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Reformation  
& Revival



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There can be little question that if Martyn Lloyd-Jones assessed his own life and work he would have considered himself to be a *preacher*. That he was a gifted and able man in many areas, there is no doubt. But, in the midst of the personal crisis which he underwent in 1925-26, Lloyd-Jones (ML-J hereafter) came to the conclusion that his call from God was a call to preach, to preach the gospel. Until his death in 1981 he was never to waver from this conviction. In the mid 1950's he said, "Whatever authority I may have as a preacher is not the result of any decision on my part. It was God's hand that laid hold of me, and drew me out, and separated me to this work."<sup>1</sup>

Thus, he entered this work only after a long and difficult struggle and only with a sense of the Divine compulsion, of the Divine "call." He would have agreed with a contemporary of his on this: "The preacher must be conscious of an interior call. He must experience the imperative pressure of a vocation and accept it with all his heart."<sup>2</sup>

From the time of this call and onwards, ML-J was to devote the whole of his considerable intellect, the whole of his passionate personality, the whole of his time to what he himself called "the primacy of preaching," either in preaching or the preparation of his sermons for publication.

This self-estimate was also that of those who knew him best. In the memorial service held in Westminster Chapel just weeks after his death, T. Omri Jenkins was to make this point in his reminiscences of "the Doctor" as "a preacher." And it is impossible to read any of the biographical material referred to before without concluding, with the writers, that whatever gifts and training he possessed, ML-J was, first and foremost, *the preacher*.

Just what are we to make of ML-J *the preacher*? By what standards are we to judge him? And what profit can we hope for in such an assessment, such a judgment?

We will consider and judge ML-J and his preaching by four standards. These will be:

1. The question of evangelical control and content
2. The question of biblical fidelity
3. The question of human and contemporary relevance
4. The question of spiritual power

#### **Evangelical Control and Content**

It is with good reason that I have put this question first, and not the question of biblical fidelity. (I confess the Doctor may have taken me to task for my order!) The Christian does not approach any subject, especially the sacred writings of the Old and New Testaments, but through Christ Himself. It is through the gospel that the Bible is to us a sacred book. It is in the authority of Christ Himself that we say, "the Scriptures cannot be broken." It is in the event of Christ and His coming and doing that we see the Bible as "the Word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17; Col. 3:16). It is because the Scriptures testify to Him and of Him that they speak to us with authority. This is the foundation of all preaching that is Christian and the foundering of all preaching that is not, even when it makes serious claims to be so! The earliest preaching was simply "preaching Christ," "the preaching of the cross," "the preaching of Him" (Acts 5:42; 1 Cor. 1:18; Col. 1:28). This is the regulative principle of all preaching and the severe judge of all preaching: *Is it evangelical?*

To my own mind, it is just this controlling content of the gospel that attracts Christians from every country and of every age group to the writings of ML-J. This he has in common with the sermons of Spurgeon, and people like Iain Murray believe that, like Spurgeon, this will guarantee immortality to his printed sermons.

The gospel controls all that is said. Everything is viewed from and judged by the centrality of Christ, His person and

His work. While this is unmistakably clear in his treatment of the Pauline Epistles (where we would most expect it), it is equally clear in his treatment of such things as the Sermon on the Mount and in Psalms 51 and 73. In the preaching of ML-J we are confronted, again and again, with the person of the Redeemer. We are taken into the doctrinal mysteries and glories, but in such a way that they become portrayals of Christ the Lord. We are directed to ethical and moral imperatives, but always—repetitiously always—with the clearly defined relationship between ethical imperative and redemptive indicative. (ML-J's preaching of ethical imperatives in Ephesians 4:17-5:20 is an example of truly great preaching of this type!)

Now, the two points of control imposed by this content on the preaching of ML-J are vital, central, and essential to all preaching that is evangelical and biblical. Karl Barth has written:

The fixed point from which all preaching starts is the fact that God has revealed Himself, and this means that the Word has become flesh; God has assumed human nature; in Christ He has taken on Himself fallen man. Man, who is lost, is called back to his home. The death of Christ is the final term of the incarnation. In Him our sin and our punishment are put away, they no longer exist; in Him God has been reconciled to us. To believe means to see and know and recognize that this is so.

