

The

Berean Searchlight

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

January 2005



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The **Purpose** of the *Berean Bible Society* is to help you understand and enjoy the Bible. The **Mission** of BBS is to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ by proclaiming the whole counsel of God according to the revelation of the Mystery. Our **Goals** are to evangelize the lost, to educate the saved in "rightly dividing the Word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15), to energize their Christian lives, and to encourage the local church.

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From the Editor to You:



Dearly Beloved,

We are sincerely grateful to all those who pray for us and faithfully support the *Berean Bible Society* financially. Your dedication to the things of the Lord has brought many dear saints into a fuller understanding of His will. The blessing you've been to the ministry, however, need not end when you are ushered into His eternal presence. Your desire to see others reached with the gospel of the grace of God can easily be accomplished even after your promotion to glory, if you plan ahead.

As you review your portfolio in the New Year, please consider having the *Berean Bible Society* included in your Will. Of course, you should not neglect to remember your loved ones as well. Since we have lost a number of bequests over the years due to fraud, may we suggest that you name an *impartial* Executor, such as your family Attorney, to guarantee that your wishes are honored. You might also consider speaking to your Financial Adviser about other creative ways to help meet the needs of the Lord's work, such as a Charitable Remainder Trust, or naming BBS as the beneficiary on your Life Insurance Policy. These are a few ways to ensure that your legacy will be used to the glory of God.

Historically, the gifts received from estates at the *Berean Bible Society* have helped us replenish our literature inventory. I recall shortly after I came to BBS in 1987 that our supply of *Things That Differ* was nearly depleted. Pastor Stam and I discussed the matter of having it reprinted, but decided we could not manage this type of major expenditure due to insufficient funds. We have always had a policy at BBS to never spend money we don't have in hand. About this time we received notification of distribution of funds from one of the brethren who had named us in his Will, which more than covered the reprinting of *Things That Differ* in both hardcover and paperback. Surely a great recompense of reward awaits all those who remember the Lord's work.

“But this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you” (II Cor. 9:6-8).

In His loving kindness,
Paul M. Sadler, President

Can God Forget?

By Pastor Ricky Kurth



“And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (Heb. 10:17).

We know that God *forgives* the sins of His people, but does He *forget* them? It would seem so. Our text suggests that He “*will not remember*” the sins committed against Him by His children (Isa. 43:25). Believers have always found a great deal of comfort in this blessed thought.

But then God calls upon us to likewise forgive others “*even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you*” (Eph. 4:32). Doesn’t this suggest that we too should forgive *and forget*? Perhaps you are thinking, “But Pastor, you don’t know what they did to me!” True, but was it more than what was done to God when men crucified His Son? Remember, God’s vow to forgive and forget the sins of His people includes even the brutal murder of His only begotten Son.

We are tempted to think, “Well, it’s easy for God to forget,” but such is not the case. God says of the sins of *unbelievers* that He “*will NEVER forget ANY of their works*” (Amos 8:7). How then can this God of “total recall” forget *our* sins? Does His memory have a convenient “on/off” switch that makes it easy for Him to forgive and forget? If so, then we who do *not* have such a switch would have an excuse for forgiving but not forgetting. But if God has such a switch, would He not also have to erase His memory of Calvary, or else forever wonder why His Son had to die? But it cannot be that God could forget the Cross, for Revelation 5:6 joins John 20:27 to reveal that the Lord’s resurrection body will *forever* bear the scars of the Cross, making it impossible for God—or *us*—to ever forget His sacrifice for our sins.

What then is the answer to our question? Can God forget our sins? Perhaps the reader has noticed that we never read that God will *forget* the sins of His people, but rather that He “*will not remember*” them. By a deliberate act of His “will” He *chooses to act toward us AS IF He has forgotten our sins*, on the basis of the blood of the Cross. That’s how fully and completely He has forgiven our sins. And if we are to forgive others “*as*” God forgave us, then we too must choose to act toward others as if we have so fully forgiven their transgressions against us that we have forgotten them—*also* on the basis of Christ’s shed blood. This and this alone is complete forgiveness of others, and it is high spiritual ground indeed.

May God help us to begin the new year with a slate wiped clean of “*all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking...with all malice*” (Eph. 4:31).

The Importance of the Local Church (Part II)

By Paul M. Sadler



**“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”
—Acts 16:31**

On any given Sunday morning it is fairly common for someone to slip into a worship service who has yet to trust Christ. We sometimes assume those who have gathered to worship know the Lord, but this is not always the case. This is why it is essential to give a clear presentation of the gospel to those present, *without exception*. A classic example is the conversion of Charles Spurgeon, the great English preacher. In his own words Spurgeon recounts the snowy Sunday morning he attended a local assembly in December 1849:

I sometimes think I might have been in darkness and despair until now, had it not been for the goodness of God in sending a snowstorm one Sunday morning, while I was going to a certain place of worship. I turned

down a side street, and came to a little *Primitive Methodist Church*. In that chapel there may have been a dozen or fifteen people. I had heard of the *Primitive Methodists*, how they sang so loudly that they made people’s heads ache; but that did not matter to me. I wanted to know how I might be saved.

The minister did not come that morning; he was snowed in, I suppose. At last a very thin-looking man, a shoemaker, or tailor, or something of that sort, went up into the pulpit to preach....He was obliged to stick to his text, for the simple reason that he had little else to say. The text was—“Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” He did not even pronounce the words rightly, but that did not matter. There was, I thought, a glimmer of hope for me in that text.

The preacher began thus: “This is a very simple text indeed. It

says, 'Look.' Now lookin' don't take a great deal of pain. It aint liftin' your foot or your finger; it is just 'Look.' Well, a man needn't go to College to learn to look.... Anyone can look; even a child can look. "But then the text says, *Look unto Me!* Ay!" he said in broad Essex, "many of ye are lookin' to yourselves, but it's no use lookin' there. You'll never find any comfort in yourselves. Some say look to God the Father. No, look to Him by-and-by. Jesus Christ says, 'Look unto Me.' Some of ye say, 'We must wait for the Spirit's workin.' You have no business with that just now. Look to *Christ*. The text says, 'Look unto Me.'"

