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Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners

John Bunyan · *1666 · Bunyan's English (this hosted transcription)*

IN this my relation of the merciful working of God upon my soul, it will not be amiss, if in the first place, I do in a few words give you a hint of my pedigree, and manner of bringing up; that thereby the goodness and bounty of God towards me, may be the more advanced and magnified before the sons of men. Bunyan, 1666, Project Gutenberg #654. For grades 9–12. Quote Bunyan, not only the editor.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

How should a school read Grace Abounding as Bunyan framed it—a relation of the merciful working of God upon his soul, from a low pedigree, so that God's bounty may be magnified?

"IN this my relation of the merciful working of God upon my soul, it will not be amiss, if in the first place, I do in a few words give you a hint of my pedigree, and manner of"

Opening of the relation

Bunyan does not open with a polished reputation. He will tell the merciful working of God upon his soul, and he begins with a low and inconsiderable generation, so that the goodness and bounty of God toward him may be the more advanced and magnified. For a time he was without God in the world; God did not utterly leave him, but followed him still. Teach this as a confession of mercy, for grades 9–12. Quote Bunyan, not only an editor's preface. This is the spiritual autobiography; The Pilgrim's Progress is a different hosted work.

KEY CHARACTERS

John Bunyan
The tinker who writes this relation of the merciful working of God upon his soul

His father's house
Of a low and inconsiderable generation, named so that God's bounty may be magnified

God, who followed him still
Whose judgments, mixed with mercy, would not utterly leave him

HOW TO READ THIS RELATION

> *"IN this my relation of the merciful working of God upon my soul, it will not be amiss, if in the first place, I do in a few words give you a hint of my pedigree, and manner of"*
>
> Opening of the relation

> *"But God did not utterly leave me, but followed me still, not now with convictions, but judgments; yet such as were mixed with"*
>
> Early mercies and judgments

Grades 9–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

The Merciful Working of God

OPENING OF THE RELATION

He will relate the merciful working of God upon his soul, and first give a hint of his pedigree and bringing up, so that God's goodness and bounty may be magnified before the sons of men.

- Keep "IN this my relation," as this file prints the opening.
- The pedigree is there to magnify God, not to display a family.
- 9–12.
- Quote Bunyan, not only the prefatory matter.

> *"IN this my relation of the merciful working of God upon my soul, it will not be amiss, if in the first place, I do in a few words give you a hint of my pedigree, and manner of"*
>
> Opening of the relation

02

A Low and Inconsiderable Generation

THE PEDIGREE

His descent was of a low and inconsiderable generation; his father's house of that rank that is meanest, and most despised of all the families in the land.

- Keep the exact humility of the line.
- This is given so that mercy may be seen, not so that a later reader may sneer.
- 9–12.
- The later preaching is not this first hint of pedigree.

> *"For my descent then, it was, as is well known by many, of a low and inconsiderable generation; my father's house being of that rank that is meanest, and most"*
>
> The pedigree

03

Without God in the World

EARLY LIFE

As for his own natural life, for the time that he was without God in the world, it was, indeed, according to the course of this world. He will not pretend he was always devout.

- He tells the barren years honestly.
- Do not skip this for a later conversion scene only.
- The italics on the Scripture phrase belong to this transcription; the words are Bunyan's.
- 9–12.

> *"As for my own natural life, for the time that I was without God in the world, it was, indeed, _according to the course of this world and the"*
>
> Early life

04

God Followed Me Still

EARLY MERCIES AND JUDGMENTS

But God did not utterly leave him, but followed him still, not now with convictions, but judgments; yet such as were mixed with mercy. The relation is already about being pursued by goodness.

- Judgments mixed with mercy: keep both words.
- This is not yet the later, fuller awakening.
- Teach perseverance as God's, and then as the sinner's answer.
- 9–12.

> *"But God did not utterly leave me, but followed me still, not now with convictions, but judgments; yet such as were mixed with"*
>
> Early mercies and judgments

05

This Book, Not The Pilgrim's Progress

THE EDITION

Project Gutenberg #654 is Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, 1666. Quote this relation. The Pilgrim's Progress is another hosted work; do not treat this map as that allegory.

- Name the work exactly.
- Quote Bunyan, not only an editor.
- For grades 9–12.
- A confession of mercy, not a later slogan.

> *"IN this my relation of the merciful working of God upon my soul, it will not be amiss, if in the first place, I do in a few words give you a hint of my pedigree, and manner of"*
>
> Opening of the relation

Mercy upon a soul | A low pedigree, magnified bounty | Judgments mixed with mercy | God who will not utterly leave | A truthful relation

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 9–12

1. The pedigree is there so that God's bounty may be magnified, not as a display of family.
2. Quote Bunyan, not only an editor's preface.
3. This is Grace Abounding (1666), not The Pilgrim's Progress.
4. For grades 9–12. Mercy, judgment, and a soul pursued.

Quotations are verbatim from the Bunyan's English (this hosted transcription), Project Gutenberg #654, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/grace-abounding/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.