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War

The dawn of Monday, September 4, heralded 'a perfect day' in the late summer of 1939, and yet, long before that hour, London's inhabitants were reminded that it was the second day of World War II. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, whose mother and brother Vincent were both away from 12 Vincent Square, the family home in Westminster, had promised that he would not stay there alone. Instead he spent the weekend at the Regent Palace Hotel where, from 2.30 am to 3.15 am on that same morning, he found himself for the first time in an air-raid shelter. 'It was a strange experience to wake suddenly to the sound of air-raid warnings,' he wrote to Bethan. 'There was not the slightest trace of panic among the people. The arrangements in the hotel are really excellent. The shelter is two storeys below the ground floor. There are dozens of wardens and preparations against every kind of emergency . . . I had some difficulty in going back to sleep again.'

In the day which followed there was little time to admire the weather. Dr Lloyd-Jones had plans in motion to purchase a house in London and these had now to be stopped. There had to be discussions with Dr Campbell Morgan at the nearby St Ermin's Hotel over what should be determined regarding services for the following Sunday. The previous day there had been confusion during the morning service. Dr Morgan, accompanied by his colleague, had been in the pulpit only some thirty minutes when an air-raid warning had halted the service. But the police had allowed no one to go out into the street, leaving the people to wait uncertainly until an all-clear sounded. The evening service was cancelled, partly because it was heard that buses and trains were to be used for evacuating children. The discussion of the two ministers on September 4 resulted in a determination to announce services for 11 am and 6 pm on September 10. Not all ministers in London were of the same opinion. In a phone call, ML–J's old friend Eliseus Howells (also

removed from Wales to London) voiced his doubts whether there should be any services at all – especially for the Welsh community, many of whom had left the city.

Apart from such conversations, there was practical work to be done to prepare 12 Vincent Square for war-time conditions. 'We have spent most of the time today,' Martyn wrote to Bethan, 'in putting "sticking paper" on the windows to save them from blast, breakages and splinters. Sticky and very tiring work!' Despite the facilities at the Regent Palace Hotel (and all for '10/– bed and breakfast, and use of bath'), Dr Lloyd-Jones returned to sleep at Vincent Square, his mother and brother also coming back after the weekend. The houses in the Square overlooked a garden in which an air-raid shelter – actually a trench – had already been dug. 'About my quarters,' he wrote Bethan on September 5, 'quite seriously I am of the opinion that these shelters are safer than anywhere else, because there is no risk of fire, or explosions or collapsing buildings – no pieces of glass, splinters, etc. The time given as warning is more than sufficient . . . You need not worry about my not going into the trenches. I shall do so invariably.' He went on to express his belief in the probable ineffectiveness of any air attacks: 'I wish you could see the balloon barrage over the whole of Westminster . . . The news of the German air-raids on Poland confirm what was found in the Spanish war, that the defence has advanced very much more than the attacking power recently.'

Whether this was true or not, the next day he was faithful to his promise, as he reports in another of the daily letters to his wife:

> This morning I awoke at 6.45 am. I had been feeling rather tired, so I set the alarm clock on from 7.00 to 7.30. That very moment I heard police whistles. I had no idea what they meant, but as they increased in volume, I jumped out of bed to see, and realised that it was a warning, and, with that, the sirens started up. I awoke Vin and mother and in a few minutes we were crossing the road and into the shelters. There is an opening in the fencing [round the Square] almost exactly opposite us in No. 12. We were there till 8.55. You will have heard the news on the wireless – still nothing in London as yet. The shelters are really good. I wear trousers, waistcoat and jacket over my pyjamas and put the socks in my pocket and put them on in the shelters. I also took my heavy overcoat – the old one – as well. Vin had neither waist-coat nor overcoat!

The truth was that London was in a state of confusion and unreality. The air-raid sirens, heard since Sunday morning, were not 'false

alarms', they were simply trial runs for the 'Air Raid Precautions' (ARP). A million-and-a-half people had left Britain's cities, urged by the government which, privately, feared as many as one million casualties from aerial bombing in the first two months of the war. Gas masks were issued to all although, as Dr Lloyd-Jones found when he called at the City Hall in Charing Cross Road, there were none yet available for children aged two to five: 'They are being made. When available I will send one on,' he reported to Bethan. To eleven-year-old Elizabeth he wrote:

> You would be greatly surprised if you could see all the various changes in London these days. *All* lights are out at night, including the street lamps. And there is no light to be seen in any house anywhere. As I was walking along to the hotel on Monday night a taxi-man shouted out to me for help. He was in that little street by Carey Mansions quite lost and what he wanted to know was the way to Horseferry Rd. The Londoners are not used to darkness in the way that people brought up in the country are.

