

INTRODUCTION

DAVID Martyn Lloyd-Jones was a towering figure in British evangelicalism during the twentieth century and certainly the greatest preacher of his age. Even among those not slow to criticise him for some of his views and actions, there is nevertheless an acknowledgement that ‘he was arguably the greatest British preacher since the Reformation, rivalled only by Whitefield, Spurgeon and Chalmers’.¹ While these days people think of him in relation to his teaching ministry, it was mainly as an evangelistic preacher that he was best known in the early years, especially as he journeyed midweek to venues large and small in different parts of the United Kingdom. Some of his powerful, convicting sermons, delivered to his own congregation first in Aberavon, South Wales and then at Westminster Chapel, London, are now in print but they can also still be heard through the *Lloyd-Jones Recording Trust*. The Doctor, as he was generally called, believed with all his heart the Gospel truths. They had gripped and changed his own life, and he was given great ability and authority to make clear to all who heard him the seriousness of sin before a holy God and that the only way to be forgiven and accepted by God was through faith in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who died for sinners the world over to deliver them from the unending sufferings of hell and to bring them to the eternal felicity that no sinner deserves.

He had a brilliant mind and diagnostic skills that would have guaranteed him a successful career in the medical world, but after

1. Donald Macleod, ‘The Lloyd-Jones Legacy,’ *Monthly Record* (October, 1983), p. 207.

his remarkable call to be a preacher, all his natural abilities and training in medicine together with his phenomenal grasp of the Bible enabled him to become an outstanding Gospel minister and an exceptionally understanding pastor to many individuals worldwide, and particularly to his own church members and ministerial colleagues.

Lloyd-Jones never set out to write a commentary or a biblical or systematic theology. Most of his printed books are sermons preached at either morning or evening services at Westminster Chapel, or material he delivered as a preacher during his Friday evening meetings, first on Christian doctrine and then expository sermons on Romans. Some of his addresses on historical subjects and medical issues have also been published. There is no better summary of Lloyd-Jones's ministry than that given by J. I. Packer when he describes him as 'a biblical, rational, practical, pastoral theologian of outstanding gifts and acumen.'²

It is with this background in mind that we consider Lloyd-Jones's theology, particularly his position concerning the Holy Spirit in the conversion of sinners, in the lives of Christians and in the Church's ongoing existence and advance. Part One concerns Lloyd-Jones's Calvinism, his Welsh Methodist roots and views, and his interest in the Puritans. It will also discuss his attitude toward doctrine and his deep concern that it should not be an end in itself. All this is important for understanding his views on the Holy Spirit, especially as they concern baptism with the Spirit, revival, and preaching.

Part Two moves on to consider Lloyd-Jones's teaching concerning the Holy Spirit. This involves delving into his position concerning baptism in general and more especially his beliefs concerning baptism with the Spirit. His exegesis of controversial biblical passages is studied together with his use of historical material and his theological conclusions. It will highlight the biblical grounds he amassed for emphasising the importance of the experiential element in Christianity, and indicate how different was his position

2. J. I. Packer, 'D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: A Kind of Puritan,' *Collected Shorter Writings* vol. 4 (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000), p.66.

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to that of Pentecostalism and the various teachings and practices associated with the modern Charismatic Movement.

Part Three will concentrate on Lloyd-Jones's thoughts on spiritual awakenings or revivals in the Church, assessing whether this subject had become an obsession with him, whether it included elements of weird Welsh mysticism, as one critic has hinted, and how far it hindered him from engaging in evangelistic enterprises and his support of others in mission work at home and overseas.

Part Four consists of a review of his beliefs on preaching and the necessity of looking to the Holy Spirit to accompany the ministry of the Word. It will include an understanding and appreciation of his own unique preaching style and the type of sermons he preached. A concluding chapter emphasises his Reformed credentials and indicates how he maintained a biblical balance not always obvious in some who consider themselves of the historical Reformed position.

