

THE NEW CREATION

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NOTE: The thoughts presented in the articles are those of the writer and are not necessarily totally endorsed by the New Creation Staff. “Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” – 2 Timothy 2:15.
 “Prove ALL things and hold fast to what is good.” – 1 Thess. 5:21.

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He Presents to Himself

*“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that **He might present to Himself the church in all her glory**, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.” Eph 5:25-27 NASB*



I recently read this Scripture in a Bible study and was impressed by the words in bold above. For the first time I saw clearly that Jesus is very active in developing his bride—his wife to be. He **presents to himself** the church. What a thought! To be sure, our God invites to this high station to be with His son; God makes all the parameters for this exaltation, but Jesus is the one developing his prospective bride. He who gave himself up for her is now sanctifying her by the washing of water with the teachings of the word. Such a blessing! We sing, *“What a Friend We Have in Jesus.”* With such a friend, is there any reason not to be filled with resolve to continue in this way in 2022?

New Year's Resolutions

A little less impatient with those we deem slow;
A little less of arrogance because of all we know.
A little more humility, seeing our worth is slight;
We are such little candles compared to stars at night!
A little more forgiving and trying to be kind;
A little more zealous the word of praise to find.

The word of praise to utter and make a heart rejoice.
A little bit more careful to speak with gentle voice;
A little more real effort to understand each other;
A little more striving to help in distress a brother;
A little more courage to each task that must be done;
These our resolutions -- God help us with every one.

Poem from Faithbuilders' Fellowship Library

R. Whittaker

Pentecost: the Voice of the Spirit of Truth

(Acts 2:1-4:4; John 16:13)

Amos 3:7, 8 "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret to his servants the prophets. The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?"

That scripture appeals to me as expressing the very essence of God's salvation work because, from the beginning, it has been a gradual revealing of secrets. (Eph. 3:9-11). The Bible shows us that the progress of that work, although signposted from time to time by certain dramatic events, is demonstrated by what God has added to man's understanding.

The pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost following Jesus' ascension was an astonishing thing to those who witnessed it: a sign from heaven, not merely to amaze, but to draw attention to the revealing of a great secret, and to lend God's authority to what His prophets were now saying: that men might be saved through repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

Israel's advantage

The Bible tells us, that of all the people on earth at that time, the Israelite was in a unique position to respond to this revelation. Everything that God had done with Israel had been with a view to preparing a people to receive the promised Messiah, a people to whom God would show His salvation. As Jesus said to the Samaritan woman: *"salvation is of the Jews"* (John 4:22; Zech. 9:9).

"What advantage then hath the Jew?" wrote Paul, *"or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because unto them were committed the oracles of God."* (Rom. 3:1-2; KJV).

Even though Jesus after His resurrection commanded his disciples in broad terms to go forth and make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19), we know that it was not His intention for a worldwide ministry to begin at that time. Jesus Himself had said, "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of

Israel" (Matt. 15:24; Rom. 15:8-9), and with very few exceptions ministered only to His own nation. He had also instructed His disciples accordingly (Matt. 10:5-6). And although Israel nationally reached its crisis point with the rejection and murder of Christ ("Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" - Matt. 23:28), yet the hope of the Kingdom of God continued to pertain exclusively to the descendants of Jacob for some time afterward. Why?

I believe part of the answer is contained in Paul's emotional reference in Romans 9:1-5 . . . *my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.*

God's relationship with Israel stemmed directly from His friendship with and His promises to, Abraham. The Israelites were "*beloved for the fathers' sakes*" (Rom. 11:28), and the ultimate blessings of both Abrahamic and Law Covenants were intended in the first instance for the sons and daughters of Israel. Why was that privileged position not forfeited at the crucifixion?

It would seem that God, having committed to them alone His "oracles" (that is, His word) up to the time of Messiah's appearance, did not fail to complete that commitment, and at the time of Christ's death the witness of God to this people was not finished. The evidence was not all in.

It is hard for us to put ourselves in the position of a Jew at that time. We live in a country of mixed heritage, and a poorly defined culture which is almost totally secular in nature. A religious life, if one has it, is personal and separate from the life of our nation. Most of us could not imagine what it would be like to be brought up in surroundings where cultural and religious life were totally bound up together, finding their basis in the divine revelation of the Law and the prophets, in which God's very words were blended with the history of one's own people. It was clearly God's intention in creating such an envi-

ronment to develop individuals whose conscience and hopes could be touched by appealing to what they themselves acknowledged as the source of wisdom, that is, the Holy Scriptures.

Without the testimony and proof that Christ had risen from the dead, the fulfilment of Old Testament scripture concerning the Messiah could not be demonstrated. Without that scriptural evidence, the devout Jew could not be expected to connect the apostles' testimony with his religious beliefs, and without that connection he would not be responsible to make this crucial decision of faith.

God having intended that the Israelite mind should be prepared in this way to receive the Gospel, we can understand that He wisely allowed time for the process to come to fruition. It would have been inappropriate at that point for the message to be taken to the Gentiles.

Pentecost

The Day of Pentecost following Christ's resurrection must therefore be looked upon as a climax in God's dealings with Israel, and I would like to discuss some aspects of it that were of special relevance to the nation.

Acts 2:1-18 and when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own language. And they were all amazed and marveled, saying, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own language wherein we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judaea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and

Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we do hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God. And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying to one another, what meaneth this? But others mocking said, they are filled with new wine. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them, saying, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words. For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is but the third hour of the day; But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my spirit upon all flesh: And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams: Yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days Will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

Peter pointed to the linguistic phenomenon that was occurring among the followers of Jesus as the fulfilment of Joel 2:28 & 29. If that was so, then the “last days” (or “afterward”, as it says in Joel) had arrived. From the preceding verses in Joel, we can see that the prophet was speaking of Israel: Joel 2:27 and ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel and that I am the Lord your God, and there is none else, and my people shall never be ashamed, and then comes the part that Peter quoted. So, the pronoun “your”, as in “your sons and daughters”, “your young men”, “your old men” refers back to Israel; it identifies those upon whom God would pour out His spirit as Israelites. “Upon all flesh” -- This kind of operation of the Holy Spirit was not without precedent. In the past God had given miraculous gifts to certain individuals as it suited His purpose at the time; Moses, Samson, Elijah, spring readily to mind; even an unsuspecting King Saul. (1 Sam. 10:10; 19:23-24). But “upon all flesh” draws a distinction between the previous, very selective operation of the Spirit of God and this Pentecostal outpouring. The Holy Spirit was now being given far more liberally, not as before to one or a few in a generation.

