

Michael A.G. Haykin  
CALVINISM AND REVIVAL

One of the key means by which God has brought about a renewal of interest in Reformed teaching and doctrine over the past forty years has been the British Westminster Conference (formerly known as the Puritan Conference). Organized in the 1950s by, among others, Martyn Lloyd-Jones and J. I. Packer, this conference, which still meets annually in December, has played a vital role in awakening evangelicals to the riches of Puritan and Reformed theology. For many years it was customary for Lloyd-Jones to give the final address of the conference. The first of such addresses was the one that he gave in 1959 entitled “Revival: An Historical and Theological Survey.”<sup>1</sup> Lloyd-Jones began his address by defining revival as “an experience in the life of the church when the Holy Spirit does an unusual work.” These extraordinary movements of the Spirit consist first of all, he stated, in the “enlivening and quickening and awakening of lethargic, sleeping, almost moribund church members” and then in “the conversion of masses of people who hitherto have been outside in indifference and in sin.”<sup>2</sup> Lloyd-Jones went on to illustrate his

---

<sup>1</sup> For the full address, see D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors. Addresses Delivered at the Puritan and Westminster Conferences 1959-1978* (Edinburgh: the Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), 1-23.

<sup>2</sup> Lloyd-Jones, *Puritans*, 1-2.

definition of revival from the history of the church and from Scripture, and to show that “the history of the progress and development of the church is largely a history of revivals, ... these mighty exceptional effusions of the Spirit of God.” Now, what is so striking about Lloyd-Jones’ survey of revival from the history of the church is how large a place revivals have occupied in the Reformed tradition. In fact, Lloyd-Jones asserts that one of the main reasons why revivals have not been prominent in this century is due to the fact that the final half of the nineteenth century witnessed a widespread turning away from Reformed theology which continued unabated until the late 1940s.<sup>3</sup>

### *The French Reformation*

Now, among one of the Holy Spirit’s new-covenant works has been what has been variously termed “revival,” “awakening” or “renewal.” A few examples will help us to understand something of the variety of what we are thinking about here.

If one looks at the massive advance of the gospel in Europe during the time of the Reformation this advance can be adequately explained only in terms of spiritual revival. Take France as an example. From small beginnings in the 1520s when handfuls of

---

<sup>3</sup> Lloyd-Jones, *Puritans*, 4-5.

men and women in France embraced the Evangelical faith, among them John Calvin (1509-1564), the numbers grew and grew year by year. It has been estimated that by the time of Calvin's death in 1564 there were roughly 1,200 Calvinistic congregations in the country with around two million members, which was about a tenth of France's population.<sup>4</sup> And the emergence of these congregations occurred in the space of less than fifty years! The French Reformation was like a mighty river that completely altered the landscape of the history of France.

*Kirk of Shotts, June 1630*

In the seventeenth century, a number of Calvin's spiritual heirs, the Puritans, also knew revival first-hand.<sup>5</sup> For instance, a celebration of the Lord's Supper at Shotts near Glasgow on Sunday, June 20, 1630 was attended by such a rich sense of the presence of God that at the end of the services, instead of retiring to bed, the people continued together in prayer and devotion throughout the night. Evidently it was not the custom at that time to have a further service on the Monday following the communion. Yet God had so presenced himself with them that they were unable to part without

---

<sup>4</sup> Mark Greengrass, *The French Reformation* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, Ltd., 1987), 43.

<sup>5</sup> For good discussions of revival during the Puritan era, see Iain Murray, "The Puritans and Revival Christianity", *The Banner of Truth*, 72 (September 1969), 9-19; J. I. Packer, "Puritanism as a Movement of Revival" in his *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 199), 35-48; R. E. Davies, *I Will Pour Out My Spirit: A History and Theology of Revivals and Evangelical Awakenings* (Tunbridge Wells, Kent: Monarch Publications, 1992), 63-68.

further thanksgiving and praise. A Monday preaching service was therefore arranged, and a young man called John Livingstone (1603-1672), chaplain to the Countess of Wigton, was persuaded to be the preacher.

