

they form a valuable monograph. Besides there are three essays of unequal value; an interesting reconsideration of the Council of Florence, a balanced survey on the relation of Church and State in Byzantium and an account of Byzantine influences in the West which is stimulating but

inadequate. Influences on science, fiction, philosophy and theology seem oddly underestimated. At least no Thomist should forget the impact of patristic and philosophic texts that came north west from Byzantium.

GERVASE MATHEW O.P.

LIVING PRAYER by Archbishop Anthony Bloom: *Darton, Longman and Todd (Libra Books)*. 8s. 6d.

It is refreshing to read a book on prayer that relates it to ordinary living, and avoids any temptation to present it as a practice mainly for the 'professional' contemplative. In a straightforward and simple way, Archbishop Anthony stresses that prayer is a personal relationship with God, not based on the desire to acquire esoteric mystical knowledge, nor on the wish to attain certain emotional states but founded on a mutual trust and love and a mutual recognition of freedom and autonomy. In the development of this, as in any other relationship, we must engage in a continual struggle against the tendency to remain static and rigid, bound by fixed attitudes and formulae. This 'rejection of images' as traditional orthodox theology calls it, demands the acceptance of risk, as well as a continuing faithful, attentive openness towards the Other.

In one of the most satisfying chapters in the book, the Lord's Prayer is shown as an ikon of, and a way towards, the achievement of this relationship. At the same time, Archbishop Anthony explains how it is a fulfillment and deepening of the experience of the people of God in Exodus – 'Thy will be done' is not a submissive readiness to bear God's will, as we often take it to be. It is the positive attitude of those who have gone through the wilderness, who have entered the promised land and who set out to make the will of God present and real on earth, as it is in heaven' – Man's attitude to God is not one of passive obedience but of active

co-operation in a given task, within a given situation. This is the practical application of the concept 'synergy' – 'working together' – a concept central to Orthodoxy – which has been so misunderstood by western theologians.

Archbishop Anthony belongs, of course, to the Russian Orthodox community, and parts of his book are devoted to the 'prayer of silence' – *Hesychia*. This is commonly supposed to be practised only by a few monks. The author points out that on the contrary, fruitful silence is a prerequisite of all relationships and not only that of prayer – 'We all know in human relationships that love and friendship are deep when we can be silent with someone. As long as we need to talk in order to keep in touch, we can safely and sadly assume the relationship is still superficial, and so, if we want to worship God we must first learn to feel happy, being silent together with him. This is an easier thing than one might think at first.'

There is also a short, but useful chapter on 'The Jesus Prayer' but disappointingly little on liturgical prayer. However, this may, in fact, be useful, as many non-orthodox tend to regard the eastern tradition as solely liturgical. This little book may help to redress the balance.

Although the cover of the book is rather unfortunate, the price is very reasonable and we can be grateful to the publishers for producing a book which will be extremely valuable both for personal reading and of use in the ecumenical dialogue.

IRENE BRENNAN

THE CHURCH IN THE THOUGHT OF BISHOP JOHN ROBINSON by Richard P. McBrien. Pp. xvi + 160: *S.C.M. Press*. 30s.

It is a sign of these ecumenical times that this book is based on a doctoral dissertation which was presented at the Gregorian University in Rome, and that the subject is handled in an extremely sympathetic manner.

By way of introduction, Fr McBrien supplies some biographical information about Bishop Robinson, showing the influences to which he

has been exposed and the context of his various publications. The bulk of the book is in two parts. Part I deals with the Bishop's teaching about the Nature of the Church (the body of Christ, the eschatological community, and its ministry and liturgy); Part II with the Mission of the Church (as a secular and a missionary community). There is a useful bibliography of