

BRYAN STATION BAPTIST CHURCH

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

INDEPENDENT • MISSIONARY • ESTABLISHED 1786

“Preaching the same truth since before Kentucky was a state”

VOLUME 30, NO. 3

DECEMBER, 1998

17TH ANNUAL MISSION BIBLE CONFERENCE

Our conference has come and gone and we are left with the blessings of the Lord from the many spirit-filled messages we heard. Over 90 ministers of the Word, and many brethren and sisters from all around the country, attended. We've received these notes: "...I witnessed many things at this conference I have not seen in many years and even have not seen since I've been saved and truly the presence of our Lord was there. The Lord uses the conference in my life in some fashion every year to draw me closer to Him and this year was no exception. The messages were encouraging as well as informational and the spirit was of our Savior..." "...It was an excellent meeting and our entire family enjoyed it tremendously! It was good to hear such Christ-centered, Christ-exalting preaching at this Bible Conference..." Make plans to attend our 18th Conference on October 25-27, 1999, the Lord willing.

CHRIST THE TRUE VINE

BY: C. D. COLE

“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,” John 15:1-6.

The Vine and the husbandman. “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman,” John 15:1. Christ is represented under various figures where the word true is used. He is the true light. “That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,” John 1:9. He is the true bread. “Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven,” John 6:32. **The Tabernacle.** “A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man,” Hebrews 8:2. This contrasts him with Israel as represented in the Old Testament under the same figure. “For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry,” Isaiah 5:7. “Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?” Jeremiah 2:21. “Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made godly images,” Hosea 10:1. In contrast with the failure of Israel, Christ is called the true vine, that which fulfills all the

expectations of the Heavenly Husbandman. And my Father is the husbandman. In the Old Testament the Father was the pro-priest but here he is called the Husbandman, the cultivator, the one who cares for the vine. This speaks of His love for Christ and his people. Christ was made in the form of a servant and took the place of dependency. “For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him,” Isaiah 53:2. Some instances of His care: before birth, He prevented Joseph from putting away his wife; after birth, the Father bade Joseph to flee into Egypt to escape the murderous hand of Herod.

Now the Father has the same loving solicitude for the branches. Here we have the Father's care for the branches. “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away,” John 15:2. The Armenian view of apostasy, or the other view that a real believer is not in view--neither of these will not do. The form of expression, “in me,” “in Him,” “in Christ” are always used to designate a true believer. Every branch in me not bearing fruit--three things that cause fruitless: (1) Running to leaf; (2) through disease called blight; and (3) through old age, when they wither and die. The same is true in the spiritual application. “For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ,” II Peter 1:8. A difficulty has been created in rendering the Greek verb here. “Iaro” is frequently translated “lifted up.” “And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” Luke 17:13. “And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is,” Acts 4:24. “Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid, And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me,” John 11:41. “And the angel which I

saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,” Revelation 10:5.

Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, etc. It is usual to think of the pruning knife when we read this. But it means cleanse. The reference is to the washing off of the deposits of insects and other parasites which infest the plant. This purging or cleansing is not to fit the believer for heaven, but for fruit bearing. This cleansing is by the word. The main instrument is the word, though afflictions and trials may come into use but only to bring us into subjection to the word. “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes,” Psalms 119:67.

Now (already) ye are clean through the word. Cleansing of the second verse is progressive; the cleansing in the third verse is absolute. The one refers to our standing; the other to our state.

Abide in me, and I in you. We are never exhorted to be in Christ. We get in Christ by a new creation. It is to abide in Christ. This shows our responsibility. This is what we are to do to bear fruit. Abide in Him, no toil, no labor. This has reference to the maintenance of fellowship. It is to have conscience communion with him. It is the occupation of the heart. It is illustrated by the dependency of the branch upon the vine. The initial of believing on Him is described as coming to him: the continued activity of faith is described as abiding in Him.

WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION

BY: C. D. COLE

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure," Philippians 2:12, 13.

INTRODUCTION: At this point Paul resumes his exhortation to the Philippians. His first exhortation, "*Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,*" Philippians 1:27. And now he is giving much the same exhortation, only in different words with emphasis on individual responsibility. It is your own salvation you are to work out.

We have a fusion here of two apparent antagonisms, and what God hath joined together, etc. Paul did not seem to see any conflict between the two statements: You work out, for God works in.

