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ROMANS 8:28 -- ELEVEN SERMONS
By Joshua Stauffer

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PREFACE

These sermons were first preached to an ordinary congregation. Later they appeared in "The Gospel Minister." It is hoped they may still reach a greater number of people in their present form. The object for which they are sent forth is that every one who loves God, is called of God and in His purpose, may be encouraged and inspired in these days of trial to be faithful because unto them "all things work together for good."

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MISSING AND MIXED UP TEXT -- PUBLICATION RENAMED

This booklet was originally titled: "ROMANS 8:28 -- FOURTEEN SERMONS" by Joshua Stauffer. However, due to a Printer's and/or Binder's error, the first 16 pages of this book were not bound into it. Instead, Pages 17-21 began the book. In addition to this snafu, another group of pages -- Pages 17-25 -- were inserted where they did not belong. To top it off, Chapter 13 was repeated after its conclusion, with perhaps part of Chapter 14. As a result, there are only 11 chapters in this digital publication, and this Hodge-Podge has also caused me to rename it to "ROMANS 8:28 -- ELEVEN SERMONS" by Joshua Stauffer. Further, I have renumbered the 11 chapters consecutively beginning with what was Chapter 3. Romans 8:28 is very true concerning God's Workmanship, but, with the Human Workmanship involved in the assembly and binding of this booklet "all things" obviously "did not work together for" a "good"

presentation of the entire publication. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the readers of this digital publication will still profit spiritually from its reading. -- DVM

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"And 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).

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01 -- ROMANS 8:28 AND OUR LOVE TO GOD

All things work together for good to them that love God. This condition must be met if the fulfillment of the promise is to be enjoyed. God is faithful to His promises and to His children. He will do His part if we do our part. Man cannot drift along carelessly and be indifferent to what he is or does and disregard the condition he must meet, and expect all things to work together for good.

Man Meeting Conditions

God does not demand anything impossible or unreasonable of man. God is not hard to get along with if we want to get along with Him. God is not hard to please if we want to please Him. The one great condition of Romans 8:28 is, to "love God." God demands our love. Love is the supreme thing in heaven and earth. There is nothing greater than love. The trinity of good is faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love. Love is the voluntary choice which seeks the highest good of the object loved. God is love and He loves us. He created man in His image and likeness, therefore man can love also. Man is a creature of love. There is a natural love and there is a supernatural love. It is natural for man to love. He was made to love. Natural love was created in Adam and is born in us. It is but natural for parents to love their children, and children to love their parents; or for husband to love wife, and the wife to love her husband. Divine love also was created in Adam. He lost this in the fall, and man in his sinful state does not love God.

Divine love involves the will. Man must will to be born again, and will to love God, in order to love Him. The new birth makes possible our love to God. In the new birth, the love of God is implanted in our hearts. We can love God as much as we will to love Him. There is no limit. God demands that we love Him with all our heart, with all our soul and all our mind. God has a right to demand our all because of creation and redemption. If we want all things to work together for good, then "love God."

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God's Gracious Provision

We read, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). It is God's part to make "all things work together for good." We are not commanded to try to make all things work for good. This is God's part. We simply take our hands off and let Him take things in hand. If we take matters in our hands, He takes His hands off. It is not what we do, but what God does. We love God, and God works. God works in accordance to how much we love Him. The promise of Rom. 8:28, increases as our love for God increases. It enlarges as our capacity for God enlarges. We cannot get ahead of God. The farther we go, the farther God works. Since love seeks the highest good of the object loved, and since we love Him because He first loved us, and He seeks our highest good and we seek His highest good, how can it be otherwise than that "all things work together for good?" God will make all things work together for good. This is His part and He does it if we love Him. Nothing can hinder Him from doing this for us.

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Manifestation Of Love

Love will manifest itself. Love must manifest itself. Love must give expression to itself, or it is not love. It cannot abide alone. It must have an object to love. If there were but one person in the universe, he could not love, there would be no object of love, no one whose highest good he could seek. For every one to love himself and no one else, would be selfishness. God has manifested His love in creating man and making man an object of His love. Again, He manifested His love in giving His Son, the eternal object of His love, to die for us, when there was no moral good in us. Love impels and prompts men to do things. God's love has been manifested to us. Our love must be manifested Godward, and if it is, God can manifest more love to us in the working of all things for our good.

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Keeping God's Commandments

Jesus said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). Our love to God will manifest itself in the keeping of God's commandments. To love God is to obey Him, to please Him. Again we read: "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3). We cannot love God and do as we please. We

cannot love God and live in sin. Neither can we love God and disobey His commandments. If His commandments are grievous, the evidence is, we do not love God much. Love lightens the task and makes us willing. If we take no delight in a task the task becomes burdensome. God seeks our highest good and to this end, He has given us His commandments. God operates along the line of His promises and the written Word, When we love God and do His commandments, we place ourselves in God's purpose, in the pathway of blessing and are on the right track for the fulfillment of His promises. Then God can work. It is when the conditions have been met, connections are all right, and the contact made, that all things will work together for good.

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Receiving God's Favors

Love to God and obedience to His commandments have their rewards and have a close relation in the working of all things for good. If we love Him, we will do all He commands us, and He will do anything that will be for our good. John writes, "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (I John 3:22).

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02 -- ROMANS 8:28 AND GOD'S LOVE TO MAN

God is love. Not only does He love, but He is love. That is His essential being. All God does is done in love. The prophet Nahum said, "The Lord is good and a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knoweth them that trust in Him." This is true whatever comes or goes-the Lord is good. Love prompts Him in all He does. All His motives are love. Love seeks the highest good of the object loved. It is because God loves us that He makes all things work together for our good.

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God Chastens Because He Loves Us

Often in trials, the temptation comes to us, God does not love us, or, God has forgotten us, or, God does not care for us. But the real fact of our case is, God chastens because He loves us. Trials are an evidence of God's love and not His displeasure. The Word of God assures, instructs and comforts. Hebrews 12:5,6 reads as follows: "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." God deals with us as His children. A child needs the love, care, instruction, correction and protection of a father. So the Christian needs the love of the heavenly Father over him. God loves us infinitely more than a father loves his children. He chastens us out of pure love and nothing but love. He chastens us because we are sons, not sinners; because we are children, not bastards; because He seeks our good, not evil; our help, not our hindrance. Oh! that it might be a settled fact with us, that every time we are chastened, God loves us.

* * *

God Will Have Broken Material

Before the Lord will use us much in His service, we must come to the place where we are fully subdued, surrendered and resigned to God and His will. God must be supreme in our lives. Christ must be preeminent, and be Lord of our lives, and the Holy Ghost must have the lines and be our business manager in order for God to make all things work together for good in our lives. God will have broken material. Before a colt can be useful and trusted it must be broken. Its will and ways must be broken, then it will obey its master and be useful. The five loaves and two fishes had to be broken before the multitude could be fed. The secret of how the vastness of the need was met by the littleness of the resources, was in bringing the little resources unto Him. The process of breaking and multiplying took place in His hands. The multiplying could not come before the breaking. If you with your little resources want to be a blessing, present yourself unto Christ and let Him break you. An old saint used to pray, "O Lord, take me, and break me and make me." The breaking process may be painful, but it will result in blessing and usefulness. Jacob, Joseph and Job are beautiful illustrations of this truth. After the kneading and breaking process, great peace and blessings came unto them. After Jacob met the mysterious Person and He wrestled with him all night, then crippled and conquered him, He gave him a new name, a new nature and a new blessing. This worked for good in Jacob's life. Joseph blessed many lives after he experienced twenty years of humiliation, sorrow and separation. Job received double after he had lost all. God loved Job, Heaven took a great interest in Job. The Lord permitted him to be tried that in the end he would receive double.

* * *

God Fits Us For The Heavenly Temple

In the Old Testament time, the Lord dwelled in the tabernacle and in the temple. The tabernacle prefigured Christ in His first coming of suffering, humiliation and redemption. It was portable. The temple is a figure of Christ in His second coming of glory, as Prince of Peace, indwelling in the church, the glorified saints. In this age the Lord indwells the individual believer. In the coming age, the Lord will indwell the Church the Lamb's wife. Solomon's temple is a remarkable figure of this glorious fact. To this end, God is making all things work together for good for His present indwelling, and His future indwelling of the spiritual temple. David was a type of Christ in His first coming of suffering, humiliation and rejection. Solomon was a type of Christ in His coming of glory and the reign of peace. David desired to build an house for the Lord. The Lord said, "Thou shalt not build Me an house, but thy son shall build Me an house." However, David made preparation, gave great gifts and material, and made possible its construction. The coming of Christ in giving Himself, His life and all that He did made possible the saving, calling and gathering out of the church. There are many remarkable facts concerning Solomon's temple that have never been duplicated, and that beautifully prefigure the church, God's spiritual house. The temple was seven years in construction. Seven indicates perfection in quality and completion as to time. In the church age, there are seven distinct periods. The labor was done by one hundred and fifty-three thousand men. Contrary to man's ways of building, all

the material was cut, carved and fitted where it was found, and then gathered. Generally the material is gathered, then it is cut, dressed and fitted, and that with much hammering. All the timber was fitted and finished where it was felled in the forest. All stones were cut and carved in the quarries. Then the material was gathered. The building went up without the sound of a hammer. No tenon was too thick, or mortise too small. No cutting, fitting or hammering was required. All fitted in their places. All this had been done before the material was gathered. So it is with the church. The material must all be selected, cut, carved, dressed, fitted, polished, or whatever is required for the place every individual will have in God's building and plan. While we are in this life and world, we are in the forest, or quarry. The Lord knows the place He wants to fit us for, and how to fit us down here so that when we go up there we will fit and fill God's place without any more fitting, cutting or pounding. The dressing and fitting process may be painful now, but all will work together for good, not only for the present, but for eternity in God's habitation.

