

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

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## EDITORIAL

### The Parable Of The Sower

Jesus often spoke to the disciples in parables. A parable was simply that of taking physical things that all were familiar with and drawing spiritual lessons from them.

Turn with me now to Matthew 13: 1-9 for the parable of the sower. We read as follows: "The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And great Multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship; and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore, And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because

they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty-fold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear let him hear."

Going on down to Matthew 13:18-23 Jesus explains the parable of the sower. Let's read it: "Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understand it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed in to stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it: Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

From this parable, and the explanation of it, we see that the sower would be that person who preaches or teaches God's word. The word may also be preached through literature, by radio, and TV. Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15). Paul declared, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17). Next, the seed here is the word of God. You may read this also in Luke 8:11. It is called the seed or the word of the kingdom, since one must receive the word into heart and obey it to be saved and to be a member of the Lord's kingdom or church. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:47).

The Wicked One who catches or snatches the seed that is sown in the heart is the Devil himself.

Next, Christ describes four kinds of soil that the seed may fall into or four types of hearts that may hear the word of God.

First, there was the soil by the way side. This is the soil that

may be found around the edges of the field or at the end of the rows. This might also include the paths across the ploughed ground. These are areas where the soil has not been dug up, ploughed, or worked. This soil would be hard and therefore not a place prepared to plant seed. But when the sower begins to sow his seed then some falls into these areas. That means the seed lies on top of the hard earth and so when the birds come in they find the seed and devour them up. Now this type of soil represents all of those who may not be seeking to study God's word, but on turning the radio on they may casually turn across the dial and hear briefly a radio sermon. They may happen to see a gospel tract, and even read a little of it, but because they have no real interest then they may lay it down and go on to something else. They might even visit a gospel meeting with a friend, but again, because of a lack of interest they do not pay much attention to the sermon that is presented. As a result, they soon forget these matters and that is the end of it. In other words, this is Satan's way of snatching the word from their heart and so they remain lost. In these different instances the word of God was never received into their heart to the point that it was understood and where it could begin to take hold and begin to influence that person for God. It was as though the word of God was never heard.

Second, there was the soil in stony places. In the days of Jesus, much of the farming was done in areas where there was a lot of rocky soil. This made it very difficult in ploughing, and also in bringing forth a good harvest. But when the soil was prepared and then the sower went forth to sow, then some of the seed would fall in stony ground. As one would look across the field it all perhaps looked like good soil, but a percentage of it had stones or rocks just below the soil. Therefore when the seed was sown and fell on stony places then there was just enough soil there for it to spring forth, but with sun bearing down on the land, and with the soil becoming dry, and with the roots of the seed not being able to go deep enough in the soil because of the stones, then the plants would wilt and die. Now this is like a person who hears the word of God, and he joyfully receives it and obeys it, but as time goes by and there are problems and persecutions that begin to come up that he didn't expect, and not having much knowledge and depth in the word, then he drifts away from God and is lost. We see

this happening all the time, and it is so sad. Jesus has said that before we obey him that we should count the cost.

Third, there was the thorny soil. Most everywhere where farming is going on there are the thorns to contend with. Many times when the seed is sown into soil like that, before the plants can get up large and strong enough so they can survive, then the thorns, briars, and thistles choke the young plants out and they die. The same is often true when one hears the word of God. He gladly receives it and obeys the Lord, but then he finds out that he can't drink and do all of the other worldly things that man does. He also discovers that as a Christian then he must be honest in his dealings with his fellowmen, that he is expected to attend the assemblies of the church, to give of his means, and to be faithful to Christ in all that he says and does. When he begins to feel pressured by all of these responsibilities, then he begins to fall away and he becomes unfruitful. He just feels that he doesn't have the time or the strength to live such a life. Many there be that start out like this but also many come to the end of their way like this. Christ taught that no man can serve two masters and therefore we must make up our minds who we will serve—Him or Satan. (Matthew 6:24). Again, Christ said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23).

Fourth, there is the good soil. Now this is what the farmer likes. He is blessed to have good soil to plant his seed in. If this be the case, then this will go along way in assuring him of a good harvest. Likewise, when the word of God is preached to a person, and he has time to listen or to study, he has a good attitude, that is, he is willing to learn and he desires to know the truth, then once he understands God's will, then he will most likely obey God. But that will not be the end. Having a good heart, and one that has received God's will in obedience, then he is the type that will follow through, will grow and develop in his knowledge of God's will and in his ability to serve the Lord. Because of his faithfulness, and the work that he does, then he is able to bear fruit according to his ability. This is the kind of person that the Lord looks to carry on his work. This is the kind of member the church depends on to spread the Lord's cause.

