular history as "sinister" and a "professional international conspirator". Any attempt to restore the true image of Fr Persons has a lot of ground to recover. Any biographer is also faced with the daunting task of assembling and investigating archival material drawn from the Vatican, Spain, Belgium and Italy as well as the collections held by the Fathers of the English Jesuit Province. Fr Edwards has an unparalleled knowledge of these sources. However, he sometimes presumes a similar acquaintance on the part of his readers. Only those who have a detailed knowledge of the political history of the late sixteenth century and an appreciation of Tudor politics will be able to derive maximum benefit from this work.

As Fr Edwards shows, Fr Persons' range of acquaintance was wide and comprised a dangerous and sometimes colourful assembly of characters. Some are introduced tantalisingly like Sir Anthony Shirley who appears to have held the post of ambassador of the Shah of Persia to the Holy See. He is briefly compared to Sir Thomas Stucley, another adventurer whose significance is never explained by Fr Edwards, and then disappears for ever. At various times in the narrative characters are introduced as if their biographies will be known to the reader. These characters may have appeared only once before at a point many pages previous to their subsequent entrance to the confusion and occasional irritation of this reviewer. The wood often disappears to the advantage of

the trees.

Fr Edwards makes a brave attempt to rescue Fr Persons from calumny in the hope that he may be seen "as deserving of a place in the calendar of warrior saints". Before that day comes Persons must be cleared of a number of charges: that he was a sophist sunk in duplicity and contorted by casuistry, that he was a traitor to his country and a determined foe of the Queen whom he would gladly have seen deposed and possibly murdered, that he was ambitious and not for the higher gifts either. Father Edwards easily disposes of the latter charge. Persons was a man of strong will and mercurial disposition which was tempered by long years of adversity and personal pain and discomfort. His dearly-won patience was acquired at the price of regular setbacks at the hands of unreliable political patrons who were often operating with a different agenda from his own. Persons' own perseverance in the cause could not have survived at it not been inspired by a devout hope nourished in prayer and faith in providence. His own religious commitment is clear, as Father Edwards shows, from his intense interest in the structures of the English continental seminaries. The noble roll of martyrs all are able to show is testimony enough to the contribution Persons made to their life and witness.

The other charges are more difficult to refute. It is clear where Fr Edwards own sympathies lie. The campaign waged against Persons and the Jesuits by the Appellant clergy is chronicled in detail, although we are left in no doubt as to who was in the right and who was emphatically in the wrong. Again a fuller description of what was at stake might have been more useful. Persons was infinitely more intellectually capable than many of his opponents. His was not an original mind but a spacious and visionary imagination. What his polemical works lack in scholarly attention to detailed research they make up for in verve and synthetic brilliance. Persons was a prematurely modern priest, aware of the challenges which Catholicism faced and of the depth of the reformation for which the sixteenth century religious conflicts called he was far ahead of his contemporaries. The vacuum was filled with their misunderstanding and dislike. The respect in which his opponents held him is clear from the virulence of their personal attacks on him.

Was Persons a traitor? This is how he is presented to every schoolchild who has read Kingsley's *Westward Ho! The sixteenth century* prompted profound developments in political philosophy as it attempted to grapple with the question of religious pluralism and monarchical legitimacy. The problems of Persons and his fellow Catholics were broadly similar to those of Calvin in Geneva, Knox in Scotland, and the Protestant reformed congregations in France. In many ways Persons was a 'revisionist' before his time. English Protestantism was seen as planted in shallow ground by a group of largely parvenu conspirators who through their seizure of the machinery of government under the Crown managed to maintain an heretical settlement. Persons devoted much of his political activity to the attempt to ensure a Catholic

succession through which this situation might be reversed. Experience elsewhere had shown that such a reversal was possible. Much of his energy was directed to creating a coalition of forces which would make this dream a reality. It is a tribute to his own conviction that he was able to spin a coherent vision from such disparate human materials and to ensure that English Catholicism should retain such a high European profile.

In his 1967 introduction to Arnold Meyer's *England and the Catholic Church under Queen Elizabeth* John Bossy wrote that fifty years of research had left us at some distance from a total grasp of the remarkable Fr Persons. Fr Edwards in this work has brought us a little closer in his valuable work but the definitive biography has yet to appear.

ALLAN WHITE OP

THE BEAUTY OF CHRIST. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE THEOLOGY OF HANS URS VON BALTHASAR edited by Bede McGregor, O. P., and Thomas Norris. Edinburgh. T. and T. Clark. 1994, Pp. xv + 277, £19. 95p.

This collection of a dozen substantial essays must count as evidence that Balthasar's theology is undergoing a wider and deeper reception in the British and Irish islands. It testifies to the connexion of St Patrick's College, Maynooth, (where the book started life as papers at a Summer School) with the journal *Communio* and thereby with the most constructive and unifying — rather than critical and dispersive — theology of this pontificate. It also does credit to the house of T. and T. Clark, who despite losing the United Kingdom publishing rights of the remainder of Balthasar's trilogy (the theological dramatics and theological logic), continue to maintain the interest in Balthasar's theology expressed in the translation of, notably, his theological aesthetics (*The Glory of the Lord*) and theology of the Atonement (*Mysterium paschale*), as well as in the commissioning of an earlier essay-collection (*The Analogy of Beauty*).

Balthasar's cousin Peter Henrici, the Jesuit auxiliary bishop of Chur, is uniquely fitted to write an account of Balthasar's *Bildung*, his 'cultural and theological formation' (though much of this material has already appeared in a *Communio* publication, *Hans Urs von Balthasar: his Life and Work*). These long maturing judgments of the 'figures' — living and dead — who shaped Balthasar are likely to stand the test of time. Breandán Leahy of Clonliffe College, the author of a Roman doctoral thesis on Balthasar's 'Marian' ecclesiology, accepted the mammoth task of writing a précis of the six- (in English, seven-) volume theological aesthetics. Though limits of space have induced occasional opacities of style, Leahy works a miracle of compression in this account of the cruciform glory of God.

Professor John Riches of Glasgow fills out the biblical background to that key aesthetic notion of glory — and does so in a way which not only