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Review: Preaching and Preachers

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BOOK REPORT

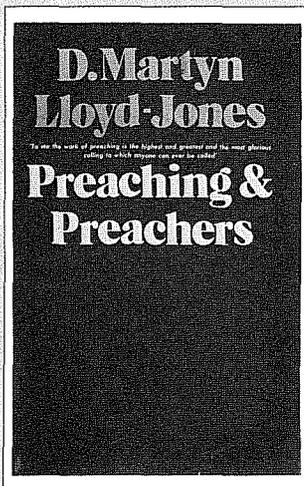
Preaching and Preachers

by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Zondervan, 1972, 325 pp., \$11.95

Reviewed by Paul R. Fink, professor of Pastoral Ministry, Liberty Baptist College, Lynchburg, Virginia.

Building upon the thesis that "the most urgent need in the Christian church today is true preaching...it is obviously the greatest need of the world also" (p. 9), D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones draws upon his forty-two years' experience to set forth a common-sense book on preaching that is a profit and delight to read. He traces the decline in the place and power of preaching and then holds that "the primary task of the Church and of the Christian minister is the preaching of the Word of God" (p. 19) and substantiates the claim from both Scripture and history.



To Lloyd-Jones there is no substitute for preaching because it is the God-ordained means to con-

front man with his real trouble — rebellion against God, under His wrath. Preaching alone can convey the Truth to people and bring them to realize their need and help them find true satisfaction (p. 40). Times may have changed but neither God nor man has. Today presents the greatest challenge and opportunity ever for preaching. Lloyd-Jones maintains that people **will** come when there is true preaching. The results may not be dramatic and may be slow, but preaching is God's own time-honored successful method.

Preaching involves a man's delivering the message of God, from God, to people who will never be the same again because of the transaction that occurs between the preacher and the listeners. Preaching, to Lloyd-Jones, involves two elements: the sermon, or message (the content of the sermon) and the act of preaching (the delivery of the sermon). The message content involves two elements: the message of salvation (*kerygma*) and the teaching aspect (*didache*) — the former for evangelization and the latter for edification. In general the preacher must prepare three types of messages: preaching to unbelievers, preaching to believers in an experimental manner, and preaching to believers in a direct, didactic, instructional manner. Every sermon should be prepared against the background of and be consistent with systematic theology, for systematic theology acts as a check to insure that the sermon is consistent with the whole of biblical teaching.

The book is replete with helpful listings including: four steps that characterize sermon preparation; twelve essential elements of

authentic preaching; six things that must be true of one who is a preacher; five tests that will aid one in determining whether he has been called to preach; and six reasons why the preacher should not announce his sermon topics ahead of time.

Lloyd-Jones places little value in traditional homiletics courses and teaching methods but feels that the preacher can best be prepared by listening to the best and most experienced preachers and the reading of sermons, especially those published before 1900.

How is the preacher to go about his task of sermon preparation? He must find out what works best for him and then work that program. In general Lloyd-Jones suggests: make personal preparation through disciplined use of time; devote time to prayer; do systematic Bible reading; work your way through a specific book of the Bible, making notes and skeleton outlines of verses that especially arrest you; engage in devotional reading to aid in understanding and enjoying the Bible; read the sermons of others; read theology, church history, apologetics, journals, and periodicals, and do general reading.

Lloyd-Jones divides all sermons into three classifications: evangelism, edification, and instruction. He does not believe in preaching on subjects per se, because such preaching tends toward a deductive approach to Scripture; nor does he generally believe in preaching a series of sermons (though he advocates preaching through books of the Bible or portions of them), and does not believe in the use of long-range approaches to sermon planning (e.g., a sermon calendar) which he

regards as too binding upon the preacher's freedom. In preparing the individual sermon Lloyd-Jones sets forth three steps: explaining the meaning of the text in absolute honesty; outlining the text, making sure divisions are evident in the text and never forced; and clothing the outline with the meat of the text.

