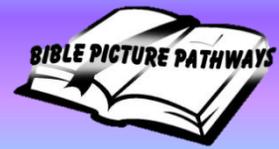




The Bible Banner



January 2017

NEW BEGINNINGS

On a plaque marking Abraham Lincoln's birthplace near Hodgenville, Kentucky, is recorded this scrap of conversation: "Any news down 't the village, Ezry?" "Well, Squire McLain's gone t' Washington t' see Madison swore in, and ol' Spellman tells me this Bonaparte fella has captured most o' Spain. What's new out here, neighbor?" "Nothin' nothin' a'tall, 'cept fer a new baby born t' Tom Lincoln's. Nothin' ever happens out here." Of course this little baby went on to become one of the greatest men in American history, but at his birth he wasn't considered to be any important news. Spiritual rebirth in a person's life may not make front page news immediately, but when a new life begins, its results will eventually get the notice they deserve.



Celery Soup

1 bunch celery (4 or 5 cups) 1 carrot, diced

3 Tbsp vegan butter or olive oil

3 small potatoes, diced

Chicken-like-seasoning to taste

Sauté all the ingredients for 3 to 5 minutes. Add 1-2 cups of water to cover veggies and cook until tender. Blend.

You may add soy or nut milk to desired consistency.

Yield: 7-8 cups



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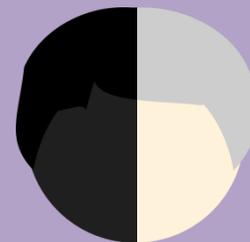
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QUOTABLE QUOTES



"He who does not give himself wholly to God is under the control of another power, listening to another voice, whose suggestions are of an entirely different character. Half-and-half service places the human agent on the side of the enemy as a successful ally of the hosts of darkness." The Mount of Blessing, page 94



Not from Around Here?

A roar of laughter reverberated through the room in reaction to the words of the teacher. The teacher was a midwife from England and she was teaching an American audience. Her proper British accent had given her identity away long before she finished the sentence: "I'm not from around here, I'm from England." The class responded with laughter to her statement of the obvious facts.

As Christians we should
be learning to speak
"the language of
heaven."

I couldn't help but wonder at the spiritual implications of the situation. Do people know my citizenship is in heaven and that I am a Christian by the way I speak? Or do I have to tell them I am a Christian? As Christians we should be learning to speak "the language of heaven." The Bible tells us, "*But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;*" (1 Pet. 1:15) "*For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.*" (Philippians 3:20)

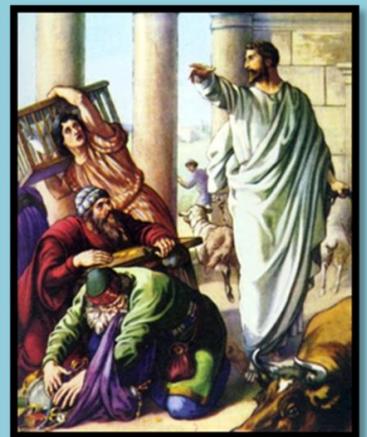
This is so important. It was the meek, unselfish manner of Christ that convinced the thief on the cross and the Roman centurion that Jesus was not only innocent, but also that he was no ordinary man, but the Son of God. The Bible says, "*He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*" Isaiah 53:7 (See also Matt. 27:54; Luke 23:39-43)

I like the way this author puts it: "*What is it to be a Christian? It is to be Christlike; it is to do the works of Christ. Some fail on one point, some on another. Some are naturally impatient. Satan understands their weakness and manages to overcome them again and again. But let none be discouraged by this. Whenever little annoyances and trials arise, ask God in silent prayer to give you strength and grace to bear them patiently. There is a power in silence; do not speak a word until you have sent up your petition to the God of heaven. If you will always do this, you will soon overcome your hasty temper, and you will have a little heaven here to go to heaven in.*" {In Heavenly Places 30.3}

