



# STUDIES

IN  
THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS

Unexpected Consequences

*A Jesuit and Puritan Book, Robert Persons's Christian Directory, and Its Relevance for Jesuit Spirituality Today*

JAMES F. KEENAN, S.J.

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William R. Rehg, S.J., teaches philosophy at St. Louis University, St. Louis, MO (2000).

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▶ **NEW BOOK!** ◀

# **The Road from La Storta**

***Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.,  
on Ignatian Spirituality***

“The vision of La Storta has not been given to us so that we might stop to gaze at it. No, it is the light in which the Jesuit regards the whole world.”

These words are from a homily on the anniversary of St. Ignatius's vision at La Storta. Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, superior general of the Society of Jesus, challenges Jesuits and their associates to consider their mission as they follow Ignatius along the road from La Storta into the wide world. In this collection of twenty essays, Father Kolvenbach proposes ways of understanding this mission from spiritual, analytical, and socio-pastoral perspectives.

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## *Of all things . . .*

It is a joy to come upon stories demonstrating that Jesuits continue to put their imaginations to good use. The most recent example is the Youth Parliament that Fr. Francis Oliva established in Paraguay. Over the last several years, it has numbered more than a thousand young people from all over that country who took an active part in educating themselves in politics and preparing to become involved in public affairs in the years to come. They participate in a yearlong series of courses, do volunteer work, gather a certain number of signatures of citizens whom they would "represent," work for two years as "legislators," and, after six months in regional government, go to the capital at Asunción to take their seats in the national House of Representatives for further work.

Good news from another part of the world too: In India the national journal *India Today* in a cover story listed the "Top Ten Colleges in India" in the arts, science, commerce, etc. Three Jesuit schools are among those top St. Xavier's in Mumbai (Bombay), Loyola in Chennai (Madras), and St. Xavier's in Calcutta. What an alumnus said of one of them might well be said of all: "[A]nd when a student . . . bids adieu to the College, he doesn't leave just with a degree but also . . . , of course, with the conscience of a morally and intelligently enriched individual." Congratulations to all three of the schools and thanks both to them and to all of the more than three dozen institutions of Jesuit higher education in India for their accomplishments in that apostolate.

And halfway between those two parts of the world, we can turn our attention to Rome and the cardinals recently created by Pope John Paul II. It is striking that nineteen of the forty-four new cardinals, almost half, are alumni or former faculty members of the Gregorian University. The College of Cardinals, of course, is not the Church, but it renders a very important service to all the members of the Church; therefore the Gregorian justifiably can rejoice over its part in helping to prepare cardinals for such service. The Gregorian University, along with the other two institutions in the Gregorian Consortium, the Biblical Institute and the Oriental Institute, are worth the effort and resources that the Society of Jesus puts into them.

A few words on three recent books. Cardinals may wear red to witness to their willingness to shed their blood for the Church. *The Catholic Martyrs of the Twentieth Century* (Crossroad Publishers, New York, x + 430 pages) is an utterly absorbing, hauntingly edifying story of those who have actually shed their blood in such witness. The vividly told stories range from those of well-known martyrs, such as the Jesuits of El Salvador and Archbishop Romero, to those who, unknown until the Iron Curtain fell, lived long and died, often anonymously, in so-called atheist lands. As Pope John Paul II has said, "At the end of the second millennium, the Church has once again become a Church of martyrs."



From martyrs and cardinals we move on to juvenile gangs and meditations: *Eyes on the Cross* (Crossroad Publishing Company, New York, 220 pages) is what the author, Michael Kennedy, S.J., calls “a guide for contemplation” that he uses with juvenile gang members and incarcerated offenders as well as with teachers, business leaders, and high-school students. Fr. Kennedy is pastor of Dolores Mission Parish, a very poor church in Los Angeles. Each of the meditations is brief; each is based on a passage from Scripture; each has a series of questions for reflection.

*In Good Company* by James Martin, S.J. (Sheed and Ward, 216 pages) is subtitled *The Fast Track from the Corporate World to Poverty, Chastity, Obedience*. Fr. Martin, one of the editors of *America*, directly, humorously, and thoughtfully writes the story of his vocation to membership in the Society of Jesus. The central part of the book takes him from Wharton, the famous business school at the University of Pennsylvania, to corporate finance at General Electric, and finally to the Jesuit novitiate in the New England Province. Every U.S. Jesuit could read this book with real enjoyment and equal profit to himself. And after he has done so, he ought to be eager to give it to any young man thinking of a vocation to the Society.

For some reason, Jesuit mathematicians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were attracted to fireworks. Jean Leurechon, about whom I wrote in the November 2001 issue of *STUDIES*, made use of them. In his book, *Artificial Fireworks*, besides giving directions on “the making of rockets and balls of fire,” he also hoped that the spectator’s “spirit which follows the motion of fire, will abandon the elements and cause you to lift up your eyes to soar in a higher contemplation, . . . [causing] your affections also to ascend.” Another Jesuit mathematician and pyrotechnician was Dominique de Colonia (1658-1714) of Lyons. In 1734, during a special celebration of the feast of John the Baptist, various of his firework displays spelled out in detail the spiritual favors to be gained: “fountains of grace, tears of repentance, and, in a blazing finale, the fire of charity.” Last of all, Tommaso Ceva (1648-1737), the originator of the “Ceva Theorem,” having to do with trisecting an angle, did not content himself with joining fireworks and mathematics. He was also the author of the libretti for more than a dozen oratorios that were performed at the Jesuit college and church in Milan. Their titles included *Serenade at the Crib*, *Adam’s Sin*, *The Triumph of Chastity*, and what—in view of the scope of its words and music—we can only leave to the imagination with which I began these comments: “The Holy Trinity in Council on the Hypostatic Union.”

Oh, for the days of Jesuit polymaths!

*John W. Padberg, S.J.*  
*Editor*



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After James and Susan Taylor, *The Story of America's History of Book*  
Publishing, University of California Press, 1982, p. 148.

James J. Taylor, Jr., *Book Publishing in America*, University of California Press, 1982, p. 148.  
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Taylor, James J., Jr., *Book Publishing in America*, University of California Press, 1982, p. 148.



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## UNEXPECTED CONSEQUENCES

*A Jesuit and Puritan Book, Robert Persons's Christian Directory, and Its Relevance for Jesuit Spirituality Today*

### Setting the Scene

Many are the stories about Jesuit books being read by the "wrong" people. For instance, the Jesuit moralist Antonio Escobar y Mendoza (1589–1669) decided to make Jesuit casuistry more accessible. By taking the cases out of their contexts and publishing them in abbreviated form, Escobar provided Blaise Pascal with the very ammunition he needed for his devastating assaults on the Society of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

Jesuit books have seriously backfired, especially when their authors did not foresee that the actual readership would surpass the intended audience. Among the many tales that confirm this insight, the Jesuit Robert Persons's *Christian Directory* probably merits the dubious honor of first place. Persons's work, designed to arouse English Roman Catholics to fervent loyalty to the Church of Rome, became instead the first Puritan bestseller in the English language.

What then is the story of Person's *Christian Directory*? We need to answer this question to understand how a Jesuit work, basically an interpretation of the First Week of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, so effective-

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<sup>1</sup> Albert Jonsen and Stephen Toulmin, *The Abuse of Casuistry: A History of Moral Reasoning* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 231–49.

