

circumstance into a kind of heroism; the second explores with a clinical compassion the difference between the mind of the professional and amateur soldier, when they confront each other in a prison camp. Not in anyway a comfortable film, it is as many worlds away from *The Battle of the River Plate* as it is from the *Ballad of a Soldier*; one is left with the impression of an extremely adult piece of work. Indeed this is one of the most noticeable characteristics of the Polish cinema. In *Pociąg (Night Train)* for instance, what might have been a pretty conventional thriller is completely transformed by the character of the doctor who is the protagonist, and the interest one takes in his predicament quite overrides the irritation induced by the unusually overt propaganda. The amount of propaganda, or at least of explicit propaganda, is curiously small in most Polish pictures considering the weight of marxist influence there must necessarily be behind a state-controlled industry, fed from state-run and exceptionally good schools of cinematography. It is therefore all the more surprising to find the second Polish film to reach London this year, Kawalerowics' *Mother Joan of the Angels* so coldly anti-religious. It might even be a personal rather than an ideological bias, one feels, as it clearly is with Bunuel. Hardly a second-rate film—certainly not a boring one—has washed up on our screens from Poland over the last five years or so; of what other film-producing country of comparable output can one say so much?

MARYVONNE BUTCHER

Reviews

EASTERN CHRISTENDOM, by Nicolas Zernov; Weidenfeld and Nicolson; 42s.

EASTERN CATHOLIC LITURGIES, text by Nicholas Leisel; photographs by N. Makula; foreword by Donald Attwater; Sands; 35s.

Dr Zernov's book is subtitled 'A Study of the Origin and Development of the Eastern Orthodox Church'. The volume forms part of a series entitled 'History of Religions', and the approach is thus basically historical.

It may be surmised that there are few writers indeed in the English-speaking world who are capable of doing what the author has done for us in this volume with such a degree of historical competence and spiritual insight. With it he has supplied a very real deficiency in the definitely sparse available literature in English concerning Eastern Christendom, and his work will be valued both as a most useful work of reference, and also as an attractively-written account

which the general reader will never find boring, and which will greatly assist and stimulate him in his reflection and prayer in face of the spiritual challenge of Christian disunity.

The major part of the work consists of seven chapters which cover every aspect of the history of the Eastern Church from the time of the Apostles up to the twentieth century, with four further chapters on the Faith and Doctrine of the Orthodox Church, Worship and Sacraments in the Christian East, the Church in the Life of Eastern Christians, and the Sacred Art of the Christian East. There is a short conclusion in which the author gives his judgment about the place of the Christian East in the contemporary world.

It is inevitable that when such a vast field has to be covered in a relatively small amount of space, the most complex historical and theological questions have sometimes to be dismissed in a paragraph or two. In general these difficulties are surmounted with great elegance, but here and there the historian or the theologian may be inclined to question the author's treatment, or to feel that more or less serious omissions have been made in one direction or another. In the patristic period, for example, while one is grateful for the insistence that the struggle about the two natures was less a conflict between orthodoxy and heresy than between two legitimate, but profoundly different, types of theology, one is inclined to suspect that the sharp distinction which the author makes between the nature of this controversy and that over Arianism is inspired more by his concern for rapprochement between the Orthodox and the so-called 'Monophysite' Churches than by the historical facts as such. The resistance to Nicaea, too, was largely a matter of theological conservatism, as indeed appears by implication in the author's treatment of the Cappadocians, which is incidentally one of several particularly attractive and helpful passages in the book.

The tragic consequences for the Church of the involvement of the State in these and in later theological and ecclesiastical conflicts are constantly and rightly emphasized. One would, however, have been glad of some more direct indication of the background to these struggles in the internal politics of the Byzantine Empire, about which a considerable amount is now known.

In the later historical chapters, the emphasis is strongly on the Russian and the other Slav Churches. This was perhaps to be expected, both because of the author's particular competence and because there is more to write about, and indeed one is grateful for it; but two and a half pages devoted to the Greek Church seems excessively little.