As days passed, Germany continued to show no interest in an onslaught upon western Europe. It seemed possible that once Poland was conquered, the Reich would offer terms which France and Britain might accept. Certainly France, which had 106 Divisions on the Maginot Line faced by only 23 German Divisions, was not about to launch any offensive to save Poland. 'I feel tolerably certain that the war will not last a year,' wrote ML-J, anticipating by many weeks 'a general feeling' which was to be widespread in Westminster the following month. With London so quiet it was difficult to believe anything else. Vividly remembering, as he did, the summer of 1914, he commented to Bethan: 'The difference, in London, between this war and the last is incredible. The best thing ever done was to pass the Conscription Bill. There are none of the recruiting meetings and the silly excitement of the last, and there are very few soldiers to be seen around.'

It was scarcely surprising, therefore, that with the expectation of an early, intensive attack from Germany proving false, there was a general bewilderment over the real state of affairs. After a brief visit to see the family in Wales on September 15, Martyn wrote to Bethan, 'I don't think I ever felt so miserable at leaving you'. On his return journey to London he had observed the movement of evacuees back

to the cities which was already occurring: 'There were dozens of women and children on the train yesterday, some very little children like Ann. I understand them perfectly, but still feel that they are very unwise.'

The confusion in the national position was matched by a large element of uncertainty in Dr Lloyd-Jones' own mind. For one thing, given his qualifications, there seemed to be a real possibility that he might be called upon for medical duties in the national interest. On September 4 he was expecting 'something might come to me here from the BMA regarding medical services'. On this subject he wrote to Bethan on September 18:

> It seems that everything is in great confusion in the world of doctors. The consultants are all out in the base hospitals – with nothing to do! The agreement they made was that they would leave their private practices at once and be paid £800 per annum in these hospitals. All this was in expectation of terrible air-raids on London beginning immediately. In view of this, it is no wonder that people like Douglas Johnson and myself have heard nothing from the BMA.

Dr Douglas Johnson we have already noticed briefly as the man who first won ML-J's hesitant interest in the larger work of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship – first at Swanwick,[1] and, more recently, in the successful international conference at Cambridge held in the summer of 1939. Although now only thirty-five years of age Johnson had already led the IVF as its General Secretary for fifteen years (since 1934 in a full-time capacity). At the persistent urging of Professor Rendle Short – one of the movement's first Presidents – he had relinquished his hopes of serving as a medical missionary in Southern Rhodesia in order to give his life to a calling which was to be far more international than he could then have realized.

With the advent of war these two ex-medicals, only five years apart in age, were brought more closely together. It was not simply that ML-J, elected annual President of the IVF in April 1939, now had an official advisory role in the student work, but rather that the two men had a natural affinity – despite the nationality difference ('DJ is so *English*,' quipped an American, 'that he even carries his gloves to church on Sunday!'). Both were omnivorous readers and

[1] See vol. 1, pp. 295–97.

born conversationalists. The exchange of views over books was to form part of their life-long friendship. In the autumn of 1939 they would meet over tea at the large table in the basement dining room at Vincent Square, when Mrs Lloyd-Jones Sr was the hostess.

With the IVF's simple office at 39 Bedford Square closed and helpers scattered (some as chaplains in the Forces), the continuance of the work needed firm leadership and the commitment of ML-J gave needed strength. Also, it must be said, it gave Douglas Johnson occasional problems. ML-J's address on 'Sanctification' at Cambridge, for example, was so different in emphasis from the prevailing view, that when the publication of all the Cambridge addresses was put in hand by the IVF, some were anxious to safeguard the publishers against negative repercussions. To a note from Johnson on this subject, Lloyd-Jones replied with tongue in cheek on September 9, 1939:

> I think I told you a year ago that there was the danger of my being a liability to you and the IVF. Clearly I was a true prophet.
>
> I see no objection at all to your suggestion that a note be put in as a general introduction to the whole report. It seems quite gratuitous even to do that but it might help certain people. Rendle Short's second suggestion I will not accept as I think it would be wrong to single out my address in that way to apologize for it as if I were the heretic!
>
> At the same time I do not want IVF to suffer. If you prefer, leave out my address altogether. I will print it as a pamphlet and get Lamont and Bouma and Grosheide to write words of commendation! Oh yes, and also Sebestyen![1]

The last suggestion was not, of course, a serious one as 'DJ' (Dr Johnson's popular nickname) would know. But it was humour at the General Secretary's expense. Here were IVF publications advisers hesitating over an issue upon which the four international leaders present at Cambridge were all united.