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*James F. Keenan, S.J., with a doctorate in Sacred Theology from the Gregorian University, is a professor of Moral Theology at Weston Jesuit School of Theology. Virtues for Ordinary Christians, Commandments of Compassion (Sheed and Ward), and Catholic Ethicists on HIV/AIDS Prevention are among his recent publications. He is presently working on a collection of essays tentatively entitled Church Leadership and Corporal Works of Mercy. His address is Weston Jesuit School of Theology, 3 Phillips Place, Cambridge, MA 02138.*



ly addressed its Puritan readership. Knowing the story inevitably leads us to look at the text. What did Persons write? Another important issue is this: Long after other Puritan works appeared, Persons's work remained a success well into the 1630s and had again as many sales as either of the great Puritan classics—Arthur Dent's *Plaine Man's Pathway to Heaven* and William Perkins's *Foundation of Christian Religion*.<sup>2</sup> No contemporary Puritan text enjoyed such popularity and no other work of devotion compared to it. The historian Helen White called it "incomparably the most popular book of spiritual guidance in sixteenth-century England."<sup>3</sup> And the historian Peter Milward observes, it reigned as "the most popular book of devotion among both Catholics and Protestants in Elizabethan and Jacobean England."<sup>4</sup>

So what? What does it mean for our contemporary self-understanding when one of the most important written works among second-generation Jesuits found its most fervid readership among early English Puritans? The relevance of Persons's work on our spirituality today bears examination.

These four topics—the story, Persons's text, the Puritan editions, and the "so what?"—need to be considered.

## The Story

**F**or several political and ecclesial reasons that we cannot consider here, Queen Elizabeth I promulgated the Act of Supremacy in 1559, thereby imposing several sanctions on Roman Catholics. Although these penalties were not regularly enforced, they had a debilitating effect on the Catholic community.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, because many priests subsequently conformed to the Church of England, Catholics wishing to remain faithful to Rome were left leaderless. Then, in 1570 Pope Pius V issued the bull *Regnans in excelsis*, excommunicating Elizabeth and declaring her no longer the English sovereign. English Roman Catholics were now politically compromised by their religious leader, who offered them little by way of spiritual or

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<sup>2</sup> Helen White, *Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1963), 205.

<sup>3</sup> Brad Gregory, "The True and Zealous Service of God: Robert Parsons, Edmund Bunny, and *The First Booke of the Christian Exercise*," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 45 (1994): 239.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Milward, *Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age: A Survey of Printed Sources* (London: Scolar Press, 1977), 73–74.

<sup>5</sup> Patrick McGrath, *Papists and Puritans under Elizabeth I* (London: Blandford Press, 1967), 10–14, 52–57.



moral direction. In fact, the ill-timed action prompted Elizabeth to respond in 1571 with even stiffer political penalties against them.

Without pastoral leadership, English Roman Catholics were caught in a squeeze play. Few knew whether to move toward or away from the Church of England. After the papal bull, they were even more confused: If Elizabeth was not the legitimate sovereign, what were they to do? One militant, John Felton, took matters into his own hands and fixed the papal bull to the gate of the bishop of London. Subsequently he was apprehended and executed for treason against the Crown.

In 1568, recognizing the need for priests, Dr. William Allen opened a seminary in Douay and six years later sent the first ordained graduates back to England. In 1579 another continental seminary, the English College in Rome, came into being.

Between 1574 and 1580 one hundred missionary priests went to England. Despite the political tension between the Pope and the Queen, Allen and his priests responded to the religious needs of the

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*In 1577 the first priest was caught,  
hanged, drawn, and quartered  
in England.*

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nearly abandoned Roman Catholics. Unfortunately, these priests, whose work was basically spiritual, were perceived as agents of a foreign power and political threats to the monarchy. Thus, in 1577 the first priest was caught, hanged, drawn, and quartered in England, and a year later another was executed.<sup>6</sup>

In 1580 a group of priests and laymen, including the Jesuits Edmund Campion and Robert Persons (1546-1610), left Rome for England. These Jesuits were expressly forbidden by their superiors to become involved in any political activities. As Campion explained,

My charge is, of free cost, to preach the gospel, to minister the sacraments, to instruct the simple, to reform sinners, to confute errors, and in brief to cry alarm spiritual against foul vice and proud ignorance wherewith my dear countrymen are abused. I never had in mind, and am strictly forbidden

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<sup>6</sup> With the passage of time, the situation only worsened. While it remains difficult to know how many priests from 1582 to 1588 actually accepted the political authority of the Queen and only pastorally ministered to the recusants, their spiritual mission was completely compromised by the attempted Spanish invasion in 1588. By 1590 another seventy-five priests and twenty-five lay people were executed by the government (see McGrath, *Papists and Puritans*, 177). From 1590 till the end of Elizabeth's reign, another fifty-three priests and thirty-five lay people were executed (*ibid.*, 256).



by our fathers that sent me, to deal in any respect with matters of state or policy of the realm, as things which appertain not to my vocation.<sup>7</sup>

Shortly before arriving in England, Campion and Persons learned that the Pope had sponsored a military expedition against Ireland. Knowing that this move further compromised the integrity of their spiritual mission, both sought to dissociate themselves from any political movements as soon as they arrived in London in the summer of 1580. Anticipating disaster and wanting to dispel possible false charges, one of the English recusants asked Campion to write an explanation of his mission. Campion responded with his *Bragge*, which was to be published only in the event of his capture. Unfortunately, the recusant made a few copies of it, and some of these fell into Protestant hands, who in turn published the *Bragge* to expose the group's mission and to respond to it polemically. The *Bragge* suddenly became a popular read.

The popularity of Campion's *Bragge* incensed the government, which launched an extensive manhunt to locate the two Jesuits. In early 1581 Elizabeth passed more legislation against the recusants and their priests.<sup>8</sup> Later that year, Campion was captured, hanged, drawn, and quartered.<sup>9</sup> Persons escaped to the continent, but was tried and condemned *in absentia*.

When the missionaries arrived in 1574, they brought with them books of spiritual comfort to encourage Catholic perseverance.<sup>10</sup> When Persons arrived in England in 1580, he contacted the printer Stephen Brinkley at the secret Greenstreet House press, and together they published several works either to defend or encourage the recusant population.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Edmund Campion, "The Bragge," in Evelyn Waugh, *Edmund Campion* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1946), 236.

<sup>8</sup> McGrath, *Papists and Puritans*, 177 ff.; Elliot Rose, *Cases of Conscience* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 47 ff.

<sup>9</sup> On the effects of Campion's writings, mission, and death, see Thomas McCoog, "'The Flower of Oxford': The Role of Edmund Campion in Early Recusant Polemics," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 24 (1993): 899-913.

<sup>10</sup> One was John Fowler's new edition of Thomas More's *Dialogue of Cumfort against Tribulation*, published in Antwerp in 1573. On More's work, see Leland Miles's helpful introduction in *A Dialogue of Cumfort against Tribulation*, ed. Leland Miles (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965), xi-xxxii.

<sup>11</sup> Persons's *Brief Discours contayning certayne reasons why Catholiques refuse to goe to Church* (London, 1580). Persons argued that the recusants were not obstinate, but rather people of conscience who merited toleration. On the influence of this work on subsequent calls for toleration of Roman Catholics, see Kenneth Campbell, "Tender Consciences: The English Catholics' Case for Religious Toleration in the Seventeenth



Persons knew about Brinkley because a year earlier the latter published an English translation of *Exercitio della vita Christiana* (1557) by the Spanish Jesuit Gaspar Loarte (1498–1578). This popular work of lay spirituality went through fifteen continental editions before the end of the century and was translated into Spanish (1569), French (1580), and later, German (1653).<sup>12</sup> The English edition was reprinted on three later occasions, and in 1594, the Puritan Mr. Bannister “Puritanized” it for Protestants;<sup>13</sup> that is, he pirated its copyright and deleted any passages that hinted at the righteousness of works or any other theological position rejected by the Reformers.

Loarte's work, the Society of Jesus' first devotional handbook, was successful because it served as a guide for lay persons who sought to be vigilant about the Christian life. Without the regimented daily order of religious life, the laity found in Loarte's work an agenda for ordinary daily prayer. Within that agenda, Loarte provided readers with six fundamental warnings: (1) Watch your company, (2) shun idleness, (3) avoid dangerous places, (4) beware of excess, (5) search out right models, and (6) do not be surprised by temptation. These six warnings became a commonplace in both Jesuit and Puritan writings.