It should also be recognized that it [preaching] has one unique end: the fulfillment of the Revelation, the redemption that awaits us.

From beginning to end the New Testament looks toward the achievement of salvation. This, however is not to deny that all has been accomplished once for all. The Christ who has come is the One who will return. The life of faith is oriented

toward the day of the Parousia. The point of departure and the point to which everything tends are summed up in the declaration: "Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever." And assuming we await the whole Christ, Christology and eschatology may be said to be one.

The preacher must show the real nature of this journey in faith; that is to say, he must make it clear that confident assurance is not Christian unless it is shot through with longing for a salvation yet to be realized in its fullness in Christ. Christ has come, Christ will come again and we await the day of His coming. . . . "The Word was made flesh" has as its response: "Amen, come quickly, Lord Jesus."<sup>3</sup>

These two focal points loom large in the preaching of ML-J. They are the perimeters, the contours of his whole message. Thus faith and hope are integrally related, and in the midst of them love for God and man is directed by the imperatives of the Word of God.

It is a matter of great concern to me that preaching in America in our generation falls short of being fully Christian at just this point. This is especially true of ethical preaching in evangelical circles, and it is often true of doctrinal preaching, even in Reformed circles. It purports to be biblical, but, because it is not strictly controlled by the content of the gospel, it is neither biblical, nor finally *Christian*. ML-J has a great deal to teach us at this point. His preaching stands as a stern judge of much of the preaching we ministers do in our own time. (I would encourage ministers to consult the first four chapters of ML-J's book, *Preaching and Preachers*.)

#### The Question of Biblical Fidelity

It should be quite obvious by now that I believe ML-J was supremely biblical and supremely faithful to the biblical

testimony, precisely because he was controlled in all his preaching by evangelical presuppositions. To be specific I am saying that he was controlled by *Christ Himself* in the gospel message. I would remind you that this is the Bible's own witness to itself in the words of both our Lord and His Apostles (cf. John 5:39-40,46; Luke 24:27,44-49).

This fidelity to the Bible came about in him through several contributing factors. We will examine these briefly.

First, there was in his historical development the fact of liberal Christianity with its complete denigration of biblical infallibility and authority. ML-J grew up in a country (the principality of Wales) and in a church (the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church) both of which suffered greatly from the inroads of the 19th-century Continental Liberalism. The husk of tradition, the historical trappings, the culture and morality of Welsh evangelical revivalism—all these were known by him as a child. But these things were often held and honored by men who did not believe the Bible to be the Word of God. One such person was a schoolteacher who gave him a copy of the life of Howell Harris but did not believe the gospel Harris preached. Cultural Christianity divorced from the Christ of the Bible. Early on, ML-J came to see what havoc this traditionalism had created in his own life and in the lives of those he loved most (cf. Murray, *The Fight of Faith*, p.720). From this background he became convinced that the loss of faith in the Bible was tantamount to the loss of Christian faith altogether. This contributed to his loyalty and fidelity to historic Christianity and its devotion to the Scriptures.

There was also the historical influence of the Protestant Reformation, the Puritan age in England, and the Welsh Methodist Fathers through their books in his early years. His mature years were influenced even further by the writings of Edwards and Warfield. Books—books which brought the past to him—books which "could preach when

the authors were not,”—these formed the biblical perspective of ML-J. In a day when so many in the church believed little in terms of historic orthodoxy, and when those who did (e.g., G. Campbell Morgan) had accepted a less robust, less theological faith (thus less biblical), books like these from the distant past formed and made him. The loneliness which he complained of regularly in his mature years was, in part at least, the result of His affinity with the dead rather than the living leaders of British Christianity. But, lonely or not, he was to stand, at times almost alone, in his fidelity to the Bible as the Word of God.

The fidelity of Lloyd-Jones to the Bible was the result of the approach he adopted to its study and preaching during his mature years. In October 1943 ML-J began what would become 25 messages from 1 Peter. This was to become a precedent for him as he would later preach a series from Ephesians, Philippians, and then Romans. Expository preaching, unknown to the churches of Britain in the 20th century, began to be heard from the pulpit of Westminster Chapel. Iain Murray writes:

In the 1950s ML-J was virtually alone in engaging in what he meant by “expository preaching.” For preaching to qualify for that designation it was not enough, in his view, that its content be biblical; addresses which concentrated upon word-studies, or which gave running commentary and analyses of whole chapters might be termed “biblical,” but that is not the same as exposition. To expound is not simply to give the correct grammatical sense of a verse or passage; it is rather to set out the principles or doctrines which the words are intended to convey. True expository preaching is therefore *doctrinal* preaching; it is preaching which addresses specific truths from God to man.<sup>4</sup>

It was the discipline imposed by this way of handling the

text of Scripture that demanded ML-J be, above all, biblical. This view of preaching requires an attitude on the part of the preacher that most closely adheres to the hermeneutic most favorable to the Bible’s own testimony to itself.

These three factors contributed to the biblical fidelity which characterizes most of the preaching of ML-J. I say *most*, because a few criticisms are in order as well. The matter to be criticized is in keeping with the strengths just mentioned. It is strength carried too far that I am concerned to warn against.

ML-J’s reaction to Liberalism led him at times to attack those movements in contemporary theology that looked to him like Liberalism, but which in fact were diametrically opposed to Liberalism. This is especially true of his attacks on Karl Barth. (A friend of mine once challenged him on this point by asking him whether he had ever read substantial amounts of Barth’s famous *Dogmatics*. ML-J humbly admitted that he had not, and further that he had no right to attack the man without having personally read his work!) Here, as elsewhere, his allegiance was to the Word of God. Because he was part of the historical continuum of evangelicalism and fundamentalism and still a *man*, he reacted just as many of us do.

ML-J’s commitment to the historic faith of the Reformers, the Puritans, and the Welsh Fathers, as well as his later appreciation of Edwards and Warfield, led him at times to interpret Scripture in light of historical theology rather than the reverse. He could, however, be bold, very bold in fact, in differing with these traditions; e.g., the Reformed tradition on interpreting Romans 7 and Warfield on cessation of gifts come to mind. It is my view that he must be watched here, and nowhere more so than when in Romans 5 and 8, as well as in Ephesians 1, he *uses* church history to *prove* his understanding of the sealing and baptism of the Holy Spirit as a distinct second work of grace for empowerment and assurance.

ML-J's *expository* approach is permeated with the tendency to eisegete as much as we exegete Scripture. The chief flaw of his method is that he spends too much on a particular word, phrase, or even text. The expository method is best implemented and guarded when the preacher takes things paragraph by paragraph, because then he is protected by the innate textual and contextual safeguards that are built into the written Word itself. ML-J's failure to do this enables him to produce what I believe at times is sheer nonsense; e.g., his meanderings and wanderings through Romans 7:14-8:4.

#### Human and Contemporary Relevance

It is increasingly my opinion that Reformed preaching in the last decades of the 20th century has largely failed in that it has failed to *connect*. That is to say, Reformed preaching has failed to be relevant and timely; it has failed to be human and contemporary. There are several reasons for this. Among them would be the tendency to be too theological which, for those who follow my thought here, should be read "Aristotelian." There is a tendency among many preachers who recover significant interest in theology and doctrine, as modeled in ML-J, to be better informed about the past than our own times. We have this tendency to love *truth*, or doctrinal propositions, more than we love people.

ML-J would have shared with me in this indictment and probably would have shared some of my analysis. As early as 1971 he was warning would-be Reformed preachers:

Having isolated your doctrine in this way, and having got it quite clear in your own mind, you then proceed to consider the *relevance* [emphasis mine] of this particular doctrine to the people who are listening to you. This question of relevance must never be forgotten. As I have said, you are not lecturing, you are not reading an essay; you are setting out to do

something definite and particular, to influence these people and the whole of their lives and outlook. . . . You are to show that this message is vitally important for them, and that they must listen with the whole of their being, because this is really going to help them to live.<sup>5</sup>

He goes on to pour scorn upon a young Reformed preacher who brought a message to a group of old women on the doctrine of the Trinity, because of the lack of relevance involved in his act!

Now in my own experience the very word *relevance* is a dirty word in many Reformed circles. Perhaps this is just the reason that our preaching has failed to *connect*. We believe in the Word of God, in the Spirit of God, in the infallibility of the sovereignty of God, but are we not in danger, at this point of relevance, of slipping into a practical hyper-Calvinism of sorts?

