

took charge of a Congregational Church in Portland, Maine, thus returning to his original affiliation. That, too, was short lived, as he returned south, this time to Jacksonville, Florida, to be in charge of a newly-formed Presbyterian Church. He died there in 1870.

In Webber's epilogue, he provides a valuable and helpful synthesis of the many strands of Pennington's life: 1) His contact with William Wright, the Quaker who treated Pennington as an equal; 2) his awareness of African Americans' genius, that to be black did not mean to be limited; 3) his realization that 700,000 children were in slavery and his vocation to improve the lives of African Americans; 4) his conversion to a "New Light" faith through the influence of Samuel Cox that brought Presbyterians into contact with African Americans; and lastly, 5) his participation in the Negro Convention movement which opposed the American Colonization Society, and developed a broader vision for a multiracial American society. Spending time with James William Charles Pennington is a richly rewarding experience, both as a riveting story of escape and progress.

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The Spirit of Classical Canon Law. By R. H. Helmholz. (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2010, Pp. xiv, 514. \$28.95.)

In this new paperback edition of his 1996 book, R. H. Helmholz provides an in-depth exploration of a variety of fascinating if not somewhat arcane topics from the vast corpus of classical canon law that spanned the mid-twelfth through the seventeenth centuries of the common era. These topics—thirteen in total—range from the laws of episcopal elections to the prohibition of the ordination of slaves to the freedom of choice with respect to monastic vows and marriage contracts.

Helmholz, a law professor at the University of Chicago, begins with a helpful overview of the sources and literature of canon law, including the texts that comprised the *Corpus iuris canonici*, which is the foundation of the classical canon law. Other sources discussed in the introductory chapter include the Roman law, the Bible, and the voluminous legal commentaries of the canon law jurists.

Helmholz then turns to an in-depth exploration of a variety of topics that are of particular interest to both legal and ecclesial historians. For example, in the chapter on canonical remedies, Helmholz discusses the classical canon law principle of *restitutio in integrum* (that is, restoration

to one's prior condition). This principle gave a party, such as a minor, who was "unjustly disadvantaged by an otherwise legal transaction or procedure" the right to "undo its effects" (95). Not only did the principle of *restitutio* expand the kinds of remedies that previously had been available under the Roman law, but it is the precursor to the modern-day legal remedy of restitution. Other subjects covered by Helmholz include ecclesial jurisdiction (for example, the church's spiritual jurisdiction over disadvantaged individuals or so-called *miserabiles personae*, which included widows and children), economic and property rights (for example, the rules governing disputes over long-standing uses of church property), criminal law (for example, the crime of blasphemy), and canonical sanctions (for example, excommunication).

Helmholz concludes the book with three observations that "reveal something important about the inner nature" of the classical canon law (396). First, Helmholz notes the high quality of the lawyering skills of the canonists. These skills seem "scarcely inferior" to those of "modern lawyers" (397). Second, he notes the ambitious scope of the classical canon law system in that it sought not just to resolve technical legal disputes, but also to "lead men [sic] to the good" in terms of moral guidance (398). Third, he acknowledges that there is much in the classical canon law system that is repulsive and "unpalatable" (398), such as condoning the institution of slavery.

As noted above, *The Spirit of Classical Canon Law* is likely to be of particular interest to legal and ecclesial historians. Although it is written in a fairly accessible albeit academic style, readers may find it helpful to have at least some familiarity with civil law, canon law, Medieval church history, and/or Latin, especially since Helmholz uses technical legal and ecclesial terms liberally throughout the book. Nevertheless, Helmholz's observations about the classical canon law remain highly germane to the issues facing the Anglican Communion today. For example, is the proposed Anglican Covenant consistent with the narrower and more limited vision of canon law that arose out of the English Reformation? Or is the Covenant a movement towards the "exceedingly wide" scope (1) and "vigorous practical centralization" (59) of the classical canon law? Helmholz's book demonstrates that the study of the classical canon law is not simply a matter of historical curiosity, but it may also be a glimpse into our future.

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