

## HIS PURPOSE.

Rom. 8:28.

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His Purpose—Rom. 8:28

This is a wonderful text and full of comfort. It covers, in its scope, the whole life, from the cradle to the grave, and more. It begins before the cradle and reaches through the ages of eternity.

It speaks of a Friend who cares for his own, bringing to their help infinite wisdom that sees the end from the beginning, as well as omnipotent power, so that "all things" that come to his loved ones, are made to "work together" for their good.

While I was yet but twenty years of age, a young boy in my S. S. class remarked, "I wish you were my papa." This he said because I was trying to point him to Jesus and Heaven. Had he understood our text he should have wished to become a child of God, whose care is a thousand times better than any human help.

Next, we notice the word "purpose." This Great Caretaker has a purpose for all who love him. The writer, Paul, explains this plan as a general one, that applies to all alike. They all are "called," "justified," "glorified" and "predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son."

This wonderful "purpose" includes even more, as the same author tells us in I. Cor. 12; where he goes into details and shows that God has not only a general plan, but that He also has a "purpose" for each individual person.

To illustrate, there was a certain boy definitely called of God to the heathen of Africa. Others, spiritually minded, were shown this even before he was. Fifteen years later he started for that dark continent. From the time of his call there were miraculous "all things" working together that he might be qualified for his life-work.

After reaching that far off land, God continued his guidance so clearly that He even showed His servant, in a dream, the very place of his future labours. Then led him, in the way, to that place.

"In a case like this," you say, "God does have a purpose for the individual, but has He for the ones who are not called to some special work"? Again let me illustrate: The mother of that same boy was just an ordinary woman who remained at home, did her own house work and never posed as a preacher. And yet she believed that God guided her daily in little missions of mercy for Him. Each morning she would pray, "Lord, what wilt thou have me do today? Lord, guide me clearly; if you want me to visit that sick sister, or that burdened one, open the way." In her simple faith she firmly believed that God gave her little tasks to do for him and directed her steps. Not the least of her work was the heritage thus passed on to her boy.

It should not be necessary to emphasize this teaching, for what soul is there, when blessed of God, does not instinctively feel that he is interested in them personally. It even seems that he blesses them as

though they were the only soul for him to bless.

And now let us return to I. Cor. 12, when the great apostle settles the question for all time. "God," he says, "hath . . . set the members, every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." Notice the words, "Everyone." Then why doubt this when a greater than Paul declared, "even the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

Ah, this does exalt life: The farmer, the wife and mother in the home, the business man, yes there is none too lowly. What Paul said and Jesus, applies to all the members of the mystical body.

Yes, beloved, you are an essential part in the Church of Christ (I. Cor. 12:21) and none may say they have no need of you.

We are taking it for granted that our reader is in the body, for the teaching is that (vs. 13) we "by our spirit are baptized into one body."

Then it is, I presume, that God sets that member "in the body, as it hath pleased him. This may let light upon some heart that does not see anything to do for Jesus. Pentecost will place you and set you to work with a supernatural equipment.

Another thought along this line has come to me with renewed force. What we are, and where placed in the body, which is the bride of Christ, determines our place and work in the life to come. In Rev. 21:9, John is invited thus: "Come hither and I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife, . . . that great City of the holy Jerusalem."

All agree that the body of Christ spoken of in I. Cor. 12, is the bride of Rev. 21 and that we are only waiting for the completion of that body when Christ shall return and present her, to himself, a "glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing."

John saw that his place in that holy city was among the "Apostles of the Lamb" as a foundation stone."

We cannot doubt that all who are (I. Cor. 12:13) "baptized into that body" and are (vs. 18) "set . . . in the body, as it hath pleased him," are there for a useful purpose and naturally occupy a corresponding place in the structure of the Holy City. This leads into the old truth that in the next life "His servants shall serve Him." It is wonderful how many times this teaching is brought out in scripture. Notice Christ's reply to Peter's question as to what should be the future reward of the Apostles. "Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." This plainly implies that higher service hereafter is the reward, for faithfulness here. Again Christ in Matt. 25 rewards those who had been faithful over a "few things" by making them ruler "over many." What we shall be and do in Eternity, then, depends upon what we are and do in time.

Let us, however, keep to our text and remember that all must be according to His "purpose." At our Pentecost we receive the white stone containing a new name indicating our position in the holy, white city. In other words we are "set in

the body" as members to do certain necessary work. Notice Old Testament characters, Abraham, Sarah, etc., receiving new names that indicated the work God had chosen for them to do. Even our Redeemer was called "Jesus" because it signified His great work, the saving of "His people from their sins."

Allow a word of caution right here. It is possible to miss God's best purpose or choice. Matt. 25. One of the servants did not fulfill his trust. To illustrate: This same boy we spoke of come to a special crisis in his experience, when God told him very definitely to confess publicly his "call." He had a severe struggle to become willing. With his willingness came great blessing and joy, together with clear mental impression of "Had you waited two years it would have been too late." The next two years of his life were full of developments. He was licensed as a preacher, ordained and went to a missionary training school.

Let us suppose that he had failed to obey and had "waited two years." What would have been the result? He firmly believes that his life would have been the clay that "marred itself in the hand of the potter." If he had not backslidden entirely, he would have been set in another place "in the body," but not in the position of God's first choice. Think of the rich young ruler, who "went away sorrowful." He rejected the call to forsake all and follow Jesus and becoming perhaps one of the Apostles whom John saw incorporated in the Holy City.

One more instance: Deut. 1:36, none of those called to inherit the Promised Land could enter "save Caleb . . . because he hath wholly followed the Lord."

To receive our Pentecost and find our God-appointed sphere of service, concerns our own welfare for both this life and all through eternity. Some who even enter Heaven are saved "so as by fire," and find no reward because their works are burned as "wood, hay and stubble." God has not allowed to work out in them his purpose.

To hear our Saviour say, "Well done, good and faithful servant," and to know we have not disappointed Him will be glory indeed.

This boy of ours was once stowing a load of hay for his father when he received a very helpful thought from the Lord. It was that, at the last day, perhaps, each person will have revealed to him God's "purpose" that he had for his life. It will be shown to him like a program or a map, giving God's first and best choice. Then will be revealed also just how near he has measured up to this purpose. Well, it made our boy more than ever determined to know and do all the will of God.

But the way it comes to me now is that we each one shall not only see the way he has made or marred his life, but will see what it will mean to him through all eternity. His eternal usefulness and power to please his triune God will all depend upon the position he held and filled in this life.

This thought has given me a new outlook on life. I see farther ahead than "when the roll is called up yonder." Every