

Pastor and People.

GOLDEN GRAIN BIBLE READING.

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CHRIST'S SUFFICIENT GRACE FOR THE BELIEVER.

Key text, II Cor. 12.9.

- (I.) *The source of the grace.* Col. 1.11., Jno. 1.16., 2 Tim. 2.1., Heb. 4.16., Heb. 12.1-2.
- (II.) *The service of the grace.*
 (1) Upholding: Jude 24-25, Rom. 14.4., Heb. 4.16.
 (2) Establishing: Exod. 3.11-12, Exod. 4.10-15, Rom. 16.25., 2 Thess. 3.3., 1 Pet. 5.10, Josh. 1.9., Jer. 1.6-9, Isai. 43.2-3.
 (3) Working: 1 Cor. 15.10., Col. 1.29., Phil. 4.13., Rom. 12.6., Ephes. 3.8., Heb. 12.28.
 (4) Praying: Zech. 2.10., Col. 3.16.
 (5) Resisting: Ephes. 6.10-11., 1 Pet. 5.8-9, Gal. 2.11.
 (6) Sanctifying:
 (7) Dying: 2 Tim. 4.6-8., Ps. 23.4., Acts. 7.56-59., Gen. 48.21-22., Gen. 50-24.
- (III.) *The channels of the grace.*
 The Word of Grace: Acts. 20.32.
 The Spirit of Grace: Ephes. 3.16.
 Through Prayer: Heb. 4.16., Isai. 40.29-31.
- (IV.) *The growth of the grace.* 2 Pet. 3.17-18., Ephs. 6.10-18., 2 Pet. 1.2-8.
- (V.) *The recipients of the grace.* 1 Pet. 5.5., Prov. 3.24

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THE CHILDREN'S PULPIT.

EDITED BY M. H. C.

This was the bard's opportunity, and he took it. Seizing the tool bag, he threw it over his saddle, and drove the two horses before him. The road was soft, so that he made little noise in departing, and was out of sight before the laggards came out, and made up their minds that their horses had run home without them. Taliesin had no bow, but from a child he had been a good slinger. Fastening an irregular stone to the cord, he slung it over the top of the tower, and with much hard work, hauled the ladder into its place. His heart was in his mouth for fear he should be interrupted, until he heard the click of the grapples. Then, carrying the tools, he ascended, removed the iron coverings, fastened the tool bag about him and slid down the rope to where the queen still sat. It was very dark down there, and Taliesin had to feel his way among the tools, and to the joints in the chains which he had to pry open. At last the chains were all removed, and he bade her sit while he hauled up the seat. Hand over hand he climbed the rope, reached the top, and sought to draw up the queen. But he could not budge the weight, and time was being lost. So he jumped into the other seat, and joyfully felt it descending, yet not fast enough. He clutched a chain, and now his downward course was rapid. He reached the bottom, and Queen Angharad the top. She called down, "I am woe to leave you there, my Taliesin." Then the bard called up, "Think not of me, but descend the ladder, find your palfrey, and away for life and liberty." Sorrowfully she descended and went her way southward in the track of the king she had given all to save. It was a joyful meeting mingled with pain, when the separated pair met within the bounds of Cardigan.

Taliesin saw on the ground one of the gold chains he had thrust through the aperture, and left the seat to pick it up. When he had done so, he saw, to his horror, that the double rope was in motion. He leaped to catch it, but in vain. The blacksmith's tools in the seat occupied by the queen sank it down, and raised that on the rope of which the bard had hoped to rise to liberty. He was a prisoner for life, and that could not last long in the dungeon from which his deliverer had been saved. Meanwhile, the smith and his companion had found their horses and their tools were not where they had expected to find them, and went about asking everybody they met if they had seen two led horses with a coil between them, and thus came after a day to the tower of Deganwy, where they saw the rope ladder hanging, and found the horses in care of the keeper. As they came near the tower, they heard the harp that the minstrel had carried strung over his shoulder, and then the words of a song:

"Passer by, go tell Maelgwn, the perjured, this warning
 From the bard, Taliesin, whose soul flies ere morning,
 Wales shall hold his proud name as a by-word of scorn."

The affrighted smith mounted one of the horses, and rode to the palace, and gave the message, as he heard it. The king, proud of his reputation, hastened to the dungeon, and ordered his men to bring out the bard. The rope was lowered, and he was placed upon the seat very feeble and helpless. They gave him wine and bread, when brought into the open air, and chafed his limbs back to warmth, then conveyed him to the royal castle, and carefully tended him for days, until his strength was restored. Maelgwn's heart was touched at last by the devotion of the bard who had risked his life for his queen, and by that of the queen who had offered hers for her husband, and he wondered if, in all his broad kingdom, there was a man or woman who would do the same for him. Then he sought to make Taliesin his friend, because he was certainly a true friend worth having. The bard rejoiced in the monarch's conversion and in his kindness, and the king bestowing upon him a green cloak and a massy gold chain, set

him above all his nobles in the place of honour, promising never again to invade Elfin's kingdom, nor to cast royal captives into the dungeon of Deganwy. So Taliesin spent his time between the two kingdoms, singing many songs of praise for both Elfin and Maelgwn, each of whom had good cause to be glad that they had befriended the greatest poet in Wales.