I'm afraid the truth in its richness has been obscured by smoke of the battle between two conflicting theologies. Arminianism is at poor business in trying to make this teach salvation by works. And many Calvinists have at least quoted one statement in trumpet tones, and the other in a whisper. They have reached a conclusion different from Paul when they read, "For it is God which worketh in you, etc."

Arminianism is basically wrong, it bases salvation on human merit. It confounds merit with mercy and grace with works. Calvinism needs correcting in many details but truth will not overthrow the system, for it is basically right.

This passage is very simple if we let it say just what it does say. It doesn't read, "It is God which worketh in you, therefore take your seat and wait for Him to work." Nor does it read, "For it is God which worketh in you, therefore do nothing while He works." This is a command to work; not to idleness. It is a command to work with fear and trembling, not with ease and complacency. It is a command with an encouragement. We will first consider the command and then the encouragement:

THE COMMAND TO WORK

Who is commanded? Not lost people, but the saved. To those in whom God had

begun a good work; who are called saints, and the beloved who have always obeyed. The true meaning depends much on to whom it is addressed. It would mean one thing if addressed to lost people and quite another thing if addressed to saints. If you are not a believer in Christ, born of his spirit and resting in Him for eternal life, this passage has nothing to say to you.

The command. Work out your own salvation. Here is individual responsibility. Every saved man has his own salvation and he alone can work it out. Preachers can't work it out for you. No pastor or priest can make or keep you right with God. He has the keys to heaven, but they are not baptism or prayer, but rather the terms of salvation.

Work out your own salvation means about the same as the command to live the citizen life worthy of the gospel. It is a command to practice godliness. It concerns our daily walk. Salvation is not something merely to be enjoyed; it is a field to be worked. He who has no use for salvation but to enjoy it will not get much enjoyment out of it. Salvation is not a bed to rest upon merely; it is a rough road to walk upon. Working out salvation is not drifting; it is swimming against the current. Salvation is not something we are to lock up and take out occasionally to admire; it is something to be used every day. All Christians are laboring men; God furnished the capital. We are all buck privates; Christ is our commander in Chief. Salvation is more than a feeling of complacency against the day of judgment; it is an enterprise to be worked at with fear and trembling. Salvation is not a garment to be worn on special days for parade; it is a garment to be worn every day. The Christian is not in a bed of roses where everything is sweet and fragrant; he is in an arena where he has to fight with the devil, world, and flesh.

How? He is to work with fear and trembling. This may seem strange if our salvation is secure. We read that "*perfect love casteth out fear.*" Yes, the fear that hath torment. But there is another kind of fear, there is a filial, reverential, and godly fear. The criminal's fear of the judge hath torment; the child's fear of his father is another kind of fear. Criminal's fear is fear of punishment; child's fear is fear of chastisement.

THE ENCOURAGEMENT

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do, to desire and to

work. This is not cooperation. Many interpret this so as to make salvation a cooperative effort between God and man. God they say, does His part and man does his part. This is utterly erroneous. A. McLaren: "No words could be selected which would more thoroughly cut away the ground from every half and half system which attempts to deal them out in two portions, part God's and part mine. With all emphasis Paul attributes all to God." God gives all the desire for holiness and all the energy for godly living. In working out salvation, God works it all in and we work it all out. God does it all and we do it all, but in a different sense. Cooperation means division of the work, but no division in this matter of godly living.

There is no cooperation between the vine and the branches. The vine does not bear a part of the crop and the branches another part. The branches bear all the fruit; the vine produces all the fruit. The fruit on the branches is visible; the strength in the vine is invisible. The fruit of the godly life is visible, the light is to shine before men that they may see it, the energy of the godly life is invisible.

There was no cooperation between God and Joseph's brethren in making him a slave and then ruler in Egypt. It was all of God, for Joseph says; "*So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God,*" Genesis 45:8. From the standpoint of responsibility our deeds are our own; from the standpoint of providence they are God's who even makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

How may I know God is working in me? By my own works. Paul: "I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I but the grace of God which was with me." God is not in you if there is no desire for holiness nor power for godly living.

Brethren and sisters, let us see to it that no sect or group has a monopoly on enthusiasm in the Lord's work. If we take this exhortation seriously, we will have as much or more enthusiasm as the self-styled good people without their holier-than-thou spirit. Let our enthusiasm be mingled with a spirit of fear and trembling. This will save us from boasting without costing us the blessing of assurance.