

The gospel of Jesus Christ, the whole gospel, and nothing but the gospel must be stressed. The gospel is related to every doctrine of the Bible, but each of those doctrines is empty without the glory of Jesus Christ. I am convinced that faithful heralds of the gospel are much more than mere doctrinaires. I am furthermore convinced that the faithful proclamation of the glorious and unadulterated gospel of Jesus Christ would rid churches of the need for the modern glut of "Christian" psychiatrists and psychologists, endless family seminars devoid of the gospel, evangelistic racketeers who misuse and pervert the gospel for their own monetary gain, and the whole host of modern Christless innovations.
– Daniel E. Parks (late 1980s)

SPURGEON'S CATECHISM

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)

46.Q. What is forbidden in the second commandment?

XLVI. A. The second commandment forbids the worshipping of God by images, (Deut. 4:15-16) or any other way not appointed in his Word (Col. 2:18).

47.Q. Which is the third commandment?

XLVII. A. The third commandment is, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain."

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Sunday Evening 6:00 PM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

Volume 7, No. 29

July 20, 2014

QUALIFIED CONSOLATION

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

We have often heard casual expressions of resignation to divine providence. Such remarks as “it is what it is” or “what is done is done” reveal a passive acceptance of reality with no thought of either design or purpose. Some express an empty hope in a vain attempt to discover purpose by simply saying “it will all work out for the best.” That is a dubious conclusion even though it seems to arise from a deficient understanding of Romans 8:28. Isaac Watts expressed reality in a verse from the hymn *O God our Help in Ages Past that is typically omitted*. “Time, like an ever-rolling stream/ Bears all its sons away;/ They fly, forgotten, as a dream/ Dies at the op’ning day.” The thought is quite simply that as far as the faithless eye can see the events of this life seem to be of no consequence. Men tend to live for the moment and are ill-equipped for tragedy and death. They have no reason to believe that anything is going to be ultimately for their benefit, unless they know Christ as their loving Lord and Savior.

It is to be feared that even believers deal with this passage in a manner that diminishes the message. In that “purpose” is an integral part of the statement it only follows that we should attempt to learn of it. The tendency is to make idle and speculative comments about some hidden good underlying dire circumstances. Such comments provide neither comfort nor assurance. Such words are often uttered in such a way as to suggest that God just

wants everybody to be happy without reference to any particular aim as to Himself and His eternal design. It is to be noted that these things not only have purpose but that they also are working. Those to whom the benefits come are clearly and particularly identified. Thus, the validity of the statement is contingent on the state and standing of those to whom it is made.

We would note that the thought here is not of singular events working some good to the person or persons involved. It is much bigger than that. The thought expressed by the Apostle is that all things are cooperating to bring about good or benefit to these specific persons. So while some immediate event may be painfully the point of focus, it is to be understood that such is being made to cooperate fully with all that God has purposed for that person. That is, of course, assuming that such a person has met or will have met the test of identification. This influence is as vast and far-reaching as creation itself.

We delight in being made aware that things are not merely incidental and are of design. Paul understood and rejoiced in trials and was comforted in the thought of their workings with an end in view. *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 2 Corinthians 4:17*. He clearly saw events as functional with regard to the ultimate purposes of God in redemption. He would think then of “all things” in creation and its operation as

cooperating in the interest of redemption. (See Romans 8:19). It is clear that all things with reference to personal experience cooperate in bringing a heightened relationship with God. Of course, attention often goes to affliction and we are reminded that the Psalmist was able to confess that "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." But, the greatest consideration of all is that all things pertaining to Christ our Lord cooperate in bringing about this, "so great salvation." *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 1 Timothy 1:15.* In fact, God has attended to every detail for all time in such a way that, for eternity, it all serves His purpose in redemption.

What then is that "good" these things work? We are reminded of that which was revealed to the Prophet: *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Micah 6:8.* We would quickly observe that what the Lord requires and "what is good" are synonymous. John Gill rightly observed that there are three kinds of good. There is "temporal good" which is most sought after by the world and least desired by the Saints. "Spiritual good" refers to the "lively exercise of grace and conformity of the

soul to God." Eternal good" sees the believer now and forever in the presence of God in an ever increasing joy as he delights to praise Him who alone is worthy.

The confidence in this statement and its consolation lies in knowing that it is tied to the eternal purpose of God to secure and bless a particular and peculiar people who are "zealous of good works." It is for such as love God and are the called according to His purpose. The comfort in these things is the presence of the Lord, Himself, with us and in us. Assurance comes as we experience this working in us to confirm the qualifications. The love of Christ is precious wrought in His people by a sovereign work of the Holy Spirit. The result is love to God and a confirmation by the love of the brethren. He has drawn and we run after Him. With such an understanding of the design of God's relationship with His people how shall we expect anything but good in all He does?