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*Loarte's work, The Exercise of a Christian Life, the Society of Jesus' first devotional handbook, was successful because it served as a guide for lay persons who sought to be vigilant about the Christian life.*

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Century,” *Grail* 3 (1987): 68–83; Christine Kooi, “Popish Impudence: The Perseverance of the Roman Catholic Faithful in Calvinist Holland, 1572–1620,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 26 (1995): 75–85. Also, Thomas Clancy, “Notes on Persons's *Memoriall for the Reformation of England (1596)*,” *Recusant History* 5 (1959): 17–34. Also written to encourage the fainthearted was Thomas Hide's *Consolatorie epistle to the afflicted catholikes*, originally published in Louvain in 1579 and probably brought to England by Persons. Also see A. C. Southern, *Elizabethan Recusant Prose, 1559–1582* (London: Sands and Co. 1949), 207–10, 347–63.

<sup>12</sup> *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, ed. Aloys de Backer (Brussels: O. Schepens, 1890–19), 4, col. 1879–1886, s.v. “Loarte, Gaspar.”

<sup>13</sup> Gaspar Loarte, *The Exercise of a Christian life* (London: Stephen Brinkley, 1579); reprint in *English Recusant Literature* series, vol. 44 (Menston: Scolar Press, 1970). Bibliographical materials are found in Manuel Ruiz Jurado's entry in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1976), 9:950–1, s.v. “Loarte, Gaspar”; see also A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland, 1475–1640* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1976), 2:108.



Through Loarte's work, as well as the texts that Brinkley and Persons copublished, the Greenstreet House press provided a devotional foundation for the loyal recusants. Knowing this, Persons decided to write for another population, those Catholics who had not yet committed themselves to a more devout Christian life.<sup>14</sup> Originally conceived to accompany Loarte's work, Persons's *First Booke of The Christian Exercise*, as it was first called, appeared in 1582.<sup>15</sup>

By the third edition, Persons named his work *The Christian Directory*. This text subsequently went through another five editions by Catholic printers and was translated into French, German, Latin, and Italian; the Italian version itself ran through nine editions.<sup>16</sup> The Puritanized adaptation of it was much more popular, however, and went through forty-seven editions between 1584 and 1640.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> On Persons see Francis Edwards, *Robert Persons* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1995); Joseph Crehan, "Fr. Persons, S.J.," in *English Spiritual Writers*, ed. Charles Davis (London: Burns and Oates, 1961), 84–96. On Persons's written positions regarding the Queen, see Thomas Clancy, "English Catholics and the Papal Deposing Power, 1570–1640," *Recusant History* 6 (1960): 114–40; 205–27; 7 (1961): 2–10. On the extraordinary antipathy felt toward him, see Victor Houlston, "The Fabrication of the Myth of Father Parsons," *Recusant History* 22 (1974): 141–51. On Persons's political efforts after the death of Campion, see John Bossy, "The Society of Jesus in the Wars of Religion," in *Monastic Studies: The Continuity of Tradition*, ed. Judith Loades (Bangor, UK: Headstart History, 1990), 229–44; id., "The Heart of Robert Persons," in *The Reckoned Expense*, ed. Thomas McCoog (Woodbridge, England: Boydell Press, 1996), 141–58. On Persons's *Christian Directory*, see my "How Casuistic Is Early British Puritan Casuistry? or, What Are the Roots of Early British Puritan Practical Divinity?" in *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773*, ed. John O'Malley et al. (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1999), 627–40. Finally, see the definitive work, Robert Persons, S.J., *The Christian Directory (1582): The First Booke of the Christian Exercise, appertayning to Resolution*, ed. Victor Houlston (Brill: Leiden, 1998).

Inasmuch as I have been working for several years on Persons and the development of English Puritan practical divinity, my research here depends, not on Houlston's wonderful new edition, but rather on the older one, Robert Persons, *The Christian Directory*, reprint of 1607 edition in *English Recusant Literature* series, vol 41 (Menston, Yorkshire: Scolar Press, 1970). References to the *Directory* in this essay are from this source.

<sup>15</sup> See Southern's discussion in *Recusant Prose*, 183; also Robert Persons, *Letters and Memorials of Father Robert Parsons*, ed. L. Hicks (London: John Whitehead and Son, Ltd, 1942), xliv–v; and Houlston, *Christian Directory*, xxxv.

<sup>16</sup> Hicks, *Letters and Memorials*, ed. L. Hicks, xliv.

<sup>17</sup> Pollard and Redgrave, *Short-Title Catalogue* 2:217–18.



adaptation of it was much more popular, however, and went through forty-seven editions between 1584 and 1640.<sup>17</sup>

That Persons's text became Puritanized is drenched with irony. It was penned by a Jesuit who sought to reclaim Catholics conforming to the Church of England. It was pirated by a Puritan preacher, Edmund Bunny (1540–1618), who used it not only to answer the needs of his listeners but also to convince Catholic readers that the differences between the Church of Rome and the Church of England were minor. Bunny belonged to the moderate Puritans, those Reformers who from about the mid-1570s remained within the Church of England, trying to offer its members a devotional renewal and a theological reform. One reason, then, why Bunny edited the work was to get Catholics to conform to a Puritan spirituality within the Church of England!<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, the Jesuit author, Robert Persons, who had been tried for treason against the Crown, who was convicted and sentenced to death, and who later, along with Dr. William Allen (1532–1594), organized the missionary effort to England—subsequently that same man became confessor to the King of Spain and urged him to launch the Spanish invasion of England. No one sought with more passion, conviction, intelligence, and cunning to wrest the authority of the Reformers away from the Crown than did Robert Persons; yet not only did his most successful writing achievement give succor to his opponents, it also was used to help devout Catholics in good conscience to accommodate conformity to the Church of England. As the

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<sup>17</sup> Pollard and Redgrave, *Short-Title Catalogue* 2:217–18.

<sup>18</sup> Edmund Bunny, "Treatise toward Pacification," A2a–A3a, in his *Booke of Christian exercise appertaining to Resolution, that is shewing how that we should resolv our selves to become Christians in deed: by R. P. Perused, and accompanied now with a Treatise Tending to Pacification* (London: N. Newton, 1585). See *The Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 3:271–72, s.v. "Bunny, Edmund"; Nancy Lee Beaty, "Parsons, Bunny, and the Counter-Reformation 'Crafte,'" in *The Craft of Dying: A Study in the Literary Tradition of the Ars Moriendi in England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 157–96.



Puritans. In 1585 (after having issued fifteen editions that year!), Bunny's printers complained to the Privy Council that another publisher (a Mr. Barnes) was printing copies at Oxford, thereby interfering with "the most vendible copy that happened in our company these many years [which] would have kept us in work for a long time."<sup>20</sup> They lost the case, and Barnes was not the only one to pirate Bunny. In the same year the Puritans J. Windet and T. Dawson both published their own editions.<sup>21</sup>

Though we do not know the number of books in each run, still these editions give us an idea of the *breadth* of Persons's influence. Two simple testimonies give us an idea of the *depth* of influence that his text exerted on the emerging Puritan movement in England. First, in 1603, twenty years after Bunny's first edition appeared, the famous preacher Richard Rogers authored the first major Puritan devotional tract, *The Seven Treatises*. In the preface, he presents his reasons for writing:

[T]hat the Papists cast in our teeth that we have nothing set out for the certainty and daily direction of a Christian, when yet they have published (they say) many Treatises of that argument. . . . I grant that there are two which I have seen, set forth by them in our English tongue, the one called a *Christian Directory*, the other the *Exercise of a Christian Life*.<sup>22</sup>

Rogers later maintained that he wrote his treatise precisely to supplant the influence of Persons's *Christian Directory*.<sup>23</sup>

The second testimony comes from Richard Baxter (1614–1691), the British Puritan divine and casuist par excellence, whose most celebrated work was suitably named *Christian Directory* and who attributed his conversion to reading Persons's work for the first time.

