

Paris. Yet, Gray's own personal financial situation as well as his social origins must have been influential in determining the character and quality of his life. Father Sewell describes how Gray later confessed to having incurred heavy debts in the 1890s, his Foreign Office salary was only £120 per annum, but we are nowhere told how he was able to support himself in circumstances of considerable ease, if not extravagance. In 1892 Gray met Raffalovich and the implication is made that the latter supported the former at various times during his life, but nowhere is this made explicit and nowhere do other possible patrons and benefactors appear. The enigma of Gray's social success and apparent economic solvency remains.

The further puzzle of Gray's conversion to Catholicism and discovery of a vocation to the priesthood also remains. Father Sewell does very well with the evidence that survives, both Raffalovich and Gray were careful in safeguarding their personal lives from the enquiries of later biographers. The author tells us that Gray was never a theologian, his course of studies was short, he did not enjoy preaching and yet during his exercise of a curate's ministry in the most densely populated urban area of Western Europe of the time, St. Patrick's parish in Cowgate, he served the people with care and devotion. Fr. Sewell suggests that Catholicism and priesthood for John Gray were means to achieve discipline and

curb an excess of passion and sensibility. At times in his life he had come close to breakdown; the structure of Catholicism was to be the means he chose to form his destiny. However, if much of the charm and vivacity of his early life seems to disappear under the formal and aloof manner of the Canon of St. Andrew's and Edinburgh still one feature remains constant. Father Sewell describes this carefully and discretely, that is Gray's gift of friendship expressed loyally and consistently. His care for Beardley remains an example of true fidelity in adversity.

Those who are looking for an exposé of the decadent nineties will be disappointed in this book. All the ingredients for popular success, religion, sexual ambiguity, social scandal, conversion and subsequent respectability are all here, but dealt with in a sober and serious, if sometimes disjointed and repetitive fashion. Father Sewell is to be congratulated on this work in that not only does he present an interesting, if somewhat idiosyncratically over-sympathetic, account of a man's journey in friendship and faith, but also provides a vivid picture of the world in which he achieved significance. Nevertheless, at the end of the book the enigma of Canon Gray remains, an enigma which even Fr. Brocard, though he comes close, has failed to solve. But it is an enigma unlikely ever to be solved.

ALLAN WHITE OP

NICOLAS ZERNOV, SUNSET TEARS **The Fellowship of St. Alban and St Sergius. London 1983. pp. 192. £4.00**

Nicholas Zernov was a major interpreter of the Russian Orthodox tradition to the English speaking West. His *The Russian Religious Renaissance of the Twentieth Century* remains a unique guide to the brief efflorescence of creative Christian thought in Russia before the Great War, a revival tragically cut short by the October Revolution, in whose wake Zernov and a large proportion of the Russian intelligentsia fled their country. *Sunset Years* is a series of final meditations on the private and public events of his life,

and on the Gospel. I am not sure how satisfactory they will seem to those outside the huge ecumenical circle which Nicholas' genius for friendship gained him. To me, their lack of literary coherence is more than compensated for by the many valuable judgments and *aperçus* on Church life they contain. From this point of view the most important section of the book is perhaps pp. 62–81 where Zernov outlines a proposal for the re-union of Orthodoxy with Rome (and also with Canterbury).

Despairing of 'learned discussion' as an ecumenical tool (we know it is inadequate) and realising that the calling of an ecumenical council for the purpose is impossible (for neither side can accept the right of the other to summon such councils), Zernov suggests that an autocephalous Orthodox church could offer full sacramental communion to Rome prior to any discussion of the outstanding doctrinal questions: this would be, he says, an 'appeal to the Holy Spirit' to create that change of perspective in which the distortions of centuries would fall away. Zernov's picture of the Church follows that of the nineteenth century Slavophile Khomiakov in seeing Tradition as the continued presence of the Spirit among the people of God, and downplaying the rôle of authorities, whether these be texts or officers. It is

difficult to think that many Orthodox divines will support his proposal but its generosity and daring is typical of the man. What finally remains with one from this slight volume, however, are the portraits of Russian emigré life after the Great War, the shed-chapels of the Parisian 15th *arrondissement* where the dispossessed of the revolution brought their flowers to surround on Good Friday the symbolic burial-shroud of the dead Christ, and the sense that only in the survival of a Christian vision of man does any hope lie for the humanisation of the Soviet State. Alas, not many of the 'third emigration' (those who have left the U.S.S.R. since 1960) share the confidence in the ultimate victory of the risen Christ which filled and moved this unforgettable man.

AIDAN NICHOLS

THE MIRROR MIND: Spirituality and transformation by William Johnston.
Colins, Fount Paperbacks. London, 1983. £2.50

William Johnston has long been well-known as an illuminating and readable explorer of the common ground between Christian and oriental mysticism. He is a Jesuit from Northern Ireland who has lived in Japan since 1951, and this latest book—*The Mirror Mind*—continues his dialogue between the religions of east and west. It is based on the eight Martin D'Arcy lectures he gave at Oxford in 1980, and it is now—after two years hardback-only sales—more cheaply available in a Fount paperback edition.

Johnston writes very consciously as a Christian. He quotes Anselm's dictum '*Crede ut intelligas: Believe that you may understand: Be committed that you may understand...* this is important, because one who dialogues may be tempted to compromise or water down his own truth in the specious belief that this is an ecumenical procedure. Or he may be tempted to flirt with another religion and end up committed neither to that religion nor to his own.' (p. 12) And yet he does not simply write as a committed Christian taking pickings from elsewhere as they fit into his own faith. He attempts to

combine Christian commitment with an openness that leads him to write 'When I say that a religion is a valid way, I simply take it as it is. I do not say it is inferior to my own; I do not even say it is equal to my own.' (p.7)

One area in which Christian spirituality has been very weak is that of the body, and here the east has something to teach us. Johnston talks of the attention paid throughout East Asia to breathing: 'To meditate without learning to breathe would be like eating without learning to use chopsticks. One might succeed, but in a very clumsy way.' (p.50) But Christians can do more than learn to pay attention to their own breathing: Johnston takes this understanding more deeply into the Christian thought-system by suggesting 'If we have devotion to the face of Jesus, to the wounds of Jesus, to the heart of Jesus, would not devotion to the breath of Jesus be profoundly meaningful? Then one would breathe the Holy Spirit in unison with Jesus. One would recall the Johannine Jesus who bowed his head and said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit...' (John 20.22). One would

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