
The removal of approximately 2,000 ministers from the ranks of the clergy of the Church of England in August, 1662 was an upheaval of such moment that it has passed into the ongoing ‘lore’ of Protestantism to nearly the same degree as another event which took place on the same Sunday (St. Bartholomew’s Day) of the year 1572: the massacre at Paris of upwards of 5,000 Huguenots. At half-century intervals since 1862, the ongoing significance of that English Ejectment (or, Ejection) has been freshly examined. Thus the present symposium, so ably edited by Alan P.F. Sell, the current ‘doyen’ of studies in English Nonconformity, marks a new half-century’s reflection. It supplements and extends the reflection provided in the 1962 volume, From Uniformity to Unity: 1662-1962 edited by Geoffrey Nuttall and Owen Chadwick.

Three substantial chapters focus on the historical antecedents (‘Puritanism c. 1559-1662’ by John Gwynfor Jones) and national repercussions (‘England 1662-89’ by David J. Appleby and ‘Wales 1662-89’ by Eryn M. White) of the upheaval of 1662. John Gwynfor Jones provides an excellent survey of Puritan life and activity in both Elizabethan and Stuart England. The reader comes away with the sense that the Ejectment had been anticipated earlier by many ‘tremors’ and smaller-scale withdrawals from the national Church. Nonconformity was therefore not a novel conception in England; it was the sheer scale of the Ejectment which set it apart. David J. Appleby and Eryn M. White show the complexity of the situation faced by those who withdrew; they could not properly discern who, in fact, was their great ‘nemesis’. Was it the monarch, the episcopate, or the Cavalier-dominated House of Commons? We read on the one hand of the circulation, within England, of up to 30,000 copies of the collected sermons preached by nonconforming ministers on that fateful 1662 Sunday. On the other, we learn that Wales which to that point had largely lacked a print-culture, steadily began to acquire one as nonconforming ministers laboured to put into print, in Welsh, sound instructional materials and the Bible itself for the benefit of congregations that they could now serve only furtively and outside the walls of parish churches.

The reader benefits by understanding something of the complexity of the choices faced by those who ultimately refused to conform. It was not simply a matter of pledging to use the Book of Common Prayer unswerv-
ingly (a sizeable obstacle for very many); there was also a requirement of re-ordination for all who were not episcopally ordained (an insistence judged inherently sectarian). Ministers were also required to abjure the ‘Solemn League and Covenant’ made with Scotland in 1643; yet this was legislation which both had been endorsed by the Long Parliament of that era and which had held out the prospect of closer religious conformity with Scotland. And to add insult to injury, ministers (many of whom had not been anti-royalist and who had welcomed the return of the Stuart monarchy) faced the requirement that they abjure the lawfulness of taking arms against the king or his representatives. Given the active involvement in securing the return from Europe of Charles II by many (especially Presbyterians) who would later refuse to conform, this Act of Conformity was a very bitter pill indeed. Further abrasive legislation was to follow.

The important fourth chapter, contributed by editor Alan Sell, stands back from these historical details and asks what the great Ejectment has been taken to mean at the half-century intervals commencing in 1862 (when it began to be marked with some fanfare) and what it all means in the present. This is richly rewarding material. Sell finds that the commemorators of 1862 and since have not always found the same principles illustrated in or drawn the same lessons from those events. Standing at a point in European history characterised by rampant secularisation and de-Christianisation, he finds it hard to advise readers as to how 1662 teaches us to navigate at this time. Both national churches and nonconformist bodies find themselves in positions of relative weakness; ecumenical discussions—in full swing in 1962—now take place in what he aptly describes as ‘winter’ conditions.

Yet Sell is emphatic that there are distinctive Nonconformist convictions such as the rootedness of God’s church in the work of the Spirit who calls the unbelieving to faith and to holiness (rather than its being primarily rooted in a hierarchy or an institutional structure) that provide crucial compass points as formal and informal discussions take place today among the various churches. This essay is provocative in the best sense of that word.

*The Great Ejectment* is devoid of the hagiographic element one finds in much literature which exists to commemorate the sacrifices of those who refused conformity. Its strength lies in the fact that it both reflects up-to-date historical analysis of the events of 1662 and their repercussions and provides superlative chapter-end bibliographies which will enable the curious to press on with their own researches. Sell’s own chapter is characterised by much accumulated wisdom. One great irony regarding the volume is that it is published in Eugene, Oregon, USA. This must be taken
as some kind of indicator that UK readership for such a critical investigation was not sufficient to make the volume’s publication viable there. Wonderfully, in this age of on-line book-buying, this fine volume will be available to inquisitive readers wherever they are situated.

Kenneth J. Stewart, Covenant College, USA


Evangelical Faith and the Challenge of Historical Criticism edited by Christopher M. Hays and Christopher B. Ansberry consists of nine essays from a group of scholars from the USA and UK. This book aims to challenge evangelicals to critically engage the historical-critical method through proving that both sides of the inerrancy debate are not mutually exclusive, thereby allowing for historical criticism to be profitable for evangelical scholarship while simultaneously upholding inerrancy. The book therefore consists of seven major and controversial historical-critical topics in order to offer an evaluation of the theological impact of historical criticism.

Hays in chapter one introduces the debate between historical criticism and inerrancy. He argues the scholarly and historical development of historical criticism is due in part to the retreat of evangelical and conservative scholars from the realm of academia in the wake of historical criticism. This left a vacuum for historical-critical scholars influenced by the prior work of deist and theologians such as Wellhausen, Hegel and Schleiermacher, who sought to locate the meaning of the biblical narratives somewhere outside of the text.

Chapter two is written by Hays and Stephen Lane Herring and assesses the historicity of Genesis 2-3. It is asked how hamartiology would be affected if critical scholars were right. The authors demonstrate that despite the claims of historical criticism, the essential Christian doctrine will remain on sure footing while some may contend to refine certain points of doctrine.

Chapters three and four offer a critical evaluation of both the minimalist and maximalist approaches to the Egyptian exodus and Deuteronomic covenant. Ansberry identifies the scholarly shortcomings in both minimalist and maximalist approaches, building upon the work of many previous evangelical and historical-critical scholars before him. Ansberry and Jerry Hwang address perhaps the greatest of the historical critic’s challenges to the Pentateuch: Mosaic authorship. Addressing the most convincing arguments from historical critics, Ansberry and Hwang dem-
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