Now, let me ask my readers some questions. What kind of soil do you represent? It may be that you are reading these articles just enough, and hearing our radio programs just enough, that before you allow the truth to really influence your life, the devil comes along and snatches it away from you. Maybe you have learned the truth, and you fully intend to obey God, but you think there is plenty of time for that. In the mean time the devil will be working. Any number of things could happen. Life itself is to be considered. Then Satan may come to you in the form of a false teacher, literature that will mislead you and confuse you, and you might be led completely away from God. Or it may be that you are not strong enough in your faith to meet the demands that are required of you to be a Christian or you may still love the world too much to become a child of God. I would pray, however, that you have a good heart, and that you want to know God's will above everything else, that you are willing to study and learn, and that on coming to understand what God requires of you, that you will become a Christian, and a member of the Lord's church, and bear fruit for him. Only then can you be the kind of person that the Lord would have you to be. I would therefore urge you to obey God now, if you know what you should do to be saved and to be a Christian according to the teaching of the Bible. As James said, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." (James 1:22). Also, remember that James said, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:17).



**associate  
editorial**

## Why the church of Christ does not Celebrate Christmas?

There are some who wonder and ask, why the church of Christ does not celebrate Christmas? Millions of people through-

out the world observe this day on the 25th of every December as the birthday of Christ. To celebrate this day they would give gifts to each other, they send greeting cards of "Merry Christmas". Lots of good food is cooked, new clothes are bought in families, and of course, drinking and dancing, etc., accompanies the celebration of Christmas. Yet the great fact is this that the word "Christmas" is not found in the entire Bible, the source of real Christianity! Christmas does not even mean Christ's birthday. This word is of Latin origin "Christes Masse" which means "Mas of Christ" and it originates with the Catholic church, from where the protestant denominational churches have borrowed it.

The church of Christ does not celebrate Christmas as a religious day because we have no record in the Bible of on what day or date Christ was born. Was it the month of December or June, we are not told. Concerning the birth of Christ the Bible has this to say : "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem." (Matthew 2:1). "And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room in the inn." (Luke 2:7). When did it happen? In the days of Herod the king. That's all what the Bible says. No date and no month is written anywhere in the Bible. Should this not be a sufficient reason for not observing Christmas, December 25th, as the birthday of Christ? The apostle John still warns us in Revelation 22:18 of the Bible, "For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book : if anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book."

The church of Christ does not observe Christmas as the birthday of Christ because there is no such example found in the entire New Testament of the Bible where the disciples of Christ or the early Christians observed Christmas or any other day as the birthday of Christ. When Jesus in the beginning, before the establishment of Christianity and His church, had sent the disciples to preach the gospel to the world. He told them, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS THAT I HAVE COM-

MANDED YOU; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19,20). Because the early Christians in the first century church never observed Christmas, it proves the fact that the apostles never taught them and Christ did not command His disciples to teach about it. Is it not another sound proof that Christmas is not from God or Christ, but it is a commandment of men?

In Matthew 15:8,9 Christ said, "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honour Me with their lips. But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." Since Christmas is not a command of God or Christ, it, therefore, is a commandment of men and hence a part of vain worship.

The church of Christ does not celebrate Christmas as the birthday of Christ, because it is not of the faith for which we must contend earnestly and which was once for all delivered to the saints. (Jude 3). 2 Corinthians 13:5 says, "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith, Prove yourselves." The faith which is under consideration comes by hearing or reading the Word of God. (Romans 10:17). Since there is no mention of Christmas in the Bible, the Word of God, and the Bible does not reveal the date on which Christ was born, therefore it is wrong to observe Christmas as the birthday of Christ.

To Christians at Galatia Paul, the apostle, wrote and said, "But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have laboured for you in vain."

## The Proper Use Of Uninspired Quotations

Jerri Manasco

Those of us who preach publicly and all who teach in a Bible class situation are faced with the problem of how to make the

lesson as enriching as possible for the class. The good teacher or preacher will, of course, ponder the value of quotes from other people who may provide some food for thought or who, by their words, may shed light on some scripture passage. The use of poetry, quotations from commentators, selections from religious articles (or otherwise) do have a place when properly utilized.

Of course, the use of the Inspired Word is the essential element in gospel teaching! ! One cannot preach the gospel without using the gospel! We Must speak as the oracles of God; we Must "preach the word"; we Must hold fast the form of "sound words" (I Pet. 4:11; II Tim. 4:2; 1:13). This is definitely bound upon anyone who professes to be a teacher of truth. But allow me to offer some suggestion as to the use of uninspired, yet helpful, quotations :

The first rule is very simple : Do Not Use An Uninspired Man's Word To Justify A "Position" On Some "Issue." The words of Thomas and Alexander Campbell, Barton Stone, and others have value (as any commentator's words) in stimulating our own thinking, but their word should never be considered as constituting the final say on any matter relating to the Lord's church. It is not conducive to the principles of the Restoration Movement in our emphasis upon Bible authority to parrot what some man has had to say on any matter without the benefit of inspiration. It is much too tempting to adopt the attitude, "This is what the early Restorers said, therefore this is what we must teach." The Roman Catholic Church could not be more eloquent in their insistence upon the authority of tradition! ! The point is not who said what, but the real question is, "What Is Truth?" What does the Bible say? It may be interesting to know what some other man has said about some point, but his position does not justify my taking that position and defending it. Jude says to contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 3), not for some man's conception of it.

