

The Christian's Assurance

by A.W. Pink

The Christian's assurance of God's sovereignty is based on His love and promise to work everything out for our good.

Scripture: Genesis 42:36, Psalm 18:16, Isaiah 26:3, Isaiah 40:17, Isaiah 57:15, Romans 8:28, 1 Corinthians 15:2, Ephesians 1:11, 2 Timothy 1:9, 2 Peter 3:1

Topics: "God's Sovereignty", "Assurance in Trials"

Description

A.W. Pink emphasizes the profound assurance found in Romans 8:28, illustrating how God orchestrates all circumstances for the good of those who love Him. He reassures believers that despite trials and adversities, faith recognizes God's sovereign control and purpose in every situation. Pink highlights that true Christians, marked by their love for God, can trust that even the most challenging experiences contribute to their ultimate good. He encourages believers to reflect on their calling and the divine purpose behind their love for God, which is rooted in His grace. Ultimately, Pink assures that all things, even those that seem contrary, work together for the benefit of God's children, leading them toward eternal glory.

Transcript

"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).

How many of God's children have, through the centuries, drawn strength and comfort from this blessed verse. In the midst of trials, perplexities, and persecutions, this has been a rock beneath their feet. Though to outward sight things seemed to work against their good, though to carnal reason things appeared to be working for their ill, nevertheless, faith knew it was for otherwise. And how great the loss to those who failed to rest upon this inspired declaration: what unnecessary fears and doubtings were the consequence.

"All things work together." The first thought occurring to us is this: What a glorious Being our God be, who is able to make all things so work! What a frightful amount of evil there is in constant activity. What an almost infinite number of creatures there are in the world. What an incalculable quantity of opposing self-interests at work. What a vast army of rebels fighting against God. What hosts of super-human creatures over opposing the Lord. And yet, high above all, is GOD, in undisturbed calm, complete master

of the situation. There, from the throne of His exalted majesty, He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:11). Stand in awe, then, before this One in whose sight "all nations are as nothing; and they are counted as less than nothing, and vanity" (Isa. 40:17). Bow in adoration before this "high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity" (Isa. 57:15). Lift high your praise unto Him who from the direct evil can educe the greatest good. "

All things work." In nature there is no such thing as a vacuum, neither is there a creature of God that fails to serve its designed purpose. Nothing is idle. Everything is energized by God so as to fulfill its intended mission. All things are laboring toward the grand end of their Creator's pleasure: all are moved at His imperative bidding.

"All things work together." They not only operate, they co-operate; they all act in perfect concert, though none but the anointed ear can catch the strains of their harmony. All things work together, not simply but conjointly, as adjunct causes and mutual helps. That is why afflictions seldom come solitary and alone. Cloud rises upon cloud: storm upon storm. As with Job, one messenger of woe was quickly succeeded by another, burdened with tidings of yet heavier sorrow. Nevertheless, even here faith may trace both the wisdom and love of God. It is the compounding of the ingredients in the recipe that constitutes its beneficent value. So with God: His dispensations not only "work," but they "work together." So recognized the sweet singer of Israel - "He drew me out of many waters" (Psa. 18:16). "

All things work together for good to," etc. These words teach believers that no matter what may be the number nor how overwhelming the character of adverse circumstances, they are all contributing to conduct them into the possession of the inheritance provided for them in heaven. How wonderful is the providence of God in over-ruling things most disorderly, and in turning to our good things which in themselves are most pernicious! We marvel at His mighty power which holds the heavenly bodies in their orbits; we wonder at the continually recurring seasons and the renewal of the earth; but this is not nearly so marvellous as His bringing good out of evil in all the complicated occurrences of human life, and making even the power and malice of Satan, with the naturally destructive tendency of his works, to minister good for His children. "All things work together for good." This must be so for three reasons. First, because all things are under the absolute control of the Governor of the universe. Second, because God desires our good, and nothing but our good. Third, because even Satan himself cannot touch a hair of our heads without God's permission, and then only for our further good. Not all things are good in themselves, nor in their tendencies; but God makes all things work for our good. Nothing enters our life by blind chance: nor are there any accidents. Everything is being moved by God, with this end in view, our good. Everything being subservient to God's eternal purpose, works blessing to those marked out for conformity to the image of the Firstborn. All suffering, sorrow, loss, are used by our Father to minister to the benefit of the elect.

"To them that love God." This is the grand distinguishing feature of every true Christian. The reverse marks all the unregenerate. But the saints are those who love God. Their creeds may differ in minor details; their ecclesiastical relations may vary in outward form; their gifts and graces may be very unequal; yet, in this particular there is an essential unity. They all believe in Christ, they all love God. They love Him for the gift of the Saviour: they love Him as a Father in whom they may confide: they love Him for His personal excellencies - His holiness, wisdom, faithfulness. They love Him for His conduct: for what He withholds and for what He grants: for what He rebukes and for what He approves. They love Him even for the rod that disciplines, knowing that He doth all things well. There is nothing in God, and there is nothing from God, for which the saints do not love Him. And of this they are all assured, "We love Him because He

first loved us."