Proverbs 17:28 states, "*Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.*" Prov. 29:11 reiterates, "*A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.*"

But the "language of heaven" and using the words of Christ does not always mean silence. Although Jesus never fought for himself, the truth never languished on His lips and he was zealous for the honor of God. The Bible records the story of Jesus chasing the moneychangers out of the temple. "*And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, **Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.***" John 2:14-16

Notice the simplicity, yet the directness of his words. The Bible tells us that even when Jesus taught "*He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*" Matt. 7:29 Those with authority don't have to say much to make a point. For example, my authority as a parent is demonstrated in the fact that when I am talking on the phone and the kids are being too noisy all I have to do is snap my fingers and they know they better quiet down or they will be in trouble. Also he who has the truth can afford to be calm, dignified, and just. They don't have to rant and rave like a spoiled toddler or use profanity like a sailor. Eccl.5:2 counsels, "*Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.*" On the contrary, the scriptures teach that "*A fool also is full of words:*" and "*a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.*" (Eccl. 10:14; 5:3)



Certainly the simplicity and literary beauty of Christ's words and those of the scriptures are unsurpassable and worthy of imitation. Every word of God is important. One book on literary beauty states, "*Vitality cannot be conveyed to thought by dead words, words which carry no meaning. Such words must be eliminated, or else substituted by words that mean something.*" (Literary Beauty of Ellen G. White's Writings, pg. 53) For us to speak with authority "words that mean something" we must consider that "*Man's words, if of any value, echo the words of God.*" {Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students pg. 423.3}

As a new year begins, let us as Christians resolve to study and speak the amazing "language of heaven." Let us heed the words of James 1:19 "*Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath...*"

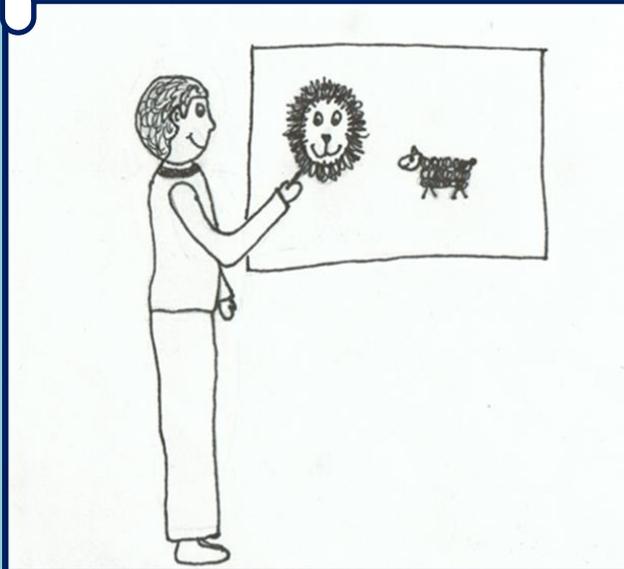
GOD'S AMAZING CREATURES



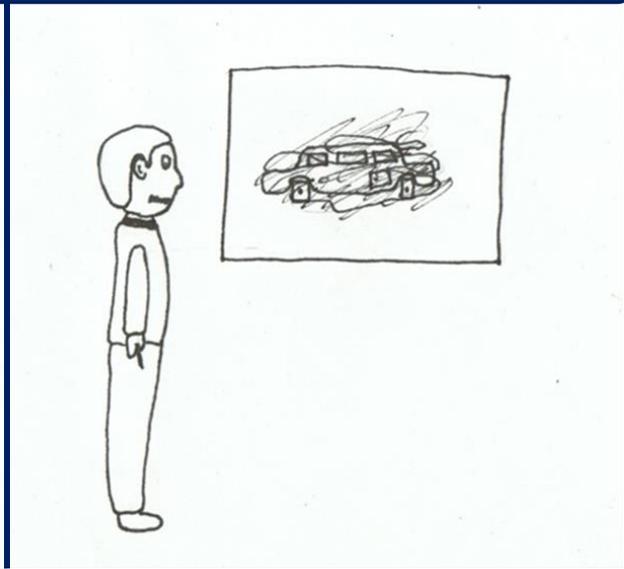
The chinchilla is a furry little animal that lives in South America. It lives in groups called "herds" high up in the Andes Mountains. Chinchilla herds can be from 14 up to 100 chinchillas. The chinchilla eats plant leaves, fruits, seeds, and small insects. A chinchilla can jump very far. It can jump up to 6 ft. That is about as far as a tall man. Baby chinchillas are born with all their fur and with their eyes open. There are usually only 2 babies. There are not as many chinchillas as there used to be. This means chinchillas are endangered. This is sad because they are so soft and cute. I'm glad in heaven, when Jesus makes all things new, there will be lots of chinchillas.