The second rule for using uninspired quotations is also simple : DO NOT ABUSE UNINSPIRED QUOTATIONS THROUGH THEIR OVERUSE. It really does not edify an audience or a class to know all that "Brother so-and-so" says on



a subject. Perhaps a few choice quotes well placed have a good purpose. However, it is sheer arrogance to pack one's lesson full of such quotes merely to give the appearance of scholarly research. What people need to hear first and foremost are the words of the living God.

The third rule to apply is this : **MAKE SURE THE QUOTE REALLY HAS A PLACE IN THE LESSON PLANNED.** Paul himself quoted from uninspired sources occasionally. In Athens he quoted a Grecian poet (Acts 17:26). Titus received a letter in which Paul referred to a statement made by a heathen philosopher (Tit. 1:12). He did not quote these men for the purpose of entertaining or filling up space; neither did he rest his case upon their uninspired words. He did, however, call in these pagan writers as witnesses against the follies of their fellow creatures. The heathen could not, therefore, claim to be totally devoid of some sense of responsibility to a Higher Power. Paul's skillful use of the statements drove home his point in a forceful way. Make sure the quote has a direct bearing on the thing being said.

Just when should one borrow uninspired quotations for use in his lessons? Two suggestions are in order :

1. If the person cited has said what you want to say, only he has said it better and more clearly, then one should not feel hesitant to bring that into his discussion. Someone else's brilliant observations may be well worth considering.

2. If another has shed some light on an obscure passage or principle, then obviously it would be advantageous to consider his comment.

What we must seek to avoid is the injecting of human wisdom into the divine scheme of things. Paul wrote, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. . . . And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom. . . ." (I Cor. 2:2,4-5). What a lesson for us! !

# God, The Refuge Of His People

John G. Shaver

The Psalmist declares, "Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him : God is a refuge for us" (Psa. 62:8). The life of the godly man is one of exposedness to sorrow and peril. He participates in that trouble which is the common portion of all men. He with all others is liable to sickness, adversity, bereavements and death. Job said, "Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble" (Job 14:1). But in addition to these, he is in an enemy's country. He is passing through a dreary wilderness of storms and dangers, where hostile hosts are in league against him. Strengthless and insufficient of himself, this is his comfort and safety: God is his refuge, a present help in every time of trouble.

We might ask, "When is God a refuge to his people ?" In the period of temptation. When Satan comes like a flood, and when he would sift as wheat. When his fiery darts are directed in fearful volleys against the people of God. These seasons are perilous, and would be fearfully fatal were not God a refuge for us. He is a refuge for us in the day of adversity. When earthly good seems to forsake us and our enjoyments fail. When providence seems adverse to us. When all appears to be against us. He is to us as he has been to Jacob, Job, David, and thousands others, a help and a refuge. He is a refuge in the night of affliction. When health has been exchanged for sickness, strength for weakness, ease for pain, Joy and gladness for weariness and decay, and when wearisome days are upon us when heart and flesh fail. None but his arm can sustain, his presence cheer, his love console. He is the sick man's refuge, when compelled to retire to his solitary chamber and lie upon the couch of pain. He is our refuge in the solemnities of death. To whom shall the spirit fly when removed out of her old habitation and abode ? When she is no longer surrounded by this earthly tabernacle ? It is than that God is our refuge. The house not made with hands is the abode, the heavenly mansion, the dwelling, forever, and ever

We then might ask, "What sort of a refuge is God to his

people ?" He is invulnerable. In God is absolute security as long as we remain faithful to his charge In him is everlasting strength. He is refuge ever near. His omnipresence ever surrounds us. Wherever we are, God is near at hand, and not afar off. He has no difficulty in coming to our refuge. Indeed, we can not even flee from him. He is always accessible, not only near to us but open to receive. He is ready to shelter and to screen us. His eyes are ever upon the righteous, and his ears always open to their cries. In the day of trouble, he hears the prayers of his distressed children, and sends deliverance, and enables them to glorify him. He is unchanging and eternal. A refuge to his people in all countries, and ages and generations. A refuge now, and always, and evermore. A refuge that never fails. A refuge in time and throughout all eternity.

