

not automatic. A book that could have been of wide interest to scholars in general has become instead a difficult treatise for the narrow specialist, and in view of the importance and originality of the material, this seems a pity. Even as it is, how-

ever, this thesis will remain a valuable book of reference with much otherwise inaccessible information, made available, in the main, through a careful index.

*Elisabeth Stopp*

RONALD KNOX THE PRIEST by Thomas Corbishley, S.J., *Sheed and Ward, 17s 6d.*

To one who never knew Ronald Knox as other than a priest Father Corbishley's memoirs doubly valuable. Ronald Knox first came into my life when I was an undergraduate and he, as a not long ordained priest, came over from St Edmund's College, Ware, to give the Sunday morning conference at the former Cambridge chaplaincy at 2 Round Church Street. When I was myself appointed chaplain at Cambridge I went at once to sit at his feet. And now that the end of my term cannot be far away he, who 'was becoming increasingly affected by a sense of failure with the undergraduates entrusted to his care', sends through this book a sympathetic greeting from a better place. Mr David Walker, in his contribution to Mr Evelyn Waugh's *Life of Ronald Knox*, has told us that 'in some indefinable way his influence was, in dozens of cases, retrospective'.

Father Corbishley conveys just this note and shows how Ronald Knox, the least assertive or possessive of men, exercised a continuous influence by no obvious means. It was, of course, his holiness that came through and above all his astounding humility. In spite of his brilliant gifts we saw 'himself always as not out of the ordinary'. Father Corbishley emphasizes 'the genuine con-

cern for sanctity' as 'the most real thing about him'. His whole life was a striving after it. He achieved it surely in the end in the classical manner by being stripped of all things. 'He who all his life had hated the thought of being a nuisance, now found himself utterly dependent on the ministrations of others. Even this last purification was to be experienced, this last humiliation to be endured, so that the last traces of self-satisfaction might be eliminated.'

It is good to have this study from Father Corbishley, so resolutely putting first things first and yet with such delicacy that Ronald Knox would not have found this book 'spinal', had it been written about another man.

In a second edition, please will the publishers give a less offensive jacket? This horrible photograph of a clerical collar, bearing the legend 'Ronald Knox the Priest', would have made its subject squirm. Ronald himself continued to wear the narrow band of linen on a stock, which had been the mark of the extreme Anglo-Catholic in his youth, and never, in my memory, the 'Popish neck-cloth, which is the repulsive dress of the priestlings of the present time.'

*A. N. Gilbey*

FEILHARD DE CHARDIN by Claude Cuénot; *Burns and Oates, 42s.*

Cardinal Heenan, Archbishop of Westminster wrote (echoing some words of Pope John's), in his pastoral letter read on February 28th of this year: 'Truth does not alter, but our knowledge of the truth is always changing'. This would have delighted Père Teilhard de Chardin, whose life

was spent in increasing mankind's knowledge of truth.

He was a scientist, a devout Catholic Christian, and a most noble example of that noble society, the Jesuits. He was loyal, disciplined, and always true to his Church and to Christ his Master. He had

the most exquisite courtesy, and was the gayest person I ever knew. Because he understood God's plan better than most of us, he was an optimist from the foundation of his being.

His thought and vision were ahead of his time, he was indeed a path-finder and this must carry with it some sense of loneliness and sometimes of frustration. He never doubted the validity of his conclusions, and he was always certain that in time truth would triumph, and that others would be able to understand and accept his advance in human knowledge of truth. But he did sometimes wish this would happen more rapidly; he longed to share the joy of his revelation. He knew how important it was that this revelation should be recorded, and it is interesting and wonderful to see his thought is now being accepted; I believe as time goes on it will more and more permeate the world, and that his vision was another breakthrough for mankind in its progress.

This life of him makes fascinating reading; the many quotations from his own letters, essays and commentaries read like poetry; he loved and observed and rejoiced in every part of God's creation.

We read in detail of his scientific career, of the long years of patient excavation and research, in which he developed his thought, and learned so much of God's plan in the past, that he was able to understand its development in the future. In the latter part of his life it was this that absorbed him, he saw that evolution did not stop with producing man, but that man himself must continue to evolve, so that Christ was in a very real sense a second Adam.

There is much in this book to help us understand his thought, although nothing can replace the lucidity of his own writing. One is glad to learn more and read more about the man himself, so dearly loved by so many, so gentle, without bitterness or uncharitableness, witty, and so clear and simple in his conversation.

I could wish the translation had been less awkward, and that many very curious words, such as 'centration' had not been used. Nevertheless I found it absorbing to read, and it brought back to life one whose contribution to the world was that of a person and not merely a disembodied scholar.

J. E. Kelley

DISSONANT VOICES IN SOVIET LITERATURE. Edited by Patricia Blake and Max Hayward; *George Allen and Unwin, 30s.*

In *Sivtzev Vrazhek*, a novel written in the twenties by the emigré Ossorgin, the old ornithologist, Ivan Alexandrovitch, having suffered the vicissitudes of the Revolution, buys furtively – lest the police see him – the 'first white roll. Like a snowdrop! Not for the taste of it, but for the joy it brought; for was not it a real white roll, such as there used to be in the old days!' It is, one presumes, with something of the same feeling that the editors of this anthology have republished and amplified their previous selection from non-conformist Russian writers, that appeared in *Partisan Review* in 1961.

As the editors themselves admit, this is not a collection that is representative of the best writing in Soviet literature. Neither the better 'Socialist realists', nor those writers primarily concerned with the analysis of personal relationships – an important trend in modern Soviet prose – are repre-

sented. The collection is also heavily weighted on the side of prose: the meagre verse translations included are poor stuff, if one wishes to taste the most original achievements of post-war Soviet literature. Thus we are given Max Hayward's version of Evtushenko's impressive humanist affirmation, the already widely known *Babi Yar*, but nothing by the more technically gifted and subtly ironical Voznesensky: Richard Wilbur's excellent version of *Anti-Worlds*, for example, would have provided a good contrast.

The book suffers generally from an attempt to use literature as proof of an intellectual dissonance common to the optimistic then disillusioned *avant-garde* of the early years of the Revolution, the writers who tried to circumvent the rigours of Zhdanovist suppression, and the post-war writers of Thaws and half-Thaws.