

## THROUGH NIGHT TO MORNING

by

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### SERMON THREE -

#### ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD

**"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose"** (Romans 8:28).

WE have in this Scripture a certainty, a mystery, a limitation and a definition.

The certainty is that "**we know**." This was true, not only of Paul, the Apostle, the great missionary to the Gentiles, miraculously converted on the way to Damascus, and commissioned of GOD to a world-wide work, but of the humblest Christian in the Church at Rome. "**We know**." Every Christian may know.

The mystery is in the words, "**All things work together for good**." It is a mystery in two senses. In a Biblical sense, first, for a mystery in the New Testament is something hitherto unrevealed. The "**mystery of the Gospel**" does not mean that it is something hard to be understood, but that it is something not yet revealed. But in the other sense these words are mysterious. It is no mystery that "**all things work**," for there is activity enough about us; the mystery is that all things should work together, for they do not seem to be doing so. It looks as if some things were dashing with other things. And more mysterious still, that all things should be working together for good! But it is true. The mystery of the revelation should make us accept the mystery of the fact. It is true, because GOD says it. "**We know**," because He has revealed it.

But there is a limitation in the words "**To them that love God**." All things do not work together for good to people who will not love GOD.

There is a definition in the words, "**To them who are the called according to His purpose**." That defines those who love GOD. If you want to know whether you are called, ask yourself, "Do I love GOD?" If you do, you are among the elect.

But our present subject is the certainty of it, and we shall keep strictly to the record, for all we know about it is in that. If I should try to tell you something I know apart from that, it would be ignorance undiluted.

**"We know."** And Paul gives three reasons, in the words that follow, why he knows "**that all things work together for good to them that love GOD**."

1. Because GOD's purpose concerning us is from eternity to eternity.

2. Because GOD's care for us is assured through the death of JESUS CHRIST.
3. Because GOD's salvation of us is permanent and perpetual, through the death, resurrection, ascension and intercession of our Lord.

**"We know that all things work together for good"**: every Christian's life has, therefore, a bright side. No matter how dark the side that is turned to you, the Godward side is bright.

**I. Let us look at the first reason, "We know that all things work together for good," because GOD's PURPOSE CONCERNING US IS FROM ETERNITY TO ETERNITY, from eternity past to eternity future**

What is GOD's purpose? It is very clearly revealed. **"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."** That is the purpose towards which all things are working together for our good. What GOD has in view is our conformity to the image of JESUS CHRIST, and He is going to bring that about through prosperity, through adversity, through sickness, through health, through failure, through success, through darkness, through light, through joy, and through sorrow.

The great purpose of GOD towards which He is bringing every Christian is not a temporary happiness, but conformity to the image of JESUS CHRIST, and all things are working towards that great consummation.

His purpose, also, is that CHRIST shall be preeminent in a great family. It is conformity **"to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."** First of all, that there may be **"many brethren"**; His purpose is to have a great many people born from above, a large spiritual family. He is not satisfied with the salvation of a few. And among these **"many brethren,"** the multitude of the saved, JESUS CHRIST shall have the pre-eminence.

He is to be the firstborn. The firstborn among the Hebrews had all the authority and most of the wealth and prestige. When Esau sold his birthright, he sold the most valuable thing in his possession. GOD's purpose in conforming us to the image of CHRIST, is that CHRIST may have the pre-eminence in His family - a family preeminence, not exaltation merely as the Creator and Ruler of the Universe.

JESUS CHRIST is as the Elder Brother in the midst of the royal family. GOD's great purpose is to make CHRIST pre-eminent in a great family of His own spiritual children.

How does He do that? By linking eternity past with eternity future. **"Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate. . . whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified."** Eternity past - foreknowledge, predestination; eternity future - conformity to CHRIST, preeminence in the midst of the brethren, expressed in the word **"glorified."**

In the eternity past He foreknew and He predestinated; He predestinated with a view to conformity to CHRIST, and to the pre-eminence of CHRIST in His great royal family. Between these two great facts of eternity past and eternity future is the calling and the justification of His

people.

In the building of Brooklyn Bridge, which links Brooklyn with Manhattan Island in the great City of New York, there were first erected on the New York side, down by the edge of the river, two granite shafts, perhaps a hundred and fifty feet in length. On the Brooklyn side, down near the river, there were two more granite shafts running down for the foundation, perhaps seventy-five feet underground. The constructor of the bridge was killed, and his own daughter had to complete the structure, as she was the only one who understood his plans. From these great foundations the two granite shafts, that are linked together, rise up, pointing towards the clouds, and from the top of each one of these granite shafts, on the Brooklyn side and on the New York side, there is suspended an immense wire cable, that is linked in the ground a quarter of a mile beyond the bridge, perhaps, fastened to the granite rock underneath. These great wire cables, at least a foot in diameter, swing from the top of these granite buttresses across the river and hanging down from these wire cables are rods of iron which support the bridge.

