

[BOOK reviews]

D. MARTYN LLOYD-JONES — SOME BOOKS BY HIM AND ABOUT HIM

Reviewed by Michael A.G. Haykin

THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT that one of the most important ministries in the English-speaking evangelicalism of the last century was that exercised by the Welsh evangelist and preacher, David Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981), first at Aberavon in Wales (1927-1938) and then at Westminster Chapel, London (1938-1968). And thankfully there is no lack of books by which to remember his ministry and the impact that his preaching made. In North America, it has been estimated that around 70 books of sermons, addresses, and studies of his life are currently available. And leading the way in keeping Lloyd-Jones' ministry before the reading public has been the Banner of Truth Trust.

Old Testament Evangelistic Sermons (Banner of Truth, 1995) captures what was the centre of Lloyd-Jones' calling as a minister of the gospel, namely, his passion for evangelism. As his wife, Bethan Lloyd-Jones, once remarked of her husband: "No one will ever understand my husband until they realize that he is first of all a man of prayer and then, an evangelist" (vii). And the power of his evangelistic preaching is evident in the twenty-one sermons in this book that cover the Old Testament from Genesis to Zechariah. An introduction by Iain Murray, Lloyd-Jones' one-time assistant, helps set the sermons in context. This is an important volume, for it shows how one of the greatest preachers of our day preached to the unconverted, what is rightly called "a special category of preaching" (xi). This is definitely an area in which Lloyd-Jones excelled and which is so needful in our day.

Two of Lloyd-Jones' sermons have also been separately published by the Banner of Truth in booklet form: *The Cross: The Vindication of God* (1999) and *Jesus Christ*

and Him Crucified (1999). They focus on what was a central theme in Lloyd-Jones' ministry as well as showing him to be a true child of classical evangelicalism, which has historically been cross-centred. The latter of these sermons, based on 1 Corinthians 2:2, was preached at Aberavon in November 1977, and is ideal for giving to those seeking to know the essence of biblical Christianity.

Iain Murray has also introduced a selection of Lloyd-Jones' correspondence: *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: Letters 1919-1981* (Banner of Truth, 1994). Often a person's letters can open helpful and sometimes fresh perspectives on an individual's life, and these are no exception. Writing, for example, to his wife Bethan on the very eve of the outbreak of World War II, Lloyd-Jones told her: "keep your spirit at peace. Leave yourself and me too, and everything in God's hands and you will find peace and rest" (41). How extremely *apropos* is this advice in the midst of today's military conflicts!

Another letter to Bethan a few weeks later well reveals the isolation that Calvinists in the 1940s through to the 1970s often experienced: "it is very difficult in these present days to be Calvinistic. It is as though one must disagree with everybody... In spite of that, however,... Calvinism is a perfect system, with teaching on every aspect of the truth" (46).

Yet another letter from this era reveals yet a different side of Lloyd-Jones, one never glimpsed in the pulpit — and understandably so. It shows us Lloyd-Jones the lover. Writing to Bethan, his wife, on September 25, 1939, he told her:

As I have told you many, many times, the passing of the years does nothing but deepen and intensify my love for you. ...honestly, during this last year I had come to believe that it was not possible for a man to love his wife more than I have loved you. And yet I see that there is no end to love, and that it is still true that 'absence makes the heart grows fonder'. I am quite certain that there is no lover, anywhere, writing to his girl who is quite as mad about her as I am (47).

One note sounded in a number of the letters is familiar to anyone acquainted with the major emphases of Lloyd-Jones' ministry: the desperate need for revival in the West. Writing to a young Scottish minister in 1942, Lloyd-Jones told him, "The times are difficult and we must be patient. The only hope, I see more and more clearly, is Revival" (63). The following year he wrote to another correspondent:

More and more I am being drawn to see that the greatest need today is the power of the Holy Spirit in and through individuals. Right theology is essential but without the power given by the Spirit it can achieve nothing.

So many say that theology therefore matters nothing. I reply — “You cannot have a true and valuable fire without first setting the paper and the wood and the coal. A fire made of shavings soon gives out.” (67).

