



# PIRSpective

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## Living a Holy Life is Hard Work

By Mark A. Bailon

It is the clear teaching of scripture that the Christian is called to live a holy life. In particular, the Apostle Paul twice writes that we are to *'mortify the deeds of the body'*<sup>1</sup> and to *'mortify your members'*<sup>2</sup> which are upon the earth.<sup>3</sup> The general teaching of the New Testament is that a person either lives under the dominion of the Spirit of God or under the dominion of the flesh. We are either a saved sinner inclined to holy living or dead in our trespasses and sins,<sup>4</sup> and thus enslaved to a life of unrighteousness. And, as clear as the biblical teaching is on this subject of holy living, it is equally clear that our daily lives are not always comprised of holy living commanded by the Word of God. In fact, we must, and do, scrap every day to mortify our sin and live in obedience to the Word of God. If you doubt that a true Christian struggles with sin, then consider what the inspired apostle writes in Romans chapter 7.

In verse 14 Paul writes that *'we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.'* This statement is very emphatic. First, Paul says that *'we know'* but then admits that *'I am carnal.'*<sup>5</sup> For our sake, he becomes introspective that he might reveal the heinousness of indwelling sin. Moreover, he states that we have been *'sold under sin'* and continue in the aftermath of that awful reality. Paul explains what he means in two ways. First, he states that what he is doing he does not understand. He is consistently not practicing what he desires to do. Instead, he finds himself doing the things he hates. The fact that he hates what he finds himself doing implies that he desires to do good. Secondly, he understands quite clearly that, literally, if there is anything that is good, it certainly does not dwell in his flesh. Nevertheless, his desire to do good is ever present but the actual production of good is not. Thus, there is a mismatch between his godly desires and what he actually ends up doing. He always desires to please God, but the actual doing of it eludes him. He also says, basically, that he wants to do good but doesn't do it, and he does not want to do evil but he does it. In fact, it is indwelling sin that instigates his sinful behavior.<sup>7</sup>

Upon consideration of this state of affairs Paul makes a discovery. He writes, *'I discover then the law that although the desire to do the good is in me, yet the evil is ever present in me as well.'* Moreover, even though in his inner most being he joyfully concurs with the law of God, he sees another type of law in his members which wars

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against the law in his mind resulting in his being taken captive by the law of sin that is active in his members. This law of sin active in his members is as persistent as Paul's desire to do good.<sup>8</sup> If his desire to do good is ever present in his mind, so also, is sin at hand in his members. The evil of indwelling sin and corruption cannot be shaken. It is like our shadow on a sunny day. Thus, Paul understands that the law is good but realizes that it is another thing altogether to obey it.

This is a very intimate view of the apostle Paul. Indeed, H.C.G. Moule wrote, 'Nothing in literature, no Confessions of an Augustine, no Grace Abounding of a Bunyan, is more intensely individual.'<sup>9</sup> It is also ostensibly unflattering. Paul freely admits that he cannot say, with any degree of confidence, that he has mastery over his sinful flesh. However, instead of belittling the apostle by accusing him of being an immature Christian, or a weak Christian, or worse, to think that he must be talking about his life as an unsaved man, we should ask ourselves if we hate sin enough to actually do better than Paul. Are we as honest with ourselves regarding our sin as Paul was with himself?

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## Baptist Doctrines and Distinctives (3).

### Church Perpetuity

By James A. Billings

#### INTRODUCTION

Church perpetuity is a misunderstood doctrine in our generation. The average person assumes that if a church or denomination has its roots in antiquity it is a valid representation of Christianity. The Roman Catholic Church has its historical roots in the third century. It claims perpetuity through an unbroken chain of Popes back to Peter. Therefore, they claim that all power of the Church resides in the Popes requiring that all Christians be in submission to Rome. The Greek Orthodox Church originated with many local churches in Greece, Turkey, Russia, and the Near East and was officially recognized in 451 A.D. at the Council of Chalcedon. The Lutherans trace their roots back to Luther's nailing his ninety-five theses on the door of the Wittenberg Church. Hence, in all three denominations listed, their prolonged existence in the minds of many, equal true orthodoxy.