* * *

God Polishes Us For Heaven

The Lord takes the rough places off down here and polishes us for heaven. Many things and trials of various kinds may be used in taking the rough places off. A hammer and chisel may be used in taking rough corners off, but putting finishing and highly polished touches on, requires grinding and friction. The smoother and more nearly finished the task, the more skill there will be required to perfect us. Satan, the world and sinners may tempt us, but trials that are hardest and that cut and grind the most, often come from good people, with no evil intent on their part. A diamond is so hard and valuable that no novice is allowed to experiment in its cutting and polishing. It is only after several years of training by an experienced person that any one is permitted to cut and polish diamonds. It also is claimed that a diamond is so hard that there is only one known substance that can be used in polishing and giving it the finishing touches, that is, diamond dust. So it is with the choicest saints of God, worldly things do not tempt them, but friction or contact with other good people who have different opinions or methods of doing things, or matters which cannot be explained may grind on us. We must be careful what we say, how we feel and what we think of others in such times, for these trials are God's diamond dust polishing us for His highest glory. These trials that are so fiery and peculiar are an expression of God's love, Who ever makes all things work together for our good.

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03 -- ROMANS 8:28 IN RELATION TO TRIALS

In order for Romans 8:28 to become true in our lives, we must be very careful what attitude we take toward trials. Trials may serve a useful purpose in our lives. They will work for weal or woe; will strengthen or weaken us in the faith. By being tried, we shall be helped upward, or pulled downward. We will be victorious, or defeated. In trials, God will triumph over us, or Satan will triumph in our lives. Trials are like the wind. In storms, the wind sways the trees. The wind will uproot the tree, or cause it to root downward and take a firmer hold in the soil. Even so do trials. Trials should cause us to believe stronger in the Lord and the Bible, and

root us deeper in the love of God. There must be a downward growth before there can be an upward growth. The Word of God teaches the child of God what attitude to take toward trials. If the Lord can have His way and triumph in our lives, He will make Romans Eight Twenty-eight true in our behalf.

* * *

Count It All Joy

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations," (James 1:2). Trials are a cause for joy. Let us refuse to feel sad, blue and downcast when trials come. Joy will give us a buoyancy that will carry us along. It may not be joy, but count it joy. To count is to add.

If we fall into temptation, count, or put to it joy. Joy added to temptation makes temptation lighter. There is strength in joy. It will help us overcome. A merry heart doeth good like medicine. This is true physically and spiritually. When we are sad and have the blues, it is easy to sin, and to go down under temptation. When we count it joy, we are not apt to sin, but will come out on top. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit. The devil cannot stand joy. When Satan tempts us and we rejoice in the Lord and give thanks unto Him, that will be a blow to the devil. He then is defeated. But Satan gets great fun out of a Christian who frets and whines, gets melancholy and is downcast. He likes to play the harp strings of our heart to make a discord and start a fuss. When we start to complain and fret, Satan will keep it up. But if there is a "Praise the Lord," and a "Hallelujah," or a "Thank the Lord," when the heart strings are touched, and a joyful melody in the heart, Satan will soon cease and leave us alone. Count it all joy and all things will work together for good.

* * *

Endure Temptation

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation" (James 1:12). To endure is to bear patiently. It is to put up with it without a murmur or complaint. Bear it so sweetly no one will know we are bearing a care, or a cross. These are tests of our faith. Faith is precious in God's sight. This is God's gold. Let us bear in mind, the Lord beholds us in time of temptation. If we bear it patiently and stand true, the Lord will be pleased. To know He beholds us, and we are the special object of His observation will help us to bear it patiently. Endure temptation and all things will work together for good.

* * *

Ask For Wisdom

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). Wisdom is needed in time of trial. Trials are perplexing. Wisdom is promised and can be had for the asking. This asking must be in faith. God will grant wisdom to enable us to do the right thing, to take the right attitude, and teach us

how to conduct ourselves in time of trial. Ask for wisdom which will be granted and all things will work together for good.

* * *

The Giving Of Thanks

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20). The thankful heart is a full heart. The full heart is in a state to overflow. When we overflow streams of blessing will start to run. The giving of thanks is an expression of inward gratitude that is not suppressed, but comes forth to flow as a stream that carries the filth of temptation away which will leave a clear stream. Praise bubbling out of the fountain of the heart cannot be suppressed. Failing to give expression in praise may stagnate the stream of blessing. Intersperse your life with praise and saturate your prayers with thanksgiving. Prayer and praise make a splendid combination. They are like the two wings of a bird. Both wings must be used in flying. Many are lame in the wing of praise, therefore, do not soar high. If you would soar above the cares of life, use the two wings of prayer and praise. Give thanks for all things, then all things will work together for good.

* * *

Facing The Wind

"Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God He it is that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Deut. 31:6). We are not to ignore trials, nor are we to be driven with the wind. Trials are likened to wind. To overcome, we must face our trials in the name of the Lord. Meet them bravely, expecting to overcome and to be triumphant. If we are downcast, fret and feel blue, we are driven by the wind. Then the atmosphere becomes clouded and is not clear. When we face the wind, the atmosphere will soon clear up and the fog will disappear. In the days of the horse and buggy, and dirt roads, when, the weather was hot and dry, the traveler going with the wind would travel in a cloud of dust. All of the dust that was stirred up was blown along as the driver traveled. But if he faced the wind, the atmosphere was clear all the while and the dust was driven behind. So will it be in trials. The Christian can live in a clean and clear atmosphere where all things work together for good.

* * *

Humble Yourselves

"For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14:11). One question that comes to us in time of trial is, How can I get out of it? We look up for a way out. We look all around for an escape. The right attitude to take is to humble ourselves, and see how low we can get. The Bible mentions self-humiliation thirty times. Be willing to bear shame and reproach; take all the blame, keep sweet, hold your peace and your tongue. Be careful what you say about other people. Submit yourselves to God and be committed to the peculiar trial. When you have humbled yourself and gone to the bottom for the Lord, you

will find an opening, a way of escape. When you have abased yourself and in heart bowed before the Lord on your knees, with your face in the dust, then you may crawl out on your hands and knees, for deliverance will have come. To the humble all things work together for good.

* * *

Brought Into God's Net

David wrote in Psalm 66:10-11, "For Thou, O God, hast proved us: Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net." It is not the devil, it is not man, it is not circumstances that brought us into the net. It is "Thou, O God," the Lord Himself that brought us into His net. When we are taken in the Lord's net, we never can get out ourselves. We cannot undo the tangles. The more we try to get out the worse tangle we make. The right way out is, first surrender and give up to the Lord. Acknowledge we are in His net and that He brought us there. Wait on Him to bring you out. He can undo every tangle. He understands our case. He brought us in, He can bring us out. In God's net all things work together for good.

* * *

Never Question God

"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" (Romans 9:20). We should never question God by saying, "Why Lord?" We may inquire of the Lord, How? When? What? Where? but not Why? When we ask "Why Lord?" we are doubting God's love and wisdom. We are taking the matter in advisement as though we knew best and He did not know. Trust the matter in His hands, resting assured that He does know best, He knows why, therefore He can bring us out. Never question God for He said, "All things work together for good."

* * *

Take Everything As From The Lord

Job said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). Too often in our trials we ignore God and acknowledge the devil. Ignore the devil and acknowledge the Lord. Do not take things as from the devil, take everything as from the Lord. Even though the devil works against us, or brings trouble, absolutely ignore him, but be not ignorant of his devices. For truly nothing can come to you without the Lord's permission. We have a beautiful example of this in the life of Job. Job did not know that he was the object of discussion at a council of God and the sons of God in which Satan also appeared. Job knew nothing of this meeting. He did not know that he was accused by Satan before God. Satan was granted permission by the Lord to sweep away everything he had (seven sons, three daughters, seven thousand Sheep, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred she asses and many servants). Blow after blow fell with rapidity and in a few moments of time all was swept away. Satan did all this and thought Job would curse God, deny Him and cease to retain his integrity in the Lord. But Job did not even acknowledge Satan, or take it as from Satan nor mention his name. Job took

it all as from the Lord. He said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." This must have been a great blow on Satan. Satan was defeated and God was triumphant. It is Satan's object to get us to take our eyes off from the Lord and personally fight him. If we do, we are defeated. We are not able to overcome Satan, for he is a mighty foe. We do not need to fight Satan personally, for he is a conquered foe. The Lord overcame him. Take everything as from the Lord, and do everything as unto the Lord. This will outwit Satan and glorify God. Then all things will work together for good.

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04 -- ROMANS 8:28 IN RELATION TO GOD'S PURPOSE

In relation to Romans eight twenty-eight, God has a purpose in everything He allows to come in our lives. The purpose is that it shall work for our good, and His glory. God is faithful to Himself, to His promise, and to His children. He will always do His part and keep His Word. Our part is to have a conscious knowledge that all things work together for good, believe that all things will work together for good, love God, and live in His will and purpose. God's part is to make all things work together for good, call us and work out His purpose. Every life created in Christ Jesus is a fresh thought from God and He has a plan for every life. Nothing can defeat God in the working out of His purpose if we love and obey Him. Hell may rage; demons may hiss; Satan may roar; earth may hinder; wicked and carnal men may rage, and half-hearted people may stand in the way; yet all must work together for good to them that love God. We do not need to make it work out, nor take things into our hands, neither use pressure or force to bear on it, but; simply take our hands off and let God work it all out for good.

* * *

Trials Reveal Character

It is according to God's purpose that we shall be tried. Trials reveal character. Trials do not make character, but reveal our true character. The impartation of divine life and grace; holiness of heart; righteousness of life; a surrendered will; faith and obedience, make a good character. Trials will help to develop our character if we are victorious. Whatever the character, a test will reveal its true quality. Anybody can be good when everything goes all right. It is not hard to be cheerful when everything goes our way. It is not hard to be sweet when nothing tries us. Any old grouch, or sinner would be mean to complain and fret when all things are going smoothly. But it takes divine grace to keep us happy, uncomplaining and victorious when things are trying, uncongenial and cross our way. When things go wrong and we go right, that is the vindication of a holy character. It is not what we are on Sunday, at camp meeting, at church, or away from home, but what we are every day at home that reveals what we are and that counts. When our inward life is tried and we manifest a holy conduct, a holy walk, holy words, and the fruit of the Spirit, God is glorified.

* * *

Trials Reveal The Resources Of God

God wants to reveal Himself unto us in His great love, His goodness, His power and faithfulness. When we have no need, no trial, there is no occasion for God to do anything for us. God cannot open a Red Sea and part the waters when there is no Red Sea in our way. God cannot heal bitter waters and sweeten them when we have no bitter waters to sweeten. God cannot give manna when we have no hunger or need, nor open the rock and give refreshing waters when we have no thirst. God cannot give victory where there is no battle, or promotion when there is no test. God cannot do anything for us when we have nothing for Him to do. His strength is made perfect in our weakness. God knows no weakness, He has no weakness, He is all strength. We have no strength, we are all weakness. If we let Him have our weakness, He will give us His strength. He will let us get in need so He can supply our need; or let us get in a hard place so He can get us out, or in a dark place so we will call upon Him and He can lead us out. It is in time of trial that God will reveal His resources to His children.

