

being a plausible and detailed attempt to justify his position so as to influence the behaviour of husbands.

Testamentary law was a good focus to have chosen because it reveals how local law and practice might stand in relation to the universal law of the Church on several matters of great importance to the individual and to society. In a detailed presentation that shows the complexity of Lyndwood's treatment, Ferme is also able to bring out his fascinating and extensive use of Roman law. Following an account of the executor's position, Ferme concludes that to a striking extent Lyndwood tried to reconcile the provincial constitutions and English practice with Roman law, especially where the Church's *ius commune* contained little if anything of relevance to the question.

Ferme's scattered observations on Lyndwood's method as a canonist would have been rounded off most suitably had he evaluated the *Provinciale* as a whole and at some length. This involves relating the kind of gloss written by Lyndwood to that of John Acton, his English predecessor who commented on the legatine constitutions, and to the writings of foreign canonists. Was Maitland right in supposing that Acton was very much Lyndwood's inferior in all those qualities and acquirements that make a great lawyer? It is also important to assess the use made in the *Provinciale* of theology, named theologians and countless Scriptural passages.

The assertion is repeated by Ferme that Lyndwood contributed to introducing continental humanistic standards into the language of official correspondence. If substantiated, this claim could shed light on the linguistic and juridical techniques adopted in his commentary. In any case, the undoubted fact that in the England of the time Lyndwood was writing a work of canon law which quoted the classical authors Cicero, Horace, Ovid, Quintilian and Aristotle is significant. In glossing the words '*Articulum mortis*' he remarks '*Item est quidam color Rhetoricus*' (1679 edition, p. 40). However, any attempt at classifying Lyndwood's method is complicated by the isolated nature of his task and his achievement.

In the 15th Century the *Provinciale* was already described as the 'golden and famous glose', but even the law graduate who said this found it to be 'diffuse, intricate with lawe and hard of intellecte' (Oxford, Bodleian MS Eng.th.c.57 f.3r). The passage of time has not simplified matters, and indeed we still lack a critical edition of the *Provinciale*. Mgr Ferme has now written a reliable guide to Lyndwood's diffuse and intricate commentary, in which Europe's medieval canonical learning found a late and unexpected flowering in England.

*CONFIRMATION, SACRAMENT OF GRACE: The theology, practice and law of the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England*, JAMES BEHRENS. Gracewing, 1995, xvii+115 pp. (£7.99) ISBN 085244 3439.

A review by Alec Graham, Bishop of Newcastle

The author of this attractively produced work is a practising barrister who has a special interest in canon law and is churchwarden of a London parish. The title of the work accurately reflects its contents, and given the background and professional competence of the author, it is not surprising that its strengths lie in the material on the practice of confirmation and on legal matters connected with it. Fortunately, the sections on practice and law form by far the greater part of the book. Though there is some treatment of the practice and understanding of confirmation in other Churches, the author for the most part concentrates on practical matters and legal considerations in connection with confirmation in the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England.

Part of the prefatory material contains a useful list of sources and authorities to which reference is made in the course of the work. Particularly useful is the list of Canons of the Roman Catholic code and of the Church of England, of the Anglican articles, and of those measures and statutes, to which the author later refers. In an appendix the principal canons of the Roman Catholic code and of the Church of England which bear upon confirmation are set out in full.

In the chapters which form the greater part of this study the legal provisions and the practice of the two Churches are treated systematically under separate headings. They cover the legal effects of confirmation, the proof and record of confirmation, the age for confirmation, preparation for confirmation, the minister of confirmation, after-care, change of name at confirmation, confirmation and church membership, and confirmation, in ecumenical relations. Of particular interest in those chapters are the passages in which are set out the legal provision for the taking of an additional Christian name at confirmation, and the judicial definitions of membership of the Church of England. Also, an interesting point is made concerning the provision of Canon B28 of the Church of England that 'if any . . . person has been baptised but not episcopally confirmed and desires to be formally admitted into the Church of England he shall, after appropriate instruction, be received by the rite of confirmation'. The question is raised whether persons who have been confirmed in the Roman Catholic Church by a priest to whom his bishop has delegated authority to confirm should, properly speaking, be confirmed as part of their admission into the Church of England. The canonical position is, as the author comments, unclear, though the further provision in Canon B28 that a person who has been episcopally confirmed with unction shall be received into the Church of England in accordance with a Form of Reception or with other appropriate prayers may surely cover the case of a person confirmed by a priest with oil blessed by a bishop.

