

popular misunderstanding is exposed from a point of view 'not theologically illiterate'); thus on p. 16, 'The unwritten tradition of the East records an average of twelve to fifteen hundred years as the period spent by a cultured thinking person between two lives. Two such periods would bridge the gap between . . . the Buddha's teaching . . . and modern times'.

It would have been more helpful if the author had distinguished between source-books to which the student will need to refer and such writers as Blavatsky, whom perhaps he will not want to be bothered with.

B.K.

LA PHILOSOPHIE CHRETIENNE EN RUSSIE: *Nicolas Berdiaeff*. By Eugène Porret (Editions de la Baconnière—Neuchâtel, 1944.)

This brief review of Berdiaeff's thought is No. 8 of the series of *Cahiers de Philosophie* entitled *Etre et Penser* and published in Switzerland. It has its modest but necessary place in the contemporary prologue to the principal drama of our century: the confrontation of the secular social systems of East and West—Russia and Europe—which, however they may describe themselves, are nevertheless linked together both in their Christian origins and in their distinct but common responses to the judgment of eternal Christian truth.

M. Porret's monograph is essentially expository rather than critical; and the greater part is devoted to an historical review of the thought of the principal Russian religious thinkers of the nineteenth century: Tchaadaeff, Kirêevski, Khomiakoff, Leontieff, and Solovieff. The writer's avowed intention has been 'de laisser parler ces penseurs . . . et d'intervenir le moins possible . . .' In achieving this end he has been most successful; and his succinct presentation has the excellent educative merit of encouraging the reader to acquaint himself at first-hand with the works of these philosophers.

The same approach adopted in the shorter second part to the philosophy of Berdiaeff himself is, however, less satisfactory. Berdiaeff's thought lends itself very ill to mere presentation; the complexity both of its content and its expression is in itself a difficulty for Western readers which is made no easier by translation into a Western tongue. In this case, the very precision, clarity and finesse of French, that most characteristic flower of Western civilisation, renders the Russian thought even shadowier and more elusive. For there are certain themes in Berdiaeff's philosophy alien from the Western Christian tradition and at first hearing strange to our ears and understanding: his ontological treatment of the problem of freedom and his concept of meonic or uncreated freedom; the reciprocal need of God and man for one another as partners in the divine Love, a profound modification of the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity; his use of the idea of beauty, distinguished from, and even opposed to, goodness, as the ultimate value. 'La fin suprême est la beauté de la créature et non le bien, qui conserve malgré tout l'empreinte de la loi.

*La beauté sauvera le monde; . . .* (Author's italics.) These ideas call for more than statement, and for more interpretation, elucidation and guidance than it was M. Porret's purpose to provide. 'Notre désir', he tells us in conclusion, 'a été de raconter aussi clairement et aussi sobrement que possible, notre découverte de ce monde si nouveau pour un Occidental, et d'entraîner ainsi le lecteur non initié dans ce pèlerinage spirituel au coeur même de la Russie orthodoxe'. Is it perhaps unkind to ask whether so sober a recounting of such a strange and disconcerting discovery is an adequate invitation to undertake a hazardous pilgrimage? English readers should pack Dr Lampert's study *Nicolas Berdyaev and the New Middle Ages* also in their scrip before setting out on the journey.

CHARLES VEREKER.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH IN THE WORKS OF KHOMYAKOV AND MOEHLER. By Serge Bolshakoff. (S.P.C.K.; 18s.)

M. Serge Bolshakoff has devoted an excellent monograph to the idea of the Church and its unity in Khomyakoff's works and, secondarily, in Moehler's. The author follows the thought of these two theologians in its historical development. We see the Slavophile theologian's ecclesiology forming by way of answers to questions asked by the Tractarian, W. Palmer. Khomyakoff's synthesis is stated first according to his letters to Palmer, then according to the pamphlet *The Church is One*, finally as it appears in the polemical treatises which he wrote in French. In the same way we witness the awakening of Moehler's thought in the synthesis of *Die Einheit in der Kirche*, and then in the rather different synthesis of his *Symbolik*.

In this sufficiently detailed and well documented statement the author shows considerable balance and even a conciliatory spirit. He admits that orthodox theologians like Khomyakoff and Pitzipios are one-sided. As to Moehler, he interprets his thought with sympathy, but perhaps with too great dependence on the Protestant historian Vermeil, who, as is well known, saw in Moehler one of the fathers of Modernism.

The author rightly emphasises a profound similarity between the two theologians—both to some extent self-taught, both rich in deep spiritual intuitions, both incomplete and rather distrusted by the hierarchies of their respective Churches. Khomyakoff knew Moehler, and was possibly inspired by him. In their profound likeness the author sees an earnest of a rapprochement between East and West. For this likeness turns on the fact that both theologians conceive the Church as being above all a society of love, in which the external features are the expression of a spirit and a life. There is indeed, in Moehler as in Khomyakoff, a common tendency which I would readily characterize in the following way: each has tried to see the Church not as a 'thing', to which the faithful are exterior and spectators, but as a life in which the faithful are active. I believe moreover that in this respect Moehler's thought goes deeper than Khomyakoff's, not only because he has recognized better the rôle of the hierarchy (I am