

minism is then indispensable if we are to make anything of the claim to freedom."

Kenny has an answer to this argument. He holds that correct descriptions of determined events need not entail that human actions are determined, even if they are describable as determined events. In this context, he insists on the relevance of the problematic nature of arguments like 'I can (cannot) do X; doing X is doing Y; therefore I can (cannot) do Y'. Certainly, there are difficulties with this pattern of argument; but does its possible invalidity suggest the falsity of incompatibilism? I

think not. If a human action is completely physically determined, if it cannot be other than it is (except logically), it still fails to be free in the way most libertarians have asserted that some actions can be. I do not think that Kenny has adequately characterised the kind of libertarianism which the incompatibilist generally has in mind. A better account is provided by Wiggins. He may doubt the existence of what some people claim to see, but at least he manages to see what people claim to exist.

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A PASTORAL GUIDE TO CANON LAW, edited by G. J. Dyer. *Gill & Macmillan*, Dublin 1977 pp. 181 £3.50.

True to the promise in its title, this is a specifically pastoral guide to canon law. It does not form a neat compendium of the Church's existing canon law in a pastoral perspective, but rather attempts to present a practical synthesis of *recent* developments in the Church's legal theory and practice, and to indicate what the next Code will be like. The method is that of question and answer, a method which in a volume obviously aimed at seminarians could have certain disastrous consequences; a repression of moral creativity, of magnanimity even, and an obsession with detail. One recalls the concomitants of this method as practised of old. It dovetailed into a world needing to know, for example, that the eucharistic fast is not violated when such things as snow, rain, dust, insects are inadvertently swallowed in breathing, or that the habit of some children of biting their nails does not affect the fast, but biting off and swallowing pieces of finger skin might do so, if the particles were more than the smallest and mixed with saliva. In the past, the sheer mass of such baneful precision must have far outweighed any accompanying exhortation not to act too casuistically. Fortunately this method does not cramp the present guide but makes for concise information and ready reference.

Like the passing of any established *genre*, the collapse of the world of manuals represents a profound shift in theological culture. Law and morality will always intersect but henceforth they should

be less removed from the pressure of other sources of christian life. The authors want us to acquire a truly evangelical legal tact as well as information.

The co-authors are all distinguished, chiefly American specialists and their project is to deal with principles and detail by asking questions ranging in scope from 'Are the new laws of the Church binding in conscience?' to 'How often may communion be received on a given day?' Most of the detail given by way of answer is helpful and informative, although ecclesiastical penalties need more detailed treatment. To ask what are the rights of 'women and other minorities' is odd, while not to discuss the sacramental life possible for the mentally handicapped is a missed opportunity; but see David Wilson's sensitive analysis in *Clergy Review* (1975) 69-84. The high quality of the new law and of its exponents can be seen in the sections on marriage. Therein will also be found a balanced presentation of the internal forum solution to the clash between law and conscience; surely *the* area to watch as Catholicism recasts its sense of the sacraments of marriage and penance.

The merit of this project is not exclusively, or most emphatically, in the rejection of legalism or the fine theological assessment of canon law. It is above all in the difficult task of making canon law a viable constituent of the Church as sign and sacrament of God's reconciling love for mankind. In some areas fewer laws are an advantage, but elsewhere only *more*

legal definitions and procedures can help affirm rights and remove abuses and injustices from the Church. Benefiting from American experience, the authors are strong on what might be called the constitutional aspect of ecclesial life. In future, marriage nullity cases may not comprise well over 90 per cent of judicial activity.

The questions and answers, then, do not simply depend on new theological concepts but also on new, often still tentative attempts at being a Christian today.

CLERGY, MINISTERS AND PRIESTS by Stewart Ranson, Alan Bryman and Bob Hinings. *Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, Henley and Boston, 1977 pp. 204 £5.95.*

Two groups of readers may be attracted by this book—sociologists and clergy. To the first it will be seen as a contribution to the sociology of the professions; to the second, especially if they are ordained in the Anglican, Methodist or Roman Catholic churches, it will be a source of information of how the clergy of the three denominations view their work, ecumenical co-operation, the future, together with data about their social background, age-structure, education, time spent in the ministry, and all the rest. Whereas extensive information of this kind has been common enough in the United States, it has been virtually unknown in this country. The book therefore fills an obvious enough gap.

But what surprising results emerge from the analysis of 1,227 completed questionnaires, each of which contained about 100 questions! It all depends on where the reader stands. To the sociologist with perhaps very little first-hand knowledge of contemporary clerical life, there is probably much to be learned in every way. And if his interest is in the sociology of the professions, rather than the sociology of religion, here is another profession that can be ticked off: And the clergy? About his brother clergy in his own church, the ordained man may gain little that is new. Further, in these days of ecumenical meeting, co-operation and openness, he is more than likely fully aware of the social facts and attitudes of clergy in other denominations, not least about the Anglo-Catholic conservatives, the 'reformists', 'the radicals' and so forth.

So much of the book is *déjà vu*,

Our epoch's style of faith makes us search for adequate forms of action through such initiatives as a more moderate exercise of the Roman primacy, the pruning of excessive clericalism by the use of lay counsel, consent and ministries, the renewal of religious communities and the daily ecumenism of couples in mixed marriages. Clearly the remaking of canon law is going to be largely a matter of orthopraxis.

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propped up by statistics, (admittedly on the whole well integrated into the text) and peppered with references to obscure articles. There is a great deal of repetition and truisms of the order—'Evangelicals are far more likely to stress the role of the preacher than those who do not identify with this tradition' (p. 70). To be sure, the writers emphasize the importance of denomination as a key factor, but who in their right minds, except perhaps certain blinkered sociologists, have ever doubted this? There frequently appears the term theological cosmology which, far from relating to the universe, is taken to imply the ecclesiastical outlook of the clergy—evangelical, modernist, conservative etc.—which for Anglicans is the same as churchmanship. Employed as an important variable, found difficult to establish for Roman Catholics, it is not to be seen in the index.

No one is likely to deny the ordained ministry is 'in flux', at least compared with previous generations. However, for the early 1970s when the survey was taken, the clergy as a whole were found to be more conservative in the face of changes in society and possible reforms in their churches than was anticipated. One would have liked to have known why this was at a deeper level than was possible from the questions asked. Perhaps, as has often been said, the clergy are a group unto themselves. They constitute neither a profession nor even an occupation in the generally held sense of these words.

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