The treatment of confessional issues reflects the author's well-known ecumenical outlook. There are a few extravagant affirmations, such as that concerning the Christian West on p. 98, but in general in all matters concerning Rome and Western Catholicism Dr Zernov is scrupulously fair, as one would expect, unpalatable though some of the facts may and indeed ought to be to Catholics. It is salutary to reflect upon a conclusion such as the following, referring to the creation of the 'uniat' Jacobites during the eighteenth century:

'Such is the story of the impact of the Christian West upon the Oriental Christians. Many of them hoped to find friendship and much-needed assistance in the West. They recognized the West as better equipped and more enlightened, and some were ready to accept the Roman leadership in exchange for improved education and greater order and efficiency in their own Church life. The price of such submission was invariably the Latinization of their rites, the abandonment of their ancient traditions and acceptance of Latin clergy as supervisors. As a result, only a minority became Uniates; the majority remained faithful to their own community, although it had morally and intellectually deteriorated under Mohammedan oppression. Bribery, intrigue and spiritual isolation sapped the vitality of the Oriental Christians; but conversion to the West was not an antidote against these evils, for both Rome and Protestantism looked upon the Christian East as inferior and degraded, to be redeemed only by absorption. Western recognition of the value of the Christian East came only in the twentieth century'. (p. 170-1).

The two chapters on 'The Faith and Doctrine of the Orthodox Church' and on 'Worship and Sacraments in the Christian East' will most probably be regarded by Orthodox as well as by others as the weakest in the book. The comparisons made between the Orthodox and the Western approach to various particular doctrinal issues are often superficial and ambiguous, and while the author emphasizes Orthodox unwillingness to seek definition and precision in theological matters, the real significance of Orthodox apophaticism as a counter-balance to the naturalism, juridism and rationalism of so much of Latin theology does not appear. Significantly enough of Dr Zernov's theological predilections, which are by no means those even of all Russian Orthodox, there are five references in the Index to Sergey Bulgakov, none at all to Vladimir Lossky, although the latter's *Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* is mentioned in the bibliography to Chapter VIII.

No indication is given of the theological importance of the *Filioque* issue. While its origins are given in the historical section (pp. 89-90), it is there simply stated (with perfect correctness) that 'There are theologians on both sides who ascribe the utmost doctrinal significance to this different wording, and there are others who think that both versions, if rightly interpreted, can express the same Catholic faith'. Insufficient distinction is made between dogmatic and merely theological differences; thus the ordinary reader would gather from p. 235 that in the dogma of Transsubstantiation the Catholic Church had imposed the Aristotelian type of explanation of the eucharistic mystery as a matter of faith, and that this is therefore one of the points which keep Eastern and Western Christians apart; which is not the case.

On the other hand the final summary (pp. 235-6) concerning the difference in theological mentality between East and West, where the Orthodox emphasis on the connection between understanding and holiness is brought out, is suggestive and good.

The style is on the whole excellent and readable, though there are a fair

number of inaccuracies, misprints or departures from accepted English usage, such as Caesaria for Caesarea on p. 50, Bissarion for Bessarion on p. 127ff., S Stophia for St Sophia on p. 132, comma for full stop on the last line of p. 170, iconastasis on p. 14, iconostasis elsewhere, Couturies thrice on p. 316 for Couturier, etc.

In the centre of the volume there are 71 excellent plates, illustrating the development of Eastern Christian architecture; the development of the Russian icon; various aspects of Eastern Church life; and a series of ten 'Personalities of the Church', of which nine, however, are Russian.

Fr Liessel's book is essentially a collection of photographs of some of the principal actions of the eucharistic Liturgy as it is celebrated in Rome by the Catholic Copts, Ethiopians, Syrians, Malankarese, Maronites, Greeks, Melchites, Russians, Ruthenians, Chaldeans, Malabarese and Armenians. In addition to an excellent and informative Foreword by Donald Attwater, and a rather sketchy general Introduction by the author, each section of photographs is provided with a note on the history of the Liturgy in question and on its particular characteristics and structure, while each individual photograph is accompanied by an indication of what is taking place and a translation of the appropriate liturgical prayer. No references are given, nor other justification for the sometimes surprising statements which occur, so that the book is not by any means a scholar's instrument; but it provides none the less a mass of information for the discerning reader.

