

unconsidered. The plea for clarity in terminology evident in some of the essays shows the canonists grappling with the complexity of the arena and attempting to forge forward in their understanding of how the systems may converge. The major shortcoming of this book is that it does not appear to have a strong sense of its purpose or its audience. This reader was left questioning whether the comparative element was meant to be anything other than implicit. Parallels and antitheses are not explicitly drawn between the canonical systems, nor is their shared heritage, comparison or points of co-operation and convergence clearly identified. Whilst some essays are highly analytical, others are no more than descriptive of a particular area. Not all areas under consideration had parallel treatment in the different Anglican and Roman Catholic systems. In terms of the book's audience, those with a working knowledge of one system or another, or with an understanding of secular property law, may feel a sense of frustration at the repetition of basic property law points, secular or canon law based, across the essays. Of course, the first criticism may be symptomatic of the infancy of this area of comparative canon law as it pertains to Church property. One may also argue that the latter criticism could be levelled at any comparative law project. Nevertheless, the collection of essays does not hang systematically together at a level beyond *colloquium* proceedings.

One gets a sense that the participants and the authors of this collection of essays not only learnt a great deal at the *colloquium*, but also took part in a highly original and innovative discussion and sharing of ideas. Some of their enthusiasm is conveyed in this book, but the fullness of the debate itself is not. Overall, this reader could not help but feel that this book is a but a hint of what the *colloquium* must have been: a very exciting movement towards unity. That said, this is a fascinating collection of essays which will hopefully prove to be the genesis of an emerging comparative canon law tradition, a movement which has enormous potential. This book is compulsive reading not just for canon lawyers, but also for anyone with a broad interest in ecumenism, the contemporary Church, comparative law, property law, or legal history.

Alison Dunn, Newcastle Law School

*THE DIOCESAN REVIVAL IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND c 1800–1870* by ARTHUR BURNS, *Oxford Historical Monographs*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1999, xiv + 344 pp (Hardback £48) ISBN 0-19-820784-0.

This book, which originated in a doctoral thesis, is an ample tribute to the author's lengthy and detailed research undertaken during 1987–88, but it is also an attempt to bring a new perspective on the impact of the Oxford Movement and the Ecclesiastical Commission upon the nineteenth-century Church of England. The book divides essentially into two parts. The opening and closing chapters form the first, in which is introduced, set out and then summarised and concluded the primary argument—that during the first seventy years of the nineteenth century the Established Church underwent a process of extensive reform sufficient to be described as a 'Diocesan Revival'. The central chapters form the second, in which eight different areas of diocesan life of the period that demonstrate the argument are examined in turn. This reviewer would strongly recommend returning to the first and last chapters since the arguments therein are densely packed and are difficult to follow upon first reading. But the story is fleshed out by what follows and there is much of interest and enjoyment to be had.

The first evidence of early diocesan reform is to be had in the revival and development of the episcopal visitation, particularly in the 1830s. New emphasis was placed

upon the gathering of statistics (there are shades of twentieth century *déjà vu* here and throughout the book) but it appears also that the bishop's dinner with his clergy was equally important. A commentary upon Bishop Sumner of Winchester reports, 'The visitation dinner, at which the Bishop spoke frequently, was not without its good effect and kindly influence.' Yet there was within a generation something of a falling off. By 1865 Bishop Hamilton received correspondence: 'What a blessing you must think it to be, that your Charge does not occur every year, or you would never be out of hot water.'

Next comes the evolution of the work of archdeacons. As with their bishops, there was renewed vigour in their parochial visitations from the later 1820s. Clearly this was necessary for, as Burns tells us, Archdeacon Goddard of Lincoln abandoned his inaugural visitation after 400 churches and four years on account of the expense. Though visitations were influential upon the formation of diocesan consciousness there was also a price to pay, for Bishop Bagot teased his archdeacon: 'An infliction of two hours upon an assembly of educated men is an infliction not to be borne.' Woe betide an archdeacon who strayed into doctrine! The *Churchman's Magazine* of 1855 wrote: 'The clergy are dragged away from their parishes to hear a brother presbyter, upon whose election they were never consulted, deliver his opinions upon any subject of his own choosing.' But overall there was a real effect as they 'transformed a decayed institution into an effective one'.

