

History and Philosophy of Spiritual Warfare

Introduction

- A. Spiritual warfare an important part of the Biblical message.
- B. Was a time in my life, teaching, and ministry when this message had very little practical importance. I found, by God's grace, that I had been deceived, disobedient, and was responsible to lead people into freedom from the enemy.
- C. Necessary to understand the Biblical message, how to implement that message, and why it is so often denied by Bible believing evangelicals today.

I. The Testimony of the Lord Jesus.

- A. Luke 4:16-18 - "War Captives" - David Gooding According to Luke.
- B. Luke 9:1,2.
- C. Luke 10:1, 17-20
- D. Luke 11:20 -- Basic characteristic of the Kingdom of God.
- E. Matthew 28:18-20 -- We are to practice and teach what He taught/commanded Disciples.

II. The Testimony of the Early Church.

- A. Philip's ministry - Acts 8:5-8
- B. Recognition of demons - Acts 19:13-17
- C. Paul's commission - Acts 26:18
- D. Paul's instruction - Ephesians 6:11-18
- E. Peter's instruction - I Peter 5:8,9
- F. Historical reference - Mark 16:15-20
Found in Tatian's Diatesseron - 170; quoted by Irenaeus (d202); and by Tertullian (d220).

III. The Testimony of the Post-Apostolic Church

- A. Justin Martyr (110-165)
For numberless demoniacs throughout the whole world, and in your city, many of our Christian men exorcising them in the name of Jesus Christ, Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, have healed and do heal, rendering helpless and driving the possessing devils out of the men, though they could not be cured by all the other exorcists and those who used incantations and drugs. (Second Apology, Chp. VI)
- B. Tertullian (145-220)
Let a person be brought before your tribunals who is plainly under demoniacal possession. The wicked spirit, bidden to speak by a follower of Christ, will as readily make the truthful confession that he is a demon, as elsewhere he has falsely asserted that he is a godAll the authority we have over them is from naming the name of Christ, and recalling to their memory the woes with which God threatens them at the hand of Christ their judge, and which they expect one day to overtake them. Fearing Christ in God, and God in Christ, they become subject to the servants of God and Christ. So at our touch ... they leave at our command the bodies they have entered, unwilling, and distressed, and before your very eyes are put to an open shame.
Apology, Chp. 23

IV. The Testimony of Historian Edward Gibbon, The Triumph of Christendom in the Roman Empire. (Harper and Brothers)

- A. Question: By what means the Christian faith used to gain a victory over the established religions of the earth and the Roman Empire. Pg 2.
- B. Answer: 1. Zeal; 2. Future Life; 3. Miracle Powers; 4. Pure Morals; 5. Unity of the Church. Pg 3.
- C. "The Christian Church, from the time of the apostles ... has claimed an uninterrupted succession of miraculous powers ... the power of expelling demons, and of healing the sick Pg 30.

V. The Testimony of Henry Kelly, The Devil at Baptism (Cornell, 1985).

VI. The Testimony Given by Books Written.

- A. William Gurnall, The Christian in Complete Armor. (B.1616) Banner of Truth
- B. John Bunyan, The Holy War, 1682
- C. Pastor Johann Blumhardt (1805-1880) Blumhardt's Battle: A Conflict with Satan.
- D. John Nevius, Demon Possession and Allied Themes. (1894) Revell
- E. Jesse Penn-Lewis and Evan Roberts, War on the Saints. 1912
- F. E. M. Bounds, Satan, (d. 1913) Baker
- G. Charles Usher, Spiritual Equipment for the Last Days. 1920 Marshall Brothers
- H. C.S. Lewis, Screwtape Letters, 1943 and That Hideous Strength, 1946

VII. The Testimony of an O.T. Professor, Dr. Merrill Unger.

Dr. Unger had written an earlier book, Biblical Demonology, in 1952 and said that wicked spirits could not develop inner control in believers. Many wrote to him. And, as he studied further he wrote Demons in the World Today, in 1971.

"Certainly there is no excuse for the Church to surrender its charismatic power to head and deliver from Satanic oppression. In the very measure that it does, it advertises its spiritual bankruptcy and makes itself a weak institution that no longer commands the respect of the spiritually needy masses. No wonder multitudes are seeking spiritual reality in Oriental religions, non-Christian faiths and occult oriented perversions of Christianity." Demons in the World Today, p. 190, Tyndale House.

VIII. An Evaluation of Our Present Historical Position.

- A. The aversion of many Evangelicals to the principles of spiritual warfare.
 - 1. The evidence of many pastors and Christians who are honest, well trained, and who to live for God and yet have serious hindrances in their life. These men and women know the message of Romans 6-8 and how to be filled with the Spirit and yet live with marital problems, immorality, and uncontrolled sinful habits. I do not mean to blame the enemy for all our problems -- but Christianity works -- and when honest

people try to live for God, and know how to do so, then continual failure and hindrance has a reason. And, it may be the enemy.

