

***Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The Man and His Books*** by Frederick and Elizabeth Catherwood (Brynitirion, Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan, Evangelical Library of Wales in conjunction with The Evangelical Library, London, 1982). (9 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

## **1. Managing Discussions**

...discussions are not easy to lead. In a talk or sermon, you map out your own logical route and you don't have to prepare for all the objections and diversions. But in leading a discussion anything may arise, and if you've not got the whole framework within which your doctrinal theme sits, then you're lost. If the line of thought is irrelevant, you have to persuade the contributor, very gently, that it really is another subject. If it is relevant, you have to know where and how it fits, that the contributor can be led to the connection, and that facet of the truth can be properly illuminated. But that requires a wide knowledge of the subject and of all the arguments; and that needs not only a well-stocked mind, but the ability to assess arguments against the framework of doctrine, and the spiritual sensitivity to detect in those arguments a tendency to truth or to error. (page 4)

## **2. Content over Style**

When you come to do the editing of the books, don't agonize too much over the words.

Now he was perfectly prepared for anything that was repetitive to be cut out. He didn't mind the first paragraphs being cut back, but he was exasperated by this desperate fuss about the exact word all the time. 'Don't worry about it,' he said, 'this is the truth of God. Let the truth go out.' And I must say it is very interesting how many people have said to all of us in the family, 'It's great reading his books, we can hear him as we read them.' That is the point. It was the content that mattered. This was the thing on which you concentrated. Of course you made the words as dear as you could for people to understand, but you didn't fuss and fiddle on about the style. (page 19)

## **3. Just Read It**

He said, 'I have emphasized the place and value of reading, but if your chief reason for reading is to parade it and make a display of your knowledge, it is obviously bad in every sense.' (page 21)

## **4. Reading Stimulates Thought**

He said, 'In a sense one should not go to books for ideas; the business of books is to make one think ... The function of reading is to stimulate us in general, to stimulate us to think, to think for ourselves. Take all you read', he said, 'and masticate it thoroughly.'

It is rather like Bacon, isn't it? You know how he said that some books are meant to be tasted, others to be swallowed-and some, he said, are to be chewed and digested. That was the reading that my father approved of. You chewed and you digested your books, so that they became part of you. You were then stimulated. You thought, and what came out was, as it were, your quintessence of all the reading, but it was yours. It wasn't originality for originality's sake. That is not what he meant. You took all this wisdom of all the ages, and you made it a part of you. You were stimulated, you thought better, and as a result you spoke better. (pages 21-22)

## **5. Reading for Relaxation**

...ministers have said so often how much they loved him coming to preach for them; he would join in with their enthusiasms. It didn't matter what it was. Whether you were reading great tomes of philosophy, or whether you were a little girl collecting special cards, he would join in with you, and he would enjoy it with you, and your pleasure was as much to him as his own pleasure in finding it.

Now, on the whole, if people do a lot of reading they are told, 'When you get tired go out and have a walk, play a game of tennis or watch television or something.' Not my father. He has a sentence which I think is very revealing. He says, 'The mind must be given relief and rested. But to relieve your mind does not mean that you stop reading; read something different [my italics].' Now this is what he did himself. He read for relaxation, and the funny thing is-and it is something that often used to amuse my mother- that his real relaxing reading was his medical journals. He read medicine, as Fred said, right to the end. (page 29)

## **6. Striking a Balance**

General reading is good, but it must never take over. You must know yourself, he would say. If you find you are spending too much time reading something, stop it and get your balance back again. He believed in balance, and not only was he balanced himself, he was helpful to others. He said, 'You have to know what to read for yourself, and also for others.' (Page 31)

## **7. Read Theology**

He read theology. 'A preacher', he said, 'should continue to read theology as long as he is alive; but it must be biblical theology.' (Page 32)

## **8. Helpful Devotional Reading**

He didn't like that sort of sentimental devotionalism at all. What he meant by something devotional was a type of reading which, he says, 'will help you in general to

understand and enjoy the Scriptures'. He helped a lot of people in this. Of the Puritans he said, 'You will find, I think, in general, that the Puritans are almost invariably helpful.'

He told the story of how, when he himself was at a low ebb, 'the heavenly Dr. Sibbes' had helped him through his *The Bruised Reed and Tire Soul's Conflict*; this heavenly pastoral figure had given him a great blessing. And then, of course, how often have we heard him say, 'I am an eighteenth century man.' Jonathan Edwards was a particular favorite. He kept telling Fred and me, 'You must read Jonathan Edwards. In the middle of your political life and all your traveling around, read Jonathan Edwards. He is the one that can keep you with your feet solidly based on the rock. Read him and learn from him. (Page 33)

## **9. Read Biographies**

Then, of course, he loved church history and biography. Now this is so obvious that I really needn't go on; you all know this. What was the Westminster Conference doing, what was he always telling us to do, but to read church history and biography? He loved it for itself. Again, it had to be detailed biography, none of these potted things. That is why he always enjoyed big ones, like Arnold Dallimore's book on Whitefield, or some of the earlier ones with their great concentration or detail and so on. He also felt, I think, that reading biography provided a balance. He said, 'The best way of checking any tendency to pride-pride in your preaching or in anything else that you may do or may be- is to read on Sunday nights the biography of some great saint. (Page 34)

Catherwood, Frederick and Elizabeth. *Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The Man and His Books*, Brynithirion, Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan, Evangelical Library of Wales, 1982.