However, as time showed, “all flesh” did not mean the whole world, or even all of Israel, but referred only to the believers in Jesus Christ. They alone are identified from Joel’s prophecy as God’s “servants and handmaids”, simply because of their obedience to a new commandment: *Acts 2:38 Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy [Spirit].*

The tongues

What was the purpose of the gift of tongues? This gift, though ranked under other gifts by Paul (1 Cor. 14:4-5), is prominent in the New Testament and is described on two later occasions as the first manifestation of the Spirit in new believers (Acts 10:46; 19:6). Because this manifestation of the Spirit later appeared among the Gentile believers, we have tended to attribute to it some universal function in the Church. I have come to the conclusion, however, that such was not the case.

From the various nationalities listed there in Acts 2, it seems clear that the Spirit motivated the disciples to speak in languages of the world of which they had no previous knowledge; to one disciple a particular foreign tongue, to another a different language, so that the Jews from abroad said, “we do hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God”. And the reaction was one of amazement and perplexity at the linguistic powers of these Galileans. Yet it would appear that the many languages were not necessary for communication, for although Peter stood up “with the eleven” as the leaders of the disciples, he alone spoke. And he was understood, so it would seem that Peter addressed the Jews in a language with which he was familiar, and which all present could understand.

The Scripture always associates the gift of tongues with spontaneous praise or prayer, the possessors of the gift being motivated to speak “as the Spirit gave them utterance”, suggesting that not only was the language a gift of the Spirit, but also the message itself. From Paul’s instructions in 1 Corinthians 14 concerning the use of this gift in the congregation, it appears that although the things spoken were of no common

benefit without interpretation, such interpretation was not always available, implying that the speaker himself did not necessarily understand what he was saying. The undisciplined use of this gift had actually made it counter-productive, to the extent that Paul wrote, 1 Cor.14:23: *If therefore the whole church be assembled together, and all speak with tongues, and there come in men unlearned, or unbelieving, will they not say that ye are mad?*

A distinct purpose

Light is shed on the true purpose of the gift of tongues by the apostle in the same chapter. He quoted the prophet Isaiah in 1 Cor. 14:21: *by men of strange tongues, and by the lips of strangers will I speak unto this people, and not even thus will they hear me, saith the Lord.* [Cited from Isaiah 28:11-12] And Paul explained, 1 Cor. 14:22 *wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to the unbelieving.*

From the context in Isaiah 28, we can see that *“this people”* was Israel. The tongues were not intended as a sign to the believer in Jesus Christ. Having already been convinced and made the decision of faith, such a person required no sign. The sign was meant to register with those of Israel who had not yet believed, and in that manner we see it used on the day of Pentecost. The Jews from far-flung lands who heard their various native languages being spoken by the disciples were stunned, and sought an explanation, giving Peter the cue to begin.

What was the message? While the fact that these unlearned men were speaking foreign languages amazed the hearers, it was the message so given that connected the gift of tongues with God. No specific utterance has been recorded, but we can glean something from what the Jews who were present said, *“We do hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God”*. They readily recognized what they heard and showed no trace of offence, which means to me that the *“mighty works of God”* were things recorded in the Law and the Prophets, things with which they were comfortable, acceptable things which they would identify with God.

It is only my opinion, but I feel that had the Spirit preached Jesus, their reaction would have been quite different. We must remember that signs from God were to aid belief, not to hinder; therefore, this Spirit-inspired praise of God had the potential to act as a stepping-stone to the Gospel for the Jew who understood the particular language being spoken, recommending his attention to the apostle's words which followed.

Two witnesses

So, we can distinguish between the contribution made by the Holy Spirit in this direct way, and its assistance of the apostles in their preaching. These eleven Galileans had been with Jesus while He had spoken the word of God to Israel, and to them privately; they had heard His wisdom and had seen the miraculous works that He did, yet that was not enough to equip them for the task that lay ahead. Jesus told them, *“But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, [which] the Father will send in my name, [it] shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you”* (John 14:26). “It shall teach you”; “it shall bring to your remembrance”: these functions of the Spirit were to be directed exclusively toward the apostles, assisting their own understanding, thereby making them able ministers of the Gospel.

The witness of the Holy Spirit

But then Jesus spoke specially about witnessing: *“[it] shall bear witness of me. And ye also bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning”* (John 15:26-27). This is very important to our understanding of the Holy Spirit's contribution as a witness before Israel, because in saying this, Jesus distinguished the witness of the Holy Spirit from the witness of the apostles. This is supported by Peter and John's testimony before the Sanhedrin:

Acts 5:32 and we are witnesses of these things; and so also is the Holy [Spirit, which] God hath given to them that obey him.

And in Hebrews, Heb. 2:4 *God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by*

gifts of the Holy [Spirit], according to his own will. (See also John 5:27-37; Acts 15:8; 1 John 5:7).

Therefore, it was not the gifts of the Holy Spirit which would constitute the apostles as witnesses, but their firsthand experience with Christ: *“for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard.”* (Acts 4:20). And the miraculous evidence of the Holy Spirit was to be a witness in its own right, a testimony not from men but from God, and we are reminded of the necessity under the Law of two witnesses to establish the truth. (Deut.17:6; John 8:17-18).

Convicting the world

Jesus also expanded on this witnessing work of the Holy Spirit: John 16:8-11 *And [it], when [it] is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; of judgement, because the prince of this world hath been judged.*

Christ assigned this ‘convicting’ work to the Spirit itself, which suggests something proven not by words but by the very presence of the miraculous Holy Spirit. And that was so, because Peter later pointed to the appearance among the believers of the gift of tongues as proof that Jesus had ascended to the Father: Acts 2:33 *Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy [Spirit], he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.* The gift of the Holy Spirit to His disciples was tangible proof that Jesus was now sitting on the right hand of God, and that fact alone, as (1) a vindication of Christ personally, (2) a judgement upon those who had not believed, and (3) an assurance of Satan’s eventual demise, fulfilled Jesus’ words in John 16:8-10.

Paul W. Brownlow
New Covenant News
Australia

(A continuation of this article, next considering Joel’s prophecy of blood, fire, and vapor of smoke in regards to Pentecost, will be published in the next issue of the New Creation Magazine).

The Highest Motive

What should be the highest motive for serving our Lord? The Bible holds out many incentives and promised rewards to the followers of Jesus. We will list some of these in our search for the highest motive.

Matthew 25:23 "His master replied, `Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; *I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!*"

Romans 2:7 "To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will *give eternal life.*"

Romans 8:16-17 "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then *we are heirs -- heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*"

2 Timothy 2:12 "If we endure, *we will also reign with him.* If we disown him, he will also disown us"

Hebrews 10:36 "You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will *receive what he has promised.*"

James 1:12 "Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, *because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life* that God has promised to those who love him."

