



A History of the English Parish: The Culture of Religion from Augustine to Victoria

N. J. G. Pounds

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Most writings on church history have been concerned mainly with church hierarchy, and with theology, liturgy and canon law. This book looks at the church 'from below', from the lowest stratum of its organisation - the parish - in which the church building is seen as the parishioners' handiwork and as a reflection of local popular culture. The book discusses in turn the origin and development of the system of precisely-defined parishes, their function - in terms of economics and personnel - and the church fabric which embodied the aspirations of parishioners, who saw the church more as an expression of their cultural and social hopes than as the embodiment of their faith. The book ends with the failure of the parish to meet all of its obligations - social, governmental and religious - from the late eighteenth century onwards.

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