* * *

Trials Send Us To Our Knees In Prayer

All Christian people know this to be true from experience. The most earnest and intense praying is done when there is soul agony, trial or need. This is also clearly illustrated from some Bible characters. Jacob, when returning from Padanaram to Canaan sent messengers before his face, informing his brother Esau of his return. Esau had the old grudge and murder in his heart for Jacob. He armed himself and four hundred men to meet Jacob. Jacob was afraid. That night he sent all he had before him and he lingered at the brook. He was alone. All night the Lord in the form of an angel wrestled with him. Then Jacob wrestled with the Lord. Never before in his life had Jacob so agonized in prayer with God. A crisis had come in his life in which God must undertake, and it was up to Jacob to pray through. The emergency demanded energizing prayer. Jacob went down and Came up again. God prevailed with Jacob; Jacob prevailed with God, and then prevailed with man.

David betook himself to prayer when he was pursued by Saul. Some of these prayers are recorded in the Psalms. He became efficient in praying and he prayed through and then gave expression in praise.

Daniel and three companions in Babylon were classed with the wise men. They had not been consulted by the king, nor given opportunity to reveal the dream to Nebuchadnezzar. The decree went forth to execute all wise men. Daniel and his companions were first apprehended to be killed. By wise counsel, Daniel assured the officer he would give an answer to the king and was granted time to pray. Daniel laid the matter before his three companions, and as much as said, Boys, it is up to us to pray this thing through that God will reveal the matter unto us so that we may live. This was a matter of life or death and it became a great incentive for these young men to pray through.

When Peter was in prison, the date was set and plans were made to execute him, but the church prayed for him. Prayer was the only hope for his release. An all-night prayer meeting was

held in his behalf. God heard and an angel delivered him out Of prison. The urgent need gave occasion for urgent prayer. Trials send us to our knees in prayer to God.

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Trials Wean Us From The World

The trials that come to the Christian constantly remind him that this world is not his home. They also make the world look cheap to him. Trials act as a spur to spur the Christian on. This will keep him on the move. It will make him long for heaven and home. Abraham was a man of: many trials. He walked with God. This made him far-sighted. He looked for a city, whose Builder and Maker is God. Thus we see the things that are hard for us to bear, after all are a blessing in disguise and work together for good.

* * *

We Are Tried That We May Be A Help To Others

The person with a big heart can be a help to others. This bigness of heart or soul comes through trials and sorrows. The trials of God's people are very much alike. Often people are tempted to think something strange has happened, and the trials are peculiar to them, no one else is tried as they. But we are commanded not to think it strange, or that something strange has happened to us, for no trial can overtake us but such as is common to man. Persons who have been tried severely and overcome know how to help and speak words of wisdom and comfort to those who are tried. They can truly sympathize and succor those who need help. The characters in the Bible who have been a help and blessing to others, were those who had gone over the road of need, or trials, and were qualified to fill a needy place.

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God Is Glorified

It is true that all things work together for our good 'if we love the Lord and are the called according to His purpose. This is the human side. On the divine side, God is glorified. The purpose then of trials is, our good and God's glory. The highest aim any one can have is God's glory. We can seek nothing higher than God's glory. The cause for the great conflict between heaven and hell, and the great contention between God and Satan, is man. It is for the possession of man. Man cannot be neutral, or indifferent to the conflict. It is an evident fact that either God will triumph in every life, or Satan will. It is up to man to settle who shall be victor in his life. God and the devil are not playing checkers, that is, God takes some and Satan the rest. This is all in man's power and will. If man wills, he can be saved. If he surrenders to God, he will win. If he gives up to God, he has conquered. When man is saved and overcomes, there are three blessed facts that become true in relation to that person: God is glorified; man is blessed; Satan is defeated. God seeks our good. Let us obey His call and seek His purpose, then all things will work together for good.

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05 -- ROMANS 8:28 IN RELATION TO PROBATION

This text is true in all places, under all circumstances, through all time and all eternity. It is a comfort to God's children who are tried. Trials are only for this life, and this world. This is the only world in which the Christian will be tried. This is the time to suffer for the Lord. In the next age we will reign with the Lord. In this life we bear the cross, in the next we will wear the crown. This is sowing time; by and by will come reaping time. This is weeping time; by and by will come rejoicing time. This is God's order and we cannot reverse it. In relation to probation and salvation, time and eternity, Romans Eight Twenty-eight is true.

* * *

The Sinless Past

Everything but God had a beginning. All that God created and made was good. Angels were created before man. There was a sinless time in the past. There was order, unity and joy throughout the universe. All was loveliness and peace. There was nothing to disturb the peace of any holy creature, nor anything to mar the joy of God's creation. In the process of time, some angels kept not their high and holy estate, but automatically and spontaneously sinned. This brought a divine catastrophe in the original creation. Undoubtedly when one-third of the angels fell and sinned voluntarily, the other two-thirds just as voluntarily chose to remain true and holy. We have reasons to believe the holy angels will never sin in time to come since they have seen the terrible consequences of sin.

* * *

Adam And Eve

God had man in His plan from eternity. Man was created in the image and likeness of God. He was placed in the garden of Eden. Again everything was made good by the Creator. Adam was placed on probation. Probation carries with it the thought of promotion. God had something better for man than Eden, or the present pleasures of this world. Before promotion comes testing. God gave Adam some laws. Every law must have a reward if obeyed and a penalty attached if broken. If he disobeyed he would die. Adam had the power of choice. Without the power of choice character and promotion were an impossibility. It was as possible for him not to sin as it was for him to sin. Without the power of choice, Adam would have been a mere machine, and would not glorify God any more than the rocks and trees. All God did for Adam and commanded him to do was to work together for his good.

* * *

The Temptation And Fall

Satan tempted Adam and Eve along the line God had forbidden them. The tempter could not stand the unity, holiness and happiness of the first sinless pair who bore the image of God. The serpent lent itself to Satan to become the medium of access to tempt man. Eve was deceived, but Adam sinned with his eyes open. He lost his holy nature and high-standing, and, acquired a sinful nature. He failed under the test. God was not surprised when Adam failed and fell. Neither will God be defeated in His plan by sin and Satan. Though man fell, yet in God's love, wisdom and power, He will make all things work together for good.

* * *

The Expulsion

In his fallen nature, it would not do or be for man's good to live in the garden of Eden, so the Lord drove Adam and Eve out. Adam was dead spiritually, and in that state he must not have access to, and eat of the tree of life. Should he partake of the fruit of the tree of life, it would seal his destiny in the state in which he partook of it, and he would forever remain dead spiritually and forever live physically. It was for Adam's good that he was banished from the garden; put: under the ban; met with disappointment, sorrow, death, and returned to dust.

* * *

The Saviour And Substitute

The way to the tree of life was guarded by cherubim with a flaming sword. The sword and death must accomplish redemption before the fruit of the tree of life could again be eaten. The Lord God dressed Adam and Eve by slaying innocent animals and making them coats. He gave them a promise of a coming Redeemer and redemption. Though Adam failed and lost all, the Lord became man's Substitute, fought man's battle, overcame man's enemy, paid his penalty by dying, so that He could forgive his sins. Through Christ and redemption, God can regenerate, sanctify and glorify man, and promote him to His right hand. Moreover, we are safer on the righteousness of Jesus Christ, than Adam was on his own righteousness. We, too, have failed. Christ did not fail, but overcame and stood true. In Christ we can stand, overcome, and be safe.

* * *

The New Creation

Known unto God are all things from the foundation of the world. God is never surprised, nor has He any after-thoughts. He cannot be defeated. He had redemption planned before the fall. The Lord can take death and bring life out of it. He can dispel darkness by creating light. He can take wreckage and chaos and bring out of them beauty and arrangement. Yes, He can take the old creation and make it into a new creation. The Lord can take man -- sinful man, dead in trespasses and sins, make him alive through Christ and the new birth -- give him a new life -- eternal life -- the quality of life God has and make him a new creature. Then the Lord can cleanse him from the carnal, sinful nature and fill him with the Holy Ghost, so he will have a holy nature and holy desires. Though man may die and return to dust, the Lord can raise him up

again incorruptible. The expulsion, the curse with its sorrow, sweating, and even man returning to dust, will all be made to work together for good through Christ, man's Saviour and Substitute.

* * *

The Testing Of The Saints

The Lord does not take us to heaven as soon as we are saved and sanctified. However, we are ready to go when we are, and have a potentiality in us to be changed and caught up any moment should the Lord come. The Lord allows us to remain here to reach maturity, to be tested, and for service. After we are saved, we will be tried by the Lord and tempted by Satan. God will have a tried people. Trials serve a purpose and are for our good and God's glory. We can have victory in the midst of trials with the curse around us, Satan loose on the outside, and Christ on the inside.

* * *

The Sinless Future

This question might be asked, If sin broke out automatically and spontaneously among the holy angels in the past, and holy man sinned willfully in Eden with good environments, how may we know sin will never break out in the coming eternity in the New Jerusalem, new heaven or new earth? We may rest assured the Lord can and will perform His purpose. This is exactly what the Lord is going to accomplish. Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The hitherto unto which the Father and the Son are working is the new creation wherein dwelleth righteousness and where sin never will break out.

* * *

The Lord's Word

1. The Lord's Word is forever settled in heaven and it will eventually be forever settled on the earth and in hell. It may be also eternally settled in the believer's heart now. We have the Lord's word for a safe and immune universe. "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:3-4). Thank God, in the consummation of the new creation, there will be an absence of the consequences of sin. All these shall have passed away. Again John writes, "And there shall be no more curse" (Rev. 22:3). God's new city, the New Jerusalem shall never be defiled. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie" (Rev. 21:27). Satan as the father of lies entered the Eden of man and lied unto Eve. Peter writes, "Nevertheless, we according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (II Pet. 3:13). David says in Psalm 37, "the wicked shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb," "the evildoers shall be cut off," "yet a little

while, and the wicked shall not be," "he passed away, and lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found."

