

and the theological core of evangelicalism runs the risk of dissipating into oblivion.⁵

Jeff Straub

The Mayflower Pilgrims: Roots of Puritan, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and Baptist Heritage, by David Beale. Greenville, SC: Ambassador–Emerald International, 2000. 272 pp. \$19.99.

David Beale, professor of Church history at Bob Jones University, has taken advantage of recent scholarly studies and his own personal knowledge in putting together an excellent treatment of the Mayflower Separatists and their connections with other seventeenth century British dissenters. After describing their background in the context of the English Reformation, Beale details the fortunes of the Pilgrims from their beginnings in the Lincolnshire area of northern England to their landing at Cape Cod in 1620 and beyond. He references everything with the best sources and fleshes out his account with colorful descriptions of these indomitably brave souls. This is the best single reference volume on the Pilgrims in print. An added bonus for Baptists especially is Chapter Eight, “How the Earliest English Baptists Originated from the Pilgrim Separatists,” in which Beale accurately describes the relationships of both General and Particular Baptists to Separatism. In doing so, he dispels the myth that seventeenth century Baptists were the product of continental Anabaptism. He also advances the position that Henry Jacob, normally considered the founder of English Puritan Congregationalism (the Independents), actually became a Separatist, having more in common with John Robinson, the Pilgrims’ “consistent separatist” pastor, than with either the English Puritans or the more radical “Brownists.”

What makes this volume particularly valuable are the appendices, ten in all, which consist of primary source materials highlighting significant events in Nonconformist history. Several practical selections are included in the appendix section as well, such as an explanation of “double” dates for British events and a self-guided tour of Leiden,

⁵Currently within evangelicalism, there is a debate over the nature of God. Open theism postulates a God who has little control over his universe. The doctrinal accommodation of the evangelical world of the last fifty years has left little choice for the evangelical church but to endure this error, since separation, or the withdrawal of fellowship, appears not to be an acceptable choice. See Bruce A. Ware, *God’s Lesser Glory* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000) for a critique of open theism.

home of the Pilgrim Separatist congregation for twelve years. And if you are interested in researching your family name, Beale gives you the necessary help to get started.

Several personal trips to England, coupled with extensive technical research, has given Beale the reputation of being one of the world's leading authorities on the Pilgrims. The quality and detail of his careful research is everywhere evident in this book. The intricacy of explanation in no way encumbers the narrative, however, but enhances an appreciation for the untiring fortitude and faith of this small band of Christians who faced incredible obstacles in helping to establish a strong foundation for American freedoms. Particularly in a day when our liberties are under severe attack by ruthless terrorists, a study of the Pilgrims can renew hope and endurance in the midst of trial and inspire devotion to the Word of God, the book that governed their actions and sustained their faith. The following summation from the *Mayflower Pilgrims* expresses well the reason why their lives are worthy of emulation: "The Pilgrim story is essentially a story of conviction, born in persecution, developed in exile, and based upon the Bible" (p. 160).

Dr. Beale conducts the Mayflower Tour of England, Wales, and Holland on a regular basis. For more information you may contact him at Bob Jones University, Greenville, SC 29614, or visit his web site at <http://www.mayflowerpilgrims.com>.

Gerald L. Priest
Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary