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## I Am Not Ashamed: Advice to Timothy (Book Review)

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*I Am Not Ashamed: Advice to Timothy*. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Edited by Christopher Catherwood. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1986. 224 pp. \$7.95. Reviewed by Helen Petter Westra, Associate Professor of English.

In the days before radio and TV preachers or tape ministries, books of sermons were a staple in the libraries of Christian families. It was not unusual for faithful church elders to possess a well-thumbed volume of sermons from which to read to the congregation should absence or illness keep a pastor from the pulpit. This book of sermons by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones is pleasant evidence that the tradition of publishing sermon collections has not yet entirely disappeared.

*I Am Not Ashamed* contains eleven messages forming the series of sermons originally delivered in the spring of 1964 in London's Westminster Chapel as Lloyd-Jones (then 65) was concluding thirty years of ministry. Unlike most extended sermon series, this one focuses on a single text: "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Timothy 1:12).

Readers might well ask why Lloyd-Jones limits himself to only one text for eleven sermons? And why choose II Timothy 1:12 rather than some more famous passage, say, John 3:16 or Romans 5:1-2? Anticipating such questions, the author himself explains that he sees his text as Paul's pivotal introduction to a larger apostolic statement and, further, that his single verse contains applications that are particularly relevant to twentieth-century believers surrounded by apostasy.

Among orthodox Christians, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981) has long been respected as a masterful, thoroughly biblical expositor. The messages in this volume do not disappoint; they are passionate and scholarly, bearing the marks of a broadly trained and penetrating mind, wisdom gained from years of medical studies as well as theological exegesis and practical ministry. As the sermon entitled "The Right Diagnosis" reveals, this preacher unflinchingly names sin as the fundamental illness afflicting human life; all other problems are in one way or another symptomatic of this primary ailment.

Following this diagnosis, the reader cannot fail to catch the urgency in Lloyd-Jones' proclamations that the unadulterated gospel is the only healing power for a generation suffering from the cancers of anxiety, agnosticism, and rebellion. *I Am Not Ashamed* becomes an ardent exploration and affirmation of the power and sovereignty of God's being, his acts, and his purposes. The ensuing sermon titles—"The Problem of Life," "Real Christianity," "God's Unchanging Purpose," "Delivered from Fear," "Abundant Life," and "Persuaded," among others—suggest the wide range of concerns covered in these sermons on Paul's pointed injunction to young Timothy, and by extension to us.

In his initial sermon, "The Problem of Life," Lloyd-Jones

establishes what he insists is an all-important theological platform—nothing can redeem sinful humans save a revelation from God through his Son, his Word, and his grace. From this base, Lloyd-Jones offers illuminating insights into human nature, duty, and destiny as his sermons move from the miracles of God's divine creative will to the power of the Holy Spirit's Pentecostal outpouring, an event that is no mere brief burst but an enduring work to the end of time and into the kingdom to come.

Many of the sermons demonstrate the author's vigorous opposition to Arminianism. "Abundant Life" is a thoroughly developed warning against a "nebulous idealism" or a rationalist belief that humans can help save themselves. Staunchly resisting the notion that God and a person cooperate in the miracle of that person's regeneration, Lloyd-Jones asserts that conversion is the "result of the operation of the Holy Spirit of God upon us. This is not man's work; it is God's work. ...The Bible talks about a 'rebirth,' about a new creation, ...the creator at the beginning offering to create again. He offers to give man a new start" (149), and "any teaching that says a man can change himself is a denial of the Christian gospel" (150).

Several sermons surprise with a rather unflattering treatment of Timothy, traditionally regarded as a gentle, diligent disciple and fellow traveller with Paul. Bypassing Paul's many commendatory references to Timothy (I Timothy 1:18, 4:14, 6:1-13; II Timothy 1:3-7, 3:14-17; Philippians 2:19-25), Lloyd-Jones depicts Timothy as someone who is "clearly a depressive" (11), losing grip of his doctrine (93), defeated by life and ready to give up (128-9), weak in faith (163), whimpering and crying in fear (170). By coloring Timothy's portrait in this fashion, Lloyd-Jones seems intent on highlighting God's grace over against human frailty (found in even the most admirable saints) and on stirring Christians to renewed gratitude for Christ's healing, forgiving gospel.

Occasionally, one wishes that these sermons had benefited from a firmer editorial hand. At high points of persuasion or urgency, Lloyd-Jones sometimes lapses into a rather awkwardly repetitious, groping syntax. On the whole, however, these sermons move with a hearty eloquence; they are forthright, brisk, free from pompous prose or heavy terminology. Again and again, they confront the reader with the most important questions of sin, salvation, and Christian commitment.

Whether these sermons on a single text are read selectively or entirely, they serve as remarkable reminders that God's Word is endlessly rich and illuminating. These sermons are as timely today as they were when they were first delivered. Indeed, by using the words of II Timothy 1:12 like a prism in the gospel's sunlight, Lloyd-Jones offers a splendid rainbow of comfort and victory in these sermons.