He too had spent the previous night in prayer. Alone in the fields, at eight or nine in the morning, he was so overcome with a sense of his unworthiness (particularly as so many choice ministers and experienced Christians were present) that he thought he would slip away quietly. He had actually gone some way and was almost out of sight of the church when the words “Was I ever a barren wilderness or a land of darkness?” were so impressed upon his heart that he felt bound to return and preach. What was to ensue was a most remarkable demonstration of the power and the grace of God under the preaching of his Word.

Livingstone preached for an hour and a half or so upon Ezekiel 36:25-26: “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.” He was about to finish when a heavy shower of rain caused people in the churchyard to

cover themselves hastily with their cloaks. This prompted the preacher to continue:

If a few drops of rain so discompose you, how discomposed would you be, how full of horror and despair, if God should deal with you as you deserve? And God will deal thus with all the finally impenitent. God might justly rain fire and brimstone upon you, as he did upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other cities of the plain. But, for ever blessed be his name! the door of mercy still stands open for such as you are. The Son of God, by tabernacling in our nature, and obeying and suffering in it, is the only refuge and covert from the storm of divine wrath due to us for sin. His merits and mediation alone are the screen from that storm, and none but those who come to Christ just as they are, empty of everything, and take the offered mercy at his hand, will have the benefit of this shelter.<sup>6</sup>

Livingstone continued preaching in such a manner for a further hour, experiencing, in his own words, “such liberty and melting of heart, as I never had the like in public all my lifetime”. The impact of this rich outpouring of the Spirit of God was close to five hundred individuals were converted that day.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Cited “Revival Snapshots: Kirk of Shotts”, *Evangelical Times*, 31, No.6 (June 1997), 16.

<sup>7</sup> Michael J. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace: Colonial New England's Revival Tradition in Its British Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 24-25.

*William Williams and the Welsh Revival*

In the following century, in 1738, a twenty-one year old medical student named William Williams (1717-1791) was returning home to Carmarthenshire when he happened to pass through a little village called Talgarth in Breconshire. It was Sunday and the village church bell was calling the village parishioners to worship and Williams joined them. But the service that morning was spiritually cold and lifeless. As he came out of the church, however, he was amazed to see, another young man standing on top of a table tomb. It was the evangelist Howell Harris (1714-1773). Harris had been prevented from preaching within the church and thus had resorted to the graveyard. It was a sermon, Williams would later recall, that was “unusually terrifying.” Around him the words of the evangelist were being driven home by the Spirit of God to sinful hearts and sinners were coming to Christ.

Unlike the revival at Kirk O’Shotts, though, this incident was part of a nation-wide revival. Known as the Great Awakening in Wales, Howell Harris described it in the early days to the English preacher George Whitefield (1714-1770) thus:

The outpouring of the Blessed Spirit is now so plentiful and common, that I think it was our deliberate observation that not one sent by Him opens his mouth without some

remarkable showers. He comes either as a Spirit of wisdom to enlighten the soul, to teach and build up, and set out the works of light and darkness, or else a Spirit of tenderness and love, sweetly melting the souls like the dew, and watering the graces; or as the Spirit of hot burning zeal, setting their hearts in a flame, so that their eyes sparkle with fire, love, and joy; or also such a Spirit of uncommon power that the heavens seem to be rent, and hell to tremble.<sup>8</sup>

Not surprisingly, William Williams never forgot the day he heard Harris preach. “It was a morning,” he wrote many years later, “which I shall always remember, for it was then that I heard the voice of heaven...”<sup>9</sup> Henceforth Williams regarded himself as a pilgrim on his way to the celestial city.<sup>10</sup>

When William Williams, Pantycelyn<sup>11</sup> died in 1791, he had, we are told, written some 860 hymns and over 90 books, and had travelled nearly 112,000 miles as an itinerant preacher during this revival.<sup>12</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones considered Williams to be “*the* theologian of Welsh Calvinistic Methodism,” which was born in that Welsh

---

<sup>8</sup> Cited Eifion Evans, *Daniel Rowland and the Great Evangelical Awakening in Wales* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1985), 243.

<sup>9</sup> Cited Tim Shenton, *Christmas Evans: The Life and Times of the One-Eyed Preacher of Wales* (Darlington: Evangelical Press, 2001), 34.

<sup>10</sup> Eifion Evans, “‘A most gifted, respected and useful man’: Part 1: A Survey of Williams’ Life” in his trans. of William Williams, *Pursued by God* (Bryntirion, Bridgend: Evangelical Press of Wales, 1996), 17.

<sup>11</sup> “Pantycelyn” was the name of his mother’s old home, which he inhabited from 1748 onwards after his marriage.

<sup>12</sup> Eifion Evans, *Daniel Rowland and the Great Evangelical Awakening in Wales* (Edinburgh/Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth Trust, 1985), 63.

revival.<sup>13</sup> His great contribution to that revival was in the realm of “experimental hymnody and revival apologetic.”<sup>14</sup> His hymns were a central vehicle in the extension of the revival and also in creating a hunger for literacy.<sup>15</sup> Thomas Charles of Bala later said of him:

He was one of the most gifted, respected and useful men of his age. His gift of poetry was naturally and abundantly given him by the Lord. ...His hymns wrought a remarkable change in the religious aspect of Wales, and in public worship. Some verses in his hymns are like coals of fire, warming and firing every passion when sung...<sup>16</sup>

Again Lloyd-Jones can say of William’s hymn-writing:

The hymns of William Williams are packed with theology and experience...William Williams was the greatest hymn-writer of them all. You get greatness, and bigness, and largeness in Isaac Watts; you get the experimental side wonderfully in Charles Wesley. But in William Williams you get both at the same time.<sup>17</sup>

Regretfully, only a very few of his hymns have been translated into English, among them are “Guide me, O thou great Jehovah” and “O’er the gloomy hills of darkness.”

---

<sup>13</sup> “William Williams and Welsh Calvinistic Methodism” in his *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors* (Edinburgh/Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth Trust, ), emphasis added.

<sup>14</sup> Evans, *Daniel Rowland*, 63.

<sup>15</sup> W. Glanffrwd Thomas, “Welsh Hymnody” in John Julian, ed., *Dictionary of Hymnology* (1907 ed.; repr. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1985), 2:1251.

<sup>16</sup> Cited *Daniel Rowland*, 63.

<sup>17</sup> Cited Evans, *Daniel Rowland*, 296.

*The revival of the Calvinistic Baptists*

In the seventeenth century one of the most spiritually alive denominations in the British Isles were the Calvinistic Baptists. From the early 1640s, when there were only seven churches in England, they grew to the point, where, by 1689, there were close to three hundred congregations. It is important to remember that Baptist growth during this period came in the midst of persecution. In the 1660s and early 1670s a series of laws were passed which made it illegal to worship in any other setting but that of the Established Church and which basically reduced any but Church of England members to second-class citizens. Between 1660 and 1688 Baptists who refused to go along with these laws often ended up paying substantial fines or experiencing life-threatening imprisonment.

Religious toleration finally came in 1689. The Baptists were now free to plant and build congregations, though it was still illegal for them to evangelize outside of their church buildings. Yet, despite the advent of toleration, the denomination as a whole began to plateau in its growth and, in some parts of England, it actually went into decline. In 1715 there were around 220 Calvinistic Baptist churches

in England and Wales; by 1750 that number had dwindled to about 150.

