

A. W. Tozer: "Showered in His Gifts" —page 9

STRANGE FIRE?

— or —

STRANGE
LOVE

The
Berean
Call

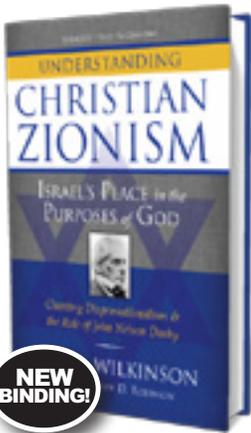
FEBRUARY 2014

*THE STRANGE FIRE CONFERENCE:
SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT ACCORDING TO CALVINISM*

by T. A. McMahon

NEW! GLOSSY HARDCOVER EDITION

Get a **FREE** copy of Paul Wilkinson's 2013 TBC conference DVD with purchase of the new *Understanding Christian Zionism* hardback or the paperback edition!



Understanding Christian Zionism

Wilkinson—Christian Zionism has been described by Hamas as “the greatest danger to world truth, justice, and peace” and by the church as “a powerful force” that “fuels the Arab-Israeli conflict” and “encourages the destruction of millions of people” with its “Armageddon theology.” How sustainable are these charges, and is there a case to answer? By locating Christian Zionism firmly within the evangelical tradition, Paul Wilkinson takes issue with those who have portrayed it as a “totally unbiblical menace” and as the “road map to Armageddon.” Charting in detail its origins and historical development, he argues that Christian Zionism lays the biblical foundation for Israel’s restoration and the return of Christ. No one has contributed more to this cause than its leading architect and patron, John Nelson Darby, an “uncompromising champion for Christ’s glory and God’s truth.” This groundbreaking book challenges decades of misrepresentation and scholarship,

exploding the myth that John Nelson Darby stole the doctrine of the pre-tribulation Rapture from his contemporaries. By revealing the man and his message, Paul Wilkinson vindicates Darby and spotlights the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ as the centerpiece of his theology. *The Berean Call*, 358 pp.

B60880 **NEW!** *Hardcover Edition* • Retail \$39.99 • 2 or more \$30.00 wt 1.4 **\$37.50**
B60859 *Paperback Edition* • Retail \$29.99 • 2 or more \$22.00 ea. wt 1.4 **\$27.50**



2013 TBC Conference - Paul Wilkinson

The Berean Call—With improved video production this year, as well as a new speaking format—viewers are sure to be encouraged and edified by our 2013 conference messages. Paul’s talks include: *Finding Nemo in the Israeli Desert* and *The Covenant Keeper*. Each message concludes with a Q&A session. ***For a limited time get the DVD FREE with purchase of *Understanding Christian Zionism* paperback or hardcover.**

DVD234 2 or more \$20.00 wt .3 **\$25.00**

ABOUT THE BEREAN CALL

Seven years after publication of the controversial ground-breaking bestseller *The Seduction of Christianity* in 1985, its authors, Dave Hunt and T. A. McMahon, joined forces on another front. TBC was formed under the direction of Dave Hunt for the purpose of encouraging spiritual discernment among those who regarded themselves not just as “evangelicals” but as *biblical* Christians. The primary vehicle for this endeavor was through the publication of the newsletter *The Berean Call*. The ministry and newsletter name is taken from Acts 17:11, in which the writer of Acts commended those in the synagogue of the Greek city of Berea for being more fair minded than those in Thessalonica—because not only were they eager to receive the Word, but the *Bereans* also checked it against what the Apostle Paul taught them in order to see if his teaching was according to the Scriptures. Through the publishing and multimedia efforts of The Berean Call (TBC) believers are exhorted to get back into the Word of God instead of being “carried about by every wind of doctrine,” and are equipped with materials to help them walk in the truth. TBC’s stated mission is to:

- ALERT** believers in Christ to unbiblical teachings and practices impacting the church
- EXHORT** believers to give greater heed to biblical discernment and truth regarding teachings and practices being currently promoted in the church
- SUPPLY** believers with teaching, information, and materials that will encourage the love of God’s truth, and assist in the development of biblical discernment
- MOBILIZE** believers in Christ to action in obedience to the scriptural command to “earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 3)
- IMPACT** the church of Jesus Christ with the necessity for trusting the Scriptures as the only rule for faith, practice, and a life pleasing to God

FEBRUARY 2014 • VOL XXIX NO. 2

Editorial Staff

Founder: Dave Hunt
 Executive Editor: T. A. McMahon
 Managing Editor: Mark Dinsmore
 Senior Editor: Barbara Romine
 Copy Editor: Sally Opliger
 Correspondence Editor: Edwin Newby
 Design & Production:
 Mark Dinsmore, Philip McDaniel

Subscriptions

The Berean Call newsletter is published monthly and sent free of charge to U.S. addresses (\$12/yr outside the U.S.). To subscribe, please write PO Box 7019, Bend, OR 97708, or call 1-800-937-6638.

TBC Online

To register for our free online newsletter and email updates, to access our digital archives, or to order a wide variety of additional resource materials, visit us at: www.thebereancall.org

Permissions

The publisher reserves all rights but permits readers to make up to 100 photocopies of any whole or partial newsletter, for non-commercial use. Readers may also quote or re-post material from this issue for print or online usage, provided that: the excerpt is not the primary content of a work for sale; that the context is preserved; and that proper citation/attribution is given. For any other usage, please contact TBC.

Donations

The Berean Call (TBC) has always operated on the belief that God will provide as we seek His face, so we do not make appeals for financial help. Although the ministry operates primarily on donations, these are freewill and not solicited. Through the years, TBC has seen God “do exceeding abundantly above” all that was asked or thought.

Contacting Us

tel: (541) 382-6210 • fax: (541) 385-6025
 orders and donations: (800) 937-6638
 general inquiries: (541) 382-6210
 e-mail: customerservice@thebereancall.org
 website: www.thebereancall.org



The Berean Call is a nonprofit 501 [c] [3], tax-exempt corporation registered in the State of Oregon. It is overseen by an independent board which has full and final authority over all corporate assets, personnel, and affairs. (2/14)

THE BEREAN CALL

“[The Bereans] . . . searched the scriptures daily, [to see] whether those things were so.”—Acts 17:11

WWW.THEBEREANCALL.ORG • DAVE HUNT, FOUNDER • VOL. XXIX NO. 2 • FEBRUARY 2014

The Strange Fire Conference: Spiritual Discernment According to Calvinism

T. A. McMahon

In October 2013, John MacArthur and Grace Community Church hosted a conference to address what he and the other speakers believe are major errors in the teachings and practices of the Charismatic and Pentecostal movements. The conference introduction states: “Strange Fire, part of Grace to You’s Truth Matters conference series, evaluates the doctrines, claims, and practices of the modern charismatic movement, and affirms the true Person and ministry of the Holy Spirit.” Seventeen messages were presented and two Q&A sessions offered. Besides MacArthur, the speakers were R. C. Sproul, Steve Lawson, Conrad Mbewe, Tom Pennington, Phil Johnson, Nathan Busenitz, Justin Peters, Todd Friel, and Joni Eareckson Tada.

Prior to listening to all 19 of the presentations and carefully reviewing the transcripts of each talk, I hoped that the conference would add to the voices of discernment that have been addressing the false teachers of the Word/Faith, Healing and Prosperity, and the Signs and Wonders movements. It’s a huge problem worldwide and continues to grow. Nothing the speakers said was new to me or to the ministry of The Berean Call, but it was good to hear these issues addressed before an audience who wasn’t necessarily aware of the mostly Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) and Charisma cast of characters.

Nearly three decades ago, I had the privilege of helping Dave Hunt with *The Seduction of Christianity*. That was a book in which we were heavily critical of the Word/Faith movement, Prosperity gospel, and Signs and Wonders teachings, which at the time made up most of what aired on so-called Christian television. *Seduction* was published in 1985. Dave’s 1987 follow-up book *Beyond Seduction* further explained the scriptural errors of the false teachers. Similar books by other authors followed: *A Different Gospel*, 1988, by D. R. McConnell; *The Agony of Deceit*, 1990, Michael Horton, (Editor); *Charisma vs. Charismania*, 1992, by Chuck Smith; *Charismatic Chaos*, 1992, by John MacArthur; *Christianity in Crisis*, 1993, by Hank Hanegraaff.

Seduction also motivated many of the apologetics ministries that focused on cults to address the cultic beliefs and practices

that were influencing growing numbers of Charismatic, Pentecostal, and evangelical churches. TBC has also continued to address such issues through our newsletter and website. The Internet has also given access to apologetics groups and individuals on websites, blogs, and via Facebook and Twitter, as many defend the faith. Sadly, in spite of all that “contending for the faith,” the number of false teachers, false teachings, and practices, along with their followers, continues to swell.

As I began listening to the Strange Fire Conference (SFC) presentations, it seemed odd to me that there was no reference to some of the long-established discernment ministries such as Personal Freedom Outreach, Herescope, Christian Witness Ministries, Midwest Christian Outreach, Watchman Fellowship, and many others that have addressed the conference’s topic for years and no doubt supplied a good deal of the research for the content that was presented there. At this point, something very disturbing became clear. The primary thrust of the conference subject matter was *cessationism* (the belief that some of the gifts of the Holy Spirit ceased for the church after the apostles died) and was presented by Calvinists and for Calvinists; this was the *modus operandi* of the entire program. Reformed theology and Calvinism were set up as the screen through which the doctrines were evaluated.