2. The evidence of missionaries, who after years of training, go to the mission field and who not only are unable to do the work God called them to do, but have mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual problems that do not yield to treatment. The rate of one term missionaries is tragically high.
3. There are those godly men and women who are leaders in evangelical schools, mission boards, and organizations, who believe all the correct doctrines, and yet do not believe that there can be any type of serious inner working of the enemy in a believer's life.
 - a. As a result many are not well trained and are unprepared for the battle.
 - b. These leaders who should have trained them for the battle, are also the first to criticize those who learn how to do warfare, and lead in putting them out of their position in the school, church, and mission agency.

B. The reason for this condition among us as Evangelicals.

1. Our fallen nature is opposed to Biblical supernaturalism. It is not a matter of Biblical doctrine -- it is in the practice of supernaturalism that we become afraid and resist it.
2. A second reason is the work of the enemy.
3. A third and powerful reason is that we, as Evangelicals, have accepted much of the principles that were developed in the Enlightenment.
 - a. There are three great movements that we must keep in mind.

1). The Renaissance (14,15,16th Centuries)

A revival of interest in the early Greek and Roman classics, its literature and how that literature applied to life. It was a turning to pagan humanism.

2). The Reformation (16,17 Centuries)

A reaction to the deadness and non-Biblical practices in the Church. Martin Luther (d. 1546) led the way. The outcome was a new emphasis on the Bible alone as our authority.

3). The Enlightenment (18th Century)

Development of humanistic principles. The time of the Industrial Revolution in which science, as we know it today, really had its start.

The use of machines like the steam engine to produce power, and machines to manufacture goods.

Peter Gay, in his excellent book, The Enlightenment: an Interpretation (Vintage Books), stated that Gibbon in writing The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire spoke of the Enlightenment as "a bridge thrown across the swamp of the Christian Millennium." (P. 58)

The principles of the Enlightenment were developed by Immanuel Kant (d. 1804). In 1784 he wrote an article.

"The Enlightenment was man's coming of age. It was man's emergence from the immaturity which caused him to rely on external authorities as the Bible, the Church, and the state to tell him what to think and do. No generation should be bound by the creeds and customs of bygone ages. To be so bound is an offense against human nature, whose destiny lies in progress." (quoted by Colin Brown in The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology (Baker))

Immanuel Kant, although a Lutheran, laid the groundwork for what was known later as 19th century Liberalism. And he opened the door to all types of Deism and Agnosticism.

b. The serious nature of the Enlightenment World View.

1). Harold Lindsell, in his book, The New Paganism, stated:

"Whoever fails to understand what the Enlightenment did cannot understand the role of the church in modern culture. Until the fact of the demise of the church as a primary factor in Western civilization is seen, the need for another reversal will not be perceived and no orderly plan will be put into operation to effect any change." (P. 45) (Harper and Row, 1987)

2). Charles Kraft, in his book, Christianity With Power, (Servant Publications, 1989) states,

In reacting against the excesses of extreme religious credulity, Enlightenment thinkers threw out, or at least raised serious questions about, belief in anything that could not be rationally understood. And these assumptions have become a part of our worldview so that quite unconsciously we have all imbibed their influences from birth." (P. 25) See chapter four of his book which is entitled: "Enlightenment Christianity is Powerless".

c. Some of the characteristics of the Enlightenment "World View."

1). Naturalism -- a tendency to explain life by natural law - no miracles.

- 2). Materialism -- Overemphasis on success and security due to material gain. And that matter is more real and powerful than spirit.
 - 3). Rationalism -- That life is basically rational "I only believe what I can understand." "I need scientific proof." "That doesn't seem possible."
 - 4). Scientism -- That life can be understood and solved by science.
 - 5). Humanism -- That true values are found in mankind. A rejection of supernaturalism.
 - 6). Psychologism -- The application of Naturalism, Rationalism, and Humanism to the study of mankind. Our problems are basically only psychological and can only be solved from within that viewpoint.
- C. The evidence that we as Evangelicals have accepted, unknowingly, many facets of these Enlightenment errors.
1. First of all in how we interpret the Bible. While holding to all the basic doctrines of the Bible, we have a tendency to downplay its supernatural content. We look with great suspicion on any reference to angels, wicked spirits, healing, and the gifts that characterized the Early Church. We are willing to die for the Bible on a doctrinal level, but do not want to accept any practical application of much of supernaturalism.
 2. Then the evidence of what we do when we are sick, or have hard cases of mental and emotional problems in our Churches. We tend to think of prayer last.
 3. We tend to think of Christianity in the past as powerful, and the Christianity of the future as powerful, but we are embarrassed to talk about power today. And, when we talk of prayer, and the great promises related to prayer, our embarrassment thermometer takes an abrupt rise.

IX. What Can We Do?

- A. We must be willing to examine our hermeneutical approach to the Bible.
- B. We must repent for our Enlightenment World View.
- C. We must pray for discernment regarding our deception re. supernaturalism.
- D. We must be humble, admit we need help, and be willing to change.
- E. We must appeal to God for Help.

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