The Baptists did not emerge from this spiritual “winter” until the last two or three decades of the century. There were a variety of reasons for what amounts to a profound revival among their ranks. There was theological reformation, in which the Hyper-Calvinism of the past and which had dominated far too many congregations was largely rejected in favour of a truly evangelical Calvinism. Then there were calls for repentance. For instance, Andrew Fuller, in his *Causes of Declension in Religion, and Means of Revival* (1785), outlined the spiritual apathy then reigning among many Baptists of his day.

It is to be feared the old puritanical way of devoting ourselves wholly to be the Lord’s, resigning up our bodies, souls, gifts, time, property, with all we have and are to serve him, and frequently renewing these covenants before him, is now awfully neglected. This was to make a business of religion, a life’s work, and not merely an accidental affair, occurring but now and then, and what must be attended to only when we can spare time from other arrangements. Few seem to aim, pray, and strive after eminent love to God and one other. Many appear to be contented if they can but remember the time when they had such love in exercise, and then, tacking to it the notion of perseverance without the thing, they go on and on, satisfied, it seems, if they do but make shift just to get to heaven at last, without much caring how. If we were in a proper spirit, the

question with us would not so much be What must I do for God? as, What can I do for God? A servant that heartily loves his master counts it a privilege to be employed by him, yea, an honour to be entrusted with any of his concerns.<sup>18</sup>

Many, Fuller noted, were merely content to get to “heaven without concerning themselves overly about *how* they get there.” The practice of giving oneself wholly to God that had been common among the seventeenth-century Puritans had generally ceased to be part of late eighteenth-century Baptist piety. This apathy was well revealed in the question, “What I must do for God?” In other words, they were asking, “What is the minimum I must do to get to heaven?”

Seeking to change this dire situation, Fuller suggested:

If it is required “What then is to be done? Wherein in particular can we glorify God more than we have done?”, we answer by asking: Is there no room for amendment? Have we been sufficiently earnest and constant in private prayer? Are there none of us that have opportunities to set apart particular times to pray for the effusion of the Holy Spirit? Can we do more than we have done in instructing our families? Are there none of our dependents, workmen, or neighbours that we might speak to, at least so far as to ask them to go and hear the gospel? Can we rectify nothing in our tempers and behaviour in the world so as better to recommend religion? Cannot we watch more? Cannot

---

<sup>18</sup> *The Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, ed. Joseph Belcher (Repr. Harrisonburg, Virginia: Sprinkle Publications, 1988), III, 320.

we save a little more of our substance to give to the poor? In a word, is there no room or possibility left for our being more meek, loving, and resembling the blessed Jesus than we have been?<sup>19</sup>

Here, Fuller listed five ways in which his fellow Baptists could prepare themselves for renewal. At the top of the list is (1) prayer; then (2) the cultivation of Christianity in the home; (3) witnessing to unbelievers; (4) honest examination of what needs to be changed in one's character and purposefully seeking to change it; and finally, (5) the development of a spirit of generosity to those in need.

However, Fuller went on to stress, one's heart attitude was also important. "Think it not sufficient that we lament and mourn over our departures from God. We must return to him with full purpose of heart." As Fuller reflected on this matter of heart-renewal, he urged his readers to "cherish a greater love to the truths of God; pay an invariable regard to the discipline of his house; cultivate love to one another, frequently mingle souls by frequently assembling yourselves together; encourage a meek, humble, and savoury spirit."<sup>20</sup>

Above all, Fuller emphasizes, there must be prayer.

---

<sup>19</sup> *Complete Works*, III, 320.

<sup>20</sup> *Complete Works*, III, 324.

Finally, brethren, let us not forget to intermingle prayer with all we do. Our need of God's Holy Spirit to enable us to do any thing, and every thing, truly good should excite us to this. Without his blessing all means are without efficacy and every effort for revival will be in vain. Constantly and earnestly, therefore, let us approach his throne. Take all occasions especially for closet prayer; here, if anywhere, we shall get fresh strength and maintain a life of communion with God. Our Lord Jesus used frequently to retire into a mountain alone for prayer, he, therefore, that is a follower of Christ, must follow him in this important duty.<sup>21</sup>

The year before Fuller wrote these words there had actually begun regular meetings for prayer, which met for one specific object: to pray for biblical revival.

