

Pastor and People.

GOLDEN GRAIN BIBLE READING.

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GOD AND THE WICKED.

How clear and strong are the statements made touching God's relation to the wicked! These are all intended to impress upon the hearts of evil men that God cannot look upon sin. He hates sin, He abhors wickedness, and whosoever is wicked on him must rest God's strong disapprobation. Just read these declarations:

The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to God. Prov. 15.26.
So is his sacrifice, and his way or life. Prov. 15.8-9.
The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked. Prov. 3.33.
The light of the wicked shall be put out. Job. 18.5.
On the wicked he shall rain snares, brimstone, etc. Ps. 11.6.
Salvation is far from the wicked. Ps. 119.155.
The Lord is far from the wicked. Prov. 15.29.
The way of the wicked is as darkness. Prov. 4.19.
The place of the wicked shall come to nought. Job. 8.22.
The years of the wicked shall be shortened. Prov. 10.27.
God is angry with the wicked every day. Ps. 7.11.
The wicked shall be turned into Hell. Ps. 9.17.
Their only hope is in turning from their wickedness to the Lord. Isai. 55.7. Ezek. 33.12.

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THE CHILDREN'S PULPIT.

EDITED BY M. H. C.

Early in the morning as soon as the birds were awake the fugitives left the shore to find the Isles of the Blest. There was no wind yet the sea was rough, although no rougher than they had often found it off the Ass's Jaw Bone. But when the sun was fully up the canoe was like a little furnace. To save fresh water they dipped their woollen bonnets in the sea from time to time till they were like cakes of salt. Polydor grumbled all the way and even asked Leon in his angry folly if he had brought him there to kill him with heat and starvation. So Leon gave him some food and water, taking far less himself and tried to cheer his cousin's heart with pleasing fancy pictures of the Blessed Isles. At last came the blessed night with a little coolness and a gentle breeze but with a clear sky and a sea almost as calm and peaceful, for the paddlers had made good headway and were now beyond the reach of the coast winds. Also about midnight the land breezes began to blow and these helped the progress of the tiny craft. Polydor slept again as Leon would not quarrel with him, saying that he had done enough slave's work for one day, but Leon staid awake and paddled alone steering his western course by the stars as he had noted the night before. It was very lonely work out there on the great ocean with not a soul to speak to, and Leon was often tempted to despair, but he thought of the great God above the blue sky overhead and trusted that He would bring him safely through. He stuck to his paddle and sang the brave battle songs of the Spartan poet Tyrtæus, which had so often cheered his countrymen in dark days and nerved them to deeds of valour.

When it was day Leon saw clearly what he had seen dimly from the African coast the great mountain which we call Teneriffe, with its lofty summit buried in the clouds. He roused Polydor from his slumbers and pointed it out to him but the ungrateful Polydor grumbled more than ever saying that he saw no Islands of the Blest but only a great rock on which he was sure no human being could live. Then a few hours later the sea breeze began to blow and with such violence that it was all the cousins could do to keep their light craft from being blown back to land again. All that day they toiled ever in sight of the wished for land yet never seeming able to get any nearer. Before night the last of their provisions had gone chiefly to Polydor. Still they held to the paddles hoping that at midnight the wind would change. Happily it did so, veering round and blowing off the African shore. The sea was still rough but the wind helped the boat's progress now instead of hindering it. As the big water bottle was now useless Leon cut it open with his long knife and spreading it out as a sail fastened it to Polydor's propped up spear. Then while his cousin again slept Leon steered the little ship over the waves. Before morning seven long leagues of sea had been crossed and the canoe glided into an island harbour and soon grated upon a pebbly beach. Then Leon prayed a short prayer of heartfelt thanksgiving and being very tired fell to sleep beside his less active cousin.