#### CHURCH PERPETUITY

Church Perpetuity is not the same as the succession of the kings of Israel or the kings of England. Churches do not take the place of each other. It is not as if one church dies and another is ordained to take its place. This simplistic view of validating denominations has greatly affected Baptist churches over the years. James Robinson Graves, the founder of Landmarkism states, 'Nor have I, or any other Landmarker known to me, ever advocated the succession of any church or churches; but my position is that Christ, in the very 'days of John the Baptist,' did establish a visible kingdom on this earth, and that this kingdom has never been 'broken in pieces,' nor given to another class of subjects—has never for a day 'been moved,' nor ceased from the earth, and never will until Christ returns personally to reign over it.'<sup>1</sup>

Baptists prefer the phrase 'Perpetuity' over the phrase 'church succession.' In defining church perpetuity, W.A. Jarrell writes, 'All that Baptists mean by church succession or church perpetuity is: There has never been a day since the organization of the first New Testament church in which there was no genuine church of the New Testament existing on earth.'<sup>2</sup>

Baptists, from the time of Jesus Christ's baptism in the River Jordan by John, hold the view that God has always preserved His church to the present and will continue till the end of the age. There have always been New Testament believers and churches that were distinct and apart from the Romish Church and Protestantism. This belief is founded in the teaching of the New Testament (Matt. 16:18, 28:18-20).

## BELIEVER'S BAPTISM BY IMMERSION

Believer's baptism by immersion is the only New Testament model for baptism. The ones appointed to baptize are those who have been called to preach the Gospel (Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15-16). The subjects for baptism are those who repented of sin, and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, thus having a credible profession of faith (Matt. 3:7-8; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38, 41; 8:36-37; 9:1-18). Membership into a New Testament Church is based on the believer's union with Christ and has nothing to do with family relationships or the so-called covenant relationship between parents and their children. Believer's baptism by immersion is decidedly a New Testament distinctive that stands in opposition to Rome, the Eastern Orthodox Church, and Protestantism. Our Baptist lineage is of great significance. All Baptists believe in a continuity of baptisms. Baptism by immersion is an ordinance of Christ which is aligned to the preaching of the Gospel and making disciples, in the context of the local church. '*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*' (Matt. 28:19). Baptized believers are called out from the world and called unto the Lord. This ordinance takes place only in the New Testament local church. The mode and subjects are to remain the same even unto the end of the world.

#### THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD

Adherence to the principles and practices of New Testament Christianity gives us reason to believe we are true churches of the Living God. The Apostle Paul defines a church as '*...the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*' The Greek word for church is ἐκκλησία (ekklesia is translated as an assembly of believers). This ἐκκλησία is not a building where the members dwell with God or a long standing ecclesiastical institution. Instead the ἐκκλησία is the assembled believers themselves. Believers have been called out by God, by His grace, and have been gathered together by the Holy Spirit. These called-out persons are the assembly of the living God. Without God effectually calling out His elect and the Holy Spirit gathering them together, there is no baptism and without baptism there is no church. True New Testament churches are nowhere defined in the Bible as a denomination or institution but only as local assemblies.

Local New Testament churches exist by the conversion of sinners through the preaching of the Gospel. New Testament assemblies manifest that they are churches of the living God by possessing the Holy Spirit, who has quickened us to a life of holiness and godliness. Only a church that has a regenerate membership or has been made alive unto God through the Person and work of the

Lord Jesus Christ can be a true church of the living God. The life of churches is defined by the congregation receiving sound doctrine, in being reprov'd, in being corrected, and in being instructed in righteousness (II Tim. 3:16–17).

Churches from the time of our Lord can only be true churches if, by definition, they are the pillars and foundation of the truth. This is the great burden that was placed on Paul, Timothy, and all called pastors since the first century. God has employed men to be preachers of His truth in the context of a local assembly. Their primary responsibility is to be faithful to that office. This faithfulness has not been entrusted to a few men who have stood with hands held in an unbroken chain–link these last two thousand years.

