

God consider "good," in relation to God's primary purpose of our lives? And It would appear that things that cause us to feel our dependence on Him, encourage us to do His will, make us greater partakers of His holiness, produce in us greater humility, consecration, and fruitfulness, and teach us crucial lessons that we could learn in no other way are "good" in relation to our being transformed into Christ's likeness.

Whatever it takes to do these things, God is either bringing or allowing to come into believers' lives; and then ruling and overruling them to accomplish His purposes. And because we know that God loves us, and that love always seeks the highest well-being of the loved one, we know that the "good" that God intends involves our very best interests.

God is working good in our lives in order to make us good, not only in glory, but in this present life as well. And some of the things God uses to achieve His purpose in our lives involve suffering.

C. S. Lewis, in the Great Divorce, provides us with a graphic illustration of God's use of suffering to kill sin (in this case the sin of lust) in a believer's life, and to mold him into the image of Christ. Aside from the question of the setting (the intermediate state) in which this suffering takes place, and some objectionable language, the illustration appears to be apt and germane.

I saw coming towards us a Ghost who carried something on his shoulder. Like all the Ghosts, he was unsubstantial, but they differed from one another as smokes differ. Some had been whitish; this one was dark and oily. What sat on his shoulder was a little red lizard, and it was twitching its tail like a whip and whispering things in his ear. As we caught sight of him he turned his head to the reptile with a snarl of impatience. "Shut up, I tell you!" he said. It wagged its tail and continued to whisper to him. He ceased snarling, and presently began to smile. Then he turned and started to limp westward, away from the mountains.

"Off so soon?" said a voice.

The speaker was more or less human in shape but larger than a man, and so bright that I could hardly look at him. His presence smote on my eyes and on my body too (for there was heat coming from him as well as light) like the morning sun at the beginning of a tyrannous summer day.

"Yes, I'm off," said the Ghost. "Thanks for all your hospitality. But it's no good, you see. I told this little chap," (here he indicated the lizard), "that he'd have to be quiet if he came – which he insisted on doing. Of course his stuff won't do here; I realized that. But he won't stop. I shall have to go home"

"Would you like me to make him quiet?" said the flaming Spirit – an angel, as I now understand.

"Of course I would," said the Ghost.

"Then I will kill him," said the Angel, taking a step forward.

"Oh—ah—look out! You're burning me. Keep away," said the Ghost, retreating.

"Don't you want him killed?"