2 Peter 1:10-11 "Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and *you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*"

1 John 3:2 "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, *we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*

Revelation 2:26 "To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, *I will give authority over the nations.*"

Revelation 2:7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, *I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.*"

Revelation 2:10 "Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and *I will give you the crown of life.*"

Revelation 2:11 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes *will not be hurt at all by the second death.*"

Revelation 2:17 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, *I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.*"

Revelation 3:5 "He who overcomes *will...be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.*"

Revelation 3:12 "Him who overcomes *I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name.*"

Revelation 3:21 "To him who overcomes, *I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.*"

Revelation 19:7-8 "Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. *Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.*" (*Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.*)

Revelation 20:4 "I saw thrones on which were seated *those who had been given authority to judge.* And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for

Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. *They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years."*

What a wonderful God we have who would give to those who overcome in the Lord Jesus Christ so much for their *little all!* Each one of these foregoing promises are beautiful and precious, showing the graciousness of our Lord in the rewarding of those who will be *"faithful unto death."* They can certainly be an incentive for each one of us to persevere and be faithful to the end of our Christian walk.

But the question now is: *Should any one of those beautiful promises to the overcoming church be the highest motive in serving our Lord?* Our answer would be a resounding *no!* Though they are each very precious in themselves, not one of them is the highest motive ~ that which should be foremost in our hearts and minds as a motive for doing God's Will. This is not to say that we are not to appreciate each and every one of these rewards held out to us, for not to do so would be to fail to appreciate God's loving and generous promises. *Nevertheless,* we feel sure there is another reason that stands out above all others as the greatest incentive and which was indeed the highest motive of our Lord Jesus Christ in His doing the Father's Will faithfully.

Hebrews 12:2 admonishes us to, *"...fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."* What was that joy which was always before Jesus' mind that made it possible for Him to *"endure the cross and scorn the shame?"* In Hebrews 10:7-9 we have Jesus' words, *"Then I said, 'Here I am -- it is written about me in the scroll -- I have come to do your will, O God.' First he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them'. Then he said, 'Here I am, I have come to do your will.' He sets aside the first to establish the second."* These words

are taken from a prophetic statement, relating to the Lord found in Psalm 40:6-8 *"Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but my ears you have pierced; burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require. Then I said, "Here I am, I have come -- it is written about me in the scroll. I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."* In John 5:30, Jesus said, *"By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for **I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.**"* In these words, I believe we will find the reason that most motivated Jesus every day and moment of His life. *He delighted to do His Father's will, to please Him and bring honor and glory to His Name!* Jesus' desire was always *to glorify His Father.* We find this beautifully stated in John 17:1-5: *"After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: 'Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with Thyself, with the glory I had with thee before the world began.'" Even here, we see Jesus' personal glory for all Eternity was bound up in His Heavenly Father! He wasn't even looking for further glory and honor but only to receive back what he had before coming to earth. These are some of the most poignantly beautiful scriptures in the entire Word of God! Just think...even our beloved Savior's desire to be glorified was so *"that your Son may glorify you!"* Clearly, Jesus' highest motive for doing His Father's will was not for any personal glory of His own, but only to render all the Praise, Honor and Glory to the One He loved more than life itself. *Is this our highest motive?**

How can we bring glory to our Heavenly Father and Lord Jesus Christ in this life when our new life is bound up in an earthly tabernacle? (1 Cor. 6:19) One way is mentioned in John 15:8: *"This is to my Father's glory, **that you bear much fruit...**" We glorify the Father in our lives when we allow Him to produce the fruit that we are to bear.* Other ways we can

bring glory to our Heavenly Father are found in Hebrews 13:15: *"Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips that confess His name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."* This text tells three ways that we are able to please, honor and glorify our Father.

1. Offer to God the sacrifice of Praise, the fruit of our lips by confessing His name.
2. Remember to do good.
3. Share with others.

All of these things, and many more, can be summed up in just one word, **obedience**. 1 Samuel 15:22 has a very powerful statement regarding obedience. *"Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken better than the fat of rams."* **Doing** God's will is better than sacrifice because it best honors God. All sacrifice, not in accord with obedience to God's will for us, is not acceptable to Him.

*Why do we want to gain Heaven's Portals? Is it to be able to bless all the families of earth in the Kingdom? Or to be partakers of Glory, Honor and Immortality? Is it so that we can be like Him and see Him as He is? Or to receive the 'hidden manna' and a 'new name'? Is it to wear the 'fine linen' of righteousness? These are all good reasons but they are not **the best!** None of these listed reasons is *the highest motive* for becoming Jesus' disciple and serving our Heavenly Father. They all pale when set against the truly highest motive, namely, *that of being able to glorify our Father and Lord Jesus Christ with the glory that they so truly deserve!* Let us while living a crucified life in Christ (Gal. 2:20) long for our Resurrection change (Rev. 20:6) so that we can then Praise the Father and Son with the highest of praise possible, greater than angels or seraphim ~ but even here and now, let us glorify both Father and Son *by our full trust and obedience, for They are Worthy!**

E. Weeks

To God Be the Glory

1 To God be the glory, great things He hath done,
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,
And opened the Lifegate that all may go in.

Chorus: Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father through Jesus His Son,
And give Him the glory, great things He hath done.

2 O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,
To ev'ry believer the promise of God;
The vilest offender who truly believes,
That moment from Jesus atonement receives.

Chorus: Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father through Jesus His Son,
And give Him the glory, great things He hath done.

3 Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done,
And great our rejoicing through Jesus His Son;
But purer, and higher, and greater will be
Our wonder, our full joy, when Jesus we see.

Chorus: Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father through Jesus His Son,
And give Him the glory, great things He hath done.

St. Peter's Fish

One of the New Testament stories that sometimes provokes a smile is that of the fish with a silver coin in its mouth. Peter, approached by the appropriate officials for the customary Temple tribute money, referred the matter to Jesus, who told him to go down to the lake (of Galilee) and cast a line. His first catch would have a silver coin in its mouth which he was to use for the tribute money. The story is found in Matt. 17:24-27. In fact there is today a species of fish in the Sea of Galilee called the musht, alternatively known as St. Peter's fish, the male of which habitually carries its young in its mouth, and at times substitutes a small stone or other object, being especially attracted to anything bright or shining. It has been known thus to carry coins. This aspect of the story is thereby vindicated. (The musht is specially reared in quantity nowadays in Israel for commercial food production.)

