

## Pastor and People.

### GOLDEN GRAIN BIBLE READING.

BY REV. J. R. DICKSON, B.D.

#### (I) MEN FORSAKING GOD.

Key Texts: Jonah 2.8., Jer. 5.25.

1. Sin in this. 1 Sam. 12.10.
2. Stripes in judgment. Ps. 89.30-32.
3. Temporal loss. 2 Chron. 7.19-20.
4. Provokes God. Isai. 1.4.
5. Awakes His wrath. Ezra 8.22.
6. Gives man emptiness. Jer. 17.13.
7. Bitter experiences. Jer. 9.13-16.
8. Shall be consumed. Isai. 1.28.
9. Cast off for ever. 1 Chron. 28.9.

#### (II) GOD FORSAKING MEN.

Key Text: 2 Chron. 15.2.

1. God does not forsake his saints. Ps. 37.28., Heb. 18.5.
2. God does not forsake them that seek Him. Ps. 9.10, 2 Chron. 4.9.
3. He does to try them. Isai. 54.7., 49.14.
4. He does to his enemies. 2 Chron. 12.5., Jer. 12.7.8.
5. He does because of their sin. Judges 6.1-13.
6. He does as a withdrawal for a time to recover them out of their evil. Ezra 9.9., 6.15., Hosea 5.15.
7. Typical instance. Matt. 27.46.

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### THE CHILDREN'S PULPIT.

EDITED BY M. H. C.

Chosroes was astonished to find two men, each of whom claimed to have opened the channel of the underground river. He asked Karun how he could prove that it was he who had done so, and the governor answered that nobody else had a right to set engineers to work on the lake of his province. Then the emperor asked Kobad, who bade the envoys say whether or not they had delivered the staff into his hands. They said they had. Thereupon Kobad told Chosroes, that if he would send men to look in the river, they would find his staff in it, for, as soon as the rocks were loosened and the tide let in for the opening, he had cast it into the whirlpool. The emperor ordered the staff to be held up, and said "Is that yours, Karun?" Now it was not a governor's staff, but that of a camel warder only, so that Karun dared not say yes. But Kobad claimed it, and forthwith Chosroes ordered the engineers to be sent for from the north, while the two men were held in custody. The engineers came, and were examined separately. They told how the governor was himself the cause of the stopping up of the underground river, and of the flooding of his province, and, how, when he became alarmed at the mischief he had wrought, he sent them to seek for the outlet which they could not find. Karun was disgraced and sent away into a distant land, lest the friends of the people who had died through his act of folly should set upon him and put him to death. Kobad was clothed like a royal prince and placed once more in the chariot, which was driven behind that of the emperor, through the city, and out of its gates along the banks of the swelling river, while proclamation was made in the emperor's name that Prince Kobad had saved the people from starvation, and the country from ruin, and was now honoured as second only to the great Chosroes himself. Then the emperor's daughter was given him, and a royal palace and great wealth instead of the camel warder's staff. "It is only right," said the emperor, "that he should prosper and be great, by whom, under God, the empire has regained its lost prosperity."

God has so wisely arranged the affairs of this world that all true riches are gained by giving rather than by saving. He bestows nothing upon us in order that we should hoard it like the foolish servant who wrapped his lord's talent in a napkin and buried it in the earth. The other servants made use of the talents committed to them, and became rich when he lost all that he had. Our powers increase the more they are employed. He who would become a great speaker or a great writer must actually throw away on the world a great many fancied treasures of talk and composition. He is like the farmer who takes the precious seed, and, instead of shutting it up in his granary, casts it away into the furrowed earth thence to spring up, in the course of the year, into a golden harvest. If we would get into our hearts and lives the heavenly treasure of faith, hope, and love, greater than our riches of earth, we must give them forth to our fellow men and to God. Jesus Christ said "Give and it shall be given unto you." So, if we give others distrust and suspicion, gloom and croaking, ill will and hate, they will come back to us again, as fowls return at night to roost. If we shut ourselves up from others in a sense of our self sufficiency, others will shut themselves up from us in our time of need. "God loveth a cheerful giver," said St. Paul to the Corinthians, and then added, "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you." If, in spite of God's law, we seem to prosper and become wealthy by withholding, our wealth will be like the lake which overflowed its borders and be a source of injury to us rather than a blessing, drowning out our immortal life, and bringing upon us the curses of the people whom our hoarding makes, of necessity, to suffer. "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again."

#### THE DUTIFUL SON.

"Honour thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee."—Exodus xx.12.