A poor day-Laborer in the Town . . . had an old torn book which he lent my Father, which was called Bunny's Resolution (being written by Parsons the Jesuit, and corrected by Edm. Bunny. . . . And in the reading of this Book (when I was about Fifteen years of Age) it pleased God to awaken my Soul, and show me the folly of Sinning and the misery of the Wicked, and the unexpressible weight of things Eternal, and the necessity of resolving on a Holy Life, more than I was ever acquainted with before. The same

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<sup>20</sup> Herbert Thurston, "Catholic Writers and Elizabethan Readers," *The Month* 87 (1894): 468.

<sup>21</sup> Gregory, "True and Zealous Service."

<sup>22</sup> Richard Rogers, *Seven Treatises: Containing Directions, Out of Scripture, Leading to True Happiness*, 3rd ed. (printed by Ezechiel Culverwell, 1610), fifth page of the preface.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, fifth to tenth pages of the preface.



things which I knew before came now in another manner, with Light, and Sense and Seriousness to my Heart.<sup>24</sup>

In his attempt to renew apathetic English Roman Catholics, Persons's *Directory* gave the emerging Puritans their first and most sustained spiritual classic.

## Persons's Text

**T**he *Christian Directory* was divided into two parts: the first was an extended reflection on the need for Christians to resolve to live a devout life; the second contained five major impediments that kept readers from resolution and offered remedies to remove those impediments.

The entire work was addressed to individuals. Though devotional manuals of the time were sometimes described as "dumb preachers," whose words could be read but not heard, the manuals were not like sermons addressed to attentive congregations.<sup>25</sup> Rather, they directed individual readers to reflect on their own personal experience. The Jesuits were already inclined in this "personalist" direction, inasmuch as their spirituality appreciated the importance of an individual's unique relationship with God. Moreover, in their ethical teaching, which often defended the individual's conscience, Jesuits further encouraged a personal relationship with God.<sup>26</sup>

In *The Christian Directory*, Persons turned this general appreciation for one's unique self-understanding into an introspective exercise that surpassed any earlier devotional expression of it. A contemporary of Persons, the Dominican Luis de Granada, for instance, usually described meditations on the passion of Jesus by inviting the readers to turn their eyes away from themselves and onto Christ. Likewise, Loarte, after prompting introspection in the evening meditations, encouraged readers to look not within but ahead to the long road of perfection before them. But Persons, addressing those

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<sup>24</sup> Richard Baxter, *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ* (1696), as cited in A. C. Southern, *Recusant Prose*, 186.

<sup>25</sup> John Roberts, *A Critical Anthology of English Recusant Devotional Prose, 1558-1603* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1966), 5.

<sup>26</sup> John O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 136-52. Persons wrote about the conscience both in his *Brief Discours* and later in the *Memoriall*. On Christian individualism and Jesuit spirituality as well as Persons's own defense of conscience, see Thomas Clancy, "Persons's *Memoriall*," esp. 26-7; id., *Papist Pamphleteers: The Allen-Persons Party and the Political Thought of the Counter-Reformation in England, 1572-1615* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1964), 142-58.



who had not yet seen the need for the Lord, turned the readers' eyes specifically onto the self.

Persons's fundamental concern was with what readers had failed to do. The most offensive of their omissions was "inconsideration"; because of it, readers also failed to recognize the urgent predicaments facing them.<sup>27</sup> To rouse them from their failures, Persons invited individual readers to "enter into cogitation of his own estate, while he has the time" (1).

Against inconsideration, Persons prescribed "consideration," defined as "an earnest and intense cogitation to find out the truth of matters" (11). This consideration exclusively focused on the readers themselves: "[W]herefore let your consideration begin from your self, and not only this, but end also in your self. Be you the first and last to your self" (12). The background for the consideration was always the same, the inevitable Day of Judgment (12-19).

Persons led readers to consider the "final end" for which we were created: "to serve God and thereby to work our own salvation." This end led to two insights: that nothing else mattered and that every decision had to be based on it (25-26). Persons's words were nearly identical to Ignatius's First Principle and Foundation.

Persons observed, however, that though there were many readers marked by faith, few lived out their faith through devotional works. He presented his work, therefore, "to stir up and awake . . . the slothful hearts of Christians to the cogitation of their own estate, and make them more vigilant in this great affaire" (67).

To awaken readers to this summons, Persons used the most introverted section of the *Spiritual Exercises*, the First Week. There he developed themes such as the readers' sinfulness as a violent affront to God; their affective awakening to the offense; the tangible appreciation of the harm that sin brings to them; the realization that, though they merit eternal damnation, God has kept them until this point from death and just judgment; and finally, the appreciation of what Christ has accomplished through his death for them.

This call to resolve began with "that reckoning day" (101). In terrifying terms Persons portrayed how awful judgment day will be. Confronted with extensive citations from apocalyptic literature (107-20), readers learned that on judgment day "[i]t will be too late to repent"; on that day "a good conscience" would be "a singular treasure" (120). Then, everything will

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<sup>27</sup> Gregory notes that later Puritans and Jesuits both referred to "consideration" as a key concept for self-examination ("True and Zealous Service," 256).



be exposed, all will be naked, and "an unspotted conscience . . . shall be a greater consolation, than all the dignities and pleasures of a thousand worlds" (121). The day will be dreadful, especially for families that failed to consider, for members will be separated, "the one to glory, the other to misery" (124).

Emphasizing the horrors of judgment day, Persons presented a defense for "the severity of God's judgment." God's infinite dignity could not tolerate the iniquity of the readers' lives. Furthermore, while Christ had already satisfied the judgment against the readers (135), they still failed to consider what God had offered in Christ: God's just judgments, Christ's perfect satisfaction, and their own salvation (144-45).

The inevitable just damnation of the inconsiderate was countered by the four "benefits of almighty God" for those who already were considerate: creation in God's image, redemption, vocation, and justification. These benefits provided a surprisingly positive side to Persons's theology. For instance, creation emphasized the unique relationship that readers could have with God. God "hath created you to the likeness of no other thing, but of himself, to no other end, but to be his honorable servant in this world and his co-partner in kingly glory, for all eternity to come" (157). Similarly, the redemption revealed a God who wanted the company of sinners. Behind Persons's God of dreadful judgment, there was a very amiable, intimate God. But because Persons believed that those not yet resolved would only presume upon God's love and thereby lose it, Persons insisted on God's severity.

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In order to move readers to a visceral appreciation of their own situation, Persons proposed a meditation in which they anticipated their inevitable deathbed experience. Summoning the readers' affections to be moved by "what opinion, sense and feeling" they might have on that day (169), he invited them to consider the three "afflictions" of the wicked on their deathbed. Each affliction concerned separation.

The first, an extraordinarily gruesome depiction of death, was literally the physical separation of souls from their bodies: "If then the mortifying of one little part only, doe so much afflict us: imagine what the violent mortifying of all partes together will doe" (174). The second was the



emotional separation that would affect especially those who never knew how to practice the detachment of the First Principle and Foundation: the “sudden parting (and that for ever and ever) from all the things which he loved most dearly in this life” (177). The final “consideration” concerned the agony of “what shall become of him, both in body and soul” (179), who would be separated from the love of God forever. To prevent these afflictions, Persons recommended the practice of devout works and frequent meditations. The motto for the meditation was clear: “Fear death now, that thou may not fear it then” (201).<sup>28</sup>

The deathbed description was innovative. Though it was not a part of the *Spiritual Exercises*, by 1599 Jesuit spiritual directors began employing it regularly as one of the meditations for the First Week. Although we do not know whether Persons was among the very first to employ it, we presume that he and other Jesuits borrowed it from the Dominican Luis de Granada.<sup>29</sup>

Persons’s use of this meditation was coupled with his astonishing deletion of the famous colloquies of the First Week. These colloquies allowed exercitants to encounter not only their own decrepit sinfulness but, what is more important, the intimate love of a merciful God as well. As a result of this omission, Persons offered his readers none of the consolation that Ignatius did.