Memory Text

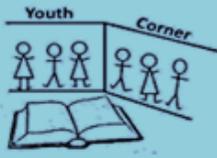
Isaiah 65:25 "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD."



Christian drew an animal picture. He messed up on it, so he erased the mistake and started to draw again. He drew a picture of a friendly lion next to a lamb. He knew when Jesus makes the earth new the animals will all be friendly.



Carnal drew a picture of a car for his mother. He messed up and drew square wheels on the car. Carnal was angry that he messed up his picture, and he scribbled over the whole picture. Carnal's mother was sad that Carnal had become angry. Jesus was sad too.



MAKE IT PLAIN

"And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." Habakkuk 2:2

On the sixteenth day after the battle of Gettysburg, a minister entered a room where his son, a young colonel, lay wounded and dying on the bed. As he entered, the son awoke and beckoning the father to his bedside, threw his arms about his father's neck, and asked him about the mother and sister.

Inquiring of the doctor, the father soon discovered that they held out no hope of the son's recovery. It was expected that he would die within four days from the gangrene that had set in at the place of amputation. The son had not been informed about his real condition, and it was left for the father to inform him of his impending death. Upon hearing about the seriousness, the son with great agitation exclaimed:

"Father, is that so? Then I must die! I cannot. I must not die! Oh, I am not prepared to die now. Do tell me how I can get ready! Make it so plain that I can get hold of it. Tell me, in a few words, if you can, so that I can see it plainly. I know you can, father, for I used to hear you explain it to others."

As the minister began to ponder how he could make becoming a Christian plain to his dying son, an incident that had happened when his son was in school came to his mind that was just what he needed to guide his son to Jesus.

"Do you remember while at school you came home one day," the minister started into his story, "and I having occasion to rebuke you, you became very angry and abused me with harsh language?"

"Yes, father, I was thinking it all over a few days ago, as I thought of your coming to see me, and felt so bad about it, that I wanted to see you, and once more ask you to forgive me."

"Do you remember how, after your anger had subsided, you came in, and threw your arms around my neck, and said, 'My dear father, I am sorry I abused you so. It was not your loving son that did it. I was angry. Won't you forgive me?'"

"Yes, I remember it very distinctly."

"Do you remember what I said to you as you wept upon my neck?"

"Very well. You said, 'I forgive you with all my heart,' and kissed me. I shall never forget those words."

"Did you believe me?"

"Certainly. I never doubted your word."

"Did you then feel happy again?"

"Yes, perfectly; and since that time I have loved you more than ever before. I shall never forget how it relieved me when you looked upon me so kindly, and said, 'I forgive you with all my heart.'"

"Well, now, this is just the way to come to Jesus. Tell Him you are sorry just as you told me, and ten thousand times quicker than a father's love forgave you, will He forgive you. He says He will. Then you must take His word for it, just as you did mine."

"Why, father, is this the way to become a Christian?"

"I don't know of any other."

"Why, father, I can get hold of this. I am so glad you have come to tell me how."