About two hundred and fifty years before the birth of Jesus Christ there were many kings in China. Of these the wisest and bravest, but certainly not the best, was King Chewangte. His capital city was Keenyang, in Shense, one of the north-west provinces of the Flowery Land. From this city he set forth with a large army to fight the Huns who, coming from the country about Lake Kokonor in the west, were trying to make themselves masters of Kansuh, the province or kingdom which lay between Shense and their savage home. Chewangte drove the Huns back and took Kansuh to himself. Then by his victorious army in some cases and in others by bribes sent through the hands of his crafty prime minister Lesze he managed to bring many of the smaller Chinese kingdoms under his sway. Thus he became the great emperor Chewangte. But he did not learn goodness. His two brothers who he feared might plot against him he killed, and the mother who had gained the throne for him he drove into exile. Now the Chinese have always thought it their first duty to love their parents. So the people of Keenyang murmured loudly when they heard how the emperor had treated his mother and the scholars among them even wrote tracts and books to show how different his conduct was from that of the best kings who had gone before him. This made Chewangte very angry. He put to death some of the common people whom he heard grumbling and cruelly ill-treated the scholars that had written against him. At last the scholars all kept out of the tyrant's way except one whose name was Maou. He went boldly to the emperor's palace and asked to see him. When Chewangte gave him audience, Maou said that he had come to be killed but before dying he wished to tell the emperor one thing, and that was, what the throne rests upon. "And pray" said Chewangte "What does the throne rest upon?" "On children's love for their parents" answered Maou, "And now" he continued "You may kill me as you have killed so many others for speaking the truth." The emperor did not kill him. I suppose his conscience pricked him, and, wishing for the time to be a better man he said to Maou "Stay and be my counsellor." So Maou remained at the palace and gave good advice.

After many years had passed away Chewangte thought to put his empire in safety from the attacks of the northern Huns and at the same time to make a great name for himself. He sent Maou home to his family in the city and went out to the northern frontiers to see what could be done. Then he resolved to build a great wall from the eastern sea to the most western part of his empire, a wall fifteen hundred miles long and so broad that six horsemen could ride abreast on it, very high also, and with gates and towers every here and there along its course. So he ordered every third man in the land to leave his home and his work and help to build the wall. Officers were appointed to draft them for service and architects and overseers to teach them how to work. This was a sad thing for the country. Fathers and sons and brothers who were the support of their families had to leave their homes, their fields, their workshops and trades to travel many of them hundreds of miles and build Chewangte's great wall. They had to sink great ships full of stones to lay the foundations of the wall in the sea, to bring stones from all parts for the mason work and run the great line of solid building over hills and valleys, rivers and plains till many of them perished under the severe toil and their families starved at home. Maou and many other scholars were grieved at this. They began to write again showing that in the old books it was said great kings loved their people and tried to do them good and lighten their burdens. Chewangte heard the news and was very angry. He ordered all the old books in the empire to be brought together and burned. Thousands and thousands and thousands of these were collected for the flames and hundreds of scholars who tried to keep their treasures were either burned along with them or put to death in some other way. Among the few that escaped death was Maou and he for punishment was ordered to go and work at the wall a hundred and fifty miles north of Keenyang.

Maou took off his scholar's robe, put on a common workman's dress and with a sad heart joined the gang of labourers that the city of Keenyang sent to the great wall. He left behind him his wife whom he dearly loved and their only son Lewpang, a lad sixteen years old. To Lewpang he said "I have left some money to keep the wolf from the door for a little while but as I may never come back being an old man you must work to keep your mother, and remember that hands and feet set their master on a throne of gold." So saying he bade him farewell, and Lewpang remained behind to comfort his mother. Next day the good son said to himself that it would never do to be idle till his father's little store of money was gone. So he went out into the city looking for work and at last found an armourer who wanted an apprentice to help him in making swords, spears and other iron weapons. Lewpang became an armourer though he was a scholar's son and should according to the Chinese custom have been a scholar himself. He had read a good deal in his father's books about the ways of making iron and steel so that with careful attention to what the armourer did and his own knowledge he soon became a very clever workman, forging weapons of the very best quality and gaining high wages from his master who was proud of his young appren-

tice's skill. Lewpang was able to keep his mother, to send help from time to time to his father at the wall, and even to add a good deal to the sum which Maou had left in his care. Every two or three months a messenger from the wall brought Lewpang a little piece of red or yellow paper covered with Chinese writing in Indian-ink which was a letter from Maou to say that he was still alive and glad to hear of his wife's health and his son's success. And the old scholar always wound up his letter by saying "Never forget that hands and feet set their master upon a throne of gold."