When they both awoke the sun was high in the heavens. The sleep had refreshed them but they were very hungry. It needed no persuasion to make Polydor rise and walk into the island on which they had landed and of which they did not even know the name. As they left the shore they saw more beautiful scenes than had ever met their eyes in Greece or Africa. The island was a perfect garden. Overhead were trees with many coloured flowers like the acacia in shape, with chesnuts and others that bore fruit. Sprinkled among them were laurels and Indian figs, and among the grass grew flowers like our bluebells but the bells were golden yellow and ferns of rare beauty. Many birds flew about among them and gaily dressed butterflies, while lizards of brilliant hues darted

through the blades of grass beneath. After refreshing themselves with fruit and wild grapes which grew abundantly the cousins continuing their journey saw coming towards them a man in a long dress with a tall hat on his head. This was the first person they had seen since they left the Canars on the African coast. Polydor who carried the spear stood ready to defend himself and whispered to Leon to draw his knife. But Leon told his cousin to put his spear down and use it as a staff, for the man they saw did not look like one who would do them any harm. Polydor would not advance so Leon went forward alone and bowed to the old man. Then remembering that the Canars told him the inhabitants of the Blessed Isles were of their race he addressed him in the Berber or Moorish language calling him *dada* which means father. The old man replied calling Leon his *yooos* or son and at once they entered into conversation.

Leon found that the old man was a *faycaig* or priest, that the name of the island was Literoygotto, that the people called themselves Achimenceys and that there Mencey or king named Achoron lived some distance off in the city of Teguisa. Also he learned that the king was a good and wise man, kind to his own people and to strangers. The *faycaig* asked who Polydor was and why he remained behind flourishing his foolish spear. So Leon had to tell that his cousin was a little suspicious of strangers and to shield him added that it was no wonder after the bad treatment he had met with. The old priest then invited Leon to come and rest awhile at his house and Leon overcoming his cousin's suspicions and bringing him with him, the three travelled along the road together.

The cousins spent a very pleasant hour at the *faycaig's* house and enjoyed the cakes which he baked hot for them in an oven under ground. Then he advised them to go and take service with the Mencey at Teguisa for he said King Achoron wishes all strangers to come and see him. He told them of a short road to the capital which lay through Lake Herro in the midst of which was an island where clothes and provisions were kept for the use of those who were on their way to the Talmogor or royal palace at Teguisa. Before coming to the lake they would hear the talking birds and must attend to what these said for that would make all the difference in their journey. Also they must swim over to the island for there was no boat there and if they could not swim they must wade, no matter how deep the water looked. He also advised Polydor to throw away his useless spear and told Leon he would do just as well without his long knife. So Leon left his knife as a present to the priest but Polydor said he was no fool and would keep his spear. The *faycaig* blessed the youths and they went forward on their way. It was a very pleasant way under shady and fragrant trees, over velvety grass studded with many blossoms and as they went on great flocks of brown and yellow canaries filled the air and began to sing. "Listen!" said Leon to his companion; "These are the talking birds, let us hear what they are saying." So they listened and Leon plainly heard the words of their song for he began to dance along the flowery way, keeping time to the music while Polydor stood still and flourished his spear. "Don't you hear what they say?" he called to the happy Leon. "Of course I do" Leon answered; "they sing the same thing over and over again with many changes. It is 'hope, peace, love, trust! trust, love, hope, peace! hope, hope, hope, peace, love, trust!'" "Don't you hear it too?" But Polydor scowled and said "They sing nothing of the kind. It is 'Beware, take care! take care, beware! ware, ware, beware, take care!'" And they are wise birds too for that is what people must do in the world."

Thus the two cousins went on their way listening to different songs from the same birds. And as the songs were different so were the ways of the young men. Leon's heart was full of the blessed quartette "hope, peace, love and trust till it made him skip and dance on his path like a happy child. Polydor's was full of distrust and suspicion and he marched like a soldier with ready spear and eye on every side looking for enemies. At last they reached Lake Herro without seeing a human being. It was a beautiful sheet of water but very dark because of the overhanging trees so that no one could tell how deep it was. Leon took off his ragged clothes and prepared to jump in, but Polydor said again that he was no fool to throw away the only clothes he had and leave his good spear behind. The old *faycaig* had warned them not to go round the lake for the ground was boggy and treacherous on both sides. Polydor was not the man however to care much for advice. It was true that the priest had entertained them well but all the same the old villain might only have done so to lead them into a trap. Besides had he not taken away Leon's knife and did he not want to take his spear as well! There was something wrong about that priest and he had felt it from the very first. So argued and spoke Polydor. "Good-bye, Leon" he cried as he went off to the right, "I am sorry you are such a week-minded fellow, willing to believe anybody and anything. If you get safely through, which I very much doubt I will be there on the other side waiting for my clotheless cousin." Then he plunged into the woods, spear in hand and Leon lost sight of him.