Burns then turns our attention to what he describes as still a relatively under-researched area, namely the rural dean and the chapter. Most authorities date the revival of this office from 1836 but there is ample evidence of activity in the 1820s, and as far back as 1785 the rural dean of St David's published a 400-page volume of inspections. This book constantly invites comparison with the Church of today, both in the similarities and the differences. In some dioceses rural deans were elected, whereas in others the bishop appointed them. For some this compromised their office: 'Would any clergyman condescend to retail the gossip of a neighbourhood to his Diocesan?' What modern bishop has not reflected in less florid language the comment of Charles le Bas in 1836: 'There is a grievous want of intercourse among the clergy; and this defect of communication between them is unspeakably injurious to their efficacy and influence.' But there was again a measurable change in the status of the office from the priest who in 1829 expressed utter ignorance of the duties of rural dean, which he was invited to accept, to the body of 600 rural deans operating by 1870. Burn's detailed research, including the mean ages of rural deans between 1835 and 1860, provides a compelling backcloth to his conclusions.

In the chapter on statistics and societies there is interesting comparison of the zeal of certain bishops to gather and publish statistical information, leading to the first diocesan yearbooks such as Lichfield's in 1856, with the trends in wider society. It is also sobering to be reminded that just as digital mapping is set to assist the Church's work in the twenty-first century, in 1840 maps were seen as useful aids in representing diocesan communities

Burns's depth of research continues to provide both insights and vignettes in the second half of the book, which tackles patronage, cathedrals, clerical discipline and the developing professionalism of the clergy, the growth in the number of dioceses and the revival of diocesan assemblies. Always the past seems to echo for as Bishop Browne of Ely wrote in 1864, 'But we are in a new condition of society. Old things have passed away, and I don't understand why doing something new when occasion calls for it should be any objection.'

Whether this book succeeds in its stated aim of shifting the emphasis of ecclesiastical historians of the nineteenth century I will leave for others and time to judge. For this reviewer it provides a valuable source of well-researched material of a period of Church history, which does not seem so far away from current concerns as may be thought. The forty-six pages of bibliography are in themselves a tribute to the energy and scholarship of its author and I am sure will provide future students with many directions for study.

Jonathan Cryer, Diocesan Secretary, Diocese of Durham

*KING JAMES VI AND I AND THE REUNION OF CHRISTENDOM* edited by W.B. PATTERSON, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp xvi + 409 (Hardback £65, paperback £15.95 ) ISBN 0-521-41805-4 and 0-521-793-858.

James I appears destined forever to suffer an ambiguous reputation. It may no longer be fashionable to call him 'the wisest fool in Christendom'; however, rarely are his more favourable contemporary nicknames of 'British Solomon' or *Rex Pacificus* cited without at least a touch of irony. It would take a bold and independent-minded historian, and perhaps also an outsider to British history, to analyse James VI and I's religious and diplomatic objectives from a sympathetic perspective. This W. Brown Patterson has now done.

At one level, the book reviews James's dealings, both literary and diplomatic, with the papacy, the major Catholic powers, domestic Catholics, and with the reformed Churches of continental Europe. It also explores James's dealings with a range of religious migrants and vagrants who settled in England, hoping to find in the Church of England the embodiment of their own religious aspirations. The apparently disparate nature of the materials reviewed is explained by their connection to the work's linking theme. James was not just a 'peacemaker' in the sense of an astute politician who realised that warfare would bankrupt his already impecunious government. He sought accommodation, reconciliation, moderation in the key religious controversies of the age. Dominating his thought was the ideal of a wholly free and genuinely ecumenical Church Council, presided over by secular rulers rather than the papacy, at which a *modus vivendi* could be arrived at between the Churches on the basis of their shared beliefs. Anyone who espoused or developed similar views and aspirations, such as the moderate Huguenot Pierre du Moulin, was assured of an enthusiastic hearing. Brown Patterson interprets this ruling principle of James's policy with a sympathy which borders on admiration.

There are some distinct advantages to Brown Patterson's perspective. He makes much better sense than usual of James's conduct in regard to the religious conferences which did take place, especially the Hampton Court Conference and the Synod of Dort. He also renders the tortuous negotiations towards the Spanish marriage in 1623, conducted against the backdrop of the invasion of the Palatinate and the despoliation of James's son-in-law, much more comprehensible. Where he has to intervene in a current historical dispute, for example over the nature of English 'Calvinism' and 'Arminianism' in the early 1620s, his verdicts are judicious and convincing.

On the other hand, two concerns arise. First, his coverage of James's policies could be regarded as partial and selective; secondly, not all the projects so exhaustively discussed in this book appear equally important. The impression of selectivity is height-