

From The Pulpit

by Rev. Donald M. Clark

BE SURE YOU GET IT ALL

Text: "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." Rom. 8:28.

Do all things work together for good? The answer is an emphatic, "No!" All things do not work together for good.

The only way that we possibly can accept the proposition that all things work together for good is for us to take all of Paul's statement in this great text. A superficial world leaps at the first part of the statement in its superstitious eagerness to assure itself that everything that happens is for the best. "All things work together for good. . ." We cannot stop there. Only a half-truth is stated to this point, and in this case, the half-truth gives an entirely false impression. The remainder of the text is "to them that love God."



REV. D. M. CLARK

Has it ever occurred to you that almost everything possible happened to the man who wrote our text? He was arrested; he was stoned; he was shipwrecked; he was cast out of a city and left for dead. Yet these things he used to strengthen his own character, deepen his faith, and to glorify Christ. We find him saying with quiet confidence: "I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel."

HOW CAN IT BE, that one man looks upon shipwreck, arrest, stoning, opposition, etc., as disaster, while another looks upon these troubles as means of progress? The answer lay in Paul himself. He had that quality of character and temper of mind which enabled him to use all things for his own good and the good of Christ. We may call it, "the love of God." You see, Paul loved God with his whole mind. What life did to Paul depended upon what was in Paul. Terrible things happened to him but he loved God, and through that love, he was able to make these disasters work for good.

All things happen to us all. Laughter and tears, joy and sorrow, birth and death, health and sickness, success and failure. What these do to us depends upon what they find in us. The love of God is the secret.

Developing this quality of character is no dark mystery which only the initiated can know. It is indeed very simple. Daily devotion, faithfully observed; weekly worship in God's house, sincerely done, with God's people on the Sabbath Day; building up over the years a storehouse of faith upon which one can draw in time of need; walking with Christ every hour of every day--these are means of grace which enable us to love God.

PERHAPS NOW we are ready to think of three words which help to unfold the meaning of this text. The inspired text says "all things." There are no exceptions. Do you know what this means? It means that all sorrow, all pain, all tragedy, all death, all disease, all experience--everything that happens to the sons of men, both good and bad--work together for good to them that love God.

In the great passage surrounding this text we are told that since we do not know what is best, we cannot even pray for the removal of our troubles. The Spirit of God, however, "prays" for us all the time. God has called us to be Christians according to His purpose, and this indicates to us that God is for us, in us, about us, and in it all, concerned. The fact that God knew us before the foundation of the world, determined our fortune. He called us to be His own and then glorified us in Christ. All this means that God is on our side in this unequal struggle in which we are engaged. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Rom. 8:31. Hence Paul can, without hesitation, make

GO to the CHURCH of YOUR CHOICE



BAPTIST

BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. I. W. Wilson, 382-2632
C & Washington Sts., Las Vegas

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. Mary Carroll
712 W. Owens Ave., Las Vegas

EVERGREEN BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. A. B. Carr, 382-5682
1113 N. H St., Las Vegas

GRACE EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. C. L. Alexander, 384-7413
815 Bartlett St., Vegas Heights

GREATER FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. P. S. Walker, 384-1248
Balzar St., Vegas Heights

NEW JERUSALEM BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. F. N. Addison
D & Jefferson Sts., Las Vegas

PILGRIM REST BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. E. C. Kline, 382-7263
101 N. A St., Las Vegas

PLEASANT GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. J. L. Kemp, 642-5708
1189 Hassell St., Vegas Heights

SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. V. C. L. Coleman, 384-3131
1209 N. E St., Las Vegas

ST. JAMES BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. J. L. Simmons, 382-2748
311 Madison Ave., Las Vegas

ST. PETER BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. Leo A. Johnson, 642-2559
C & Washington Sts., Las Vegas

VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. A. J. Thompson, 642-4001
1305 N. E St., Las Vegas

this word, "All things work together for good to them that love God," an inclusive matter.