Some weeks were to pass before it was clear that ML-J and Johnson would not be called up for military service. By that time Dr Lloyd-Jones' mind was concentrating on the entirely unexpected problem to be faced at Westminster Chapel. Although the congrega-

[1] The four leaders named were from Scotland, the USA, the Netherlands and Hungary, respectively.

tion in the years immediately preceding the Second World War was not as large as that which Campbell Morgan had known in earlier days, it was well able to support two ministers. On Sunday morning September 3, 1939, the numbers had been much as usual but thereafter, with the evacuation and petrol rationing, there was bound to be a change. The autumn evenings were also already bringing a shortening of daylight hours, and, as the long, high windows of the chapel could not be 'blacked out' to comply with the restrictions now imposed on buildings used at night, the future of the services on Sunday and Friday evenings was in doubt. A Friday evening Bible School was held for the last time on September 15, with about 500 present, and thereafter it was switched to 2.30 pm on Saturdays. Similarly, a final Sunday evening service was held at 6 pm on September 17 and thereafter an afternoon service appointed for 2.30 pm. With numbers strong on the evening of the 17th, when Dr Lloyd-Jones preached, he was obviously doubtful about the change. In the letter to Bethan, already quoted, written the next day he says:

There was a really good congregation last night – many more than poor Hutton used to get at his best. The number of men present had struck everybody, and many felt that we should hold on to the 6.0 service for a while, and then back to 5.0, etc., etc., if it became necessary.

The probability of difficult days ahead at the Chapel was, however, rightly foreseen by Dr Morgan. The older minister had no pension and at seventy-five still depended for income upon the work of preaching which he loved. Westminster, where he also lived at St Ermin's Hotel two blocks away from the Chapel, was the centre of his life. But in the early days of the war Morgan did not see how his ministry could continue. In another letter to his wife Martyn reported:

Blackie phoned today to say that CM is very depressed, feeling that he ought to go – that there is no need of him at Westminster now.[1] But then they have nothing to live on. I had told him, on Saturday, that I would go if the church could not support us both. What he tells Blackie about that is that it is he who ought to go and leave the younger man in charge. But you will see his difficulty. I cannot allow him to suffer, and I am

[1]Margery Blackie, a distinguished physician and general practitioner, was a member at Westminster Chapel and a close friend of the Morgans.

determined, should it be necessary, that I will go for the time being. But perhaps we shall find congregations better than we think, and the problem may not arise.

On the third Sunday of the war the loose collections came to £35. 'Quite good,' ML-J commented, 'and yet, in view of the expenses on the place, not nearly enough'. At an emergency meeting of the deacons on October 1, four senior men were appointed to review the entire financial position. The Chapel had only £48 left in its 'reserve fund' and the treasurer had had to borrow £100 from another fund in order to meet expenses to the end of September. Dr Lloyd-Jones wrote to Bethan the next day: 'I shall be very glad when the position at Westminster is made clear one way or another . . . I understand that there would be very strong opposition to my leaving. We must exercise patience and live from day to day.' At the next deacons' meeting, on October 22, it was reported that when Dr Lloyd-Jones was invited to become joint minister the estimated receipts for the six weeks following were £4,227, whereas now the receipts in the first six weeks of war were £2,686 – a decrease of £1,541. In the words of the Deacons' Minutes, 'The problem was how to decrease our expenditure to the extent of £1,541'. It was decided that, except for terminating one of the Chapel cleaners, all other staff could be retained provided salaries were cut. Thus Dr Morgan's salary was reduced by £300 to £800, Dr Lloyd-Jones' by £200 to £500 and those of Mr A. E. Marsh (Church Secretary) and Sister Dora (Deaconess) were halved to the figure of £150.

Dr Lloyd-Jones was perfectly satisfied. Reporting the meeting to Bethan, he said, 'In view of this, I will, of course, go on, and we shall have to consider various possibilities for you three'. The family, as we shall note later, was to return from Wales in December.

The problems of autumn 1939 were to prove small indeed compared with what was to follow. During this initial period of the 'phoney war' the reasons for Hitler's inactivity in the West were not rightly understood. Repeating newspaper reports, Martyn wrote to Bethan that autumn: 'Many are prophesying that there will not be any air-raids. It seems that London's defences are beyond our comprehension.'

