

language of Aelfric, Rolle and even Hilton requires translation almost as much as the Latin which still enshrines the work of the great majority of English spiritual writers from the days of St Bede the Venerable. Perhaps someone someday may find leisure to put some of those forgotten treasures into English, and money to put them into print.

WALTER GUMBLEY, O.P.

THE LEGENDS OF THE SAINTS, by H. Delehaye; Chapman, 30s.

The first edition of *Les légendes hagiographiques* appeared in 1905. It was then considered in some quarters offensive to pious ears. It is the measure of its success that what was then suspect as the work of a revolutionary or a modernist is now accepted as a standard work of Catholic scholarship. Modern writers go further than Delehaye in repudiating the many worthless stories that still find a place in the Breviary. The recent suppression of the feast of St Philomena shows that this critical spirit is not obnoxious to the highest authorities. Hence this book after nearly sixty years has lost much of its importance and appeal. The author's original preface to the first edition now appears to be stating, not a startling 'new look' but a tame commonplace. The book first appeared in English in 1907: the present translation is from the edition of 1955. During those fifty years the text has not been substantially changed; a selection of more recent works has been added to the references, but surprisingly few considering the studies published over the last half-century. The translation is, on the whole, an improvement on that of the earlier one, but in phrase after phrase the reader is reminded of the French, and irked by a leisurely style, that now seems somewhat archaic. What is entirely new in this edition is the valuable bibliography of Delehaye's multitudinous books and articles, and a memoir that is interesting though out of harmony with the rest.

GODFREY ANSTRUTHER, O.P.

THE ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, THE CHURCH AND CHRISTENDOM, by Lorenz Jaeger; G. Chapman, 21s.

The author of this book is Archbishop of Paderborn and a member of the Preparatory Commission for the impending Vatican Council: he writes, therefore, with special authority. The book is intended to 'place' the new Council in the context of the conciliar tradition, the pastoral work of the Church in the modern world, and the delicate problems of relations between Catholics and their 'separated brethren'. Archbishop Jaeger is admirably equipped for his task. Immensely well-read, he ranges over historical problems, theological issues, makes acute observations on contemporary problems, shows prudence and, above all, an informed and quite unsentimental charity. His thesis is that the new council will be thoroughly within the traditional conception of a Council, and like the other councils it will have its unique con-

tribution to make to the life of the Church. This time there are no doctrinal conflicts separating Catholics and requiring authoritative definition: rather what is required is a renewed sounding of the notion of catholicity, recalling the schismatic and heretical, and equipping the faithful for pastoral work in the new world created by the decline of colonialism, the rise of African and Asian nationalism, and the success of communist movements in many parts of the world.

Mgr Jaeger has something to say on all these topics. He is not concerned to be original but he is always sensible and he puts the reader on to the considerable literature now available. If the tone of this book and its patient and scholarly approach are to be characteristic of the Council, its work should be notable indeed. Naturally such a book is not easy reading and there is some repetition but there are many rewarding insights—a most shrewd account of the real lines of division between Lutherans and Catholics for instance—and some odd and amusing details. The Vatican uses an electronic computer, apparently, for sorting out the preliminary suggestions and resolutions for the Council's agenda: Dr Fisher at the end of his famous audience with the Pope presented his host with a 'fine picture of the Queen's coronation' and got the resolutions of the Roman synod in return.

ERIC JOHN

MONASTIC LIFE IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND, by J. C. Dickinson; Adam and Charles Black, 38s.

In his preface J. C. Dickinson acknowledges a debt to the 'majestic and graceful' volumes of Professor Knowles. The impression of reading Knowles occurs frequently and very pleasantly, simply because Mr Dickinson has something of that same capacity for putting across well digested learning with a sustained lightness of touch, and a skilful use of sidelights on main issues, that produce a vivid impression of 'being there'. The book begins as a guide to help us, in a general way, through the ruins that have been so neatly tidied and labelled by the National Trust. Into the architectural framework of the more or less typical monastery, the author fits a reconstruction of the daily and yearly monastic round, and a short history of the orders. By the time we have got to Part III, on the dissolution, the monastery is thoroughly alive, due in no small measure, of course, to such delightful anecdotes as the one about the birdsnesting canons of Bolton, and the kind of vignette that catches the nuns after compline getting together for a drink and a little chat.

The chapter on the dissolution period is particularly well done, and will be a useful eye-opener for those who still think that anything but greed was involved in the motives of the dissolutionists. Indeed one can imagine this book having, with its reticent candour, the sort of effect that the mutilated pedestal of St Alban's shrine can, and does have, on the 'pilgrim' of today. It is only a pity that the photographs, beautifully chosen from the point of view of their subject matter, are not really sharp enough to make a full impact. Publishers