

*THE ENGLISH CHURCH AND ITS LAWS, 12th–14th CENTURIES*, by C. R. CHENEY. 1982. London: Variorum Reprints (£57.50) ISBN 0–86078–108–9.

A review by Eric Cicestr

Professor Cheney was responsible with Sir Maurice Powicke for the late twelfth, thirteenth, and early fourteenth centuries part of the new edition of Wilkins' *Councils and Synods*. His volume of Collected Medieval Texts and Studies published in 1973 contained a few of the preliminary investigations made for that work. The volume presently under review contains many more, notably the two magisterial articles of 1935 on Legislation of the Medieval English Church. Scholars are specially indebted to Professor Cheney for disentangling the various provincial statutes collected by Lyndwood, and for pioneer work on many of the earlier English diocesan statutes. Most of the papers in this volume are available in English journals, notably in the *English Historical Review*, but it is helpful to have them collected together. It is still more important that Professor Cheney himself was able to make corrections and additions before they were reprinted. The volume is a real tribute to the memory of a meticulous and penetrating scholar who was always ready to encourage and help others working in his field.

*LITURGY, ORDER AND THE LAW*, by RUPERT D. H. BURSELL. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. xl+322 pp. (Hardback £45, Paperback £16.99) ISBN 0–19–826250–7 and 0–19–886249–3.

A review by Eric Cicestr

Chancellor Bursell has done a great service to the Church and to the Law in collecting and clarifying the current law of worship in the Church of England. No doubt in the next three years it may be overtaken by the further revision of the Alternative Services Book promised for the year 2000, but it is doubtful whether the law will be greatly changed.

As Lord Habgood says in his Foreword: 'If the law is to be obeyed, it needs to be known, understood and presented in ways which make sense in today's circumstances.' Anyone who looks at a legal text-book of only a few years ago would be struck by the difference between the law and the current practice of worship in the Church of England. Parts of the law reflect controversies and decisions of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which have been rendered obsolete in practice by changing customs and theological views. A reading of this book shows how much has been done to bring law and practice more in accord with one another by the decisions of two distinguished chancellors, Walter Wigglesworth and Garth Moore. Some of their interpretations may have been ingenious but they saved the Church from potentially serious conflict.

Chancellor Bursell has in his turn helped the situation by his decisions and by the writing of this book has done a great deal to present the law of worship as a reasonable law which should be obeyed. It is one of those volumes to which reference will constantly be made, a book which shows the law as a living thing and which therefore will deserve many future editions both for its intrinsic merit and as being easy to adapt to changes in the law.

There are six useful Appendices two of which lay to rest those hoary subjects of argument Lawful Authority and the Jus Liturgicum. The others make available useful texts relevant to worship.