

## EDITORIAL

In his recent judgment in *Re St. Thomas Pennywell* (1995) Fam. 50, Chancellor Rupert Bursell expressed the view that the previous 'rigorous' interpretation given to the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer concerning the legality of the use of ornaments and ceremonial practices had been swept aside and that many earlier judgments were no longer binding in so far as they were based upon that interpretation. This obiter dictum has since been adopted by Chancellor Bursell as the *ratio decidendi* of his subsequent decision in *Re St. John the Evangelist Chopwell* (3 Ecc. L.J. 529) This seems to me to reflect the reality of what has been happening gradually over recent years to the perception of many regarding what were originally considered extreme practices in the Church of England. Chancellor Bursell's opening address to the one-day Conference on *Laissez-Faire Liturgy?* in London on Saturday, 23 March should lead to a stimulating discussion by other speakers including Bishop Colin Buchanan and members of the Society generally. As to the liturgy itself, is uniformity attainable or desirable? What will the consequence be in the case of lawful and unlawful departures from the authorised service? Are present changes marking a transformation in the life of the Church as seen in Word and Sacrament? Full details of the Conference appear at page 2.

In the last issue I mentioned the reports of two of our Working Parties on Clergy Discipline and Cathedrals which had been submitted as evidence to the General Synod's Working Party on Discipline and to those responsible for giving effect to the recommendations contained in the report of the Cathedrals Commission. Both reports are included in this issue of the Journal as examples of the good work produced by Society members although the reports naturally only have the authority of the Working Parties in question. If members feel prompted to write to support or differ from the Working Parties' views, comments should be sent to Malcolm Taylor, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1 as soon as possible. The other Working Parties to which I referred in the last issue are continuing and will welcome new members. It is hoped that further Working Parties may form themselves at our London Conference.

One of our members, Fr. Robert Ombres, O.P. has asked me to commend the Edmund Plowden Trust with which he is involved. Its aim is to assist in and promote the study and understanding of the law in our country and to compare it with systems elsewhere in the light of the Declaration of Religious Freedom (of the Second Vatican Council), International Law, Canon Law, the Law of Nature, and ethics and morals. It publishes a review called *Law and Justice* and details regarding membership can be obtained from the Hon. Administrator, Stephen Penty, 45 Hassocks Road, Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex BN6 9QL. As Fr. Ombres reminds us, Plowden was a very distinguished member of Middle Temple and his tomb is in the Temple Church.

It is also hoped that the Society may be able to sponsor a 'fringe meeting' at the next Lambeth Conference in 1998. The General Committee will be considering the matter again soon and members' ideas would be very welcome.

This is the first issue of the Journal to be printed for us by the Oxford University Press who have been most helpful and efficient. It is also the last issue in connection with which I shall enjoy the tremendous enthusiasm and dedication of Hughie Jones to whom I record my profound thanks.

Members of the Society will be pleased to learn that Archbishop David Hope has kindly consented to perpetuate what is becoming the custom of the Archbishop of York being a Patron of the Society.

The Editorial Committee and Editorial Advisory Board have recently been strengthened by the addition of Mark Hill and James Behrens to the Committee and Professor F. Lyall of Aberdeen University to the Board.

If members are thinking of writing an article for the Journal, please do contact me first to make sure the subject has not already been covered by someone else and to obtain a copy of 'Notes for Authors'.

Finally I am sure all members will wish to express their delight at the news of the appointment of our Vice-Chairman Canon Christopher Hill to be Bishop of Stafford. His Consecration will be on 7 March at St. Paul's Cathedral.

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*Editorial Committee:* Michael Goodman (Chairman), James Behrens, Timothy Briden, Rupert Bursell, Norman Doe, David Harte, Mark Hill, Hughie Jones, Peter Moore and Thomas Watkin.

*Editorial Advisory Board:* Professor Baker, Bishop Kemp, Professor Lyall, Chancellor McClean and Fr. Ombres, O.P.

## ECCLESIASTICAL LAW SOCIETY

# LONDON MEETINGS

*Meetings are held in 'Briefs', 7, Stone Buildings, Lincoln's Inn, 5.30 p.m.*

Wednesday 13th March 1996

'Heretics Ancient and Modern'

The Venerable T. Hughie Jones  
Former Archdeacon of Loughborough

Wednesday 15th May 1996

'Punishing the Erring English Clergyman:  
The quest for a satisfactory system of  
clergy discipline in the mid-nineteenth  
century'

Dr Arthur Burns Lecturer in History  
King's College, London

Wednesday 10th July 1966

'Mechanisms for dealing with  
*corruptio legis*'

Speaker: Fr. Richard Barrett  
S.T.B., J.C.L.

*Members and non-members are all welcome*

for further details, contact Paul Barber (0181-299 4380)