#### CHURCH AUTHORITY

Baptists must ask themselves a very basic question that concerns Church Authority. Is an unbroken succession of visible, independent churches from the time of the Apostles necessary to validate our existence as orthodox New Testament churches? The answer is 'No.' If the answer is 'Yes,' we must concede that men are born into the Kingdom of God through church affiliation and blood rights instead of the regenerating grace of God. This of course is contrary to the teaching of Matt. 28:18–20. All authority is given to Jesus Christ. He is the head of our churches (Acts 20:28). His churches are commanded to carry out His commandments but He has retained His authority. Church authority is limited to the membership of a local church and their submission to His commandments. Men must be born again to become children of the living God and this fact makes The Gospel, not the church, the agency by which men become citizens of the heavenly kingdom.

#### THE AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH: CHRIST AS HER HEAD

The local church, with her Head as the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 23:8, 16:18; Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:22–23; Col. 1:18), is distinct and independent from every civil or ecclesiastic body of influence. Jesus stated, *'And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter (Πέτρος, a pebble, rock, or stone), and upon this rock (πέτρα, a mass of rock which points to the Lord Jesus Christ) I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'* This statement confirms that the church is not built on Peter's confession of faith, but instead, on the Lord Jesus Christ alone. The Local Church answers to Christ, her King, and no one else. Thus, it is of the highest priority of every local church to have and submit to no other authority or standard other than the Bible.

Baptist churches have been, historically, autonomous for two reasons. The first is doctrinal, in that it conforms to the New Testament pattern (there is no evidence of any associations or denominations in the New Testament). The second is practical, in that it will more easily enable a church to conform to New Testament doctrines and

principles. Membership into or loyalty to a denomination necessarily forces a church to conform to its doctrinal standards and places the local churches in an untenable situation that forces them to submit to the church leaders, councils, and creeds.

#### FELLOWSHIP BETWEEN CHURCHES

Churches fellowship one with another on the basis of like–mindedness, therefore fellowship is based on an analysis of each local church's relationship to the truth. The essential belief of the Local Church is that the Scriptures were given by divine revelation to every man. The Scriptures are not the property of civil governments, synods, popes, presbyters or church councils. If a local church submits to any councils or organizations outside of its realm, it necessarily sets aside the Scriptures as its rule for faith and practice and, consequently submits to extra–biblical authority. There is no evidence in the New Testament showing that a church or a body of churches could exact any authority over an independent church. Hence, no minister of a local assembly can interfere, in an official capacity, in the polity of another church.

#### THE ORIGIN OF THE BAPTISTS IS NOT FOUND IN 'CHAIN-LINK' SUCCESSION

Sadly, there has been a movement in the United States since the late 1800s by some Baptists in trying to establish Baptist succession (i.e., perpetuity) back to the time of Christ's earthly ministry through the so-called 'chain-links.' The so-called, 'fourteen chain-links' came from an article published in several periodicals in 1921 and 1922 dealing with the ancestry of the Baptist Church of Dyer, Tennessee (author unknown). The article sought to prove an unbroken chain–link from the church at Dyer, Tennessee, to the Hill Cliffe Church of Wales, to a church in the valleys of the Piedmont, all the way back to Polycarp, who was baptized by the Apostle John, and John who was the beloved friend of Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup>

The article from Dyer, Tennessee has generated a modern movement that has gone so far as to say that if a church is not related to these links through baptism they cannot be regarded as a true church of Christ. This has caused devastating effects on our Baptist churches across our great land. This position has been coined 'Neo–Landmarkism' because it does not correspond with the beliefs of the founder of Landmarkism, J.R. Graves. Ironically 'Neo–Landmarkism' has used the same argument for validation as a true church as the Roman Catholic Church has. The only difference between the two is that Rome traces its authority back to the Apostle Peter and Neo–Landmarkism traces its authority back to the Apostle John. Roy Mason states, 'Baptists do not claim perpetuity upon the basis of a successive and unbroken chain of baptisms.'<sup>4</sup>

