

WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

"My Grace Is Sufficient for Thee"



And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong.

II Corinthians 12: 7-10

There have been many speculations as to what constituted the "thorn in the flesh" to which St. Paul refers, but whether it was his partial blindness, his occasional prostrations (which seemed to come at the most inopportune times and caused him intense embarrassment), or some inner difficulty which tortured him, it served the high purpose of keeping this proud and fiery Spirit humble and compassionate. Only those who have had a similar experience (and all who have attained must have had it in some measure), can fully appreciate the inner agony he suffered, but which carried him to the spiritual heights. St. Augustine put it aptly when he said, "Well-nigh the whole substance of the Christian Discipline is humility."

It is not easy for the Son of Cain, imbued as he is with "pride of intellect, intolerance, and impatience of restraint," to devote himself so wholeheartedly to loving and serving others that he forgets his own problems and infirmities, even taking pleasure in "distresses for Christ's sake," but when accomplished, the reward is spiritual treasure without

price. If he be a student of occult philosophy, he is moved and encouraged to strive in this direction by the realization that the Christ, our indwelling Planetary Spirit, is constantly suffering in the cramped confines of our planet, as He makes it possible for us to obtain purer substance for our desire bodies, to unfold the *Christ within*, and thus to progress from the regime of law into the realm of "grace."

Concerning the real meaning of "My grace," Max Heindel has written: "John tells us that the *law* was given by Moses, and *grace* came by the Lord Jesus Christ. But *what is grace?* Can *grace* work contrary to law and abrogate it entirely? Certainly not. The laws of God are steadfast and sure, or the universe would become chaos.

"As *law, apart from love, gave birth to sin, so the child of law, tempered with love, is grace.* Take an example from our concrete social conditions: We have laws which decree a certain penalty for a specified offense, and when the law is carried out, we call it *justice*. But long experience is beginning to teach us that justice, pure and simple, breeds strife and struggle in increasing measure. The criminal, so-called, remains criminal and becomes more and more hardened under the ministrations of law; but when the milder regime of the present day allows one who has transgressed to go under suspended sentence, then *he is under grace* and not under law. Thus, also the Christian, who aims to follow in the Master's steps, is emancipated from the law of sin by grace, *provided he forsake the path of sin.*

"It was the sin of our progenitors in ancient Lemuria that *they scattered their seed* regardless of law and without love, but it is the privilege of the Christian to redeem himself by purity of life in remembrance of the Lord."