In lieu of Christ, Persons inserted himself and interrogated his not yet converted readers. Since they had not yet resolved, the readers were left with an isolating terror, accentuated by Persons’s harangues. In these deathbed meditations, Persons achieved what he was after: teaching the readers that without Christ they were nothing but imperiled.<sup>30</sup>

Persons then offered specific meditations from the First Week, especially the one on hell, wherein readers were asked to see, feel, smell, hear, touch, and taste what could be sensed of hell.<sup>31</sup> At length, Persons supplied his own graphic description of the “great and severe pains and

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<sup>28</sup> Persons invokes here the model of St. Jerome, a frequently cited model of virtuous life, who is described as meditating on a skull that he keeps with him, a veritable memento mori (196–98).

<sup>29</sup> Jean Delumeau, *Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture, 13th–18th Centuries*, trans. Eric Nicholson (New York: St. Martins Press, 1990), esp. 355–56.

<sup>30</sup> Beaty, “Parsons, Bunny,” 178.

<sup>31</sup> On the Jesuit use of the meditation on hell, see Piero Camporesi, *The Fear of Hell: Images of Damnation and Salvation in Early Modern Europe*, trans. Lucinda Byatt (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1990), 56–57, 69–89. See also Delumeau, *Sin and Fear*, 373–82.



punishments appointed by God" (203). He validated his description with proof texts from the Scriptures and early Church theologians. Against this terrible scenario, Persons urged the readers to resolve and to see it as an easy action "for a man to dislike his own naughty life, and then to receive remission" (254).

After having roused his readers' affections about their imperiled state, the inevitable just judgment, and the possibility of joyous rewards, Persons begged them in rather crude terms to consider the following option:

Tell me now (gentle Reader and most loving and dear brother) why will you not accept this offer of thy Savior? Why will you not recognize this his Kingdom? Why will you not buy his endless glory of him, for so little a labor as he requires for it? (295)

The purchase of divine glory (almost for free!), a metaphor intact in the Puritan editions, led Persons to ask even more directly:

All this (I say) has been meant by me to this only end and purpose, that you . . . should finally resolve yourself what you would do . . . until it be too late to amend them. . . . Make some earnest *Resolution*, for looking to thy State in the life to come. Recall to mind oftentimes that worthy sentence: This life is the moment, whereof depends all eternity of weal or woe hereafter. (298-9)

The *Directory's* first part was, then, a haunting contemplation on the appalling state of one's sinfulness. This was not a sinfulness of specific actions catalogued as they were in casuistic manuals; rather this was the profoundly distorted relationship between a loving, merciful, but just God and wickedly obtuse readers. This was the sinfulness of inconsideration, the negligent, unthinking, and ungrateful heart that never knew the importance of an examined life.

Persons prompted readers to forge through the marshy, untrampled terrain of their own deplorable life of sin and guided them repeatedly with the controlling insight of the First Principle and Foundation. He offered readers who had neither a spiritual director nor, evidently, a habit of prayer the opportunity of sensing the same need for a conversion experience that exercitants encountered after finishing the first of the Four Weeks of the Spiritual Exercises. Such a focus on experience, the self, one's sinfulness, God's boun-

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ty, and the terror of God's just judgment resonated with a soul inclined to becoming a devout Catholic. But it also resonated with readers disposed to a spirituality of a profoundly Puritan devotional bent. Uncannily, the deeply introspective yet profoundly relational spiritualities of both traditions approached one another asymptotically, precisely when they stood at opposite ends of the religio-political identity of England at the end of the sixteenth century.

Readers from either tradition who were convinced by Persons of the need for resolution turned to the second part where they found the impediments that inhibited resolution as well as the remedies for removing them. Unlike the moral manuals of casuistry that addressed only confessors, this devotional masterpiece directed lay readers to care for their own souls. Moreover, the remedies were not to avoid specific actions, but to fortify vulnerable dispositions, to cultivate newer virtuous ones, and to root out dangerous, vicious habits. The remedies in the second part were at the same personal and experiential depth as the meditations in the first part.<sup>32</sup>

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*God's grace is the most fundamental aid for removing any obstacles that obstructed an approach to the virtuous life.*

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Persons argued that the first impediment, the so-called difficulty of the devout life, was rendered less burdensome by the coming of Christ. He reminded readers of God's grace, the most fundamental aid for removing any obstacles that obstructed an approach to the virtuous life. To warn readers that conversion to the virtuous life was not personally an easy decision, Persons noted that "the best men have greatest conflicts in their conversions" (403). Persons cited Augustine as a prime example.

Countering the second impediment, the fear of persecution, Persons suggested that a life of peace was a myth and contended that difficulty was constitutive of life. He asked whether readers could conceive of any person living in a lasting peace, free of any personal cross. Though people could escape for a moment from turmoil, Persons invoked the Psalms to show that those moments were for them the most perilous of times (415-47).

In this light, he explored "why God sends affliction to the Godly" (418). After claiming that it was "to increase thereby our merit in this life, and consequently our glory thereof depending in the life to come" (419), he

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<sup>32</sup> Just as Persons depended on Luis de Granada for the originality of the deathbed meditation, similarly, he relied on Granada's *Guía de Pecadores* (1556) for some of the material in the second part (see Houliston, *Christian Directory*, xxxiv-v).



proposed other reasons: to draw Christians from a love for the world, to provide a medicine for their disease, to provide a preservative against sin, to make time in purgatory lighter, to test, to make Christians flee to God, to give Christians the joy and gratitude that they feel when delivered from tribulation, to embolden Christians in God's service, and to make them more like Christ. These afflictions were not, then, an isolating experience, but rather a profoundly relational one: Christ "gives out portions of his Cross (the richest Jewel that he makes) . . . but to every one a measure according to the measure of good will and special affection wherewith he loves them" (436).

The third impediment was the greatest one: "the love and respect, which men bear to the pleasures, commodities, and vanities of this world" (462). Through an extended consideration of the Scriptures, Persons treated vainglory, worldly honor, worldly nobility, worldly wisdom, beauty, and apparel (462-91). While focusing on the problem of personal attachment, he helped readers see how profoundly dangerous the world was. He wrote that the "world is misery"; brevity, instability, unhappiness, illness, temptations, and dangers were its true signs (500-506). Indeed, like a weed, "the world strangles" (506-11).

The next impediment was "presumption in the mercies of our Savior, without remembrance of his Justice." Asking "whether God's mercy be greater than his Justice," he answered by first noting the widely held belief that most of humanity was damned (587). Still, he held that God's mercy exceeded his justice, but that to presume on God's mercy was a sin against the Holy Spirit.<sup>33</sup> To remedy that impediment, he urged the virtue of servile fear (593-5).

The final impediment to resolution was the "deceitful hope" of those who plan to delay their resolution until their deathbed. After invoking Augustine's lengthy description of the miserable death of those who deferred their conversions to the last minute (596-627), Persons provided other tragic stories of those who procrastinated (628-42).

Having awakened readers out of their inconsideration, Persons offered them direction. Like the first part, the second recommended no external actions, no daily prayers or practices. Rather, Persons suggested remedies to be applied to the roots of impediments, or what we today would

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<sup>33</sup> On the development of this teaching in Puritan theology, see Baird Tipson, "A Dark Side of Seventeenth-Century English Protestantism: The Sin against the Holy Spirit," *Harvard Theological Review* 77 (1984): 301-30.



call dangerous dispositions. By addressing their dispositions, Persons provided a profoundly personal form of moral and spiritual guidance.<sup>34</sup>

Persons's concern was not with those who rejected God outright, but rather with those who were distracted. Distractions kept readers from responding to divine initiatives. For this reason, Persons attempted to awaken readers to consider their own situation and then offered them remedies to combat any distractions. Sin was, then, inconsideration, the fundamental disposition of not bothering to consider the obstacles that distracted believers from resolution.