Under the banner of *sola scriptura* (“the Bible alone”), the speakers claimed to have the antidote for restraining the exponential growth of false spiritual teachings: “Rightly dividing the Word of Truth,” God’s Word. No argument there. In fact, the good that came out of the conference took place when the Bible was, at times, “rightly divided.” Too often, however, the speakers deviated from the Scriptures to support the doctrines and practices of men. That was not good. Many of them turned to theological *systems* such as Calvinism and Reformed theology. They leaned on fallible Calvinist icons as guardians of truth and were overtly biased against those outside the Reformed camp. The most damaging aspect was the confusion caused by the support of Calvinist cessationism. That’s a double whammy error in my view: Calvinism “proving” cessationism.

In view of the stated objective of the conference, a launching platform for MacArthur’s latest book *Strange Fire: The Danger of Offending the Holy Spirit with Counterfeit Worship*, we agree that millions of professing and even true Christians have

been duped by false teachers and spiritual con artists who prey upon those who are ignorant of what the Word of God teaches.

Even a cursory glance at the activities surrounding the spiritual charlatans in the movement should reveal enough to ward off anyone with common sense. The conference speakers had no shortage of outrageous examples of what transpires in the name of the Holy Spirit—things that are laughable to non-Christians and grievously blasphemous to true believers. Over the decades, many have addressed the erroneous teachings and the deceitful purveyors of what could be characterized as spiritual debauchery in a circus atmosphere, but very few have been rescued from the delusion in comparison to those who have been swept into it. The chief reason, as was correctly communicated by some in the conference, is the preference in Christendom for *subjective* and *experiential* spirituality over a diligence in studying and obeying the objective Word of God, which is *sola scriptura* in actual practice.

Why are Christians so easily drawn into false teaching? Perhaps they have an affinity for the temporal things of the world rather than the eternal; a desire for being spoon-fed the Scriptures rather than undertaking a disciplined reading of the Bible for themselves, and certainly the seductive power of the Adversary in drawing Christians away from God’s Word comes into play. In short, it’s a combination of “the world, the flesh, and the devil” (1 John 2:15-17; Galatians 5:17; 1 Peter 5:8-9) in these days of increasing apostasy. Had the conference addressed those issues strictly from the Bible, there would have been much to agree with, but that was far from the case.

To begin with, the speakers reflected an “us and them” mentality. “Us” were all those in the Calvinist/Reformed cessationist camp. “Them” consisted of anyone who rejects the Calvinist/Reformed cessationist teaching (with the exception, of the Charismatic Calvinists, who at least are among the elect). Others were almost always marginalized by being indiscriminately thrown in with the obvious false leaders of the Signs and Wonders movement.

By direct teaching and/or implication, all the speakers adhered to the view that Calvinistic cessationism is *the* teaching of the Bible and is therefore the silver bullet for killing off the false doctrines and practices of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. John MacArthur declared, “. . . read the Reformers, and read the Puritans,

and follow the flow of the truth through history.... You're not going to go to an association of Reformed churches, those who believe the doctrines of the Reformation that take us back to the doctrines of the New Testament, and find false miracles...." (All conference quotes are available at: www.gty.org/resources/sermon-series/325)

Steve Lawson said, "Those of us who are Reformed in our theology are enormously grateful for the revival of Reformed Theology that has swept through the body of Christ over these last years.... In fact, Dr. MacArthur has said, 'If you're not reformed right now, you are basically irrelevant.'" Lawson strengthened that statement, adding "If you're not reformed, you're wrong."

African pastor Conrad Mbewe sees Reformation theology as the hope for his continent, which has been ravaged by the biblically distorted Signs and Wonders and Prosperity teachings: "I'm glad to say there is a growing Reformed Movement on the continent. But it's still very much a trickle and we need to pray and do everything we can to get Christianity back to the Bible [through Calvinism]." The Bible, yes, Calvinism, no.

A litany of Calvinist icons were paraded before the audience to support the idea that Reformation theology is not only foundationally biblical, but it is also clearly cessationist. None of the speakers made mention of some of the renowned men of the faith who were clearly non-cessationists such as John Wesley, D. L. Moody, H. A. Ironside, A. J. Gordon, George Müller, Andrew Murray, and A. W. Tozer, to name but a few.

Nevertheless, after presenting John Calvin's cessationist position, MacArthur says, "This is a time for the people who now stand on the shoulders of the Reformers in every area of their theology to be faithful to Reformation theology to its full rich intent. If we claim allegiance to the Reformers, then we ought to conduct ourselves with the same level of courage. Don't call yourself a Charismatic Calvinist. John Calvin would reject that. John Calvin did reject that. You'll have to drop the Calvinist part."

Calvin wrote his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* at age 26, only two years after leaving the Catholic Church. That ought to give one pause, but it doesn't seem to prevent Calvinists from voicing their overwhelming praise of him for his knowledge and insights of the Bible. Philip Schaff is quoted by Lawson: "Calvin was an exegetical genius of the first order. His commentaries are unsurpassed for originality, depth, perspicuity, soundness, and permanent value. Calvin was the king of the commentators."

Former Westminster Seminary president John Murray is also quoted regarding Calvin's proficiency: "Calvin was the exegete... of the Reformation and in the first rank

of biblical exegetes of all time." Lawson declares, "I do believe that Calvin towers over church history as the most substantial theologian that has been given to the church, its most powerful influence, and we would do well to hear from our older brother."

Of course, they are referring to John Calvin, aka "the Protestant pope of Geneva." Geneva, at that time, was a city of about 20,000 in which Calvin instigated the torturous persecution of hundreds, including more than 50 executions of residents, many of whom were drowned for simply disagreeing with his "biblical" doctrine of infant baptism (see Dave Hunt's *What Love Is This?*). Calvin, "the [church's] most substantial theologian" and foremost "exegete," interpreted Luke 14:23 to support his cruel and often lethal manner of "compelling." (See this issue's Q&A)

The SFC speakers also highly esteemed Augustine (Roman Catholicism's doctor of its major dogmas), John Chrysostom (who taught prayers for the dead), Martin Luther (who taught infant baptism, baptismal regeneration, and wrote a vicious anti-Semitic tract), Jonathan Edwards (who taught that God is the author of sin and evil), B. B. Warfield (who taught theistic evolution and honored Darwin as "...one before whom we gladly doff our hats in true and admiring reverence"), as well as contemporary Reformed theologians J. I. Packer (a signer of Evangelicals and Catholics Together) and R. C. Sproul (who teaches partial preterism).

Obviously, these Reformed models and their heroes are not superheroes of the faith except in the minds of the SFC speakers and the audience. They got some things right, but they also had some very significant doctrinal problems. My point is that no matter what position one takes on a doctrinal issue, *sola scriptura*—not the views of fallible men (1 Corinthians 1:12-13), no matter what side they take—is the determiner of doctrinal truth.

Although the contributions to Christianity of Calvinism and Reformation theology were declared throughout the SFC as bastions of biblical truth compared to the abuses that have been fostered by non-Calvinist non-cessationists, none of the speakers mentioned that we can credit the Reformers and their inspirers and followers for many erroneous beliefs. These include amillennialism, post millennialism, Theistic Evolution, Replacement Theology (which leads to anti-Semitism), pedobaptism, preterism, Christian Reconstructionism, Theonomy, and Lordship Salvation, all of which are unbiblical. Nevertheless, Lawson states, "If we are to see a new Reformation in this day, if we are to see this resurgence of reformed truth that has now begun in these last decades continue to expand... we must be exclusively committed to the written Word of God." To the former, no; to the latter, absolutely.

The SFC must be recognized in terms of its promotion of Calvinist cessationism as the antidote that will remedy all the ignorance and abuses of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. That is at best a "biblical" placebo that will do little to stop the current plague of the Word/Faith, Healing, Prosperity, and Signs and Wonders false teachings and practices. For all of its continuous claims of *sola scriptura*, Reformed theology denies that *sola* in doctrine and practice. Its advocates, past and present, got some things right and others dreadfully wrong. *Sola scriptura* is indeed the authority for every true believer, but it must be the *full counsel of God*.

The key address regarding cessationism was delivered by Tom Pennington. He began by noting that non-cessationists point out that the New Testament nowhere directly states that the miraculous gifts will cease during the church age. His reply was that the New Testament doesn't directly say they will continue either. He continued with seven arguments as to why the miraculous gifts disappeared at the end of Apostolic age. We appreciate his diligence in searching the Scriptures in order to come to the position he has. That's what we all need to do. We have done this as well, but our understanding from the Scriptures is that the gifts of the Spirit (and of Christ—Ephesians 4:7-12) did not cease with the passing of the Apostles. The Apostle Paul wrote quite a bit in his letters to the Corinthians addressing the subject of the gifts (given for the edification and building up of the church). What would be the point of his rather lengthy teachings if the gifts and the edification received from them were soon to cease?

