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HATING ONE'S SELF

BY: C. D. COLE

"Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes," Job 42:6.

If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple," Luke 14:26.

"Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts," Isaiah 6:5.

What is the opinion men should have of themselves? The world says that men should think well of themselves: the world emphasizes self-respect rather than self-denial as the proper attitude toward one's self. But the Bible emphasizes humility as against pride...it says that he that exalteth himself shall be abased, while he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. *"And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican: I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than*

the other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted," Luke 18:9-14. This is a story of two men going up to the temple to worship; the one was a Pharisee who spoke well of himself; the other was a publican who called himself a sinner who needed to trust in the blood of the Lamb. And this man who had such a lowly opinion of himself was accepted of God—he went down to his house justified while the Pharisee, who thought so well of himself, returned home a lost sinner.

Some men have what we call an inferiority complex—that means that in the presence of other men they feel their inferiority. Others have a superiority complex, that is they feel their superiority in the presence of others. Well, whether we have an inferiority complex or a superiority complex depends largely on whose presence we are in. This message does not have to do with how we feel in the presence of other men, but what we think of ourselves in the presence of God. In God's presence it is not an inferiority complex we need, but we need to abhor ourselves.

Humility does not mean an inferiority complex in the presence of men, but it means self-abhorrence in the presence of God. John the Baptist was a most humble man in the presence of Christ the Lord, but he was as bold as a lion before men. In the spirit of self-abnegation he said of Christ, *"He must increase, but I must decrease."* He must become all and in all; I must become nothing in comparison with Him.

that marks the beginning of the Christian life. Conviction of sin is a feeling of self-abhorrence. In conviction the Spirit of God pricks the bubble of human pride—the sinner explodes and all his self-righteousness vanishes into thin air. The man who thinks well of himself is his own Saviour. The man who deserves compliments from himself, as did the Pharisee, has never taken the place of a

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sinner, and the man who has not taken the place of a sinner does not trust Christ as Saviour.

2. Hating one's self is a spirit that marks progress in the Christian life. The Christian continues as he began. He began by losing confidence in self and hoping in Christ, and as he grows in grace he still has no confidence in the flesh but rejoices in Christ.

Job had been a man of God a long time when he said, *"I abhor myself..."* Isaiah was a seasoned prophet of God when he cried, *"Woe is me for I am a man of unclean lips."* Paul was a veteran apostle when he said, *"When I would do good evil is present with me,"* and

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1. Hating one's self is a spirit

THE GOD OF ALL GRACE

BY: C. D. Cole

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you," I Peter 5:10.

Notice the setting of our text. Peter is writing to suffering saints. He is writing to those whose outward circumstances were painful. He exhorts to humility, submission, and faith in their painful experiences. He urges soberness and vigilance, because the devil would use their circumstances as a means of destroying their hope, and bringing them to despair. There is a contrast here in the devil's purpose in afflictions and God's purpose. The devil would use them against us, but God makes them work for our good. The devil is seeking to devour and is to be resisted in the faith; God uses suffering as a means to perfection. *"But the God of all grace,..."* To notice this text in its fullness will require more time than the flesh will allow, but I want to speak of three things taught in it:

1. The expression, *"The God of all grace"*,
2. The believer's calling;
3. The purpose and benefits of Christian suffering.

1. *"The God of all grace."* Our text tells us that grace belongs to God--it belongs to Him exclusively. Grace is not of man's originating. We have factories for turning out many and varied products, some useful and others harmful, but there are no factories of grace. Grace is exercised by God and experienced by man. Our God is the God of all grace. Grace is that operating principle in God by which he saves sinners--no grace, no salvation. It is the source of every eternal blessing. It is that which makes God a Saviour. Grace is the need of sinners. Grace takes no account of human merit. It looks for sinners to save. Grace is the Good Samaritan on the highway from the Jerusalem of God's presence to the Jericho of the devil's planning to rescue men from the

robbers of their souls and to provide an inn for their recovery. Grace is a life-guard on the sea of sin recovering sinners from sinking in their perdition and ungodliness. Grace is God working in the flames to snatch men as brands from the burning.

"The God of all grace." Grace is manifold. It has many sides and angles. There is grace for every human need, and sin has made human needs manifold. There is:

A. Convicting grace. God is acting in grace when he shoots the arrow of conviction into the conscience making us feel that we are sinners and helpless, ruined and undone. God is acting in grace when He wounds us in our soul, and makes us cry for pardoning mercy. It is grace that kills the spirit of self-righteousness and makes men take the place of guilty, hell-deserving sinners. Grace is not operating in a human soul when that soul finds any comfort and help in self. My friend, if you are basing your hope for heaven upon anything you have ever done or ever expect to do, you are not a child of grace.

B. Pardoning grace. *"Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears removed."* Grace wounds that it might heal; grace kills that it might make alive; grace destroys false hopes that it might give the good hope in Christ; grace convicts that it might pardon; grace brings men to the end of their own way that it might show them a better way; grace preaches the thunder of the law that it might preach the Gospel of peace; grace speaks of the horrors of hell that it might proclaim the glories of heaven; grace uncovers the sore of sin that it might apply the balm of Gilead and present a heavenly physician.

C. Restoring grace. Sinless perfectionists break with grace here. But the poor David's can say, *"He restoreth my soul."* Restoring grace is for backsliders. Our souls often wander from the presence of God and seek satisfaction in the things of earth--in the things of man's providing. But God

in grace and mercy brings us back to dependence upon Him and rest in the work of His Son.

There is grace for every human need: convicting grace, pardoning grace, restoring grace, keeping grace, dying grace, and supporting grace.

