

*“Those whom the Lord has employed for any great services, He has generally first trained by discipline, retirement, or trial.”*

14. To teach them sympathy with the trials of others  
**(Romans 12:15; 2 Corinthians 1:6;  
1 Thessalonians 3:7&8; 1 Peter 5:9);**

15. To quicken the spirit of devotion and communion with Christ **(Psalm 119:71; 73:28; Micah 6:9);**

16. To help to further the progress of the gospel **(Acts 8:3&4; Philippians 1:12);**

17. To make them desire more earnestly the rest of heaven **(2 Corinthians 5:1&6; Philippians 1:23).**

The idea in **Psalm 84:6** is the same which occurs in:

- **Isaiah 35:7**, *“And the parched ground shall become a pool”*;
- and in **Job 35:10**, *“Who giveth songs in the night”*;
- an idea which was so beautifully illustrated in the case of Paul and Silas in the jail at Philippi, when, at midnight they *“sang praises to God”* **(Acts 16:25)**.

By the power of God, by the presence of the Saviour, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, these times become seasons of purest joy – times later remembered with most fervent gratitude, as ranking among the happiest periods of life.



**Psalm 84:6:** *“Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.”*

[ The word “Baca” is derived from a root term that means, *“to weep / make lamentation”* ].

The psalmist paints a picture of pilgrims who had to travel long distances in order to get to the tabernacle/ Temple for special times of worship. Wearily entering one of the more inhospitable parts of the road – ‘the valley of Baca’ – they would sometimes find that by the time morning had dawned, rain had fallen and filled the pools. This provided necessary refreshment for the body – and typifies the kind of nourishment we need for our souls.

We may be ‘traversing the valley’ right now, but we too are assured of joys for our pilgrimage: the Lord makes ample provision for us when our needs reach their peak – He diffuses happiness and comfort where there is trouble and sorrow, just like fountains being made to flow in a sterile and desolate valley – and a sense of the glory of the final destination begins to dawn upon our souls, allowing us to concentrate less on the trials and discomforts of the road.

*I've wrestled on towards Heaven, 'gainst storm and  
wind and tide,  
Now, like a weary traveller that leaneth on his guide,  
Amid the shades of evening, while sinks life's  
lingering sand,  
I hail the glory dawning from Immanuel's land.*

Rev. G.S. Bowes, in his excellent manual, 'In Prospect Of Sunday,' (published in 1881) gives a comprehensive list of **the benefits of afflictions** when they are properly viewed and sanctified to us.

1. To promote the glory of God, to manifest the Divine perfections, the Divine wisdom, goodness, patience, faithfulness and power (**John 9:1-3; 11:3&4; 21:18&19**);

2. To lead them to seriousness and consideration (**1 Kings 8:47; Ecclesiastes 7:14**);

3. To test their sincerity and condition.  
*"Afflictions are the touchstone to try the pure gold of grace"* (**Job 23:10; Psalm 66:10; Proverbs 17:3 - Genesis 22:1; James 1:2&12**);

4. To humble the heart and lead to self-searching (**Deuteronomy 8:2,3&16; 2 Chronicles 7:13; 1 Samuel 3:19&20**);

5. To discover and embitter sin.  
*"Affliction generally treads on the heels of some sin, and takes away its guilty charm"* (**Job 26:8&9**);

6. To prepare the heart for the reception of the good seed of truth (**Job 23:16; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; Psalm 94:12**);

7. To purify the soul and purge out corruption (**Isaiah 1:25; 27:9; John 15:2; Jeremiah 9:7**);

8. To wean them from the world (**Hebrews 10:34**).  
*"Affliction puts bitterness upon the world's choicest dainties, or makes the mouth out of relish for them."*

9. To be a fence to keep them from being led into sin (**Hosea 2:8-15; Job 34:31&32; Psalm 119:6; 2 Corinthians 12:7**);

10. To unfold and endear the word, to give clearer understanding and sweeter relish (**Psalm 119:71; 94:12**) – *"Without the teaching of affliction, full one-third of the Scriptures are only like life-buoys upon dry land"*;

11. To mature and display the graces of the Christian character - faith, patience, resignation. How could such excellencies be matured without affliction? (**Romans 5:3-5; James 1:3; John 15:2**);

12. To lead to truer fellowship with the sufferings of Christ, to show us a little of what He suffered, and to call forth closer fellowship with Him (**Philippians 3:10; Colossians 1:24**);

13. To prepare them for greater usefulness.