Obviously, cessationism and non-cessationism cannot both be correct. Unlike the gospel and other essentials of the faith that are objectively clear, the gifts of the Spirit are not essential for salvation and are more difficult to discern. Conclusions about them are developed in a more subjective process. Although what we believe about the gifts is not *essential*, it doesn't mean that our belief is unimportant. The gifts are given for the edification, strengthening, and enabling of the body of Christ—His church. A wrong belief regarding the gifts of the Spirit will hinder the church's edification and fruitfulness. Scripture tells us that "the just shall live by [the] faith" (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38). Influential writers with opposing views may present their arguments and convince others, but in the end, we are all personally accountable for rightly dividing the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15) in determining what we believe and why we believe it. That must be both our declaration and our practice of *sola scriptura*.

For a further critique of the Strange Fire Conference, see our Q&A section. **TBC**

Quotable

It is not true that a definite limit is placed in Scripture upon the manifestation of sign gifts, and that such gifts have never appeared since the days of the apostles.

—H. A. Ironside,
Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth

Q&A

QUESTION: You seem to have a bad attitude regarding Calvinism, yet I noticed that you also minister with Calvinists and offer resource materials written by Calvinists. It seems to me that you are being hypocritical or at least inconsistent. Is this reflective of McMahon's taking the helm of the ministry, or is he just following Dave Hunt's lead in this?

RESPONSE: Anyone who has read Dave Hunt's classic *What Love Is This?*, published by TBC, would have a very good idea regarding the ministry's stance on the doctrines of Calvinism. We base our stand on the Bible, and therefore we do not offer materials that *promote* Calvinism. On the other hand, we do offer resource materials produced by some who hold to certain aspects of Calvinism and who may prefer not to be called Calvinists even though they hold such beliefs personally. Our involvement with them has to do with their specific ministries, which we believe are edifying and valuable to the body of Christ, the content of which has nothing to do with Calvinism. All of this is consistent with the position held by Dave, who, although he had significant differences with the beliefs of Calvinism, nevertheless spoke at conferences with Calvinists and supported some of them personally. He considered many of those to be brothers and sisters in Christ as well as good friends.

QUESTION: I've been told by a Calvinist that if I'm not a Calvinist, then I'm an Arminian. As a Christian, do I have to be one or the other?

RESPONSE: As I mentioned in a previous newsletter, I have a major problem with labels. More often than not, they characterize a person according to the definition imposed upon him by the questioner. They are also very subjective because the person who imposes the label on another rarely knows what the labeled person actually believes. In your situation, rather than clarifying anything, it is terribly misleading.

The dichotomy usually has to do with salvation and whether a believer is eternally secure or not. Calvinists claim to believe in eternal security; "Arminians" are said to believe that a Christian can lose his salvation. Both statements have their problems.

First, "Perseverance of the saints" (the P in T.U.L.I.P.) is hardly an assurance of eternal salvation, as Calvinists claim.

Second, Jacob Arminius himself believed in eternal security. (See Dave Hunt, *What Love Is This?*, p. 91, footnote 17, from *The Works of James Arminius*, Vol. 1 and 2)

If someone feels like they need to label me, the only label I would go along with is a "biblical Christian." At least with that label there is an objective basis for determining the Scriptural basis for what I claim to believe rather than being entangled with the doctrines and definitions that men make up.

To demonstrate how ridiculously complex man's labels can become, consider someone whom I might label as a Calvinist. Would that label really represent the person's actual beliefs? It's hard to say. Is he a hyper-Calvinist? Is he a 27-point Calvinist? A 5-point or a 4-point, a 3-point, 2-point, or a 1-point Calvinist? Does he believe in limited atonement or particular redemption? Is he a supralapsarian (also referred to as an antelapsarian) or an infralapsarian (also referred to as a sublapsarian)? Is he an amillennial Calvinist, a postmillennial Calvinist, or a premillennial Calvinist? Is he a Christian Reconstructionist or a Theonomist Calvinist? Is he a neo-Calvinist or a neocalvinist (Kuyperian Calvinist)? Is he a preterist or partial preterist Calvinist? Is he a Calvinist cessationist or a Calvinist continuationist? Is he a providentialist Calvinist? Those are just a few of the categories to which some Calvinists subscribe.

QUESTION: In John MacArthur's Strange Fire Conference, the speakers make a big deal of what superb interpreters of the Scriptures John Calvin and others who followed his teachings were. How does that fit with the fact that many of the Reformers continued to hold some Roman Catholic beliefs and practices?

RESPONSE: It doesn't. Every believer is accountable for the way in which he understands the Bible. No system of man, whether Calvinist or otherwise, gives anyone special insights. It comes down to *exegesis* or *eisegesis*, the former having to do with *objectively discerning* from the text what God is communicating. The latter is when a person *subjectively imposes* his own ideas upon the text of Scripture

without regard to its context or other rules of hermeneutics.

I noted in this month's article that men such as Augustine and Calvin used Luke 14:23 to justify their use of coercion, punishment, and even death in dealing with those whom they believed to be heretics. Augustine reasoned, "Why therefore should not the Church *use force in compelling her lost sons to return?*... The Lord Himself said, 'Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in....' Wherefore is the power which the Church has received...through the religious character and faith of kings...the instrument by which those who are found in the highways and hedges—that is, in heresies and schisms—are compelled to come in, and let them not find fault with being compelled." (E. H. Broadbent, *The Pilgrim Church* [Port Colborne, ON: Gospel Folio Press, reprint 1999], 49.)

That is a clear case of eisegesis as Augustine imposed his view on Scripture with complete disregard to its context. John MacArthur does the same in his interpretation of the "widow's mite" in Luke 21: "I don't know what you have been taught about that story of the widow giving her last two cents—that was not an example of Christian giving. God doesn't expect you to give your last two cents and go home and die. That's what happens to a widow who is succored by a religion of works. She was trying to buy with her last two cents her way into the Kingdom because that's what she had been taught. And Jesus says, 'Any system that sucks people down to the place where they have nothing left in a false hope is coming down.' And it did." (www.gty.org/resources/sermons/TM13-6/testing-the-spirits-john-macarthur)

Then there's the confusion of Calvinists being consistent with 5-point Calvinism, and especially the denial of free will and predestination. John MacArthur is lauded at the Strange Fire Conference as one of "a host of gifted [Calvinist] teachers," and one of the influential Reformed "standard bearers" of this generation. Nevertheless, he declares that *choice* is involved: "Anyone who *will not* confess Jesus as Lord *cannot be saved*. But the shock is, there are people who will confess Jesus as Lord who are not saved. They will profess Jesus as Lord loudly and repeatedly on their way to hell. This *invitation* at the end of the Sermon on the Mount forces anyone and everyone who reads to *choose*. It's a very sharply defined contrast between false faith and true faith; non-saving faith and saving faith. Two paths, two ways and *it's still the choice*." (emphasis added)



IN DEFENSE *of the* FAITH

BIBLICAL ANSWERS *to* CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

What About Divine Inspiration?

QUESTION: The Judeo-Christian Bible is not the only book that claims to be inspired of God. There are the Qur'an, the Hindu Vedas, the Book of Mormon, and others that claim to have come from God. Doesn't the very fact that Christianity teaches that the other books are not true cast serious doubt upon the Bible as well? If so many others could be wrong, why not one more? After all, an atheist only doubts one more book than the Christian doubts.

RESPONSE: Whether the scriptures of other religions are true or false has no bearing upon the Bible's validity or lack thereof. The fact that 10 of 11 contestants failed to win a race could hardly be taken as a plausible argument that therefore no one could have won. That there is counterfeit money in abundance does not suggest for even a moment that real money doesn't exist. In fact, it argues *for* its existence, because otherwise counterfeiting would have no purpose. That billions of people are willing to accept the sacred writings of various religions as having been inspired by God shows a deep hunger within mankind for divine revelation that has always existed in all ages, in all races and cultures, and in all places.

Such a universal and powerful hunger could not have been developed by evolution. The human body does not hunger or thirst for some nonexistent food or drink but only for that which exists and would sustain its life. The only exception would be if one had tasted something that was harmful but delicious or that produced deceptive feelings of well-being or power and then craved it unnaturally. A craving for that drug or intoxicating beverage would never have arisen, however, had it not actually been tasted or experienced. Thus, one could not claim that belief in God was "the opiate of the masses" without admitting God's existence. Someone must have "tasted" something real, as the Bible challenges us: "O taste and see that the LORD is good..." (Psalm 34:8).

Logically, then, the universal hunger for God argues persuasively for His existence; and the hunger for revelation from Him argues that such revelation exists as well. Whether what claims to come from God actually does so, however, can only be determined on the basis of the facts—and only the Bible passes that test, as we shall see.

The fact that the world is filled with false prophecies claiming to come from God is exactly what one would expect, given this innate thirst for God and the willingness of the human heart to deceive itself and others. Nor can it be inferred from the fact that many false prophecies have been proclaimed that therefore no true prophecy has ever been uttered. That mankind has universally in all places, at all times, and under all religions been susceptible to false predictions is evidence of an intuitive belief that true prophecy must be possible and important.

The Bible must be examined on its own merits. It will be shown to be either true or false on the basis of the internal and external evidence taken together—not by comparing it with the sacred writings of other religions. Furthermore, the Bible's very claim to be the *only* revelation from God to mankind requires that all other sacred writings be false. So their falseness, far from proving that the Bible can't be true, is an argument in its favor.

TBC NewsWatch

EVOLUTION: BELIEF AT WHAT COST?