We can see the focus of Persons's concern by examining his use of the Scriptures. Though he invoked hundreds of scriptural citations, he gave an extended, fifty-page treatment only to the Parable of the Sower (466–516). This parable, found in the Gospels of Matthew (13:1–23), Mark (4:3–20), and Luke (8:4–15), told the story of a sower casting seed on various types of soil; depending on the quality of the soil, the seeds died in the ground, withered before flowering, or eventually flourished and bore abundant fruit. Persons's central focus was to examine whether readers were vigilant to those deep and habitual dispositions that impede the growth of the seed, that is, their vocation.<sup>35</sup>

In sum, Persons invited readers to consider self-examination, the appreciation of the enormous difference between Creator and sinner, the unworthiness of the sinner, the call to conversion, the need to bring forth devotional works in service of God, the summons to a constant vigilance, the dangers of deception, particularly presumption, the recognition of affliction as revealing divine love, the call to practice the virtues, the depiction of the world as misery, the remedies that address one's hesitations, and the deep-felt knowledge that the present is the moment of judgment. At the end of the sixteenth century, these topics captured the interests of both

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<sup>34</sup> Here Persons anticipated the current theological concern for the fundamental option found in contemporary Roman Catholic ethics; see Josef Fuchs, *Human Values and Christian Morality* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1970), 92–111; Bernard Häring, *The Law of Christ* (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1961), 99–119.

<sup>35</sup> In my study of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Puritan practical divinity, I have determined that no scriptural passage receives more attention than the Parable of the Sower.



devout Roman Catholics and Puritans.<sup>36</sup> Edmund Bunny recognized this congruency immediately.

## The Puritan Editions

**D**isinherited by his father for pursuing the ministry rather than the law, Bunny trained at Oxford and became chaplain to the archbishop of York. Leaving York, he became an itinerant preacher, traveling throughout the country. In 1576 he published both his *Whole Summe of Christian Religion*, designed for the "common multitude," and an abridgment of Calvin's *Institutions*, which was translated into English four years later.<sup>37</sup>

Bunny was, above all, an evangelizer. After witnessing the unsuccessful trends of previous Reformers who sought to make obedience to the law the central issue of the Reformation, Bunny and others turned to an "evangelical" or "moderate" type of Puritan piety that through pamphlets and other devotional literature encouraged converts to become intense adherents to Christ.<sup>38</sup>

As we saw earlier, starting around 1575 these Puritan preachers sought to reform the Church of England, not to separate from it; they strove to persuade their listeners to pursue a more ardent Christian life.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Undoubtedly, many Roman Catholics were moved to resolution. For instance, John Gerard writes that *The Christian Directory* was "a most useful and wonderful book which I believe has converted more souls to God than it contains pages" (*The Autobiography of a Hunted Priest*, trans. Philip Caraman [Chicago: Thomas More Press, 1988], 13). Likewise, in his 1607 edition *Persons* acknowledged the great success that God "has been content to use it as an external mean, with the cooperation of his inward grace, to recall diverse ones from the damnable estate of sin and wicked life unto his favor and service" (3b).

<sup>37</sup> He also wrote several works studying the norms of good governance in the Old Testament (see *Dictionary of National Biography*, 3:271-72, s.v. "Bunny").

<sup>38</sup> As is evident from Bunny's own publications, these Puritans did not discount the desire to determine the actual norms that good Christians should follow, but their piety was a highly relational one based on an indebted love for Christ. See Jerald Brauer, "Types of Puritan Piety," *Church History* 56 (1987): 39-58; see also William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938).

<sup>39</sup> See Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1982), esp. 116-68.



Like Bunny, all of them found Persons's *Christian Directory* congruent with their theology.

Whether Bunny knew from the beginning that he was editing a Jesuit who had been "convicted for treason" is unclear. In his preface, Bunny stated that he does not know the author except by the initials "R. P." that appeared on the title page of *The First Booke*. Still, he acknowledged that "R. P." used the work of Loarte, "Doctor of Divinity and a Jesuit friar."<sup>40</sup>

In 1584, Edmund Bunny published his pirated edition, *A Booke of Christian exercise appertaining to Resolution*. The work was bracketed by a dedication and preface and by a lengthy *Treatise Tending to Pacification*. At the outset, Bunny explained his attraction to the text: "for the persuasion that it hath to godliness of life" (A2). After praising Persons's purpose, he admitted the need to censor Persons occasionally: "I have taken pains to purge it of certain points that either carried some manifest error, or else some other inconvenience with them" (Preface, 1b).

In the *Treatise Tending to Pacification*, Bunny divided his case for the Church of England into two parts. First, in contrast to the few benefits and great inconveniences of remaining recusant, there were the great benefits and few inconveniences of professing in the established Church. Second, since it was a question of choosing communions as opposed to leaving Christianity, the real issue was to see "who are the truer members of that Church that we all are of." He added, "In which point, so long as the question is but between us and them, the advantage is wholly and only ours" (Table of Contents).

Persons responded to Bunny in his own extended preface "containing certain notes upon a false edition of the same Book by M. Edmund Bunny" (Preface, 1a). Persons believed that Bunny's piracy showed "first how poor and barren these new Doctors are of all spiritual doctrine, tending to good life, and reformation of manners; since they are content to use and pervert our Books for some show thereof" (Preface, 1b). From Persons's perspective, the only available works were by writers from the "true" Church, who had not departed from the Roman tradition that generated this devotion. Moreover, English readers fared better with works of devotion than of controversy, but Puritans provided only the latter (16a-b, 20b-22a).

Persons also attacked Bunny's *Treatise* by arguing that there was nothing new among the Puritans, that they have only eliminated some ideas and practices, and that by accommodating them a Catholic actually surren-

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<sup>40</sup> See *The Dictionary of National Biography*, 3: 271-72, s.v. "Bunny"; Gregory, "True and Zealous Service," 246.



dered some long-held beliefs (11b). Moreover, the Puritans broke from the Roman Church; since the Roman Church remained intact, why would readers want to separate themselves from the Church? (17b–20a). Why change anything when readers could draw comfort from knowing that Catholicism has never changed? (11a).

Above all, Persons rebutted Bunny's editing of Persons's own work. About that editing, Brad Gregory has compared the two texts and noted that Bunny edited Persons in three ways: occasional changes of single words, very rare deletions, and about thirty marginal warnings. In his own response, Persons noted some examples of the word changes: "Catholic priests, that hear Confessions" became "Men that be skillful to give counsel." "Penance and Satisfaction" become "toil of amendment" (2b–3a).

Bunny deleted a five-page discussion on purgatorial fire and Persons's description of early Christian ascetical practices that presumed the possibility of one's complete avoidance of sin.<sup>41</sup> But such lengthy deletions were rare. Gregory noted, for instance, that the longest chapter, the impediment on the love of the world, ran fifty-five pages and Bunny's two most extensive deletions there were each only four lines long.<sup>42</sup>

Bunny's parenthetical comments and marginal notes either qualified Persons's writing or, in the extreme case, disagreed outright with him, as, for instance, over Persons's denial that Christians know with certainty of their own salvation (4a, 5a, 16b).

Two "qualifying" notes illustrate Bunny's concerns. First, Persons remarked rhetorically that in asking why God sent affliction to the godly, it would be enough to say that it pleases God (P. 2.3.3, p. 418).<sup>43</sup> Bunny took Persons to task: For the Puritans, affliction was not an arbitrary, occasional option exercised by God, but rather an integral component to redemption. For them, those who knew no affliction in their lives had reason to doubt their own salvation. Second, on whether God's mercy exceeded God's justice, Bunny made a few minor emendations (P. 2.4.15, p. 343). Persons's ease in asserting the overriding mercy of God was not shared by his Puritan editor.

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<sup>41</sup> "True and Zealous Service," 246.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 253. Earlier Gregory noted that on "fewer than twenty occasions does [Bunny] delete eight or more lines" (246).

