

Sunday, March 16, 2014—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—Lesson 131
The Life and Ministry of C. Richard Jordan, After the Bible Society

Introduction

- We have already seen that Richard Jordan resigned from the Berean Bible Society on August 29, 1987. In the immediate aftermath of his departure, Stam elected to engage in public discourse via the *Berean Searchlight* and his message at the 1988 Berean Bible Fellowship Conference on the topic of the King James Bible. We have spent the last three lessons documenting this discourse.
- While publicly Stam elected to fight the battle with Richard on the Bible issue, behind closed doors, according to Jordan, the Pauline Prayer subject was more of an issue and point of contention between two men.
- After leaving the Bible Society a variety of different accusations against Richard and “his guys” were leveled by people associated with the Berean Bible Society (BBS). The most commonly repeated one is that Richard stole the *Searchlight* mailing list and/or the BBS donor list. Richard addressed this accusation directly during our interview. Richard stated that the accusation surfaced after he sent out the first edition of *The Grace Journal* in December, 1987 since it was sent to many people who had been donors to the BBS. Nancy and Allen Leach had been running Berean Lighthouse Tapes since 1981 and had compiled a mailing list of people who had purchased audio and video cassettes from their ministry. Between 1981 and Richard’s resignation in 1987, the Leach’s had compiled a mailing of list of between 2,800 and 2,900 addresses for people who had ordered tapes from their ministry. According to Richard it was Allen Leach who encouraged him to write the first issue of *The Grace Journal* in the first place because people wanted to hear from Richard what was going on. In addition, Richard shared that eight to ten people had also sent him lists containing the names and addresses of people who wanted to continue to receive updates and information about Richard’s ministry once he left the BBS. Lastly, when Richard resigned he was ordered to clear out his office and take all of his personal belongings. Included within those personal belongs where all his correspondence files from his time at the BBS from 1979 to 1987. The original mailing list for the first issue of *The Grace Journal* was comprised from these three sources and not a stolen mailing list from the BBS.
- In any event, Richard said that the notion that he stole the BBS mailing/donor list is laughable in the first place. During the 1980s, the mailing list was still on steel print plates that filled almost an entire room at the BBS. If he had stolen them, it would have been obvious they were missing. There was no printed master list at the time, according to Jordan. Likewise, there was no donor list. Donations were noted and cataloged using a card catalogue type system where there was a card for every donor and when donations were received they were noted on the respective card. Again it would have been next to impossible for Richard to have stolen the entire cabinet containing these cards.

Pauline Prayer: Some Final Thoughts on the GADs

- We have already studied in Lesson 128 Stam's letter to the readership of the *Searchlight* dated September 1, 1987 in which he announced that Richard would no longer be working for the Bible Society. Please recall that in the second half of that letter Stam attacked Richard on the subject of Pauline Prayer stating in part, ". . . Pastor Jordan began teaching another "far out" doctrine, utterly devoid of Scriptural foundation: the doctrine that "God does not heal the sick in answer to prayer during this dispensation," and that our prayers should be only for spiritual blessings, not for physical or temporal ones."
- During my interview with Richard he stated in no uncertain terms that his decision to leave BBS had more to do with the prayer issue than the King James Bible. By the time Jordan left the Bible Society, Stam had taken to telling people what Richard believed about prayer. Richard recounted a board meeting in which the subject came up. Stam was telling the BBS Board that Richard did not believe in prayer for physical things. Richard challenged Stam to play the tape in the album he was holding on the Philippians 4:6-7 because it was not true. Stam of course refused to do so. Richard said that over the years at least 10,000 albums on Pauline Prayer have been produced and sold.
- Richard stated during our interview that O'Hair kicked the religious idol of water baptism and look what that got him—controversy and grief from his fellow Fundamentalists. Likewise, Jordan kicked the religious idol of prayer and look what it got him—controversy and grief from his fellow mid-Acts Pauline Dispensationalists. Richard said that through the early discussions regarding the Grace Alternative Doctrines (GADs), he continued to ask the following questions: 1) How Does It Work? 2) What Do You Mean by That?
- The following is a sample exchange regarding the relationship between prayer and healing between Richard and Stam/BBS Board.
 - RJ: "Will God heal you in answer to prayer?"
 - Stam: "If it is His will to do so."
 - RJ: "So, if you don't pray, will God heal you anyway, if it's his will?"
 - Stam: "No you need to pray and ask for healing."
 - RJ: "So then why is God healing someone, because it's His will or because the person asked for healing?"
- In the inaugural issue of *The Grace Journal* from December, 1987 Richard also addressed "The Question of Pauline Prayer" in the second half of his editorial. Seeking to set the record straight about what he actually believed regarding the matter, Richard wrote:

- “Prayer is an inter-dispensational principle in that all men in all ages are exhorted and privileged to pray. It is, however, also a dispensational issue that they do not all pray for the same reasons nor have cause to expect the same results. All men in all dispensations pray but they do so in accordance with the instructions given to them for their particular dispensation.

Once again, speaking for myself, I do not believe that in the present dispensation the believer is to “pray only for spiritual things.” In point of fact, I am not even sure what that is supposed to mean.

