

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.

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THE MIRROR MIND: Spirituality and transformation by William Johnston.
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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

243

further recall the breath of God in Genesis and the great passage in Ezekiel where Yahweh breathes on the dry bones of Israel and gives them life.' (p. 58)

Considering the physicality of much of Jesus' activity in the gospels—such as the breathing on the apostles mentioned here—it is indeed strange how much the physical side has been neglected, even within Churches with a strongly developed sacramental system. How very rude and distasteful we would think it if someone deliberately came up to us and breathed in our face—an act of physical intimacy of a sort usually reserved to lovers. And then when we consider that *pneuma* means both breath and Spirit, it becomes even odder that Christianity has paid so little attention to recognising the Spirit in the breath. Here we see it is not a matter of Christianity being supplemented by eastern religion, but of eastern religion reminding us of what is already in our own heritage.

Another point where Johnston uses oriental categories to throw illumination on Christian mysticism is in the cyclic progression of word and silence in prayer. The *yin* and the *yang*, the masculine and feminine, the light and the shade, the head and the belly... can also stand for the word and the silence. 'Applying all this to meditation we can understand how, when words become abundant and reach their fullness or saturation point, silence ensues. And out of the deep silence emerge words.' (p. 79) And just as the seed of light is in the darkness, and the

seed of darkness is in the light (the T'ai-chi-T'u diagram represents this by a black spot in the fullest part of the white area and vice versa) so the seed of silence is in the words, and the seed of words is in the silence. *Yin* and *yang*, which so often suggest nothing more than crank eating, make a lot more sense when illustrated through our own Christian experience like this.

As the book progresses Johnston pays more attention to Jung, and less attention to eastern religion. And as he does so, he slips just a little towards the great Jungian danger—of regarding religion as useful because healing, rather than as healing because true. Speaking of the therapeutic integration of the *animus* and *anima*, he writes: 'Jung has outlined his own spiritual path with its analysis of dreams and its healing of the psyche. But I believe that a similar end has been attained through prayer, the Eucharist, devotion to the Virgin Mary and other practices of the Christian life.' (p. 163) If this means Christianity need not feel inferior to Jungian theory, then the approach of different 'valid ways' seems to have gone too far. But that is probably to be unfair. What Johnston is trying to do is avoid comparative evaluations altogether while concentrating on drawing lines across the open page of dialogue. It is a dialogue that, now begun, will not fade out, and to which Johnston has, over the years, and now again in *The Mirror Mind*, made a significant contribution.

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