Jesus knew from a distance, which may have been a mile or so and could not have been less than a goodly number of yards—He was in the lakeside town of Capernaum at the time—that a particular fish was swimming about in the lake at that moment with a coin in its mouth. Perhaps He exerted the power necessary to bring it into contact with Peter's line. That should not be thought incredible in a day when men can see with their own eyes what is happening in a spacecraft orbiting two hundred miles above the earth, and control the movement of that spacecraft by touching a few buttons. There is no physical link of sight and touch between the controller on earth and the spacecraft above; the power by which the wonder is accomplished is an invisible electrical energy which men have learned to employ. If men can do that, why balk at the idea that Christ, who came from God, whence is the source of all energy, should do the same? One of the fruits of man's increasing knowledge of the powers behind Nature's operations is the realization that so many 'incredible' stories of olden time are not so fantastic after all; they rest on principles which were formerly undreamed of by man but now are beginning to be understood.

This aspect of the story is, however, the least important. Of greater moment is Jesus' reason for the action. Why employ such an apparently elaborate and spectacular way of producing the tribute money when just one coin from the disciples' admit-

tedly slender store would have met the need? There is evidently more behind the story than at first sight appears.

First of all, the background. “*Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute?*” asked Jesus of Peter “*of their own children, or of strangers?*” (v.25) “*Of strangers*” responded Peter. He knew, only too well, the practice of conquering powers like Rome, who taxed their subject nations and occupied territories rather than their own peoples. “*Then are the children free*” said Jesus; free citizens of the Empire do not pay tax. But Jesus was not declaring himself and his disciples free citizens of Rome. He had already, on a previous occasion, told his hearers to “*render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s.*” (Mark 12:17) The tribute money now in question was a levy made upon all Jews for the upkeep of the Temple; it was an ecclesiastical tax and nothing to do with Rome. This is made apparent by the words used. The tribute money due to Rome was a “penny”—the denarius. The tribute demanded of Peter in Matt. 17:24 was the didrachma, the half shekel or “shekel of the sanctuary” worth two denarii and this indicates that it is the Temple tax that was in question. The “piece of money” from the fish’s mouth in v.27 was a stater equal to two didrachma * sufficient for Peter and his Master.

* (Matt. 17:24 NIV, “*After Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma temple tax came to Peter and asked, ‘Doesn’t your teacher pay the temple tax?’*” Matt. 17:24 Weymouth, “*After their arrival at Capernaum the collectors of the half-shekel came and asked Peter, ‘Does not your Teacher pay the half-shekel?’*”)

Hence Jesus’ words in v.27 “*give unto them for me and thee.*” As a silver coin the stater was about equivalent to the English half-crown but to obtain the same purchasing power today one would have to spend several pounds or more.

There had been a celebrated dispute between the Pharisees and the Sadducees as to whether this Temple tax should be compulsory or voluntary, and after lengthy discussion in the Sanhedrin the Pharisee party had won the day—the tax was made compulsory. It is quite possible that Jesus was alluding to this dispute and showing that the Pharisees, in imposing a compulsory tax on the people, were no better than their Roman overlords. In theory,

every Israelite was a child of God, a Freeman of the Commonwealth of Israel, and his offerings to God were traditionally to be “*of his own voluntary will*” which is the formula used in the instructions for the Levitical rituals as laid down in the Book of Leviticus. Leviticus 23:38, “*Beside the Sabbaths of the LORD, and beside your gifts, and beside all your vows, and beside all your freewill offerings, which ye give unto the LORD.*” Now the Pharisees had destroyed that spontaneous basis and substituted the rule of law. “*The children are free*” said Jesus. Every man of Israel should be free to bring his monetary offering for the upkeep of the Temple as his heart inspired him. The question which the tribute-collectors had asked Peter was therefore eminently improper.

It would seem therefore that Jesus could have evaded the tax by quoting the original Levitical law. This He did not do. What the Pharisees demanded as a right He extended to them as a gift. “*Lest we offend (“scandalize”) them...*” was the expression He used. He would not use his knowledge of the Mosaic Law to avoid a payment which was exacted out of his fellows anyway. And here, perhaps comes the real point of the story. The scanty store of money He and his disciple possessed was contributed by the poor to whom He ministered and by his followers among the people, who “*ministered unto him of their substance.*” (Luke 8:3) He would not use their offerings, given for the sustenance of his little band of disciples, to meet this impost. This was a case where He could appropriately call upon the wealth of his Father in Heaven, who owns all the gold and silver, and all the treasures of earth. Hence this exercise of his extra-human power in discerning the whereabouts of that silver stater and his instructions to Peter to go and catch that fish. In a very real sense the Father paid the tribute-money for the Son.

AO Hudson
Bible Student Monthly, England

Only One Letter’s Difference: “Just one letter of the alphabet makes all the difference between us now,” said a recently converted young woman to an unsaved friend, who could not understand the great change that had come over her. “You love the **world**,” she said, “and I love the **Word**.”
~ Word of Life ~

The Four Pillars of Humanism

We feel it our duty and responsibility before God to warn our readers about this movement which within 100 years has steadily infiltrated itself into the halls of education from elementary and High Schools to our Colleges and Universities; its teaching permeates the curriculum of millions of young people all over the country who, unless taught otherwise at home and church, are growing without religion and without any moral absolutes.

Humanism claims that it is not a religion, but it is as much a religion as Communism. It is a Godless religion, which promotes materialism and indulgence in all the pleasures of life without giving a thought to the Creator or His laws as taught in Scripture.

In fact, gradually Humanism has been able to banish God, Jesus, the Bible, and prayer out of the classroom under the pretext of 'separation of church and state,' (even though the Bible was the main book used in schools when this law was put into effect). Humanism is ably assisted by its staunch ally, the Civil Liberties (?) Union, this while pretending to defend the civil liberties of all people, really is an enemy of God, the Bible and all religion in general. We daily read about its activities in the papers of every city and town.

We know that man without God is hopelessly lost. He is like a blind man in a dark room looking for a black cat that is not there. Man without the Bible does not know how he got here, where he is going and what the future holds for him. His scientific, philosophical and educational achievement, of which he boasts so greatly, has not even touched the real issues of life.

With all his astounding technological advances, he has not been able to turn man's heart toward God. Yes, he can 'bypass' the heart, 'transplant' it or even give man an artificial one, but he cannot *transform man's heart* or make him a *'new creature' as a son of God*. Man is ever learning, but never able by his own effort to come to the knowledge of basic truth

because of an unrepentant heart and lack of God's Spirit to lead his life, hence his lost condition (2 Timothy 3:7).