2. God's order is reversed in the new creation to that of the old creation. We learn by studying the first chapters of Genesis and comparing them with the last three chapters of Revelation, that God has reversed the order in the new creation. We see a contrast of the old creation and the new creation; the first Adam and the last Adam; paradise lost and paradise regained; the serpent enters in and the serpent goes out; sin begins and sin ends; sad beginnings and glad endings; sad endings and glad beginnings; thorns, and no more thorns; death, and no more death; the tree of life barred, and the twelve gates open to the tree of life. In the old creation the Lord made everything preparatory to and for man. Man was the last and the crowning act of His work. All was put under man. The test came afterward and man failed and fell. In the new creation, man must first be made anew, then be tested and be an overcomer. Then the Lord will make the heavens and earth new. Man will be prepared and tested before he will enter into the new and prepared place.

3. Probation will be ended and promotion realized. Man was put to a test in Eden. Man will not be tested in the New Jerusalem, his eternal home. He is tested now. Probation will then be for ever over. Whatever state a person is in at death, or the end of probation, he will forever remain in that state. Everybody will then have been sifted and classified. We may be assured sin will never break out again. When Lucifer rebelled, one third of the angels were loyal to him, taking part in the rebellion. There is no Scripture to indicate they can be restored or redeemed, but are bound by an eternal sin. Two-thirds stood true. These have stood the test and remained true and would do so again. Since they have seen the consequences of sin and witnessed the conflict between right and wrong, there will never be any inclination on their part to sin. All sinners will be banished into the lake of fire and brimstone to be tormented day and night for ever. The judgment of the great white throne will be over. Evidently while the earth is being renovated by fire, the final judgment will take place in space. God's method of getting rid of sin is by judgment. All sins have been judged in the Person of Christ on the cross. He that believeth in Christ shall never come into condemnation. Those who live and die in their sins will remain in their graves to await the second resurrection and the final judgment. This is the judgment of all wicked. These will all be banished into the lake of fire. All sinners, demons, Satan, and sin with its consequences will be sloughed off.

Our Lord and Christ will usher in peace, and reign until the last enemy which is death is destroyed. He will out-reign sin and death. When everything has been brought into subjection, Christ will turn everything over to God, and Deity will rule over glorified humanity through eternity. Then sin never again will break out. Righteous men are being tested and tried now. If man by the grace of God willingly and joyfully stands true in the midst of trials, in a world full of sin, Satan loose, demons depressing and oppressing, the curse on the earth, and man does not sin, but is an overcomer, we may rest assured when man is glorified and is in the presence of God with no testing, no curse, no sin, no Satan, no demons, no trying circumstances and environment, that he will never sin through eternity.

4. The Sin Cure. The redeemed will then all have been blood-washed and blood-cleansed. All have had the sin-disease and been made whole by the blood-cure. All will have been treated

by the antitoxin of the blood of Christ, Who was sinless. The disease will never break out. There will be perfect immunity, all have been cured, not one will be contaminated, no one will have the disease so there can be no contagion.

5. No sinner, demon or Satan will be allowed to roam on the new earth. Satan came into the garden of Eden, and now walks to and fro in the earth. In God's time, righteousness and peace shall flow like a river for ever and ever, ages without end.

Romans Eight Twenty-eight is a help and comfort to every pilgrim who is on his way to the New Jerusalem. In eternity we will be able to look back and view the whole entail of sin from the fall to the final consummation of redemption and say, all things have worked together for good.

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06 -- ROMANS 8:28 IN RELATION TO SERVICE

The Lord seeks to develop in us the most holy character and the most useful service. To this end He makes Romans Eight Twenty-eight true in our lives. In relation to the gifts He has bestowed on us, and His calling for our lives, He makes all things work together for good.

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Tests Prepare Us For Service

Before the Lord sends His servants forth into His service, He will test them. This is right. Before He promotes us, He will test us, and we must stand the test and come out with a passing grade. Tests will do one of two things: they will reveal hidden flaws and bring them to the surface, (and if there are any, they need to come to the surface), or they will manifest the genuine hidden qualities and vindicate their perfection. All the parts of an automobile must be tested, and after the machine is assembled, it must go through some more severe tests. If there are any defects, it is better for them to come to the surface while the machine is being tried, than after a sale has been made and an accident occurs on the road because of defects. All Bible teachers, ministers, evangelists and gospel workers have a tremendous responsibility in directing, leading and influencing lives for good or evil, for heaven or hell. All things work together for good in that they fit us for greater usefulness and service.

* * *

Special Training For Special Service

The way to get special things is to specialize. When we offer special prayers we receive special answers. Whenever the Lord wanted a special person to fill a special place, He always put him through special tests, and gave him special training. God prepares the man first and then the place. All things work together for good, for that, which is special in our lives.

* * *

"Preparation" A Scriptural Term

The world is spending millions for what it calls "preparedness." This is for the destruction of life. How much more essential it is for a "preparedness" in Christian experience, which is for the construction of good and that which concerns souls and eternity. We read, "The Lord prepared His throne in the heavens... He prepared the heavens... He prepared the light and the sun;" "He prepared rain for the earth... I go to prepare a place for you;" "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, the things which God hath prepared' for them that love Him... prepared for the Master's use," "prepared unto good works... A prepared people... a prepared inheritance... A vessel prepared unto glory;" and "a prepared city." God prepares us for the place, and then He prepares the place He wants us to fill. To this end, He makes all things to work together for good in our lives.

* * *

Great Men Of Great Consequence

There have been many mighty men of God in the past who have blazed their way through wildernesses, and left a trail behind them. Their lives cut a channel deep enough so that their influences were felt after they were dead and gone. Enoch walked with God and pleased Him. Noah was a man of courage and patience. Abraham was a man of faith and obedience; Joseph was noted for his purity and wisdom; Moses was a great intercessor, moderator and leader. David was a man after God's own heart. Elijah and Elisha were mighty prophets of God. Daniel was greatly beloved and much thought of in heaven. John the Baptist was the greatest born among men. Many mighty heroes of the cross and faith in this age have been mightily used of God and their influence still goes on for good. All things worked together for their good and for their highest usefulness.

* * *

Secret Cause For Greatness

We always think of the open results of the great men of God, but who ever thinks of the secret cause for greatness. There are reasons for greatness, for open reward and for success. Why were they great? If we inquire, or search into the reasons, we learn there were secret causes. Little may we realize the great sufferings and sacrifices these men have gone through, nor do we think of the great trials in their lives. We would like to be translated like Enoch, but will we walk with God without a break like Enoch? Would we be like Moses, then must we endure as seeing Him Who is invisible, and consider the reproach of Christ greater riches than the glittering things of this world. If we would be like Joseph, then let us be pure and suffer uncomplainingly. Are we willing to drink water out of a brook and be fed by ravens like Elijah? They were men in whom all things have worked together for good in spite of bitterness, hardships and persecutions.

* * *

Bitter And Sweet Ingredients

There are many things in the lives of those whom God prepares for a special place that are bitter. The Lord carefully measures every ingredient in tempering our lives for our good and our greatest usefulness. In Isaiah 28:23-29 we read of the wonderful wisdom and counsel of the Lord in dealing with His people. As the farmer plows in order to have a harvest, and threshes only in order to separate the grain from the straw, then ceases to beat it, then bruises the grain to make bread, so the Lord in His love and intelligence deals with His people only as far as is for their good and usefulness unto others.

* * *

Separation Is Education For Preparation

In the Old Testament, God made use of separation in the preparation of His children for an eminent place. God called these to a life of separation. Abraham was called to leave his kindred, father's house and country. No place was named, no distance was given. To all the questions asked by his relatives, he could only answer, I do not know. Many years he walked alone with God and did not take up with the Canaanites which were in the land, but he was all taken up with God.

Joseph was separated for twenty-two years from his father to prepare him to be the second ruler of Egypt, and the food administrator for a famishing world. Moses keenly felt the bitterness of separation and the condescension from the courts of the king and being reared as a prince to become a servant in the desert. Forty years were spent in exile and in caring for sheep. We read, "He endured as seeing Him Who is invisible (Heb. 11:27). Many other great men and women were trained in the school of separation. Some of the Nazarites of whom were Samson, Samuel and John were separated unto God before birth. Moses and Josiah were separated from earliest infancy. Some in their youth, as were Joseph, Daniel, Nehemiah, and Naaman's maid. These all were uprooted as it were and taken out of their natural soil and planted in soil less congenial to cultivate godly attainments. But opposition intensifies desire. These excelled and triumphed over all opposition and came out on top. Everything in their lives prepared them for greater usefulness.

* * *

Extremity Develops Latent Possibilities

When God tests our integrity, the test will be sharp, short and sudden. It is very essential for the safety of humanity that machines, braces, brakes, anchor cables and railway irons be tested under extreme strain to make known any flaw or defect, or to make known their perfections. Job is an example of extreme tests. Blow after blow fell with rapidity. No premonition, warning or reasons were given. They prepared him to receive double. Joseph's test through Potiphar's wife was subtle, carnal and sharp. He stood the strain; stood true; retained a spotless character and today is noted for his purity. After his prison experience, he was a blessing

to his own people, to Egypt and the king for eighty years. Some other characters like Saul, Gehazi and Solomon failed in life. They were not tested: They started out well and ended in disaster. They came to prominence suddenly without that thorough training and started out with a glorious sunrise, but their sun set behind storm clouds.

* * *

Patience A Part In Preparation

The test of patience is probably the most severe and effective of all methods by which the Lord develops sterling qualities, spiritual life and sends promotion. One of the hardest lessons the Christian must learn is that of waiting. Enoch must walk with God three hundred years and endure many ungodly things before he was translated. Noah must wait and be a preacher of righteousness for a hundred and twenty years amid the sneers and scorns of a godless and unbelieving generation. Abraham must go childless for twenty-five years after the promise of a seed had been given, and learn that we inherit the promises of God through patience, faith and obedience. Everything is carefully timed by the Lord. He moves in the fullness of time. The Lord never hurries. Weak faith hurries God. Man is a creature of time and it takes time to reach maturity. Frequently the inexperienced and immature breaks down and injures himself, or by an injudicious act may injure another which may cause him to fall. God can well afford to take time in the training of His choice servants, and teach them great lessons of patience, and put that in the "all things" that work together for good.

