

The Faithfulness of God

One of the most profound as well as comforting verses in the Bible is Romans 8:28. “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” Although this verse is comforting for Christians it is also, far too often, misunderstood. Some have held on to this verse as a promise from God that He will always work good in our lives as we perceive it. The good that God gives us is often missed because of our desire to have what we want—or are convinced that we need—at any given moment.

Benjamin B. Warfield was an important theologian of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He was a professor at Princeton Seminary for nearly 34 years until his death on February 16, 1921. He was known for his amazing intellect as well as his godly life. He was called by some, “the lion of Princeton.” Warfield once wrote his own thoughts on Paul’s magnificent verse, Romans 8:28.

“The fundamental thought is the universal government of God. All that comes to you is under His controlling hand. The secondary thought is the favor of God to those who love Him. If He governs all, then nothing but good can befall those to whom He would do good... Though we are too weak to help ourselves and too blind to ask for what we need, and can only groan in unformed longings, He is the author in us of these very longings... and He will so govern all things that we shall reap only good from all that befalls us.” I would encourage you to read these words again and let them sink in.

Although B.B. Warfield was a very learned and respected man, he did not live his life in an ivory tower. This man who wrote: “All that comes to you is under [God’s] controlling hand,” was married in 1876 at the age of 25 to Annie Pierce Kinkead. The young couple went on their honeymoon in Germany. During a terrible thunderstorm Annie was struck by lightning and permanently paralyzed. After caring for her for 39 years, Warfield laid her to rest in 1915. Because of the extraordinary care that his wife required, Warfield seldom left his home for more than two hours at a time during all those years of marriage.

There is much to commend in such a man who was faithfully devoted—not only to his wife—but to his Lord Jesus. During all this time of struggle, he might have easily become embittered, and yet his desire and his passion remained; he wanted to use his gifts and his life to serve God in his calling of training men for pastoral ministry. By God’s grace, Warfield was

faithful to that task throughout his adult life and he understood—better than most—that it is God who is always faithful. God is the one who brings all things into our lives for our good and his glory.

Christian, this promise is for you; rest in the promise of Romans 8:28 while seeking, by grace, to be faithful all your life to our glorious and gracious and faithful God who works all things for our good and His glory.

Rev. Dr. Steve Jones is the pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church PCA in Paxton, Ill.