The son turned his head upon his pillow to rest, and there followed his father's advice. He asked for forgiveness, and then believed that God would fulfill His Word. The young man was no longer afraid to die, although he desired to live and be a better man. A little while later, after his father had sung and then prayed with him, the son said:

"Father, I am very happy. Why, I believe I shall get well. I feel much better." And he did recover. From that hour all his symptoms changed—pulse went down, and countenance brightened. The doctor soon came in and found him cheerful and happy—looked at him—felt his pulse, which he had been watching with intense anxiety and said—"Why, Colonel, you look better."

"I am better, Doctor. I am going to get well. My father has told me how to become a Christian, and I am very happy. I believe I shall recover, for God has heard my prayer. Doctor, I want you should become a Christian too. My father can tell you how to get hold of it."



Image: Amputation being performed in a hospital tent, Gettysburg, July 1863

The next morning two surgeons, who had been in constant attendance, came in and began as usual to dress the wound. On opening the bandage, they suddenly drew back, and throwing up their arms exclaimed—“This is a miracle! The gangrene is arrested, and the colonel will live! God has heard your prayers!”

“Why, Doctor,” replied the colonel, “I told you yesterday that I believed I should get well, for I asked Jesus that I might live to do some good. I knew He heard my prayer, and now you see He has. Bless the Lord with me, Doctor.”

Many today are living in fear of death and eternal ruin. Like this young colonel, they need to know the plan of salvation and how they may be saved. Like the colonel their cry (even if it is silent) is “Make it so plain that I can get hold of it.” Won’t you tell others about how Jesus died for them, and that He will forgive all their sins if they ask and believe? Will you “make it plain” for them?



Study to Shew Thyself Approved — Understanding “The Language of Heaven”

Learning language and its limitations can be quite educational. For example, although an Asian friend who was visiting us spoke English quite well, we quickly learned that she didn’t understand all the English expressions or idioms, so each time we used an expression we would explain, “That’s just an expression.” We had no idea we used so many expressions! For example, another visitor told about how she had been trying to explain how she had found a Bible text that was special to her at a particular point in time. “The verse just popped out at me!” she said. But seeing a blank look on the face of the person she was talking to she tried to rephrase, “I mean my eyes just fell on it.”

Expressions seem to be part of every language, but their meaning is often a mystery to those who don’t speak the language. The same is true of the Bible, written in the language of heaven. For example, much of the Bible is written in picture language or similitudes. God says, “I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.” Hos. 12:10 The same is true of Christ. Matt. 13:34 records, “All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:”

I have often seen the language of the Bible ridiculed by people who don’t understand the “expressions”. For example, I have seen or heard of more than a few people who stumble at the words of Eccl. 11:1. “Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.” One of them even stated that this was ridiculous, because if you throw bread into the water after several days all you will have is soggy bread. The Bible predicted this kind of scoffers who don’t understand the language of the Bible. “But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.” Isaiah 28:13

However, the honest seeker will recognize the language of heaven and have confidence in the Word even when he doesn’t totally understand. He will continue to dig for truth. “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.” Matt. 13:44 One author makes this concept plain by saying, “No church can advance in holiness unless its members are earnestly seeking for truth as for hid treasure.” (Maranatha p. 132: GC p. 522)

So what does the Bible mean when it says to “Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days”? Just as we explained to our friend the puzzling expressions that we used, the Bible is its own interpreter. You must just learn to prayerfully unlock the language.

In the Bible, bread is often used to represent the word of God. For example, Luke 4:4 states, “And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” (Also Matt. 4:4 and Deut. 8:3)

Waters are often used to represent people, like in Rev. 17:15, “And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” (Also Isaiah 17:12)

If we plug in the Bible’s own definitions, we find that this passage is a beautiful promise. It tells us when we give God’s word to the people, we will find it – we will see the resulting effect on the people “after many days”.

See if you can figure out the “hidden” meaning in this verse that is a prophecy of Jesus Christ. Isaiah 7:15 “Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.”