The illusion was soon to be dispelled. In April, 1940 with the East secured behind him, Hitler launched his forces into Norway and Denmark. A month later it was France's turn. The last British troops

were out of Dunkirk on June 3 and the Germans entered Paris on June 14. Upon the fall of France, Hitler expected Britain's surrender as a natural consequence and then a 'thousand-year Reich'. But Britain, in which the only fully-equipped division of troops was Canadian, stood fast. 'The Battle of Britain' for the control of the air over south-east England began in August and, although not won by the Germans, they were still able on September 7, 1940 to begin day and night bombing on London in earnest. At that same date across the English Channel forty German divisions were ready to invade on a front extending from Folkestone to Bognor, an action which was postponed 'until further notice' on September 17. That month, with his colleague on holiday and preaching in Wales, Campbell Morgan was alone in the Westminster pulpit. Extracts from his diary give some idea of what was happening in London one year after the outbreak of war:

Sept. 1 [Sunday] At 11 started service at Westminster when warning sounded. Closed and came home. All clear by 11.30. Went back and found a number of people so continued service and preached. Lunch at 12.30. Started to rest and again a warning at 2. All clear at 2.30, so finished the rest. Tea at 4. At 6 o'clock took service – a good attendance.

Sept. 2–6 Two or three air-raid warnings every day and night.

Sept. 7 A daytime raid. They came pretty near. At night the heaviest attack so far on London and coming pretty near us.

Sept. 8 [Sunday] Got things in order for possible service. It being National Day of Prayer, at 11 o'clock I gave a brief address and we had prayer. Whole service lasted 45 minutes. Warning at 12.30. All clear at 1.30. Preached again at 6. Warning at 8 so down to the lounge.

Sept. 15 [Sunday] Preached in Westminster at 11. As I was uttering the last sentence warning went at 11.52. All clear 12.55. Another warning at 2.12. All clear at 3.20. At 6 to Westminster but very few and no service. Warnings all night.[1]

The era of mere ARP practices and of 'false-alarms' already seemed to lie in the distant past. On Wednesday, September 25, came the further entry in Dr Morgan's diary: 'Went to look at church after incendiary bomb hit it last night. A sad sight.'

Since 1938 the two colleagues at Westminster had been alternating every month in the services which they took, one man taking the morning service for four or five weeks and the other the second

[1]Quoted in *A Man of the Word, G. Campbell Morgan*, Jill Morgan, Pickering and Inglis, 1951, p. 309.

service. When Lloyd-Jones returned on October 6, 1940, it was to commence a month of morning services. But some, and probably Morgan himself, clearly felt that it was too dangerous to continue services at Westminster. The damage from the incendiary bomb on September 25 had not been serious, yet it was enough to lead Morgan to change the venue for morning worship on September 29 to the Livingstone Hall, the headquarters of the London Missionary Society in nearby Victoria. At Westminster Chapel there were no air-raid shelters at hand for the congregation when alarms occurred during services, neither could anything adequate be provided upon the premises. After two October Sunday mornings in the Chapel a transfer to Livingstone Hall was arranged to take effect at once. Meanwhile Morgan had held no afternoon service on September 29, nor throughout October 1940. He had already dropped his weekly Bible School at the end of June.

As though a witness to the uncertainties of this dark hour, for the next three months the long-kept Vestry Register at Westminster Chapel, in which the preacher noted his text every Sunday, lay unused and no record of what either man preached has survived. Something of what was being discussed by the two preachers in private, however, is known. Morgan, who had lived to see spiritual and national conditions undreamed of when he had gone to his first pastoral charge in Staffordshire in the far-off summer of 1889, had moments when he feared that the end of the work at Westminster was near. Humanly speaking that was a real possibility, with the old congregation scattered and the very survival of the building in serious doubt. For fifty-seven nights in succession, an average of two hundred German bombers were over London every night. Churchill later wrote, 'At this time we saw no end but the demolition of the whole Metropolis'. Before the end of October, 1940 the Bishop of London was to state that in his diocese alone 32 churches had been destroyed, and 47 seriously damaged. What hope had Westminster Chapel, standing as it did so close to Buckingham Palace and other primary targets for German bombing? Morgan and Lloyd-Jones usually met weekly and the old veteran did not hide his dismay over the situation into which his friend had been brought. It was not so much that Morgan was concerned for himself. 'Although I confess it is not easy,' he wrote, 'I am constantly hearing in my own soul the words: "In nothing be anxious, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known

unto God".' But he did fear that Lloyd-Jones might be left without work and without a pastorate. Already his colleague was facing numbers considerably less than those to which he had been accustomed on Sundays in Wales. Recalling the effect of the War on the size of the congregation, ML-J was to say in later years: 'Almost immediately our congregation went down to about 300 as most people who could get out of London did so . . . Finally only 100 to 200 were left of Campbell Morgan's great congregation.'