The mistake many Baptists in our generation are making in attempting to validate our antiquity and authority as

the church of the living God is founded on a misunderstanding of the doctrine of church perpetuity. Just because many of our theological and ecclesiastical opponents believe that validation as a church or denomination is found in chain-link succession does not mean we have to argue on their terms. Baptist churches must not and, frankly, cannot prove an unbroken chain or continuity of churches back to apostolic times to prove Baptist perpetuity. This notion cannot be found in the principles of Landmarkism. Robert Robinson sums up this controversy well, saying, 'Uninterrupted succession is a specious lure, a snare set by sophistry, into which all parties have fallen.'<sup>5</sup>

#### THE HERESY OF THE 'ESSENTIAL MOTHER-DAUGHTER AUTHORITY'

The nature of New Testament Baptist churches far transcends the chain-link theory of church perpetuity. The model for all Baptist churches is found in the New Testament. Membership into Baptist churches requires a credible profession of faith followed by baptism by immersion and ratified by a vote of the church. Jesus Christ instituted the assemblies of Christians. He ordained Elders and Deacons. He set forth His laws and standards for the churches. His subjects enforce those laws among themselves. His churches are governed by the manifest will of God which is only found in the Word of God. This means that no earthly institution or authority can supersede the Word of God. There is no 'Mother Church' that by right can lord itself over so called inferior churches.

Some Baptists believe the logical consequences of Chain-Link succession is 'that there is an essential authority which must be given by a mother church to a group of baptized believers (the daughter) in order for them to constitute a new church. These members must be members of the mother church in order for them to receive this authority.'<sup>6</sup>

Years ago a letter was circulated across the United States by a certain Reformed Baptist church. This particular church was a member of a well-known Baptist association. This church was in submission to the ruling elders of the association. In other words, the church's existence was defined and bound up in the association. The letter that was sent out revealed that a new church in another area was being established and they were the motivating principle behind the founding of that new church. They asked that churches across America pray for the mother church, which sent the letter, because 'they were pregnant with church.' Obviously, this language cannot be found in the writings of Luke or Paul. The newly established church, although started by a missionary from the church who sent the letter, could only find its right to exist as a New Testament Baptist church through its faithfulness to New Testament principles and practices found in the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. In the

case of this newly formed church they were taught from their inception that their only right to exist came from the authority of the 'Mother Church.' It must be stated that some 'extreme' views of EMDA hold that the mother church can revoke the 'franchise license' of an inferior church. Bill Stang, writing in *Voice in the Wilderness*, p. 35 states, "True churches come from true churches; but that's not all: they remain true to their Lord. For in every franchise there is, if the franchisee will not abide by the guide lines of the franchiser, the franchiser is within full right to revoke the franchise."

#### THE GREAT RESPONSIBILITY OF BAPTIST CHURCHES

Baptist church perpetuity is preserved by each and every local assembly's faithfulness to the New Testament. The focus of perpetuity is on the Lord who has been faithful throughout every generation by means of His local churches. A true New Testament Baptist church finds its validity in its life as a church. It is not an historic life but a spiritual life that flows from the saving work of Jesus Christ and is manifested in its relationship to the living truth of the Gospel. The truth of Scripture and the witness of history testify of our great Baptist heritage. It is found in one overriding principle—faithfulness to the Word of God.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is a mistake of grand proportion for Baptist churches to believe that they have the right to exist because of their associations with a certain conference or group or their relationship to a chain-link of baptisms. This will only give the members of these churches and associations a false sense of security in believing because they are members of a longstanding church or group of churches they are eternally secure. This is the end result of a faulty view of church perpetuity which carries with it eternal consequences.

Baptists must understand that the terms 'Church' and 'Christianity' are not synonymous. All churches, including Baptist churches must prove their right to exist by one standard only—The Word of God. This is the only standard by which we may judge ourselves to be called 'Christian.'

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## Essential Texts for a Biblical Approach of Apologetics (3). Romans 1:18-21.

By Paul S. Nelson

Romans 1:18-21 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

### INTRODUCTON

Romans 1:18-21 is arguably the most important passage of Scripture for establishing a biblical approach to apologetics. Some have called it a charter for the doctrine of natural revelation because it explains the unbeliever's certain knowledge of God acquired through the witness of creation. The following article discusses both external and internal aspects of natural revelation, and man's hostile reaction to it. It addresses the unbeliever's bias against the knowledge of God and suggests a corresponding apologetic method. If we are to defend the faith we must know how our opponents think, and how unbelieving thought manifests itself. Our method of apologetics must confront the bias of unbelieving thought.

