

It would be a help towards our relationship with the Oriental Christians if they could become familiar with a work like this, which shows how deeply the traditions of Eastern mystics such as St Gregory of Nyssa and Dionysius have passed into our Western traditions. This profound continuity with the past is one of the most interesting characteristics of *The Cloud of Unknowing*. It should be noticed, too, that although the author is dealing principally with interior prayer and that although his work does not show that striking emphasis on the approach to God through the Incarnation that we find in Walter Hilton, he does in fact give the greatest importance to the prayer of the Church: 'They that be true workers in this work, they worship no prayer so much as those of Holy Church. And therefore they do them in the form and statute that they be ordained by holy fathers before us'. This shows that even the author of *The Cloud* who leads us into what may seem to be the most abstract and imageless form of the mystical life sets primary emphasis on the corporate prayer of the Church.

DOM ODO BROOKE, O.S.B.

THE WESTERN LITURGY AND ITS HISTORY. By Theodor Klauser.
(Mowbray; 4s.)

Professor F. L. Cross has translated this short work because 'it gives a lucid and comprehensive survey of these discoveries [of the technicians] in a form wholly free from technicalities and without ever losing sight of their practical implications'. It is indeed a very readable summary of the work of a great liturgical expert. The importance of the work may be gathered from the following quotation from the introduction: 'In deep and ineffaceable characters it (the Roman Liturgy) bears the marks of the spiritual development not of a single people, but of several. The most diverse influences, assuming ever new forms, have played their part in fashioning the structure and composition of our Liturgy.' The author throws in great contrast the earlier living spirit of prayer and devotion which moulded the Roman way of worship and the later 'unhistorical attachment to legality of the rubricists'. For this alone the book should be read by all who are trying to pray the Mass.

C.P.

AVICENNA: SCIENTIST AND PHILOSOPHER. Edited by G. M. Wickens.
(Luzac; 15s.)

This book is an excellent introduction to Avicenna, being a series of lectures given at Cambridge in the spring of last year to mark the millenary of the Arab philosopher's birth. Although the lectures were intended to have a general appeal, the copious notes which have been added to the printed edition enhance its value for the scholar. A general introduction to Avicenna's life and times is given by Professor Arberry's vivid and enter-