Then the good man followed up his text in this way: "Look unto *Me*; I am sweatin' great drops of blood. Look unto *Me*; I am hangin' on the Cross. Look unto *Me*; I am dead and buried. Look unto *Me*; I rise again. Look unto *Me*; I ascend to heaven. Look unto *Me*; I am sitting at the Father's right hand. O poor sinner, look unto *Me!* Look unto *Me!*"

When he had managed to spin out about ten minutes or so, he was at the end of his tether. Then he looked at me under the gallery, and I daresay, with so few present, he knew me to be a stranger. Just fixing his eyes on me, as if he knew all my heart, he said, "Young man, you look very miserable." Well, I did, but I had not been accustomed to have remarks made from the pulpit on my personal appearance before. However, it was a good blow, it struck right home. He continued, "And you will always

be miserable—miserable in life and miserable in death—if you don't obey my text; but if you obey now, this moment, you will be saved." Then lifting up his hands, he shouted, as only the *Primitive Methodist* could do, "Young man, look to Jesus Christ. Look! Look! Look! You have nothing to do but look and live!"

I saw at once the way of salvation. I know not what else he said—I did not take much notice of it—I was so possessed with that one thought. I had been waiting to do fifty things, but when I heard that word, "Look!" what a charming word it seemed to me. Oh! I looked until I could have almost looked my eyes away.

There and then the cloud was gone, the darkness had rolled away, and that moment I saw the sun; and I could have risen that instant, and sung with the most enthusiastic of them, of the precious blood of Christ, and the simple faith which looks alone to Him. Oh! that somebody had told me this before, "Trust Christ, and you will be saved."¹

EVANGELISM

One of the goals of the local church is to establish believers in the Word of God. With this in mind, we believe there needs to be a greater emphasis placed on *evangelism* in our Grace Churches. As we have seen above, it is important to interject the gospel in our preaching and teaching of the Scriptures for those who may be present that are outside of Christ. But there should also be a concerted effort to challenge the

members of the local assembly, “to do the work of an evangelist” (II Tim. 4:5). There is a misconception among the Lord’s people that it is the pastor’s responsibility to go door to door in the community to reach the lost for Christ—after all, “we hired him to do the work of the ministry.” The truth of the matter is God has called the pastor to edify and equip the members of the assembly for this purpose (Eph. 4:11,12).

“Beloved ones,
we must never
allow the fear of
men to silence us...”

Of course, the lion’s share of a pastor’s ministry will be devoted to glorifying God through the proclamation of the Word, rightly divided. But there must also be time set aside to remind the saints that they are the voice of reason that stands between the unsaved and the eternal consequences of their sins. Essentially, it is the pastor’s responsibility to put the proper tools into the hands of his people so they can evangelize those who are in danger of the judgment to come. If your assembly isn’t growing numerically it needs to ask itself if the members are actively sharing the gospel in their daily walk.

Paul said to Timothy, who tended to be somewhat timid at times: “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be

not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord” (II Tim. 1:7,8). Beloved ones, we must never allow the fear of men to silence us, otherwise the glorious gospel of Christ will be hid from those who so desperately need it.

While we do not endorse all the teachings of the Baptists, we do have to commend them for their *boldness*. The reason there is a Baptist Church in nearly every major town in America is because they actively share the good news of Christ and Him crucified with everyone they come in contact with in their community. Both my wife and I are a product of their evangelistic efforts. As former Baptists, we were *passionately* challenged by our leaders that we must not sit idly by while our loved ones and friends perish. They reminded us again and again of the importance of having a burden for lost souls.

UNION OR UNITY

“And he [Paul] went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches” (Acts 15:41).

As Paul departed from Antioch to undertake his second apostolic journey, he and Silas went through Syria and Cilicia *confirming* the local assemblies that were established prior to the apostle’s first missionary journey. A large part of Paul’s ministry was confirming the faith that was first delivered to the Gentiles by him. With Paul as our pattern, the objective of every local church should be to edify its members so they can more effectively serve the Lord in their daily experience. Here a

capable teacher of the Word that teaches the whole counsel of God in view of Paul's revelation is indispensable. The Word of God creates *unity* among the Lord's people. During the Reformation when the Scriptures were heatedly debated, Philipp Melancthon, a friend of Martin Luther, wrote: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."

But what constitutes the "essential doctrines" which have come to be known as the Christian faith? Historically it is those teachings that have been generally accepted as being *undeniable* by the household of faith, such as the inspiration of the Scriptures, the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, the depravity of man, the bodily resurrection, the state of the dead, the pre-millennial return of Christ, etc. Interestingly these teachings are usually denied in one form or another by the cults—therefore, these fundamentals of the faith distinguish us from the cults.

With the recovery of Paul's gospel the founding fathers of the Grace Movement saw the importance of *adding* to our doctrinal statements the primary teachings of grace. Thus the essentials of the faith for our Grace assemblies include salvation by grace through faith alone, the one baptism, the commission of reconciliation, the blessed hope, etc. These additions stress the importance of rightly dividing the Word of truth. Whether we are speaking of the fundamentals of the faith or the unique doctrines of

grace, *all* of the above is based upon the Scriptures, which is our final authority.

Though important, the non-essentials of the faith are those teachings not always agreed upon by the brethren. In other words, they are open for further discussion. For example: We are forgiven in Christ, but will our sins be brought into view at the Judgment Seat of Christ? Did the Body of Christ begin in Acts 9 or Acts 13? Is the Body of Christ the Bride of Christ? Was Paul out of the will of God when he went to Jerusalem in Acts 21? Who wrote Hebrews? While convictions run deep on these biblical subjects they should never disrupt our fellowship with one another. The key word here is *liberty!* Until we come into the unity of the faith at the Rapture we sometimes have to agree to disagree, but we must always do so in love.

So then, the essential doctrines of the faith delineated in a doctrinal statement serve to bring *unity* to the local assembly. It is also a safeguard against the inroads of unsound teachings. So that all things might be done decently and in order, we encourage local churches to adopt a membership role in conjunction with a comprehensive church constitution. Customarily two things are required, a clear testimony for Christ and full agreement with the doctrinal statement. Membership is a deterrent against hostile takeovers by unscrupulous brethren who have no desire to preserve the testimony of grace in the community.



