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# Recent Contributions to Free Church History

## 1. *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England*

The Reverend H. S. Ross, in his "Some aspects of the Development of Presbyterian Policy in England" (May 1964, pp. 3-18), provides a valuable account of the changing views of their polity of the English Presbyterians, contrasting them on the one hand with English Independents and on the other with Scottish Presbyterians.

In, "Some problems in the History of Presbyterians in the Seventeenth Century" (May 1965, pp. 4-13), Professor George Yule identifies some of the more important realities that lurk behind the bald use of party names in descriptions of the English Resolution. The Reverend G. A. Hood's "Introductory study of our Missionary 'Image,' 1847-1965" (May 1966, pp. 78-97) tells the story of the changing philosophy of the Presbyterian Mission in China, comparing the pioneering period after the Mission's foundation in 1847 with the period of questioning and reassessment at the turn of the century, and setting the role of the contemporary mission against this historical background. The Reverend A. L. Macarthur in his "1876 and the Unity of The Church" (May 1967, pp. 118-31), chronicles a Presbyterian contribution to the pre-history of the ecumenical movement by telling the story of how the Presbyterian Church in England, the English Synod of the United Presbyterian Church and the one English congregation of the Reformed Presbyterian Church came together.

The Reverend J. Johansen-Bergs "Arian or Arminian? Presbyterian Continuity in the Eighteenth Century" (May 1969, pp. 35-58) contains material of interest to Baptist historians as the description of the doctrinal developments of those eighteenth century Presbyterians who became Arians overlaps with the story of the General Baptists to whom several references are made.

2. Reference should also be made to a joint publication of the Congregational and Presbyterian Historical Societies entitled, *Studies in the Puritan Tradition* (1964) which contains the following articles "Relations between Presbyterians and Congregationalists in England" (G. F. Nuttall), "Developments in English Puritanism in the Context of the Reformation" (G. Yule), and "The Difference between Congregational and Presbyterian in the Chapel-Building Age" (R. Thomas).

## 3. *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*

The Reverend D. Pike's "The Religious Societies 1678-1738" (March 1965, pp. 15-20, June 1965, pp. 32-8) represents some of the work undertaken by the author in preparing a thesis for a Leeds M.A. It provides a careful account of one of the contributory strands of the Methodist Revival.

Those with an interest in Chartism will be informed by the Reverend M. S. Edward's account of "The Resignation of Joseph Rayner Stephens" (February 1967, pp. 16-21). This, the author claims, freed him for the social involvement of his subsequent career: "Only when the framework of traditional Wesleyan activities had been removed were the eyes of Stephens opened to the plight of the factory operative." (p. 20).

On the same theme of Methodism and political involvement is Dr. Gowland's "Public Opinion in Manchester Wesleyanism, 1832-57" (February 1968, pp. 93-104) in which he examines "how far Wesleyanism acted as a minor political machine inflexibly committed to a prescribed course of action and motivated by the highest considerations for the Tory party." (p. 93). Dr. Gowland is author of two Manchester theses entitled "Political Religion and Religious Politics in South-East Lancashire 1834-5," and "Methodist Secessions and Social Conflicts in South Lancashire 1830-57." Dr. Robert Currie, Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford and author of *Methodism Divided: A study in the sociology of Ecumenicalism* (1968) contributes "A Micro-Theory of Methodist Growth" to the October 1967 issue of the Proceedings (pp. 65-73) in which he discusses the causes of variant patterns of growth in different regions, different periods and in the different Methodist sects; he notes that whereas Baptists and Congregationalists tended to be strong where Anglicanism was strong, Methodists triumphed in the context of Anglican weakness and associates this with old dissent's enthusiasm for disestablishment and Methodism's indifference to this cause. Dr. A. R. Griffin's "Methodism and Trade Unionism in the Nottinghamshire-Derbyshire Coalfield" (February 1969, pp. 2-9) emphasises the different phases of Methodist involvement in the Unions: from 1844-65 they exercised "no more than a peripheral role," from 1865-8 the union campaign was "conducted like a religious revival," but thirdly from the 1870's "while Methodists were still at the centre of the agitation, they were now quite clearly playing out two separate roles" (p. 8). This article should be read together with Dr. G. M. Morris' observations on the peculiar role of the Primitives in this movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Note 1197, p. 58, June 1969). In all, these Methodist articles are valuable for the insights they provide as to how a religious group grows and how it is both influenced by social pressures and influential in moulding the shape of secular society.

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