### NATURAL REVELATION AND THE UNBELIEVER'S KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Natural revelation<sup>1</sup> is the revelation of God in everything he has made. God shows us who he is through his creation. Accordingly, Romans 1:18-21 vividly describes the acquisition of a general knowledge of God through the works of creation (external) and by the very constitution of man's nature (internal). It is an inescapable knowledge of God that is everywhere present. All created reality is revelational of the nature of God.

In v.20 the apostle Paul states, *'For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.'* What are the *'invisible things'* the unbeliever knows about God? Paul tells us they are *'his eternal power and Godhead.'* It is not simply knowledge of God's existence, but of his nature and attributes. Not only is God's *'eternal power'* (τε ἀίδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις) revealed in his works of creation, but all his divine excellencies. The term *'Godhead'* in the Greek (θειότης) is a collective term for all the divine perfections, i.e., the attributes of God. This general knowledge of God comes *via* the senses through creation, and is *'clearly seen.'* The verb *'clearly seen'* (καθορᾶται) has reference to looking down from above and means to see thoroughly. It implies sense perception combined with an intellectual apprehension.<sup>2</sup> The participle *'being understood'* (νοούμενα) has reference to the mind and gives the sense of possessing an intellectual comprehension. Both verb and participle are

in the present tense denoting that man continually sees and understands the nature of God. Further, we note that man acquires this clear knowledge *'through the things which are made.'* The apostle is asserting that all people know God and he states it explicitly in v.21 - *'they knew God.'* The existence and nature of God are obvious. Men cannot open their eyes without being compelled to see him.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, this general knowledge of God is not just acquired from a mere external revelation, but also by the very constitution of man's nature. Man possesses a general knowledge of God by virtue of being created in the image of God; a knowledge that is innate and intuitive within him. Paul says, this knowledge of God is manifest *'in them'* (ἐν αὐτοῖς), i.e., in their hearts and minds, within the very constitution of their nature (v.19).<sup>4</sup> A sense of deity (*sensus divinitatus*) has been implanted within the human mind of all men which is correlative to God's natural revelation in the works of creation. It is stamped on man's innermost being. Therefore, because man was made a rational and moral creature as God's image bearer, he necessarily apprehends the manifestations of God in his works of creation and providence. It is impossible for man to separate himself from the reality of his own constitution.

Through both external and internal aspects of natural revelation, God's moral attributes and standards are also understood. Natural man knows the justice of God and understands the revelation of God's wrath against sin. When he looks into the heavens, he understands that they declare *'the wrath of God'* (v.18). By natural revelation, every man knows the righteous judgment of God and that they *'are worthy of death'* (v.32). When Paul speaks of the unbeliever in v.32 as *'knowing the judgment of God,'* he uses an intensified form of the participle *'knowing'* (ἐπιγινώσκοντες) which means to fully know. The unbeliever fully knows the righteous character and justice of God. Further, in Romans 2:14-15, Paul argues how the law of God, being the expression of God's moral character, is written in the heart of every unbeliever, and their conscience bears witness to it. Indeed, every human being has a sense of deity by which he understands the judgment of God, that he is under the wrath of God, and worthy of eternal death (vv.18, 21, 32). No person can escape this witness of God; it is indelibly inscribed upon his heart. Every man knows God by virtue of being created in the image of God.

Although God has revealed himself to each and every person with unmistakable clarity, this does not mean that everything that can be known about God has been revealed to the unbeliever. For example, the gospel of Jesus Christ is only revealed through the special revelation of Scripture. However, natural revelation gives a sufficient knowledge to render every man inexcusable. Because this knowledge is inescapable, Paul asserts that the unbeliever is *'without*

*excuse* (ἀναπολογία) before God (v.20). The unbeliever has no defense. He knows that he is guilty and accountable to God.

