

sends, be it storm or calm, business success or disaster, pleasure or pain, is the best for them, because He is working not only outside of us to arrange our circumstances for our necessities, but also within us to prepare us for whatever comes to pass.

As with the things outside of our lives, so with those inside, all will work together for good. As if foreseeing that our troubles would weigh most heavily on our spirits, God has made them particularly efficient as means of grace, and has assured us over and over again of His loving sympathy in all our trials, and of His over-ruling care in turning them to good account. In prosperity we are inclined to forget the God we love, but in times of sorrow we turn to Him, and He is nearer and more real to us than ever: for just as the darkness of night reveals the wonders of the universe in numbers and brilliancy unseen by day, so the gloom of adversity reveals the glories of our Father's love which were unnoticed in the light of prosperity. "Our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: while we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen." And when, instead of the throbbings of sorrow we feel the beating of His affection, when instead of anguish and despair, we cherish faith and hope, when instead of irrevocable loss we realize unbounded gain, then we know that all things work together for our good, and our love abounds yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment. Many, however, fear happiness and success more than calamity. When they are down as low as they can get, they feel secure, but when treading the dizzy heights of prosperity, they are in danger of a fatal fall. Here, too, God can keep us. All true success is the result of well-directed energy, and is the gift of God. It requires more faith and more grace to receive earthly success with

spiritual success than to receive one alone, but God can enable us to use all His gifts in the proper way.

When we examine ourselves and our past history, we see so much weakness and sin, that we feel discouraged, and ask:—What will He do with sin? It is spiritual, its effects are spiritual, and we fear they will be eternal. But if we love God, and, as a consequence, hate evil, even sin will be used to bless us, for God can make the devil and his works serve Him. Paul says:—"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." That is, the grace we receive when we turn from sin is greater in quantity and better in quality than the righteousness we lost. Our own goodness was only a creature's at best, but now we possess the holiness of Christ, which is superior to ours: just as He is superior to us. Thus, although sin is an awful curse in itself, it brings a greater blessing than it removes. Here Paul's question is instantly suggested:—Does not this lead us to be careless about sin, or even to continue in it? And Paul's answer is:—"We are dead to sin and cannot. The great essential of the Christian character is hatred to sin and eternal opposition to it in every form. It is only on this condition that it or anything else will work for our good, and the spirit that would lead us to trifle with sin because God overrules it, will forfeit all the promised good, and leave us to all its fearful consequences. But when we are turned away from all evil, then everything serves us, and we need neither lament for the past nor fear for the future, since both are in the hands of God, who has given this promise and will fulfil it.

In like manner are we blessed by the service of God in all its phases. Living in vital union with Christ, communing with Him, studying His word, praying, praising, working for Him and for