In October, 1940 Dr Morgan temporarily left all the work to his colleague by cancelling his own afternoon services. He wanted there to be no question of his friend leaving, so long as there was any congregation at all. No one could have been more magnanimous. Perhaps not everyone realized this at the time. Several years later when Dr Lloyd-Jones was about to address a group of professional men, his chairman (another doctor) employed his 'chairman's remarks' to pass on his 'knowledge' of how things had stood during the joint ministry at Westminster. Dr Lloyd-Jones, he declared, had experienced a most difficult time because Campbell Morgan wanted to monopolize the pulpit and had given him little opportunity to preach. Not for the first or the last time Dr Lloyd-Jones had to correct his chairman. The actual situation, he informed the gathering, was the opposite to what they had just been told. 'The old man had to be encouraged by me and so reluctant was he that there were occasions when he would try to withdraw from his turn to preach even when we were preparing to leave the minister's vestry for the pulpit.' 'Dr Morgan,' Lloyd-Jones was also to say on another occasion, 'was a very kind and very generous man'.

In the deacons' meetings held in October, 1940 something of the strain behind the scenes was revealed. In a meeting on October 13 there was some comment on the different practice of the two ministers with regard to air-raids. The records note: 'It was pointed out that at present Dr Morgan closes the service at once [if warning sounds] whereas Dr Lloyd-Jones continues at any rate until the more imminent danger.' After discussion, the general but not unanimous opinion was that 'the service should be closed when warning was given'. More delicate than this, however, was a matter contained in a letter written to Morgan by Lloyd-Jones respecting the termination of the second service on a Sunday. Lloyd-Jones, who was chairing the deacons' meeting of October 13 in Morgan's absence, clearly wanted the two services maintained – in part, probably, for Morgan's own sake.

This issue was too important to be long postponed. Another deacons' meeting was held on October 20 with Morgan presiding and Lloyd-Jones present. At this meeting it was noted: 'The matter relating to the question raised by Dr Lloyd-Jones in his letter to Dr Campbell Morgan was further considered. It was unanimously agreed: That the present ministerial arrangement be continued, with the resumption of a second service commencing in November, if such can be arranged [at Livingstone Hall] and to review the general position again early in December.' So Lloyd-Jones took an afternoon service on November 3 and continued it through two successive months to December 29, 1940.

As a church meeting on November 10, 1940 had revealed, there were a number who did not approve the move to Livingstone Hall. A senior member of the church, Mr J. B. Gotts, wanted to know, 'Why are we having services at Livingstone Hall? Would it be possible for Dr Lloyd-Jones to amplify the statement he recently made from the pulpit at Westminster regarding the holding of services in Livingstone Hall?' Perhaps as a result of this discussion the Vestry Register for the first Sunday of 1941 contains the note, 'Returned to Church' although not until the next Sunday was the more than three months' silence broken and a record of the preachers' texts resumed. Possibly because of the sickness of his colleague, Lloyd-Jones preached at both services throughout January 1941. For January 12 his text for one service, as recorded in the Vestry Register, was Habakkuk 3:17–18, 'Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.'

It was a text singularly appropriate for the ministers as well as for the people. Lloyd-Jones presided at a deacons' meeting on January 26, 1941, Morgan being 'absent with a chill'. The Church Treasurer, Mr J. Ryley,[1] was also absent but he sent in a statement which was read by his friend, Mr A. W. Caiger. Despite all economies and cuts in salaries already agreed, he reported that the year 1940 had ended with an overdraft of £150.6s.0d. Further, the weekly offerings through the winter had been averaging little more than £10 and the position was worsening! Reading Ryley's state-

[1] A member since 1905, he died in 1943, when he was succeeded by Caiger.

ment, Caiger said: 'I think we should begin by telling our Ministers that we see no prospect of paying them their present stipends after the end of March, possibly February. How to keep the Church going at all is a problem . . .'

While granting the reality of the difficulties, it cannot be said that the diaconate at this date appear as men with strong spiritual priorities. Concern was expressed that the Bible School should be restarted in order that the funds which were being lost from that source might be made up. Finally, it was agreed to continue the ministers' allocations until the end of March when the position would be reviewed. At the next recorded meeting of the diaconate on April 6, 1941, Messrs Ryley and Caiger proposed that henceforth both ministers' salaries be terminated and that they both be paid simply on a supply basis of £10 a service – thus reducing weekly expenditure upon the ministry to £20 per week, or £30 when Dr Morgan resumed his Bible School on May 2. It was also proposed that money be saved by ending the tradition of inviting a visiting preacher in the summer period (John Hutton had preached for four weeks in August, 1940). Instead the two ministers should alternately take double duties during the holiday months. Such were the extremities to which the deacons now believed themselves to be driven and they unanimously adopted the above proposals.