### NATURAL REVELATION AND THE UNBELIEVER'S REACTION

The natural knowledge that every man has of God must be carefully distinguished from the reaction that man makes to this revelation. Unregenerate man rebels against the knowledge of God because it brings him face-to-face with his Creator and condemns him. He knows he is guilty before God and hates it. He loves darkness and hates the light, because his deeds are evil (John 3:19-20). Scripture everywhere teaches that the natural man is hostile to the knowledge of God.

The unbeliever is so opposed to the truth that he actively seeks to suppress it. It is the epitome of his rebellion against God. In v.18, we are told all unbelievers '*hold the truth in unrighteousness.*' The Greek verb for '*hold*' is κατεχόντων which literally means to '*hold down.*' It is a deliberate act of suppressing and repressing the truth of God. And it is done '*in unrighteousness.*' The present tense of the verb '*hold*' denotes a continual act. The unregenerate are continually suppressing the truth in their wickedness. '*They did not like to retain God in his knowledge*' (v.28). The truth about God is obnoxious to them.

In v.21 we find that the unbeliever refuses to glorify God or thank him. He is afflicted with vanity in his thinking. '*But became vain in their imaginations*' denotes futile speculation and worthless reasoning. Further, '*their foolish heart was darkened*' denotes being stupid and unintelligent (ἀσύνετος). The passive mood in the Greek for '*was darkened*' (έσκοτίσθη) gives the sense of being covered with darkness. This describes the noetic effects of sin. The unbeliever lives in a stupor and is utterly self-deceived. He is anything but neutral in his thinking. He exalts his reasoning against the knowledge of God (2 Cor. 10:5). His very intellect is constantly devising schemes by which he thinks he may overthrow God.

The remainder of chapter one (vv.22-32) continues to show how unregenerate man constantly suppresses the knowledge of God. He daily changes the glory of God revealed in creation into idols (v.23). He daily denies the Creator-creature relationship by worshiping and serving the creature rather than the Creator (v.25). He daily changes the truth of God into the lie (v.25). He daily refuses to keep God in his remembrance (v.28). And he daily delights in those that rebel against the knowledge of God (v.32).

In summary, the reaction of natural man to the certain knowledge of God revealed in creation is rebellion. Sinful man actively, constantly and deliberately suppresses, denies, perverts, devalues and exchanges the truth of God for the lie. He seeks to define and interpret reality apart from God. He is buried in self-deception. But try as he

may, it is impossible for man to escape the knowledge of God. The *sensus divinitatus* is indelibly inscribed upon his heart.

. . .to be continued in next issue

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## Thoughts on Revival<sup>1</sup>

by William R. Downing

### THE GREAT NEED OF THIS HOUR

We live in a day of religious pragmatism and innovation. Indeed, something new has come to pass in this generation. It has always been that professed men of God would look at the contemporary from the perspective of the inscripturated Word of God. But now, we find, even among Evangelicals and Fundamentalists, that professed men of God are looking at the Word of God from the perspective of the contemporary and thus completely misunderstanding and misrepresenting both God and his truth. The words of E. M. Bounds, written well over a century ago, are to the point for our time:

'What the church needs today is not more machinery or better; not new organizations or more and more novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use—men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come through machinery but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men—men of prayer.'

### THE GOSPEL AND EVERY BELIEVER

There are some who think that preaching alone will build the church, i.e., that the individual Christian who sits in the pews is more or less a spectator to the gospel ministry. Nothing could be further from the truth! We each have the burden and privilege of bearing the good news to our fellow human beings. The words of C. H. Spurgeon, written in 1881, are quite true for today:

'Any Christian has the right to disseminate the gospel who has the ability to do so; and more, he not only has the right, but it is his duty so to do as long as he lives. The

propagation of the gospel is left, not to a few, but to all the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ: according to the measure of grace entrusted to him by the Holy Spirit, each man is bound to minister in his day and generation, both to the church and among unbelievers. Indeed, the question goes beyond men, and even includes the other sex; whether believers are male or female, they are all bound, when enabled by divine grace, to exert themselves to the utmost to extend the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.'