Leon was much tempted to go after his cousin because he loved him in spite of his hard ways. But the birds flocked round him with their sweet warblings of hope, peace, love and trust and the sun shining down upon the islet in the centre of the lake made it now so beautiful and so near that he plunged

into the waters and swam towards it never fearing. Soon he found that he need not take the trouble of swimming unless he liked for as he rested for a moment his foot touched the bottom of hard smooth land. So leisurely he waded over to the island. There he found many vines and fruit trees and in their midst a little stone house like a summer house in royal grounds. The door was open but nobody was there. Bread and dried fruit were on a table in the centre and more was in recesses in the wall and all around the room hung changes of clothing for the use of those who were going to see the Mencey. Leon ate some of the food, took a pitcher and filled it with fresh water of the lake which he drank amid the songs of the birds and then choosing a plain dress put it on. He also took some of the bread and fruit and another suit of clothes for his cousin and crossed over to the other side of the island. Here there was no need to wade for a bridge of stone spanned the narrow stretch of water between the island and the shore. When he reached the shore he found another stone house there and looking in at the doorway saw a man lying down upon the floor. Thinking it was his cousin he called out in Greek "Chaire!" or hail Polydor!" and walked forward to meet him, wondering that he had found his way there so soon.

Before Leon came up to him the man rose and seized a heavy club. Then Leon saw that he was a negro, very black and very large, with a fierce, savage face and bloodshot eyes. But as he had never done the negro any harm he still advanced and saluted him in the Moorish tongue. The negro held up his club for a moment then looking at Leon's kindly face and seeing that he carried no weapon he let the stick fall and asked the young Greek what he wanted there. So Leon told his story and offered the black man some bread and fruit for he knew that if he ate with him he would not do him any harm. The negro sullenly took the food for he was hungry and then feeling better told Leon how he was an outlaw. The king he said was far too good for him. He liked freedom to do as he pleased and what he pleased had not always been what the Mencey liked. He had killed some people that stood in his way and now he hated everybody because everybody looked down upon him or feared him. If Leon had turned away from him it would have been bad for him but as he trusted him he would see that black as he was he could be trusted. Then all of a sudden as if he had heard a noise he jumped to his feet again and ran off with his club into the thickets on the left side of the lake. "I hope" thought Leon to himself "that poor Polydor will not meet that man." As soon as the negro was well out of sight Leon began calling to his cousin and continued doing so till night fell. Then as he could do nothing till the morning he wrapped himself in his robes and fell asleep to dream of sweet-scented flowers and sweet-voiced birds singing ever of hope, peace, love and trust.

In the morning soon after he awoke he heard a noise the crackling sound of some one breaking through the bushes on his left. "It is that negro again" he said. But it was not; it was Polydor. And such a wretched looking creature as he was! I suppose you have never beheld. His woollen cap was gone, his sandals lost, his clothes torn and stained and his much loved spear not to be seen. He writhed rather than walked along as if he were in great pain. After Leon had given him some refreshment he told his pitiful story. No sooner had he left his cousin at the margin of the lake than he found himself in a jungle, then the jungle turned to a bog and the bog to a swamp. But for his spear with which he tried every stepping place he could not have got along. As it was he fell and sank into the mud many times. Then when he had got more than half way round he saw a gigantic black man coming towards him whereupon he hid behind a tree. The negro called to him to come out but he would not. Then there was a chase but as the black man knew the swamp well and was very active he soon caught up with Polydor. A short fight followed but the negro dashed the spear out of his opponent's hand then so beat him with his club that the unhappy Polydor lay in the mud as dead. Whereupon the black man took the spear and went his way. After a while Polydor came to himself and crawled feebly onwards through thorns and slime and stinging insects and dreadful creeping things to meet his cousin. Leon was very sorry you may be sure for Polydor's misfortune but did not dare to tell him that he also met the negro for the sufferer was in such a frame of mind that he would have suspected his cousin even of having set the outlaw upon his track. So dreadful and far reaching a thing is suspicion when we indulge it.

(To be continued.)

From the lowest place on earth it is possible to reach a high place in heaven.

A kind word will go farther and strike harder than a rifle shot.

It is possible to fail a thousand times in the eyes of men and yet succeed in the sight of God.

We are led to believe in Christ when we see him in the eyes of those we love.

If a man pray as he should, it is the prayer of faith. If a man obey as he should, it is the obedience of faith. If a man war in the Church militant, it is the fight of faith. If a man lives as a Christian and holy man, he liveth by faith. If he die as he ought, he dieth by faith. These all die in faith.