If God be such a refuge, and he is, than we infer first, the security he permeates to his people. Amidst all the changes and revolutions around them, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the seas, God is their refuge. Second, the confidence they should feel towards God. Trust in him at all times and forever. Commit all to his care and keeping. Third, the course they should pursue in troubles. Flee to God, seek his mighty help and succor. Fervently call upon his gracious and matchless name. Fourth, let the sinner flee by an active, obedient faith to this refuge, that he may escape the wrath that will be meted out on the last day.

## The Trivial, The Important, And The All-Important

**Dalton Key**

Oh, how we need to learn to distinguish between the trivial, the important, and the all-important! Too often we find ourselves sidetracked, majoring in minors and minoring in majors. Someone has well observed that we worship our work at our play, and play at our worship. How confused and misdirected many of us have become!

Take a good, hard look at yourself. Trivial matters are often allowed to dominate, and are viewed as important; important matters are misjudged as being all-important; and all the while, the all-important matters are squeezed out by the trivial and the important, and are neglected entirely.

Just what are we talking about? A stain on my tie is trivial; a secure financial future is important; faithfulness to my Lord is all-important. Or to put it another way, small everyday matters of living are trivial; the fact and quality of life itself are important; and the spirit, belonging to the eternal realm, transcending life in the flesh, is all-important.

It seems our day is made or broken, good or bad, depending upon how our hair stays in place, whether or not our favorite shirt is clean, or what the weather is like. Many an ulcer has grown from an obsessive, worried preoccupation with the trivial matters of living. Strokes have resulted from nothing more than one too many red lights on the way to work. Many of us are exchanging our lives for mere pettiness.

But even worse than this is the fact that we are coming dangerously close to exchanging our souls for what we consider to be the important matters of life. Flesh is given prominence over spirit, living is allowed to supercede spiritual life, and time is considered in place of eternity. We must come to see faithfulness to God as more important than life itself, for as James Montgomery wrote, "Tis not the whole of life to live, nor all of death to die." Inspiration admonishes, "Be thou faithful unto death" (Revelation 2:10).

Life in the flesh is important, but it is not all-important. Self-preservation is a powerful instinct, but it is not the most important thing on earth. The Christian martyrs of the first century, who counted not their very lives as dear unto themselves, proved that there exists something more important than life, than survival. May we come to realize the same truth.

## Highly Speculative "Evidence" Points To God

Martel Pace

The Memphis *Commercial Appeal* for June 27, 1982, had a

fanciful article in the magazine section under the heading, "Our Mysterious World." The author, George Cunningham-Tee states, "most reputable biologists have no doubts about the concept of natural selection (survival of the fittest) and gradual evolutionary change."

This author, like so many others, assumes that the survival of fit specimens, such as man, indicates how we arrived. But *survival* does *not* explain *arrival*!

However, Mr. Cunningham-Tee is wise enough to know there has not been time enough in the earth's history to develop accidentally something so intricate as the human brain. Therefore, he asks this amazing question: "if we have developed too quickly . . . could it be because man's brain is an import?" (quoted from Max H. Flindt, in *On Tiptoe Beyond Darwin*).

Man's brain, he acknowledges, has ten billion neurons, ten times as many as the ape. Since, he confesses, it "took nature 500,000,000 years to develop one million neurons . . . the maximum capacity of an anthropoid brain" there just wasn't enough time to develop a human brain which is much bigger. How then do Mr. Cunningham-Tee and Mr. Flindt account for this in harmony with their theory of evolution? Here it is:

Obviously, nature did not create man's brain. The skymen did in an ancient breeding experiment, or a series of them. These gentlemen know God did not make us and would rather believe "the Sky People put us here . . .!" It is easier for them to believe in such fanciful myths than to accept the "Sky Person" (God) made and put us here. This they would have us believe, was done by them in rapid experiments so as to speed up the process of evolution.

Is this not an admission that it takes intelligence to develop a brain as intelligent as man's? It appears to be so. Thus, the very reasoning (?) they use is an argument against their assumptions and tends rather to point to a greater being than man which we call "God." They don't want it this way and have invented the "Sky People." We never cease to be amazed at the assumptions of those who do not want to submit to the will of God.

# It Doesn't Take As Long As You Think

Ancil Jenkins

How long does it take to read through the Bible ?

Some people are afraid to start reading the Bible because it seems such a formidable task. But there are only four books in the New Testament, for example, that take over an hour to read: Matthew, Luke, John and Acts. There are several books that can be read in less than three minutes by even the average reader: Titus, Philemon, II John, III John, and Jude. In the Old Testament, Obadiah consists of only one short chapter. So though the Bible is a library of 66 books, some of them are briefer than a chapter in the latest novel.

The New Testament has been read aloud publicly in 15 hours and 25 minutes. And the Old Testament can be read by a moderately rapid reader in as short a time as 30 hours.

Following is the time required by a fairly rapid reader to read each book of the New Testament. Check yourself by this.