#### HOW GOD MAY USE ONE PERSON

Revivals in history have often begun with only one person who became burdened enough to pray, and pray until the blessing came. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote:

'Now, you will find that in all these instances, the movement began with just one man. Take the man who began the prayer meetings in Fulton Street in New York City in 1857, a most ordinary man, but he felt this burden, and did something about it. The revival in Northern Ireland, started with just that one man, James McQuilken. And the same was true in Wales, with one man only, called Humphery Jones, who, feeling the power of revival in America, felt a burden for his own country and crossed the Atlantic back to Wales, and began to tell people about it. Now, I emphasize this for one reason only...somebody...whom I do not know, may be the person that God is going to use. And that sort of thing can only happen in the Christian Church, it does not happen in the world....let us get out of this deplorable modern habit which seems to have possessed the Christian Church, and which makes the ordinary church member think that he or she can do nothing at all...No, the teaching of the Bible is the exact opposite, it may be you that God is going to use. You are an unknown church member. It does not matter. In the hands of God, you may be the channel....Are you concerned about the situation? Have you got a zeal for the glory of God?...If this is a burden that can come to anybody, why has it not come to you? Let us leave it at that, but remember that it may be the action of just one person.'

#### PRAYER AND REVIVAL

There is a direct correlation between prayer and revival. Both Scripture and history witness that there is a direct connection between prayer meetings and revival. God does not send revival and spiritual awakening to people who do not pray—ardently, fervently, passionately and perseveringly seek the face of God for them. The great prototype of all revival, which began on the Day of Pentecost, was preceded by a prayer meeting which was characterized by concentration, perseverance and unity of purpose (Acts 1:14).

Can we expect revival—the blessing of the presence and power of the Spirit of God reviving the church and converting the unsaved—unless we pray? Unless we have meetings specifically for prayer? We must pray, we must

pray together, we must pray earnestly, we must persevere, and we must pray with a unity of purpose, laying aside all personal agenda and anything foreign or grievous to the Holy Spirit. What glorious blessings we only obtain through prayer!

#### PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

Both Scripture and history witness to the effectiveness of prayer for revival and spiritual awakening. This relation was instituted at Pentecost by the waiting church at Jerusalem (Acts 1:14). It was renewed during that great, Apostolic revival (Acts 4:24–31). Subsequent history has repeatedly witnessed to this relationship between prayer and revival. Examples can be seen and historically verified by remaining records in the Kirk O' Shotts Revival in 1630, the Cambuslang Revival in Scotland in the 1740s, the Baptist prayer meetings in the eighteenth century which resulted in both revival and the beginnings of the modern missionary movement, the revival under Spurgeon's ministry in London in 1854, and in the 'Great Prayer Revival' which began on Fulton Street in New York City in 1858 and spread over both the United States and throughout Great Britain. The Welsh Revival and the subsequent spread of its influence around the world from 1904 to 1910 to such places as Africa and Korea was carried on by believing prayer. May the witness of both Scripture and history stir us to believing and persevering prayer!

#### LONGING FOR REVIVAL

Revival has been described as 'a people saturated with God.' To be overpowered by a sense of God, however, may not be something wonderful; it might be utterly devastating. Do we long for revival? Do we earnestly long for God to give us a sense of himself, of his holiness and our unholiness? of his righteousness and our unrighteousness? of his absolute sovereign power and our creatureliness and utter lack of power? Have we come to realize in the very depths of our being the words of our Lord, '*without me ye can do nothing*'? Are we willing to come to terms with our sins? our secret, heart sins? every sin?

When revival came to the large gathering of Korean pastors in the 'Korean Pentecost' of 1908, it came with a confession of sin which was devastating. One recalls that he never wanted to attend such a meeting again as long as he lived! He said that every sin imaginable was openly confessed that night. The Spirit of God was mightily at work and nothing was held back. Is this really what we want? True, fervent prayer will lead to confession of sin, and confession of sin will bring God's blessing. But are we willing to come to terms with our most treasured sins? As the sinner must be brought low by a conviction of sin before he finds peace in the Lord Jesus, so revival might well mean the same devastating experience before the blessing is sent by God.

