

did he go so horribly wrong? The answer to this question surely is that saintliness in life and soundness in doctrine condition each other: a wrong head will spoil a good heart and vice versa. It was the tragedy of Mazzini's career, such as it is revealed to us in these two excellent books, that in his case the one dragged down the other until in the end there remained little sense in his theory and little charity in his practice. There can be few spectacles more melancholy to behold.

W. STARK

CINÉMA, FOI ET MORALE. By René Ludmann, C.S.S.R. (Editions du Cerf; n.p.)

This is an absorbing piece of work on the influence of the cinema on the world of today; written, it is true, from the French point of view but also, because it is French, lucid and extremely realistic.

Fr Ludmann divides his enquiry into three parts: the cinema and its influence on moral behaviour and, he tells us, what he means by morality is what is generally understood by the term—order, loyalty, goodness and purity—qualities equally, if negatively, asserted by the production code's veto against crime, falsehood, gangsterdom, adultery and so on; secondly, the influence of the cinema on faith (which is so much more important than morality); and finally, and perhaps most fascinating to the ordinary film-enthusiast, he devotes his last section—and illustrates it, too—to what he calls 'type-films': the anti-religious film, the a-religious film, films with spiritual value where we can be proud to find *Brief Encounter* given very high marks indeed, and then the truly Christian film, of which he cites two. One is Bresson's *Journal d'un Curé de Campagne*, and the other is Rouquier's *Lourdes et ses Miracles* which, when I saw it in Lourdes itself, was given an introduction of such unveiled hostility by the priest in charge of the free performance, that I should now very much enjoy hearing a discussion between him and Fr Ludmann on what the really Christian film should be.

From start to finish of his study, Fr Ludmann is eager to emphasize the universality of the cinema; the fact, for instance, that where ten adults may come to Mass in a village, fifty more will turn up to the same priest's mobile cinema-show; that whereas the figures for those practising their religion are reckoned to be something like fifteen to twenty per cent of the population, in France perhaps sixty-four per cent will go to the cinema twice a month. For religion to neglect this potent instrument, to despise or underestimate its hold, or to dismiss it without careful examination would be criminal folly. Though he advances a formidable list of potential moral dangers in the film—some rare, some only too common—he is refreshingly dubious about the

power of production codes or moral classifications to make much difference in the long run. For what he feels to be the greatest danger of the cinema is not that it is sinful, or suggestive, but that it is escapist and unreal and induces a kind of anaesthesia in the addict; and production codes and moral classifications do not often seem to take much account of this. Fr Ludmann would like first-class films to deal with contemporary problems, realistically and seriously, instead of countering danger with a series of negative proscriptions curtailing most ideas of any real vitality. When he comes to the question of faith, where he feels the influence of the cinema could, and should, be much greater, he is full of enterprising ideas and his vision of the cineast, like the Psalmist, praising the wonderful works of God is perhaps not so exotic as it sounds at first.

This is a short book and a provocative one—and many such studies have come from French publishers in the last few years: would that we in England could point to even one similar work written from the intelligent Christian point of view! But we cannot, and the greater number of all serious books on the cinema in this country have come from writers with views very different from ours, to whom we have ceded the day without even a struggle. All the more reason, therefore, to read books like *Cinéma, Foi et Morale* if you can possibly get hold of them.

MARYVONNE BUTCHER

ORGANIZ'D INNOCENCE: The Story of Blake's Prophetic Books. By Margaret Rudd. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 30s.)

Miss Rudd's purpose is to give 'a sympathetic hearing' to the Blake of the major prophetic books. Her thesis rests on the dangerous assumption that these poems are to be explained by reference to Blake's own life, and is that they are a psychological exploration of 'the fluid dream-like world of breakdown, breakdown above all of the vision that had held life together', leading to a solution in terms of 'reorganiz'd innocence', spiritual wholeness, and 'a mature and undivided Human Love'. Having stated this at length, she gives an exegesis of the poems, quoting extensively but not always accurately.

Miss Rudd is working on a 'hunch' in this unsatisfactory and rather arrogant book, and she quotes her publishers' praise of her 'exciting and original insight'; but her own wide view—for she cautions us against a 'myopic examination' of the books—is obtained only by leaving much out (few before her have found that *The Four Zoas* has a 'simple, almost naïve coherence'). The author often forgets her warning about the ambiguity of Blake's thinking, and assumes a too precise consistency of thought and symbol in order to prove her