When three years had passed since the commencement of the wall the old king died in great pain and trouble of mind. The scholars and most of the people were glad though they did not dare to say so for they thought that the eldest son of Chewangte whose name was Foosoo would succeed his father. Foosoo was a good and generous prince. When Chewangte buried alive four hundred and sixty scholars because they wanted to keep their books he was very angry and spoke strongly against his father's wickedness. Chewangte ordered him to be killed but he escaped for a time. However the prime minister Lesze after the death of his master proclaimed Chewangte's second son as emperor under the name of Urshewangte. Then he contrived to get hold of Foosoo and put him to death. Thus the hopes of the soldiers and of the oppressed people were dashed to the ground. Lewpang had been expecting to hear the name of Foosoo announced when the new emperor was proclaimed. But when instead he heard that of Urshewangte he was not altogether cast down. "The new emperor is young," he said to his mother "and he has just lost his father; so that he will feel for you and me with our husband and father far away in his old age among the rude workmen at the wall." His mother told him not to put too much trust in Urshewangte's goodness for he was the pupil of the cruel Chewangte and the cunning Lesze.

Lewpang got a holiday from the armourer, put on his best clothes and went to the new emperor's palace. Many of the guards and attendants knew him because he was the son of the scholar Maou who had lived for a time with their late master. When his name was sent in to the audience hall Lesze smiled craftily and advised Urshewangte to see the lad. So Lewpang who was now a handsome and well bred Chinaman, nineteen years old, was admitted to the royal presence. He bowed very low before the emperor and told his story, entreating Urshewangte to recall his father from the hard labour of the wall. When he had finished the emperor turned to Lesze and said "Do you know this young man who is so ready with his tongue?" Lesze answered "I know him, Son of Heaven, for the son of the scholar Maou, who was disobedient to the orders of the great Chewangte and even presumed to tell him that the throne rests on children's love for their parents." Urshewangte impatiently shook his great robe of yellow silk and said to Lewpang "Maou is a great scholar. It must be a treat for the poor people at the wall to have him with them. What other fine lessons has he taught his dutiful son on whom our throne rests?" Lewpang was so confused with the bantering tone of the emperor that he could only call to mind the advice his father had repeated so often. So he answered "My father told me that hands and feet set their master on a throne of gold." "What do you think of that?" Urshewangte asked Lesze. "August emperor," he replied, "Putting the two maxims together they sound very like treason. It might be well to send the son to join the father at the wall." "No, no" said Urshewangte laughing. "We must follow the teachings of the scholars, and especially of the great scholar Maou. Lewpang here has hands and feet and I am his master, so his hands and feet shall set me on a throne of gold, for this seat is only gilded. Then the throne will rest on a child's love for his parent and Maou shall be set free to return to his wife and son. Look well, Lewpang at the size of my throne for that in gold is the price of your father's liberty." The scholar's son not daring to show his despair knocked his head three times on the floor of the audience chamber as the custom was, and backed away to the door, while Lesze chuckled over the emperor's wit. Hardly knowing what he was doing, he found himself at home where his mother tried in vain to comfort him.

When Lewpang came to himself he looked over his father's letters and in every one of them read the sentence "Hands and feet set their master on a throne of gold." Now Maou he knew was a very wise man as the emperor had said, therefore these words must mean something. He had hands and feet but how were these going to make a golden throne for him. If he were to work all his life as an armourer he would never be able to win gold enough for the purpose. Indeed it seemed to him that there was not gold enough in all China to make such a throne. But then China was not all the world for he had read of many other countries, although the books which told about them said that none was to be compared with the Flowery Land. A joyful thought came to Lewpang. He had been using his hands diligently but not his feet and both were needed for the throne of gold. So he would travel and do his best to find his father's ransom. Leaving the money he had saved with his mother and bidding farewell to the armourer he set out upon his travels. All along the north the wall was being built and he knew that if he went that way he would be pressed into the service. Therefore he took his journey westward towards the Kokonor where dwelt the Huns. He crossed the hills of Kansuh and many streams that go to make up the great Yellow river or Hoangho. On the way he lived upon the plainest food and slept wherever he could find shelter so that he spent very little money. He kept his eyes and ears open continually along the road that he might miss no opportunity of learning how to find gold. When he had come to the western limit of the Empire and was just passing into the country of the Huns an old man in the dress of a physician met him. The old man was thin and pale and weary looking as if he had been sometime without food. As soon as he saw the bag at Lewpang's back in which he carried his rice he asked the young armourer for a meal offering to pay him well for it. Lewpang did not know how soon he might be in want himself but he took pity on the famished physician and shared his dinner of cold boiled rice with him. The old man ate greedily and asked for more always saying he would pay well for all he got. So Lewpang gave him more and trusted in Heaven not to let him want.

(To be continued.)