BAPTISTPRESS.COM, 1/3/14, "EVOLUTION: PLENTY OF PEOPLE BELIEVE, BUT AT WHAT COST?" [EXCERPTS]: Nearly two-thirds of Americans believe in human evolution and one-third reject the idea, according to a Pew Research Center study...

Whether a person embraces evolution or creation has implications for all of life, [Ken] Ham [of Answers in Genesis] said, because an atheistic evolutionist rejects God as the absolute authority and determinant of right and wrong, good and bad. Morality then is relative.

Rob Phillips, an apologetics leader for the Missouri Baptist Convention, said the beliefs expressed in the Pew study have implications for daily life because if evolution is true, life ultimately is meaningless.

(www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=41766&ref=BPNews-RSSFeed0103)

SISTER WIVES STAR CHEERS UTAH POLYGAMY RULING

ABCLOCAL.GO.COM, 12/15/13, "SISTER WIVES STAR KODY BROWN CHEERS UTAH POLYGAMY RULING" [EXCERPTS]: A landmark ruling from a federal judge in Utah striking down key parts of the state's polygamy laws handed a legal victory to polygamist families across the state—but the battle might not be over.

The ruling was cheered by Kody Brown and his four wives, who star in the hit TLC cable TV reality show "Sister Wives," and other fundamentalist Mormons who believe polygamy brings exaltation in heaven. The Brown family filed their lawsuit in July 2011 and fled Utah for Las Vegas last year under the threat of prosecution.

The ruling decriminalizes polygamy, but bigamy—holding marriage licenses with multiple partners—is still illegal, said Jonathan Turley, the Browns' Washington, D.C.-based attorney...The Utah Attorney General's Office could appeal the ruling. Spokesman Paul Murphy said the office plans to thoroughly review it before making a decision... "The new attorney general would want to weigh in on this decision," Murphy said. Gov. Gary Herbert says he's "always a little concerned" when the courts make public policy changes, and said his legal counsel would determine the ramifications of the decision.

How do polygamists feel about the ruling? Most of them are thrilled, saying polygamous families in Utah have lived

under the threat of arrest for decades and can now come out from the shadows. "Now that we're no longer felons, that's a huge relief," said Anne Wilde of Salt Lake City, co-founder of the polygamy advocacy group Principle Voices. "This decision will hopefully take away the stigma of living a principle that's a strongly held religious belief." In a statement, the Browns said they hope the decision will help others "come to respect our own choices as part of this wonderful country of different faiths and beliefs."

The Salt Lake City-based Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints came out after the ruling to reiterate that it abandoned polygamy in 1890 and that it strictly prohibits the practice today for its 15 million members worldwide. Polygamy is a legacy of the early teachings of the Mormon church but has no place in modern Mormonism, church officials said.

(www.abclocal.go.com/kfsn/story?section=news/national_world&id=9361136)

GLOBAL PERSECUTION OUTLOOK FOR 2014

CHRISTIANTODAY.COM, 1/1/14, "GLOBAL PERSECUTION OUTLOOK FOR 2014" [EXCERPTS]: Islamist persecution is set to rise in 2014 ahead of elections in Nigeria and Afghanistan. Communism remains a potent oppressor of Christians, with North Korea maintaining its reputation as the worst persecutor of Christianity in the world.

"2014 looks set to be a turbulent year for Christians—especially ahead of elections in Nigeria and Afghanistan," says Colin King, the UK director of Release International, which serves the persecuted Church worldwide.

"2014 is the 25th anniversary of the collapse of the Berlin Wall, yet today communist and former communist countries remain active in oppressing Christians. The worst persecutor of Christians in the world today continues to be North Korea."

[A contact] in North Korea, who cannot be named for his protection, says: "Any activity related to Christianity, whether bowing one's head to pray, possessing a Bible or making contact with a missionary while abroad, is punished harshly."

"Sentences to concentration camps without trial are not unusual. These offences are never recorded as religious violations, but rather described as sedition, contact with foreign spies, or conduct detrimental to the state."

(www.christiantoday.com/article/global_persecution.outlook.for.2014/35212.htm)

TOO MANY KIDS TAKING ANTIPSYCHOTIC DRUGS?

CONSUMERREPORTS.ORG, 12/16/13, "ARE TOO MANY KIDS TAKING ANTIPSYCHOTIC DRUGS?" [EXCERPTS]: The number of children taking powerful antipsychotic drugs has nearly tripled over the last 10 to 15 years, according to recent research. The increase comes not because of an epidemic of schizophrenia or other forms of serious mental illness in children, but because doctors are increasingly prescribing the drugs to treat behavior problems, a use not approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Doctors are prescribing antipsychotics even though there's minimal evidence that the drugs help kids for approved uses, much less the unapproved ones, such as behavioral problems. And to make matters worse, the little research there is suggests the drugs can cause troubling side effects, including weight gain, high cholesterol, and an increased risk of type-2 diabetes.

But overuse of antipsychotic drugs has become worrisome enough that the American Psychiatric Association recently announced that doctors should not routinely prescribe the drugs as first-line treatment to children and adolescents for any reason other than psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia or severe tic disorders. "What's not known about the long-term effects is very troubling," Christopher Bellonci, M.D., assistant professor at Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston, said. "The younger you go, the more you can affect the developing brain."

So, what's behind the antipsychotic boom? Our investigation, based on an analysis by the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, uncovered several factors, including overly aggressive drug marketing and a lack of access to quality mental health care. Caught in the middle are families who often have insufficient resources to deal with complex emotional, psychological, and behavioral problems.

"There's a societal trend to look for the quick fix, the magic bullet that will correct disruptive behaviors," David Rubin, M.D., associate professor of pediatrics at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, said. "But for those looking for a quick solution to escalating behaviors at home, the hard truth is there is unlikely to be a quick fix."

(www.consumerreports.org/cro/2013/12/are-too-many-kids-taking-antipsychotic-drugs/index.html)

T. A.'s Speaking Schedule

- Apr 11-12** **Discerning the Times Conference**
Saskatoon, SK
(306) 371-1570
www.discerning-the-times.org
- Aug 29-31** **TBC Conference**
Bend, OR
1-800-937-6638
www.theberean.org/conference

STS 24/7 Broadcast Schedule

- Feb 7** **Dick Fisher (pt 2)**
Personal Freedom Outreach
- Feb 14 & 21** **Richard McDaniel**
Shield of Faith Mission
- Feb 28 & Mar 7** **Dave & Tom Classic**
The Seduction of Christianity

Listen to Search the Scriptures 24/7 at:
www.theberean.org/radio
(Schedule is subject to change.)

Dear TBC Staff,

We just want to say thank you to all at TBC. Dave Hunt's teaching has greatly blessed us, as well as Tom McMahon's and the other articles you publish. We will faithfully pray that TBC will continue with the integrity it always has and that the Lord will continue to use each of you for His glory. T&AW (email)

Dear T. A. and Staff,

Just a quick note to say I really appreciate your ongoing work of warning the flock of all the deception coming at us. We can be sure of our Lord's promise that the gates of hell shall not prevail against us. We will surely have lots of rejoicing when He comes for us! Till then, I pray for your strength and provision to keep up the good work He has called us to. MT (NY)

Dear T. A.,

The work that TBC is doing has helped me to recognize some of the "grievous wolves" that seem to be popping up with a lot more frequency lately. I have been receiving your publication for many years and wait anxiously for it every month. It is always a blessing to me and I usually learn something new.

I believe God has given you and your contributors the awareness to recognize false teaching in spite of the fact that many "false teachers" use Scripture to support

their error. In some cases, I believe, these errors (deception) are intentional. A born-again believer can be easily deceived if his knowledge of the Word is minimal. This is where the ministry of TBC comes in. It's like Jesus washing the disciples' feet....In this world we come across false teaching but, thanks to TBC, our feet are washed clean of this dirt. DG (CA)

Dear Mr. McMahon,

My husband and I have enjoyed *TBC* for about 25 years now. It was very helpful in our early days as Christians when we had little knowledge of the scriptures and saw so much confusion in the Christian world. Your resources were invaluable.

I have just completed reading the fourth edition of *What Love Is This?* and found it so helpful in setting me free from my "moderate Calvinist" position. Hunt's book is packed with logic and a true understanding of the "Calvinist" scriptures that I misunderstood. The book has helped me eliminate the nagging doubts about whether or not I'm His elect, and given me the freedom of not depending on my works for assurance of salvation. But most of all, it has given me a greater joy in my salvation, a greater desire for evangelism, and a greater love for my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Thank you so much for your ministry. MC (email)

Dear TBC Staff,

As a new reader/subscriber since August 2013 and a "recommitted" believer, I have been gaining a greater biblical understanding to many important issues. Reading and studying your timely articles has truly made me more aware than ever before to "search the scriptures"—a true Berean indeed! DA (PA, prisoner)

Dear T. A. & Staff,

My wife and I are so grateful for the blessings, strength and encouragement, and unadulterated biblical teaching we have received from The Berean Call ministry. We were blessed beyond measure for so many years to have attended conferences where both Dave and T. A. were speakers. We will truly miss Dave and Ruth, but we rejoice with you all knowing that we are looking forward to that "blessed hope" when we will all be together with our Lord for all eternity.

My hope and prayer is that God will continue to use *TBC* and staff to minister His Word and to lead the lost to Christ while teaching discernment to His church.

