

effectively from Paul of Hungary OP, Hostiensis, Cardinal Robert Courçon, and others, on the medieval juridical side, to Paul Ricoeur. The last chapter is a very thought-provoking contrast between Christ's penitential 'patente' in B and the Church's penitential 'chartre' in C. For Thomas, the C passages discussed offer a most radical re-envisioning of the institution of private sacramental penance. Perhaps a discussion was needed on the distinction between the particular judgment immediately after an individual's death and the Last Judgment, with special reference to Benedict XII's constitution *Benedictus Deus* (1336).

Early on, Thomas describes his project as to show that poet and canonist – even if the latter did not know or care about the former – as being engaged in a common approach to writing, revising, and thereby co-producing the law. On the last page, Thomas refers to the sixteenth-century Protestant receptions of the poem, and how a particular configuration of theology, ecclesiology and politics seen in *Piers Plowman* had become impossible after the 1530s. To the components of this configuration Thomas would add such books of canon law as were burned by Luther in 1520, and are now used by Thomas to study *Piers Plowman*. For Thomas the poem's innovations within the terms of canon law became increasingly strange and unintelligible to readers for whom the Church's legal institution no longer represented an open dialectical process.

This is a brilliant book, as complex and multi-layered as the medieval poem it deals with.

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A NEW HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN WALES: GOVERNANCE AND MINISTRY, THEOLOGY AND SOCIETY edited by Norman Doe, *Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2020, pp. xxi + 370, £24.99, pbk*

This collection of essays, produced under the editorship of the distinguished Anglican canon lawyer, Norman Doe, marks the centenary of the foundation of the Church in Wales. On 31st March 1920, the Welsh Church Act 1914 came into force, disestablishing – and disendowing – the Church of England in Wales. A separate Welsh Province came into being on 1st June 1920, incorporating the four Welsh dioceses (St David's, Bangor, Llandaff, and St Asaph) which had become ecclesiastically separated from the Province of Canterbury.

The volume is divided into key parts, and each part is divided into chapters written by 18 prominent scholars, mostly clerics.

The opening chapter of Part One provides an overview of the history of Christianity in Wales until the late nineteenth century in order to identify issues rooted in the past that became significant during the

disestablishment campaign. These issues include the loss by parishes of their historic endowments, payment of tithes, and the growth of Nonconformity. Chapter two examines the disestablishment campaign and factors which aroused opposition to the Established Church. Nonconformists, who far outnumbered Anglicans, pleaded for religious equality and believed that the State should be neutral in the campaign. The link between Welsh identity and Nonconformity was strengthened as the campaign progressed. Chapter three describes the social, political and cultural changes in Welsh national life over the century, and assesses the response of Church and Chapel. Also assessed is how the Church has functioned alongside the Chapels in its witness and mission to an ever-evolving nation. Chapter four outlines ecclesiastical developments since 1920. Two new dioceses were soon created: Monmouth in 1921, and Swansea and Brecon in 1923. Developments in the areas of administration, finance, liturgy and ecumenical cooperation and the ordination of women, and in the reorganisation of parochial structures are considered.

In Part Two, chapter one, Norman Doe explains and evaluates how the Constitution of the Church has evolved to become a means of applied theology rather than a mainly functional instrument. Pre-1920 ecclesiastical law still applies alongside the Constitution, unless and until modified by it. Chapter two focuses on landmark developments in episcopal and archepiscopal ministry over the century through biographical sketches. The election of the missionary minded Timothy Rees as bishop of Llandaff in 1931 is viewed as evidence of the Church overcoming post-disestablishment isolation. In chapter three, Barry Morgan (Archbishop 2003–17) describes how the Church's structure, organisation and disciplinary policy have changed completely since 1920. Changes in clergy deployment, pay, and conditions of service are examined, while the response of clergy to these changes are assessed. Chapter four looks at changes within the role of the laity. Since disestablishment, their role now extends from ensuring the effective running of churches to involvement in various patterns of ministry, and to the mission of the Church on diocesan and provincial level.

Part Three chapter one is concerned with the doctrine of the Church in Wales. Its doctrinal inheritance is considered, as is the establishing of a Doctrinal Commission and how this came to embody the beliefs of the Church. In chapter two, Gregory Cameron, bishop of St Asaph, outlines changes in the liturgical life of the Welsh Church. He comments on the shift from uniformity to diversity in worship – a response to changes in social communication – as an effective means of teaching and sustaining faith. Rites of passage are the subject of chapter three. Regulations governing baptism, confirmation, the Holy Eucharist, marriage and burial, at the time of disestablishment, are examined. So also are changes in relation to the norms applicable to these rites. Chapter four focuses mainly on ecumenical relations between the Church in Wales and other communities of faith. The 1975 Welsh Covenant was an initial step towards unity with the

main Nonconformists bodies. Churches Together in Wales (*Cytûn*) soon followed, as did the creation of Local Ecumenical Projects (LEPs) under the diocesan bishop.

In Part Four chapter one, Rowan Williams (Archbishop of Wales 1999–2002) examines the longstanding conflict between the Church and Nonconformity over ‘historic’ Welsh Christian identity. He draws attention to the Church’s lack of sensitivity in the face of changing cultural patterns in the post-War period, apart from a few notable exceptions among the episcopate. Chapter two reviews the history of Church in Wales schools since 1920. Through its schools’ system, and in cooperation with the State, the Church has been able to provide free education for all based on Christian values. Chapter three takes the reader on a journey from the time of disestablishment when the place of the Welsh language in the Church was almost non-existent, through periods of hope and lament, to the present time when Church services are available bilingually and ordinands are obliged to learn Welsh. In chapter four the Church’s diverse contribution to State and society is described by Joanna Penberthy, bishop of St David’s. Earlier diocesan welfare work receives attention, as does later activity through diocesan and provincial structures for social responsibility. Community development projects undertaken include running family centres and supporting farming communities facing difficulties.

Part Five is by way of conclusion. Chapter one focuses on how the image of the Church has developed since disestablishment. The Church’s changing image is viewed through different lenses: for example through its relation with society at large, its means of communication via the worldwide web, and its increasing attention to media relations. In chapter two John Davies, the current Archbishop, poses challenging questions on how the Church has fared in its core task of proclaiming the gospel and making disciples. He ends on an optimistic note by referring to recent developments in Church life and ministry.

This is a well-coordinated and richly informative publication which is enhanced by having a detailed bibliography, a biography of contributors, and a chronological list of plates. It deserves wide readership.

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EFFORT AND GRACE: ON THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISE OF PHILOSOPHY by Simone Kotva, *Bloomsbury*, London, 2020, pp. xv + 226, £80.00, hbk

Those convinced of the auto-anaesthesia of the late modern subject have often prescribed therapeutics of attentiveness: to riff as anti-mystical a thinker as Richard Rorty, attending to the contingency of our final vocabularies unmasks economies of power concealed behind concepts,