Certainly ML-J would have answered, "Yes." The whole of his prolonged ministry of preaching was an example of a man with a timeless message, communicating it in a very timely, relevant manner. It is left to us to discover the elements in his life and work that made for this relevance.

At the very outset I must note something that ML-J criticized in himself, namely his lack of *evident* love for the people to whom he preached. Speaking of this under the notion of *pathos*, ML-J says, "I plead guilty to one thing more than any other; I would have to confess that this is perhaps what has been most lacking in my own ministry."<sup>6</sup>

I emphasize the word *evident* in my phrase "evident love for the people we are preaching to." I find this self-criticism quite astonishing, because if there is anything in the sermons of ML-J that brings me back to them again and again, if there is anything that struck me forcibly when I first read *Faith on Trial* in 1970, it was, as I verbalized to myself: "This man really loves people. Why, he could love me." True, he does

not reveal too much of himself; he does not speak directly to people in the manner that I use, but this love for people does come through. It was this love that took him into the practice of medicine and from medicine to preaching as can be seen in the early chapters of volume one of Murray's biography. This love, this concern, is very evidently there. Those who sat in the pews at Aberavon, and later at Westminster and throughout the United Kingdom as he preached widely, knew that the "little man" preaching to them *really* cared about them.

One of the first personal contacts I ever had with ML-J was through a pastor who had been stationed in England during the Second World War. When asked about the preaching of the minister of Westminster Chapel he said, "He was the only man I ever heard who, in addressing a large congregation, could make you feel like you were the only one he was talking to. He had the perfect 'bedside manner' for a preacher." Now some of this can be attributed to ML-J's medical background, and some of it to his own personality, but surely a large measure of it comes from his Christian love and compassion for the people to whom he was preaching.

We must also attribute to his relevance as a preacher the fact that he was in every respect a 20th-century man. He once claimed to be an 18th-century man, but this was a reflection on his own predilections for spiritual encouragement in his reading matter! ML-J was a man of our time. He was deeply and comprehensively interested in his own century, its history, politics, trends, etc. His reading was wide and quite astonishing in its grasp of current affairs and issues. He mixed with a wide circle of men and women, both Christian and non-Christian, liberal and evangelical, Reformed and non-Reformed. He was a great listener as well as a great talker. He was deeply interested in history and not just of earlier days. He was known to read the papers, listen

to the wireless, and, in the last decades of his life, watch the "telly." His friends included not just intellectuals and scholars, theologians and preachers, but farmers and merchants, what might be called "the little people." And he was blessed with an intelligent, percipient, common-sensical wife! All this combined to make him a man attuned to the people and the times that he was to minister to as a preacher.

It must be added, further, that he had the ability to communicate with compassion and lively interest in such a way that 20th-century men and women, indeed boys and girls, could understand him. In this respect he was the least "preacherly" of preachers! This was observed from the earliest days of his ministry (cf. Murray, *The First Forty Years*, Chapter 7, "A Different Preaching," pp.131f). Speaking of this difference in terms of the introductions of sermons, he himself said:

I am not and have never been a typical Welsh preacher. I felt that in preaching the first thing you had to do was to demonstrate to the people that what you were going to do was very relevant and urgently important. The Welsh style of preaching started with a verse and the preacher then told you the connection and analyzed the words, but the man of the world did not know what he was talking about and was not interested. I started with the man whom I wanted to listen, the patient. It was a medical approach really—here is a patient, a person in trouble, an ignorant man who has been to quacks, and so I deal with all that in the Introduction. I wanted to *get the listener* [emphasis mine] and *then* come to my exposition. They started with their exposition and ended with a bit of application.<sup>7</sup>

I recommend for your own examination the evangelistic preaching of ML-J's early years as a model of relevance in

preaching (*Evangelistic Sermons*, The Banner of Truth Trust, 1983), but remember that these sermons were preached in 1927-38! In this way, ML-J was like C. H. Spurgeon in the previous century, a man of his times speaking to men of his times. Murray concludes his magisterial work with these words: "He was a preacher. He believed in preaching which was unadorned, unstudied (so far as mere sentences were concerned) but alive, a union of truth and fire, and both humbling and uplifting to the sublime in its effects."<sup>8</sup>

