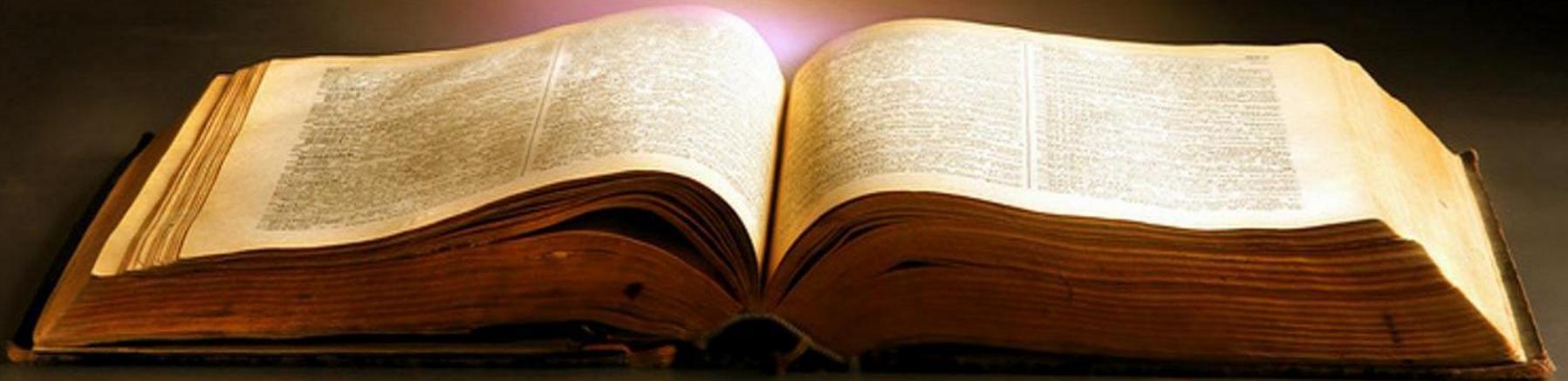


Stow Park Bible Fellowship

Bible Doctrines

Based on the teachings of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

1. The Authority of the Bible



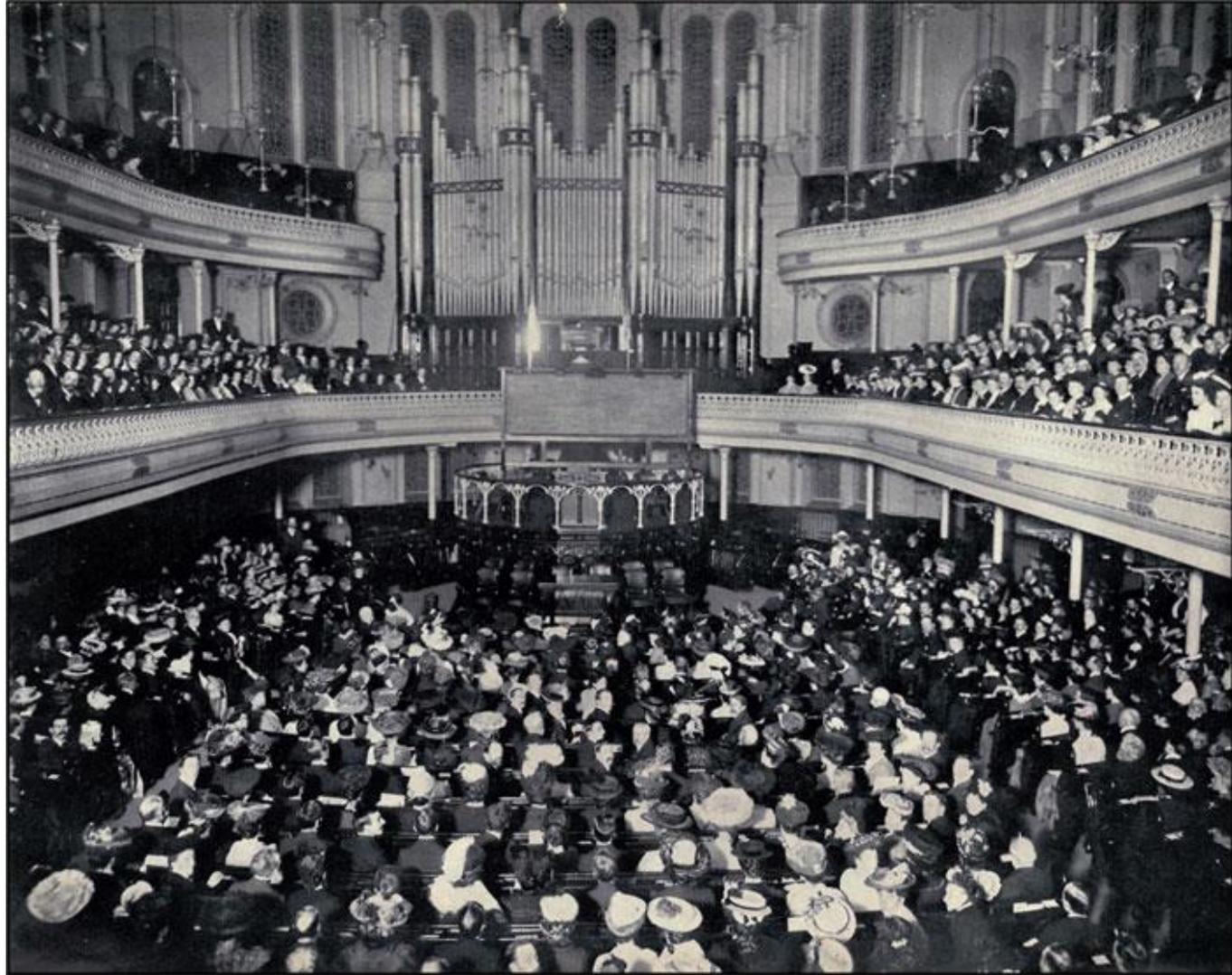
The Authority of the Bible

- Perhaps I should explain a little about the man upon whose writings I am basing this series of important theological principles, for that is surely what a 'Doctrine' is.
- Born in South Wales, Dr. Lloyd-Jones trained at St. Bartholomew's Hospital and thereafter practised as a physician and was assistant to the famous Lord Horder.
- After leaving medicine in 1927, he became the minister of a Welsh Presbyterian Church in Aberavon, South Wales.
- He was there until 1938 when he moved to London to share the ministry of Westminster Chapel in Buckingham gate with the late Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, who retired in 1943.



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- This ministry lasted for 30 years until he retired in August 1968 when he then engaged in a wider preaching ministry and in writing until shortly before his death in 1981.



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- On Friday evenings after the war, Dr. Lloyd-Jones held discussion meetings in one of the halls in Westminster Chapel. The subjects of these discussions were practical issues in the Christian life and the meetings were attended by many people.
- The questions which arose demanded a knowledge of biblical teaching of all kinds; often, too, a matter of doctrine would arise which the Doctor would deal with, usually in his summing up at the end of the discussion.
- It was partly as a result of this, partly, too, because the numbers were becoming too large for the hall, and perhaps even more, because so many people were asking him about the biblical doctrines, that he felt it right to move the 'Friday night meeting' into the chapel itself and to give a series of lectures on those great subjects, and these distillations of my studying his writings are the bases for this series of Doctrines.

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- Before we even begin to think about any doctrine in the Bible I feel it is important to stress that whatever we shall discover together and whatever Doctrine we proclaim, it is because we have discovered it in the Bible which we believe is the inspired Word of God.
- In this Library of Books which we call The Bible, God has revealed Himself, not only in creation, history and providence but more He has revealed Himself in the way recorded therein.
- The Bible claims that it is not only the record of divine revelation; it goes beyond that and claims that it is God's Word and it's authority is based on that and is inspired.
- So the question is: Can you/we accept the Bible's testimony as authoritative and inspired? I do hope so.
- The next question, is therefore, what do we mean by 'inspired'?

