

LA PRIÈRE DE JÉSUS. By a Monk of the Eastern Church. (Éditions de Chevetogne; frs belges 40.)

The Prayer of Jesus is a technical term of Byzantine spirituality for the invocation of the name of Jesus, whether in isolation or by a more or less developed formula: most commonly, 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me'. In England attention has been drawn to it by, among others, the late Evelyn Underhill and Mrs Nadejda Gorodetsky, who wrote of it in *Blackfriars*, February 1942; and interest continues to grow in the West generally.

In *Irénikon*, nos. 3 and 4 of 1947, there appeared an article on the Prayer of Jesus by an Eastern monk, in which the prayer was treated at some length, and well documented, in its wholeness and its historical development. (Incidentally, certain misunderstandings were effectively dealt with.) The interest in this article was such that the monks of Chevetogne have now reprinted it in book form, as no. 4 of Collection *Irénikon* N.S. It must be strongly recommended to all readers of this review, both for its own sake and because the book so admirably fulfils the wish of Pope Pius XI that Eastern teaching and practice be made known to Christians of the Western tradition.

The explanation of how the Hon. Frederick North came to present to the British Museum a copy of the *Philokalia* of Makarios of Corinth and Nicodemus the Hagiorite (p. 62, n.) seems simple: North (1766-1827; he was a son of *the* Lord North) travelled in Greece and was received into the Orthodox Church at Corfu in 1791.

D.A.

THE GOSPEL OF GOD. By Anders Nygren. (S.C.M. Press; 6s.)

This is a translation of a lengthy pastoral letter of the Lutheran Bishop of Lund. The writer is a leading figure in the ecumenical movement, and has made his name as a theologian. What he says is therefore of interest outside the Church of Sweden. We may expect to find in it a representative example of present-day Lutheran teaching. If, however, we hope to discover a tendency towards Catholicism, we shall be disappointed. The book is radically Protestant; that is, it suffers from the disastrous simplification Luther introduced. The Gospel of God is the bare message of redemption; its ministers are heralds and nothing more. The great background on which Christianity was projected and which it in fact accepted; Christ's revelation of God's nature, his doctrine of man, the incarnation and its consequences, the treasures of God's kingdom, the rich complex of Catholicism: all this hardly enters the picture. Yet there are certain Catholic elements that make an appearance; for instance, a passing mention of the new creation, an evaluation of the Church year which Lutheranism has

retained, a consideration of the two sacraments which are all it will acknowledge, though combined with an attack on the Mass and a sacrificing priesthood. But even this minimum of Catholicism the author finds it difficult to harmonise with the fundamental error to which he clings.

JOHN HIGGINS, O.S.B.

THE MONASTIC CONSTITUTIONS OF LANFRANC. Translated from the Latin with Introduction and Notes. By David Knowles. (Nelson; 15s.)

These 'constitutions' make fascinating reading for anyone interested in the liturgy as well as in the religious of the middle ages. In them the great Archbishop of the eleventh century lays down the rules of monastic behaviour, particularly in choir, for the monks of Canterbury, to give them a good foundation to build on after the Norman Conquest. He describes in detail all the liturgical ceremonies throughout the year, and their comparison with the modern rites, particularly of Holy Week, will provide much instruction and interest. To readers of this review perhaps the general principles upon which Lanfranc relied for his directory will prove of still greater interest. Thus he demands a certain liberty in respect of the rubrics which is almost wholly lacking in our present attitude to the liturgy: 'We have added a few details and have made certain changes, particularly in the ceremonies of certain feasts. . . . In this we do no prejudice to our own freedom or that of those who come after us; we are all free to add or to take away or to make changes if we think alteration to be an advantage, following right reason or the judgment of those better informed. . . .' (p. 1.) Such a freedom, however, would be dangerous without the free but firm spirit of obedience which holds the whole ceremonial of the Church together—'All such arrangements, once they have been settled for their subjects by superiors, cannot without blame be violated by those whose whole life is one of obedience.' (p. 2.) It is, of course, this permanent spirit of obedience which makes it possible for all the elaborate liturgy described in this book to become the work of prayer that it is intended to be. And this truth is confirmed by a delightful instruction for the novices of Canterbury which begins with a paragraph on 'customs' which 'form as it were an introduction and preface to the Rule'. (p. 134.)

The editor has done his work well, though some sentences might have been more clearly translated (e.g. 'the converses shall precede the deacon' on page 41; the Latin says that the deacon follows the lay-brothers, a rubric which is more intelligible to one cognisant of Good Friday ceremonies). The publishers of this series of medieval classics are to be congratulated on what must be very much a venture of faith.

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