* * *

Sorrow An Element In Training

God will have broken material. The flower that has been bruised releases the most fragrance. No life will be its best for God in holy fragrance, or in highest usefulness until that heart has been crushed by sorrow, and healed by the comforting words of the Lord and the anointing oil of the Comforter. Sorrow may come through outside providences, or inward grief over the sins of others. Jeremiah, the weeping prophet had both outward and inward sorrow. Abraham had great sorrow when he was called upon to offer up Isaac. Jacob had much prolonged sorrow. In his maturity and old age, he was one of the greatest saints of all ages. Few men have had sorrow such as Job. Moses, David and Daniel are examples of how God used sorrow in drawing them closer to Himself, and in giving them an enlarged soul that made them a blessing unto many. God used all these things and made them work together for good in their lives. The Lord can use tests, bitterness, separation, extremities and patience in our lives and make them work together for good.

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07 -- ROMANS 8:28 AND THE RIDDLE OF THE AGES

The Bible is a little lamp that gives a big light. The most important things are revealed the clearest. The great doctrines and truths are all clearly revealed. The doctrines of Christian

experience; namely, regeneration and sanctification are reiterated again and again. Redemption and the coming of Christ in His suffering and humiliation, and His coming again in glory, with the glories to come, are the great messages of the prophets. The more important the truth stated, the more there is written on the subject. The farther in the future the event, the brighter were the visions of the prophets. The spiritual, heavenly and eternal issues shine out the brightest. We are not left in the dark in regard to future events. The Bible is a "we know" Book, and the Christian is a "we know" person.

Concerning the material, the temporal, the physical and present things, the Bible does not shed as much light on, as it does on the spiritual and eternal matters. The great and eternal issues become clear and well known and established facts. But the problems of the present and material things often make the believers search the Scriptures and patiently wait to know what steps to take next. We do not know all things concerning the physical, material and present problems, but We know that all things work together for good.

* * *

The Riddle Of All Ages

The riddle of the ages is: Why do the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper? This question could not be understood: by Job of old. It also confronted David. All along the course of time, many saints have wondered why they suffer so much affliction, poverty and misunderstanding. Jeremiah cried out: "Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?" He did not understand all things. Many saints have been made to cry out, "How long, O Lord, how long?"

* * *

No Trial If We Knew All Things

The one element in the trial which makes it hard for many to bear and go through is they do not understand why. If they could understand "Why?" they think they could bear it better. There would be no trial if we knew all and understood the "why" of all we are called to endure, bear, or go through. The children of God should never question God, "Why?" as though they knew and God did not. We should be content to know that God knows best and why, and to know "all things work together for good" even though we do not know why.

* * *

Trials Make Room For Faith

If we fully understood everything and could see as God sees, there would be no room for faith, for then all would have entered into the realm of sight. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." In the present life with its limitations, we look through a glass darkly and we are called to walk by faith and not by sight. Were the elements that try us eliminated there would be no room for faith.

* * *

Trials Make Room For Blessings

Where there is no trial, there can be no faith and where there is no faith, there will be no blessing. Many blessings are lost from wasted trials. Before Thomas believed the Lord was risen, he must see the Lord and feel Him and His nail prints. He saw and was convinced. The Lord reproved him by saying, "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." Queen Elizabeth would not have envied the milk maid as she looked out from behind the prison bars if she only had known that one day she would sit on a throne and rule a kingdom for forty-four years. We are commanded not to fret ourselves because of evil doers and because the wicked prosper in their ways. We will not now fully understand the import of all we are called to go through. It is best for us not to know. If we knew the end from the beginning, it would hinder God from carrying out His plan. There would be no test, no faith, no room for expanding our capacity, and developing character and the qualities God so much desires.

* * *

Abraham Believed Not Knowing

When God called Abraham to offer up his son Isaac, who was the son of promise and through whom the promises were to be fulfilled, He did not make known unto Abraham the end from the beginning. This was the greatest test in Abraham's life. Nothing he was called to do was as hard as to offer up his son. Had the Lord revealed unto him that when he had erected the altar, placed the fire and wood in order, bound his son and would be in the very act of slaying him, he then was to cut the bonds and set him free, for God would have a ram near, fast in the thicket, which he could offer in the stead of his son, it would not have been a test. This would have cost him no tears, no groanings or sorrow, but all would have been a form -- a sham. This would not have been any test whatever of his love, faith or obedience to God. Neither would Abraham have received any enlargement of heart, blessing, revelation or added promise. Neither would God have been honored or glorified in Abraham. Neither would the story be interesting to us or been worthy of record in the Bible. It was best for Abraham not to know why God called him to this nor to know that Isaac would be given back unhurt. It made Abraham love and appreciate God and Isaac more than ever. It developed Abraham's love and faith and also expanded his capacity to receive greater blessings.

* * *

Joseph Understood Not Yet Believed

Joseph did not know, nor was it best for him to know all he must go through before his dreams would be fulfilled. When he dreamed of his exalted position, he did not dream that the way of fulfillment would be by separation, privations, humiliations and sorrow. Had he known all before, it would have frustrated God's plan. Neither would he have had the preparation and

sterling qualities developed by being true under trial. These fitted him to be a ruler and administrator. Joseph being envied, hated, hated the more, sold, taken into Egypt, sold again, made a slave, tried by Potiphar's wife, cast into prison, then being kept there by the forgetfulness of the chief butler, were trials unjustly imposed upon him, yet each one was a link in the chain, and for one to have been missing would have made a break. Each unjust deed was a step farther and led onward and closer to the throne and promotion. Everything in Joseph's life worked out for good. As each trial came into his life, it may have appeared to Joseph to lead away from what was good and the fulfillment of his dreams. But as we look back and see things as they really were, we see that each trial was needful and worked out for good and advanced him in his life. Had Joseph failed to stand true in these tests, it would have disqualified him for promotion. Blessings and promotions come when we stand true, even though things look dark and we do not understand all things. When we know and understand too much, it hinders God, for we take things into our own hands to work them out ourselves. Our part is to stand true under all circumstances, and God's part is to make "all things work together for good." This He will do if we love Him, are called and live in His purpose.

* * *

Job's Integrity In Darkness

There are other Bible characters that also beautifully illustrate that God knows best, and blessings and promotion come after trial. Job was a man that was perfect, upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil, and there was none like him in the earth. Yet God subjected this man unto great trial. Many things befell Job and he could give no logical reason, nor did he understand why. But the Bible reader will learn that a council was held in heaven, when the sons of God presented themselves to give account unto God. Satan appeared also. He came from the earth. Of all the worlds in the universe, this planet is the sphere of Satan's activities. He acknowledged he came from the earth where he goes up and down and to and fro. He knew Job. He would have destroyed him but for God's hedge about him. Satan accused Job and claimed he would curse God if all he possessed were swept away. God granted permission unto Satan to destroy and remove all he possessed but he could not touch Job. Satan came back and awaited his day. Then blow after blow fell with rapidity. One servant came running and told him the awful tragedy how the oxen were plowing (five hundred yoke) and the asses feeding, and the Sabeans fell on them and took them all away, slaying all the servants. Another came running and informed Job that fire from heaven fell consuming all sheep (seven thousand) and all the servants. Another came and said the Chaldeans stole all the camels (three thousand) slaying all servants. The greatest calamity of all was when another servant informed Job a hurricane had struck the house where his children were feasting and killed his seven sons and three daughters. In it all Job sinned not, and instead of cursing God, he blessed God. Job did not know the background, nor all the reason for his loss. Satan again attacked Job after another council was held in heaven. This time he afflicted Job's body. Job suffered untold agony. His three friends did not understand the mystery of his sufferings. They came to comfort him, but they were miserable comforters. God took the case in hand. He vindicated Himself and blessed Job. God gave him double. Yet the Lord did not point to the controversy at all, nor did He explain the mystery of his suffering, neither did the Lord make an attempt to explain the council held in heaven. However, we learn in it all God was glorified, Job was blessed and Satan defeated. Only

in the life after death, in the day of rewards will it be made known unto Job the "why" in all details of his sufferings. Though Job did not know for himself, nor could he explain to his friends why he suffered loss and affliction, yet he did know and look beyond the darkness of the mystery of the present, the physical and material, and triumphantly testified concerning Christian experience, redemption and eternal glories. Concerning these he was clear and sure. Job said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." And again, "But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." This was worth a thousand times more unto Job and also to God, than for Job to know the mystery of his suffering and be in the dark concerning his redemption. Let us trust God though we cannot see nor understand. We know that we do not know all things, but we know that God knows all things. We do not know how, but we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.

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08 -- ROMANS 8:28 IN RELATION TO PURITY AND MATURITY

In the working together of all things for good in the Christian life, there of necessity must be a growth from spiritual childhood to maturity. Man is a creature of time, yet he is bound for eternity. Regeneration is instantaneous and sanctification is instantaneous. Christian experiences are obtained instantly, but the attainment of good qualities and the working of all things for good in our lives will require time. There are some lessons that develop qualities, which take time for man to learn. It takes time for man to attain unto maturity. To this end, God allows such things to come into our lives which He will make to work together for our good, for He desires that His children shall attain unto maturity; which will give expression in a holy life, a holy walk and holy works. In Christian experience there is a "putting off" and a "putting on." That is, some things are laid aside, given up, etc., and some other things we take on, we do, etc. Paul said, "I die daily." Trials have a purifying effect, and the Lord permits them for this purpose. While we are in this life and natural body, we are subject to error and mistakes; we also can grow, therefore trials are a necessity to help develop a growth and effect a purging process.

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A Sifting Process

In this life the sifting process is on. Satan will keep after us until we land in glory, where we will be out of his reach. The Lord tries us to get rid of the chaff. Satan tempts us to get rid of the wheat. The Lord wants us to be pure wheat and nothing but wheat, so He winnows to get rid of the chaff. Satan wants us to be chaff and nothing but chaff, so he sifts to get rid of the wheat and to keep the chaff. Much depends on the attitude we take toward trials; how well we will endure; how strong our faith is in the Lord and His promises, whether we will stand firm or be defeated, or whether we will be chaff or wheat. If the Lord is triumphant in the trial, the chaff will be separated from the wheat. If Satan gains the victory over us we became more chaffy.

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What Is Chaff?