There are two appendices which contain items that have not been in print previously. Appendix One gives an address by Lloyd-Jones on the Welsh 1904–5 revival and reveals where he saw failures as well as evidences of God's power in that remarkable event. In Appendix Two, the 1930–1931 journal of Lloyd-Jones gives an insight into the preacher's own spiritual state at the time when he was experiencing great blessing in his own church. The journal also reveals the way he sought to deal with sins which he felt were gaining the victory over him and his concern to experience the highest forms of assurance. They shed light on some of his most memorable pastoral sermons such as the 1 John series and especially those in *Spiritual Depression*.

Part One

≈ Theological Background ≈

1

CALVINISM

*... it is very difficult in these present days to be Calvinistic. It is as though one must disagree with everybody – criticising evangelicals ... as well. In spite of that, however, it does show that Calvinism is a perfect system, with teaching on every aspect of the truth.*¹

THOUGH Lloyd-Jones was not one for labels, his theological position was definitely of that brand of Protestantism known as Calvinist or 'Reformed'. He rarely referred to himself as a Calvinist and deliberately avoided such terms in the pulpit. Even when giving conference addresses he was often reticent about calling people Calvinists, stating on one occasion, 'I do not like these labels but as they are used I must use them.'² As far as he was concerned, Calvinists were 'Paulinists'.³ Did that mean he was embarrassed to use such terminology or that he was a reluctant Calvinist? Not at all! Addressing the Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Library in 1963, he referred to Reformed theology a number of times. In the light of the new growing interest

1. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, To his wife, 22 September 1939, 'The Difficulty of being Calvinistic' in Iain H. Murray, *Martyn Lloyd-Jones Letters 1919–1981 Selected with Notes* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1994), p. 46.

2. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, 'John Calvin and George Whitefield', *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors. Addresses Delivered at the Puritan and Westminster Conferences 1959–1978* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), pp. 123–24; see also pp. 42–43 and p. 208.

3. Referring to Calvin and Whitefield he stated '... they were both Calvinists ... What we mean is that they were both Paulinists. But it has become customary to use the term Calvinist,' *The Puritans*, p. 103.

in the gifts of the Holy Spirit at that time, he was concerned that, while some Pentecostals 'in their dissatisfaction are looking in the direction of Reformed Theology', many in the older denominations 'are looking to this Pentecostal teaching' and its unbiblical ecumenical associations rather than to Reformed teaching. He was thankful for those dissatisfied with the superficiality of the life of their churches who were turning 'directly to the Reformed theology and the teaching for which we stand'.⁴ Just ten years before his death, Lloyd-Jones stated plainly in an address to an International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) Conference: 'I am a Calvinist'.⁵

A biblical approach

It was, however, from a biblical theology perspective that Lloyd-Jones emphasised his Calvinistic position and it was by expounding the Scriptures that he wished to lead the people to whom he ministered into an appreciation and understanding of Reformed truth.⁶ This whole biblical approach to moulding people's thinking in a Calvinistic direction is discernible from his 1944 radio address for BBC Wales on John Calvin.⁷ He identified Calvin's beliefs and indicated why he was attracted to him highlighting how Calvin based everything on the Bible. Calvin, he showed, 'does not wish

4. Iain H. Murray, *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The Fight of Faith 1939-1981* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1990), pp. 480-482.

5. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, 'What is an Evangelical?', *Knowing the Times. Addresses Delivered on Various Occasions 1942-1977* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1989), p.352. By specifically referring to election and predestination he was aligning himself with the eighteenth-century Calvinists such as Whitefield and Rowland and against the Wesley brothers who in their sermons and writings vehemently denied what they mistakenly believed Calvinists understood by these biblical terms.

6. See his *Inaugural Address* booklet at the opening of The London Theological Seminary in 1978, pp. 12-13; also Lloyd-Jones, 'A Protestant Evangelical College,' *Knowing the Times*, pp. 370-71. In addition, *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Great Doctrines Series: God the Father, God the Son*, Vol. 1 (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1996), pp. 4-9.

7. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, 'John Calfin,' Llais y Doctor. Detholiad o waith cyhoeddiedig Cymraeg (Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr: Gwasg Bryntirion, 1999), pp. 50-55. An English translation is found in Lloyd-Jones, 'John Calvin,' *Knowing the Times*, pp. 32-37.

for any philosophy apart from that which emanates from the Scriptures. It is in the *Institutes* that one gets biblical theology for the first time, rather than dogmatic theology.’ Though Lloyd-Jones saw systematic theology as useful scaffolding, the advantages of biblical theology were more pastorally helpful in bringing people to appreciate the seriousness of sin and the amazing grace of God, and at the same time to reject all the speculative and fatalistic views concerning predestination. He had in mind not only the perils he found in the Barthian position but the dangers and disadvantages in the philosophical approach of the Reformed systematic theologians.

Lloyd-Jones used the address to emphasise his own Calvinistic theology concerning ‘the great central and all-important truth’, namely, ‘the sovereignty of God and God’s glory’, and that were it not for God’s grace there would be no hope for the world. Human beings are fallen creatures who are enemies of God and totally unable to save themselves. If God had not unconditionally elected some for salvation everyone would be lost. It is only through Christ’s death that it is possible for these elect ones to be saved and no one would accept the offer of salvation were it not for God’s irresistible grace by the Holy Spirit. This same God continues to sustain His people and keeps them from falling, while the Church is a collection of the elect having no earthly ruler but the Lord Jesus Christ. He also emphasised with Calvin God’s common grace, that all is under the control of God and that nothing can hinder His purposes from being realised. All the five points of Calvinism were observable in his summary of Calvin’s teaching.⁸

It should be remembered that his radio talk was at a time when there was a general antipathy toward any form of Calvinism within mainstream Christianity,⁹ but Lloyd-Jones nailed his colours to the mast and encouraged a decidedly Reformed appreciation of the

8. Lloyd-Jones, ‘John Calvin,’ *Knowing the Times*, pp. 35-36. Often referred to under the acronym ‘TULIP’, the so-called Five Points of Calvinism are: Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited (or Definite) Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and the Perseverance of the Saints.

9. Murray, *The Fight of Faith*, p. 61. For some Westminster Chapel responses to Lloyd-Jones’s Calvinism, see p. 100. For Lloyd-Jones’s attitude to Campbell Morgan’s theology, see p. 133.

Christian faith.¹⁰ Writing to Bethan, his wife, in 1939, he reported how he had remarked to Dr Douglas Johnson, the Inter-Varsity Fellowship (IVF) General Secretary,¹¹ that ‘it is very difficult in these present days to be Calvinistic’. Nevertheless he encouraged himself and Bethan that ‘Calvinism is a perfect system, with teaching on every aspect of the truth.’¹² It was quite common for Calvinists like himself to be called ‘hyper-Calvinists’ and he remarked that ‘they do not know what a hyper-Calvinist is’, and then proceeded to describe the tenets of hyper-Calvinism.¹³ On the other hand, there were true hyper-Calvinists who regarded Lloyd-Jones as a dangerous Arminian, as he himself stated, ‘because I preach Christ to all and offer salvation to all.’¹⁴

Advancing Calvinism

There were small yet significant signs within Britain of a resurgence of Calvinism during the interwar years. Lloyd-Jones became acquainted with some of the key figures,¹⁵ and after the Second World War, it was Lloyd-Jones who carried the Calvinistic movement forward.¹⁶ This is clearly evident in the support he gave both to the Evangelical Library which was formally opened in 1945 and to the setting up of *The Banner of Truth Trust* in 1957. In 1949, James Clarke republished Henry Beveridge’s translation of Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion* on the recommendation of Lloyd-Jones, and it was he who wrote a cover blurb that encouraged

10. Murray, *The Fight of Faith*, especially pp. 193–96.

11. This evangelical student movement is now known as the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF).

12. Iain H. Murray, *Martyn Lloyd-Jones Letters 1919–1981. Selected with Notes* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1994), p. 46.

13. Murray, *The Fight of Faith*, p. 234.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 234.

15. David W. Bebbington, ‘Lloyd-Jones and the Interwar Calvinist Resurgence,’ in *Engaging with Martyn Lloyd-Jones*, editors Andrew Atherstone & David Ceri Jones (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2011), p. 57; Murray, *The Fight of Faith*, pp. 63–64.

16. See Bebbington, pp. 38–58.