Matthew 1 hr, 23 min., Mark 46 min., Luke 1 hr. 25 min, John 1 hour, Acts 1 hr. 20 min., Romans 35 min., I Corinthians 28 min., II Corinthians 23 min., Galatians 13 min., Ephesians 13 min., Philippians 8 min. Colossians 8 Min., I Thessalonians 7 min., II Thessalonians 4 min., I Timothy 10 min., II Timothy 7 min., Titus 3 min., Philemon 1 min., Hebrews 26 min., James 8 min., I Peter 10 min., II Peter 7 min., I John 8 min., II John 1 min., III John 1 min., Jude 2 min., Revelation 41 min.

Though this would not allow for contemplation as you read, it should permit you to do a fairly careful reading. A slower reader will require more time, especially for books that are more theological than narrative in nature. Try reading the longer books in one setting to get the most out of them. Remember this is the book by which you will one day be judged Don't you think you should know what is in it??

# The Power Of A Good Christian Life

W.C. Anderson

The best thing we can do is to live the Christian life. There are two reasons for living the good life. We will go to heaven and we can influence others to go there. It is a pleasant thought to know that we can save souls from hell. James said, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one converts him let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and, shall hide a multitude of sins." (James 5:19, 20.) A Christian can save souls by the power of a good Christian life.

## HOW DOES ONE BECOME A CHRISTIAN ?

He must hear Christ. When Peter wanted to honor two Old Testament characters God told him to hear Christ, not Moses nor Elijah. God said "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Matthew 17 : 5.) God has spoken to us through his Son. (Hebrews 1 : 1, 2.) God has told us that he loved us enough to give the life of his Son as sacrifice for our sins.

The alien sinner must believe that the Son of God was given "...that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have life." (John 3:16) The Lord said, "...except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24.)

The soul that truly believes in Christ must repent of his sins. He said "...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3.)

The sinner who repents becomes a penitent believer, but he cannot stop here. He must become an obedient believer. Jesus commanded his apostles, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." (Mark 16:15, 16).

On the day described in Acts 2 we learn that Peter said, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation. They then that received

his word were baptized : and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls." (Acts 2:40, 41). These people "continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in breaking of bread and the prayers." (Acts 2:42). To be Christians we must do as they did.

## **BEING A CHRISTIAN**

It is not enough to just become a Christian. One who becomes a Christian must strive daily to live the good life until he dies. Jesus said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23).

To be a Christian, we must follow the teaching of Christ as long as we live. We will study some things we must do to be Christians.

## **WE MUST BE PATIENT**

This is written : "And let patience have its perfect work that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing." (James 1:4). One definition of patience is "enduring without complaint." Jesus is a good example of patience. When he was being ridiculed just before he was crucified, he did not make one complaint. Would you have controlled yourself like Jesus did ?

Husbands and wives should be patient with each other. A good rule would be that they should never say a word while angry. Learn patience by waiting until the feeling of anger is gone. Then speak kindly to your companion. It would be good to follow this rule with everybody.

## **WE MUST BE KIND**

Jesus said, "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be children of the Highest : for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." (Luke 6:35). God is kind even unto people who are not thankful for all he has done for them. He is



kind to people who are evil. Can we be kind toward people who do not appreciate what we do for them? If a person says bad thing about you, can you return kindness for evil?

Christians at Ephesus were admonished to "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice : and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Ephesians 4:31, 32). Isn't the foregoing a beautiful quotation? Among those words of Paul we see that he said, "and be ye kind one to another".

### **PREACH BY BEING GOOD**

There was a Christian woman who worked in the home of a wealthy woman who was not a Christian. The wealthy woman was favorably impressed by the good life of her domestic worker. She decided to attend the church of which the Christian was a member. She wanted to know what kind of teaching made the woman so nice.

After hearing a number of sermons, she decided to become a Christian. The preacher was so elated and proud that he wanted to know which one of his sermons convinced her to change. She told the preacher that it was the good life of the little old lady who worked for her and not any of his sermons.

There is power in a good Christian life.

## **"Can That Faith Save Him?"**

**Frank D. Young**

Every lost person needs to be saved. Hell is a horrible place. Jesus referred to this condition as "unquenchable fire" (Mark 9:43), and where "the fire is not quenched." (Mark 9:48). In Matthew 13:42 Christ refers to one's being lost when he said, "Cast them into the furnace of fire : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Hell is eternal. When Jesus contrasts heaven

and hell, he said : "And these shall go away into eternal punishment : but the righteous into eternal life." (Matthew 25:46). To be lost eternally is a calamity. However, to die in one's sins is to be lost. Nothing can be more important than being saved from sin.

### SAVED BY FAITH

James asks : "Can that faith save him?" The answer is obvious. No, that faith cannot save him. One is saved by faith. But not all faith saves. In Hebrews 11:6 we're told, "Without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" Without faith, one isn't saved, nor can he be.

