

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

gives the reader a helpful entrée to the 'biblical theology' in *Herrlichkeit* but also offers some original reflections on the serviceability of the paradigm Balthasar offers in the reading of Scripture, not least for an exegesis which would see the Christ of the Atonement, this 'wordless Word', as re-constellating the images of the Hebrew Bible rather than closing off their meaning. The essay on Balthasar and the Fathers, by Deirdre Carabine, an Irishwoman teaching in an East African University, comes next quite appropriately for, aside from his early patristic monographs and anthologies, *The Glory of the Lord* contains Balthasar's most sustained comments on the patristic corpus. This is a learned essay which, had it made use of the second and third volumes of the theological logic (Balthasar's last major publications), would have found its basic presentation of such themes as negative theology and the essence/energies distinction in God resoundingly confirmed. I cannot agree, however, with Carabine's claim that for Balthasar eschatological deification in the beatific vision becomes an entirely here-and-now affair.

The Irish Jesuit Balthasar scholar Gerard O'Hanlon contributes a helpful survey of the theological dramatics, the centre from which, on internal evidence, the trilogy as a whole should be seen. His sober summary of the argument (that term is more pertinent here than with the theological aesthetics), which, for those who fear Balthasar is a Patripassianist, can be supplemented by his fine study of the divine immutability in Balthasar's thought, has, however, a curious issue — namely, an attempt to apply this work to the social problems of modern Ireland. Shorn of any attempt to mediate between the two by, for instance, appeal to the concepts found in Catholic social teaching, and mistaking (surely) the manner in which Balthasar regards theodramatic action as in the public forum, it is hardly surprising if O'Hanlon finds his own results unsatisfactory. Re-reading the end of *Middlemarch* might help. Two succeeding essays, with a Marian emphasis, can neatly follow, for Balthasar's fullest exposition of his Mariology comes in *Theodramatik*. The Marist Johann Roten, a professional Mariologist working in the United States, contributes a subtle account of how Balthasar's anthropology is itself Marian ('Man is a woman', as Chesterton remarked); also domiciled in the United States is the English lay theologian John Saward whose account of the *Mother and Child* is simple in the best sense of that word, in the spirit of Bernanos, Péguy, the little Teresa.

The Gregorian Jesuit John O'Donnell introduces the final work of the trilogy, *Theologik*. A theological logic shows how a world dependent for its own truth on the divine knowing and acting can be the vehicle for the self-manifestation of the divine Logos itself, with the Spirit of truth, the Paraclete, not only interpreting that further revelation but leading the world on to the glory of the Father which is its primal truth's own Source.

The Irish Presbyterian John Thompson, and the book's two editors, the Maynooth professors Bede McGregor and Thomas Morris give the reader a chance to evaluate this rich material in three contexts — those

of ecumenism, inter-faith dialogue, and Catholic dogmatics itself which must be, for a Catholic Christian, the widest of those three circles: the historic revelation and the reflection to which it gives rise is, in Balthasar's own adaptation of Anselm, 'that than which nothing greater can be thought'. Where Professor Thompson's mind is tough, Fr Bede's heart is soft; in their contrasted styles they prepare one for the closing mini-*Summa* which, slightly repetitious though it be, I can recommend as Balthasar-in-a-nutshell.

An appended note by the Scottish-based Irish Carmelite Noel Dermot O'Donoghue, while entering some caveats, lauds Balthasar's 'orchestral imagination' from his own standpoint, somewhere between Cardinal Mercier and Kathleen Raine. It will take, I guess, another half-century of study before that music fully sinks into Catholicism's theological mind.

AIDAN NICHOLS OP

VIOLENCE AND RELIGION: ATTITUDES TOWARDS MILITANCY IN THE FRENCH CIVIL WARS AND THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION, by Judy Sproxton, Routledge, 1995. 103 pp. £30.00

Sproxton combines historical, literary and theological insights to offer an overview of the development of thought on war and religion in England and France in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The medieval tradition and the Christian humanism of Erasmus have been left behind, with their trust that the peace of the nations is somehow connected with the peace of God, human justice with divine justice, however imperfectly. Having described Calvin's radical rupture of this connectedness, so that human justice and divine justice become contraries, Sproxton deftly traces the outlines of the rather different theological, devotional and political positions adopted by his heirs: d'Aubigné, the Monomachs, Beard, Winstanley, Cromwell and his poetic hagiographer, Andrew Marvell. She dedicates a chapter to each of them.

As a literary, historical and even psychological study it is fascinating, but as a glimpse of the theological consequences of the radicalism of a Calvinist view of the Fall it is chilling. One may warm to Winstanley, but Marvell's view amounts to little more than a basis for the deification of tyrants. Justice must give way to "valour" and force, because all we know of justice is a human pseudo-justice, a pretentious claim to something which is uniquely God's. At least in violence and war, he suggests, one can sense something of God's power and his wrath against sinful humanity.

The book will be of interest to students of literature, theology and history, and to those in the peace movement who have reflected on the balance between lawful postures of deterrence with avoidance of aggression. My only regret is the price put on it by Routledge. Students, whose grants are being cut by 10% a year, will benefit less from Sproxton's work than they should.

GILBERT MÁRKUS