<sup>43</sup> So that those familiar with either or both texts can more easily compare them, I refer readers to the part, chapter, and paragraph of the text as well as the page. Thus, P. 2.3.3, p. 418, refers to Persons's text, the second part, third chapter, third paragraph, found on page 418 of the 1607 reprint edition that I use.



These marginal notes, like the thirty others throughout the text, rarely contradicted the original text (the certainty of salvation is the exception); rather they were emphatic warnings against being mollified on matters dealing with God's sovereignty or God's just judgment. Still, these seemingly minor editorial changes were the most important ones. Bunny noted in his preface, for instance, that for Persons "the service of God, eight or nine times is joined withal to the gaining of heaven." Bunny deleted the "gaining of heaven" (Preface, 3b).

Nonetheless, these changes were as infrequent as the deletions. For instance, concerning the reasons why God sent afflictions, Bunny kept Persons's list of thirteen reasons, making only two slight modifications.<sup>44</sup>

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*Bunny's parenthetical comments and marginal notes either qualified Persons's writing or, in the extreme case, disagreed outright with him.*

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Anyone comparing the two texts would be struck, then, by the few changes that Bunny made. As Brad Gregory notes, "Bunny's admonitions remain identical to Parson's on the necessity of avoiding sin and doing good works" (257). Moreover, the Puritan preacher rarely amended the Jesuit's use of the Scripture (247, 253). For instance, the extended commentary on the Parable of the Sower remained basically intact. What is more important, the key structure of the work was not at all changed: the function of the First Principle remained as did the entire experiential meditation process of the first part and the five remedies of the second part.

Why, then, did Bunny bother with the changes, deletions, and editorial admonitions? Why was Persons so alarmed by them? Both Brad Gregory and the editor of the critical edition of *The Christian Directory*, Victor Houlston, provide helpful answers to this question. Gregory writes, "Bunny takes pain to avoid any implication that human beings either contribute to their own salvation, or ought to strive for salvation through

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<sup>44</sup> Interestingly, Bunny even left in the example from the *Imitatio Christi*: "Finally . . . to make us perfect Christians: that is, like unto Christ our captain" (P. 2.2.13, p. 241). *The Dictionary of National Biography* notes that Bunny may have translated the *Imitatio Christi* (3: 272). Moreover, in the preface he notes the success of Thomas Roger's translation of the *Imitation of Christ* (Preface, A3b). Like his decision to keep the imitative comment here, Bunny's interest in the *Imitatio* is singular from a Calvinist-Puritan point of view, see Elizabeth Hudson, "English Protestants and the *Imitatio Christi*, 1580-1620," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 19 (1988): 541-58.



their service to God" (248). Houliston, for his own part, calls attention to "the many unobtrusive but inescapable indications that the godly life so powerfully urged on the reader was not a natural outcome of salvation, but its unremitted condition."<sup>45</sup> Bunny was looking to eliminate any tolerance of righteousness through works.

This issue aside, then, how can we explain that a Jesuit work became a foundational text for evangelizing Puritans? Two almost diametrically opposed opinions have been offered by way of explanation. At the end of the last century, some claimed that the extraordinary sales indicated widespread Catholic influence at the end of the sixteenth century. As Louis Martz, one of the most important commentators on devotional literature, wrote, "By the opening of the seventeenth century a large proportion of the English public had taken to its heart the fruits of the Counter Reformation in the realm of inward devotion."<sup>46</sup> Brad Gregory countered these claims. He held that Bunny purified the text: "Bunny had taken care to remove the Catholic distinctiveness from the *Exercise*." Gregory believed that both Persons and Bunny held one worldview, "shared by both groups but dependent on the specifics of neither."<sup>47</sup> Were the early English Puritans really Roman Catholics in their spirituality, as Martz suggested? Or did Bunny present a sanitized Christian spirituality, free of Catholic traces, as Gregory argued?

Both answers are extreme. Bunny's edited work was clearly a Puritan work, but it was not original. Certainly Bunny purified that text, but not of its "Catholicism." Rather, he expunged any hint of what he perceived as works righteousness, any denial of the certitude of faith, and any doubt about God's sovereignty or the righteous severity of God's judgment. Traces of those differences were rare, however, not because Roman Catholic theology did not hold them as important, but because the specific devotional text that Bunny edited held few instances of them. Bunny did not access an "Ur-Christian spirituality," as Gregory implied. Rather, Bunny appropriated a very specific expression of Catholic devotional spirituality: an expanded set of meditations based on the structure, content, and theme of the First Week of the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises* and a series of remedies to follow through on one's resolution.

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<sup>45</sup> *Christian Directory*, xxiii.

<sup>46</sup> Louis Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation: A Study in English Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), 9. Also, Thurston, "Catholic Writers."

<sup>47</sup> "True and Zealous Service," 267.



Against the established Church of England, two very different groups, Jesuit priests and Puritan divines, sought to awaken in the hearts of the potentially devout a conversion to Christ. Both groups believed in the priority of God's commandments over the nation's, and both looked at the future life as more important than the present. For these reasons they each sought both remedies for their temptations and exercises for being vigilant; they also sought spiritual nourishment, whether the Mass for Catholics or godly preaching for Puritans. In doing this, they each gave order to their members' lives and, in a time of upheaval, some security, purpose and vision.<sup>48</sup>

Neither group provided these services as preachers of locally established churches. In the absence of toleration, they each preached as itinerants, the Jesuits more clandestinely than the Puritans. They addressed individual readers, not large congregations, and they also directed the solitary readers to search their souls and to turn to the Lord. The call to conversion, like the act itself, was deep but radically singular.<sup>49</sup>

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Guiding the subsequent new birth from conversion became the task of the next group of Puritan writers. Just as Roman Catholics after resolution turned to Loarte's manual to help them with vigilance in their new beginnings, so too Puritans had their manuals of vigilance to accompany them in their new birth. But introspective manuals were not all they had; for just as the Catholic "beginners" turned and looked for Jesuit spiritual directors to mentor them in the care of their soul, so too the Puritans had their

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<sup>48</sup> McGrath, *Papists and Puritans*, 384-90. On the stability that conversions offered Puritans, see Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965).

<sup>49</sup> In his study of Puritan conversion, Charles Cohen notes that "[c]onversion transformed single unregenerates into members of communities dedicated to opposing ungodliness. But [c]onversion became less the initiation into a group charged with a holy mission than a private act of supreme individual importance" (*God's Caress: The Psychology of Puritan Religious Experience* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1986], 273-74).



divines to console them as pilgrims in fellowship with the Lord. The habits acquired in conversion became the habits of regeneration.

### So What?

**M**y friend and colleague John O'Malley, after telling a rather interesting historical story, frequently challenges his audience with the question, "So what?" Is this just a good tale or can we learn something from it? Persons's story and text raise an enormous variety of issues worth our consideration. Here I want to tease out a few.

First, for all the doctrinal and ecclesiological disputes of the Reformation, Christians on either side of the aisle prayed—from the depths of their souls—to the same God. Moreover, they often prayed the same way. For instance, that same Mr. Bannister who Puritanized Loarte also Puritanized with great ease other Catholic writers. Lutherans similarly took over other Catholic devotional works. The spiritual divide between Protestants and Catholics was practically negligible.

Second, doctrinal and ecclesiological disputes today seem to have the same nastiness as they did then. Fortunately, underlying these disputes is the Church of Christ, which encompasses all the baptized, and that one true Church is made up of the People of God who share deeper and richer experiences of a God who creates, redeems, calls, and guides. In the promotion of ecumenism, our shared spiritualities are the seedbeds for the fruits of greater union.

Here, then, the Puritan reception of Persons's *Directory* is a cause for rejoicing. Though Persons himself did not take delight in the news that his text was converting many to the godly life of Puritan spirituality, today we acknowledge happily that Persons's work awakened both Catholics and Puritans to the life of Christian devotion.