It was this timeliness, this relevance, that made one 12-year-old girl write to him during his illness in 1968, "I hope that you will soon be well enough to be back in the pulpit at Westminster, because *you are the only preacher I can understand!*" ML-J told this story with evident glee and with a not-too-well-disguised pride, but the telling thing is this: *His preaching was marked by a human and contemporary relevance!*

#### **Spiritual Power**

This has already been observed in the last quote of Iain Murray's above, where he described ML-J's preaching as "alive, a union of truth and fire, and both humbling and uplifting to the sublime in its effects." This comes very near to ML-J's own description of preaching in his lectures published under the title *Preaching and Preachers*, delivered as lectures at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, PA, in 1969. He said:

What is preaching? Logic on fire! Eloquent reason! Are these contradictions? Of course they are not. Reason concerning this Truth ought to be mightily eloquent, as you see it in the case of the Apostle Paul and others. It is theology on fire. And a theology that does not take fire, I maintain, is a defective theology; or at least the man's understanding of it is defective. *Preaching is theology coming through a man who is on fire.*

What is the chief end of preaching? I think it is this: *To give men and women a sense of God and His presence* [emphasis mine]. As I have said already, during this past year I have been ill, and so have had the opportunity, and the privilege, of listening to others, instead of preaching myself. As I have listened in physical weakness this is the thing I looked for and have longed for and have desired. I can forgive a man for a bad sermon, I can forgive the preacher almost anything if he gives me a sense of God, if he gives me something for my soul, if he gives me a sense that, though he is inadequate in himself, he is handling something which is very great and very glorious, if he gives me some dim glimpse of the majesty and glory of God, the love of Christ my Savior, and the magnificence of the gospel. If he does that I am his debtor, and I am profoundly grateful to him. Preaching is the most amazing, the most thrilling activity that one can ever be engaged in, because of all that it holds out for all of us in the present, and because of the glorious endless possibilities in an eternal future.<sup>9</sup>

In these words we are permitted to look into the heart of an old man, an old preacher. We are permitted to see what is important, what is vital to one who feels his own mortality. We are given to see that which makes his preaching what it is, that which continues to communicate itself to us in the printed words of a dead man. Here we glimpse the secret of the power of preaching, and the power of the preaching of ML-J. What enters in to such a view of preaching? What constituent elements make for preaching such as he was capable of?

Let us begin by saying that there were unique things at work in the life and ministry of ML-J. We must observe in this life, as in the lives of all other great and unique men, the absolute sovereignty of God. The life of ML-J was unique. His gifts, training, historical setting, personality, and

opportunities were all unique! As such, when God made him He “broke the mold,” as they say. There will never be another like him, and one of the humorous things that one notices upon visiting evangelical churches in Britain today is the fact that there are many little men trying hard to be “the little man.” Imitation may be the greatest compliment, but in the work of the Kingdom it is disastrous. We have had ten good years to learn that aping the Doctor’s mannerisms, following his expository style, seeking his spiritual experiences, and even filling his pulpit at Westminster itself will not reproduce the spiritual force and power that he was. He himself would have deplored all of this. He was wont to refer to Joshua, chapter one, whenever undue emphasis was placed on men in the history of God’s acts, “Moses my servant is dead.” God’s sovereign pleasure is seen in that such a man was born, was formed and developed, was used uniquely and unrepeatedly. We must rest and be still before this display of divine sovereignty.

We must also appreciate, in a manner that ML-J often sought to depreciate, the fact that a certain amount of his popularity at the beginning and throughout his ministry depended on this uniqueness. It is not every day, after all, that an up-and-coming Harley Street doctor leaves medicine to preach the gospel to working class people in the “sticks” of South Wales. To the end of his life, ML-J could fill the largest auditoriums in the U.K. simply because he was ML-J.

This must not be taken as a cynical dismissal of the powerful spiritual force that ML-J was, and that he was as a preacher. Here there are things that are not simply unique to the man, but are unique to the whole Christian gospel and church. These we shall now look at with some reflection.