The Scriptures declare that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16). To avoid perishing, one must believe on Christ. Faith saves !

Paul argues : "Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1). One is not at peace with God, until he is justified from his sins. This justification is by faith. Faith saves !

One becomes a child of God by faith. In Galatians 3:25 the apostle emphasizes that our salvation is by the gospel of Christ, and not by the law of Moses : He says "For ye are all the sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus." By faith one become a child of God. And not until one is in Christ has he become a child of God by faith.

A Christian gains heaven by his faith. The apostle Peter says : "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:9.) This apostle also says, we have "... an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved, in heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1

Peter 1:4, 5). By man's faith, holding to God's power, children of God will reach their reward, and only that way. Faith is necessary to save us from sin. Faith must continue to govern our lives, if we are to safely gain the eternal abode with God.

### A FAITH THAT CANNOT SAVE

But James asks : "Can that faith save him?" No ! There is a faith which does not, and cannot save. "Faith only" (James 2:24), a faith which does not cause one to obey God; faith without works, will neither bring one to forgiveness of sins, nor will it bring him to heaven at last. There is a faith which does not save !

James challenges our faith, when he asks : 'If a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him?' (James 2:14). "Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself." James 2:17). Does one believe he can have real, genuine, saving faith, without obeying God's commandments? James says, "Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works : show me thy faith apart from the works; and I by my works will show thee my faith." (James 2:18). This challenge of the apostle is apt for everyone today. Do you believe? Do you have faith in Christ? "Show me thy faith apart from thy works." We make the same demand. Show your faith. Without doing something, one can't demonstrate that he has faith. Without obeying Christ, one cannot demonstrate his faith in Christ. And James has asked, "Can that faith save him?" James says, faith apart from obedience doesn't save. Hear him further.

"Thou believest that God is one; thou doest well : the demons also believe, and shudder." (James 2:19). Do you believe that God is? So did the demons. Do you believe that Christ is "the Son of God?" So did the demons. Luke says in 4:41, "And demons also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art the Son of God." Luke further says that Christ "... suffered them not to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ." (Luke 4:41). It isn't enough to believe that God is, or that Christ is God's Son.

James continues to emphasize that "faith apart from works is barren." (Verse 20). Faith without works is nonproductive. Faith which does not obey God is a faith that does not serve God. Faith without works is incomplete. Faith must work so that it may accomplish its purpose. Abraham was justified by works when he offered Isaac. The Scriptures say, "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness." (James 2:23). Every reference to Abraham's faith shows his obedience to God. By faith alone, Abraham would not have left Chaldea. We would never have heard of Abraham, if his faith had not moved him to do God's commands. Thus the Bible says, "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed. . . ." (Hebrews 11:8). James therefore concludes. "Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith." (James 2:24).

Faith, short of obedience, does not make one a child of God. The Scriptures say : "As he spake these things, many believed on him. Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples : and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:30-32). These people believed him to be the Christ, but still were not "free." When they asked the Christ. "How sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" Jesus replied, "Everyone that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin." (John 8:34).

Though they believed in Christ, they were still sinners; in bondage to sin. Why? The truth had not made them free. Peter says : "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth. . . ." (1 Peter 1:22). These Jews, in their heart accepted his claims for divinity, but they refused to follow him. Of others like them, John said : "Nevertheless even of the rulers, many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogues : for they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God." (John 12:42, 43). People who refuse to confess Christ, cannot follow Christ, and will not obey him. To refuse to confess Christ is to reject him. Jesus said : "Everyone therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will

I also deny before my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32, 33). The apostle Paul said : "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10:10). The rulers who believed on him, yet refused to confess him, had a measure of faith. But James asks, "Can that faith save him?" The rulers had faith only!

## **SONS OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS**

Paul said : Ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. (Galatians 3:26, 27). One is a Child of God in Christ. One is not a child of God, out of Christ. Paul says, we're baptized into Christ. The faith which makes us a child of God is a faith which puts one into Christ. But this faith leads one to be baptized into Christ. Hence Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16). The reason is "... in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins." (Colossians 1:14). Thus when Paul says, "Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1), he but declares that in obedience to Christ's gospel, these Romans had been saved. And Romans 6:3 affirms that the Romans who were "baptized into Christ Jesus" were who were "baptized into his death." That faith saved them, and will save one today ! "The faith that saves is the faith that obeys".

## **Kangaroos And Koala Bears Cry Out: There Is A God!**

**Sharon Shepherd**

"O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches." (Psalm 104:24).

Indeed the earth is full of God's glorious creation. Let us look at some important traits of the kangaroo and the koala bear to show the creation of God.