The precious revelation of this passage to those who love Him should give us reason to reflect and to greatly reverence our God. Furthermore, we should be moved to greater humility to think that in the grand scheme of the things of God that we are incorporated into His purpose. *bhs*

AN EXPANDED LOOK AT PSALM 23

The Lord is my Shepherd — that's relationship! I shall not be in want — that's supply! He makes me lie down in green pastures — that's rest! He leads me beside quiet waters — that's refreshment! He restores my soul — that's healing! He guides me in the paths of righteousness — that's guidance! For His name's sake — that's purpose! Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death —that's testing! I will fear no evil — that's protection! For you are with me — that's faithfulness! Your rod and the staff, they comfort me — that's discipline! You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies —that's hope! You anoint my head with oil — that's consecration! My cup overflows — that's abundance! Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life —that's blessing! And I will dwell in the house of the Lord — that's security! Forever — that's eternity! AUTHOR OF ELABORATED MATERIAL UNKNOWN (Cited by Ravi Zacharias in *The Grand Weaver*)

“So Then” -- Romans 9:16 – Don Fortner

In Romans 8 God the Holy Ghost declares that all who are saved by grace in time were saved by grace from eternity, and that God rules the world to accomplish his purpose of grace toward us in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:28-30). In Romans 9 he compares the salvation of our souls to the work of a potter with clay, making one vessel unto honor and another to dishonor. In this indescribably sweet portion of his Word God tells us that salvation is his work alone. How believing hearts rejoice to hear him declare, “So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy!”

The language of Holy Scripture is so plain and clear regarding the matter of salvation by grace alone that only the willfully ignorant and those who wrest the scriptures to their own destruction can fail to see it. Paul tells us here most plainly that salvation is neither by the will of man, nor by the works of man, “but of God that showeth mercy.”

Not our Will

Salvation is not accomplished by the sinner’s free-will. It is true that no man is saved against his will, or without his will. All who trust Christ bow to Christ and worship Christ, and do so willingly. They are made willing in the day of his saving power (Psalm 110:3). But no one is saved because of his own will. The will of man is not the determining factor in salvation, but the will of God (John 1:12-13). It is God’s will that determined to save, elected a people, provided a Redeemer, and gives dead sinners life in Christ. The fact is man has no free will. His will is bound by his nature. His will is governed by the nature of his heart. Man by nature is corrupt, sinful, rebellious, and totally depraved. He has no will to be righteous, to come to God, to honor God, or to trust Christ and submit to his dominion, unless God gives him such a will by his Holy Spirit in regeneration. Salvation is not by our will. How thankful we ought to be that God’s salvation does not wait on our will!

Not our Works

And salvation is not in any way determined by or dependent upon the works of men. What monstrous pride and self-righteousness must that man be possessed of who supposes that his works have merit with God! Our best deeds are motivated (at least in some measure) by self-love. Our purest thoughts are vile. Our noblest ambitions are corrupt. God demands and accepts nothing short of absolute perfection, perfect righteousness, and perfect holiness. And these things no man can produce. We are saved by grace alone through the perfect righteousness of Christ. Christ’s blood made atonement for our sins, satisfying the demands of justice (Romans 3:24-26). Christ’s righteousness is bestowed upon us by an act of God’s free grace (Romans 5:19-21).

But of God

God is in no way obliged by the will or works of men to bestow his mercy. Man’s will does not govern God’s will; and man’s works do not determine God’s works. God is absolutely sovereign. It is his right entirely to give his mercy to whom he will, or withhold it from whom he will; and he can never be called to give an account of his actions to anyone.

God willed to be gracious for the glory of his own great name. Having determined to create a world with a race of angels and a race of men, he chose to save some angels in their original holiness and leave others to fall; and he determined to allow all men to fall into sin representatively in our father Adam, choosing to save some for the glory of his grace and to pass by others. God determined who he would save, choosing his own elect in Christ, and predestinating all things to bring them into their heavenly inheritance as the sons of God. God willed to give his Son to die as a sin-atoning substitute for his elect. In his eternal purpose of grace, God looked upon his Son as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and accepted his people in him. And in the fulness of time, God sent his Son into the world to magnify his law and make it honorable, so that he might be just and yet justify the ungodly. At the time appointed, God sends his Spirit to regenerate his elect and call them to faith in Christ by the gospel. This call of God the Holy Spirit is a sovereign, irresistible, distinguishing, effectual call. It goes only to God’s elect, only to the redeemed; and it always results in salvation. And it is God who preserves his elect in life. His saved ones cannot perish. All of them will endure unto the end and be glorified at last. If even one of God’s elect were to perish, his purpose would fall to the ground, the blood of Christ would be of non-effect, the Spirit’s power would be broken, and God’s name would be mocked in hell forever. These things can never be. We are sure that God will be glorified in the salvation of all his elect, because nothing depends upon man, but all depends upon “God who showeth mercy!”