First, the power of his preaching is vitally and essentially connected to the power of the gospel which he so powerfully preached. The sheer thrill and wonder we find in his treatment of the great Pauline texts declaring the gospel is

indicative of this point. How often we find him saying things like, “In many senses there are no more important verses in the whole range and realm of Scripture than these two verses” (on Rom. 3:25-26). And again, “Surely there is no more wonderful, no more striking statement of the truth concerning the Christian than this” (on Eph. 2:4-7). Many other examples could be cited in addition to these. His frequent defenses of Paul’s “repetitiousness” and “redundancy” in phrases like “in Christ” or “through the Lord Jesus Christ,” etc., are also indicative of his wonder at and love for the gospel of Christ. The great conclusions to his sermons, especially those based on Romans 5:1-11, also point to the fact that it is the *gospel itself* that is at the core of this powerful preaching.

May I suggest that our lack of power in preaching may be directly related to the fact that we do not really believe, we do not really grasp, we do not really appreciate, as did ML-J, the fact as we ought that “the gospel is the power of God?” It is because all his preaching was controlled by the content of the gospel that this was so. By this I mean that his preaching focused on the two points of reconciliation (in the death of Christ) and redemption (in the return of Christ). This is why it was the powerful, wonderful thing it was and still is, even in print. This is the common possession and heritage of all who feel themselves “laid hold of, drawn out, and separated to” this work of preaching as ML-J did. We must grasp the gospel, love the gospel, be gripped by the sheer beauty and glory of the gospel if we would ever know anything of the power in preaching that this man knew. This has ever been the hallmark of great preachers and great preaching from apostolic days down to our own. This is the true apostolic succession from Paul to men like ML-J and on to the coming of the Lord. “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.”

Second, the power of his preaching is vitally related to his own personal experience of the power of the gospel in Christian conversion and life. ML-J came to true Christian faith as an adult and then only after a long struggle to ascertain his true condition and estate. In the early days of his Christian life he loved to quote Francis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven":

I fled down the nights and down the days;  
I fled Him down the arches of the years;  
I fled Him down the labyrinthine ways  
Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears  
I hid from him . . .

Reflecting upon this, ML-J said:

I strayed, I got lost and I grew tired on many paths, but I was always aware, as was Francis Thompson, that the "Hound of Heaven" was on my tracks. At last He caught me and led me to the "way that leads to life."<sup>10</sup>

Having come to faith in the Savior, the whole of his life and career were thrown in an upheaval that he was never to get over. At the height of this upheaval he had an experience that changed his life and direction forever. He says:

One night [some friends] wanted to go to a theatre in Leicester Square and they persuaded me to go with them. I have no idea what the play was about at all, but they were very excited about it. What I remember is this: as we came out of the theatre to the glare and glare of Leicester Square, suddenly a Salvation Army band came along playing some hymn tunes, and I knew that *these* were my people. I have never forgotten it. There is a theme in Wagner's opera *Tannhauser*, the two pulls—the pull of the world and the chorus of the pilgrims—and contrast between the two. I know exactly what it means. I suppose I had enjoyed the

play. When I heard this band and the hymns I said, "These are my people, these are the people I belong to, and I am going to belong to them."<sup>11</sup>

Now this, to my mind, is decisive in understanding the man ML-J and his preaching. Here is the turning point. From this point on he is the "bond servant of Jesus Christ, separated unto the gospel of God."

Later, when he agreed to go to Sandfields, Aberavon, South Wales, the Moderator of the Forward Movement (an arm of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church for evangelizing the working classes) expressed surprise that ML-J was willing to go to such an out-of-the-way place. Lloyd-Jones replied by saying, "Really, Mr. Rees, why should you be surprised. Don't you believe what you preach?"<sup>12</sup>

All of this went into the making of the man, the preacher. He really believed what he preached, and it was this commitment that is at the heart of his spiritual power as a preacher.

ML-J was never given to talking overmuch about his own spiritual life and experiences. He never spoke of his prayer life except to reproach himself. But there was little doubt in the minds of those who knew him best (such as his wife and close friends) that he was a deeply spiritual man with a deep experience of Christ. Thus the life planted by God in the new birth was nurtured by God through the devotion of a man to the Word and prayer.

Perhaps the most telling (in the context of our present study) thing that can be said of the spiritual power of the spiritual life of ML-J comes from the last months of his life. During his final illness he said to Iain Murray on one of his visits (July 26, 1980), "People say to me it must be very trying for you not to be able to preach—No! Not at all! I was not living upon preaching."<sup>13</sup>

He had warned people in one of his sermons from *Spiritual*

*Depression* of their need to know Christ and to live only for Christ. He believed what he preached. He lived what he preached. In the end he could say with Samuel Rutherford, "E'en Anwoth was not heaven, E'en preaching was not Christ." It is this kind of real, profound spiritual integrity that is at the root of all preaching that is powerful.