These rods of iron, about a foot apart, and securely fastened, hold up the bridge. After the bridge was finished, all the traffic that could be put upon it did not seem to depress these iron cables one-tenth of an inch.

The tramcars went across it, and the great lumbering wagons; the elevated trains ran over it. Any amount of weight could be suspended in the middle of the bridge, right over the river, hanging upon these great iron cables, fastened with buttresses on each side, linked with granite underneath.

Something like that swings between eternity past and eternity future. Yonder in eternity past are the great granite buttresses of GOD's foreknowledge and predestination. We cannot understand it, but the fact is revealed that in eternity past there is GOD's foreknowledge and predestination; and yonder in eternity future is conformity to the image of CHRIST and His pre-eminence in the midst of His brethren. And swinging from those great granite shafts in eternity past and eternity future is GOD's calling and GOD's justification; and all the weight of salvation, the guilt of sin and burdens of earth, swing from these great cables of GOD's purpose in calling and justification. It is a solid bridge. All the earthquakes of time can never shake it down. They cannot shake the buttresses of GOD's foreknowledge and predestination; they cannot shake the buttresses of GOD's great purpose, to conform His people to the image of CHRIST, and to give Him the pre-eminence. GOD's calling and justification are the cables that swing between the eternities. And salvation, with all that pertains to it, hangs from these cables, buttressed on one side by eternity past and on the other by eternity future.

## **II. In the second place, "we know that all things work together for good" because GOD'S CARE FOR US IS ASSURED THROUGH THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST**

**"If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His Own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"** GOD's care for us is assured through the death of JESUS CHRIST.

- If GOD be for us, no matter if the devil is against us; GOD is greater than the devil.
- If GOD be for us, it matters nothing if all the powers of darkness be against us; He is greater

than all of the forces of evil.

- If GOD be for us, why bother about those against us?

But the question is, Am I certain that GOD is for us? Now, listen! "**He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all**" - is He not for us? "**Will He not with Him also freely give us all things?**" Does not the greater include the less? If He spared not CHRIST, but delivered Him up, will He spare anything?

Note these two expressions. One of them describes a home scene. GOD sent JESUS from home, the "**Father's house**," from the heights of glory. He loved us well enough not to spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. That takes us to the shadow of the cedars, to the buffeting, to the scourging, to the mock trial, to the cross-bearing and the sinking under it, to the hill outside the gate, when the hands were nailed, and He, uplifted between Heaven and earth, was delivered up to the Roman cross. "**He that spared not His own Son**" - yes, sent Him from Heaven, and, when He came to earth, delivered Him up - did not permit the angels to rescue Him - will He not with Him freely give us all things?

If He spared not Heaven's best, will He spare the best of earth? If He delivered Jesus up for us all, will He not deliver up the very best that He has for us all? So that Paul could say, "**we know that all things work together for good**," because GOD's care for us is assured through the death of CHRIST. The fact that He spared not CHRIST, that He delivered up CHRIST to suffering, is an argument that "**all things work together for good**."

His care for us will never be exhausted; it will never cease. The giving up of JESUS is proof of the fact that He will make all things else work together for our good, towards conformity to His image and towards His pre-eminence among many brethren.

### **III. In the third place, GOD's SALVATION OF US IS PERMANENT AND PERPETUAL through the death, resurrection, ascension and intercession of CHRIST**

"**Who shall lay anything to the charge of GOD's elect? It is God that justifieth.**" It is, therefore, permanent; there is no appeal from that decision. The Supreme Court of the Universe has given its decision. "**It is God that justifieth**," and justification remains.

But what else? "**It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us.**" "**Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died.**" So that GOD's justification is based on the death of CHRIST; and GOD, Who is the highest authority, has pronounced us just on the merit of CHRIST; and that death of CHRIST has been confirmed by His resurrection, by His ascension and by His intercession.

"**Who shall lay anything to the charge of GOD's elect? It is God that justifieth.**" That is permanent and complete. It is the cable which swings between the eternities. There is no flaw in it. No condemnation, no guilt before GOD, but justification on the ground of the perfect righteousness of CHRIST. Now, what about it? That complete justification is projected into eternity, is carried into Heaven. "**It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us.**" Risen again, at the right hand of GOD, on the throne of the universe.

He "**also maketh intercession.**" Calling and Justification will endure from eternity to eternity. It is supported by the living CHRIST, CHRIST on the throne at the right hand of the Father; and the living CHRIST on the throne will see to it that complete and permanent justification stands throughout eternity. He will see to it that the cables of His calling and justification, which swing from eternity past to eternity future, will never break.

~ end of chapter 3 ~

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