With gem-like passages such as these, this reviewer felt that the book’s 250 pages were far too few. Hopefully, another selection of Lloyd-Jones’ can be compiled.

Some of Lloyd-Jones’ views were controversial among fellow Calvinists. His advocacy of the “sealing of the Spirit,” a post-conversion experience, based on his exegesis of passages like Ephesians 1:13 and his rejection of cessationism when it came to the gifts of the Spirit are two notable examples in this regard. Extensive discussion of both can be found in *The Baptism and Gifts of the Spirit* (Baker Book House, 1996), which brings together in one volume two earlier books, *Joy Unspeakable* and *The Sovereign Spirit*. Even if one does not agree with Lloyd-Jones’ convictions on these issues—this reviewer, for instance, does not find his exegesis of Ephesians 1:13 at all convincing — it is extremely profitable to read this work. Lloyd-Jones’ zeal for experiential Calvinism, his rich understanding of the Holy Spirit’s work in the history of the church, and his passion for revival are both infectious and challenging.

Finally, mention needs to be made about a recent study of Lloyd-Jones’ thought and ministry: John Brencher, *Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981) and Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism* (Paternoster Publishing, 2002). While Brencher is convinced that Lloyd-Jones was, and still is, a major influence on evangelical thought and life, his is not an uncritical study. Brencher recognizes what we have already noted, namely Lloyd-Jones’ power as a preacher, but he argues that because Lloyd-Jones failed to articulate a well-rounded theology of the local church, his time at Westminster made it simply a preaching centre with little pastoral care (28-82). Again, Brencher notes that Lloyd-Jones played an enormous role in rescuing British evangelicalism from “a theological backwater and gave new meaning to biblical Calvinism” (111), but he believes Lloyd-Jones’ separatism, very evident from 1966 onwards, to be wrong-headed for it “marooned [him] ecclesiastically” (233). While this reviewer, for one, would disagree with Brencher’s analysis of Lloyd-Jones’ separatism, his book is a very important attempt to move beyond hagiography and analyze the true impact of Lloyd-Jones’ ministry.

That Lloyd-Jones’ ministry had its weaknesses should not surprise us, for, after all, he was a fallible human being. But as Leigh Powell, currently pastor of Covenant Baptist Church, Toronto, and one who sat under Lloyd-Jones’ ministry at Westminster Chapel, has noted:

From his own intense level of spirituality, David Martyn Lloyd-Jones raised men’s expectations to seek a living face to face communion with

the Lord of Glory. Whatever else one may say of his ministry, he did lift his congregation up to glory; he left us rejoicing and praising God, “lost in wonder, love and praise!” **E**

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BEFORE DARWIN: RECONCILING GOD AND NATURE
BY KEITH STEWART THOMSON

Yale University Press (2005); xiv + 314 pages

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Reviewed by Scott Dyer

THE WAR OVER DARWINISM continues unabated; especially in the United States where a recent case in Pennsylvania has once again put the creation/evolution debate in the headlines. Anyone who frequents newsstands as I do will have noticed that a number of both popular and specialized magazines have featured articles and cover stories on this issue in the past six months. For the most part these articles have sought to reassure the general public that all is well in the Darwinian camp and that recent challenges to the Darwinist paradigm are nothing more than a new form of fundamentalism cunningly disguised as science. Don't let monikers like “Intelligent Design” and “Irreducible Complexity” fool you, they argue; it is the same bad creation science with the same hidden agenda.

In a debate of this nature an understanding of the history of how Darwinism emerged out of the soil of Victorian science as the dominant theory for biological origins can be highly instructive and this is where a book such as *Before Darwin* by Keith Thomson, an emeritus professor of Natural History at Oxford, can potentially be quite helpful. Ideas don't develop in a vacuum, and as Thomson demonstrates, science often moves forward by seeking empirical evidence to support non-empirical assumptions.

Thomson's own bias in favour of Darwinism is clear from the outset and needs to be kept in mind as one considers his research. Even so, there is much to be gained by reading his account of Darwin's predecessors, especially how these thinkers sought to stay faithful to what they believed the Scriptures taught regarding creation and how their empirical findings cohered with such an interpretation.