The spiritual deficiency in the diaconate reflected the long-standing weakness of the whole congregation. The large pre-war attendance had disguised the extent to which lower standards prevailed. There was a definite liberal element in the membership and particularly in that of the 'Institute' which constituted a kind of church within the church.[1] Speaking of his reception at the Chapel, Dr Lloyd-Jones once said: 'They were very kind to me but I felt a great lack of spiritual understanding and spiritual fellowship. There was no prayer meeting at all and no spiritual meeting'. With Dr Morgan's ready acquiescence, ML-J introduced a Monday evening 'Fellowship' meeting in the autumn of 1939 with the intention of encouraging spiritual conversation and discussion. Mr and Mrs L. G. Covell were among the 'smallish company' which gathered in the Church Parlour week by week for this purpose and, forty years later, they remembered these meetings as 'oases of spiritual enrichment in the early months of the "phoney" war'. Mr Covell writes:

[1]On the Institute and conditions at the Chapel when Morgan resumed his ministry there in the 1930's see vol 1, p. 362–363.

It was the Doctor's custom to invite questions, and amongst the many topics raised and dealt with so adequately and convincingly I remember one of outstanding interest. It was the problem of a Christian minister in dealing with the communion service and individual communicants. What about persons who should not, on moral grounds, be qualified to participate? The Doctor drew on his experience. At his former pastorate in South Wales he had known the great majority of his people and had refused the elements to a person who he knew was living adulterously.

There was also some discussion that same evening on the difficulty over the right administration of the Lord's Supper in a congregation such as Westminster Chapel's where the people were drawn from a wide area and might often be unknown both to the minister and to one another.

With the advent of serious bombing in September 1940, the Monday Fellowship meeting had to be abandoned for the time being. From that date onwards the destruction of London continued. By March 1941 a number of London's most historic churches had gone. They included St Andrew, Holborn where George Whitefield once preached; Austin Friars, a Reformed church of immigrants from the reign of Edward VI; St Magnus-the-Martyr, the burial place of Miles Coverdale the Bible translator; John Newton's St Mary Woolnoth and St Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe, scene of the ministry of William Romaine. Among more modern buildings, St Columba's (Pont Street), Spurgeon's Tabernacle and the City Temple shared in the devastation. An observer, writing on 'London Churches in the Blitz' in the *British Weekly* for April 24, 1941, reported: 'The first building visited, The City Temple, was the completest ruin I ever saw . . . Among the rubbish where I stood were pieces of a tablet commemorating the founding of the church in 1640 by Thomas Goodwin, the Puritan.' At the Congregational Union Assembly the following month, it was reported of the denomination that 'no fewer than 260 churches have been damaged more or less seriously.' At one of their weekly conversations in St Ermin's Hotel, Morgan, reflecting on what was happening, exclaimed to his colleague, 'I have brought you here, and this is what I have brought you to! We are almost certain to be bombed completely to the ground'.

Dr Lloyd-Jones did not share that fear. There were some occasions in his life when he had strong presentiments about the future. These impressions, it should be said, were not always correct, neither did he ever make them a rule for others, but explain it as we will, in the

worst of the Blitz he believed that Westminster Chapel would be preserved. In this respect the weekend of Sunday May 11, 1941, was to be for him one of the most memorable of the war. Between 11.30 the previous evening and 5.37 on the Sunday morning some 507 planes of the Luftwaffe made a supreme effort to shatter London. A raid in March had caused 750 civilian deaths in the metropolis but this May weekend was to claim 1,436 victims and before dawn on the Sunday 2,200 fires were reported, with as much as 700 acres ablaze at one time. Around Westminster Chapel many buildings were hit, including the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey and Westminster School. When dawn came many streets were blocked by fallen buildings or by fire-fighting equipment.

It was not Dr Lloyd-Jones' turn to preach until the evening[1] and consequently he had gone the previous day to Oxford where he had an engagement to preach in the Chapel of Mansfield College on the Sunday morning. Lloyd-Jones recalled his experience that weekend as follows:

I was staying with the then Principal of Mansfield, Dr Nathaniel Micklem. We had gone to bed on the Saturday night, and the next thing I remember is that I was awakened in the morning by Dr Micklem who had brought me up a cup of tea. As he handed me the cup of tea he said, 'Look here, I am going to announce this morning in the service that you will be preaching at night as well as in the morning'. I said, 'But you mustn't do that, I am preaching at Westminster Chapel tonight'. 'My dear man,' he said, 'you will not be preaching in Westminster Chapel tonight.' 'Why not?' I replied. He said, 'There is no Westminster Chapel'. I said, 'What do you mean?' 'Well,' he said, 'there has been a terrible raid last night, the worst we have ever had. I have heard on the wireless that the whole of Westminster is practically flattened, so why not preach here tonight?' I said, 'Listen to this. I am telling you that Westminster Chapel has not been demolished, and that I shall be preaching in it tonight'. He was amazed at this, and especially at my certainty.