Thank you for all the tools you provide. May God bless, strengthen, comfort, and encourage you all as you continue in the work He has given you. GT (MI)

TBC Notes

Staying the Course

I guess it's natural that when one person succeeds another in ministry questions arise regarding perceived changes in the ministry. Certainly in our case there have been some changes, yet nothing has changed related to the doctrine and perspectives that Dave Hunt has held going back over the more than three decades that we worked together.

There have been some accusations made along those lines, but those making them don't seem to know much about Dave's views over the years. Although the accusers have not offered any documentation supporting the alleged changes, some declare that they know what Dave would have approved or disapproved.

For 38 years, my calling was to help Dave do what God called him to do: preach, teach, and write. As the Lord enabled, TBC developed into a very helpful support ministry that allowed Dave to fulfill his calling. Now that Dave is home with the Lord, our calling as a ministry is to take the books, sermons, radio programs, videos, and tracts that he produced by God's grace and distribute them as widely as we can, with an emphasis upon getting Dave's teachings from the Word of God out to the upcoming generation.

Obviously, as new issues arise in the church, new teachings contrary to the Scriptures, and new influences that the world has generated, I, among others here at TBC, will be addressing them. To that end, I have been privileged and am deeply thankful for the years of learning from Dave in the area of biblical discernment.

Most of the members of TBC's Board of Directors have been involved with the ministry for more than a decade, and two of them from TBC's start 20 years ago. As the executive director of the ministry, I am personally accountable to the Board, of which I am not a member. All of the Board members are fully aware of the adjusted goals of TBC since Dave's passing, which center upon maintaining the integrity of his work. We covet your prayers that we will, by God's grace, stay the course on which God directs us.

T. A. McMAHON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SHOWEDED IN HIS GIFTS

EXCERPTED FROM *KEYS TO THE DEEPER LIFE* BY A. W. TOZER

IN THEIR attitude toward the gifts of the Spirit, Christians...have tended to divide themselves into three groups: First, there are those who magnify the gifts of the Spirit until they can see little else. Second, there are those who deny that the gifts of the Spirit are intended for the Church in this period of her history. Third, there are those who appear to be thoroughly bored with the whole thing and do not care to discuss it.

...Another group, so few in number as scarcely to call for classification, consists of those who want to know the truth about the Spirit's gifts and to experience whatever God has for them within the context of sound New Testament faith. It is for these that this is written.

WHAT IS THE TRUE CHURCH?

A proper understanding of the gifts of the Spirit in the Church must depend upon a right concept of the nature of the Church.... The true Church is a spiritual phenomenon...composed of regenerated persons who differ from other human beings in that they have a superior kind of life imparted to them at the time of their inward renewal.

- They are children of God in a sense not true of any other created beings.
- Their origin is divine and their citizenship is in heaven.
- They worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Jesus Christ, and have no confidence in the flesh.
- They constitute a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.
- They have espoused the cause of a rejected and crucified Man who claimed to be God and who has pledged His sacred honor that He will prepare a place for them in His Father's house and return again to conduct them there with rejoicing.

In the meantime, they carry His cross, suffer whatever indignities men may heap upon them for His sake, act as His ambassadors, and do good to all men in His name. They steadfastly believe that they will share His triumph and [thus] are perfectly willing to share His rejection by a society that does not understand them. They have no hard feelings—only charity and compassion and a strong desire that all men may come to repentance and be reconciled to God.

This is a fair summary of one aspect of New Testament teaching about the Church. But another truth, more revealing and significant to those seeking information about the gifts of the Spirit, is that the Church is a spiritual body, an organic entity united by the life that dwells within it.

Each member is joined to the whole by a relationship of life. As a man's soul may be said to be the life of his body, so the indwelling Spirit is the life of the Church. The idea that the Church is the body of Christ is not an erroneous one.... The Apostle Paul in three of his epistles sets forth this truth in such sobriety of tone and fullness of detail as to preclude the notion that he is employing a casual figure of speech not intended to be taken too literally.

[His] clear, emphatic teaching...is that Christ is the Head of the Church, which is His body. The parallel is drawn carefully.... Conclusions are drawn from the doctrine, and certain moral conduct is made to depend upon it.

As a normal man consists of a body with various obedient members [and] a head to direct them, so the true Church is a body, individual Christians being the members and Christ the Head.

The mind works through the members of the body, using them to fulfill its intelligent purposes. Paul speaks of the foot, the hand, the ear, the eye as being members of the body, each with its proper but limited function; but it is the Spirit that worketh in them (1 Cor. 12:1-31).

The teaching that the Church is the body of Christ in 2 Corinthians 12 follows a listing of certain spiritual gifts and reveals the necessity for those gifts.

The intelligent head can work only as it has at its command organs designed for various tasks. It is the mind that sees, but it must have an eye to see through. It is the mind that hears, but it cannot hear without an ear. And so [it is] with all the varied members—the instruments by means of which the mind moves into the external world to carry out its plans.

As all man's work is done by his mind, so the work of the Church is done by the Spirit, and by Him alone. But to work, He must set in the body certain members with abilities specifically created to act as media through which the Spirit can flow toward ordained ends.

HOW MANY GIFTS?

Paul mentions no less than 17 (1 Cor. 12:4-11, 27-31; Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:7-11). These are not natural talents merely but gifts imparted by the Holy Spirit to fit the believer for his place in the body of Christ.... [T]hrough the body of Christ, God is doing an eternal work above and beyond the realm of fallen nature. This requires supernatural working.

Religious work can be done by natural men without the gifts of the Spirit, and it can be done well and skillfully. But work designed for eternity can only be done by the eternal Spirit...through gifts He has Himself implanted in the souls of redeemed men....

Certain evangelical teachers have told us that the gifts of the Spirit ceased at the death of the apostles or at the completion of the New Testament. This, of course, is a doctrine without a syllable of biblical authority back of it.... The result of this erroneous teaching is that spiritually gifted persons are ominously few among us. When we so desperately need leaders with the gift of discernment, for instance, we do not have them and are compelled to fall back upon the techniques of the world. This frightening hour calls aloud for men with the gift of prophetic insight. Instead we have men who conduct surveys, polls, and panel discussions. We need men with the gift of knowledge. In their place we have men with scholarship—nothing more....

[T]he Scriptures plainly imply the imperative of possessing the gifts of the Spirit. Paul urges that we both "covet" and "desire" spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:31; 14:1). It does not appear to be an optional matter with us but rather a scriptural mandate to those who have been filled with the Spirit.

But I must also add a word of caution. The various spiritual gifts are not equally valuable, as Paul so carefully explained. Certain brethren have magnified one gift out of 17 out of all proportion.... [T]he general moral results of this teaching have...not been good.... [I]t has resulted in much shameless exhibitionism, a tendency to depend upon experiences instead of upon Christ, and often a lack of ability to distinguish the works of the flesh from the operations of the Spirit.

Those who deny that the gifts are for us today and those who insist upon making a hobby of one gift are both wrong, and we are all suffering the consequences of their errors.

...We have every right to expect our Lord to grant to His church spiritual gifts, which He has never in fact taken away from us but which we are failing to receive only because of our error or unbelief.

It is more than possible that God is even now imparting the gifts of the Spirit to whomsoever He can and in whatever measure He can as His conditions are met even imperfectly. Otherwise, the torch of truth would flicker out and die.

Clearly, however, we have yet to see what God would do for His Church if we would all throw ourselves down before Him with an open Bible and cry, "Behold Thy servant, Lord! Be it unto me even as Thou wilt."

EXCERPTED FROM *An Urgent Call To A Serious Faith: A Prophetic Alarm for the Bride of Christ* BY DAVE HUNT

WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN LIFE?

“... the just shall live by faith”

— HABAKKUK 2:4; ROMANS 1:17; GALATIANS 3:11; HEBREWS 10:38

SURELY A PHRASE that is repeated four times in the Bible must contain one of God’s most important teachings. The life God gives is only for the *just*—but who is *just*? The Bible leaves no doubt as to the answer: “For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not” (Ecclesiastes 7:20); “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). God’s law demands, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself” (Luke 10:27). By that standard we have all broken God’s law repeatedly and are condemned.

Nor is there any way that we, as sinners, could become *just*. Living a perfect life in the future (even if that were possible) could never merit forgiveness for sins already committed or deliver from the judgment which God’s justice righteously demands. Saving a million lives in the future, for example, could never atone for having taken just one life in the past. Only God could declare a sinner to be “just”—but how could He, when His irrevocable law condemns us? For God simply to forgive the sinner would violate His own law and in itself would be unjust.

Paul, inspired of the Holy Spirit, explains how God can justly justify sinners: “Being justified freely by his [God’s] grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood... for the remission of sins... that he [God] might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Romans 3:24-26). Forgiving the sinner and declaring him just comes only on the basis of Christ having paid the full penalty demanded by God’s justice against sin, and the sinner having personally accepted that payment by Christ. Forgiveness cannot come about through good deeds, church attendance, sacraments, baptism, scapulars or medals, prayers, tears, promises, charitable gifts—or anything else that pastor, priest, church, or Mary could do. Only the infinite God Himself, coming as a sinless man through the virgin birth, could bear, in our place, the infinite penalty we deserved.