Perhaps a word should be said here about the difference between “union” and “unity.” If I take two pieces of metal and bolt them together, that’s *union*. However, if I melt the same two pieces of metal down and pour it into a mold to produce a tool, that’s *unity*. Unity speaks of *oneness*. When unbelievers are permitted to join the membership of a local church, as dignified and capable as they might be, that’s union. Paul says, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?” (II Cor. 6:14). If a believer rejects aspects of a church’s statement of faith and joins in membership this, too, is union. Both of these circumstances are sure to cause a division in the assembly if they are tolerated.

When a local assembly acknowledges the essentials of the faith it produces unity. After years of laboring in the gospel together, Paul said of Timothy, “I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state” (Phil. 2:20). That’s *oneness!* Sadly this was not true of all believers in his day. Due to the carnality of the Corinthians the apostle had to admonish them to be *one*.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus

Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (I Cor. 1:10).

Please note here that Paul is not addressing those who were standing for the truth, but those who had *departed* from the faith. They were the ones who were to realign themselves with sound doctrine that the oneness of the assembly might be restored. When problems arise in the church today many are of the opinion that those who have defended the truth over the years should cave in for the sake of peace. Mark these words and mark them well, compromise never creates unity; rather, it produces a union which neutralizes the Word of God.

EDIFICATION

Another function of the local church is to edify or build up the saints in the faith that has been handed down to us. Since sound doctrine governs our Christian walk the two cannot be separated, although many have given it the old college try to their own peril. The goal is to ground the Lord’s people in the Word of God, rightly divided, that they might become more spiritually minded. This will single-handedly eliminate many

of the problems that plague local assemblies.

The moment the sinner trusts Christ an eternal relationship is established which eventually touches every other relationship of their life. Today this relationship is rooted in *grace*, not the law. The law is powerless to help us live the Christian life. Dr. Kenneth Wuest expressed it this way:

*Do this and live the law commands,
But gives me neither feet nor hands.*

*A better word the gospel brings,
It bids me fly and gives me wings.*

If there is one thing that will poison the vitality of a local assembly it's legalism. At Galatia the Judaizers taught the Galatians, who had been saved by grace, they could become more spiritual by keeping the Law of Moses. Paul commends them that they had begun well, but if they placed themselves back under the Law they essentially had fallen from grace (Gal. 3:1-4; 5:1-4).

“The law is powerless
to help us live the
Christian life.”

The particular Baptist assembly I was once associated with had a special knack for putting its members on a guilt trip for failure to observe their rules and traditions, which is another form of legalism. There was an unspoken list of “do’s” and “don’ts” that had to be closely followed or you could be shunned without the official pronouncement, such as would be the case in the Amish community.

The so-called pillars of the assembly set what they felt was the acceptable standard of appearance, attendance, giving, conduct, etc.

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:11,12).

Beloved, God sets the standard and the standard today is GRACE. Grace brings liberty! It is patient, understanding, forgiving, and allows for differences. If someone attends a service a bit unkempt with different color socks or two different types of shoes, I don't really care, I'm just grateful they're under the sound of the Word. God has not called us to be the fashion police! He looks upon the heart, not on the outward appearance. That's the wonderful thing about grace; *it* will make whatever adjustments are needed in the believer's life to the glory of God.

The edification ministry of the local church should extend beyond the pulpit ministry to include home Bible studies, evangelism training, classes to introduce newcomers to Paul's gospel, youth group meetings, etc. Of course, the pastor cannot be expected to cover all of these ministries; therefore, it is important for leaders to be groomed within the assembly to assist him with these responsibilities.

To Be Continued!



Endnote

1. *Spurgeon*, by Arnold Dallimore, Moody Press, Chicago, Illinois, pages 18,19.

The following is a message delivered by Pastor Stam on Thursday evening, July 15, 1965, at the *Grace Gospel Fellowship Convention* in Cedar Lake, Indiana. This article appeared in the April, 1966 issue of *Truth* magazine, published by *Milwaukee Bible Institute/Worldwide Grace Testimony*, now the *Grace Gospel Fellowship*, but has never appeared in the *Searchlight*.

The Affliction of Christ

By Cornelius R. Stam

“I Paul...now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for His Body’s sake, which is the Church” (Col. 1:23,24).

Already I can almost hear some of you beginning to quote passages from Scripture which clearly indicate that our Lord suffered the full penalty for our sins at Calvary, that His vicarious sacrifice was a once for all matter. This is true, but it is not the whole truth.

A New York woman is supposed to have called Transworld Airlines one night to ask how long it would take to fly to Hawaii. When the young lady at the other end said, “Just a moment,” the woman said, “Thank you” and hung up! She didn’t listen long enough to get the true answer. Let’s not make this mistake here. Let us rather consider this passage thoughtfully and thoroughly so as to understand its true meaning.

WHAT IT DOES NOT MEAN

This passage certainly does not mean—it cannot mean—that Paul had to supply a lack in the vicarious suffering of Christ. This is clear, not only from Scripture as a whole, but from this very

epistle of Paul. Verse 20 of this very chapter speaks of God’s “having made peace through the blood of His Cross,” and verses 21 and 22 add:

“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled.

“In the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight.”

Again in chapter 2, verses 10-13, the apostle declares that believers are “complete” in Christ, having been identified with Him in His death and resurrection.

These passages in this very epistle speak of the glorious all-sufficiency of Christ’s finished work of redemption.

Once hostile to God and the things of God, we have now been reconciled and have in turn been commissioned to proclaim “the word of reconciliation” to others (II Cor. 5:19). Of this glorious message the Apostle Paul was the first to be “made a minister,” as he says in Colossians 1:23. But what, then, does verse 24 mean, where the apostle refers to “that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ”?

WHAT IT DOES MEAN

There is an interesting connection between verses 22 and 24 of this chapter. In verse 22 the apostle refers to “the body of HIS [Christ’s] flesh,” while in verse 24 he speaks of filling up what is behind of the afflictions of Christ “in MY flesh, for His Body’s sake.”

To understand the significance of this latter passage let us consider the background.

Psalm 2 predicts the Father’s response to man’s rejection of His Son:

“He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision.

“Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure” (Vers. 4,5).