So I did not allow him to make the announcement that I would be preaching at night also. I preached in the morning and after lunch got my train to London. I remember that approaching Paddington I could see fires burning in places on both sides of the line. I got out of the train and found a great queue of people waiting for taxis. At last I got one. 'Where for, sir?' said the taximan. I said, 'I want a chapel called Westminster

[1] An early evening service at 6 pm had been restored on April 6, 1941.

Chapel, halfway along Buckingham Gate, Westminster'. 'I'm afraid, sir,' he said, 'you cannot get into Buckingham Gate'. 'Why not?' 'Oh, terrible bombing last night,' he said, 'everything flattened.' I said, 'Look here, you get down in the direction of Victoria and I will guide you'. I had decided to bring him along Palace Street and then to turn in here into Castle Lane. While all this was going on he was telling me about what he had seen; but I was still absolutely certain that I would be preaching in this chapel. I will never forget it. We came round the corner from Palace Street into Castle Lane. I looked, and here was this old building standing as if there had not been a raid at all. I believe I am right in saying that two window-panes on the left side from the pulpit were cracked; and that was all that had happened. I preached here and took the service as usual.[1]

Severe difficulties continued throughout 1941. On October 8 Morgan could write, 'London is going through a tremendous ordeal. I have not been in bed for six weeks. Down in the lounge we do get some sleep during the night at intervals, and so we are keeping up . . . The chapel has been hit three times.' Without fire-fighters constantly on the premises it would undoubtedly have been burned out. As it was the congregation had to return for a time to Livingstone Hall. Nor had the financial situation improved. On October 26, 1941, a letter from Mr Ryley, who was unwell, was read to the diaconate once more emphasizing the seriousness of the position and proposing that the ministers should appeal for higher giving. One of the ministers, at least, is unlikely to have acceded. Dr Lloyd-Jones was never known to appeal for money in the churches which he served.

No records exist of how many who attended Westminster Chapel lost their lives in the blitz. One unusual case, however, has been recalled by Mrs Lloyd-Jones. From the first days of the war, two sisters, the Misses Spain, were among the most faithful attenders at all services. 'They always sat together in the middle block, near the front – hardly elderly, late middle age perhaps – always pleasant and courteous, but we knew very little about their background, except

[1] *Westminster Chapel* (1865–1965), Centenary Address, 1965, reprinted in *Knowing the Times*, pp. 222–45. The air-bombardment diminished after this date as Hitler moved planes to the East for his attack on Russia – an action which, with the entrance of the United States into the war at the end of the year, secured his final defeat. As one Editor wrote in 1941: 'Hitler is regarded as a sort of superman. But we have had supermen before. History has a way of dealing with them catastrophically.'