## KANGAROO

The kangaroo is a remarkable animal. It is a native of Australia. A full grown kangaroo is as tall as a man and weights about 200 pounds. The female has a big, deep pocket at the lower part of her body, this pouch or pocket has a circular ribbon of muscle around its mouth so that she can either draw it almost completely closed or open it wide. If it wasn't for this furry receptacle in which her baby can be stored after birth, the mother kangaroo could not possibly succeed in rearing her young. A baby kangaroo called a Joey is born about five weeks after being conceived, and is then a good deal less than one inch long. In fact, the incompletely formed little infant is so tiny that two or three like him could lie together in a teaspoon !

The pink, blind and totally helpless newborn kangaroo is such a "premature" baby that its body is actually semi-transparent. The only part of the baby kangaroo that is well developed and strong are its front feet. Just as soon as the tiny "Joey" is brought into life, it grips its mother's fur and by instinct starts heading toward the mother's pouch, which she has moistened to allow the Joey to slide easily down the abdomen. As soon as the young Joey is secured in the pouch, it takes hold of the mother's milk gland and hangs on to it, yet the infant kangaroo has no power to feed itself by sucking; the mother kangaroo actually pumps milk into the baby by using a special set of muscles.

We may wonder how the young kangaroo breathes and avoids choking, with milk continually being pumped into its gullet as it jounces along in its nursery. The explanation is that the mother has a specially adapted breathing apparatus, by which air can pass directly into the lungs through a passage having no direct connection with the mouth.

Four months after birth a kangaroo youngster grows a coat of fur and detaches itself from the constant milk supply. It starts peeping out the mother's pouch now. When the Joey's mother stops to graze, it hops out to the ground and starts some nibbling on its own; but at any sign of danger, the Joey makes a rush for

the pouch and dives in head-first; then it must scramble around in order to get right-side-up again.

When the Joey has grown more, it starts hopping along side of the mother for longer and longer periods of time, strengthening its legs in the leaping skill that enables a grown kangaroo to make a thirty foot broad jump over ten feet high. The Joey only takes refuge in the mother's pouch again when serious danger occurs. If the mother should be run down and captured, the Joey is very unlikely to be captured too, because the mother's strategy when she finds herself hard pressed is to lift her baby out of her pouch and tumble it into a hiding place as she races and leaps along. If she finally manages to escape her enemies she will quietly return to retrieve her waiting offspring. (H.S. Stuttman Co., The Illustrated Library of Nature, pages 68-70).

The stages of an infant to a fullgrown kangaroo is indeed great. The stages fit together perfectly. There was a perfect God who created the kangaroo.

### **KOALA BEAR**

Now let us look at the koala bear. The koala bear is a native of Australia. It is a slow, gentle, woolly-coated animal that climbs around in eucalyptus trees. The mother koala has a baby, as a rule, at intervals of two years, and only a single baby. The little koala stays in its fur-lined cradle only a short time, until the mother transfers it to her furry back. There the young koala spends its whole childhood, riding and climbing. The young koala continues to cling to its mother until it is almost half as big as she is. When it comes time for the baby to be weaned from a milk diet to eucalyptus leaves; the food which full-grown koalas eat exclusively, the mother helps it through the transition by one of the strangest features in any animal childhood. Her body develops a temporary power to make eucalyptus "pap." This "vegetable soup" is produced only for a month or so, every two or three days, and only at a special time in the afternoon. (H.S. Stuttman Co., The Illustrated Library of Nature, pages 70-72).

The koala bear stages are indeed extraordinary also. The changes of the bear's body is unexplainable. God's creation is glorious in everything!

Through these two remarkable animals, God's craftsmanship and creation is very much seen. The traits of such animals as these could not come from nothing. There had to be a beginning of these perfectly fitted together traits and bodies of the kangaroo and the koala bear. The Bible concludes the matter in Psalm 72:19, which says "And let the whole earth be filled with his glory." In Jeremiah 51:15, "He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding hath he stretched out the heavens."

## Easter

**Basil Overton**

"Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quarternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people." (Acts 12:1-4.) Study carefully the following observations on this text.

1. If the Easter of this text had been a Christian holiday, no doubt Herod would have killed Peter on that day just to express his contempt for the church or the Christians. For some reason he respected Easter.

2. The days of unleavened bread were the days of the Jewish feast of the Passover. "Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover." Luke 22:1).

3. The word in the Greek text translated Easter is Pascha. This word means Passover.



**Pascha** is in the Greek New Testament 29 times. It is translated **Passover** every time except in Acts 12:4. It is doubtful the word **Easter** is in Acts 12:4 in any version except the King James Version. The King James Version is a good version. I have studied it over 50 years, and have preached from it all of my forty years of preaching. However, I have for a long time realized there are some flaws in it. **Easter** being in Acts 12:4 is one of them.

4. Obviously, Herod the king was being respectful of his Jewish subjects by respecting their holy day called Passover by not killing the apostle Peter on that day.

