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Gerald Bray. *Tudor Church Reform: The Henrician Canons of 1535 and the "Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum"*. Woodbridge, England and Rochester, N.Y.: Boydell Press, 2000. clx + 892 pp. \$125.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-85115-809-9.

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This is the second volume that Gerald Bray, of the Beeson Divinity School at Samford University, Alabama, has edited for the Church of England Record Society, the first being *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947* (vol. 6, 1998). The two texts contained in this volume, the Henrician Canons of 1535 and the "Reformatio," should have appeared chronologically in the first volume, since they were written between the Canons of 1529 and the legate constitutions of Cardinal Pole in 1556. But their length made a supplemental volume necessary. So this volume is a companion to the earlier. Reviewing almost nine hundred pages of sixteenth-century canonical texts is a daunting challenge, and perhaps the most profitable view of the texts can be inferred from their origins.

The Henrician Canons were lost until 1974, when they were discovered in the British Library and dated as written in 1535, before the dissolution of the monasteries and after Henry VIII's breach with Rome. The Canons therefore represent a snapshot of Reformation thought at a time when religious views were both unpredictable and mercurial. The Canons of 1535 consist of thirty-six titles, covering 360 separate canons, mostly codified from existing statutes, papal canons, and some canon law dating back to the early church of the second century. The canons followed the traditional form and order of the decretals. Probably Henry VIII himself never set eyes on the Canons of 1535; indeed, Gerald Bray speculates that Cromwell shelved them because they did not fit in with fast-moving plans for reform.

The abortive canonical reform of 1535 was repeated in 1544 but not pursued as Henry VIII reached old age. In the reign of Edward VI wrangles over the composition of the canon reform commission delayed any action, but a

commission of thirty-two was finally formed in February 1552. The "Reformatio," which the commission produced in 1553, failed to obtain parliamentary support because it had excluded lords temporal, who then voted against it in the House of Lords. In contrast to the Henrician Canons, the "Reformatio" sought to lay aside previous law and attempt a wholesale reform of the ecclesiastical patina of statutes and canons. This was an expression of the full-blooded Protestantism of the reign of Edward VI, whereas the Henrician Canons were a tentative recodification of Catholic structures and law. So, for example, canonical scripture was identified in the "Reformatio" as those defined by the Council of Trent of 1546, whereas the Henrician Canons simply accepted the papal definition of scripture. The "Reformatio" sought to be a document that incorporated reform of the Church, but it remained conservative in the sense that it reformed rather than destroyed. In this it reveals the influence of Cranmer on the commission responsible for its authorship. The ultimate failure of the "Reformatio" perhaps lies in its failure to be more radical. By insisting on binding the laity as well as the clergy to ecclesiastical discipline, the "Reformatio" earned the enmity of the Duke of Northumberland, who publicly scotched the document in the House of Lords. Perhaps, wonders Bray, Northumberland saw the danger of a reformed and therefore revitalized Church of England. The "Reformatio" was abandoned in 1553 and Mary's succession caused a hiatus in canonical reform. While Elizabeth's commission of 1559 drew on the "Reformatio," it lacked Cranmer's guidance. But the publication of the "Reformatio" in 1571 renewed interest in it, and allowed some of the canons in the "Reformatio" to be used in the reforms of 1571. Thereafter they remained an important text for the Church of Eng-

land. Even Edmund Gibson, one of the greatest canonists of the eighteenth century, used the "Reformatio" in his *Codex Juris Ecclesiastici Anglicani* (1713).

The texts published here cover nearly nine hundred pages with Latin and English texts side by side. It must

be admitted that these volumes are not such as other than the most dedicated Reformation scholar will read them from cover to cover, but as reference works which encapsulate the caution of Henry VIII's reign and the reforming Protestantism of Edward VI's they are an indispensable source.

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