On the other hand, God's redeemed children have this truth imbedded in their minds and lodged in their hearts. They don't depend on self but on God for guidance and direction in all affairs of life. Thus, they are able to face life's issues clearly and logically for they have set their affections on things above and not on earthly temporal things (Col. 3:2). Earthly, visible things, while real, eventually perish and pass away, but heavenly, invisible things endure forever (2 Corinthians 4:18).

There is a design and purpose in human life, planned by an all-wise God before the foundation of the world and gradually unfolding to its final but glorious end. Humanists claim that man, a product of evolution, not creation, never sinned, therefore, never needed a Savior or even a God; that his future destiny is in his own hands and intelligence. What a poor and hopeless prospect indeed. Those deluded by humanism reject the personality of Satan as well as God. According to them, Satan is a figment of religious thinking in order to keep man subject to the clergy and religion through fear. But the Bible teaches otherwise. Satan is real. We are told of his creation as a resplendent cherub full of beauty, power and wisdom, who sadly sinned against his Creator when he became filled with pride, craving the adoration and worship of men and angels which belonged to God alone. Satan lied to mother Eve, inducing her to disobey God and fall under his evil power and influence (Isa. 14:3-23; Ezek. 28:11-19; Gen. 3:1-5). Thus, Lucifer (bearer of light) became Satan, enemy of God and man. Humanists cannot explain why man dies, but the Bible gives the answer (Gen. 3:15); Humanists offer no hope of life beyond the grave, while the Bible teaches of a coming resurrection of the dead (John 5:28, 29).

Man, under the influence of Satan, has refused God's rule over him, just like a child who, upon learning to walk, does not want to be controlled by his parents. Man boasts, "*I am the captain of my ship, I am the master of my soul,*" and

makes his own rules regardless of God's will for him. The present world situation is the result of such irrational thinking, foolish boasting, and pride in man's own power, intelligence and achievements, instead of understanding that "*every good gift comes from above!*" Therefore, man today finds himself surrounded by his own failures with no way out.

Humanistic theology rests on four major pillars. They are:

1. Atheism which is the belief that there is no God or Creator, no Judge to whom one day every human being must give an account. The Bible speaks of such unbelievers: "*The fool has said in his heart, there is no God*" (Psalm 14:1; 53:1). And if there is no God there is also no perfect Son of God – Jesus – and no angels ~ just the empty, vacant universe of the Atheist.

2. Evolution follows quite naturally on the heels of the first pillar. But if there is no Creator, how does one explain the presence of fish, birds, reptiles, mammals and man himself on the face of the earth, all "*after their own kind?*" Humanists give evolution as the explanation that man and all living things evolved from lower life forms through billions of years to what they are today. Fantastic nonsense? Indeed! Yet today, highly educated professional educators and scientists believe and teach evolution, not as a theory but as scientific fact.

An Evolutionist logically cannot believe in the God of the Bible. Faith in God condemns and destroys this human theory of evolution. One cannot believe in both. If evolution is true, then the Biblical account of Creation is untrue - a myth, a fanciful story of something that never really happened. This, of course, denies the fall of man from perfection into sin and death and the absolute need of a Savior.

3. Amorality is the third pillar of Humanism which naturally comes forth out of the first two. If there is no God, man is not bound by God's law. There are no such things as good or bad. Man can make his own laws, yet he has no foundation, nothing solid on which he can build his life. All is quicksand.

Amorality means to be without morals - every man for himself to get whatever he can out of life and by all means to forget the Ten Commandments. Whatever one can get away with is okay. *“Do your own thing”* is their slogan, but the Bible says, *“The way of a fool is right in his own eyes; but he that hearkens unto counsel is wise;”* also *“There is a way which seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”* (Proverbs 12:15; 14:12).

4. No Absolutes or forms of conduct that are eternal, unchangeable, uncontroversial, and firm as a rock. For example: the dignity, nobility and worth of man are inseparably based on the truth that God created man in His image. He breathed into him the breath of life and man became a living soul (Gen. 2:7). But if there is no God, then there was no creation; man evolved from a beast, so there is no dignity, no nobility, nor any eternal hope for man. He is just a higher order of animal being, but still only animal.

Out of such thinking comes the abortion mentality. Life is not sacred and since God did not create life, He is not to be consulted. Man alone will decide if and when an unborn child should be aborted (murdered) or live. The Author of life is out of the picture completely, and only the convenience of the prospective mother is to be consulted in this decision of life and death. If God is not consulted in terminating a pregnancy, this could lead to terminating the elderly who have “out-lived their usefulness.” If there are no God-given moral standards of right and wrong, then right easily becomes wrong and wrong easily becomes right. Then, what is wrong with homosexuality, adultery, fornication, alcoholism and every kind of corruption that has invaded the home through air-waves and the printing press that now dominates this present hour in human history?

Humanistic thinking has captured and controls the minds of highly educated men as well as those who blindly follow them, including the young generation that is being taught by them. But the Apostle Paul warns in Romans 12:2, “... **be not conformed to this world...**” that is to say, don't be fash-

ioned, molded, shaped, by this world's philosophy, for every time you turn on TV, read a newspaper or send your children to a secular school, both you and they are bombarded by the humanistic philosophy based on the theory that there is no God and anything goes if you can get away with it.

“Be not conformed to this world.” But humanistic philosophy on every hand is squeezing us so firmly that we are having difficulty in **not** being conformed to this world. It is so much easier to follow the crowd and avoid the criticism and scorn of our educated ‘superiors,’ thus receiving their approval that we find ourselves engaged in a first class battle for life or death.

Paul continues, *“But be **transformed** by the renewing of your mind...”* This is the secret ~ *transformation!* If the worldly ideas have entered into your mind, shaping your thinking, we strongly encourage you to start now the process of *letting God transform you; from the inside out*, just as the caterpillar climbs higher where the caterpillar life dies as he is transformed into an airborne butterfly. Rid yourself of every humanistic philosophy from every corner of your mind and let the indwelling spirit of God take over every part of your intellect and life, saturating it with the truth of the living and powerful Word of God.

We can be sure that in the end Satan will not triumph. He will be defeated, imprisoned and finally destroyed (Rev. 20:1-3. 10; Heb. 2:14). The combined forces of darkness will not succeed. God will accomplish all His purposes, and one day, when His King is reigning, *“every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”* ~ *“And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear (obey) that Prophet (Jesus), shall be destroyed from among the people”* (Phil. 2:10 11; Acts 3:21).

Our King is marching on!