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- **Dr. Lloyd-Jones, surprisingly, suggests we start with a negative.**
- **That doesn't mean that certain portions of the Bible are inspired and others are not. Some people think that is the case.**
- **They say, portions and particular statements and teachings, particularly those concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, are inspired but, those historical books and various other sections are not inspired.**
- **That is not what is meant when it is said the Bible is divinely inspired.**
- **Nor does it mean that the Bible is the product of human origin on to which the divine breath has been breathed.**
- **No, what is meant is that the Scriptures are a divine product breathed out by God, (Inspired really means 'God-breathed').**
- **So it means that God breathed these messages into men . . .**

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- . . . and through them, and these Scriptures are the result of that divine action.
- In simple terms, it is meant that everything we have here has been given by God to man. That every word is divinely inspired.
- Now that may be difficult for some of us to believe, but that is the Doctor's belief and hopefully his thoughts as we discuss them will dissipate any doubt anyone may have.
- Even Dr. Luke whose writings we have just finished reading in Acts says in his introduction to his Gospel that he himself had carefully investigated everything from the beginning and it seemed good also for him to write an orderly account to Theophilus, so that he may know the certainly of things being taught.
- Verbal inspiration means that the Holy Spirit has thus overruled and controlled and guided these men, even in the particular words, in such a way as to prevent any error, and above all to produce the result that God originally intended.

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- The Bible itself makes specific claims in this matter of inspiration. Take the description it gives of itself as the *Word of God*. How often you find the Bible using that term about itself!
- Someone has taken the trouble to count the words, ‘The Lord said’. ‘The Lord spoke’, ‘The word of the Lord came’ and found that they were used 3,808 times in the Old Testament alone.
- Then we must consider some more specific claims, for example in Deuteronomy chapter 18, verses 17,18 we read, ‘The Lord said to me (Moses): “What they say is good. I will raise them up a prophet like you from among the brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him.”’
- An interesting fact is that many of the Old Testament prophets did not want to speak but were compelled to do so.

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- **Take for Example. Jeremiah, chapter 1 verses 6 and 7 state: “Ah Sovereign Lord,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am only a child.” But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a child.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you.”**
- **The very reluctance of Jeremiah in a way disclaims his own authorship and he simply delivers what God gives him.**
- **Again, Daniel in 12:8 says, “I heard but I did not understand”. And Peter says the same thing in 1 Peter 1:10-12.**
- **“Concerning this salvation, the prophets who spoke of the grace that was to come searched intently . . . trying to find the time and circumstances in which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing . . . It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that they have now been told to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.”**

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- Now we come to the crucial passages:
- The first is in 2 Timothy 3:16 where Paul writes: “All Scripture is God-breathed (inspired) and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
- The Second is 2 Peter 1:20 – “Above all you must understand that no prophesy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophesy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”
- There is much more that Dr. Lloyd-Jones writes about the authority and inspiration of the Bible including the style, the elevation of thought, what the reading of the Bible has done for people throughout the centuries, the testimony of the saints to the Bible.
- But finally, he states:

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- **“You cannot prove to anybody that the Bible is uniquely and divinely inspired. Ultimately, people have to be enlightened by the Holy Spirit. So let me finish by quoting a passage from the Westminster Confession of Faith which states it all perfectly:**
- **We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverend esteem of the Holy Scripture, and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, (which is to give all glory to God,) the full discovery it makes of the only way of man’s salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it does abundantly evidence itself to be the word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts.”**

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- I do hope we can all agree that the Bible is the authoritative and the divinely inspired Word of God and that the Doctrines which we shall begin to discover next week are based, not on man's intelligence but are from the very mind of God.

Please note, that much of Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones's Doctrinal beliefs is taken and some directly quoted from his book,

“Great Doctrines of the Bible”,

Volume 1, “God the Father, God the Son”.

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