

HE GIVETH MORE GRACE

Annie Johnson Flint

Annie Johnson Flint was born on Christmas Eve 1866 in the small town of Vineland, New Jersey. When she was only three years of age her mother died giving birth to her baby sister. Also, her father was suffering from an incurable disease, and he willed his two daughters to be brought up as Baptists.

Annie became a Christian at the tender age of eight and was a great advocate of the idea young children *can* understand sufficient spiritual truths to be saved. In fact, she believed many of the Christian truths were often plainer to the simple faith of a child than to adults who often made it more complicated than required ... as Jesus said, **Mt. 11:25** O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. **26** Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

She was a happy and popular young girl who looked on the ‘brighter side of life’, and she loved writing poetry which often showed her caring sensitivity towards others.

After she finished high school she spent a year in teacher training, and had a position offered to her. Shortly afterwards though, she developed arthritis which grew worse until she could hardly walk. She had to give up work, her father had now died, both her adopted parents had died, and she was left with her younger sister who wasn’t well either ... Also, they had next-to-nothing to live on.

She kept writing poems and making hand-crafted cards and gift books ... two publishing companies printed some of her work. Her fingers were by now twisted with arthritis, but it didn’t stop her writing. She came to terms with her condition and in turn shared the difficult moments of her life, trying to encourage others understand the hardships of their own lives. For example, here are two verses from one of her most well-known poems, *What God hath promised*,

God hath not promised skies always blue,
Flower strewn pathways all our lives through;
God hath not promised sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.

But God hath promised strength for the day,
Rest for the labour, light for the way,
Grace for the trials, help from above,
Unfailing sympathy, undying love.

... And through these words, she believed God was using her weakness for His glory until her earthly work for Him came to its end in 1932. ... She based our hymn upon three Bible promises, firstly, **James 4:6** *But he giveth more grace* ...

He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,
 He sendeth more strength when the labours increase,
 To added affliction He addeth His mercy,
 To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.

His love has no limit, His grace has no measure,
 His power no boundary known unto men,
 For out of His infinite riches in Jesus,
 He giveth and giveth and giveth again.

James 4:6 *But he giveth more grace*. ... Even the ‘but’ is important. James was referring to the spiritual battles of the believer with various types of sin. For example, some were arguing and fighting among themselves. They were jealous of each other, and their prayers were selfish, and not God-honouring.

It is within this context James writes these words, but we can also apply them as Annie Flint did. She lost her mother, and her father ... her adopted mother and father ... she had to look after her younger sister ... as well as having to do it all with her own deteriorating condition. She trained to become a teacher for that is what she wanted to do ... teach children, however, *that* was denied her. She had no other family, - no brothers, no sisters, aunts or uncles. To say the least, her situation was quite dire!

At the age of eight though, she was born into a personal relationship with God which ‘coloured’ everything about her, for she had the confidence from Him in her heart, **II Cor. 9:12** *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.*

The second of the Biblical promises upon which this hymn was written comes from **Is. 40:29** *He increaseth strength* ... It is the promise God is always present for His people, - He gives them hope even in their trials ... Listen to this, **Is. 43:2** *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee ...* ⁷ *Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.*

Believer, you belong to God, - you are His prize, His trophy. Like Annie Flint, you mightn't have perfect use of all your faculties, but you are in the Master's hand, and you are the work of the Potter. Annie Flint, - with all her ailments, - was perfect to Him for even as God reminded Moses, **Ex. 4:11** *who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?* ... God creates no imperfections for all His work is perfect, and nothing interferes with His will.

And therefore, since He knows the way I take, He will give me the exact measure of grace when I need it. His grace is greater than anything we could ask for. It covers what we could never think of. ... It is through His saving grace we have been 'born again' ... It is through His sanctifying grace He is keeping and shaping us until the day when His glorifying grace will have reached its purpose and we stand at the Saviour's side before the Father. He gives the spiritual blessings and understanding of His Word to pursue His will ... even when it is not clear to us. His grace is greater than the power of sin and anything we face in this life.

When we feel as if we are helplessly rolling about in a pit, His hand reaches down and lifts us out and on to the rock. No matter what the circumstance, God's grace keeps His people for in His grace is the unconditional love for His children which promises never to abandon them. No matter where we are, God's love has no limit for He never becomes weary of us, and He understands,

My Jesus knows when I am lonely
 He knows each pain, He sees each care
 He understands each lonely heartache
 He understands because He cares ...
 My Jesus knows just what I need

Our hymn says, "He giveth and giveth and giveth again". His 'storehouses' are always full ... **Phil. 4:19** *my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus* ... **Rom. 8:32** *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

James 4:6 *But he giveth more grace* ... **Is. 40:29** *He increaseth strength* ... Thirdly,

When we have exhausted our store of endurance,
 When our strength has failed ere the day is half-done,
 When we reach the end of our hoarded resources,
 Our Father's full giving is only begun.

Jude 2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied ... “He giveth and giveth and giveth again”. Even should we think we have pushed His grace to the absolute limits, - He keeps on giving, for He always has more grace in abundance than we could require. No matter what our circumstances, He is never beaten nor exhausted. He loves you with such a great love, greater than you could ever measure ... and out of that vast love, He gives you His peace, **Ps. 46:2** Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; **3** Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

Wide, wide is the ocean, high is the heaven above,
 Deep, deep as the deepest sea is my Saviour’s love.
 I, though so unworthy, still am a child of His care;
 For His Word teaches me that His love reaches me everywhere.

It is a confidence we have never worked for, neither has the world given it to us. It is a peace which comes straight from the heart of God, “out of His infinite riches in Jesus” ... To show you something of the depth of His grace, look back to Calvary and see how He sent His Son to die for you there ... See how He laid all your sins upon His Beloved, and look at the pain from His head to His toes ... and the torment of His suffering ... *That* is the richness of God’s grace towards His children! Indeed, David captured it perfectly, **Ps. 13:6** I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.

His love has no limit, His grace has no measure,
 His power no boundary known unto men,
 For out of His infinite riches in Jesus,
 He giveth and giveth and giveth again.

For other poems by Annie Johnson Flint, see https://www.preceptaustin.org/annies_poems