It may be profitable for us to consider what chaff is. Several places in the Bible chaff is used as a symbol of the wicked. John Baptist preached that Christ, Whose fan is in His hand, would thoroughly purge His floor, gather the wheat into the garner, but burn the chaff with unquenchable fire. Christ used the figure of wheat as believers, and tares of the wicked. Let us consider the believer as wheat. The chaff is a part of the dried straw. Straw and chaff are necessary and essential to the growth of wheat which helps to hold, protect and form the berry in its milky state until it goes hard and ripe. In reality it is not chaff until the wheat is formed. When the berry is ripe, the chaff has served its purpose. The chaff must then be separated before the wheat can be used for seed, feed or be transported.

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Getting Rid Of The Chaff

"What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord?" (Jer. 23:29). There must be a separation. In Bible times the chaff was separated from the wheat by the use of a threshing instrument called the "tribulum" or a flail. With this the wheat was beaten which loosened the chaff and then it was winnowed. The modern way straw and chaff are separated from the wheat is by a threshing machine. First, it is cut up by knives, then torn by cylinders, then beaten and rubbed; following this it is shaken, then it is fanned, the chaff is blown out on a pile while the wheat runs out separate and clean. From this we get an illustration of what the believer may go through sometimes while chaff is being separated from him.

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Tribulation Worketh Patience

In Romans 5:1-3, Paul writes, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience." From this passage we learn that we are justified by faith, and, then we have peace with God, we enter into the sanctifying grace by faith. We are not sanctified by trials or tribulation, but by faith in Christ and the Word. These experiences cause us to rejoice in the glory of God, and also to glory in tribulations. It is easy to rejoice in the saving and sanctifying grace, but it will take standing grace to glory in tribulations. Tribulations in this passage as Romans Eight Twenty-Eight, "Worketh." "All things work together for good." Tribulation, "worketh" patience. Tribulation sets in motion several good things, it worketh patience; patience worketh experience; experience worketh hope; hope keeps us stirred and the love of God aflame in our hearts.

There are things in the lives of good people who are at peace with God and have entered the standing grace, which require the "tribulum" to separate them from the Christian. These

things are not sinful, but may become sinful if not separated. Generally these great trials do not come to the young Christian for the Lord knows how much we can endure and will not allow us to be tempted above that which we can bear. When we have reached a more mature state, chaff must be separated before we are best fitted for service. The chaff may not be the same in every believer. A few things might be mentioned that must be considered as chaff and not wheat: preconceived ideas; love of praise; love for ease; being too nice, precise or dignified; lightness, an unteachable spirit; prejudice or pre-judging; ears too ready to hear everything; a tongue ready to say too much; being too hasty; personal feelings and preference instead of what is best or the mind of the Lord; personal feelings going out too much where they can be stepped on instead of being trained to grow up and reach heavenward; being too harsh; self-pity when done an injustice. These and many more can only be considered as chaff.

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Purging Through The Word

In John fifteen, Christ gave a lesson on abiding and fruitbearing, using the vine as an illustration. The secret of fruitbearing is abiding in the vine. Christ is the True Vine and we are the branches, The secret of "more fruit" is purging. In this connection, Christ said, "Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). The Word is a cleansing element. Through the Word we are cleansed experientially, and also daily. The laver which stood between the brazen altar and the tabernacle was there to maintain a daily cleansing. So the Word of God will keep us clean if we walk in the light and correct our life and conduct by the Scriptures. There is to be a putting off of the things that do not harmonize with the Word, and a putting on of the things in which we come short. If we do not do this, the husbandman must come along and use the knife which is a painful, but needful process. If He does not, there will be a superfluous growth which causes the life of the vine to go into branches and not into fruit. It is fruit the husbandman desires. He receives much glory when we bear fruit, but not when we grow a superfluous growth of wood and foliage without fruit. Let us ever cleanse our daily lives by obeying the Word.

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Getting Rid Of Dross

Then again, we learn another lesson from the Old Testament concerning purity and the method the Lord uses to refine His people. "He is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." The Lord Himself is the refiner. It takes a hot fire to refine silver. He knows how hot the fire needs to be, how much is dross and silver and when all of the dross is removed. He knows when we are pure. The Refiner "sits." He does not stand. God "sits" when He works. He takes time when He works with man. Man is a creature of time. God is eternal and can well afford to take time when He is dealing with man. He never works in haste.

Dross is refuse. Dross is the scum or slag of melted metal. Ore in its raw state is of little value and no use. The more dross, the less is its value, and the bigger its bulk. The dross must be

separated. The silver must be cleansed -- refined. The cleansing element is fire. He shall "try." The meaning of "try" is that of purifying, cleansing. Job said, "But He knoweth the way that I take; when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). There is much dross in many people. This must be eliminated before the believer can be his best in service for God. There are two stages of cleansing mentioned. Cleansing is the work of Christ and the Spirit. The first stage is instantaneous. When the Spirit comes in the believer to possess him, sin is cleansed and his heart is made pure. Then there is a cleansing that is gradual. There are many imperfections of mind, manners and conduct which take time to eliminate. This is timed by the Lord. As the Refiner, He sits. All that is dross, He eliminates. When He sees His image reflected in us, His object is achieved, and His purpose for us accomplished. He will not keep us in the smelting pot overtime.

Iron can be purified until it will shine more than silver and be higher in value. The purer the metal, the less dross, the bigger its value and the more serviceable is its use. It is claimed a bar of steel worth five dollars if made into horseshoes is worth ten dollars; if made into needles, three hundred dollars; if made into pen knife blades, thirty-two thousand dollars, and if made into watch springs is worth two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

While we are going through fiery trials, let us remember that when He has tried us we shall come forth as gold; that it is all for our good, for God's glory and for our highest usefulness. Let us remember "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

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09 -- ROMANS 8:28 AND THE FULLNESS OF GOD'S TIME

Man is a creature of time. He has many lessons to learn which take time. Time has to do with man. God is eternal and fills all eternity. God is always, on time. He never acts in haste or does any thing prematurely, nor is ever late. Some things He does instantaneously. The original creation of the heavens, the earth and angels were created instantly (Ps. 33:6). In the reconstruction of the earth and the creation of man, God worked six days. Six is man's number. We come into the world as infants, helpless, weak and dependent. It takes years to grow into manhood. It takes years to grow into maturity physically and mentally. There is a reason for this. God has so ordained it. Man is not merely living for the present, for God has an eternal object in view; so He can afford to take time in getting us ready for life's work and also for the eternal ages to come.

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Everything Is Timed By God

The seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years are timed by God. The earth, moon, sun, all planets and stars in their orbits are timed by God Who fills all time and space. The ages or dispensations are timed by God.

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All Must Work For God's Glory

God has so ordered everything that they must praise Him. He even makes the wrath of man to praise Him. The ages are shorter or longer according to the purpose of God. When He pleases, He can bring a change and usher in a new order of events. What God has done with ages and the world, He can do for individuals, He can change times, bring to pass new orders and events for those who love Him and live in His purpose.

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A Hard Lesson To Learn

One of the hard lessons for the servants of the Lord to learn is that of waiting God's time. But the waiting days will work together for good. God is never late to answer prayer, to help, or hear our cries. Often we may not be as ready as we think we are, nor are we ready for the place we seek to fill. God knows this and He says, "The time has not yet come, for thou art not ready for the place, or the place is not ready for thee."

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The Great Exemplar Of Promptitude

God Himself is the great Exemplar of promptitude. This is proven by all His works and words. The sun is a witness of God's faithfulness, also the moon, the days and the seasons. The Bible and the lives of all of God's saints attest this fact. Christ, the Son of God is another beautiful illustration of God's faithfulness and promptitude. Christ was:

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Born In The Fulness Of Time

The coming of Christ was promised before any one was born. After four thousand years of waiting, the Redeemer came (Gal.4:4). Christ began His ministry in the fullness of time. Not until He was thirty years of age, and John the Baptist had prepared the way for Him, did He begin to preach. Jesus lived and labored in the divine schedule of His Father's will. He was hunted and hounded from the cradle to the grave.

* * *

Christ Died In The Fulness Of Time

Not until His work was done and the fullness of time came did He die. He died on the dot and spot designed by God and eternity. He died on the Passover day and the hour of the evening sacrifice. If He had not died in the fullness of time, His bones would have been broken to hasten

His death, then the Scriptures also would have been broken. But this was not possible for none of His bones could be broken, neither could the Scripture be broken.

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He Arose In The Fullness Of Time

Christ arose the third day according to the Scriptures. He was buried, and the tomb was made secure and guarded by a watch, but His body could not see corruption. God raised Him from the dead. Christ ascended in the fullness of time. The Spirit came on the day of Pentecost iv. the fullness of time.

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Christ Will Come Again In The Fullness Of Time

Some have said, Christ is long past due. No He is not. He will not be late in coming. His coming draweth nigh. When the church, His body is completed, He will come suddenly, and the church will be caught up. Many have sighed and had great heart longings for the Bridegroom to return. We are commanded to watch, to wait, to be patient and to be faithful, for He will surely come again.

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Examples Of Faithful Waiting

Many O. T. saints waited and died, not having received the promise. Many Church saints are waiting and many have died in hope. Our waiting on the 'Lord will be rewarded. There may be cases where people think they are being delayed, and the best is not being worked out in their lives, but if they will await the fullness of time, time will prove the waiting to have been for the best after all, and their lives will become more fruitful and happier because they waited. Time to come will prove that all things work together for good.

Abraham and Sarah waited many years for an heir and the birth of one in whom God's promises would be fulfilled. The longer they waited, the older they became, and the more impossible the promise seemed humanly. But the longer they waited, the stronger their faith became, the more God promised them, the more wonderful it seemed to them, and the more they rejoiced when it was fulfilled. The inspired record is more interesting than if there had not been any faith, any testing, any waiting, any promises and the supernatural undertaking in bringing it to pass.

We inherit God's promises by waiting. Joseph was an inspired prophet in his youth. The way his dreams were fulfilled was by suffering and waiting. Because he suffered much, he was comforted much. Could he have become ruler in Egypt the next day after he dreamed, he would not have been prepared for it, neither would the world have been ready for it, and the inspired record would have little interest and charm in it. But God worked at both ends of the line. He had

the man in training and when the emergency came, the man was ready. Everything worked together for good in Joseph's life, and of necessity he had to wait God's time for the fulfillment of God's plan.