Thomson makes the central thesis of his book clear in the Preface where he

states that his goal is to illuminate the struggle between science and religion. He sees this as a struggle between a worldview that seeks to explain nature wholly in terms of natural processes (science) and a worldview “that maintains the existence of a fundamental core of unknowability, of supernatural mystery and the controlling hand of an eternal non-worldly being” (xii). One could argue with this framing of the science/religion debate in the contemporary intellectual scene, but in the pre-Darwinian period that Thomson seeks to elucidate it generally holds true. A number of important theologians in the hundred and fifty years or so leading up to Darwin had sought to wed their empirical findings with their understanding of God’s creation and governance of the universe as they believed it to be found in the Scriptures. Even before Isaac Newton, and even more so after him, there was increasing enthusiasm for the study of “natural philosophy” (natural science) through empirical means. Thomson’s study makes it clear that many, if not most, of the early scientists were also theologians.

The book starts off with a close look at the relationship between William Paley, author of the classic work on natural theology [William Paley and James Paxton, *Natural Theology* (Landisville: Coachwip Publications, 2005); first published in 1803] and Charles Darwin. By the time Darwin attended Cambridge Paley’s works on natural theology had become standard and Darwin was even examined on them in 1830 at which time he stated, “I am convinced that I could have written out the whole of the Evidences [Paley’s *A View of the Evidences of Christianity*] with perfect correctness... the logic of this book and... his *Natural Theology* gave me as much delight as did Euclid” (6). Thomson goes on to make the remarkable statement that “a direct connection can be traced between Paley’s arguments *against* any kind of evolutionary theories ... and the origins of modern scientific thinking *in favour* of evolutionary theory” (6). In the second last chapter of the book Thomson shows how Paley’s adoption of Malthusian ideas fuelled Darwin’s concept of natural selection. Paley and Malthus both saw overpopulation with its consequences of disease and depopulation as a way that nature stayed in balance. In Paley’s mind this offered evidence of order in nature. Darwin however turned this argument on its head and saw in it a mechanism for the selection of species based on reproductive success.

In the intervening chapters Thomson sketches the development of natural theology from the seventeenth century up until the time of Darwin. This survey is very informative and the reader is introduced to a host of characters and ideas that have generally fallen into obscurity. For example we meet the Rev. John Ray (1627-1705), the brilliant Cambridge scientist who became a Dissenter and devoted his life to the cataloguing of plants and animals. Ray was “devoted to the central premise that nature was the handiwork of God” (73). Thomson goes so far as to say, “In thirty years of studies and travels he had revolutionized ‘natural science’ (botany and

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zoology), almost single-handedly moving it from a medieval to modern mode” (73). In particular, Ray looked for patterns in nature that would set the stage for those who followed in his footsteps, including Paley and Darwin. Thomson sees it as ironic that theologians who were looking for evidence of a Creator in the natural world inadvertently provided evidence that would be used by Darwin to propose his theory of natural selection and deal a death blow to natural theology.

This is certainly one way to look at it. However, one could also argue that because these theologians believed in a contingent, ordered creation they felt it a worthwhile endeavor to study that creation because it is a reflection of God’s glory. The fact that others such as Darwin interpreted the evidence of natural selection as something incompatible with the Christian God takes nothing away from the fact that modern science was birthed in the womb of a Christian theism that took creation seriously because it believed in a God who created order out of chaos.

This leads me to what I see as the greatest weakness of this book. Although subtitled, *Reconciling God and Nature*, Thomson in fact does not see the possibility of any such reconciliation. Based on the evidence that the natural theology of Ray and Paley ultimately failed, Thomson concludes that religion and science will never carry on a fruitful dialogue. This is very curious considering the revival of just such a dialogue in modern times. To centre the interface of science and theology totally on the debate over evolution is to present an entirely skewed understanding of how these two fields can fruitfully interact. I would point the reader to the excellent work of Thomas Torrance, Alister McGrath, and Nancey Murphy in this regard.

