
ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD

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From a Sermon on Romans 8:28

Observe what he says. Make thou no exception, when he makes none. **All!** remember he excepts nothing. Be thou confirmed in thy faith; give glory to God, and resolve, with Job, "*Though he slay me, yet will I trust him.*" The Almighty may seem for a season to be your enemy, in order that he may become your eternal **Friend**. Oh! believers, after all your tribulation and anguish, you must conclude with David, "*It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.*" Under all your disquietudes you must exclaim, "*O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*" His glory is seen when he works by means; it is more seen when he works without means. It was a great work to open the eyes of the blind; it was a greater still to do it by applying clay and spittle, things more likely, some think, to take away sight than to restore. He sent a horror of great darkness on Abraham, when he was preparing to give him the best light. He touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, and lamed him, when he was going to bless him. He smote Paul with blindness, when he was intending to open the eyes of his mind. He refused the request of the woman of Canaan for a while, but afterwards she obtained her desire. **See, therefore, that all the paths of the Lord are mercy, and that all things work together for good to them that love him.**

Even affliction is very useful and profitable to the godly. The **prodigal son** had no thought of returning to his father's house till he had been humbled by adversity. **Hagar** was haughty under Abraham's roof, and despised her mistress; but in the wilderness she was meek and lowly. **Jonah** sleeps on board ship, but in the whale's belly he watches and

prays. **Manasseh** lived as a libertine at Jerusalem, and committed the most enormous crimes; but when he was bound in chains in the prison at Babylon his heart was turned to seek the Lord his God. Bodily pain and disease have been instrumental in rousing many to seek Christ, when those who were in high health have given themselves no concern about him. The ground which is not rent and torn with the plough bears nothing but thistles and thorns. The vines will run wild, in process of time, if they be not pruned and trimmed. So would our wild hearts be overrun with filthy, poisonous weeds, if the true Vinedresser did not often check their growth by crosses and sanctified troubles. *"It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth."* Our Savior says, *"Every branch that beareth fruit, my Father purgeth, that it may bring forth more fruit."* There can be no gold or silver finely wrought without being first purified with fire, and no elegant houses built with stones till the hammers have squared and smoothed them. So we can neither become vessels of honour in the house of our Father till we are melted in the furnace of affliction, nor lively stones in the walls of new Jerusalem till the hand of the Lord has beaten off the proud growths of our flesh with his own hammers.

He does not say that all things *will*, but *do*, work together for good. The work is on the wheel, and every movement of the wheel is for your benefit. Not only the angels who encamp around you, or the saints who continually pray for you, but even your enemies, the old dragon and his angels, are engaged in this matter. It is true, this is not their design. No! They think they are carrying on their own work of destroying you, as it is said of the Assyrian whom the Lord sent to punish a hypocritical nation, *"Howbeit, he meaneth not so;"* yet it was God's work that he was carrying on, though he did not intend to do so. **All the events** that take place in the world carry on the same work—the glory of the Father and the salvation of his children. **Every illness** and infirmity that may seize you, **every loss** you may meet with, **every reproach** you may endure, **every shame** that may colour your faces, **every sorrow**

in your hearts, **every agony** and pain in your flesh, **every aching** in your bones, are for your good. **Every change** in your condition—your fine weather and your rough weather, your sunny weather and your cloudy weather, your ebbing and your flowing, your liberty and your imprisonment, all turn out for good. Oh, Christians, see what a harvest of blessings ripens from this text! The Lord is at work; all creation is at work; men and angels, friends and foes, all are busy, working together for good. Oh, dear Lord Jesus, what hast thou seen in us that thou shouldst order things so wondrously for us, and make all things—**all things to work together for our good?**

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