Moses was not mistaken in his call when he slew an Egyptian and buried him in the sand, but he was mistaken in his method, and in his time. He was not yet ready to deliver Israel, neither was God ready, nor Israel. God's time had not come. He was forty years ahead of God's time according to the time revealed unto Abraham. So the Lord took him to the back side of a desert and let him practice forty years on sheep, working for his board. This made him meek. When God's time came Moses by signs and wonders, led Israel out of Egypt in the very year, month, and day of His schedule. The days of waiting worked together for good in the life and ministry of Moses.

David was hunted and hounded by Saul. He lived in caves, the hills and wood. Frequently in writing some Psalms, he cried out, "How long, O Lord?" His days of waiting seemed long. Though tested and tried, he would not touch Saul, but recognized him as God's anointed, and he waited and wandered from place to place until God's appointed time came. If he whom God anoints and appoints, will but wait, God will not disappoint. God's time came for David, and by divine appointment, he went to Hebron and took the throne. This all worked together for his good. After several years more, he went to Jerusalem and became king over all Israel. Nor was he behind time, for not until then did the Lord open the way.

The writer of Romans Eight Twenty-eight, is another beautiful illustration of the fact that it pays to await the fullness of time. When he was converted and three days later filled with the Spirit, he preached immediately that Christ was the Son of God. Several years later he went to Jerusalem, but was sent to his home in Tarsus. Still he was waiting God's time which was sure to come. The time came when Barnabas sought him and brought him to Antioch. Here he found God's place for his life, and God's time for his great and fruitful ministry. This became the great starting point for the missionary journeys. All worked together for good in his life. Neither he nor anyone else could have planned his way, nor ordered the time better than God's plan and God's time for Paul.

Let us seek to know God's plan for our lives, then also seek to know God's time. If we wait and hold ourselves in readiness, the time will come, then we will know it is the right time to go forth. It is He Who makes all things work together for good Who will open the door. Then let us go forth in His name, and if we do, it will be an evidence we are ready for His service.

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10 -- PAUL PROVING HIS OWN TEXT

Every preacher should live up to his own preaching and the standard he holds up. His preaching to be effective must be true in his life.

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Living Up To His Ministry

The human writer of Romans Eight Twenty-Eight was Paul. In no life has this text been more true than to him who wrote it. The life of Paul is a beautiful illustration of the truth of Romans Eight Twenty-Eight. He proved the truth of his own text. From the time of his conversion when he began to love God and received his call, all through his ministry, till his work was done, when he died a martyr's death, Paul could say, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

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A Great Conversion

Three days after Saul was converted he was filled with the Holy Ghost, and also received his Sight. He had been the greatest enemy of the church, but now became its greatest friend. He immediately began to preach that Christ was the Son of God. This man reaped what he sowed. And so it ever is in all things, in all lines, at all times, in all men. He went to bind others, but he was bound. He led others, but he had to be led after his conversion. Opposition came to him, and after many days the Jews took counsel to kill him. Paul was definitely and supernaturally converted. He loved the Lord and was not mistaken concerning His definite call. The Jews seeking to kill him at Damascus, made necessary his escape. This did not hinder, defeat or discourage him. At night, the disciples let him down by the wall in a basket. This worked for good in his life. It put his life into motion. His conversion must be known unto the church in, Jerusalem. He had done much harm in Jerusalem before his conversion, therefore, it was necessary for him to be back and testify unto saints and sinners of his conversion, and that Christ was the Son of God. At Jerusalem he again met opposition. He tried to join the church there, but they were afraid of him and seemed to treat him coldly. Barnabas went security for him, which, gave him some greater opportunity for service. Again the Jews sought to slay him. Here the Church took him and brought him to Caesarea, and from there sent him home, which was at Tarsus. Paul took no offense, or insult at those in Jerusalem, nor did he speak evil of them, or criticize their action. He took it as from the Lord. He went home. No doubt this was where God wanted him for the time being. Paul did not complain, but awaited God's time for God's plan to be carried out, If the person who loves God and is called will keep sweet, be uncomplaining at any injustice done unto him, and wait on God, the Lord will set before him an open door which no man can shut.

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God's Time And Place

A great revival was going on at Antioch in Syria. It attracted wide attention. Some leaders from Jerusalem were sent. there, one being Barnabas. Barnabas, which means, son of consolation, and such he was, saw a place for Paul. He went to Tarsus, sought Paul and brought him to Antioch. Here Paul fitted into the work and did much good. In the atmosphere of revival fires and prayer, the foreign missionary movement was born. God's plan for his life was being

wrought out. In the first missionary journey of Paul, he met with many varied experiences. Wherever he went, he met with opposition. This opposition worked out for the furtherance of the gospel. On the island of Cyprus, at Paphos, was an apostate Jew, named Bar-Jesus. He was a sorcerer and a false prophet, a child of the devil, full of subtlety and mischief, and an enemy of righteousness. This man withstood Paul and Barnabas and sought to turn others from the truth. Paul would not allow this to hinder the progress of the gospel. The sorcerer was smitten with blindness, because the hand of the Lord took him in hand. This worked out for good. The deputy of the island, instead of turning away, turned to the Lord and believed. At Antioch in Pisidia, Paul was having great interest, crowds and success. Some Jews were filled with envy, contradicted Paul and spoke against him. This worked for good. They did not give up, turn back and go home, but instead Paul and Barnabas became more bold and courageous and said, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles." This is just what the Lord wanted them to do. It led to a wider work and greater missionary activity. Many Gentiles believed and the Word of the Lord was published throughout all that region. Again the Jews were stirred, persecuted them and expelled them out of their coasts. But the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Ghost. A church was started before they left and by being expelled other cities heard the Word. At Iconium many Jews and Greeks believed. The unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles. Opposition again came but Paul abode a long time in this place and boldly preached the Word. Satan would not permit a successful work to go on unhindered. When God works, Satan works in opposition. A great multitude believed. Both Jews and Gentiles treated him spitefully and sought to stone the apostles. This again worked for good and they fled to Lystra. So long as they encountered opposition, they persisted with their preaching, but when threatened with injury and death, they went to other cities as the Lord had commanded. There was no danger of Paul staying too long at any one place. His motto was "Ever onward."

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Accepted Then Rejected

At Lystra, the people first sought to worship Paul and Barnabas and sacrifice to them, then they changed and sought to kill them. Paul was stoned and the people drew him out of the city, supposing he was dead. It may be hard to see how this worked out for good, but it surely did. We like to think of the conversion of Timothy, his ministry, and the comfort he was to Paul as a compensation for his suffering at Lystra. Lystra was the home town of Timothy. The apostles returned over the same route they had come. This goes to show they were not cowards. In retracing their steps Paul confirmed and admonished the converts to continue in the faith and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

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Settling An Important Question

When Paul and Barnabas arrived at Antioch, they gave a report of their evangelistic tour and that many Gentiles were converted. In this Paul met opposition from "certain men" which came from Judaea. These taught, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." This led to much dissension and disputation. Nevertheless, this too worked for

good and gave Paul a better record before the Jews and a greater field among the Gentiles. It resulted in a church council at Jerusalem where Paul was privileged to report his labors. It resulted in the decision of what the Holy Ghost favored and also in favor of Paul and his doctrine. It was decided once and for all that man is justified by grace through faith and that apart from works of the law. This settled a most important question. We can readily see how this dissension that was unpleasant worked together for good in relation to Paul; his ministry; his Gentile converts; the Jewish church and all saints.

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Two Instead Of One

After some time Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go again and visit our brethren and see how they do." Barnabas was determined to take with them John Mark. Paul thought not good to take him with them. Both were good men and filled with the Holy Ghost. There is inspired record for this fact. There was a sharp contention and these, men decided to separate; Barnabas took Mark and went one way; Paul took Silas and went another way. Even this worked together for good, because it resulted in two missionary groups instead of one.

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Closed Doors

Paul and Silas went over the second half of the first missionary journey. Little is recorded of this. The Holy Ghost forbade Paul at this time to preach in Asia, and in Bithynia the Spirit suffered him not. Being restrained, Paul went forward and coming to Troas, a sea coast town, the end of Asia Minor was reached. That night a vision appeared unto Paul and a new continent loomed up before him, calling him to come over to help them. Immediately he and his group set sail for Europe. Being forbidden to preach, and doors being closed, did not hinder the Lord nor Paul, but it worked together for good.

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Open Doors

Paul sailed for Europe, and with a new continent before him, he sought the great centers of population where he could plant the gospel from whence might go forth the truth. He came to Philippi, and as yet they met not the man seen in the vision, nor any man whom they knew. Their first meeting was a prayer meeting, an open air meeting, and the first convert was a woman. Satan contested the preaching of the Gospel in the new continent. Opposition arose and a demon possessed damsel applauded these men and the truth. The Gospel does not need such support. Satan tried to neutralize the power and work of God. Paul in the name of Jesus Christ cast this spirit out. Then opposition and persecution broke loose. Paul and Silas were beaten and cast into prison and fastened in stocks. Things may have appeared dark. Paul rose above this, for he and Silas had a midnight prayer and praise meeting. This was better than grumbling. God sent an earthquake and shook the prison, loosing them. The jailor tried to commit suicide, but Paul

prevented him. The jailor made his own altar call and repented. He was saved and his house. Paul had testified unto him when the jailor mistreated him. But this all worked together for good. The conversion of Lydia and her household, the conversion of the jailor and his house resulted in the nucleus of a prosperous church.

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Opposition And Prosperity

Paul had to flee, but he left a church at Philippi. It seems almost every place he went after a few weeks of preaching there arose so much opposition and persecution that Paul had to leave and flee to another city. This opposition brought much spiritual prosperity. It also seems wherever he went his preaching resulted in many conversions and the beginning of a church. After planting a church, persecution arose and he had to flee. This kept him on the go, and resulted in more churches. It does not take much discernment to see that this too worked together for good. It resulted in more converts, more churches, more gospel centers and more people receiving the Gospel.

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Varied Experiences

The experiences of an evangelist and missionary are varied and many. Paul could testify to this fact. We will let him speak: "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, Once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." Did these things discourage, defeat or hinder him? Let him testify: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." "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:" Paul took everything as from the Lord and made it a stepping stone to help him on to God. In this way he kept on top and outwitted the devil.

