

Glad Tidings

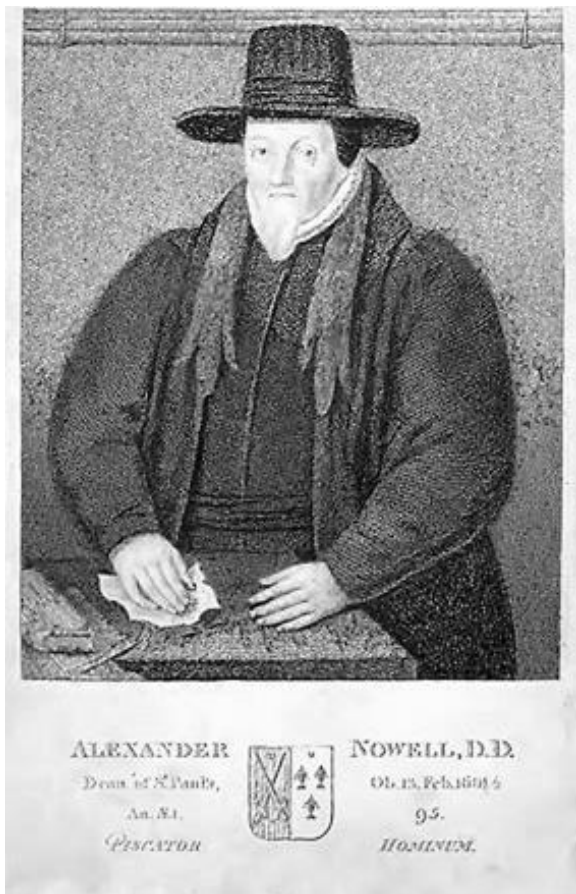


The Newsletter of the United Episcopal Church of North America

Lammas 2022

ALEXANDER NOWELL, DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S

By the Most Revd Peter D. Robinson



Northern England seems to have produced a disproportionate number of Reformers during the early-1500s, Ridley, the Grindal brothers, Coverdale, Sandys, and others all hailed from the northern counties of Lancashire, Yorkshire, Westmoreland, Cumberland, Northumberland, and Durham. Nowell is another one of that number chiefly remembered today for the three catechisms which he produced in the decade 1562-72, and for his long tenure of 42 years as Dean of (Old) St Paul's Cathedral.

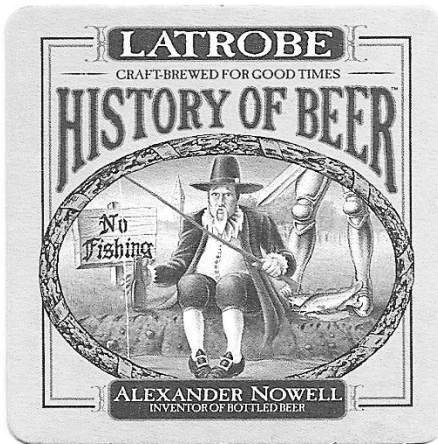
It is known that he was born at Reed Hall, Reed, near Clitheroe in Lancashire somewhere between 1507 and 1517, but the precise date is unclear. He first enters the records as a pupil of Middleton Grammar School near Manchester, and then as being elected a fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford, in 1526, which would suggest he was born 1510-12. It is unknown when and by whom he was ordained, but he was appointed as the second headmaster of Westminster School in 1543, and continued there until 1553 when he fled into exile first at Strassburg, and then at Frankfurt-am-Main where he became involved in the conflict between Richard Coxe, Elizabeth I's former tutor, and John Knox, the Scottish Reformer, over the direction of the English congregation in Frankfurt. He struck up a friendship with Knox, but by the same token, when Knox and the radicals departed for Basle or Geneva, he remained in Frankfurt.

Nowell returned to England in 1559, and was rapidly appointed as domestic chaplain to Edmund Grindal, Bishop of London, another northerner, and then as Archdeacon of Middlesex, and then Dean of St Paul's in 1561. It was as Dean of St Paul's that he preached the opening sermon and he served as Prolocutor (speaker) of the Lower House of Convocation during the crucial session of 1562/3. This is the Convocation at which further Reforms, such as the abolition of organs and cathedral choirs, were proposed, and the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion were debated and approved. Like his boss, Bishop Grindal, Nowell seems to have favoured some further reforms, but his further advancement in the Elizabethan Church was blocked by an ill-advised sermon calling on the Queen to marry. Elizabeth seems to have taken umbrage as only she could do, and after that Nowell could do no right, so that, rather than proceeding to the bishopric that his background and talents might have suggested, he remained Dean of St Paul's until his death in 1602. *(continued on Page 2)*

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Nowell is chiefly remembered today for his Latin Catechism of 1562, which was approved by the same Convocation as the Thirty-Nine Articles, and the subsequent English Long, Middle, and Short Catechism which appeared 1568-72. Of these it is the Middle Catechism which has had the longest life

being reprinted until well into the Restoration period. It was also translated into several languages, such as Welsh as late as 1809, and Greek as early as the author's own lifetime! Theologically, he seems to have occupied the middle ground between Lutheranism and the Reformed tradition suggesting that his beliefs achieved their final shape in Frankfurt, as city open to both the Lutheran influences coming out of Saxony, and to the Reformed ideas flowing down the Rhine from Basle and Zurich. Nowell's Middle Catechism, for example, maintains the traditional understanding of the words 'He descended into Hell' in the Apostles' Creed, devotes little attention to the subject of Predestination and Election, and frames its doctrine on both Baptism and the Lord's Supper in terms acceptable to both moderate Lutherans and moderate Reformed.



In private life, Nowell was twice married, but had no children. According to Isaak Walton, he was a keen angler who gave most of his catch to the poor, along with a tenth of his income as Dean of St Paul. The other great boon that Nowell left to humanity, according to Fuller, is the invention of bottled beer, after he accidentally left a bottle filled with ale where he had been fishing. When he returned a week later he found "not so much a bottle as a gun" and bottle opened with a resounding 'pop,' and the beer had been much improved by its second fermentation! Rarely have two such boons to humanity come from a single man.

Nowell died on 13th February 1602, and was buried at St Paul's Cathedral.

+PDR

CLERGY NEWS

The Missionary Diocese of the South and Ozarks:

- The Rev. Tony Cirilla was ordained deacon on April 23, 2022 at St. Joseph Anglican Church, Branson, MO
- The Rev. Keith Bernarducci was transferred to the Anglican Catholic Church on May 12, 2022.
- The Rev. Tom Bradshaw retired from and was named Rector Emeritus of St. Barnabas Anglican Church, Heber Springs, AR, on July 3, 2022.
- The Rev. Bill Adams, presbyter, was received in the Missionary Diocese of the South and Ozarks from the Anglican Orthodox Church on July 7, 2022.

The Convocation of the Missionary Diocese of the South and Ozarks will be held at All Saints Anglican Church, 706 N. Main Street, Boaz, AL, on the 14th and 15th of September.

A memorial Service for Fr. Jim Byrum was conducted on Sunday, 10 July at St. Bede's Church Tucson. Fr. Byrum, who died in February, served St. Bede's for several years before his retirement to Athens, Tennessee. Among the 60+ attendees were individuals from a number of states by former parishioners, including Mrs. Byrum. Her address is : Mrs. Nancy Byrum; 135 County Road 723; Athens, TN 37303.