We must address, finally, what ML-J calls, in his final lecture to the students at Westminster, the "Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power." (This is published as a chapter in *Preaching and Preachers*.) ML-J believed that the message and the messenger alone were insufficient. Both must wait upon "the demonstration of the Spirit and of the power." ML-J frequently quoted both 1 Corinthians 2:1ff. and 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5 in this same connection. In his concluding remarks he says,

I am certain, as I have said several times before, that nothing but a return to this power of the Spirit on our preaching is going to avail us anything. This makes true preaching, and it is the greatest need of all today—never more so. Nothing can substitute for this.<sup>14</sup>

There must be fire! There must be power! And there must be spiritual demonstration!

How may we ensure this? It is at this point that ML-J, as in so many other areas, is completely at odds with modern evangelicalism and especially with the charismatic movement. How may we be sure of such fire, such power, and of the demonstration of the Spirit? He says in the opening remarks of the same lecture:

I have kept and reserved to this last lecture what is after all the greatest essential in connection with preaching, and that is the unction and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It may seem off to some that I keep the most important thing of all

to the end instead of starting with it. *My reason for doing so is that I believe that if we do or attempt to do, all that I have been saying first, then the unction will come upon it . . . The right way to look upon the unction of the Spirit is to think of it as that which comes upon the preparation (emphasis mine).*<sup>15</sup>

He then goes on to quaintly illustrate this principle with reference to Elijah and the preparation of the altar and the coming of the fire of God.

The preparation that ML-J has in mind includes "all I have been saying." This involves the preparation of the message (including exegesis, exposition, homiletics, etc.) and the preparation of the preacher (through prayer, personal holiness, devotional exercise, study, general reading, etc.). To my mind, this is the sanest and most holistic treatment of the way to true spiritual unction to be found in any 20th-century treatment of this subject.

I believe, when his life and thought are carefully considered, it is quite obvious that ML-J was not in sympathy with the charismatic movement or the newer claims of "power evangelism." To try to place him into such a movement betrays the mature thinking of the man as seen in quotations like the one above. However we may feel about ML-J and "the baptism of the Spirit" (and I confess that I am not in agreement with much of his thinking at this point), he insisted that the gospel must be preached in a power outside the preacher and his gifts. This was a power dependent upon the sovereignty of God and the careful use of appointed means. Let us give ourselves to this in humble dependence upon the Lord, the Spirit.

What of the preaching of David Martyn Lloyd-Jones? In my experiences, both in the books and on several audio tapes of him, I have heard the gospel, rooted in the authority of the biblical witness, speaking with relevance to 20th-century men and women, and in a power that is

awe-inspiring. In Iain Murray's words, "preaching . . . alive, a union of truth and fire, and both humbling and uplifting to the sublime in its effects."

It is this kind of preaching that I aspire to every time I seek God for His message, every time I seek to give that message form, and every time I go into a Christian pulpit to preach. Like "the Doctor" I am seldom if ever happy with my own efforts. But with this standard I prod myself and comfort myself. I urge the exercise upon each of you. It will surely do us all great good.

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**End Notes**

- 1 Iain Murray, *The First Forty Years*, p. 101.
- 2 Karl Barth, *The Preaching of the Gospel*, p. 34
- 3 *Op. cit.*, pp. 17-19.
- 4 Iain Murray, *The Fight of Faith*, p. 261.
- 5 D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *Preachers and Preaching*, p. 76.
- 6 *Op. cit.*, p. 92.
- 7 Murray, *The First Forty Years*, pp. 146-47.
- 8 Murray, *The Fight of Faith*, p. 777.
- 9 Lloyd-Jones, *Op. cit.*, pp. 97-98.
- 10 Murray, *The First Forty Years*, p. 56.
- 11 Lloyd-Jones, *Op. cit.*, p. 93.
- 12 Lloyd-Jones, *Op. cit.*, p. 109.
- 13 Murray, *The Fight of Faith*, p. 739.
- 14 Lloyd-Jones, *Op. cit.*, p. 325.

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