In the closing chapter of the book Thomson draws an analogy from the construction of the new Museum of Natural History in London that was built in Victorian times. The intent of the architects, and in particular John Ruskin who had a part in its design, was for it to be a monument to natural theology and lead visitors from the contemplation of nature to the contemplation of God. In fact, the building was never completed and has become a stronghold of Darwinian science. Thomson sees the irony in this and comments: “As a statement of natural theology and the perfection of God’s creation, it therefore fails. But in its unfinished state it makes a different, more modern, metaphor about the work of science and the reconciliation of science with religion” (279). I am not exactly sure what Thomson means by this final and somewhat ambiguous statement. I will choose to take it as a metaphor for a dialogue that continues to be fruitful if yet far from complete. ■

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THE WORKS OF JONATHAN EDWARDS
VOLUME 22: SERMONS AND DISCOURSES, 1739-1742
 EDITED BY HARRY S. STOUT AND NATHAN O. HATCH,
 WITH KYLE P. FARLEY

Yale University Press (2003); 608 pages

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Reviewed by Scott Dyer

THE LATEST painstaking efforts to produce a critical and comprehensive edition of the work of Jonathan Edwards have resulted in a volume of his sermons preached during the years 1739-1742. Scholars and laymen alike have cause to rejoice at such a publication — scholars for the excellent critical apparatus, introductions, and annotations, and laymen for having available more sermons from one of the greatest preachers and thinkers America has ever produced.

Harry Stout, Nathan O. Hatch, and Kyle Farley have done an excellent job of editing and providing helpful introductions to each sermon. In particular, Stout's forty-four page preface to this volume provides both the historical and intellectual context for the sermons preached during this period in Edwards' career. He spends considerable time explaining how Edwards' preparation for what he intended to be his life's great work, *A History of Redemption*, lies behind a number of the sermons, including, for example, *God's Grace Carried On in Other Places* and *Christ the Spiritual Sun*. Edwards came to believe that a new approach to theology was needed that was not primarily focused on an ordered delineation of doctrine (i.e. a systematic theology) but was instead founded on a comprehensive history of redemption. Such a history would include not only earthly history, but the history of heaven and hell as well. These three histories would be interwoven as one all-encompassing history of God's expression of His glory in the redemptive work of Christ. Regrettably Edwards' death prevented him from producing what, given his other work, surely would have been a groundbreaking theology. Nonetheless, Stout outlines how much of Edwards' thinking in this regard can be gleaned from these sermons as well as another series of sermons published in Volume 9 of the Yale edition titled, *A History of the Work of Redemption*.

As for historical context Stout discusses the disappointment that Edwards experienced because of the lack of sustained commitment from many who had demonstrated such zeal during the 1735 awakening. It was due in part to this disappointment that he invited Whitefield to come to Northampton in 1740. Stout argues that Whitefield had an important influence on Edwards during this time. In fact a distinct change in his sermonic style is apparent by comparing sermons from

before and after his contact with Whitfield. In particular, Edwards began to focus considerably more attention on preaching about hell in his awakening sermons. It is no coincidence that it was during this period that he preached *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* to such great effect in Enfield. What is not as well known is that earlier he preached a sermon entitled *Sinners in Zion* that can be seen as a precursor to that former more famous sermon. Both sermons are included in this volume with several versions of *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, including a transcript of the original manuscript. Edwards' relationship with Whitefield is somewhat enigmatic and has often been described as less than warm. This may be so, but there is little doubt Edwards had tremendous respect for the great revivalist. The fact that he went so far as to change his sermon style based on his observation of Whitefield's preaching is ample testimony to this admiration. Stout also points out that Edwards actually wept during Whitefield's preaching. Facts such as these help to round out our understanding of Edwards, who has often been caricatured as an austere intellectual who showed little outward emotion. It may also be one of the greatest testimonies to the power of Whitefield's preaching that it could even bring Edwards to tears! In my mind the only weakness in Stout's preface is that the wider historical context is somewhat lacking, but this is a minor quibble in what is overall an excellent introduction to the volume's contents.