Third, we still saw that a significant Jesuit work of devotion spoke directly to those firmly predisposed toward Puritanism. Moreover, we saw that Loarte's work of vigilance also influenced the Puritans. There's something chilling about this, no? Some of the earliest works of Jesuit spirituality being avidly read by (of all people!) contemporary Puritans! Yet the contemporaries of both were not surprised by this affinity. A writer of sixteenth-century English history, J. C. Aveling, notes that "pamphleteers amongst



moderate Catholics and Anglicans were agreed that Jesuits and Puritans were tarred with the same brush."<sup>50</sup>

Certainly there are a number of positive reasons to explain the Puritan attraction to the Jesuits: They both believed in the importance of a fervid and personal love for God, of individual direction, and of the discernment of spirits, as well as the value of both introspection and one's own experience.<sup>51</sup> But the Puritans were suspicious of unknown neighbors, saw the world as misery, called their followers to a life of acute vigilance, insisted that they seek the counsel of their divines, promoted enormous fear about the judgment of God, and scared many of their followers either into submission or despair.<sup>52</sup> These are the very teachings of the *Christian Directory*! Comparing the Puritans to the Jesuits might prompt us to have a better estimation of the Puritans, but Persons's "success," like Aveling's observation, might also help us

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*But take away the colloquies, as Persons and other Jesuits have done, and we also take away God's heartfelt love and tender mercy, which make the grace of the First Week possible.*

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to realize that inevitably we may have some shadows of our own that we need to recognize. How puritanical were we? How puritanical are we?

Fourth, for all its "success," the *Christian Directory* is hardly the *Spiritual Exercises*. Rather, it is only an interpretation of the First Week of the Exercises. This is significant, because when we make use only of the

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<sup>50</sup> J. C. Aveling, "The English Clergy, Catholic and Protestant, in the 16th and 17th Centuries," in *Rome and the Anglicans*, ed. Wolfgang Haase (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1982), 95. Any Jesuit influence on the Puritans is even more striking when we realize the depth of their anti-Jesuit sentiment. See Thomas Wood, *English Casuistical Divinity during the Seventeenth Century* (London: SPCK, 1952), 59-63, 103-8; William Perkins, *William Perkins, 1558-1602, English Puritanist*, ed. Thomas Merrill (Nieuwkoop: B. De Graaf, 1966), xii-xiii, xvii. On anti-Jesuit sentiment among Roman Catholics, see E. J. Mahoney, *The Theological Position of Gregory Saryus, O.S.B., 1560-1602* (Ware: Jennings and Bewley, 1922).

<sup>51</sup> Cohen, *God's Caress*.

<sup>52</sup> In the later 1607 edition, Persons's first impediment was "the mistrust and diffidence in God's mercie" or, to put it simply, despair. As I believe can be shown, despair grew as an experience of fear among Puritans unable to find within themselves the certain signs of salvation. This is disturbing; twenty-five years after *The Christian Directory* was first published, there was presumably a notable increase of despair among readers of English devotional literature.



First Week and omit the colloquies and the other three Weeks, we are using only the preconversion material of the Exercises.

Would a book on the other Weeks have been so successful? Hardly. Consider that after the First Week exercitants, having made their general confession, are no longer inconsiderate sinners, but instead ardent disciples, who look at their relationship with the world, not as threatening or as compromising, but rather as the place for living out their response to God's call. This shift in perspective on the world is an eventual one: by the Second Week, exercitants begin to extrovert; by the end of the retreat, they embrace the world as the place for attaining the love of God. Before conversion, the world is an impediment; after conversion, it becomes the home of the converted. For the Puritan, however, the world is a hostile place both before and after one's conversion.

Yet even if we see that it was not Ignatian spirituality in toto, but rather the First Week alone that appealed to Puritans, we still need to find out how often the early Jesuits used only the First Week in their preaching. Likewise, in our own preaching and retreat giving, we need to ask ourselves how reliant we are on the First Week alone. This is not an easy answer to render. Among others, James Joyce suggests in *The Portrait of an Artist* that the First Week shapes a great deal of Jesuit personality.

Fifth, Persons not only used the First Week, but he deleted its colloquies. The doorway from the First to the Second Week is framed by the experience of the colloquies, where the exercitant encounters the merciful Christ on the cross. Persons directed his readers, not to this experience, but rather to his own words, thereby violating Ignatius's fifteenth annotation, which warns against interfering with the possibility of God's communicating directly with an exercitant. Persons's actions highlight the significance that the colloquies have for the integrity of the Exercises. The experience that we encounter in the colloquies of the First Week mutes whatever fear an examination of our own condition might produce. But take away the colloquies, as Persons and other Jesuits have done, and we also take away God's heartfelt love and tender mercy, which make the grace of the First Week possible.

Sixth, Persons's "good works" were expressly concerned with devotional activity. As such, Persons paid little attention to the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, because he was concerned with what was owed to God and without any concern at all for what was owed to the neighbor. This is astonishing. If the paradigm for the last judgment is found in Matt. 25, how could Persons only deal with a neglect of God without ever nodding to the neglect of neighbor?



O'Malley testifies well to the works of mercy in both the *Formula of the Institute* and in the practices of the early Jesuits and their confraternities.<sup>53</sup> Yet, when we look at the First Principle and Foundation, do we find those works as explicitly constitutive of the praise, reverence, and service of God? In terms of Jesuit practices there certainly was and still is an evident corollary between the First Principle and the works of mercy. But in terms of the overall vertical direction of the First Week and, especially, of the First Principle, the evidence of any connection to love of neighbor must be deliberately made. This, I think was the extraordinary accomplishment of the Thirty-second and Thirty-fourth General Congregations, that is, the assertion that the works of justice are constitutive of the promotion of faith. Persons's own lack of witness to love of neighbor is itself an indication of our need to make it more and more explicit.

Last, if there is one single thing that preachers know with certainty, it's that they have no idea how their sermons will be received. Similarly, we cannot anticipate the reception of our written works, particularly on spirituality. Persons's story is not a story that we have much control over; it's not a story that warns us against writing. It embodies, rather, a paradigm to remind us that writers and preachers do not necessarily know who their actual listeners and readers are.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *First Jesuits*, 165–99.

<sup>54</sup> I want to thank John O'Malley and José Carlos Coupeau for their helpful comments on earlier drafts, and the members of the Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality for a very enlightening discussion; particularly do I thank John Padberg, Doug Marcouiller, and especially Dick Blake for their many constructive insights on this essay. I wish to thank the Association of Theological Schools as well, who provided me with a grant for a sabbatical this past year.



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Editor:

It is ironic that you published Rigoleuc's "Points for a Spiritual Director" in conjunction with Starkloff's article "Pilgrimage Re-envisioned" [STUDIES 32, no. 5 (Nov. 2000)]. Carl's article is on the Trinity's *missio ad extra*, which should animate the lives and activities of Jesuits. This is in stark contrast to the spirit of Rigoleuc's points, which is inner-directed.

Let me venture to formulate some counterpoints.

1. How often do you pray and make sacrifices for others, for your constituencies (parishioners, religious subjects, children, students, etc.)? Whom do you pray for?

2. Do you find Christ in others?

3. What do you worry about? What apostolic desires do you have?

4. What do you understand by service of God? of the Church?

5. In your dealing with others, what changes are you trying to bring about in them?

6. Are you bringing others closer to Christ? to the Church?

7. What means do you use to bring others to Christ?

8. Are you working alone? Are you working as part of a team?

9. How have you offended others? Do you ask pardon of those you hurt?

10. How forgiving are you?

11. What are the character traits that make you less effective?

12. What are the types of readings that you like?

13. Where do you want updating? In theology, in liturgy, in communication skills, etc.?

14. Are you a peacemaker, a reconciler, a community builder?

15. What can be done so that people do not separate religion from life?

16. Is your apostolic activity making you more prayerful? Why not?

17. Whom do you go to for help?

The best of success in all your apostolic efforts.

Victor L. Badillo, S.J.

Manila Observatory

P.O. Box 122, U.P. Post Office

1101 Quezon City

Philippines



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