Similarly, in Psalm 110:1, we find the Father saying to His rejected Son:

“Sit thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.”

Such predictions as these may be found throughout Old Testament prophecy, and nowhere is there any indication of any prolonged delay in the judgment, or of any period of grace between man’s rejection of Christ and the judgment to follow. This was a “mystery...hid from ages and from generations,” as the apostle points out in verse 26 of the passage we are considering.

It was when Jew had joined Gentile in declaring war on “the Lord” and “His anointed” (Psa. 2:1-3; 110:1), when the stage was fully set, as it were, for the outpouring of the bowls of God’s

wrath, that God interrupted the prophetic program by saving the leader of the rebellion and sending him forth as an ambassador of grace and reconciliation.

Thus Christ was to remain a voluntary exile as the rebellion on earth continued, and Paul, along with others, was to bear whatever sufferings might still remain in connection with the continued rejection of Christ. And this is exactly what happened.

Paul had been persecuting Christ (Acts 9:4) as he inflicted suffering and sorrow upon His saints, but now that the persecutor was saved, the Lord said to Ananias:

“I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name’s sake” (Acts 9:16).

Thus Christ was to remain “rejected of men,” but who was to bear the sufferings associated with His rejection? Surely not the Lord Himself, for He is forever blessed in heaven. These sufferings were now to be borne by Paul—and us. “That which is behind,” or which still remains, “of the afflictions of Christ,” is to be borne, not by Christ, the Head, but by us, the members of His Body.

Such suffering was sweet to Paul. If the apostles of the kingdom could rejoice that they were “counted worthy to suffer shame for His name” (Acts 5:41), how much more could the apostle of grace rejoice in bearing the afflictions of Christ so that he might continue to carry on his “ministry of reconciliation” and so add members to Christ’s precious Body!

This was nothing less than “the fellowship of His suffering” and the apostle longed to experience it more fully (Phil. 3:10).

We belong to a soft generation, in which most seem to think that living in ease and pleasure is man’s highest good. But those of us who are truly regenerated and have tasted of the riches of God’s grace in Christ should long, as Paul did, to experience, yes to enjoy, more fully, “the fellowship of His sufferings,” standing fast against all odds in the proclamation of the glorious message He has committed to us. The words of Paul to the Philippians on this subject are also God’s Word to us:

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake;

“Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me” (Phil. 1:29,30).

Just as Paul, Christ’s “Ambassador in bonds,” was a living demonstration of God’s grace to a rebellious world, so believers today who stand true to their glorified Lord to suffer for Him, are thereby telling the world that “the dispensation of the grace of God” is still in effect. The present “afflictions of Christ,” however, are not the result only of witnessing to the lost; they are often also the lot of those who defend the message of the glorified Lord against the inroads of false doctrine and practice. When Paul referred to “my sufferings for you” and declared that he suffered the afflictions of Christ “for His Body’s sake,” he did not mean only that

the Body might grow numerically, but also spiritually, through the teaching of the truth. It was his stand against false religion in defense of the truth that cost him the most suffering of all, but think of the far-reaching results!

“‘That which is behind,’...
‘of the afflictions of
Christ,’ is to be
borne, not by
Christ...but by us....”

It is true indeed that the sufferings of some believers are not exactly the sufferings of Christ but are due rather to their own failures. On the other hand, however, there is a growing feeling in more liberal circles today that those who witness tactfully to the world, as one with them, and stand diplomatically for the truth, will not be called upon to suffer for it, while in fact God’s Word declares:

“Yea, and ALL that will live godly in Christ Jesus SHALL suffer persecution” (II Tim. 3:12).

God helps us to faithfully “fill up that which is behind [still remains] of the afflictions of Christ... for His Body’s sake.” It is in this connection that the apostle declares:

**“...God would make known [to His saints] what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you [Gentiles], the hope of glory:
“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may**

*present every man perfect [ma-
ture] in Christ Jesus:*

*“Whereunto I also labor, striv-
ing according to His working,
which worketh in me mightily.*

*“For I would that ye knew
what great conflict I have for you
and for them at Laodicea, and for
as many as have not seen my face
in the flesh.*

*“That their hearts might be
comforted, being knit together in
love, and unto all the riches of
the full assurance of understand-
ing, to the acknowledgement [full
knowledge] of the mystery of God,
and of the Father, and of Christ”
(Col. 1:27-2:2).*

WHAT THIS MEANS TO US TODAY

All the prayers of a hundred thousand saints for revival, all the record-breaking evangelistic-revival campaigns, and all the organized efforts to establish unity by compromise will fail to bring about a true spiritual revival, as they have failed through the past several decades.

Since the revelation of the glorified Lord through Paul has been committed to us to proclaim, there will be no revival until this message is recovered and proclaimed, unadulterated and unmixed.

How can there be a spiritual revival while the church continues to work under the wrong commission and practices a dozen different baptisms? How can the Church enjoy true unity without

“God give us pastors,
teachers and laymen
who are willing to
suffer ‘the afflictions
of Christ...’”

a practical recognition of the Scriptural fact that “there is one Body,” whose members have been united to Christ and to each other “by one baptism”?

To stand for these truths faithfully entails suffering—suffering for His Body’s sake. But this suffering is sweet, first because it is “the fellowship of His suffering,” and second because such a stand brings great blessing to the hearts and lives of those who take heed, “their hearts...being knit together in love, and [advancing] unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding...” (Col. 2:2).

God give us pastors, teachers and laymen who are willing to suffer “the afflictions of Christ... for His Body’s sake,” who count position, popularity, and material gain as loss for Christ, whose one consuming passion is to know “the riches of the glory” of the mystery revealed by our ascended Lord and to dispense these riches to others that the lost may know the glory of His saving grace and the saved the glory of their calling as “one Body in Christ.” 



Pastor Stam didn’t just *write about* suffering “the afflictions of Christ,” *he lived it*. See the offer for his book, “ *Holding Fast the Faithful Word*” on Page 24.

Emeritus Professor of Music Arthur Birkby has been on the faculties of Westminster College, the Philadelphia Conservatory, Western Michigan University, the University of Wyoming, and Biblion College & Seminary. Dr. Birkby has performed as concert organist in over 100 cities of Europe and the U.S. His article should not be construed as a condemnation of all contemporary Christian music, but rather as a call to carefully evaluate the music we use to glorify the Lord.