In developing the sermon, Lloyd-Jones cautions against the use of too many quotations and too close reasoning. In the actual presentation of the sermon Lloyd-Jones abhors reading a sermon from the manuscript, delivering a memorized sermon, or preaching from too skimpy sermonic outlines ("skeletons"). He prefers extemporaneous preaching from the use of full notes of which the preacher is independent during his delivery. Concerning the use of illustrations the preacher should exercise utmost care to make sure they make the point without calling attention to themselves. In the same way, humor and imagination must not detract from the truth of the sermon. Lloyd-Jones offers three guidelines for determining the proper length for the sermon: the preacher, the subject matter, and the capacity of the congregation.

In listing things to avoid in preaching, Lloyd-Jones includes: professionalism, a display of knowledge, reliance upon preparation, reliance upon good voice, the temptation to be a "character," and pride. Dangers to avoid in the sermon include: too much intellect, too little intellect, mere exhortation, no exhortation at all, polemics, irony, ridicule, artificial delivery, a "parsonic" voice, chattiness, and practiced gestures. The rule in sermon delivery is to be natural and forget yourself completely — be absorbed with the presence of God and the glory and greatness of the Truth you preach.

Lloyd-Jones is cautious about the use of music in the church and favors congregational singing as opposed to solos or ensembles or choir music. He cautions against "organist tyranny" and "choir tyranny," pointing out that fre-

quently the musicians of the church are more interested in music than they are in Truth. Lloyd-Jones suggests that choirs be abolished altogether (p. 267) and also frowns on attempts to "condition" the people. Music must be kept in its place as handmaiden or servant to the Truth. Lloyd-Jones is likewise against attempts at psychological conditioning of the audience through light manipulation. All attempts to condition the audience ultimately arise out of one's view of the work and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Lloyd-Jones' book concludes with odds and ends related to the romance of preaching: Preach the same sermon to different audiences as long as there is merit in the sermon. Make sure repetition of a particular sermon does not stem from laziness, panic, or pride. Keep a record of sermons preached and locations, so you won't be embarrassed by repeating the same sermon to the same congregation. Never preach another man's sermon without acknowledgment. He elaborates on the various elements involved in preaching: the thrill of walking into the pulpit with a fresh sermon that you know is a message from God; the endless possibilities of each service, where one never knows what the Spirit of God will do; your own response to your sermon as you see a theme develop as you preach; the thrill of never knowing who is going to be listening; and the thrill of having people relieved of their spiritual problems and oppressions. Indeed, "We are in the hands of God, and therefore anything can happen" (p. 303).

In all, *Preaching and Preachers* is a delightful, readable book. Preachers will be reminded of the humanness of the preacher and will identify with his dilemmas, particularly in sermon preparation and delivery. Each reader will find things with which he wholeheartedly agrees, but undoubtedly also things with which he wholeheartedly disagrees. To areas of agreement, Lloyd-Jones offers reasons to reinforce that agreement, and if disagreement, he

offers reasons to justify his position and to stimulate readers' thinking and reevaluation. The book will help preachers understand the place of preaching and its importance for today and the future. Indeed, he will be captivated by the romance of preaching and determined to preach the Word, to be instant in season and out of season and be reminded of the high calling and privilege that is his as a preacher.

Free Enterprise: A Judeo-Christian Defense

by *Harold Lindsell*

Tyndale, 1982, 180 pp., \$5.95

Reviewed by Ora Max Wellman,
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Virginia.

This small book is a penetrating analysis of the merits of free enterprise and sets forth indepth resource materials and background information which make the work worthy of its title. The author does his writing with a rare clarity of purpose: to keep Socialists from attaining their objectives; to raise his readers to a concern to do something about Socialism's attempt to destroy the free enterprise system; to exhort that free enterprise without the moral law of God, common to the Judeo-Christian tradition, is deficient even though it may still be better than Socialism; to counter arguments about the depletion of natural resources and the propaganda that small is beautiful and big business and corporations are ugly.

The writing of Lindsell is so well structured and thorough in its explanations of definitions, doctrines, concepts, ethics, philosophies and practices of comparative economics that the volume ought to serve as a handbook for educators, professionals, and business employees as well as churchmen and all conservative laymen.