### THE REALITY OF REVIVAL

What is 'revival'? It is an out-pouring of the Spirit of God which produces a heightening of the spiritual life of an individual, a church, a community or a society. The idea of revival and spiritual awakening are usually combined. Thus, we think of revival as producing a large number of converts. Our concept of revival is largely through the Scriptures and the study of historical accounts. Few in this generation have personally witnessed revival. The last wide-spread revival occurred about a century ago. Since that time there have been localized revivals in which God has been pleased to do mighty things. In this secular, technological age, revival may seem distant, abstract, something confined to past history, or even imaginary. But revival stands in both Scripture and history as undisputed fact. We must not let such escape our reading, our thoughts and our prayers. In our day, people and churches are looking to their own methods and innovations to produce results. Evangelical religion is largely reduced to the psychological level. Prayer is often a mere formality. Ah, but Scripture and history witness to the presence and power of God in the out-pouring of the Spirit. May we continue to seek the face of our God for return of his blessing. Let us pray for revival.

<sup>1</sup>This article was compiled from various short articles that appeared in the weekly Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Silicon Valley church bulletin.

*Living a Holy Life continued from page 1 . . .*

The apostle Paul is baring the soul of a saint who has attained, by God's grace, an acute consciousness of sin. If the Spirit of God were to convict us of virtually all of our sins each day, it is very likely that we would conclude that Paul was not exaggerating the problem of indwelling sin in Romans chapter 7 even though it reads that way to a spiritually dull mind. But as it is, we sin in our mind and so quickly rationalize it away that we scarcely notice the transgression. This scenario typically occurs when we are deciding what to do with our so-called leisure time. The Lord would have us study, or pray, or help someone or otherwise do good, but we would rather watch television or read a magazine or go exercise. These latter activities are, of course, not inherently evil, but they can be if they are done in lieu of fulfilling the will of God; if we dare to consider our motivations. Welcome to Paul's world of Romans chapter 7.

It is a given that our combat against indwelling sin<sup>10</sup> and corruption will continue as long as we live. The fact that we will not and can not absolutely mortify sin in this life is not arbitrary or accidental. Rather, it is for our good and God's glory. We show all the heavenly host how much we love the Lord and hate sin by continuing in the faith and not giving in to the temptation to turn from the faith and give up. Our situation is similar to Job's. Not the same,

but similar in the sense that we have to trust God despite our circumstances. Our struggles with sin are never ending. The apostle understood this so he asks, '*Who shall deliver me from this body of death?*' Paul is keenly aware of the gap between our daily lives and the sanctified life we are called to live. As the intimacy of Romans 7 has shown, Paul was conscious of his sin and very sensitive to his infirmity. He knows that sin is a power from which the soul cannot get free. Not in this life. He very openly lays out his personal struggles. He fought the good fight and so must we. Let us persevere in the faith and obtain that great prize, the goal or end of our faith, that is, the salvation of our souls.<sup>11</sup> To God be the Glory.

### REFERENCES

1. Romans 8:13 *For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* Here 'mortify' is θανατοῦτε; to kill, put to death.
2. Colossians 3:5 *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth.* Here mortify is νεκρώσατε; to treat as dead, put to death. Moreover, the verb is in the aorist imperative which denotes a call to an urgent, immediate action.
3. The Apostle provides a few lists of deeds of the body and our members which are upon the earth. For example, see the rest of Col. 3:5, Gal. 5:19-21.
4. KJV Ephesians 2:1 *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.* KJV Colossians 2:13 *And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.*
5. Paul uses the emphatic personal pronoun. I; *I am carnal having been sold under sin.* ἐγὼ δὲ σάρκινός εἰμι πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τῆν ἁμαρτίαν.
6. In verse 15 the phrase '*which I do*' and in verse 17 the phrase '*that do it*' and in verse 18 the phrase '*to perform*' and in verse 20 the phrase '*no more I that do it*' all render the verb κατεργάζομαι, to do or accomplish; to produce or bring about or work out.
7. Verses 15 through 20.
8. The word translated '*is present*' in verses 18 and 20 is παρᾶκειται and means to be present or at hand.
9. H.C.G. Moule, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Minneapolis, MN: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, 1982).
10. Paul uses the term indwelling twice, in verse 17 and then in verse 20 of chapter 7.
11. 1 Peter 1:9.