

EDITORIAL

It became very clear at the recent Conference on the Parson's Freehold and Clergy Discipline, that both are ripe for review and perhaps drastic revision. It was interesting and indeed surprising to learn from Bishop Bowlby that over a third of the full-time stipendiary clergy no longer possess a freehold at all, being members of Team Ministries, priests in charge, chaplains or employees in diocesan and other clerical organisations. Nevertheless it was obvious that many clergy still valued the freehold as a guarantee to proper clerical independence. That said, however, most of those present felt some further loosening up of the present freehold system was urgently needed, in cathedrals as well as in the parishes. The Secretary of the Methodist Conference Brian Beck, in a frank discourse, explained how his Church is seeking ways to make its disciplinary system more effective and at the same time more sensitive to the difficult personal and pastoral problems that give cause for concern. Both addresses will be published in the January 1993 issue of the Journal. This makes sense as, of necessity, only about a quarter of our membership were present in London on 28th March. By the end of the day, following a stimulating Question Time in the afternoon, most people agreed that there had been a well balanced programme with plenty of opportunity for getting to know other members. If you have views on ways in which our Conference structures can be improved, do please write to the Secretary with your suggestions for consideration by the General Committee.

Whilst on the subject of getting to know each other, it may interest members to know that regional meetings are now taking place from time to time in the south west. Maybe other areas would like to follow suit. But it would help if the Secretary could be informed of such developments.

Some of the Working Parties which have been meeting over the last few years have completed their tasks and the Reports on Visitations (p. 347) and Remarriage in Church (p. 359) are included in this issue of the Journal. Details of new Working Parties appear on page 419. If you wish to set up a Working Party on a particular topic, please notify the Chairman who can give useful advice.

We now begin to look forward towards our next residential Conference in Ripon on 23-25 April 1993 on 'Law, Grace and Liberty' and members will find Norman Doe's article 'Toward a Critique of the Role of Theology in English Ecclesiastical and Canon Law' on page 328 a stimulating foretaste.

Norman Doe, who is a generous contributor to the Journal and the Society's activities generally, is also to be congratulated on the success of the LL.M. course on Canon Law which he directs from Cardiff. Several distinguished members of the Society have decided to improve their knowledge of the subject.

I should also like to mention Peter Moore who, as a very new member, compiled the index for the first bound volume of the Journal and has been very helpful in his advice to authors on drafting. He has offered to provide an index for volume 2 which David Harte will again be producing following the publication of this issue of the Journal. He will accept your copies of issues 7-11 for binding during the Ripon Conference as he did at Cardiff in 1991. Back numbers will be available for those who do not have a full set. The bound volumes mark the beginnings of an attractive collection – and owners avoid the risk of losing individual issues! Of course, you can purchase a bound volume *and* keep your individual issues if you like.

We are also intending to publish Occasional Papers when we have material which is really too long for one issue of the Journal and could not conveniently be split between two. They will be in red covers like ordinary issues of the Journal, and can be incorporated into bound volumes in due course.

The next list of Members is due out early in 1993.

I know all members will have been saddened to hear of the death of that distinguished ecclesiastical lawyer, Chancellor George Newsom, whose obituary appears below.

Finally I am sure all members will express much pleasure in welcoming Archbishop George Carey as one of our Patrons. He let us hope he will be able to attend one of our gatherings before long.

MICHAEL GOODMAN
Parkside
Dulwich Common
London SE21 7EU

RIPON 1993

Plans for the Society's residential conference next year are now well in hand, and members are asked to enter the event in their diaries!

**Venue: THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF RIPON & YORK ST JOHN
(RIPON CAMPUS)**

Dates: 23-25 April 1993
(Friday evening to Sunday lunch inclusive)

Cost: £105

Conference Theme

LAW, GRACE & LIBERTY

A theological, historical and legal exploration of the place of law in the life of the Church and the proclamation of the gospel.

The Specialist interest groups will further their work together.

Early booking is advised.

Please return the enclosed booking form, with non-returnable deposit of £10 to

The Venerable D. Scott
4 Honing Drive
Southwell
Notts. NG25 0LB