Gaetano Boccaccio

You Can Do Nothing

"Apart From Me You Can Do Nothing." John 15:5

*In everything, the life of the branch is to be the exact counterpart of that of the Vine. Of Himself Jesus had said: "The Son can do nothing of himself." As the outcome of that entire dependence, He could add: "All that the Father does, the Son does likewise." As the Son, He did not receive His life from the Father once for all, but *moment by moment*. His life was a continual waiting on the Father for all He was to do. And so Christ says of His disciples: "You can do nothing **apart from me**." He means it literally. To everyone who wants to live the true disciple life, to bring forth fruit and glorify God, this message comes. What had been said: "He that abides in me, and I in him, the same bears much fruit," is here enforced by the simplest and strongest of arguments: "Abiding in Me is indispensable, for, you know, of yourselves you can do **nothing** to maintain or act out the heavenly life."*

A deep conviction of the truth of this word lies at the very root of a strong spiritual life. As little as I created myself, as little as I could raise a man from the dead, can I give myself the divine life. As little as I can give it to myself, can I maintain or increase it: *every motion is the work of God through Christ and His Spirit*. It is as a man believes this, that he will take up that position of entire and continual dependence which is the very essence of the life of faith. With the spiritual eye he sees Christ every moment supplying grace for every breathing and every deepening of the spiritual life. His whole heart says *Amen* to the word: *You can do nothing*. And just because he does so, he can also say: *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* The *sense of helplessness*, and the *abiding* to which it compels, leads to true fruitfulness...

Apart from me you can do nothing - What a plea and what a call to every moment to abide in Christ! We have only to go back to the vine to see how true it is. Look again at that little branch, *utterly helpless and fruitless except as it receives sap from the vine*, and learn that the full conviction of not being able to do anything apart from Christ is just what you need to teach you to abide in your heavenly Vine. It is this that is the

great meaning of the pruning Christ spoke of - all that is of self must be brought low, that our confidence may be in Christ alone. "*Abide in me*"- **much fruit!** "*Apart from me*" - **nothing!** Ought there be any doubt as to what we choose?

The one lesson of the parable is: as surely and as naturally as the branch abides in the vine, *You can abide in Christ*. For this - *He is the true Vine*; for this - *God is the Husbandman*; for this - *you are a branch*. Shall we not cry to God to deliver us forever from the "*apart from me*," and to make the "*abide in me*" an unceasing reality? Let your heart go out to what Christ is, and can do, to His divine power and His tender love to each of His branches, and you will say evermore confidently: "*Lord! I am abiding; I will bear much fruit. My impotence is my strength. So be it. Apart from Thee, nothing. In Thee, much fruit.*"

Apart from Me - *you are nothing*. Lord, I gladly accept the arrangement: I am nothing - *You are all*. My nothingness is my highest blessing, because *You are the Vine*, that gives and works all. So be it, Lord! I, am nothing, ever waiting on Thy fullness. *Lord, reveal to me the glory of this blessed life.*

Andrew Murray

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

Joh 15:1-10 KJV

Autobiography of the Bible

I am the oldest book in existence, having outlived the storms of thirty centuries. Men have endeavored by every means possible to banish me from the face of the earth; they have hidden, torn, burned, reviled and despised me and have put to death tens of thousands of my faithful witnesses. Indeed, no other book has been more bitterly hated...more dearly cherished...or been so misrepresented and misunderstood; but today, while many of my foes slumber in death, I live on!

There is revealed within my covers a chain of testimony which gives evidence of a plan so broad and a design so deep as to be beyond the power of human origin. My story centers around the dear Redeemer, who *"by the grace of God tasted death for every man."* Based on His atoning sacrifice, all the dead will be raised and the whole earth made glorious with life without a trace of sorrow, pain or death.

Like the crystal springs from the mountain side which flow on and on to refresh the luxuriant verdure on the plain below, so in the glad day now dawning, the waters of truth will impart its life-giving blessings to the willing and obedient of mankind, who will forever with one sweet accord, praise, love and adore my Beloved Author.

From The Call of the Bride

¹**Blessed Bible**, precious Word!
Boon most sacred from the Lord;
Glory to his name be giv'n
For this choicest gift from heav'n.

²Tis a ray of purest light,
Beaming through the depths of night;
Brighter than ten thousand gems
Of the costliest diadems.

³Tis a fountain, pouring forth
Streams of life to gladden earth;
Whence eternal blessings flow,
Antidote for human woe.

⁴Tis a mine, aye, deeper, too,
Than can mortal ever go;
Search we may for many years,
Still some new, rich gem appears.

Overcoming Intolerance

*“Walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called ... showing **tolerance** for one another in love”* (Ephesians 4:1-2 NASB).

In our quest for maturity in Christ, tolerance in our relationships with others is a necessity. It is a basis for developing all the fruits of the spirit, for without it how can we be joyful, peaceful, long-suffering, gentle, and godly — not just outwardly but from the heart?

The chief motivating factor for our love of God is recognition of His astounding grace in tolerating our fallen condition. When we appreciate this fact, we can then be tolerant toward others in their fallen state. We acknowledge that God’s present tolerance of sin is based on His plan of redemption of the human race. The chief gift is His Son’s sacrifice of himself to bring mankind back to oneness with God. His tolerance of sin is temporary. His permission of evil is allowed for the experiential education of mankind and the development of the Bride class of joint heirs with Christ. God temporarily tolerates imperfection in His creatures, and we must tolerate it too. Most sinful conduct is due to either ignorance of what is right or not having the fortitude to pursue righteousness. When we exercise intolerance we are led into many errors in judgment.

Examples of Intolerance and Tolerance

There are many Scriptural examples of overt intolerance. It started with Cain and Abel. Cain would not tolerate God’s acceptance of Abel’s offering if God was not going to accept his. Envy drove him to murder. Many of the Priests, Pharisees, and Scribes were intolerant of our Lord’s teachings and healings. He was not commending them nor keeping the Law the way they interpreted it. They grew in their intolerance of Jesus, to the point that they conspired for his death. Diotrefes did the church much harm in his intolerance of any members not subservient to him, even putting them out of the fellowship (3 John 9,10). Herod was intolerant of any opposition to his reign, even to the murder of boys under two years of age in his at-

tempt to kill the Messiah. King Saul also manifested this trait in his persecution of David, for he could not tolerate any rival to his throne, even though he had been reluctant to receive the kingship when it was first bestowed upon him.

On the other hand, Nicodemus showed tolerance when he went to our Lord to find out more about Jesus' teachings. Jesus showed tolerance in patiently answering his sincere inquiry. The Athenians gave Paul a hearing at Mars Hill and tolerantly listened, until he mentioned the resurrection of the dead. Paul tolerantly agreed to perform a Jewish rite to remove Jewish Christian prejudice against him regarding the law covenant, the performing of which rite resulted in his arrest and eventual trip to Rome.

