

BRYAN STATION BAPTIST CHURCH

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

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OUR ELEVENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE...

On October 26-28, our church was blessed to receive many preacher brethren and friends from across the United States into our homes and our sanctuary to worship the Lord and praise His holy name together. The messages stirred our hearts and motivated us to serve Him in a greater way. We are looking forward to next year's conference, the Lord willing. Make plans to be with us for our Twelfth Annual Conference on October 25-27!

Al Gormley, Pastor

THE GOD WHO WORKS WHILE WE WAIT FOR HIM

BY: C.D. COLE

Isaiah 64:4, *For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.*

INTRODUCTION: From the foundation of the world men, left to themselves, have never imagined what God is like. The best representations men have had of God have been terrible caricatures. In their representations, men have changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man--birds, four-footed beasts, and even creeping things. They have confounded God with His creation. Among the gods of the heathen there has never been one that bore any resemblance to the God of the Bible. Men never dreamed of such a God as ours who loves them and is almighty and all-wise in His care for them-- they have never known anything of the God who works wonders while they wait.

You will recall that great day on Mt. Carmel when Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to a demonstration as to who was the true God. They set up their altars and Elijah proposed that they have their first innings. You pray first and the God who answereth by fire, let Him be God. You remember what they did. They cried aloud, "*O Baal, hear us.*" And in desperation they cut themselves until they were blood-soaked. And you remember, too, how Elijah mocked them and urged them to cry a little louder; that their god might be asleep or away on a journey. They wanted their false gods to work for them, but there was no voice or hand to respond to their frantic cries. Then when Elijah placed the sacrifice on his altar and made it as hard as possible for the true God to answer by fire, he prayed to the God who works, and fire fell from heaven and licked up the water and consumed the sacrifice. Then the prophets of Baal fell on their faces and

said, "Jehovah, he is God." Yes, Jehovah is the Christian's God but how few professing Christians know much about Him or give Him much recognition!

What Does It Mean To Wait For God?

I. It does not mean to substitute idleness for necessary and legitimate labor. It does not even mean to substitute prayer for work. We are to work and pray while we wait. The farmer breaks the soil; he harrows it and sows and then cultivates it and while doing all this he waits for God to give the harvest. The doctor uses all the skill he has for the cure of his patient, but he must wait for God to heal. The preacher prays as he witnesses to the lost, but he has to wait for God to save. Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but God has to give the increase. I have known people to sit down and do nothing and say they were waiting upon God. Parents do this way with their children. They never witness to them about the Lord--they seem to be afraid of their own children--and then say they are waiting upon the Lord to save them. Wives do this way with their husbands. They say they are waiting upon the Lord to save them, but they never witness to them--they seem to be afraid to invite them to go with them to church--they compromise their holy religion and let their husbands take them to forbidden places--and then say they are waiting upon God to save them. But this is far from waiting upon God in the true sense. You are not waiting upon God when you are in the path of disobedience.

II. To wait for God involves the recognition of our own limitation. It is to realize and say that I have done all that I can do, but this is not enough. If God does not work, all our work will avail nothing. We cannot get our daily bread by all our working; nor can we get it without our working. But we can as easily get it without our working as we

can without His working.

Suppose someone in the home is ill--suddenly and seriously ill. To our limit we do all we can. We have sent for the physician. We recognize our limitation and wait for the expert--the man skilled in healing. But the doctor has his limitations, too. You have heard the doctor say, when he had done all he could, that 'the case is in the hand of God--we can only wait for Him'.

III. To wait for God also involves the fact that He has no limitations. He is adequate to every occasion. There are no crises with Him. There are no difficult cases for Him. There is nothing impossible with Him. This is a good thought for the dying hour. When life is in the balance and the doctor is at his wit's end, we can feel that there is nothing too much for Him who is the resurrection and the life.

This is a good thought for any hour. Whatever the problem is that confronts you, if you are right with God and have the right attitude towards Him and the spirit of obedience to His will, you can wait for Him who worketh for him that waiteth for Him.

Here is the road to the highway of faith. If you want great faith, you must have a great God. No man's faith can be stronger than his God.

And Jehovah is God everywhere. He is supreme in every realm. He is not confined to any particular place or limited by any set of circumstances. He is the Sovereign God who makes all things work together for good to them that love Him.

There is an ad that says of a certain firm, "We shop for you in all the world." There was pictured a map of the world. And the ad further stated, "We have buyers everywhere. We bring things from afar to your doorstep, and deliver them to you. We shop for you in all the world." And so does God. To

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THIS ONE THING I DO

BY: C.D. COLE

Philippians 3:13-14, "...*this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*"

INTRODUCTION: Paul is letting us into the secret of his own life, and telling us what made him the kind of Christian he was. He tells us how his life was lived in relation to the past, the future and the present. As to the past, there was wise forgetfulness, as to the future, there was wise anticipation, and in the present, there was strenuous concentration, and these are the things that make for success in any field of human endeavor.

There are two distinct but parallel truths that every Christian needs to be established in. The one is the sovereignty of God including His eternal purpose in grace; the other is human responsibility of man involving faith and good works. The denial of either of these will inevitably lead to spiritual paralysis. Hardshellism, the denial of divine sovereignty in grace and salvation will produce the same results unless interest is kept up through fear or love of human praise. There was a brother who visited his people in Georgia, and out in the country the people had lost all interest in religious matters and their churches had ceased to function. He had to drive 25 miles to find a place a place to worship. I venture the assertion that Arminianism has prevailed in that section for many years past.

