

Preaching and Preachers. By D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1972. 325 pp. \$22.99. Reviewed by T. Scott Christmas.

Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, thirty years the pastor of Westminster Chapel, prefaces this classic on preaching by stating, “Throughout the years I have read many books on preaching. I cannot say that I have learned much from them, but I have enjoyed them greatly, and have often been entertained by them—as far as I am concerned the more anecdotal they were the better.” Although Lloyd-Jones follows others by maintaining an anecdotal flavor, this book is both entertaining and instructive to the preacher. He felt partially justified to write such a work because of some forty-four years of experience. While aiming at being practical, he attempts to deal with the detailed problems and questions that have been put to him privately as well as those discussed in ministers' meetings. Lloyd-Jones was a master preacher. This work is filled with sage instruction and advice about the faithful fulfillment of the great high calling of preaching the Word of God.

The book grew out of a six-week series of lectures delivered to the students of the Westminster Theological Seminary in 1969. In a conversational and intimate style, he presents his treatise on preaching and preachers in sixteen informative chapters. In Chapter 1, Lloyd-Jones begins with his case for the primacy of preaching. He lays down the proposition that preaching is the primary task of the church and the minister. Everything else is you subsidiary to this purpose. At the time of the composition of this material, there was a negative reaction against preaching. Lloyd-Jones attributes the decline to certain negative attitudes within the

church, such as the loss of belief in the authority of the Scriptures (p. 13), the presence of church pulpiteers (p. 13), and the printing and publication of sermons (p. 15). Yet, he counters that the preaching of the Word of God was central in the ministry of Christ, the ministry of the apostles, and the ministry of the Reformers. Therefore, based upon the evidence of the Scriptures, and the supporting evidence of the history of the church, Lloyd-Jones concludes that preaching is the primary task of the church (p. 25).

In Chapter 2, the author explains that the ultimate justification for asserting the primacy of preaching is theological in nature (p. 26). The consideration of man's need and the nature of the salvation proclaimed in the Scriptures drives one to the conclusion that the primary task of the church is the preaching and proclamation of man's need and God's remedy. Lloyd-Jones contends that other agencies in the world can never deal effectively with the problems of mankind. "My whole contention is that it is the church alone that can do this, and it is the preacher therefore who alone can make it known. He is set apart by the church" (p. 29).

Having dealt with the theological justification for preaching, Lloyd-Jones devotes the first portion of Chapter 3 to considering objections to the primacy of preaching. He seeks to answer the efforts of some to replace preaching with group discussions, dialogue, and the exchange of views. Once those issues have been dealt with, Lloyd-Jones addresses the sermon. He divides the subject into two sections: the content of the message and the form given to that content. The author explains the three possible types of preaching as evangelistic, instructional teaching, and experimental (p. 63).

In Chapter 4, Lloyd-Jones considers the form of the sermon. He reasons that a sermon is not an essay. It is not to be confused with giving a lecture. It is not a running commentary on the meaning of a verse or passage. Lloyd-Jones contends that “the essential characteristic of a sermon is that it has a definite form, and that it is this form that makes it a sermon. It is based upon exposition, but it is this exposition turned or moulded into a message which has this characteristic form” (p. 72). The form begins with finding the main point or burden of the passage being preached. This point should be doctrinal in nature. The matter should be divided into propositions or headings. The object of these headings or divisions is to make clear this central doctrine or proposition (p. 76). The line of reasoning or thought should be progressive and must end at a climax. Application should be made throughout the message. It is vital that the sermon always end on a note of application or exhortation (p. 78). Lloyd-Jones writes:

That is my idea of the sermon, and that is what I mean when I stress this idea of the form. You do not stop at mere exposition or explanation of the meaning of the text. You do that, you have got to do that, but what you are concerned to do is to convey its message. In other words a sermon is an entity, it is a complete whole (p. 78).