New Life in Christ

One cannot even begin to “live by faith” while “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1), which is mankind’s natural condition. One must be made “alive from the dead” (Romans 6:13) by receiving God’s forgiveness in Christ. The Christian life of faith is only for those who are “in the faith” (2 Corinthians 13:5). Living “a good Christian life” is not the way to become a Christian. Only those who already are Christians can live that life. Nor is it lived in order to earn heaven, which is impossible, but out of gratitude to Christ for having paid the penalty for sin.

A Christian has been “born again” of the Spirit of God (John 3:3-8) through “the Word of God” (1 Peter 1:23) by believing the gospel (Romans 1:16) and is a “new creature” (2 Corinthians 5:17) in Christ, having been “created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10). If we trust Him to do so, surely God will open the right doors, guide each step of every Christian’s life, and provide the means of fulfilling the “good works” that He has ordained for each of us.

Clearly, one must first enter upon the Christian life by faith in Christ in order to begin to “live by faith.” Paul exhorts us, “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Colossians 2:6). And how did we receive Christ? As helpless, hopeless sinners who could do nothing for our own salvation but had to look entirely to Christ to save us. In that same attitude of unworthiness and complete dependence upon God for His grace and upon Christ to live His life through us, we live by faith the Christian life.

Christ told Paul that His strength was perfected in Paul’s weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). We must stop trying to be strong in ourselves, and “be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might” (Ephesians 6:10). The battle with the forces of evil, God assures us, will be won “not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit...” (Zechariah 4:6). There is great joy, even in great trials, in trusting Christ and seeing what He can do.

That the Christian life is to be lived by faith tells us that it comes supernaturally, not naturally, as we trust God and know and obey His Word. It cannot be by our own direction and strength but only under the leading and by the power of God, who alone is the proper object of faith. Yes, the Christian life is miraculous. Expect it to be. Beware, however, of the widespread unbiblical emphasis upon, and insatiable desire for, the miraculous, which foster delusion. One of today’s most prominent televangelists and proponents of signs and wonders has written, “you can perform miracles if you but understand... the laws... that unlock God’s power... the flow of God’s energy...” In another book, he asserts, “We speak to money, and it comes. We speak to storms, and they cease...” Money comes from his mailing list, and this country has recently experienced the worst storms in years without any intervention from him.

The most powerful evidence of God’s supernatural work in our lives is found in the transformation of our character to Christlikeness. The “fruit,” not of “therapy,” but “of the Spirit,” is “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Galatians 5:22,23). The “works of the flesh” (Galatians 5:19-21), no matter how exemplary, are not acceptable to God (Romans 8:8). To live the Christian life, one must learn to “live in the Spirit” and “walk in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25).

This is not to deny the benefit of education, diligence, hard work, prudent investment, experience, and sound practice in earning one’s “daily bread” (Matthew 6:11). Earthly success, however, though legitimate, is not the Christian’s goal in life. Christ declared, “... a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15); “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven... for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:19-21).

The Trial of Faith

The fact that the Christian life is supernatural does not guarantee the “financial success” promised by today’s false prophets—nor that we will be free of trouble, sorrow, or pain. Positive confession leaders forget that it was from prison that Paul wrote, “I can do

all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13); and in the same context he declared, “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” (verse 11).

The Christian life is too glorious to be easy. It must involve trials and testings. This was true of Christ himself as well as of the apostles and early church. Jesus said, “In the world ye shall have tribulation” (John 16:33); “The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you” (15:20).

Avoiding this uncomfortable truth, a “user-friendly gospel” is preached by thousands of pastors. Mega-churches are created by offering an appealing “Christianity” that is guaranteed to bring success and popularity with the world, but which would not be recognized by Paul or the other apostles as the Christian life they knew. Celebrities popular with the world are paid to enter today’s pulpits to endorse Christ; thereby they entice multitudes into a false Christianity. Once upon a time the Christian’s heroes were missionaries and martyrs. Not today. Believers and the world now share the same role models. Today’s successful church offers a Christianity guaranteed to be comfortable and which provides numerous services, from 12-step programs to psychological counseling, to escape every possible trial.

The faith by which the Christian life is to be lived and which is described as “more precious than gold” must be tested by temptations, trials, and difficulties. Why? So that when the faith by which the just live comes through the fire of adversity it will “be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:7). Of Christ, who left us “an example, that ye should follow his steps” (1 Peter 2:21), it was said, “who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross...” (Hebrews 12:2). We are able to endure earthly trials because our hope lies beyond this brief life: “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:17).

Those who have trusted God through a deep trial testify that their faith has been strengthened and their joy increased. Having to depend totally on Christ draws us closer to Him and increases our love for Him. Any counsel, help, or support we offer to those in distress should bring them through the trial of faith with their roots deepened in Christ (Isaiah 43:2), rather than enable them to escape the very challenges God intends and the work He desires to effect in their hearts. By allowing us to face seemingly hopeless situations, God intends to move us from mere intellectual belief to practical trust in His provision.

In *The Power of the Spirit* William Law writes, “Whenever a man allows himself to have anxieties, fears, or complaints, he must consider his behavior as either a denial of the wisdom of God or as a confession that he is out of His will” (pp. 20,21). Many who call themselves Christians say they have trusted Christ with their eternal destiny, but seem unable to trust Him in this life—a fact which casts doubt on their relationship to Him.

God wants to test our faith now—and for good reason. Moses told the Israelites, “The Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no” (Deuteronomy 8:2). Oswald Chambers said, “God wants you to understand that it is a life of *faith*, not a life of sentimental enjoyment of His blessings.... Faith by its very nature must be tried.... ‘Though he slay me, yet will I trust him’—this is the most sublime utterance of faith in the whole of the Bible” (*My Utmost for His Highest*, p. 305).

“Yea, though I walk *through* the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me,” wrote David (Psalm 23:4). He did not expect, much less plead, to be given another path that would bypass that terrible valley, but only that God would be with him through his trial. Living by faith involves confronting the

difficulties of life, which indeed may have been allowed of God to test and correct us. The Christian life includes learning where we have gone astray and being willing to be corrected and brought back into obedience to God and His Word. It is often in times of distress alone that God can break the hold of that which has drawn our affection away from Him, perhaps without our even knowing it.

Committed to Christ Come What May

As we walk by faith, and experience God’s faithfulness in trials, praise and worship well up within us. Indeed, praise and worship are to play a significant role in the Christian life. Sadly, so many of today’s praise and worship songs reflect the lack of depth in current Christianity. Congregational singing often consists of empty, repetitive choruses which have taken the place of the old hymns of the faith. Phrases are repeated again and again, such as “We worship You, Lord, we praise You, Lord, we lift Your name on high, we lift our hands, we exalt You,” and so on. There is much clapping and swaying to the catchy tune and beat. Yet the congregation and the “worship team” seem oblivious of the fact that instead of truly praising and worshiping, they are merely singing words about praise and worship, without mentioning God’s character, qualities, and deeds which evoke worship.

Sound doctrine, too, plays a vital role in the Christian life of faith. Paul’s life sets the example for us all. In describing his life to Timothy, he put *doctrine* first: “But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions.... Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:10-12). He also warned that “the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine” (4:3). We are in that day. Doctrine is despised. Entertainment and sermonettes are more popular with today’s Christianettes (loosely quoted from A. W. Tozer).

One well-known Christian leader writes that “the Bible is not an impractical book of theology, but rather a practical book of life containing a system of thought and conduct that will guarantee success....” His idea that theology is “impractical” is shared by millions. And “success”—which he, as a multimillionaire, enjoys in abundance—is now measured by the world’s standards instead of by God’s.

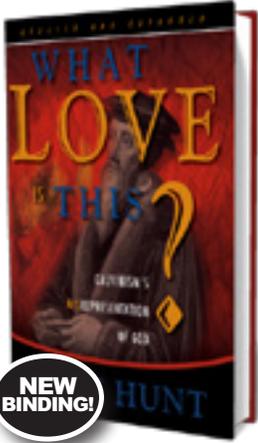
Our hope is in heaven and in the imminency of the rapture which will transport us out of this evil world into His presence. In the meantime, our confident trust in our Lord through the trials of this life of faith demonstrates the reality of our trust in Him for eternity. A true story about Blondin, who walked back and forth on a tightrope across Niagara Falls, illustrates the point.

One day, in the crowd watching Blondin, a spectator was trying to explain to a younger man what it means to truly trust Christ. “What do you think of Blondin?” he asked. “He’s the greatest!” came the enthusiastic response. “Do you think he can carry a man across and back?” “Of course,” was the immediate reply. “I’ve seen him do it.” Looking the younger man squarely in the eye, the questioner said, “When Blondin comes back from the other side, he’s going to call for a volunteer. Will you be the man?” The young man turned white. “Not on your life!” he exclaimed.

Many have a similarly theoretical faith in Christ. They can sing enthusiastically about salvation, but when life’s adversities strike they have no real peace and joy and run to the nearest therapist instead of to the Lord. May He give us grace to live by faith as true Christians; and may earth’s trials strengthen our faith, deepen our love for God, increase our fellowship with and joy in Him, and bring honor and glory to Him for eternity.