Hymns: The Best for the Master

By Arthur Birkby

Since the ninth century A.D., churches were virtually the only centers where historically significant music composition and performance were actively pursued. In contrast, today's important music events occur more often in concert halls, universities, and arenas. Musical masterworks have endured because their composers, having intuitive ideas, inherent talent, and prodigious industry, were influenced by, and applied fundamental principles of design and structure. Even those composers who introduced what must have seemed novel or iconoclastic inroads into music, were steeped in the traditions of their predecessors, and did not abandon the need for discipline when putting forth innovative kinds of form, harmony, melody, rhythm, or style.

The church's association with music since antiquity is easily understood. Music is mentioned many times in the Bible. As early as Genesis 4:21 we read of Jubal being the father of those who play the harp and flute. Other instruments mentioned in the Bible include the horn, organ, timbrel, tabret, lyre, trumpet, sistrum, and psaltery; but most of these had little resemblance to today's instruments. Other Scriptural examples regarding music abound, such as Exodus 15:1-18, describing Moses leading a responsorial song celebrating Israel's deliverance through the Red Sea. Details of early temple music are described in I Chronicles 15.

Temple musicians were employed by many of Israel's kings. One music director, Heman, and his fourteen sons were responsible for the temple's choral music. The temple choir contained 288 highly trained singers who wore white linen robes. During Solomon's reign, there were 4,000 instrumentalists in addition to the singers (I Chron. 23:5).

The musicians who were engaged in providing music for worship services were skilled, as evidenced in I Chronicles 15:22, II Chronicles 34:12, and Psalm 33:3. Attempting to maintain a high level of music in today's services, many churches hire well-paid professionals who

enhance worship by bringing dignified, reverent praise to the Lord. It must be noted that “dignified” or “reverent” does not preclude jubilant or energetic musical offerings. Sobriety and dignity do not necessarily imply gloom and wretchedness.

Unlike big city “mainline” churches with impressive budgets for music, many congregations rely on their own members to provide worship music without monetary reward. When faced with this situation, they should strive to select musical participants who are competent as well as willing.

By way of analogy, if a preacher were unable to preside at a service for one reason or another, and a substitute were required, it would be patently inappropriate to ask a layperson whose speech was unintelligible, ungrammatical, or crude, and who had no knowledge of Scripture, to preach the sermon. Even worse would be a situation in which a person with limited Bible knowledge, and having a liberal, non-doctrinal view of Scriptural truth, would be asked to preach to a congregation of believers who expect a spiritual gospel message.

Let us see how this might apply to music. The lack of worthy music in today’s worship services is not always because the music leaders are uneducated or unskilled. Rather, it is because they themselves may lack discernment; and some feel that by appealing to an uncultured general cross-section of society, they will attract a larger appreciative audience.

Because of space, this article will address only congregational singing, rather than consider other elements of music in the service. The recent, overwhelmingly ubiquitous use of so-called “praise choruses,” or “worship songs” has led to the virtual elimination of hymnals. The presumed justification for avoiding hymns in a book is that they are old-fashioned, and do not address the needs of the youth. There are several fallacious premises in this argument. Firstly, it assumes that youthful demands are shared by mature adults. Secondly, it suggests that hymns in the book, being “traditional,” are old-fashioned. Any perfunctory scan of a recognized, published, modern hymnal will reveal a wealth of hymns dating from many eras, including songs by contemporaries, and they deserve to be explored.

“...‘dignified’ or ‘reverent’ does not preclude jubilant or energetic musical offerings.”

Hymnal contents often run the gamut from tawdry to magnificent; but rare, indeed, can “magnificent” selections be found among the so-called “praise” songs or choruses. There are, certainly, some songs reflecting popular idioms that do have merit, especially those that derive from actual, traditional folk melodies. “Praise” songs that are banal, trivial, and lacking any redeeming qualities are rampant.

The reader may ask whether there are standards by which a legitimate assessment of a hymn's worth may be determined. Of course! Let us consider texts as well as musical settings. Most texts are in some form of poetry. Poetry as an art form often has as its purpose the creation of beauty, or perhaps the emphasis or clarification of meaning by using rhetoric, rhyme, or meter not always associated with mere prose.

Consider, for example, the beauty and magnificence expressed in *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* by Isaac Watts. All four stanzas are glorious; but ponder for a moment two of the stanzas, which state:

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, Save in the death of Christ, my God! All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His blood.

Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were a tribute far too small; Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Compare the above with the following popular worship chorus:

Lead me in Your everlasting way, Lead me in Your everlasting way, Lead me in Your everlasting way, Lead me in Your everlasting way.

Or, how about this one:

There is no God but Jehovah (16 times)

Or another one:

I love you, Lord. I love you, I love you, I love you, Lord.

Adding salt to the wound, after singing songs like these repetitive ones, the worship teams (as they like to be called) often sing the song a second or third time!

Now a word must be said in behalf of the music. A hymn tune's worth cannot be justified by whether one likes it, or does not like it; but its intrinsic value can be determined by anyone having a background in music composition. This would include familiarity with harmony, theory, form and analysis, counterpoint and music history. With these points of reference, most "choruses" will be recognized for their shallowness and their flagrant errors in the most fundamental principles of music writing.

Composers of all ages "broke the rules," so to speak, of writing technique. Even such greats as J. S. Bach, Chopin, Brahms, Debussy, or Schoenberg broke the rules; but the infractions can be easily and legitimately justified as one studies their output. When writing music in a particular idiom, one should follow principles characteristic of that style. The problem with the worship choruses is that they are not stylistically unique in any way. Instead, they are based upon

“traditional” concepts, but ignore the compositional principles that would make them acceptable.

An analogy may be made in the art of painting, where one learns about form, composition, color, brush technique, and other related topics. In the eras of Rubens, Raphael, Monet, Goya, and other old masters, artists exercised their own prerogatives in their masterpieces, as have other artists throughout history. In more recent times, Picasso’s inimitable style avoided reality, whether in a portrait or a still life. Dali chose a fanciful dream world in which to create his surrealist pictures. Great artists, who dare to be different, know thoroughly the accepted precepts of their forerunners, and are able to convey new ideas as developments of the giants who preceded them.