ALL MEN instinctively shrink from suffering and trouble. The pathway of tears is the common lot of all mankind. All up and down the whole creation there is strife, strain, struggle for existence, pain, and death.

Man cannot escape it. But man can meet it with a song in his heart. He cannot avoid it, but he can surmount it. Man can prevail; he can conquer in the face of misfortunes, because he knows that his life is not subject to blind fate. Unthinking chance does not shape his future. Lady Luck, cavorting across the cosmos, does not toss the dice and "tell" his destiny. Christian man is upheld by a Power beyond himself, guided by a Hand not his own.

Not only does Christian experience help us here, but Christian philosophy makes its contribution as well. Worked into the warp and woof of our concept of life is the thought that God is weaving a pattern, a design, in our lives and in the universe. Viewed from our side there is no clear-cut design but we know that from God's side there is a pattern which is plain to Him. Now we see through a glass darkly, but there will come a day when mists will blow away and all will be clear. Our love for God leads us to this faith, and this faith leads us to love God.

PAUL MAKES IT CLEAR that all experience is included when he says that all things work together for good to them that love God. A careful reading of the text shows, furthermore, that it is not only inclusive, but is also exclusive. It excludes all who do not love God.

CATHOLIC

ST. JAMES CATHOLIC CHURCH
Mgr. William J. Devlin, 382-9953
704 W. McWilliams Ave., Las Vegas

Sunday Masses: 11 am and 5 pm
Weekday Masses: 7:30 am; Saturday, 9 am
Holyday Masses: 9:30 am and 7:30 pm
Confessions: Saturday, 4-4:30 and 7:30-8 pm
Adult Classes: Monday and Friday, 7:30 pm
Child Classes: Monday, 4-5 pm; Saturday, 9-10:30 am
Rosary: Daily, 7:30 pm except Sundays

CHURCH of GOD in CHRIST

UPPER ROOM C. of G. in C.
Bishop C. C. Cox, 385-1541
1117 N. F St., Las Vegas

POWERHOUSE C. of G. in C.
Supt. J. W. Logan, 382-6187
1216 Adams Ave., Las Vegas

LIGHTHOUSE C. of G. in C.
Eld. Willie Rawls, 384-5539
E. Sahara Ave., Fourmyle

MOST HIGH C. of G. in C.
Eld. J. Washington 642-5675
2029 Travis St., Las Vegas

PRAYER HOUSE C. of G. in C.
Eld. W. M. Shaw, 382-1743
Blankenship St., Vegas Heights

CARVER PARK C. of G. in C.
Eld. C. Parson 642-3967
Carver Park Adm. Bldg., Henderson

ST. PAUL C. of G. in C.
Eld. Coruth Hall, 649-1523
301 N. D St., Las Vegas

(All Churches of God in Christ)

Bible Band: Tuesday, 8 pm
Young People: Wednesday, 8 pm
Consecration: Friday, 8 pm
Sunday School: Sunday, 9:45 am
Morning Service: Sunday, 12 noon
YPWW: Sunday, 6:30 pm

METHODIST

ZION METHODIST CHURCH
Rev. M. D. Bennett, 382-9900
911 N. G St., Las Vegas

PENTECOSTAL

CHURCH of the LORD JESUS
Eld. Hosea Coleman, 642-8741
1260 Bartlett St., Vegas Heights

Only those who love God find that all things work together for good. Not all are children of God except in the sense of all being creatures of God.

Look again at the entire verse: "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." If we are children of God in this close sense of having been called by Him, then we know His purpose and we love Him in such a way that we take whatever comes and make it work out for good.

Not only is the truth inclusive ("all things") and exclusive (only for "them that love God") but it is also conclusive. Paul does not say that we hope, or trust, or think maybe, or perhaps. He says without hesitation: "we know." In truth we are positive, sure.

(See PULPIT, page 11)