Anyone with first-hand knowledge of Eastern Orthodoxy will however have the most serious doubts as to whether the publication of this book is likely to 'show those brethren of ours still separated from us that in the unity of faith and obedience the Church has no desire to deprive them of a single item of their ancient and noble heritage, and that from their union with us there would come no alteration in their legitimate liturgical observances'—which is the wish expressed in a commendatory letter to the author from His Eminence Cardinal Tisserant. As Donald Attwater says in his Foreword, 'the pictures in this book are clear evidence that (quite apart from the special cases of the Maronites and the Malabarese) the elimination of liturgical hybridism is far from finished yet: leavened altar-breads that approximate to unleavened wafers, Western altar-linen, such as the corporal and the pall, lacey albs instead of *stikharia*, stiff gestures and carriage of the hands by celebrant and ministers, and so on. Small things, apparently, and concerned with minor external matters; but they have significance for the integrity of a rite, which means much more than formulas alone, as Pope Pius XII made abundantly clear. And they are part of a real obstacle to Christian understanding: non-Catholic Easterners are quick to detect and criticize such innovations'.

The author is described as 'a specialist in the field'. The text nevertheless reflects, in places quite crudely, the juridism of the characteristically Latin approach to the Christian East. It is no doubt true that the decision of Chalcedon was infallible and that the Monophysites did not accept it. It remains that to say

that in regard to the two natures 'Monophysitism . . . refused to admit the infallible decision of the Church in the matter' (p. 3) gives a totally false impression of the origins of this schism. Similarly, it is a historical fact, however much we may regret it, that the universal primacy of jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff was never generally recognized in the Christian East. It is therefore naïve to say that 'The Oriental Churches all broke away in time either from the unity of faith (thus becoming heretical) or from Primacy (sic) of the Catholic Church (thus becoming schismatic). Since the Middle Ages, however, individuals and groups have returned to the Catholic Church . . . ' (p. xviii). One cannot 'return' to something to which one has never consciously belonged. The practice in some rites of celebrating 'Low' and even, *proh dolor*, silent Masses is recorded without comment.

It must be reiterated that this book contains a mass of useful information, statistical, historical and liturgical. It is to be feared, however, that its effect upon non-Catholic Orientals will only be to confirm them in their (mistaken) conviction that the Catholic Eastern rites are but a parody of the real thing.

C. J. L. NAPIER

MODERN ATHEISM, by Etienne Borne; Burns and Oates (Faith and Fact); 8s 6d.

Does anyone take atheism seriously in England? It is not only that one cannot imagine an English Catholic writing a book like this, but that the English atheist himself (a distinctive and not uncommon phenomenon) would not much care to be associated with the kinds of atheism which M. Borne so ably describes and analyzes. The English atheist does not care much for Marx or Nietzsche, and one must therefore treat this book, as the publishers suggest, more as an anthropological sidelight on the European situation than as a practical guide to our own. The first chapter, certainly the clearest and the most useful, shows that atheism is a permanent possibility for the human mind simply because the fact that God exists is open to dispute—really open to *dispute*, that is, to rational argument, to 'demonstration', and it would be a rash man who claimed that it is easy to prove an atheist wrong. St Thomas Aquinas had to insist, astonishing as it seems to us now, against many of his contemporaries, that this is so—that there are in fact at least two strong arguments against the existence of God. It is these two arguments, which he puts to himself at the outset of the five ways, which are the nuclei of the two great forms of modern atheism which M. Borne identifies: the positivist and the existentialist. The first of these, springing from the self-assurance of the human mind, from its sense of the power and the scope of scientific enquiry, finds that the existence of God is a superfluous hypothesis. The second, coming from the natural anguish of the human heart at the sight of evil, refuses to consent that such a world could be ruled by a loving God. 'God is scientifically unnecessary and ethically impossible'. These are the two