#### *The Prayer Call of 1784*

The origin of these prayer meetings can be traced back to the year 1784, to a town called Nottingham in the heart of England, where in June of that year, the pastors of the Baptist churches belonging to the Northamptonshire Association were meeting. Earlier that year a treatise on corporate prayer for revival by Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), the New England divine, had come into the hands of John Sutcliff (1752-1814), the Baptist pastor of Olney, Buckinghamshire. Deeply impressed and moved by this treatise, Sutcliff proposed to

---

<sup>21</sup> *Complete Works*, III, 324.

his fellow pastors that a monthly prayer meeting be established to pray for the outpouring of God's Spirit not only upon the Baptist churches of England, but also upon all those churches that loved the Lord Jesus. This proposal ran as follows:

Upon a motion being made to the ministers and messengers of the associate Baptist churches assembled at Nottingham, respecting meetings for prayer, to bewail the low estate of religion, and earnestly implore a revival of our churches, and of the general cause of our Redeemer, and for that end to wrestle with God for the effusion of his Holy Spirit, which alone can produce the blessed effect, it was unanimously RESOLVED, to recommend to all our churches and congregations, the spending of one hour in this important exercise, on the first Monday in every calendar month.

We hereby solemnly exhort all the churches in our connection, to engage heartily and perseveringly in the prosecution of this plan. And as it may be well to endeavour to keep the same hour, as a token of our unity herein, it is supposed the following scheme may suit many congregations, viz. to meet on the first Monday evening in May, June, and July, from 8 to 9. In Aug. from 7 to 8. Sept. and Oct. from 6 to 7. Nov. Dec. Jan. and Feb. from 5 to 6. March, from 6 to 7; and April, from 7 to 8. Nevertheless if this hour, or even the particular evening, should not suit in particular places, we wish our brethren to fix on one more convenient to themselves.

We hope also, that as many of our brethren who live at a distance from our places of worship may not be able to attend there, that as many as are conveniently situated in a village or neighbourhood, will unite in small societies at the same time. And if any single individual should be so situated as not to be able to attend to this duty in society with others, let him retire

at the appointed hour, to unite the breath of prayer in private with those who are thus engaged in a more public manner.

The grand object of prayer is to be that the Holy Spirit may be poured down on our ministers and churches, that sinners may be converted, the saints edified, the interest of religion revived, and the name of God glorified. At the same time, remember, we trust you will not confine your requests to your own societies [i.e. churches]; or to your own immediate connection [i.e. denomination]; let the whole interest of the Redeemer be affectionately remembered, and the spread of the gospel to the most distant parts of the habitable globe be the object of your most fervent requests. We shall rejoice if *any other Christian societies* of our own or other denominations will unite with us, and do now *invite them* most cordially to join heart and hand in the attempt.

Who can tell what the consequences of such an united effort in prayer may be! Let us plead with God the many gracious promises of His Word, which relate to the future success of His gospel. He has said, “I will yet for this be enquired of by the House of Israel to do it for them, I will increase them with men like a flock.” Ezek. xxxvi.37. Surely we have love enough for Zion to set apart *one hour* at a time, twelve times in a year, to seek her welfare.<sup>22</sup>

The focus of this momentous call to prayer was the “revival of our churches, and of the general cause of our Redeemer.” How was this to be achieved? By “the effusion of [God’s] Holy Spirit, which alone can produce [this] blessed effect.” There is, in these words, a distinct recognition that the revival of the denomination lay ultimately in the

---

<sup>22</sup> The Prayer Call of 1784 [in John Ryland, Jr., *The Nature, Evidences, and Advantages, of Humility* (Circular Letter of the Northamptonshire Association, 1784), 12]. For a detailed discussion of this call to prayer and its historical context, see Michael A. G. Haykin, *One heart and one soul: John Sutcliff of Olney, his friends and his times* (Darlington, Co. Durham: Evangelical Press, 1994), 153-171.

hands of God the Holy Spirit, and all of their labours without his blessing would come to nought. Yet, those who issued this statement were not High Calvinists who expected results without the use of means. And thus they encouraged their congregations to gather for prayer once a month for one hour on the first Monday of the month.