Jesus was tolerant toward his disciples, even on the last day of his ministry, when he heard the desire of some to be the greatest in the kingdom. He was tolerant of their inability to watch and pray at the Garden of Gethsemane, when they fell asleep. How tolerant he was of Peter, who denied knowing him, not once but three times. Our Lord did not let the needed lessons slip by, but gently reproved with words that did not offend but rather brought forth the right response. The tolerance continued with Saul, later Paul, who persecuted him (the body members of Christ). Then there is our Lord's tolerance toward us who were once alienated from God through wicked works. Tolerance is a trait of a mature Christian.

Tolerance is not putting up with some action that is manifestly wrong. We are told to correct a brother if we see him overtaken in a fault, not to condemn him but to help him to see the right way, restoring such a one from the path of sin "*in a spirit of gentleness*" (Galatians 6:1 NASB). It is our *phileo* and *agape* love for the brethren that is to be exercised, and what better place for building up one another than in our gatherings. Doing so helps us grow in love. Because our *ecclesia* is God's arrangement for the edification of the saints and the development of character through social interaction with those who love and want to please the Lord, should we not want to cooperate with God in blessing them? At these meetings, we have

a choice: We can simply endure our time together (a form of tolerance) or we can rejoice and profit from the interchange with our brethren (true tolerance). Much depends on the mindset of each in attendance.

“Tolerance” in Our Bibles

The English words “tolerance” and “intolerance” are not found in the King James Bible. Instead the KJV uses “bear with, endure, forbear, suffer.” The New American Standard Bible (NASB) does translate Strong’s G430 as “tolerance” in two texts, Ephesians 4:2 and Romans 2:4. Context gives us the fuller picture: *“Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing **tolerance** for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”* (Ephesians 4:1-3). We see from this text that tolerance is necessary to continue in unity of spirit with our brethren. Intolerance breaks this bond of unity and can lead to evil works: strife, slander, bitterness, and division. The whole chapter of Ephesians 4 is speaking to our relationship with the brethren. Skip down to verses 30-32 (NASB): *“Do not grieve the holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”* Thus tolerance is part of the fruit of God’s holy Spirit.

The second text using “tolerance” is in Romans 2:4. We quote from the context, verses 1-4: *“Therefore you have no excuse, every one of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you think lightly of*

the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?"

"Therefore," in verse one, concludes from chapter 1 that the saints to whom the epistle was addressed had no excuse for their evil conduct. Their judgment was right in condemning such things, but they were ignoring the fact that they were practicing the same things and would come under the judgment of God. They had taken lightly the kindness and tolerance and patience of God, not realizing that these kindnesses should lead them to repentance.

A lesson we could take from this is that any tendency to condemn others for intolerance while ignoring our own intolerance will not escape the judgment of God. Do not think lightly of the riches of His kindness, tolerance, and patience. Tolerance toward others expresses gratitude for God's tolerance toward us.

R. Whittaker

The Christian's experience is a continual schooling. Daily we are learning more and more about ourselves and about the wisdom and justice of God. As we learn these lessons day by day, we are learning more to reprobate and correct in ourselves. In thus discovering our own imperfections, we should learn, as a matter of course, not to expect perfection in others; and we should give them credit for doing their best to exemplify the highest ideals which they have in respect to the unity and perfection required for membership in the body of Christ.

Songs in the Night

Trying times are the times to keep trying.

A diamond is but a piece of coal that stuck to the job.

He didn't know it couldn't be done, so he went ahead and did it.

What we love, we shall grow to resemble.

Great is Your Faithfulness

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." Lamentations 3:22, 23 NRSV

One of the most encouraging things about a New Year is the word "new". It speaks to us of a time of fresh beginnings, a time when we can put behind us all our failures, all our broken resolves and start anew. In this New Year, let us remember that the Lord's love is all enduring. It will never disappear, no matter what we do or how we perform. His mercies toward us never end; they are new every morning. Let's start each day of this new year with that in mind. We need not wait until the next new year to begin again. We can begin again each day, because God in His infinite love and wisdom has given us a new beginning today. God loves us, in spite of the ways in which we have let Him down in the past, but we can start NEW today. Let us resolve this day to start anew to serve Him with all our heart, all our mind and all our soul! Let us give praise to Jehovah, the God of new beginnings, and thank Him for His steadfast love that never ceases, His mercies that never come to an end, and His great faithfulness. As each new day of this new year passes, may the realization of His great love and mercy toward us spur us on to serve Him with our whole hearts!

Father, thank You for this new day--this New Year. Thank You for new beginnings. Help us to learn from our past, but not to live there. Help us to start fresh each day, knowing that Your mercies are new every morning. Make this day a day that will bring You glory as I learn to live anew in Christ. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

Quiet Waters Christian Devotions

In God's works we see His hand; in His Word we see His face.

A Portrait of Jesus: *The Paralytic Man*

“Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on.”

Mark 2:4



This is an incredible story of faith of four young men who carried their friend to be healed by Jesus. These friends heard Jesus was in town and heard of his healing powers. This was their chance to help their friend. They carry him to where Jesus is speaking but they can't even get close to the door and no one is moving to let them through. Suddenly one of them has an idea, let's go up on the roof and make a hole and we can lower him down. Someone get some rope. They carry him to the roof, estimate where Jesus is below and start removing the roof, a roof that had enough substance that it could hold their weight. This was no small feat and you can imagine the mess, both above and below, as straw, sticks and dried mud fall from the ceiling as they work. Finally they have a hole big enough for their friend on his pallet to fit through and they lower him with expectation. The crowd gasps, not sure what the homeowner thinks, but I'm guessing he was not thrilled. The hole in the roof is a reminder of their faith. Mark tells us in verse 5, *“When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, “Your sins are forgiven.”* Jesus was witness to the great faith that these friends had, desperate faith. But he doesn't heal him immediately--he forgives him his sin, which is a far greater thing than being healed, and even the Pharisees react to this, declaring amongst themselves that it is blasphemous because only God can forgive sin. Jesus knowing what was in their hearts asks them a question, *“Which is easier to say to this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say ‘Get up, take your mat and walk?’ But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”* He then turned

to the young man, *“I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.”*

And with that statement Jesus proved he was the Son of God with the power to forgive and heal. And, thanks to friends, faith and the power of Jesus, the former paralytic rolls up his mat and walks away in freedom and forgiveness. I hope that each of us has the faith that these friends had, that would go the extra mile to bring healing to him--healing that only Jesus could bring. I think that is the lesson for us here. How far will we go to bring healing and forgiveness of sin to one of our friends? As the crowds dispersed that day in Capernaum, I'm picturing the four friends putting that roof back together with great joy in their hearts.

