

Puritan Papers. Volume 4: 1965–1967, ed. J.I. Packer (Philippsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2004), viii+305 pages.

One of the key stimuli behind the resurgence of interest in the Puritans and their theology has to have been the Puritan Studies Conference, co-founded by Martyn Lloyd-Jones and J.I. Packer in the 1950s. Under God, it has introduced a number of generations to the riches of Puritanism and those Puritan-style movements and communities that are the Puritans' theological heirs.

The organization of the conference was fairly simple. Six papers would be given, the last of which was normally by Lloyd-Jones, and each would be followed by extensive and edifying discussion. This pattern is still continued in the December Westminster Conference, which originated in 1970 after significant disagreements between Lloyd-Jones and Packer.

This is the fourth volume in a series of reprints of the papers given at Puritan Studies Conference. In this case, it contains the papers given between 1965 and 1967, momentous years in the history of western culture. Here we find timeless studies of the Reformers—the subject of the 1965 conference—and papers from the 1966 conference that range from reflections on Henry Jacob (by Lloyd-Jones)—an relatively obscure figure, but one with great importance for the emergence of the Calvinistic Baptists—to a study of Charles Finney by Paul Cook.

The final set of papers, from 1967, has a similar breadth: from the Puritans to Abraham Kuyper. Of importance is the topic of Lloyd-Jones' 1967 paper, which was “Sandemanianism,” in which he analyzed what some might have considered an esoteric topic, namely, the teachings of “Sandemanianism.” Ever the one to apply church history, Lloyd-Jones argued that the errors of this eighteenth-century movement had much to teach his hearers, for he felt that there were far too many in contemporary Evangelical circles who were replicating the central Sandemanian error, namely that true faith can be held without deeply-felt affection. Now, in the course of his lecture Lloyd-Jones gave a brief historical overview of the early years of this movement. He noted especially that it was in the late 1780s and 1790s that Sandemanian teaching truly became something of a menace to English and Welsh Evangelicalism. Moreover, he stated that the key theologian who was raised up to refute the errors of this movement was “the famous Andrew Fuller” who “more or less demolished Sandemanianism” in his 1812 *Strictures on Sandemanianism* (p.272–3).

In brief, Lloyd-Jones' paper—though this is true of all the papers in the volume—demonstrate an important reason for the study of church history: the edification of the church. While those studying the history of God's people must do so with academic rigour, the academy is not the final justification for such study. Rather, it is that the people of God, through recollection of their identity from the past, might better understand their calling in the present and for the future.

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