In Chapter 5, the author takes up the act of preaching. Lloyd-Jones reasons that certain things must be present in order to qualify as authentic preaching. First, the whole personality of the preacher must be involved. Second, the preacher must exhibit a sense of authority over the congregation and proceedings. Third, the preacher must possess an element of freedom, “not being tied to his preparation and by it” (p. 83). Fourth, there must be an element of exchange between preacher and congregation. Fifth, the preacher must be serious, “never giving the impression that preaching is something light or superficial or trivial” (p. 85). Sixth, there must be a balancing element to sobriety; the writer refers to it as liveliness. Other elements necessary

to preaching include zeal (p. 87), warmth (p. 89), urgency (p. 91), persuasiveness (p. 91), pathos (p. 92), and power (p. 95).

Who is to do this preaching? The preacher is to be a man specially called by God to the ministry of the Word. The preacher is the subject of Chapter 6. Lloyd-Jones is particularly helpful with his coverage of the call to preach. He places proper emphasis upon the necessity of the subjective inward call of the man and the outward objective confirmation of that call by the church. Although Lloyd-Jones believed that education was important, he states, “The chief thing is the love God, the love of souls, a knowledge of the Truth, and the Holy Spirit within you. These are the things that make the preacher” (p. 120).

In Chapters 7-16, Lloyd-Jones covers topics such as the congregation, character of the message, preparation of the preacher, preparation of the sermon, shape of the sermon, illustrations, eloquence, humor, what to avoid, calling for decisions, the pitfalls and the romance of preaching, and the demonstration of the Spirit and of the power.

One of his weaknesses is that Lloyd-Jones can be overly dogmatic on issues he need not be. For example, when addressing the need to be “apt to teach,” Lloyd-Jones argues that preaching “demands a certain degree of intellect and ability. So if a man lacks a basic minimum in that respect he is clearly not called to be a preacher” (p. 111). There doesn't seem to be any room for growth on the part of the candidate, just a clear declaration—“not called.”

However, he clearly states in his preface, “Some may object to my dogmatic assertions; but I do not apologize for them. Every preacher should believe strongly in his own method; and

if I cannot persuade all of the rightness of mine, I can at least stimulate them to think and to consider other possibilities.”

In his foreword, R. T. Kendall stresses the fact that the book emphasizes the man more than the art of preaching, and spiritual preparation more than sermon preparation. For the most part, his assessment proves to be true. In his own unique way however, Lloyd-Jones does help his readers understand the art of preaching. With a conversational and intimate style, Lloyd-Jones speaks to ministerial students and ordained preachers. His principals are not abstract, but helpfully illustrated by many personal anecdotes. They are logical, persuasive, and to the point! Lloyd-Jones was a preacher. He understood his calling and his craft. And this understanding carried forth to others in his definition of preaching:

There is a man standing in a pulpit and speaking, and there are people sitting in pews or seats listening. What is happening? What is this? What is his object? Why does the church put him there to do this? . . . Any true definition of preaching must say that that man is there to deliver the message of God, a message from God to those people. If you prefer the language of Paul, he is an ambassador for Christ. That is what he is. He has been sent, he is a commissioned person. In other words he is not there merely to talk to them, he is not there to entertain them. He is there—and I want to emphasize this—to do something to those people; he is there to produce results of various kinds; he is there to influence people. He is not merely to influence a part of them; he is not only to influence their minds, or only their emotions, or merely to bring pressure to bear on their wills and to induce them to some kind of activity. He is there to deal with the whole person; and his preaching is meant to affect the whole person at the very centre of life. Preaching should make such a difference to a man who is listening that he is never the same again. Preaching, in other words, is a transaction between the preacher and the listener. It does something for the soul of man, for the whole of the person, the entire man; it deals with him in a vital and radical manner (p. 53).

All who have listened to or read the sermons of Lloyd-Jones know that there was no difference between what he believed about preaching and how he preached. He was a man of God who had

a message from God for the people of God. As people listened to him preach, God used His Word to change their lives.

Although this book needs no recommendation, this reviewer recommends it enthusiastically! Truly, it is a classic in the field of preaching.