5. Easter was not observed by those who called themselves Christians until hundreds of years after the time referred to in Acts 12. There is no Bible authority for observing Easter as a religious holiday. Faithful Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus every first day of the week, or every Sunday.

## Holding A Grudge will Poison One's Life

**Edsel Burleson**

Doug Parsons told the story of a woman who was bitten by a dog suspected of having rabies. She was immediately rushed to the hospital, treated, and left in a room to wait for an autopsy on the dog. Only then would she know whether or not she had been infected. An intern on duty thought he should explain the seriousness of the situation to her. She asked him a lot of questions, and by the end of the interview, he realized he had told her more than he had intended. She was visibly shaken.

Later he came by to look in on her. She was sitting on the side of the treatment table, writing. She would pause occasionally and stare into space, then resume writing. The doctor was sure

he had upset her so much she was writing her will, or funeral instructions. He went to comfort her.

He asked if she were writing her will. "Oh, no," she said, "Just in case I have been infected, I'm making a list of the people I want to bite before I die."

One of the most damaging things one can allow to happen is to harbor a grudge against another. Rather than hurting the other person, one's life, in a manner of speaking, becomes controlled by him. One becomes suspicious of the motives and actions of the one the grudge is against.

Dr. S.I. McMillen says that a disordered emotional life is a frequent cause of ulcerative colitis, toxic goiters, high blood pressure and scores of other diseases. If the truth were revealed, thousands of death certificates would record that the victims died of "grudgitis".

The apostle Paul taught that problems between individuals should be solved "before the sun goes down". (Ephesians 4:26). Jesus instructed "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matthew 5:23,24).

Someone once told of two women who had allowed little things to become big things until both were victims of grudgitis. As a result, their spite for each other increased daily as their work brought them face to face. One day, in the heat of an argument, one said, "If you were to die, I wouldn't even go to your funeral."

The other replied, "I'd surely go to yours. I would want to be there to see them throw dirt into your face."

Brooding over injuries and injustice received at the hands of others will poison one's life. James said, "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned." (James 5:9).

Do not cheat yourself of fellowship with God, the beauty of a Christlike character, and the best joys of life by holding a grudge. A Christian cannot afford to pay that price !

## The Heart Breaking of Sin

**Joseph Amporful**

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth and it grieved his heart." (Genesis 6:5-6).

The Bible says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Genesis 1:1). After God had worked for six days, he crowned his effort with a beautiful woman for Adam. And the Bible says, "God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good. (Genesis 1:31).

It was not long until man whom God had created in "his own image" began to sin against his Creator. When the sin of man became so grievous, the scripture says "it repented the Lord that he had made man." God punished man with the flood.

God sent King Saul to "... go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have and spare not." (1 Samuel 15:3). But in the same chapter we are told that he brought back to Israel King Agag. He also brought some fatlings of the land to be sacrificed unto the Lord. "Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel saying, it repented me that I have set-up Saul to be the King: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the Lord all night." (1 Samuel 15:10-11).

In both instances above, the offender refused to repent. When Noah preached during one hundred and twenty years and the people failed to give heed to his preaching (1 Peter 3:20). God destroyed them with water, saving only eight souls. In the second instance Saul justified himself saying, "I have performed the commandment of the Lord." (1 Samuel 15:13). But he did just

the opposite. Such acts always break the heart of many godly men.

When Ezra learned that many of the Israelites had married heathen women (a practice strictly forbidden by God), he rent his clothes, pulled hair from his head and wept and prayed. Many people were so moved by this that they wept with him. And, well they should! Sin is a terrible thing! It offends the Lord, it grieves spiritual sensitive people, and it brings untold misery to those who transgress God's commandments. In this very instance the men of Israel had to send their foreign wives and their children back to their home land, which must have caused great pain. But this drastic step was necessary to keep the nation of Israel from spiritual disaster.

Some husbands are breaking the hearts of their wives and children for continuous indulgence in drinking, failing to provide for them, etc. (1 Timothy 5 : 8) Many wives are causing the same mess by nagging, fretting and sulking. Some children are disobeying their parents to break their hearts. In these instances, the church is no exemption. Many members are breaking the hearts of, elders and preachers, when they sin grievously. Some elders and preachers do the same.

If you have not obeyed the gospel to become a Christian you are breaking the heart of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. You can make God happy today. (Luke 15 : 7.) Repent of your sins, confess your faith in Christ and be immersed into Christ to save yourself from this disaster. (Acts 2 : 38; Galatians 3 : 27.) God does not treat sin lightly.

Friend, whether you be a Christian or not, you and all of us need to have a deep sense of grief over our sins. People caught in the snare of sin subject themselves to great burden. Let us never underestimate the heartbreaking of sin! For "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebrews 10 : 31.)

