

their readers the compiment of explaining clearly why most modern scholars now accept the *Testament* as authentic (see e.g. *Medieval Women*, ed. D. Baker, Oxford, 1978, p 277)? The effect of this, and of their refusal to admit that her relations with Francis and the hierarchy passed through some notable vicissitudes, make her seem a much less interesting figure than most scholars find her. Happily, Francis and Clare can speak to us direct in these excellent translations, and show the rich variety of their own experience; and in the translations they are faithfully revealed, even to Francis's famous paradox, about tiresome brothers – 'do not wish that they be better Christians' (p 75).

Early Dominicans must have been a much more difficult book to write. Dominic cannot talk directly to us; a selection has had to be made from a wide and scattered literature of variable interest concerning a number of the early friars. This literature has been mastered as few scholars could have mastered it; and a very shrewd and interesting selection made. One regrets the omission of most of Jordan of Saxony's *De principijs* the less, since Fr Tugwell has given it in another publication; one regrets the omission of the Toulouse depositions of the canonisation process all the more, since he has advanced our knowledge of the texts of the process so much in his account and translation of the depositions from Bologna. Every student will have his particular delights and sor-

rows. I specially welcome Jean de Mailly's *Life and the Nine Ways of Prayer* of St Dominic, and the splendid selection from Humbert de Romans, who comes into his own at last. Introductions and notes are full of new learning, and the wealth of textual knowledge makes one regret that some of the translations are not accompanied by the original Latin; one certainly hopes that the Editor will go on to edit in full many of the texts from which he has selected, for he rightly says 'there is a remarkable lack of serious critical editions of early Dominican texts' (p 35). He talks of his translation as 'a kind of progress report' (*ibid.*) and this sums up the achievement of the book. For not only do the texts show us the width of early Dominican literature in a new way, but the selection and commentary open up all manner of interesting problems about early Dominican history and spirituality. For the student of the early Dominicans the works of Vicaire and Hinnebusch provide ample foundations; but they have hardly brought the early friars to life. This is Fr Tugwell's special achievement: all who would know about the early friars will find copious interest in these texts; and all serious students of the early Dominicans will be stimulated to rethink their suppositions and start again with a refreshing, novel view of the material familiar and unfamiliar.

ROSALIND B. BROOKE

IULIA DE BEAUSOBRE: A RUSSIAN CHRISTIAN IN THE WEST by
Constance Babington Smith. *Darton, Longman & Todd*, pp 195. £9.95.

I have a bookcase which carries works by the poet Kathleen Raine, Helen Thomas' writings upon her husband the poet, Gerald Brenan's *St John of the Cross*, Philip Sherrard's *Christianity and Eros* and Aelred Graham's *Contemplative Christianity*. To these I shall add this book, for it belongs in that company, being a work that touches life at the bone, the poetry of idealism, and the deepest conviction about the presence of God in man's history. It is about the journey from shelter to suffer-

ing, from enclosed social safety to compassion even for one's torturer, from a weak convention about faith to a religious adhesion that surpasses denominational loyalty. It is a tale of the journey of an unquenchable spirit in time and experience to something akin to sanctity; and it is shortly and delightfully told.

The author is a biographer of substance, who gave us *Rose Macaulay* in 1972 and *John Masefield* in 1978: between the two, she was received into the Orthodox Church

by Bishop Kallistos Ware, joining the Greek Orthodox parish in Cambridge, where she now lives. She has known her subject since 1953, and was moved to Orthodoxy by her. The book is a labour of respect, indeed by Iulia's literary executor, who – knowing that such a task would one day be put upon her – gathered notes and letters from an early date to give a picture of her subject's many lives.

The string that held the pearls was a strange tale of social extremes. Iulia was born in 1893 to an immensely rich and cultivated St Petersburg family that indulged in the habits of bored excess. She had an English nanny, 'Pussy', who proved more than once a bridge to higher life. In early 1917, the last days of security for such families, she married a Russian diplomat of remote Huguenot descent, a passionate Russophile (and that ultimately cost him his life), Nikolai de Beausobre. The October Revolution found them in London, and Nikolai insisted on taking his wife, seven months pregnant, back to by then Petrograd in an abyss of anarchy. What followed was an alternation of bare survival under suspicion and duress, escape to England, return to Russia and misery, and soon imprisonment. Their son died of starvation, Nikolai eventually died a suspected spy, Iulia was put to a concentration camp and learned to withstand investigation under torture.

And so it went on until 1934, when Iulia was literally ransomed by 'Pussy', her erstwhile nanny, coming to England and a wholly new life at the age of forty. She had the English language along with French from her childhood; and Russian from study in her prison days. There was a poetic flair in her that Pasternak mourned the loss of when she fled Russia; but in another way she admirably repaid any literary debt she had to the country of her birth by writing almost the first vivid and authentic account of what it is to be inside the hell of Russian prison camps, *The Woman who could not die* (1938). When she read Mandelstam and Solshenitsyn in the 1970s, she realised the soundness of her own account and its intrinsic objectivity. Soon afterwards, in 1940, she wrote a mere

booklet called *Creative Suffering* which insisted, with great insight born of experience, the redemptive possibilities of embraced suffering.