[SEE PAGE 13 TO ORDER *An Urgent Call To A Serious Faith*]

NEW! CLASSROOM-QUALITY STUDY AND REFERENCE BINDING



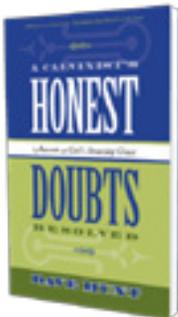
What Love Is This? - Calvinism's Misrepresentation of God

Hunt—TBC is pleased to announce the fourth edition of Dave Hunt's crucial critique of Calvinism—now in “reference” binding, which is a glossy color hardcover with no dust jacket—making it ideal for classrooms and frequent use. This edition has a couple of noteworthy differences and advantages from the previous edition. The documentation and formatting have been fine-tuned to improve accuracy and readability. Also, in order to make the book more portable, chapters 30 and 31 (which presented the fictional but true-to-life account of “AI” and “Jan”) have been extracted. The material from these two chapters is contained in a separate book: *A Calvinist's Honest Doubts*. We trust that even more readers will be blessed by this new hardback edition. Discussions with many people around the world reveal that multitudes of sincere, Bible-believing Christians are “Calvinists” only by default. It takes only a few simple questions to discover the fact that most of those who regard themselves as Calvinists are largely unaware of what John Calvin and his early followers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries actually believed and practice. Nor do they fully understand what most of today's leading Calvinists believe. *What Love Is This?* exposes the true beliefs of Calvinism and addresses all the issues surrounding this doctrine. The Berean Call, 546 pp.

B60873 Hardback • Retail \$39.99 — 2 or more copies only \$30.00 each! wt 1.9 **\$37.50**
B00743 Paperback • Retail \$29.99 — 2 or more copies only \$22.00 each! wt 2.0 **\$27.50**

WHAT LOVE IS THIS? THE PAPERBACK COLLECTION

Excerpted from Dave Hunt's bestselling book *What Love Is This?*, TBC has created a series of smaller, more digestible portions highlighting specific aspects of Calvinism. We're pleased to offer all 3 excerpts along with the original book (in hardcover and paperback) for one low price!

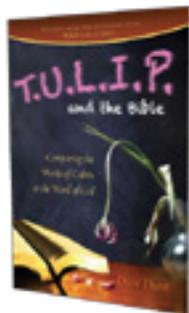


Honest Doubts

Hunt—Based on years of actual accounts and conversations, this “user-friendly” book is derived from the final chapters of earlier editions of *What Love Is This?* In *Honest Doubts*, readers will become familiar with the key issues of Calvinism

in a unique format that reads like a real-life drama, because the characters are composites of actual individuals, and the circumstances are equally real. Discover the heart of a Calvinist “seeker”—and the surprising result of his quest for truth in this fictionalized but true-to-life dialogue. The Berean Call, 109 pp. Retail \$9.99

B60347 wt .3 **\$9.50**



T.U.L.I.P. and the Bible

Hunt—Quoting from the major Calvinistic creeds or confessions (including actual citations and context from the Canons of Dort and the Westminster Confession of Faith), Dave Hunt proceeds to dissect the

“sacred” T.U.L.I.P. one petal at a time—exposing each of Calvin's five points to the light of Scripture as a workman “rightly dividing the word of truth.” With reformed theology and reconstructionism enjoying a recent resurgence among young adult ministries and across denominational boundaries, TBC is pleased to offer this long-awaited resource at an attractive price for owning, sharing, and giving. The Berean Call, 190 pp. Retail \$12.99

B60750 wt .5 **\$9.50**



Calvin's Tyrannical Kingdom

Hunt—Calvin has been acclaimed as a godly example who based his theology and actions upon Scripture alone. But in fact, much that he did was unbiblical—though entirely consistent with this belief system. Should

today's Christian leaders continue to laud a man whose behavior was often so far removed from the commandments of Christ and the example of Paul? Should believers seek to celebrate (and emulate) Calvin's theology? Dave Hunt answers these questions in this excerpt from *What Love Is This?* The Berean Call, 119 pp. Retail \$12.99

B60767 wt .4 **\$9.50**



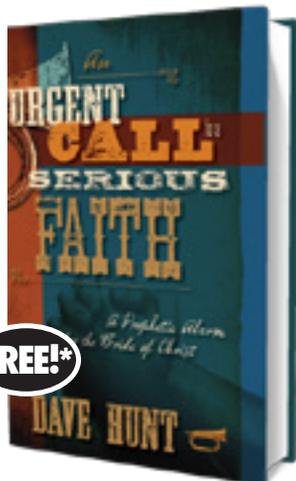
WHAT LOVE IS THIS? ULTIMATE COLLECTION —

The “ultimate collection” includes *What Love Is This?* (hardcover), *Honest Doubts*, *TULIP and the Bible*, *Calvin's Tyrannical Kingdom*, and a **FREE** *What Love Is This?* paperback (reg. \$27.50)! A great collection to share with your family, friends, or Bible study group! Save \$46.95 off retail and \$34.50 off TBC's regular price!

SET120 Retail \$105.95, TBC Regular \$93.50 (SAVE \$34.50!) wt 2.0 **SALE \$59.00**

FREE URGENT CALL HARDBACK! WITH PURCHASE OF RADIO DISCUSSION

**Get a FREE copy of An Urgent Call to a Serious Faith – with purchase of An Urgent Call radio discussion!
Read through the book with Dave and Tom as they encourage you in the faith!*



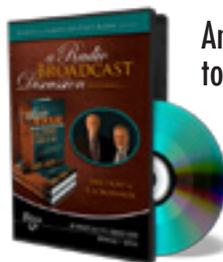
FREE!*

An Urgent Call to a Serious Faith

Hunt—The awesome sense of the greatness of God and the cosmic and eternal proportions of the work that He is doing seems largely absent from Christianity today. Could this be why so many carry the self-imposed burdens of man-made “programs” they are trying to put into effect in order to “live victorious lives” or to “advance the cause of Christ”? When we see that the task is totally beyond our capabilities, then we cease from our striving and begin to allow Him to work in and through us by His mighty

power. This beautiful hardback edition includes the revised and expanded content of *Seeking and Finding God* (Dave’s favorite evangelistic book), which was originally derived from an earlier printing of *An Urgent Call*. This edition is aimed at believers who understand the times and who desire to be equipped from God’s Word to minister effectively today. The Berean Call, 254 pp. Retail \$27.99

B00339 wt 1.2 **\$17.50**



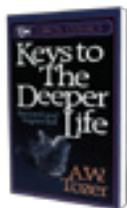
An Urgent Call to a Serious Faith - Radio Broadcast

Hunt/McMahon—This re-mastered series from *Search the Scriptures Daily* Radio contains a wealth of information that will encourage you in the faith. Have you ever prayed, “Lord, how can I... deepen and defend my faith? ...know and prove that God’s Word is true? ...share Christ with confidence? ...refute false religions? ...truly love God as He desires? ...fulfill God’s purpose for my life? ‘Rightly divide’ God’s Word? Understand Bible prophecy? Prepare for Christ’s return? Understand and teach Bible doctrine?” Listen as Dave Hunt and T. A. McMahon guide you to God’s Word for the answers! Answer the call of Ephesians 5:14-16 “Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” About 18 hours of audio.

**Get a FREE copy of An Urgent Call to a Serious Faith with purchase of radio discussion below!*

CD145	14 Compact discs — \$59.95 retail	wt 1.1	\$49.00
MP3145	1 MP3 disc — \$29.95 retail	wt .2	\$24.50

CLASSIC RESOURCES FROM A. W. TOZER DEEPENING YOUR WALK WITH GOD



Keys to the Deeper Life

Tozer—*Keys to the Deeper Life* contains six of Tozer’s best-known essays and editorials. In them he rigorously examines many of the failings and foibles of his day. Although most were

written more than three decades ago, the insights they offer are as fresh and thought provoking as the day they were published. Zondervan, 92 pp. Retail \$9.99

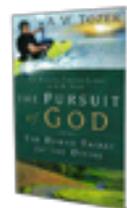
B33361 wt .3 **\$9.00**



The Size of the Soul

Tozer—In this 12th book of editorials, Tozer covers such topics as the steps to revival, the needed reformation, the Christians hope, and the causes of religious confusion.

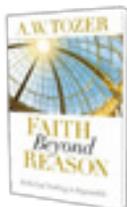
Wingspread, 168 pp. Retail \$11.99
B00497 wt .6 **\$10.00**



The Pursuit of God

Tozer—“As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God” (Psalm 42:1). For the person thirsting for the things of God without distracting embellishments,

this book will become a faithful companion. Wingspread, 121 pp. Retail \$12.99
B93663 wt .5 **\$12.00**

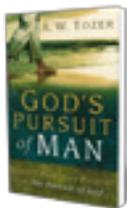


Faith Beyond Reason

Tozer—Do you believe God will move heaven and earth for you if you trust Him? In this treasure of spiritual insights about faith, Tozer takes an in-depth look at the gospel of John and asks us to examine

our faith and what it stands on. *Faith Beyond Reason* will leave you with a new and empowering sense of what your faith means while subtly revealing the power of God in your life. Wingspread, 160 pp. Retail \$12.99

B60337 wt .4 **\$12.00**



God’s Pursuit of Man

Tozer—Admitting to having been forced by inward pressure and an unbearable burden to write it, Tozer’s aim was to assure believers that if they want to know the power of Christ they must be invaded by

God. “This little book of the spiritual way has not been ‘made’ in any mechanical sense, it has been born out of inward necessity....The sight of the languishing church around me and the operations of a new spiritual power within me have set up a pressure impossible to resist.” —A.W. Tozer. Wingspread, 138 pp. Retail \$12.99

B07049 wt .5 **\$12.00**



Paths to Power

Tozer—This book helps us to examine our steps along the highway of Christian living so that we may receive the power God intends that we use for His glory and our blessing. He urges us to compare our motives and methods with the plumb line of biblical truth in order to obtain His richest enabling through the power of the Holy Spirit. Christian Publications, 64 pp. Retail \$6.99

B01903 wt .1 **\$6.00**

NEW! 2013 NEWSLETTER RESOURCES ON CD AND MP3

Fallen behind on reading the newsletter? Catch up with the 2013 audio newsletter archives! Whether driving, exercising, or doing housework, these audio newsletters are a perfect way to catch up on all TBC newsletters from last year.