D. Keeping grace. Here is another point on the highway to glory that men break with grace. They fall out with grace and walk no more with her. They want grace to forsake the sinner and leave him to the fate of his own sin and folly. *"For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off,"* Psalm 37:28. *"Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time,"* I Peter 1:5.

E. Dying grace. *"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me,"* Psalm 23:4. Dying grace is for the dying hour. No use asking for it till we need it. God abandons the saint at no point of the journey from the city of destruction to the city beautiful.

F. Supporting grace. *"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,"* II Corinthians 12:9.

2. **The believer's calling.** Now the God of all grace hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus. Here is calling or regenerating grace. To be

saved, sinners must be called of God. I sometimes think we magnify the means of grace above the God of grace. We may have all the means of grace, but without the God of grace to make the means of grace effective, there will be no blessing. What are sermons and prayers and ordinances unless the God of grace operates directly upon human souls? Beneath the streets and pavements of our cities there are pipes and tubes. What are they there for? To convey water, but of what use are they if there be no water to flow through them? Will iron pipes of themselves bring water to your bathroom? What is the ax good for if there is no woodmen to wield it? So what is all our praying and preaching? They are mere pipes and need the water of grace to flow through them if they are to be any benefit to human souls. *"For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase,"* I Corinthians 3:4-7.

Notice this calling is of God:

A. It is effectual. All who receive it are saved. It gives life to the dead. *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live,"* John 5:25.

B. It gives eternal benefits. *"Unto His eternal glory."* Saints are not there yet, but this is the end of their calling, and the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

C. It is through Jesus Christ. Apart from His atoning death there would be no regenerating power from God. Grace gave Christ to die, and grace sent the Holy Spirit to quicken unto life.

3. ***"...after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."***

A. Here is God's will for His saints. What do we think of it? Do we

delight in God's arrangement for us. Few can say with Paul, *"If I must needs glory, I will glory in the things that concern my infirmities."* Again he says, *"I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches,*

"Grace is everything for nothing; Christ free, pardon free, heaven free."

in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong."

Grace is more powerful than sin. Here is the sinner's only hope, although until quickened by the Spirit of grace, he does not know it. No man can rescue himself from the tyranny of sin. Sin is too much for any man. Men are taken captive by the devil (II Timothy 2:26). Men may reform, but they cannot regenerate themselves. They may give up their crimes and their vices, but they cannot give up their sins. *"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil,"* Jeremiah 13:23.

Salvation by grace means that God is to have all the praise for our salvation. The Father is to have all praise for providing the Saviour; the Son is to have all the praise for performing the work of salvation; and the Holy Spirit is to have all the praise for promoting salvation in us by convicting us of sin and bringing us to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Grace," cried Spurgeon, "is everything for nothing; Christ free, pardon free, heaven free."

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when he cried, *"I know that in me that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing."* Peter had been a long time with Christ when he said, *"Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord,"* Luke 5:8.

Self depreciation is in proportion to our appreciation of Christ. The better one knows himself the less he thinks of himself. The worst of men have been braggarts; the best of men have been beggars before God. The man of sin, the Anti-Christ, is going to think so well of himself that he will make himself the object of worship.

The hope of the believer is not in his own goodness but in God's grace. The more good the believer does, the more good he sees that he has left undone.

Below are some ways to determine how sinful we are:

1. Compare our obedience to men with our obedience to God. Do you make the same effort to obey God that you do to obey men? Are you as particular to meet obligations to God as you are to men? Are you as careful to honor God as you are your mother or father?

2. Consider our motives in Christian work. Will you do more for self than for Christ's sake? Would you go to church twice every Sunday if you were to get \$10 for going? Will you do something for \$10 that you would not do for Christ's sake?

Would you give more than you are giving if what you gave was to be put up on the blackboard so it could be seen by men? The church is supported on a principle that makes it easy for a man not to give who does not want to give. Most pastors know very little about how the members of their church give. They know there are tithers and some members who are regular and faithful in their giving the year round, but how the vast majority give, they know little about it and nobody else knows.

3. How about the interest you take in your own business in comparison with the interest you take in the church, the business Christ founded to

look after his interests. Are you as careful to see that the church prospers as you are to make your own business prosper?

In Ephesians 2:3-5, we are told that *"we were by nature children of wrath...but God, who is rich in mercy...quicken us together with Christ."* And in Titus 3:5, we read that it was *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit."* It was in mercy that Christ died for us, and it was also in mercy that the Spirit enlightened our sin darkened understanding.

The contemplation of God's mercy fills the redeemed soul with humility and praise, two virtues of great value in the sight of God. And whatever God values ought to be sought after by us. If God hates pride, I ought to seek to be humble. If God is pleased with a spirit of thankfulness, I ought to seek after a thankful spirit. It is natural to seek those things which are prized by men; it is supernatural to seek that which God approves. The world admires the proud and self-sufficient spirit, and therefore, it is men like Napoleon and other men of war who are the world's heroes. But it is the meek and quiet spirit that is of great price in the sight of God. *"But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price,"* I Peter 3:4. And there is nothing that will make us more humble and thankful than the contemplation of divine mercy. Mercy reminds us of our miserable condition as children of wrath. Mercy explains our salvation. Without mercy we would be consumed by the wrath of God's justice.

Here is the obligation of the saints: we owe our salvation to the mercy of God in Christ. No man can appreciate the mercy of God who feels that he deserves salvation. Deserving mercy is a contradiction of terms. In humility and praise let us attribute our salvation to the mercy of God!