In 1942 she met that amazing outsider, the Polish Jew turned naturalised Englishman, Bernstein Namierowski, who became in 1953 Sir Lewis Namier, a knighthood recognising his place among historians of English political life. Namier had married his mistress, a Russian widow, in 1920; but she soon deserted him for another. A. J. P. Taylor has called her 'a bewitching character, the nearest thing to a fairy I have known'; but she was no wife. On her death in 1947, Iulia felt able to marry Namier and they had thirteen years together before his sudden death. She knew this complex man as no other; knew his wounds and his sense of being deprived of the fruits of his labour, through lack of the right shibboleth. And so she was able, in seven peaceful rewarding years after his death, to write his biography (part of it in a mode that was almost ghosted autobiography): *Lewis Namier* (1971) won her two literary prizes and Max Beloff's opinion that this was 'one of the most extraordinary, moving and revealing biographies ever written'.

There were a number of other writings, and they pinpoint the person better, as one who loved beyond the confines of this world. During the War Iulia devoted her energies largely to two valuable works on Christian Russia, *Russian Letters of Direction* about Macarius the *starets*; and *Flame in the Snow: a Russian Legend*, an account of the life and teaching of St Serafim of Sarov, greatest of recent saints from Russia. She wrote and reviewed – in *Time and Tide* – on the Russian Church, on the power of prayer, on the Russian social conscience, on cruelty and degradation. She also found time throughout her life to write poetry and prayerful meditations. Of the latter, the most substantial was her unfinished *Alyosha's Way*, the title referring to the youngest of the three Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*, sent out by his spiritual father to find God in the world. An essay on constant prayer, Iulia saw it as her final message to the West. For her,

the prototype Christian of our new age belonged to what she called 'the post-Christian Church', an unspoken communion of believers able to coalesce and disperse without an external organisation, for whom – as for her in latter days – Church 'membership' meant no more than living constantly in the presence of God.

Alyosha's Way had been envisaged as a finished work of six chapters, four of which were put into shape by Iulia in her widowed retirement at Woodcote, the fourth being 'Chrysostom and constant prayer'. The climax was to be an exploration of the relationship between prayer and the Virgin Mary. A further revision, near her death in 1977, brought Iulia to offer an account of her own experience of prayer in prison and concentration camp; and of Solov'yov 'the only Russian philosopher', and his influence. What remained to us after Iulia's death has here been published (pp 153-171).

What the author has done, as an act of pietas no less than an offering of great in-

sight, is to provide an unvarnished account of a life of creative suffering which began with fierce action and ended in deep contemplation; then a series of notes and letters that fall under the heading 'Echoes of friendship' and substantiate the tale told; then the final writings, notably *Alyosha's Way*, that Iulia never got to the publisher. There are pages of illustrations; but the biographical element is not strictly the point: the point is that it is a valuable record of a very significant spiritual aeneid. Something of the meaning of suffering in a Christ-like context is brought out by Iulia's comment upon her erstwhile torturers: 'When you overcome the pain inflicted on you by them, you make *their* criminal record less villainous. . . . But when, through weakness, cowardice, lack of balance, lack of serenity, you augment your pain, their crime becomes so much darker; and it is darkened by you'.

ALBERIC STACPOOLE O S B

MARXISM AND CHRISTIANITY by Denys Turner
Basil Blackwell, Oxford. £17.50.

'Anyone who, like me, feels crushed between the moral cynicism of a Brezhnev and the moral hypocrisy of a Reagan . . . will have identified the controlling concerns of this book' (p xi). It is both necessary and difficult for the reader of Dr Turner's vigorous, dense, lucid and provocative essay to keep this observation in mind. Necessary, because it exhibits the practical passion which shapes his attempt 'to define a problem about the possibility of morality' (p vii). Difficult because, although he insists that his 'argument is severely restricted in scope . . . austere, formal and conceptual' (p vii), the reader (and perhaps, at times, even the author) may be misled into supposing that *such* an argument can generate substantive conclusions of greater range and weight than it can, in fact, support.

The outlines of the argument can be briefly stated here, because Turner has, over the years, tested several features of it in *New Blackfriars*. Six chapters on 'Ideol-

ogy' (defined as 'a praxis characterized by a form of contradictoriness, in which the modes of social perception and relationship which it routinises misrepresent the social processes which generate them', p 127) are followed by three chapters expounding the thesis that, since Marxism is the only 'form of social knowledge' which, under capitalism, satisfies the necessary conditions of 'scientific' (in contrast to 'ideological') knowledge, and since 'Morality is that form of knowledge which, in relation to a given form of society, can be called the science of it' (p 117), therefore, under capitalism, 'morality is Marxism'. In the final four chapters, he argues that 'it is both necessary for Christianity to incorporate . . . the Marxist criticism of religion and possible for it to survive that incorporation' (p 160). Only in the measure that it does so will it be in a position to supply, in turn, essential critical correctives to Marxist 'amorality'.

The author insists that this is not a