To the contrary: Paul’s epistles clearly show that in the age of grace God Himself is vitally interested in every detail of our lives and invites us to bring them all to Him and leave them there, knowing that He will do His best for us—because He has already done His best for us: in Christ Jesus! Thus, our problems become productive and actually “work for us,” as II Corinthians 4:16-18 says.

In line with the nature of what God is doing today (i.e., forming a spiritual body of believers called the Body of Christ), Pauline Prayer naturally focuses on spiritual issues—but it never “overlooks” physical circumstances, situations and/or needs. Rather it provides empowerment for the believer to properly respond to these “felt needs” and handle every detail of life for the glory of God. Romans 8:26-27 is clear that the indwelling Holy Spirit motivates and energizes by His power an effective prayer ministry that penetrates the deepest levels of human need.

There are definitive “results”—spiritual, emotional and physical—which come as a response to this wonderful divine operating asset of “praying in the Spirit.” Thus, the writer feels that anyone who tells you that you cannot pray for everything that is on your heart is short-changing you just as surely as the one who tells you that God will give you anything you pray for is holding out false hopes and expectations to you.

The following, from the pen of Sir Robert Anderson, expresses our view on prayer so fully, we simply reproduced it here with our hearty “Amen” attached:

“It is a solemn thing to make unconditioned demands upon God. To the record of such prayers may often be added the solemn words: ‘He gave them their request, but sent leanness unto their soul.’ Hezekiah prayed in this way. He claimed a prolongation of his life and God granted his petition; and the added years gave him his son Manasseh, and the consequences of Manasseh’s sin (that God ‘would not pardon’) still rests as blight and a curse upon that nation!

Such a prayer, I make bold to say, is unfitting to the Christian. How different the teaching of the Divine Spirit. How different the teaching of the Divine Spirit! It may be the life of husband or wife, or parent or child that is in the balance: what then shall be the

believer's attitude? To claim it, as Hezekiah did, and chance the awful risks which the answer may entail? Or 'by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving,' to leave the request with God; and having thus left it all with Him, to trust His love and wisdom with the issue? It was thus the apostle prayed when he sought relief from that mysterious hindrance to his ministry; and the denial of this request, instead of bringing bitterness of soul, only served to teach him more of the 'the power of Christ.'

The prayer of the Pentecostal ages was like drawing cheques to be paid in coin over the counter. The prayer of the Christian dispensation—that of the life of faith—is to make known our requests to God and to be at peace (*The Silence of God*, 207-208)."

Concerning the healing of the sick: If God does heal a sick one, does He do so because we pray—or does He do so because it is His will to do so in the outworking of His purposes? It seems to me that in light of Philippians 4:6-7, the fundamental purpose of Pauline Prayer is not simply to make life easier for the believer but rather to set us at peace with His will, whatever it may be. This is something far better with which our heavenly Father has replaced the healing program of former days." (*The Grace Journal*, "Here I Stand"), (2-3)

- As early as the April, 1988 issue of the *Berean Searchlight*, articles started to appear addressing the subject of Pauline Prayer. Paul Sadler's article, "Paul's Prayer Life" characterized the GAD view of prayer as "an Arminian view of man and a Deistic view of God." Sadler wrote:
 - "What a controversial subject the prayer life of the believer has become in recent days! . . . Recently, we spoke with one of our younger Grace pastors who was quick to inform us that "while we pray about everything, God isn't really interested in the physical and material concerns of our lives".

Statements that are all too common along these lines are: "It is not God's policy to heal the sick today in answer to prayer;" "There's no need to pray about that new home—God isn't dealing in real estate;" "God doesn't grant us traveling grace in answer to our prayers." We are told to pray about everything, but in the end, God will respond only to our spiritual needs. They say He will never intervene in other areas of our lives to either help us or supply our needs.

To us this view on prayer is one of the most discouraging and disheartening teachings we have heard in recent times. It also borders on an Arminian view of man and a Deistic view of God. A great evil lurks here, in that many believers are being influenced to live the Christian life in their own strength while God just idly looks on from heaven, as it were. . .

Four pillars that seem to stand tall in the minds of some these days are: a limited prayer life; no chastisement by God; no need to ask God for parental forgiveness; and no "Judgment Seat of Christ" to come. (37)

- Throughout the 1990s, articles appeared in the *Searchlight* criticizing various aspects of the GADs. Some examples include the following:
 - “Consecrated For the Service of Christ” by Paul Sadler in the August 1995 *Berean Searchlight*. This article addressed the subject of the spiritual gifts and those who viewed pastor and teacher as “merely offices,” not direct supernatural empowering.
 - “God’s Gifts to His Church” by Paul Sadler in the May, 1996 *Berean Searchlight* offered a fuller criticism of the GAD position on the spiritual gifts. Please note that this is about the time that Richard released his eight volume tape set titled *The Grace Alternatives*.
- Richard shared during our interview that, as a general rule, he has elected not to respond to critical articles such as these, electing instead to focus on his own ministry. We have seen this firsthand through our own observations of Richard’s life and conduct.

Works Cited

Jordan, Richard C. “Here I Stand” in *The Grace Journal*. December, 1987.

Sadler, Paul. “Paul’s Prayer Life” in *The Berean Searchlight*. April, 1988.