If you want interest in spiritual things that will survive the test of time and will not be dependent on human rewards and slavish fear, then find a people who have conviction on the truths of divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

Paul certainly had such conviction and his convictions explained his humility before God and his untiring labors

for human salvation.

It needs to be remembered that men become good Christians in the same way they become good doctors, good mechanics, or ripe scholars, namely, by a strenuous concentration to the task of their profession.

But the misery is that, though people know well enough that they cannot be good carpenters, or doctors, of musicians without certain habits and practices, they seem to fancy that they can be good Christians without any effort, and without any sense of responsibility. Our text suggests appropriate thoughts for the New Year--on how I may become a good Christian.

I. Make God's aim your aim. God had an aim or purpose in your conversion. Discover that aim and make it your aim. That aim was perfection--a God-like and a God-pleasing character. Is that your aim? Is that what you want to be? Is that what you are striving to be? Notice Paul distinguishes between the "mark" and the "prize". "*I press toward the mark for the prize.*" The mark or goal of his life was perfection, and the prize was the result of that effort. The aim or goal towards which Paul strained was the aim which Christ had in view in his conversion. "*I labor if that I may lay hold of that for which also I have been laid hold of by Jesus Christ.*" Paul took God's purpose in calling, and Christ's purpose in redeeming him as being the great object of his life. God's aims and Paul's were identical. Can you say as much; if not, why claim to be a Christian.

God's providence in our lives is for the accomplishing of His purpose, the perfection of character. For this all the discipline of life is set in motion. For this, sorrows and joys are experienced. For this, hopes and fears and loves are kindled. For this, we have been redeemed. For this, Jesus Christ lived and suffered and died. God means to make us like Himself, that is to bring us into conformity to His will as mani-

festated in His Son, and so all His dealings with us are to bring about this end.

To see and accept this will give nobleness and blessedness to our lives as nothing else will. How different all our estimates of the meaning and nature of events would be, if we understood that their intention was not merely to make us happy, or to make us sorrowful, but to make us Christ-like. If we looked beyond our sorrows to the end for which they come, we would not so often be saying to ourselves, "Why has this trouble come upon me?" Some plants need frost to bring out their savor, and so Christians need sorrow to develop in them the Christian graces and virtues.

To make God's aims our aims will save us from the prostitution of powers, which, to unworthy and ignoble aims, is the saddest thing in humanity. Paul pressed forward in his struggle for perfection. What are you striving for?

Many of us can say, "I press on," but for what? Some press on in a record of crime before men and ungodliness before God. Wealth--fame--position--health--education. Suppose you make a fortune, what then?

There is one mark, and every arrow that does not hit that target is wasted and spent in vain.

II. Concentration of all effort on this one aim. "*This one thing I do, I press on toward the mark.*" All legitimate occupations in life are consistent with this one aim. If you are engaged in any kind of business inconsistent with the struggle for holiness, you had better give it up.

It isn't easy to make progress in the Christian life. There must be concentration of all our powers to this one end. If you want to bore a hole you take a sharp point, not a blunt one. Concentration of effort toward holiness will give point to our lives. The conquering word is, "*This one thing I do.*"

The difference between the amateur and the professional is that the

amateur pursues a thing at intervals-- he takes time off from other occupations to do it, while the professional makes it his life's business. I fear most of us are amateur Christians--we pursue the Christian life by spurts and starts. We need professionals in the business of Christianity. *"Whether I eat or drink or whatsoever I do, I will do all to the glory of God."* This is the Christian ideal and the sum of human responsibility.

III. Pursue this end with a wise forgetfulness. *"Forgetting the things that are behind."* Paul is thinking of the runner, who has no time to cast his eye over his shoulder to mark the steps already taken. Paul does not mean that we are to forget God's mercies and so fail to render Him thanks; he does not mean that we are to forget our failures so as not to profit by them. Paul means that we must forget the past so that we may concentrate on the present. He means that we are to forget our failures in so far as they might make us feel that future success is impossible.

If you are ever tempted to say, 'I have tried it so often and failed, that it is no use trying it anymore', remember Paul's wise exhortation, and forgetting the things that are behind, *"...press toward the mark."* A wise forgetfulness is to forget past sorrows, past failures, past joys, past achievements, in so far as these might act as a weight in running the Christian race and pressing on toward perfection.

IV. Pursue the aim with wise, eager reaching forward. The word for reaching forth is a very graphic word. It means "reaching out over," and gives us the picture of the runner with his whole body thrown forward, his hand extended, and his eye reaching even further than his hand, in his eagerness for the mark and the prize.

Suppose we made the effort to please God the way we do to please our loved ones. If we gave the same thought, time and strength to the perfection of a godly life that we give to making money, seeking pleasure, or achieving fame, what a difference there would be in our lives!

Here is the path to holy living: forget everything in the past that would discourage or make us satisfied with present attainments, consecrate all our

powers in an effort toward holiness; and press on with our eye on the goal and the prize.

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those who love Him and wait for Him, his ships are like Solomon's ships of Tarshish which brought gold, silver, apes and peacocks. God's ships of promise will come freighted with blessings from everywhere as may be necessary to fulfil all His purpose concerning you.