2013 TBC Cover Articles

TBC—Listen to an entire year of audio newsletter cover articles from *The Berean Call*, as read by T. A. McMahon and producer Gary Carmichael. This repackaged CD album contains quality audio files, playable on ANY compact disc player, car stereo, or computer. Enjoy all 12 feature articles (approximately 3.5 hours total) from 2013, presented in the order in which they were originally published. (Note: The CD collection features only “main articles.”) 3 CDs, Retail \$17.99.

NLCD13 2 or more \$14.00 ea. wt 0.3 **\$17.50**



2013 TBC Audio Newsletter on MP3

TBC—Features all of the monthly cover articles, Quotable, Q&A, TBC Extra, News Alerts, and more from *The Berean Call* in 2013, as read by T. A. McMahon, producer Gary Carmichael, and TBC staff members. This beautifully packaged album contains one MP3-CD of archival-quality audio files, playable on most compact disc players, car stereos, or computers. You may also copy the MP3 files to your computer, iPod, or other personal, portable MP3 player for your convenience. 1 MP3 CD, Retail \$17.99.

NLMP313 2 or more \$14.00 ea. wt 0.2 **\$17.50**



TBC Cover Articles on CD – Complete collection from 1999-2013

TBC—Listen to more than a decade of audio newsletter cover articles from *The Berean Call*, as read by Dave Hunt, T. A. McMahon, and producer Gary Carmichael. Each of these repackaged CD albums contain archival-quality audio files, playable on ANY compact disc player, car stereo, or computer. These are not compressed MP3 files, but full broadcast-quality CD-audio files. Each annual album (except 1999) includes 12 feature articles (approximately 4 hours total), for your listening enjoyment, presented in the order they were originally published. You’ll hear Dave and Tom read their featured articles to you, month by month, year by year. This is a fantastic way to quickly and easily “catch up” on all the back issues, from the convenience of your home, car, or office as you listen to *The Berean Call* newsletter on audio CD! (Note: The CD collection features only “main articles.” The “Complete Audio Newsletter on MP3” version also includes additional newsletter content—see right). 47 discs, 15 albums.

NLCDSET TBC REG. \$199.00 – SAVE \$100! wt 4.7 **SALE \$99.00**



TBC Audio Newsletter on MP3 – Complete collection from 1999-2013

TBC—Complete audio newsletter on MP3 features monthly cover articles, Quotable, TBC Extra, Q&A, Letters page, and News Alerts from *The Berean Call*, as read by Dave Hunt, T. A. McMahon, and TBC staff members. Each of these beautifully repackaged MP3 albums contain MP3-CDs of archival-quality audio files, playable on most compact disc players, car stereos, or computers. You may also copy the MP3 files to your computer, iPod, or other personal, portable MP3 player for your convenience. 15 discs, 15 albums.

NLMP3SET TBC REG. \$149.00 – SAVE \$50! wt 3.0 **SALE \$99.00**



1986-2013 Newsletter Archive on CD-ROM

Hunt/McMahon—TBC Newsletter Archive on CD-ROM. Every TBC newsletter, from 1986-2013 and the index, all in PDF for Mac or Windows, on one CD! features monthly cover articles, Dave Hunt Classics, Guest Features, Quotable, TBC Extra, Q&A, In Defense Letters page, and News Alerts from *The Berean Call*. A great resource for Bereans looking to add to their study tools — the PDFs are completely searchable by keyword or phrase, page number, year, or month!

CDPDF 1 CD-ROM wt 0.3 **\$15.00**

2013 NEWSLETTER REPRINTS



2013 Newsletter Reprints

TBC—Contains every issue from 2013! These loose-leaf, binder-ready reprints include a complete, updated index (1986-2013) listing more than 2,000 names, subjects, and topics. 12 issues. Retail \$10.99

2013 wt .7 **\$10.00**



1986-2013 Newsletter Reprints

TBC—Every issue from 1986 through 2013! Comprehensive, annually updated, loose-leaf, binder-ready reprints come with an extensive updated index. Retail \$65.99

102013 wt 7.8 **\$65.00**



ORDER FORM

TOLL FREE ORDERS: 800-937-6638 • 7:00 AM – 4:30 PM Mon-Fri (PST) • FAX: 541-385-6025

ONLINE: www.thebereancall.org MAIL: PO Box 7019 • Bend OR 97708

1 ORDERED BY: address correction or change below

Account No. _____
Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

3 SHIP TO: same as "ordered by" alternate address below this is a gift to

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

2 CONTACT INFO: In case we need to contact you regarding your order

Daytime Home (_____) _____
Daytime Work (_____) _____
E-Mail _____

To sign up for automatic e-mail news, please visit our website: www.thebereancall.org and click on "subscribe" to create a user name and to see the newsletter options

4 PAYMENT: (PLEASE — IN U.S. FUNDS ONLY)

CHARGE to my credit card

Card Number _____ / _____ / _____ / _____

Expires on (mm/yy) ____ / ____

Signature _____

CHECK or money order enclosed / check number _____

5 ORDER RESOURCES: Please print all information clearly and use catalog codes

NOTICE

Item Code	Title/Product Description	Weight (Int'l Only)	Regular Price	Multiple Item Discount Price *	Quantity Ordered	Total Weight (Int'l Only)	Total Price
NLF	\$1.00 per month for Int'l TBC subscriptions		\$1.00	n/a	1 yr	n/a	\$12.00

* MULTIPLE ITEM DISCOUNT PRICE: Save 20% when ordering 2 or more of the same item. (PLEASE NOTE: Items on sale, clearance, closeout, or other special or limited-time offers do not qualify for the multiple-item or wholesale discount.)

SHIPPING RATES & OPTIONS

USA \$3 or \$7

INT'L \$15 first, \$5 additional

\$3 - DISCOUNT SHIPPING

Your items will be shipped by the cheapest method, delivers in 7 - 21 days.

\$7 - FASTER SHIPPING

Your items will be shipped by USPS First Class Mail or faster, delivers in 3 - 7 days.

If you require a specific shipping method, or want FedEx expedited shipping, we will charge you the actual shipping cost. Customers who buy at wholesale or ministry discounted pricing also pay actual shipping cost.

Please provide a street address to get the lowest shipping cost.

Please use the calculation below to estimate your shipping costs. If actual shipping costs are less, we will adjust what we charge you. If shipping charges are more, we will contact you.

First pound is \$15, each additional pound is \$5

Example: a 10-pound package is \$15 (first pound) + \$45 (9 additional pounds) = \$60

We will use International Priority Flat Rate Boxes whenever possible to reduce postage costs.

If you pay with a credit card, we will charge the actual amount of shipping. If you pay by check or cash, we prefer to refund you with store credit. You may also choose to receive a refund by check or specify that the difference be used as a donation.

Please provide an email address (if you have one) in case we need to contact you about your order.

6 TOTAL WEIGHT: _____

(Canada / Int'l only—please round UP to nearest pound)

7 TOTAL YOUR ORDER:

Product/Resource Total _____
← Shipping Fees _____
Gift to Ministry _____
TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

If MY FUNDS EXCEED PRODUCT AND SHIPPING COSTS, PLEASE KEEP BALANCE AS A GIFT

Thank You!

FEBRUARY 2014

NEW & IMPROVED! LARGE PRINT NEWSLETTER "SUPER SIZED" FOR 2014

SAVE \$5 NOW WITH YOUR NEW OR EXTENDED SUBSCRIPTION FOR YOURSELF OR A LOVED ONE!

Large Print Newsletter

TBC—Put down that magnifying glass! Sight-challenged readers will be excited to know that beginning with the January edition, our Large Print newsletter is now "SUPER SIZED!" In addition to extra large (14-point) type for the main article text (compared with 10-point in our standard edition), Large Print readers will now enjoy these advantages:

- Identical layout and graphics to our standard edition—including the cover art!
- "Super-Sized" resource pages as well as editorial features!
- "Super-Sized" order form for easier use!

The binding of these editions has also changed to permit this format change: 16 pages will be printed double-sided on 8 sheets of 11x17 paper, which are then corner-stapled and trimmed to approximately 11 inches wide by 15.5 inches high—a convenient size to handle and enjoy. Each LP edition will be folded in half, tabbed, and mailed to the recipient. The cost of this edition has remained at \$15 per year for over a decade, but will be increasing to \$20 to help defray costs. But for a limited time (for all current and new subscriptions!) you can subscribe or extend your subscription at the old rate of \$15 through March 31, 2014.

NLLP 1 year subscription, 12 newsletters TBC Reg. \$20.00 **SALE \$15.00**