The heart of the “Prayer Call” is to be found in the fourth and fifth paragraphs. There the conviction that reversing the downward trend of Calvinistic Baptists could not be accomplished by mere human zeal is mentioned again. It must be effected by an outpouring of God’s Holy Spirit: “the grand object of prayer is to be that the Holy Spirit may be poured down on our ministers and churches, that sinners may be converted, the interest of religion revived, and the name of God glorified.” Without the Spirit all of the church’s best efforts to bring men and women to Christ will fail, all of her noblest attempts to edify God’s people and bring glory to God’s name fall short of success. The Spirit is the true agent of renewal and revival. Thus, there was a desperate need for prayer.

Then, there is the “inclusive” nature of the praying. As the Calvinistic Baptists of this Association came together for prayer, they were urged not to pray solely for their own churches or even for their own denomination, but to embrace in prayer other Baptist

churches throughout the length and breadth of England, and even churches of other denominational bodies.

Third, there is a definite missionary focus: the readers of this call to prayer are encouraged to pray that there would be a spread of the gospel “to the most distant parts of the habitable globe.” It is important to note that it was out of this group of praying Baptists that William Carey (1761-1834) came, the so-called father of the modern missionary movement. All great missionary ventures are born in the cradle of prayer.

Fourth, there is the Scriptural foundation for the call to pray for revival. Only one text is cited—Ezekiel 36:37—but those who drew up this document were well aware that there are other biblical texts that could be cited. One of Sutcliff’s friends, Thomas Blundel, has this to say with regard to this verse from Ezekiel: “It is chiefly in answer to prayer that God has carried on his cause in the world: he could work without such means; but he does not, neither will he. ...He loves that his people should feel interested in his cause, and labour to promote it, though he himself worketh all in all.”<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> *The River of Life Impeded* in his *Sermons on Various Subjects* (London, 1806), 183, 184.

*The record of revival*

There is little doubt from the record of history that God heard the prayers of Sutcliff and his fellow Baptists. As they prayed, the Calvinistic Baptists in England began to experience the blessing of revival, though, it should be noted, a great change was not immediately evident. For instance, in 1785, Sutcliff's close friend Andrew Fuller reported about their meetings for prayer:

It affords us no little satisfaction to hear in what manner the monthly prayer meetings which were proposed in our letter of last year have been carried on, and how God has been evidently present in those meetings, stirring up the hearts of his people to wrestle hard with him for the revival of his blessed cause. Though as to the number of members there is no increase this year, but something of the contrary; yet a spirit of prayer in some measure being poured out more than balances in our account for this defect. We cannot but hope, wherever we see a spirit of earnest prayer generally and perseveringly prevail, that God has some good in reserve, which in his own time he will graciously bestow.<sup>24</sup>

The stirring up of many to wrestle in prayer for revival was considered by Fuller as more than balancing the failure to increase the membership of the churches. And so it was resolved “without any hesitation, to continue the meetings of prayer on the first Monday evening in every calendar month.”<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> *Causes of Declension in Religion, and Means of Revival (Works, III, 318).*

<sup>25</sup> Cited Arthur Fawcett, *The Cambuslang Revival* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1971), 230.