God is the best paymaster. His promises are all yea and amen, for the testimony of the Lord is sure. The poor and afflicted are God's children and He is responsible for all the debts they incur from the kind hearts of their fellows. "The poor ye have always with you," said Jesus Christ, and whenever we will we can do them good. What we do for them we do to God. "I will recompense, saith the Lord," and, if that be true in regard to wicked actions, much more so is it in regard to those that are good. We have all some people about us who are not so well off as we are, some whom we are able to help in some way. Our human nature says, "Be selfish, leave them to take care of themselves; let those who are older, and richer, and stronger than we are look after them." But the voice of God in our hearts and in the Word of God, calls upon all who would be God's children to take part in this blessed work. And who would not be a child of God, if not now at least, in view of eternity, when the rewards and punishments will be meted out. You do not grudge the money you put into the savings bank, because it is there for you, lying safe and gathering interest. So do not grudge anything spent upon God's poor children, whether it be money or time or trouble. It is all safe in the great bank of the whole universe, which pays back a hundredfold in this present life, and eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor mind of man conceived how great shall be its premium upon the smallest earthly loan in God's blessed eternity. God will pay again.

THE CONVERTED MERCHANT.

"A word spoken in due season, has good in it!" Proverbs xv.23.

About the time when Theodoric the Ostrogoth reigned in Italy, and the Saxon Ella was conquering the native Britons, there lived in Asia a great merchant named Yosuno. I say he dwelt in Asia, although it is the largest continent in the world, because in all its vast extent he knew no home, and because he had travelled from Constantinople to the eastern limit of China, and from Ceylon to Siberia. Father or mother, sister or brother, he had never known. Where his infancy and boyhood were spent he could not remember; he only knew that it was in neglect, half starvation, and cruelty. The people with whom he had travelled, gipsies perhaps, showed him no spark of kindness, nor did he know that there was such a thing in the world. When he was in northern India at the age of eight, an elderly merchant bought him, and trained him up as his personal attendant and confidential agent, but all in a spirit of pure selfishness. The boy gained knowledge of all sorts of goods, things to eat and drink and wear, to work and fight and furnish houses with, common every day articles and luxuries, useful and ornamental objects; the produce of half the world passed before his eyes. He was very clever in learning languages, Greek, Persian and Afghan the dialects of India and Thibet, of Tartary and China. He knew where to buy cheaply, and where to sell at a large profit. He had no pleasures, he formed no friendships, but stuck to business as the only thing in life, and was as valuable as a gold mine to his greedy, selfish master. Abused and ill-treated by the man who owed so much to his ability and diligence, he was never tempted to run away, because he knew of no place to run to; he thought all the people in the world were like those with whom his pitiful youth was spent.

Death came at last to the old merchant, as it comes to all, near his native place in India. The rajah of the kingdom took half of his property, and people claiming to be his relatives took all the rest as they thought. But Yosuno, who was near fourteen years a slave and twenty two years old, looked out for number one, and made for the northern mountains with much gold money and far more precious jewels concealed in his clothes. Knowing the world to be full of thieves, he got simple-minded hill men to be his servants, bought camels and started an armed caravan like his old master's. His two humped Bactrian camels were able each to carry a thousand pound weight of merchandise. In the fertile regions of Thibet and Tartary he purchased wheat and other grains, which he sold in less favoured countries at a profit. From China he brought into the west great and precious loads of silk, porcelain, and tea. He supplied the Indian rajahs and other princes with horses for their armies from Persia and Arabia, and received in exchange gold and precious stones. To equip these horses he visited Asia Minor, famous for its work in stamped leather and various kinds of trappings, for its woven stuffs of wool and goat's hair and of gold and silver thread. Arabia furnished him with gums and spices, and Persia with rugs and embroidered goods, as well as with hores. To adorn the images in idol temples and the attire of kings, he brought pearls and sapphires from Ceylon, emeralds from Siberia, and the cat's eye chalcedony from Malabar. All Asia he ransacked for articles with which to trade, until he was known everywhere as the great and rich merchant Yosuno. He had but one rule of life, to buy cheap and sell dear, and to accomplish these two things he stopped at nothing. Truth and honour, honesty and humanity were words that had no meaning to him, but profit and loss were terms he understood well. Yet he could never be convicted of dishonest dealing or of taking anything without an equivalent. As the world went in

his day, he was a very respectable merchant as well as a shrewd successful man of business, and for selfish purposes only he was always true to his word. Thus the producers and merchants of many lands trusted him, and he was no stranger even within the palace gates of mighty monarchs.

