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Prayer Meeting Address by Mr. J. Delves at "Ebenezer" Clapham on  
Monday evening 22nd. July, 1963.

Hymn: 82

Reading: Romans 8.12-28

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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS 63/A

It is true that the sacred truths incorporated in these verses are familiar to us, and I suppose this chapter has often been read in public and in private; but I have read these verses now, because I lighted on verse 28 "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." in the course of my travels today, and as it has continued with me I thought I might make some observations upon it.

A noticeable feature is the particular reference made by the apostle to the people to whom, or, concerning whom "All things work together for their good." He does not refer this to the world in general, to all mankind, or to certain types and characters of people, but to "the called according to His purpose" and this conforms with His divine decree, predestination, that is dealt with in this chapter. All His living family are called according to the Lord's purpose and therefore everything concerning us, concerning you, is according to the Lord's purpose, because, not only did He predestinate His people in covenant by divine decree, but we believe that everything in their lives and in their providences is under His control and appointment, and this is His purpose. The point here is that it is according to His purpose, not only in relation to the call of them, which follows upon their predestination but it is His purpose that all things shall work together for their good, to them that love God. Indeed all those who are called, do love God, they love Him for this particular purpose that He should have remembered them in their low estate! His love to us in His dealings will be sure to result in a love to Him although we may not feel it as we would desire.

I want to mention three things. First of all the difficulty as far as we are concerned of really receiving such a statement! Really, it is only grace that can receive it, and grace does. The difficulty arises from the thought that many things seem to work

otherwise in us, and instead of working for our good, some things seem to make altogether against us, so that we may feel like Jacob who said "All these things are against me" although they were not really! If grace is given to overcome the difficulty and the oppositions of carnal reasoning and our poor proud nature, and many other things beside, then we can really receive it. The apostle says, not just simply, all things work for good, but work together like so many links in a chain, though there may be some very dark links.

The second point is the certainty of the statement. He does not say they may work together, or that he hopes they will, but, "We know that all things work together for good". The apostle had a way of expressing things definitely and confidently. In the 22nd. verse he says, "We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now", and here in this 28th. verse he says, "We know that all things work together for good". Joshua knew this, and was able to say, after the Israelites were settled in the land, "Not one thing hath failed of all that the Lord hath promised, all came to pass."

Thirdly there is the consolation of this truth. It should be of great help to the Lord's people in their difficulties, in our difficulties. If faith and grace are brought into exercise so that we can receive this truth with respect to ourselves, feeling a hope in the Lord's mercy and as knowing a little of the things of His good gospel, this can be a help to us, a consolation to us even in heavy, in dark, in perplexing trials, and in disappointing things. It can be like a balancing of the clouds to us to calm our minds when we may be troubled and bring us to the Lord, and so it may be a good thing to view it like this; "We know that all things work together". It is the working together of these things. Some providences may have been very dark when passing through them, very conflicting, very confusing, and even distressing, but looking back and rightly viewed, you can now say of the trial, it was a link in the chain, it was among the all things that have worked together for good.

Further reading 2 Corinthians 4.8-18