If an aspiring artist today were to paint a replica of the Mona Lisa, and add lipstick and insert a ring into her nose, the result would be sacrilegious. That is, in essence, the kind of charade that some of today’s would-be hymn writers are foisting off on congregations. They are unable to create something that is uniquely contemporary; rather, they create caricatures that are often offensive, corrupting idioms that require principles to be followed.



In centuries past, church musicians such as J. S. Bach adapted folk songs, and even silly love songs, to be used for congregational singing. These unpretentious ditties were modified, and garbed in splendor, depth, and beauty appropriate for sublime texts derived from the Scriptures. One such work is the well-known, ***O Sacred Head, Now Wounded***. The original musical treatment of this tune was used in a song about a lad whose mind was befuddled with thoughts of his ladylove. Bach enriched this melody by modifying its harmony and rhythm so that it became a vehicle for expressing unspeakably profound truths. In contrast, there are church song leaders nowadays who “jazz” up traditional hymns, thereby cheapening them rather than improving them. If one does not actually listen to the words of a praise chorus, the music may often be more readily identified as belonging in a night club, a skating rink, or an MTV broadcast.

There is nothing wrong with having one’s own preferences in music in whatever genre. It is important, however, to make choices appropriate to the environment. In worldly settings, discriminating taste in music is of little consequence. When offering the Lord our worship in song, only the very best befits our sacrifice of praise. Sadly, much of what is presented today falls abysmally short of that goal. 

Dr. Birkby will be happy to respond to any question you might have regarding his comments in this article. You can write him at: abirkby@comcast.net.

Our good friend John LaVier has spent a lifetime preaching the gospel of grace. He served as an assistant to Pastor J. C. O'Hair at *North Shore Church* in Chicago. In 1945 he accepted a call to pastor *Grace Church* in Indianapolis, where he faithfully served the Lord for 47 years. Pastor Lavier retired in 1992, but has continued his ministry through the written page. The following article is an example of John's love for the truth, rightly divided.

Why is Heaven Silent?

By John D. LaVier

After the tragic event of September 11th, 2001 we often heard the question "Where was God?" or "Why did God allow this to happen?" The believer knows that God is still on His eternal throne, that He is sovereign, and nothing happens apart from His direct or permissive will, but for a season He has withdrawn from this earthly scene. He does indeed work on behalf of His own, and otherwise as well, but He acts covertly and His action is seen only with the eye of faith. Bloody wars take place among the nations, thousands perish from famine, flood, earthquake and storm, but no voice or action is heard from above. In one of Sir Robert Anderson's books the opening words are: "A silent heaven is the greatest mystery of our existence."



What is the answer to this mystery? For two thousand years the heavens have been silent and this is strange when we compare it with Old Testament times. God was then dealing with the Hebrew nation and they saw marvelous displays of His person and power. He brought them out of slavery, making a path through the sea, and for forty years He fed them and led them and brought them into the land of promise with mighty victories over all their foes. Isaiah saw the Lord; Daniel fell at His feet; angels walked to and fro in the land; God fought for His people; heaven was not silent.

When Israel is enjoying the favor of God the heavens are open, but when Israel is in disfavor with God the heavens are silent. Between the two testaments, when Israel was being judged for their sins, there was a period of time which is often referred to as "the four hundred silent years." God spoke His last word through Malachi and then 400 years of silence. This silence was finally broken by the appearance of the angel Gabriel to Zacharias announcing the birth of John the Baptist. Then Gabriel spoke to Mary, telling her of that Holy One which should be born of her, even the Son of God. Later the angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds, announcing the birth of the Christ-child, and from the opened heavens they heard the heavenly host praising God.

Heaven was not silent during the earthly ministry of Christ, when He was presenting Himself to Israel as their Messiah, nor was heaven

silent after His resurrection...when Israel was given opportunity to repent. There were miracles, wonders, signs, angelic visitations, jail deliverances, sudden judgments, etc....However....Israel no longer stands as a nation before God. They are set aside for a reason and a season. The reason was their rejection of Christ both in His incarnation and in His resurrection. The season is this present dispensation of the Mystery....

We find a great man of God sitting in the Roman prison, but no angel comes to liberate him. An age of silence has begun. A silent God. A silent heaven. This silence has already lasted two millenniums. The nations rage and we see war, sin, suffering and sorrow on every hand. The people of God oft suffer at the hands of their enemies, and we see the ever-increasing and God-defying masses sinning and sinning and sinning. And yet in the midst of it all, God remains silent.

When God turned away from Israel, that nation through which His earthly purposes are to be realized, He then and there withdrew from this earthly scene. C. H. Mackintosh wrote "So long as there was any ground of hope in connection with Israel, the heavenly mystery was held back; but when earth had been abandoned and Israel set aside, the apostle of the Gentiles...writes to the Church, and opens out all the glorious privileges connected with its place in the heavens." God has for a season abandoned earth but we are here as His ambassadors in enemy land and we are asked to walk by faith and not by sight. God is allowing man's day to run its course and is permitting the full development of the mystery of lawlessness. The mystery of iniquity is working. Soon the whole will be leavened. Man's day will be replaced by the Lord's Day. Then....

THE SILENCE TO BE BROKEN!

This is promised everywhere in Scripture. The psalmist declared: "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence!" Just as the silence of the 400 years was broken by His first coming, so the present silence will be broken by His second coming. But before He manifests Himself to the world, He will manifest Himself to His own. This is the bright and blessed hope of the Church, the rapture, and it will be the opening rift in the silent heavens. After the Body of Christ has been removed from the scene God will begin to deal again with Israel and the nations. The silence will be broken and God will speak again, not then in grace, but in wrath. The heavens will be opened, not to pour out blessing, but disaster. The judgments of the Apocalypse will be visited upon the world, when the seals will be broken, the judgment trumpets sounded, and the vials of God's wrath poured out.

Finally, the heavens will be fully opened and the blessed Lord Jesus Christ will return. The Apostle John saw Him as the rider on a white

horse, followed by the heavenly armies, and He wrote: "He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." The silence will be broken. The King will return and have His rightful place upon the throne, with all beneath His feet. Every eye shall see Him and the earth will be filled with His glory. And never again will there be silence, for the lines of communication will always be open between heaven and earth, both as to the millennial earth and on into the new earth. 