Few people are always successful and prosperous, and Yosuno was no exception to the rule. Disease sometimes smote his caravans coming from Central Asia, that breeding place of plagues that often carry their ravages to the ends of the earth. Then, men and camels died, and valuable cargoes had to be left in desert places frequently to disappear or be destroyed before fresh beasts of burden and their drivers could be got to remove them. Fire, now and again, broke forth in his storehouses, and in a few short hours consumed the profits of years. Vessels were wrecked on sea and river, sending into the depths many a valuable bale that bore the great merchant's name upon it. Tyrannical rulers exacted heavy duties, and confiscated the wealth of the foreigner who had no country and therefore no monarch to uphold his rights. Plundering bands of robbers fell upon his caravans in transit or in camp, and bore his merchandise away to their mountain strongholds, leaving dead or wounded on the ground those of his servants who endeavoured to defend their trust, and even threatening his own life. Rogues and sharpers on every side tried to take him in. Some people call all men rogues until they prove themselves honest, but Yosuno called all by that name and, as he thought, never saw reason to change it. Had he been able to keep all that he had gained there would have been no man in all Asia so rich as he; but he was always making fortunes and losing them, so that, though never poor since he began for himself, his checkered fortunes hindered the progress in wealth he so much desired.

Yosuno was a man utterly without faith. At first, he had had faith in himself, but this many losses caused him to lose. He did not believe there was an honourable man in the world; everybody, from the emperor down to the outcast had his price and could be bought, if it was worth while buying him. Like King David in his haste, but in all soberness and always, he said "All men are liars," their oath was as bad as their word, kindness, humanity, love, any form of consideration or unselfishness he never looked for, since he never dreamt that any person could be so foolish as to think of any interest but his own. King Solomon found one good man in a thousand but not one good woman, a proof that in the wise king's time the world must have been very bad; Yosuno found nor man nor woman, all alike were evil. As for children he had no patience with them. Forgetting that he, the great merchant, had once been a child, he regarded them as utterly useless creatures of no commercial value, consuming and giving nothing in return. He treated his own horse and dromedary well, and made his men do the same by those they had in charge, but from no love to the animals or feeling of kindness towards them, simply for the selfish reason that they would live longer and work better. If he could have made money by it, he would have thought nothing of flaying them alive and treating his servants in the same way. As he did not trust man so he could not trust God. As a matter of policy he would go into any temple and follow the fashion for the sake of gain, but he knew there was no God. Sometimes he thought there was a ruling devil, breaking forth in terrible storms, in torrid droughts, in earthquakes, in wasting disease, and in the hellish passions of slaughtering armies. There seemed to be nobody to take care of the world and protect a clever merchant's hard earned wealth.

Yet, after many long years of travel and scheming and toil, Yosuno was tired, and felt like giving up the terrible, continual battle of life. If there were only a safe land in all the world he would go there and spend the remainder of his days in peace, but where, throughout the earth, was this safe land to be found? So long as there were storms to rage and plagues to strike down, floods to overwhelm and fires to consume, where could safety be? And man was everywhere, false, deceitful, selfish, cruel man, viler than all the world's other evils. The merchant knew that world so well; how could he be at peace in it, even with himself? Yet there was one country he had never seen, because men told him that no large profits were to be made there. It was in Siberia, about the river Yenisei. Westward, in that land, he had seen the Ural mountains and the Obi river; eastward, he knew Lake Baikal and its mineral treasures. But, though the Yenisei kingdom was the greatest of all in Siberia, he had never gone to visit it, because it was the home of oppression and hypocrisy. One day, when he was travelling in Khira, he came to a halted caravan, which he found belonged to an old acquaintance, Sanfosi. It had halted because its master lay a-dying, so Yosuno went into the chief tent to see the dying man; not that he cared for Sanfosi but one can never tell when advantageous things may turn up. Sanfosi, was very ill and near his end, but he still had strength to guide a pencil. He asked his old acquaintance to write an order on his people in the Yenisei country to give a large stock of valuable furs to the man who should bring home his dead body, to be buried in the Siberian land. When Yosuno had written the order he signed it, and then said, "I know that nothing but your own interest would make you convey my dead body home, therefore I have signed this order. Keep it by you, and present it with my body and what remains of this caravan to my heirs, and they will reward you according to my request."

(To be continued.)