It is encouraging to note that in several instances the practice of the Roman Catholic Church and of the Church of England is closer than may be commonly supposed. Explicit mention is made of the positive encouragement given by the sponsors of candidates for confirmation in the Roman Catholic Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, and this corresponds closely to the practice widely observed in the Church of England. Also, the practice of our two Churches with regard to the age for confirmation and with regard to the question whether admission to communion should precede or follow confirmation reveals a greater variety than may be generally recognised. Another example of similarity of practice may be seen in the provision in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults that the bishop 'should arrange, if possible, to meet the recently baptised at least once in the year'. This corresponds with Anglican expectations about the role of the bishop in the initiatory process as set out, for instance, in the suggestions made in the report *On the Way*.

These chapters on law and practice which form the greater part of this study are preceded by a historical introduction and by a chapter on the theology of confirmation, and they are followed by a chapter which contains a summary and conclusions. It is to these sections of the work that we now turn. The historical introduction, a mere five pages, can be no more than a very cursory and limited treatment of a subject which has had such a long and complex history. In the explicitly theological chapter there are some useful points, not least the treatment of the rites for confirmation in the Book of Common Prayer and in the Alternative Service Book which draws out their ambiguous and equivocal nature. In this theological chapter, however, there is a flaw in method with regard to the use of the biblical material. The author has drawn on the references to the verb 'confirm' in a modern Bible Dictionary, and he sets out in full seventeen passages from the Old Testament and ten from the New in which this verb is used. Six of these quotations

from an English New Testament (the New International Version) translate a Greek verb which means 'to make firm', but the other four quotations represent Greek verbs which can mean 'to make firm', only by a loose or paraphrastic translation. A similar pattern may be discerned in the quotations from the Old Testament: one root predominates which, in its causative stem has the sense of 'confirming', but in the other quotations other Hebrew roots are used which have rather different associations. I am much indebted to the Revd Dr C. H. Knights, vicar of Ashington, Northumberland, for these points about the Hebrew. Methodologically it would have been better for this theological chapter to have consisted of a study of the laying on of hands in the New Testament, with some reference back to its antecedents and forward to its subsequent use and understanding in Christian initiation. In any case both in this chapter on the theology of confirmation and also in later chapters in which there are biblical references, it would have been simpler if the usual conventions with regard to biblical references had been observed.

The author of a work on confirmation inevitably ventures into the theological field both in the chapter specifically devoted to theological material and also more widely in his book. This one does so rather breathlessly: the treatment both of the Trinity (p. 16) and also of the theological significance of a new name (p. 70) could, with advantage, have been much fuller and thus have assisted the reader to have grasped the point. On other occasions the author tantalisingly raises theological questions, and the reader longs to know how he would answer them. For instance (on p. 60) he asks 'why theologically the Church of England holds it necessary to have a bishop to administer the laying on of hands', and in his concluding chapter he states that 'the Church of England should consider whether this should remain the position' (p. 98); it would have been instructive to have had the case argued. This subject lies close to the surface of the discussion on ecumenical confirmation celebrations, a section which also is tantalisingly brief: the author gives the text of the relevant portions of Canons B43 and B44 and adds the briefest of comments. It would have been useful to have had some treatment of the different settings presupposed by these two canons and of some of the practical and theological difficulties raised by the practice of joint ecumenical confirmations.

The heading of the final chapter, 'Summary and Conclusions', does not in fact do full justice to its contents, for it also contains a fair number of recommendations. Among them is the suggestion that the *Duties of Church Membership* drawn up by the Convocations in 1953 and/or the *Short Guide to the Duties of Church Membership* published by the two archbishops in 1954 be reissued and incorporated into the canons.

In conclusion, the reader will find in this study much useful information clearly presented, particularly with regard to the law and the practice of the Roman Catholic Church and of the Church of England. The author quotes in a footnote the celebrated description of confirmation to be found in the *Ely Report of 1971* that it is 'a rite in search of a convincing theological justification for its existence'. As the reader of this study reflects on its contents he may be led to precisely the opposite conclusion, namely that confirmation is a rite so rich in meaning that both in theological understanding and in practice it is difficult to do full justice to it.