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Paul The Prisoner

Paul was made a prisoner at Jerusalem. His life was threatened and he was taken to Caesarea by night. Over two years were spent in prison at Caesarea. Paul made an appeal unto Caesar at Rome, because he had done no wrong unto the Jews neither did the Jews seek to give him justice, but sought to kill him. Paul was taken to Rome. While he was awaiting his trial, he

had time to meditate and pray. It was while he was in prison that he wrote the prison Epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon). These Epistles are the richest and deepest of all the inspired writings. He was bound, but the Word of God was not bound. The good done by these Epistles is untold and will go on until the Lord returns. More good has been done all through this age by these Church letters than if Paul had been a free man. Being a prisoner worked together for good and God's glory.

In the book of Romans, where the great text is found that all things work together for good, Paul proves to them the truth of this text. In writing to them he says: "Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you" (Rom. 1:10). When this desire was fulfilled, it was not as Paul anticipated. When he went to Rome he was a prisoner. Instead of a prosperous journey it was a perilous one. This journey is recorded in Acts 27. It was made at the loss of the cargo and then the vessel. For many days neither sun nor stars appeared and for fourteen days no food was eaten. Paul prayed through and when all hope was given up, the prisoner of the Lord took matters in hand, ate, and encouraged the rest to do so. We read that God gave him all the souls on the ship. All reached shore safely after the vessel was wrecked. This most probably means that through the prayers of Paul they safely reached shore, that is, their lives were not lost, and then in addition, as a result of coming in touch with Paul, his prayers, ministry and the island experiences, they (two hundred seventy-six) were saved and reached heaven's shore. This storm worked together for good. Paul arrived at Rome, and as he had written to the Romans in Romans Eight Twenty-Eight, at Rome he could still say, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

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11 -- ROMANS 8:28 AND THE LIFE TO COME

We want to look at this familiar text of the Bible from another standpoint. This text is not only true in this life, but it will also be true for the life to come. It is true in this age, and it will be in the ages to come. Trials serve a present purpose and also a future purpose, but more for the future than for the present. Trials work for good for this life and also the life to come. While this is the only life in which we shall have trials, yet they will keep working for our good throughout eternity. Jesus said to Peter, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." So it will be in relation to trials. We will understand better by and by.

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The Introduction To The Father

In this life God's people are considered as the off-scouring of the world. But in the next life we will be the scoured-off ones. We are the laughing and gazing stock of the world. In the next world we will be the wonder and amazement of angels. We are to go without the camp bearing His reproach. We are persecuted for righteousness' sake. We are called to bear the shame and reproach of the cross. Though the world is ashamed of Christians and also of Christ, yet Christ is not ashamed of the sanctified. If we are not ashamed of Christ, He will not be ashamed

of us. Jesus said: "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32). When our work is done, and God's purpose for this age fulfilled, then the Lord shall come to raise the dead in Christ and change the living in Christ, and together we shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Christ will meet His people and take them into heaven. Probably the first thing He will do will be to introduce us to the Father. We then may hear the Son say to the Father, Father, these are Thine and Mine, and are the sons of God, they were not ashamed of Me while they were in the world; Father, I am not ashamed of them before Thee in heaven. The Father will behold us with a fatherly smile that will send a thrill to our hearts that will make us forever feel at home and in our right element. We then shall hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Then in a new light shall we see how all things have worked together for good.

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Introduced Before The Holy Angels

We read: "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God" (Luke 12:8). There are an innumerable number of holy angels. They are ministering spirits. We shall be introduced before the angels, who may do obeisance before us and give us a welcome. They will look on with amazement and wonder. We, not angels, will sing the story of redemption.

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Vindication Of The Trial Of Our Faith

Our faith is now tried by the enemy to rob us of our confidence in God, but in the life to come our faith will be approved and proven, that is, declared or openly manifested that it might be found unto the praise and honor of God. Our faith shall then be rewarded. The spot-light of God's holiness will be focused on every heart and everything shall then come to light. God will bring every work into judgment (Eccl. 12:14). Every secret thing will be brought to light. The Lord does not forget our trials, burdens, sacrifices and labors. We may forget them soon after we go through them. The Lord does not forget them. They will again be brought to our remembrance, but only to reward us and to rejoice our hearts in comfort before Him. Every tear, every groan, every burden, every sorrow, every pain, every trial, every sacrifice will some day be tried before the Lord and analyzed in the laboratory of heaven to see how patiently and joyfully we endured them, and how much divine love there was in our hearts. We shall then receive an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away. It all will be in accordance of how things worked out for good while in this life.

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The Enlarged Soul

David was a man of many trials. He writes, "Thou has enlarged me when I was in distress" (Ps. 4:1). Trials, sorrow, distress, afflictions and hardships that are borne patiently give

an expansion and enlargement to the soul. All the saintly people we meet who are big-hearted and are a help and blessing to others, received this enlargement through distress. There is a reason for it. We well understand it. The process for enlargement is found in Psalm 4.1. This enlargement makes us a blessing in this life. David had this enlargement of soul and for this cause, Every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented gathered themselves unto him, and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men" (I Sam. 22:2). These four hundred knew where to go in their trouble and where to find help. David could help them. But particularly do we wish to consider this enlargement in relation to the life to come. The enlargement received in this Hfe will be carried into the next. It is true that when we get to heaven, we shall all be as happy as we possibly can be, and that every cup will be running over with joy. But there is another fact equally true, which is well for us to get now, that is, there are going to be different sizes of vessels. Every vessel whether shall or large will have all it can hold and be running over. There will be no room for contention or envy. To illustrate this: Let us suppose there are vessels of different capacities. Here is a pint and it is full and ever-flowing; here is a quart full and overflowing; here is a gallon full and overflowing. Here is a bucket, a tub, a barrel and a tank. All are full and overflowing. The pint has no room for complaint or envy with the quart measure, nor the quart with the gallon and so on. Even so in heaven, every vessel will be full and forever overflowing. But all vessels are not the same in capacity.

Now is the time to get this enlargement. Now is the time to sacrifice, suffer, endure, weep, pray and labor for the Lord. All eternity will tell how we have lived in this life. All things will work together for good for time and eternity.

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Judging Of Angels

In the life to come, the overcomers will be promoted and honored. In this present life we are inferior to the angels. We read, "Thou hast made him (man) a little lower than the angels" (Ps. 8: 5). The inference is, for this life, we are lower or inferior to the angels, but in the life to come, when we shall be united with Christ and exalted with Him, our position in Him will be superior to the holy angels. Weshall be seated with Christ on His throne and reign with Him. This will be a greater honor than that which is conferred upon the angels who are ministering spirits. Again, "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (I Cor. 6:3). We know this is future. Evidently the saints in the life to come, through Christ, will judge both the holy and the fallen angels. The holy angels will be ministering spirits or servants to the saints. The saints may have authority over the holy angels. As to the fallen angels, these will be judged (II Peter 2:4; Jude 6). Back of every oppression and trial in this life, there is some wicked spirit, one of Satan's emissaries tempting us. In the great day of judgment when every transgression and disobedience will receive a just recompense of reward, these church, persecution arose and he had to flee, This kept him on the go, and resulted in more churches. It does not take much discernment to see that this too worked together for good. It resulted in more converts, more churches, more gospel centers and more people receiving the Gospel.

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Varied Experiences

The experiences of an evangelist and missionary are varied and many. Paul could testify to this fact. We will let him speak: "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." Did these things discourage, defeat or hinder him? Let him testify: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." "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." Paul took everything as from the Lord and made it a stepping stone to help him on to God. In this way he kept on top and outwitted the devil.

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Paul The Prisoner

Paul was made a prisoner at Jerusalem. His life was threatened and he was taken to Caesarea by night. Over two years were spent in prison at Caesarea. Paul made an appeal unto Caesar at Rome, because he had done no wrong unto the Jews neither did the Jews seek to give him justice, but sought to kill him. Paul was taken to Rome. While he was awaiting his trial, he had time to meditate and pray. It was while he was in prison that he wrote the prison Epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon). These Epistles are the richest and deepest of all the inspired writings. He was bound, but the Word of God was not bound. The good done by these Epistles is untold and will go on until the Lord returns. More good has been done all through this age by these Church letters than if Paul had been a free man. Being a prisoner worked together for good and God's glory.

In the book of Romans, where the great text is found that all things work together for good, Paul proves to them the truth of this text. In writing to them he says: "Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you" (Rom. 1:10). When this desire was fulfilled, it was not as Paul anticipated. When he went to Rome he was a prisoner. Instead of a prosperous journey it was a perilous one. This journey is recorded in Acts 27. It was made at the loss of the cargo and then the vessel. For many days neither sun nor stars appeared and for fourteen days no food was eaten. Paul prayed through and when all hope was given up, the prisoner of the Lord took matters in hand, ate, and encouraged the rest to do so. We read that God gave him all the souls on the ship. All reached shore safely after the vessel was wrecked. This most probably means that through the prayers of Paul they safely reached shore, that is, their lives were not lost, and then in addition, as a result of coming in touch with Paul, his prayers, ministry and the island experiences, they (two hundred

seventy-six) were saved and reached heaven's shore. This storm worked together for good. Paul arrived at Rome, and as he had written to the Romans in Romans Eight Twenty-Eight, at Rome he could still say, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

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"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Rev. 2:17). The hidden manna was placed in a golden pot and put in the ark in the holy of holies. To eat of the manna of God will give us access into the very presence of God. Manna was bread from heaven. This hidden manna will be eaten by the overcomers. To eat is one of the greatest pleasures of life. To eat is to be satisfied, sustained and refreshed. The Lord will forever satisfy all overcomers.

"He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of My Father" (Rev. 2.26-27). This assures us of reigning with Christ in the age to come. We then shall be kings and priests.

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels" (Rev. 3:5). In addition to all that is promised, we shall be clothed in shining raiment-robos of righteousness, enjoy blessed fellowship and security, and be introduced unto the Father and the holy angels.

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name" (Rev. 3:12). With all this writing inscribed on our hearts by the Son of God, the overcomer will not miss heaven. There can be no "mis-sent," but we are assured safe arrival for the overcomer is properly addressed.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21). This puts us next to Christ. We shall be in Christ, honored with Him, exalted with Him, seated with Him in His throne to forever rule and reign with Him. With all these promises, the believer should be willing to suffer and endure the trials of life joyfully and even die for the cause of Christ. Every promise in the Bible is a guarantee that Romans Eight Twenty-Eight works for our good.

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