What does butter represent? Isaiah 7:22, Prov. 30:33, Heb. 5:12, 1 Peter 2:2, 1 Cor. 2:13 (churning)

What does honey represent? Psalm 19:7-10, Psalm 119:103

If you have enjoyed this study, you might also enjoy more Bible Study Tips found <http://www.biblepicturepathways.com/bible-study-tips.php> on our website.





Grandma C Learns to Exercise*

A Little Runner's Health Story Special

Grandma C lived in Asia close to a very big river. She liked to watch boats going up and down the river every day. She liked to watch people working in their rice fields. Grandma C's favorite food was rice. She ate white rice for breakfast, and white rice for lunch, and white rice for supper. She didn't know that eating so much white rice was making her sick. She didn't know that eating refined white flour and white rice instead of brown rice and whole grains could give people a disease called diabetes.



Recently, Grandma C had noticed some strange things about herself. She noticed that sometimes she was hungry even right after she ate. Sometimes she felt tired even before she did anything. And it seemed like she had to go to the bathroom a lot even though she seemed thirsty all the time. She had even noticed a few times that when she got a cut it didn't seem to heal up as fast as it used to. Grandma C wondered what was wrong with her.

One day, Grandma C decided to go to the edge of the village to the little clinic to see if the people at the clinic knew what was wrong with her. At the clinic she met a nurse named Mr. H. When Grandma C told him about her problems, Mr. H guessed that she had diabetes. He knew many people in the village had diabetes because they liked to eat so much white rice instead of whole grains.

Mr. H told Grandma C that he would prick her finger and take a blood test to see if she had diabetes and hyperglycemia. "Hyperglycemia is high blood sugar," said Mr. H. "This test will tell us what number your blood sugar level is"

Grandma C looked to see what number would show up on the little screen. When the machine beeped, the screen said her blood sugar was over 400. Grandma C looked at Mr. H, and Mr. H looked at Grandma C. Mr. H said, "Grandma C, your blood sugar is way too high!" Mr. H knew that some people would not be functioning well with a blood sugar over 400. He was surprised that Grandma C seemed OK so far.

Mr. H gave Grandma C a glass of water to drink and then said, "We need to get that number to go down. I will show you a neat trick for getting high blood sugar to go down."

Then Mr. H took Grandma C for a very brisk walk. Up the road they went, into the busy town, around the curve, past the children playing, past the people working, faster and faster they walked until they got to the top of the little hill far away from the clinic. Then Mr. H and Grandma C turned around and started walking back. They walked back down the hill, back past the people working, back past the children playing, around the curve, out of the busy town and back to the little clinic.

Mr. H looked at his watch. "We have walked about 20 minutes," he said. "Now let's test your blood sugar again."

Grandma C wasn't sure she wanted to be pricked again, but she was curious to see if Mr. H's trick really worked. Again Grandma C looked to see what number would show up on the little screen. This time when the machine beeped, the screen said her blood sugar was much lower. It was not 400 anymore. It was not even 300 anymore. It had gone way down, and the screen said it was now in the 200's. Grandma C looked at Mr. H, and Mr. H looked at Grandma C.

Mr. H said, "Grandma C, that is much better. A good blood sugar should be between 70 and 140, depending upon when you ate last, but you can see that exercise is a good trick for making the number go down. If you learn to eat brown rice that hasn't had the healthy skin taken off, it will help you to feel even better. Mrs. M can show you how to thresh and cook the rice so that it is still healthy."

Grandma C was happy. Mr. H was happy too. He reminded Grandma C, "You need to go for a walk every day. If you eat good food and exercise every day you can make the diabetes go away." Grandma C said, "I think I will. Exercise is a very good trick." Mr. H smiled. He knew his exercise trick had worked because daily exercise was a special part of God's plan for good health.

**Although this story is based on an actual occurrence, some non-health details may vary.*

