

for receiving aid in any field' (p. 67). This cannot be done without competent assistance, yet there are areas which simply do not have trained personnel for such a task. In addition, of course, one still finds ecclesiastical superiors who have yet to be convinced of the need for such work. Even where priorities are clearly established they are not always honoured in practice. The neglect of the university milieu is particularly flagrant in many areas.

The author points out another danger which is very real: '... a renewed form of clericalism which would be worse than any kind yet known. If, therefore, bishops and priests must at times play a direct role in certain temporal domains, let it always be with the desire of forming laymen who can assume these tasks as rapidly as possible' (p. 63). The danger exists not only in the domain of the temporal, but also to some extent in the ecclesial; here the problem is more delicate and limits are less easily defined. Yet the layman does have a role in the life of the Church as *layman*, and a lack of awareness of this role on the part of the clergy can deprive the Church of valuable initiatives. Rather than opposing clergy and laity in the pastoral of the Church, we need to see it as a whole, and the work of clergy and laity as a part of this whole.

This book should be read by those involved in Latin America, by bishops and religious superiors who have men in Latin America or are contemplating work in the area. If certain reservations must be made regarding this and other works in the series, this does not mean that they are not worth attention. This work in particular, because of the extreme density of its content, demands *careful* reading. Nothing could be further from the mind of Father Houtart than a naïve acceptance or a 'slogan' approach to what he has to say. The book reflects a growing realisation that there can be no valid 'a priori' approach to the pastoral of the Church in Latin America.

JORDAN BISHOP, O.P.

ENGLISH MEDIEVAL MURAL PAINTING, by A. Caiger-Smith; Clarendon Press; 45s.

There is no doubt a great deal to be said for patriotism but when one remembers the artistic wealth of medieval art in other countries, the matter of this book looks pretty thin. That, of course, is not the painters' fault nor the author's. It is pleasant to believe that the English medieval school was comparable with the French or Spanish or Italian before the Protestant destroyers and the later restorers got to work; but the evidence is indeed scanty for such faith. Most of what has survived is in small provincial churches, which is why it has survived. Mr Caiger-Smith is at a disadvantage: he can only describe lost, large-scale schemes of decoration and has no means of conveying their quality. English mural painting *may* have been important. We do not know. We have no St Savin-sur-Gartempe, no S. Angelo-in-Formis, no Simone Martini or Giotto; and when we compare the poor remnants of our fifteenth-century frescos with Masaccio, we are glad to remember that we had already had Chaucer. But

still, there are a few beautiful ghosts on our church walls, a few masterpieces such as the Chichester roundel.

Mr Caiger-Smith has compiled a useful short account of all the surviving frescos that are likely to interest anybody but the specialist. After his introduction, he has discussed these first in a chronological order, grouped as Romanesque, Early and Late Gothic. He has then discussed the major iconographical groupings and finally he has three chapters on patrons and painters, on the destruction of the images and on the materials and techniques employed. There are, in addition, a particularly useful selective list of frescos arranged by counties, a short bibliography and an index. All this occupies only a hundred and ninety pages which are illustrated by one plate in colour and twenty-five in half-tone. This describes the book and must convey the limits of its possible value: it is obviously neither profound nor comprehensive. Nor, unfortunately, is it as good as it might have been even within its scale and intention. Mr Caiger-Smith seems to have no very clear standards of aesthetic appreciation. He can, for example, say of a Virgin and Child fresco that though 'it does not approach the quality of the Chichester Roundel, it is equally interesting because of the kneeling donors beside it'. (I once overheard an old lady at an exhibition say: 'A cat always improves a picture'). This confusion of values suggests the presence of the undigested card-index and indeed that presence haunts us throughout. The book never rises above being a compilation and is never vitalised by any clear or consistent theme. It even suggests a Ph.D. thesis. It is a characteristic of such things that their 'subjects' are isolated and occasional generalisations outside them are often astonishingly naïve. Mr Caiger-Smith makes statements which are inaccurate or highly controversial without the flicker of an eyelid. For example, he describes Romanesque architecture as 'aristocratic and military' and most monks as 'well-born men brought up to think manual labour beneath them'. For the most part, he treats English mural painting almost as if the rest of Europe had never existed. He throws no light on the international sources of these paintings, though at one point, he mentions that Canterbury had 'extensive connections abroad', and that 'the presence of foreign style is not inexplicable'. But 'foreign style' is present in some degree in every stroke of every brush on every wall in Europe, even if it is not always historically explicable. This book is not concerned with an indigenous folk-art but with one manifestation of an international style. English mural painting may have passed into sudden, imposed darkness; but it did not, like the sparrow in Bede's story, also come out of darkness.

ANTHONY BERTRAM

MEDIEVAL ENGLISH LYRICS, edited by R. T. Davies; Faber; 45s.

This is an excellent anthology, because from first to last it has been made with the needs, the interests and the limitations of those to whom it is directed clearly