John Willson serves as one of the Bible Correspondence Instructors for *Prison Mission Association*, and is a good friend to *Berean Bible Society*. He has been a welcome contributor to the pages of the *Berean Searchlight* for many years.

The Believing Remnant, Preserved and Secure

By John Willson

There has been much debate about the security of believers during this dispensation of Grace, but what about believers in the Old Testament, and during the Kingdom Age? By following the references found in the Scofield Study Bible, we can trace the believing remnant of Israel, and draw some conclusions about the security of believers in other dispensations.

There has always been a remnant since the nation began with Abraham in Genesis 12. We refer to these people as the believing remnant because Romans 9:6-7 says, "...for they are not all Israel, which are of Israel, neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but in Isaac shall Thy seed be called." Throughout Israel's history we see that the majority of this nation was unbelieving, or as God said of them in Romans 10:21, "...a disobedient and gainsaying people." However, there was always the believing few, as Paul states in Romans 11:5: "Even so at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."

Elijah thought he was the only faithful one left in Israel, yet God said to him, "I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." In Isaiah's day the number may have been smaller, because Isaiah 1:9 says, "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and...Gomorrah." Isaiah also prophesied the return of the future remnant during the seven-year tribulation (Isaiah 10:20-22). There are many references to the believing remnant throughout Isaiah and Jeremiah, as there are in the other prophetic books. In

the four Gospels we see the believing remnant in those who "...looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:36-38). These would be those like Simeon, Anna, Zacharias and Elizabeth, Mary, John the Baptist and all those who believed God's promises. The Lord referred to them as the little flock, for in Luke 12:32 He said, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

Matthew 24 is a lengthy prophecy of the seven-year tribulation. It is addressed primarily to the believers who will be on earth at that time. Verses 3-12 speak of sorrows and persecutions, wars and famines. Then verse 13 says, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." This will be the fulfillment of Zechariah 13:8-9, because they will be that third part of the nation brought through the fire of the tribulation. These verses read, "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die, but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people, and they shall say, The LORD is my God."

This verse in Matthew 24:13 does not mean that a person must "endure to the end" or lose his salvation as some teach. This verse is saying that he that lasts or lives through that period will be saved through it and enter into the Kingdom. As God said, "And I will bring the third part through the fire...."

It is very possible that the prophecy of the 144,000 in Revelation 7:4 is referring to this remnant. It reads, "...there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel." If they were sealed, they were secure, and it did not depend on their endurance. This is similar to the truth for us in Ephesians 4:30, "...ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

We know the believing remnant during Jesus' ministry was secure as John 10:28 states: "...they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (see also verse 29). If these kingdom believers were safe and secure, those whom God will bring through the tribulation will be also.

This brings up the question of the security of all the Old Testament saints. There is no example of a true believer losing his salvation or fearing that he would lose it. Also there is no verse that indicates that these Old Testament saints had to maintain good works to remain saved. The word **preserve** as used in several Old Testament verses indicates the safety and security of God's people:

Psalm 97:10—"...He preserveth the souls of His saints...."

Psalm 37:28—"For the LORD...forsaketh not His saints, they are preserved forever...."

Psalm 145:20—"The LORD preserveth all them that love Him."

Those whom the Lord knows are often called *saints*, meaning those HE has sanctified and set apart for Himself. Those kingdom saints were promised eternal life in the future Kingdom, and they knew that God would keep His promise. David's confidence is expressed in Psalm 23:6, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Job was confident when he said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth...yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:25-26).

Tracing the remnant through the Bible is an interesting study, not only in the Old Testament and in the four gospels, but also through Acts. Also they are addressed in the Jewish-Christian epistles of James, Peter, and John. James writes to the twelve tribes scattered abroad (James 1:1) and Peter addresses them as the strangers scattered (I Peter 1:1). Then John writes of them often in the great prophecy of Revelation. The remnant was always a minority, even as true believers today are a small minority, yet God gives to all His people the assurance of eternal life, regardless of the dispensation they are under. 

Question Box

"I think I live godly, but I don't suffer persecution. Can you explain II Timothy 3:12?"

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Tim. 3:12).

Even in this land of relative religious tolerance, this verse is true. Galatians 4:29 says that Ishmael "*persecuted*" Isaac by "*mocking*" him (Genesis 20:9), and all who will live godly will suffer at least this type of persecution. Then if godliness be defined as the kind of aggressive city-to-city ministry that Paul describes in the context (II Tim. 3:10,11), engaging in this type of militant ministry will also make you a lightning rod for the kind of persecution that Paul endured.

This is why Paul instructs us to pray...

"For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all *godliness* and honesty" (I Tim. 2:2).

While "*all that will live godly*" shall suffer persecution, we can pray that we be allowed to live "*in all godliness*" quietly and peaceably. We can and should pray that the government will restrain persecution, and refrain from engaging in it themselves.

—Pastor Kurth

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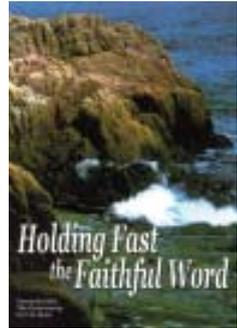
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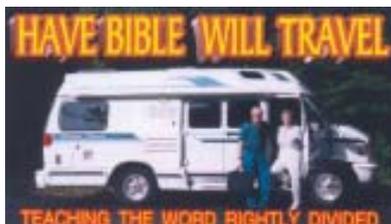
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From Florida:

"I have been watching Les Feldick for about a year here in Orlando, and it was his program that first made me realize we DO have to rightly divide the Word, and now I am hooked on all of his style of teaching. What a GREAT difference it makes when a person sees that you do HAVE to rightly divide for the Bible to make perfect sense!"

From Virginia:

"I was delighted to see that you had put up numerous works by J. C. O'Hair. I had heard of him but did not know what he had written. I have begun to read some of the works he authored and am being blessed by them as I have been by Mr. Stam's works. I am a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary. I was taught in seminary about hyper-dispensationalism (Bullinger, Welch) but unfortunately, the teachings of the distinctiveness of Paul's ministry and the Mystery were not taught. My first awareness of these teachings came from Les Feldick. From these studies the eyes of my understanding have been enlightened, and I have come to the conclusion that only by understanding the distinctive ministry of Paul is there any hope of remedying the confusing that plagues the Church today." (We agree!—RK).

