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The Development of the Canons: A Historical Study and Summary of the Church of England's Canons 1969 to 2020

GERALD BRAY (EDITOR)

Latimer Publications, London, 2022. 214pp (paperback £9.50),

ISBN: 978-1-906327-72-9

Canons do not form the entirety of the ecclesiastical law of the Church of England: statutes, statutory instruments, rubrics, case law, quasi-legislation, and the medieval canon law are also important sources for ecclesiastical law. Nevertheless, for certain topics, such as liturgy and ministry, the canons will usually be the first point of reference.

In 1964 and 1969 a new body of canons for the Church of England were promulgated by the convocations of Canterbury and York. These replaced the canons of 1604 which were almost entirely repealed. From 1969, the power to legislate by canon has been transferred to the General Synod of the Church of England, which has continued to develop the canonical corpus by the promulgation of new canons, and by means of Amending Canons. Between 1969 and 2020, 41 Amending Canons amended, repealed, or introduced new canons.

Gerald Bray's book is in effect a reference guide to these changes. A chronology sets out the promulgation of new canons and the date and effect of the Amending Canons. Then the text of all versions of the canons since 1969 is reproduced in full. Bold and italic text indicate how the text has been amended and when. Using the footnotes, it is easy to determine the text of a canon as it was in force at any particular date. In addition, further footnotes reference historical sources that influenced certain canonical changes, and an introduction provides some orientation.

The Development of the Canons is thus a handy reference work for historical study, providing at a glance that which was previously somewhat tedious to piece together. When reading a judgment or article that refers to a canon, Bray's book allows one easily to check exactly how that canon stood at a certain date. Legislators in General Synod are able to see what changes have been made to canons by their predecessors, and can check whether a canon has received recent attention by Amending Canon. Historians of ecclesiastical law can trace significant developments of the past sixty years, such as changes to the law respecting the authorization of forms of services or the ordination of women.

In many respects, this book is a sequel to Bray's earlier work, *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947* (Boydell Press, 1998), an indispensable reference work covering the period from the reformation as far as the proposed canons of 1947. *The Development of the Canons* completes the story, bringing Bray's conspectus of canonical legislation up to date. The most remarkable feature of this book, however, is that it can be bought for less than £10. Latimer Publications are to be commended for making a book on canon law available at a price that will appeal to General Synod members, the parochial clergy, and interested parishioners. At this price, it is a book that should be on the shelf of everyone interested in the canon law of the Church of England.

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