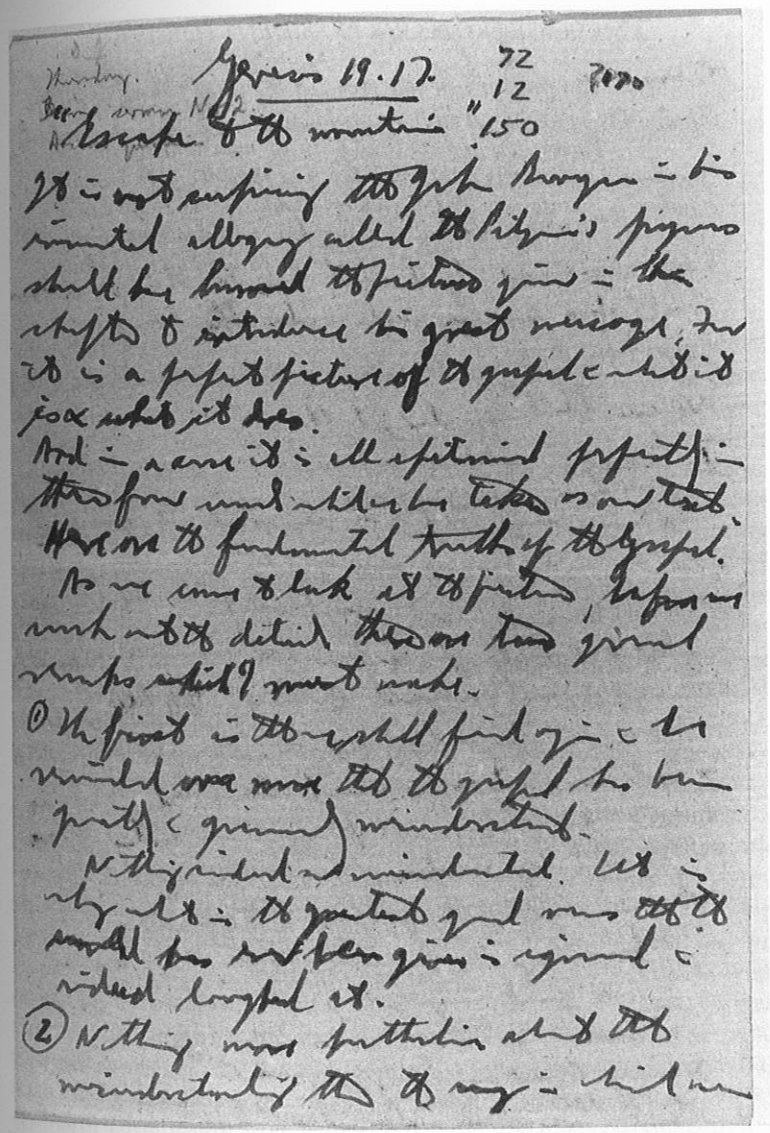
that their father had been a business man, and that both he and their mother were dead.' One Sunday they were present as usual though the church was then meeting in the Livingstone Hall. Dr Lloyd-Jones was preaching that day on 'the wedding garment' and on the danger of being found without 'the wedding garment'. Mrs Lloyd-Jones continues:

At the end of the service, the elder Miss Spain came to speak to him. She had come to thank the Doctor for the sermon – a thing she had not done before – and during the conversation she told him that they had one other sister in an important government post down on the South Coast. Apart from this, they had no family, near or far. Drawn to talk because of Martyn's interest, she told him that this third sister was feeling lonely and was coming up to London that very evening to stay for a few days with them. As she was leaving, she turned back and half shyly said: 'Doctor, I am so glad I have on that wedding garment, thank you', then went out to join her sister.

That night a bomb fell on their house and all three sisters were killed outright. The members of Westminster Chapel were their family at the burial.

The Doctor always felt, after his conversation with Miss Spain that night, that it was of the Lord's mercy that they had been taken together, theirs was such a close relationship. We might have thought it strange that the third sister had come up from the South Coast to join them on that particular night. But, knowing that the Lord is not only 'rich and merciful' but also 'very kind', we will not call it strange.

What was strange was that had Miss Spain not had that conversation with the Doctor on that Sunday night, no one would have known what had happened to the third Miss Spain and, except for her employers, not even of her existence! The authorities were grateful for the few facts which the church could give them.



ML-J's notes in actual size of a sermon preached on November 23, 1941 (see p. 34). In all they came to three sheets written on five sides which he would have with him in the pulpit.

'A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT FOR 1940'

. . . (1) The present war has revealed the utter failure of all human systems to deal with the problem of mankind . . .

(2) Never was the biblical view of man and of sin so evidently and clearly right as to-day. The radical evil in human nature is manifesting itself on a world scale. Never again can it be said, or should it be said, that man inherently and naturally desires the right, and the best, and is ready to accept it if it be but offered to him.

(3) The uncertainty of life in these days makes people more ready to listen to the Gospel. The most 'blasé' person is uncomfortable at the thought of death, though he may try to hide the fact.

Here then lies our opportunity.

We must not abuse it by simply turning to those who do not know Christ and saying, "I told you so." Events in the world will truly prove we were right. But what matters is not that we shall be right, but that others may be put right.

We can seize the opportunity in many ways, but there are two special ways which we must always remember.

The first is our general life and conduct. There should be about us a calmness, a poise of spirit and general control of our lives which should differentiate us Christians from all others. Whatever the conditions, and however trying, we should show that we have hidden resources of which the world knows nothing. The way in which many of the first Christians faced death was the means of converting many to Christ and earned the encomium – 'these Christians die well'.

The other way is the right use of conversation and of social intercourse. Almost every conversation to-day turns upon the strangeness of life and the uncertainty of the future. No more perfect opening for the Gospel is conceivable.

God grant that we all may be worthy of our high calling!

ML-J

The above is part of a letter sent by the Inter-Varsity Fellowship to all past members of the University Evangelical Unions whose addresses could be located. It was a first move to establish a link between graduates and the success of the idea was to lead to the creation of a Graduates Fellowship with their own magazine.