"To them that love God." But, alas, how little I love God! I so frequently mourn my lack of love, and chide myself for the coldness of my heart. Yes, there is so much love of self and love of the world, that sometimes I seriously question if I have any real love for God at all. But is not my very desire to love God a good symptom? Is not my very grief that I love Him so little a sure evidence that I do not hate Him? The presence of a hard and ungrateful heart has been mourned over by the saints of all ages. "Love to God is a heavenly aspiration, that is ever kept in check by the drag and restraint of an earthly nature; and from which we shall not be unbound till the soul has made its escape from the vile body, and cleared its unfettered way to the realm of light and liberty" (Dr. Chalmers).

"Who are called." The word "called" is never, in the New Testament Epistles, applied to those who are the recipients of a mere external invitation of the Gospel. The term always signifies an inward and effectual call. It was a call over which we had no control, either in originating or frustrating it. So in Rom. 1:6,7 and many other passages: "Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called saints." Has this call reached you, my reader? Ministers have called you: the Gospel has called you, conscience has called you: but has the Holy Spirit called you with an inward and irresistible call? Have you been spiritually called from darkness to light, from death to life, from the world to Christ, from self to God? It is a matter of the greatest moment that you should know whether you have been truly called of God. Has, then, the thrilling, life-giving music of that call sounded and reverberated through all the chambers of your soul? But how may I be sure that I have received such a call? There is one thing right here in our text which should enable you to ascertain. They who have been efficaciously called, love God. Instead of hating Him, they now esteem Him; instead of fleeing from Him in terror, they now seek Him; instead of caring not whether their conduct honored Him; their deepest desire now is to please and glorify Him.

"According to His purpose." The call is not according to the merits of men, but according to the Divine purpose: "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to this own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. 1:9). The design of the Holy Spirit in bringing in this last clause is to show that the reason some men love God and others do not is to be attributed solely to the mere sovereignty of God: it is not for anything in themselves, but due alone to His distinguishing grace.

There is also a practical value in this last clause. The doctrines of grace are intended for a further purpose than that of making up a creed. One main design of them is to move the affections; and more especially to reawaken that affection to which the heart oppressed with fears, or weighed down with cares, is wholly insufficient - even the love of God. That this love may flow perennially from our hearts, there must be a constant recurring to that which inspired it and which is calculated to increase it; just as to re-ignite your admiration of a beautiful scene or picture, you would return again to gaze upon it. It is on this principle that so much stress is laid in Scripture on keeping the truths which we believe in memory: "By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you" (1 Cor. 15:2). "I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance," said the apostle (2 Pet. 3:1). "Do this in remembrance of me" said the Saviour. It is, then, by going back in memory to that hour when, despite our wretchedness and utter unworthiness, God called us, that our affection will be kept fresh. It is by recalling the wondrous grace that then reached out to a hell-deserving sinner and snatched you as a brand from the burning, that your heart will be drawn out in adoring gratitude. And it is by discovering this was due alone to the sovereign and eternal "purpose" of God that you were called when so many others are passed by, that your love for Him will be deepened.

Returning to the opening words of our text, we find the apostle (as voicing the normal experience of the saints) declares, "We know that all things work together for good." It is something more than a speculative belief. That all things work together for good is even more than a fervent desire. It is not that we merely hope that all things will so work, but that we are fully assured all things do so work. The knowledge here spoken of is spiritual, not intellectual. It is a knowledge rooted in our hearts, which produces confidence in the truth of it. It is the knowledge of faith, which receives everything from the benevolent hand of Infinite Wisdom. It is true that we do not derive much comfort from this knowledge when out of fellowship with God. Nor will it sustain us when faith is not in operation. But when we are in communion with the Lord, when in our weakness we do lean hard upon Him, then is this blessed assurance ours: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee" (Isa. 26:3).

A striking exemplification of our text is supplied by the history of Jacob - one whom in several respects each of us closely resembles. Heavy and dark was the cloud which settled upon him. Severe was the test, and fearful the trembling of his faith. His feet were almost gone. Hear his mournful plaint: "And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me" (Gen. 42:36). And yet those circumstances, which to the dim eye of his faith wore a hue so somber, were at that very moment developing and perfecting the events which were to shed around the evening of his life the halo of a glorious and cloudless sunset. All things were working together for his good! And so, troubled soul, the "much tribulation" will soon be over, and as you enter the "kingdom of God" you shall then see, no longer "through a glass darkly" but in the unshadowed sunlight of the Divine presence, that "all things" did "work together" for your personal and eternal good.

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