By 1798 there were close to 361 Calvinistic Baptist churches in England and Wales. This number had risen to 532 by 1812, and in 1851 it stood at over 1,370. From a more personal angle, one can observe the revival that was taking place in the following extracts from the letters of Andrew Fuller.<sup>26</sup>

In the year 1810 Fuller noted in a letter to William Carey: “I preached a sermon to the youth last Lord’s Day from 1 Thess 2:19. I think we must have had nearly one thousand. They came from all quarters. My heart’s desire and prayer for them is that they may be saved.” Fuller was still rejoicing when he wrote to a fellow Baptist pastor, John Ryland, on December 28: “I hope the Lord is at work among our young people. Our Monday and Friday night meetings are much thronged.” A couple of months later he told Ryland: “The Friday evening discourses are now, and have been for nearly a year, much thronged, because they have been mostly addressed to persons under some concern about their salvation.” And what was happening in Fuller’s church was happening in Baptist causes throughout the length and breadth of England and Wales.

---

<sup>26</sup> The following extracts from the letters of Andrew Fuller are all cited by Doyle L. Young, “The Place of Andrew Fuller in the Developing Modern Missions Movement” (Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1981), 232.

A second fruit of the revival was the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792 with Andrew Fuller as the first Secretary. The following year William Carey was sent out as the Society's first missionary. Carey had been converted in the late 1770s and had eventually become a member of the church that John Sutcliff pastored in Olney. Not long after his conversion Carey was gripped by the responsibility that the church had been given by the risen Christ in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) to spread the good news to the ends of the earth. It needs to be recalled that part of the Prayer Call of 1784 had urged prayer for "the spread of the gospel to the most distant parts of the habitable globe." The formation of this society was a direct result of prayer for revival.

Carey would labour in India until his death in 1834. The impact of his missionary labours can be well seen in the following extract from a letter by an Anglican evangelical named Thomas Scott, who had known Carey in his early years. Writing on December 3, 1814, to John Ryland, Jr. (1753-1825), a close friend of both Carey and Fuller, Scott stated:

I do most heartily rejoice in what your missionaries are doing in India. Their's is the most regular and best conducted plan against the kingdom of darkness that modern times have shewn; and I augur the most extensive success. More genuine Christian wisdom, fortitude, and disinterested assiduity, perseverance, and

patience appear, than I elsewhere read of. May God protect and prosper! May all India be peopled with true Christians! — even though they be all baptists ... The Lord is doing great things, and answering prayer every where.<sup>27</sup>

### *Concluding words*

When Sutcliff was dying in 1814, amongst the things which he said one statement in particular stuck in the minds of his family and friends: “I wish I had prayed more.” It was an amazing statement for Sutcliff to make, for he had been a key figure in a movement of prayer, which was definitely owned by God to bring revival to the English Calvinistic Baptists. When Andrew Fuller heard what his dear friend Sutcliff had said, he reflected on it thus:

I wish that I had prayed more. I do not suppose that brother Sutcliffe meant that he wished he had prayed more frequently, but more *spiritually*. I wish I had prayed more for the influences of the Holy Spirit, I might have enjoyed more of the power of vital godliness. I wish I had prayed more for the assistance of the Holy Spirit, in studying and preaching my sermons: I might have seen more of the blessing of God attending my ministry. I wish I had prayed more for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to attend the labours of our friends in India; I might have witnessed more of the effects of their efforts in the conversion of the heathen.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> John Scott, *Letters and Papers of the Rev. Thomas Scott* (London: L. B. Seeley and Son, 1824), 254.

<sup>28</sup> Cited John W. Morris, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev Andrew Fuller* (London, 1816), 443.

Sutcliff's dying statement was used here by Fuller as a test of his own prayer life and in the process, he found it wanting. Yet, seen in the light of all that we have looked at, Sutcliff's statement as he lay dying and Fuller's reflection on it also reveals something else: a profound awareness that the Spirit's blessing and empowerment in personal and corporate revival is *the* most important aspect of the believer's life and the Church's life.