D. Mathewson

In the many cycles of God's dealings with man, we are often brought to a new circumstance, a bend in the road with a new direction, a fresh start with a change of jobs, or just another measurement of time called a new year. The attitude in which we face these challenges is vital in respect to the progress to be made, and the victories to be experienced. I John 4:18 says, "Fear hath torment". The Greek word translated here as 'torment' literally means, 'restraint'. It also holds within it the meaning of 'a pruning' which signifies a holding back, a restriction of growth. Fear prohibits one from going on to perfection, for it draws back from the unknown, and confines us to the limitations of that which we have already experienced. Therefore we must gird up our minds, knowing that "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind", (II Timothy 1:7). And His love in us will "cast out all fear".

Inasmuch as "the steps of a man are ordered by the Lord: and He delighteth in his way," (Psalm 37:23), we can courageously accept the challenge of an open door, knowing that He goes before us to lead step by step. It is God that hath set before us this 'open door', and "If God be for us, who can be against us? – In all these things we are (become) more than conquerors through Him that loved us," (Romans 8:31, 37)

Ray Prinzing, *Daily Overcoming*

Prayer List

"Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you." (1 Samuel 12:23)



Let us be Prayer Warriors for our Brethren!

Allen, Russell and Family – VT (d)	Jones, Arlene - VA
Ammerman, Shirley & Family – NJ (d)	Karavas, Anna - CA
Anderson, Family– WI (d)	Knapp, Jamie – NH
Bews, Sandra and Family TX (d)	Knapp, Joseph – IL (d)
Boswell, Arlene – IL	Leavitt, Denise & Richard – ME
Buxton, Jean & Family - UK	Lepitre Family - IL
Carpenter, Gloria – KY	Howes, Paul & Carla - UK
Cline, Ruth – MO	Mazzotta, Eva – VA
Cooper, Carmela – NJ	Miller, Alain – Canada
Csutor, Judith – CT	Moore, Ralph & Maryellen – CA
Day, Ronald – PA	Orsburn, Judi – CA (d)
Dewys, Mary & Family – MI (d)	Parker, Geraldine – CA
Dickson, Roberta Jo – CA	Penton, Jim – Canada
Donnarummo, Dan – OH	Phillips, Stella – OK
Duhaime, George & Family – CT (d)	Riggio, Fran – NH
Dunn, Kim - IL	Rowe, Bryan - UK
Fantuzzo, Tony – NY (d)	Schultz, Becky & Family – MN (d)
Feliciano, Carmen - NY	Schwartz, Ruth – TX
Fischer, Mike & Liz – WI	Seminoff, Brenda – CA
Foster, Jean – IL	Thomassen, Sandi – NM (d)
Hauslein, Karen – MD	Tuscia, Priscilla – FL
Hawk, Barbara – PA	Weaver, Eddie - NY
Hildebrandt, Lois - FL	Weeks, Jeannie (Mitchell) (d)
Hogrebe, Joan – MO	White, Ken & Joan - NY
Hopkins, Linda & Andrew – TX (d)	(d) = death in the family
Iannaccone, Marie & Family – IL (d)	

Entered into rest:

Margie Williams, TX - Nov. 2021

Important: If you know anyone in the names listed above whom no longer needs special prayers, please advise us so we may remove their names. Also, if any of the information is incorrect, please let the editor know. Thank you.

Bible Correspondence Course New Graduates & Websites

Congratulations to the following students who have completed their course and have been awarded a Certificate.



No new graduates to acknowledge in this issue.

You are invited to view the following websites:

<http://www.cdmi.org> (Christian Discipling Ministries International)
<http://www.cbchurch.com> (Christian Believers Fellowship in NH)
<http://www.biblefellowshipunion.co.uk> (Bible Fellowship in UK)
<http://www.bbschurch.org> (Lombard, IL)
<https://sites.google.com/site/quietwatersdevotions/home>
<http://www.cartyorkshire.co.uk> (CART)
<http://www.campblessing.com> (Camp Blessing)
<http://www.homechristians.net> (Fraser Valley, B.C.)
<http://www.bibelgemeinde.at> (Free Bible Students, Austria)
<http://www.bibelgemeinde.org> (Mission Work Bible Students, Austria)
<http://bibelforscher.heimat.eu/> (Free Bible Students, Germany (English))
<http://www.softgrafic.com/bibbia> (Italian Bible Students)
<http://www.newcovenantfellowship.org.au> (New Covenant News, Austr.)
<https://ebassociados.org> (Assoc. Bible Students, Brazil–Portuguese/Span)

Be Faithful in the Little Things

“The beginnings of unfaithfulness are always the little things that we think will make no difference. No one was ever called of God to a high position who did not lay the foundation of that call in courageous faithfulness to the small details of life. But whether our position be high or low, it is required of a steward that he be found faithful.”

It's the little things we do and say
That mean so much as we go our way,
A kindly deed can lift a load
From weary shoulders on the road,
Or a gentle word, like summer rain,
May soothe some heart and banish pain.
What joy or sadness often springs
From just the simple little things!
Selected

Conferences & Conventions

The Christian Believers Conference was held on July 29-Aug.1, 2021 online through Zoom. The recorded sermons and interactive studies are posted on the CBC webpage cbconference.com under the subtitle Recent Videos.

Notice: If you know of Christian friends who would benefit from receiving the bimonthly New Creation Magazine via mail, send their names and addresses to the CDML main office, care of Bruce Blake. The address is inside the front cover. Remember, the magazine is given at no cost. Also, please realize you can read the current or past magazines online at CDML.org or subscribe there.

Note: If you would like to have your Convention, Conference, Camp, or Seminar published in The New Creation Magazine, send information or a program *at least three months in advance* of the issue month of the magazine to the editor, Bob Whittaker.

Donations

Many people around the world appreciate the New Creation magazine. For many, it is their only source of Christian communication. Also, for many, they only have it through the generous contributions of others. If you feel moved to help them in continuing to get the New Creation, please consider a donation to CDML.

Article Contributions

Please send articles for possible publication to Dennis Gorham,
4 Alicia Street Somersworth, NH 03878
email: dennisgorham@comcast.net

Any information published in this magazine that you know is incorrect should be brought to the attention of the editor at his email address: bobwhittaker64@gmail.com. We strive for accuracy but do not have full knowledge.