The selection of sermons generally reflects the twofold division that Stout outlines in his preface, i.e. those that reflect some of Edwards' thinking on the history of redemption and others that reflect the influence of Whitefield and focus on the awakening of sinners. For the purposes of this review I will look at one of each.

The sermon entitled, *Christ the Spiritual Sun*, is based on Malachi 4:1-2, which is a warning to the unjust and an exhortation to the just. Verse two ends with the encouragement that for those who fear the Lord, "the Sun of righteousness [will] arise with healing in his wings." The main thrust of Edwards' argument is that the same rising Sun, who he equates with Christ, will have a wholly different effect on the just than on the unjust. The redemptive-historical nature of his exegesis is apparent when he notes that the sun Malachi describes is nothing other than "the day of Christ's coming, the messenger of the covenant, or the day of the Sun of righteousness" (51). He points out that the Old Testament was a period of darkness when compared to the light that entered the world through Christ and ushered in the New Testament age.

In the introduction to the sermon it is pointed out that of all the metaphors that Edwards' used none is more dominant than that of light and this comes through clearly in this sermon. Additionally, we know from Edwards' early writings along with his conversion account in his *Personal Narrative* that he loved creation as an expression of God's glory. This sermon reflects that love throughout and uses

descriptive language that makes God's justice, holiness, and love for his people palpable. Witness the following:

The conversion of one that is brought to believe savingly on the Lord Jesus Christ is like the dawning of the day, the first shining of the light of the Sun in a soul that before was filled with the greatest darkness. Now divine things are discovered and made manifest that before were totally hid and covered as with a thick veil of darkness. Now things are seen as they be, in their proper forms and colors, in their true situations and relations. Now many glorious objects are discovered. When the Sun rises in the heart, then the Sun of righteousness, the most glorious object of all, is seen by its own light (51).

However, Edwards warns that for sinners this same Sun will “strike them with terror... They shall see Christ appearing in his majesty, and it will be dreadful majesty to them, that will fill 'em with horrors and set them a-trembling and gnashing their teeth” (60). Reading these words one cannot help but realize how different today's typical preaching is from that of someone like Edwards and this is why it is so critical for contemporary Christians to read this material. Agree or disagree it makes us aware of how much we have changed and should cause us to pause and reflect on what we have been gained and what has been lost.

Sinners in Zion is an awakening sermon and, as mentioned above, can be seen as a precursor to the more famous *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*. Based on Isaiah 33:14 (“The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites”), its primary focus is to stir up those who once showed signs of conversion, but had by this time lost their religious zeal. Edwards weaves a dramatic parable throughout the sermon about a man who realizes too late that he has squandered his opportunities and must now face final judgment. He goes into heart-wrenching detail, describing the agony and final thoughts of this lost soul as he contemplates his doom. The influence of Whitefield's dramatic style is clear, and as mentioned earlier, there is a distinct change in the content and style of Edwards' preaching apparent in this sermon. As to content, Edwards shifted his focus from heaven to hell and aimed his preaching directly at those in his congregation that he felt had slipped away from their earlier commitment. He was especially concerned for the older congregants, some of whom were longing for a return to the days of his grandfather Stoddard's ministry. Hints of the coming rift between Edwards and the church in Northampton can be heard in statements such as, “There are doubtless some now hearing this sermon that the rest of the congregation will, at the day of judgment, see among the devils at the left hand. They will see their frightened ghastly

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countenances” (282). Politically correct Edwards was not! As to style this sermon reflects a turn toward the dramatic that was not nearly as apparent in Edwards’ earlier preaching.

In addition to the sermons in this volume there are a number of interesting illustrations including photographs of pages 2 and 3 of Edwards’ four-page outline of *Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God*. The scholarly apparatus is excellent and includes generous annotations with indicators of variants interspersed throughout the text. Given the high price it is obvious that it is intended primarily for libraries. However, for the serious Edwards’ student or scholar this fine volume will provide hours of fascinating study and soul-stirring reading. And if you don’t want to shell out the \$150 you can always get a library card! **E**

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