From Michigan:

"I was truly blessed by your book, *The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter*. I thought Peter was talking to the Body of Christ, but he was talking to his countrymen. I now see the Apostle Paul was preaching to the Gentiles, and was for the Body of Christ. I also understand now that water baptism was part of the kingdom gospel, not for 'the dispensation of the grace of God.' I have a brother who wants to be put on your mailing list."

From South Carolina:

"I have been learning and growing in understanding. I thank you for all the help you have been in answering my questions."

From Florida:

"After reading such books as *Things That Differ* and *Galatians: Law vs. Grace*, I'm under the impression that most churches are not preaching the Word correctly." (Sad but true.—RK).

From Colorado:

"All of my *Searchlights* are re-marked and used so much that I would be lost without them. My friend had questions about tongues, tithing, etc., but praise the Lord I could answer them with *grace* and share Paul's epistles. The Lord knew how much I wanted to share with her, and He used the moment. What an absolute divine privilege to be an ambassador for Christ."

From Missouri:

"It is time to say thank you for the *Searchlight* that provides fellowship in a barren area. Words of instruction and edification to encourage the heart to press on with the precious truth that truly bless the soul and spirit."

From Kentucky:

"I am a junior at Murray State University. I am also a soldier in the United States Army. I am also a dispensational believing Christian. I recently found out about your website, and am just absolutely amazed! Around here, most people believe in the sign gifts and water baptism, and I'm trying to break through to a group on campus who believe that. I was raised in *Berean Bible Church* in Evansville. I just wanted to say thank you for your awesome website, and especially for the J. C. O'Hair online library; that is a blessing!"

From British Columbia, Canada:

"*Two Minutes With the Bible* has saved my life and changed my life and I am so grateful for God's great Word and your instruction of it."

From Montana:

"I'd like to order a few copies of *Things That Differ* to give to people who show an interest in the pure unadulterated gospel of the Cross. It is the book that was the key to the clear understanding of the Bible that cleared up the confusion I had struggled with for many years. In Montana there isn't one church that is associated with your ministry. I pray that God would use me to start a fellowship and then possibly a church where Paul's gospel is proclaimed so that the great work of our Lord Jesus Christ will be clearly understood." (We will pray with you for this, and invite our readers to join us.—RK).

From Florida:

"I have just borrowed the October edition of the *Berean Searchlight* and find it a great Bible study guide and tool. I wish for my own subscription."

From the U.S. Virgin Islands:

"I've been studying *The Present Peril* and find it extremely direct and to the point. Churches here generally pursue social-psychology and use the Scriptures to highlight their messages. It seems they have the cart before the horse. Perhaps this is the reason for our rampant violent crime, although there are close to 200 'Christian' churches on this 84 square mile island."

From Virginia:

"I am blessed by the *Searchlight* and the other pamphlets I've received from you! Your ministry is deep to the pulling down of strongholds. Many brothers here at this correctional institution read the *Searchlight*, and they have blessed me with a lot of their old copies which I ponder, and go over these truths daily."

From Missouri:

"I have had the *Berean Bible Society* on my favorites list for a long time but just now discovered what a vast spiritual treasure it truly is. It will be my home page from now on. I am one of Brother Ed Bedore's converts to the truth."

From California:

"Thank you for the thorough response. Also, *Two Minutes With the Bible* has been very instructive for my kids. I share those that are most relevant when they are taught undivided truth in Sunday School."

From Idaho:

"Blessings for all the literature you provide to those of us who might not be able to afford these teachings." (We thank God for all of our supporters who help us help others.—RK).

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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A PRAYER REQUEST: Laura Thomas, daughter of Les and Iris Feldick, recently fell from a startled horse and sustained a serious injury that has left her mostly paralyzed. Laura is an integral part of the administrative aspects of Les Feldick Ministries, her father's national Bible teaching ministry, and so please pray for her, the family, and their work for the Lord. Letter excerpts in our *Mailbag* frequently testify to the great work Brother Feldick is doing introducing people to God's Word, rightly divided.

HONOR TO WHOM HONOR IS DUE: On September 26th, Pastor Bob Davis retired after thirty-eight years of service as pastor of *Robinson Grace Church* of Grand Haven, Michigan. The Apostle Paul reminds us to "*acknowledge ye them*" that refresh the saints and "*hold such in reputation,*" and this we do most gladly!

A PRECIOUS HOME-GOING: Eva Hall of *Hilltop Bible Church*, Crestwood, Illinois, went to be with the Lord on November 21st after a long battle with lung disease. Together with her husband Russ, Eva was a stalwart of the faith at *Hilltop* for many years. Her grace and strength in the face of physical adversity were an inspiration to many, and she will be sorely missed.

THE SPRING SEMESTER of *Berean Bible Institute* begins January 24th. If your heart burns with a desire to serve the Lord in the ministry, why not join the men and women who are receiving a solid Bible education and building a firm foundation in the Grace message at BBI. Contact Dr. Ed Bedore at bbi@bereanbibleinstitute.org, call him at 262-644-5504, or write him at 116 S. Kettle Moraine Drive, P.O. Box 587, Slinger, WI 53086-0587.

OUR COVER THIS MONTH features a photo taken by Ken and Barb Wardius, a couple who travel extensively throughout the state of Wisconsin in search of unique photo opportunities. You can view some of their impressive gallery of photographs on various themes at their website: www.execpc.com/~slw81/, and you can e-mail them with any questions at: slw81@execpc.com.

*The picture of the lighthouse that appears on the front cover was taken by Ken and Barb Wardius. The *Wisconsin Point Lighthouse* is located in Superior, Wisconsin. The tower is forty-two feet tall and was built in 1913. On November 9, 1975, shortly before 2 p.m., the ill-fated ore carrier *Edmund Fitzgerald* floated past the *Wisconsin Point Light* on her way to a date with tragedy less than 30 hours later.

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A Good New Year's Resolution

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:15, 16).

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