

PAUL ... who proved it's an ill wind that blows no good  
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(ACTS 28: 1)

It has often been said that life is like a carpet. When viewed from the wrong side, the pattern is fantastic and meaningless ; when seen from the correct side, the same colorful threads produce perfection and design. Life's experiences may be horribly disconcerting, but we have reason to believe that ultimately we shall understand how God makes all things work together for good to them that love Him. Our side of life's carpet may be confusing ; let us believe that God is too wise to make mistakes. Luke supplies a wonderful example of this fact.

#### A Saviour Discerning

Far out in the Mediterranean Sea lay the small island of Melita. It represented a world of its own, for few were the contacts made with the rest of civilization. Trading ships occasionally visited the small harbor, but apart from these connections the islanders had little association with other people. The chief man was named Publius, and at the time of this story his father was dangerously ill. Probably haemorrhages had drained the older man's energies and undermined his resistance to disease. The stricken family were so far removed from the necessary medical assistance that death seemed inevitable. The people were heathen, and had no spiritual realities upon which to lean in their time of need. The position was desperate ; but the Lord was not unmindful of His people. He saw, He understood, and He cared.

#### A Storm Diverting

Away to the East a sailing ship, well behind schedule, slowly made its way toward Phenice, where the captain and the crew expected to winter. It appeared that nothing could prevent the fulfilment of their plans, for even the winds were favorable (Acts 27:13). Yet aboard that vessel was Paul, whose presence was urgently required on the distant island. There was no other servant of God who could move into the emergency, and unless supernatural powers intervened, even Paul would fail to reach Melita in time. The Lord decided to take a hand in affairs. "Not long afterward there arose a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon. And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive." It was then that the unseen Pilot took charge. With unerring accuracy the vessel was driven from its usual course, and although it took a considerable time to bring the missionary to the desired haven, ultimately the devastating storm achieved this purpose.

#### A Saint Dispensing

" And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick with a fever and a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid hands on him, and healed him. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed" (Acts 28: 8, 9). And since Paul remained in the island for three months, it may be safely assumed that he often preached the Gospel. His unexpected appearance had been providential, and Church history proves that his ministry to the islanders was not in vain. It is also noteworthy that Doctor Luke was one of Paul's companions. God's healing powers do not abolish the necessity for the exercise of wisdom. We have a part to play in the fulfilment of the divine purpose. Miraculous power was given to Paul,

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who in Christ's name dispensed it to needy people. He was a true  
missionary.

#### A Suggestion Disclosing

Long afterward Paul wrote, " 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 " (Rom. 8: 28). The  
apostle had many experiences which suggested this fact, yet  
the storm which took him to Melita was perhaps the greatest.  
Discomfort, depression, and danger had all appeared in the  
strange pattern of those frightening days ; but God's hand was  
at work, and it was His wisdom which directed the course of  
the storm-tossed ship. Everything was perfectly in order, for  
God was over-ruling in the affairs of men. And since God is  
unchanging, we may be assured the same providence over-  
rules our affairs. Stormy circumstances may buffet the soul ;  
disaster may appear to overwhelm us ; but when Christ is  
our pilot we are safe.

Simply trusting every day,  
Trusting, through a stormy way  
Even when my faith is small,  
Trusting Jesus, that is all.

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