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COME

BY: C. D. Cole

Come, a simple word. But it is often wise to think over well known things. We can all use words so often that we quite miss their meaning. How many speak, or even sing, of "Salvation," "Faith," "Eternal Life," "Heaven," and "Hell," and hardly care at all. This is dangerous. Never speak without thinking. Never sing, unless you sing the truth, in your own knowledge or experience.

"Come" is a word of motion: it means much more than mere imagination, and more than mere talking. In its "root" meaning it often brings before us a personal power. And it shows us two places: the place *from* which one comes, and the place *to* which he comes. And "come" is not "go:" it implies that "I" am in the place "to" which the journey is made. And my heart rejoices to tell of the greatest journey. The Lord Jesus Himself said, "*I am come that they might have life*", John 10:10, and again "*The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost*," Luke 19:10. And the Holy Spirit ever reminds us of such grace, "*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*," I Timothy 1:15.

How thankful are some of us for this fact. He did not wait until we came to Him. He did not come half the way, but the whole. "*And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him*," Luke 10:34. There is wonderful grace in the simple word "come."

The Lord Jesus "was" not here, but "was" from all eternity, with God the Father, in the glory. He was not a man, but became a Man. And so He "came" -- came right down into the world. Though He had made everything, and had a right

to all, yet when He came to His own possessions, even Israel, "*He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not*," John 1:10-11. But He did not go back till He had finished His work. "*I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do*," John 17:4. And so He could say, "*I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*," Luke 5:32. And by His death salvation is free today.

And when He was raised from the dead, He went to God the Father. "*Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God*," John 13:1-3. But he will soon come back. He himself has said so, "*And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself*," John 14:3. To whom is he speaking? To his people. Only such will be glad to see him. To them he gave the final promise, "*Surely I come quickly*," and they respond, "*Even so, come, Lord Jesus*," Revelation 22:20. Everywhere we read of His coming, "*For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry*," Hebrews 10:37. "*Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him*," Revelation 1:7. It will mean his joy to receive His people, "*That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish*," Ephesians 5:27. What will it mean to

them? It will be their joy also to behold him, "*As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness*," Psalm 17:15. But what will it mean to you? To some he will come near in judgment, and the question was sounded out more than 2,000 years ago, "*But who may abide the day of his coming?*" Malachi 3:2. "*And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him*," Jude 14-15.

How can you and I be ready for him? There is only one answer. His two "comings" are united by a precious word of invitation, and it is the very same word "come." Sinners are invited to him today, for he died to save such. "*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*," Matthew 11:28. "*Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price*," Isaiah 55:1. "*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely*," Revelation 22:17. Have you felt the burden of your sins, and have you come? If not, why not? If you feel the load today, you are welcome

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WHO'S PLEASED?

By: Brian Bryant

(Member of Bryan Station Baptist Church)

Take a minute to think about "What have I accomplished up till now?" Most of us are thinking, well, I've got a pretty good job; a nice home; I've got a car, but I would like a newer one; I'm working on a decent retirement; I'm putting my kids through school (and most of us give thanks to God for them). Some of us may have different aspects of what we've accomplished up till now. But just stop and think, that at this point of His life, did Jesus have these same thoughts from time to time? You answer that for yourself.

Now ask yourself: "What have I accomplished up till now that is pleasing to my creator?" Is he pleased with my car or would he be more pleased if I walked around spreading His word. Is He pleased with the amount of production I've turned out at work, like my boss is, or would He be more pleased if I opened my mouth and told people about the one man who saved me from eternal damnation and about the joy and peace that just knowing Him brings to my life. Is he pleased that my kids are disciplined to pay full attention to their teachers at the school I've worked so hard to get them into; or would He be more pleased if I would discipline my children to pay full attention to the teacher who can teach them about their creator and the eternal life he offers.

Who and what are we really trying to please, when it comes to life outside of the church building and the watchful eye of our brothers and sisters? Have we forgotten that our Father never ceases to watch over His children? Have we forgotten that being a good church member and a good Christian extends further than the church parking lot? Are there not still lost souls out there who need our Saviour, the only way to salvation? Have we become so greedy in day to day life that we don't want to share our Saviour, or is it that we are just so afraid that our peers may think we're weird or Bible thumpers and that they might try to disassociate

themselves from us. That would be awful. We're not weird, we're chosen. What else could we ask for? What's better than being a child of the creator of the entire universe?

There is probably some man or woman claiming there is something better, but what we have is the most precious and valuable gift that we as humans can ever obtain; Jesus Christ without whom there is nothing, absolutely nothing.

It is not too hard to imagine what life would be like without our Saviour, because none of us were born saved. Just think about your life before God showed His mercy on you--what you did on a regular basis that you felt life was fulfilling. If it doesn't turn your stomach, maybe you should pray that the Lord would give you the ability to really examine yourself. When I look at my life and the things I have done, things that simply abhor our Father, it makes me want to throw up, and even now that I am saved, it is intensified.

All the things I do to please my slowly rotting flesh disgust me. I can't even imagine how our Father must feel looking down upon me. Do you find yourself like I do, constantly begging the Lord for forgiveness of your sins? It is important to have a repentive heart. But if we are always asking for forgiveness, shouldn't that tell us that we are doing entirely too much to please our flesh instead of pleasing the one who deserves everything we have to offer?

Our Bible tells us to offer our body as a living sacrifice. This sounds good, but when it comes to actually applying it to our own lives; well, that's a job we would rather put off until a more convenient time. But when does that time come? We don't know if tomorrow will come, then what? What will our excuse be? I was busy with work or my kids' soccer game, or fishing or whatever. We have got to pray and instead of begging the Lord for forgiveness all the time, pray and beg him to

increase our faith and strengthen us in such a manner that He might be put first in all things. Is He worth it? He thought you were. He thought I was.

I am no less guilty than anyone else. I was just blessed in having the Lord lay these things on my mind and heart. He put them there to be dealt with, not to be ignored. If we are not doing all we can to please our Father, it seems to me there is only one other person who is being pleased, and he doesn't deserve the satisfaction or the glorification that is due unto God, the only true and living God. Let's pray.

Look at Lot! Lot had the same Holy Spirit dwelling in him that we have in us. He faced the same difficulties we have today. Where is our faith? Is God not the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow? Will he not do the same for us is we'll only have faith in His promises? What are we thinking, people? What really matters to us here, huh? He had all the wonderful earthly things, but none of them even held a candle to His heavenly Father and His faith in knowing that all things work together for the good of His children. Is this not the same true and living God we are serving? Or maybe the question is, Is this the God we are serving?

Formula for a Strong Nation

I know three things must always be
To keep a nation strong and free.
One is a hearthstone bright and dear,
With busy, happy loved ones near.

One is a ready heart and hand
To love, and serve, and keep the land.
One is a worn and beaten way
To where the people go to pray.

So long as these are kept alive,
Nation and people will survive.
God, keep them always, everywhere—
The home, the heart, the place of prayer.
—Author unknown

GRACE AND WORKS

By: C. D. Cole

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them," Ephesians 2:1-10.

Introduction: There are two opposing theories of salvation. They are mutually exclusive and destructive. Both of them cannot be true. To hold to one is to deny the other. To be wrong here is fatal. One is the theory of salvation by grace; the other is salvation by works.

There is a compromise position that makes salvation by grace and works. But the Scriptures will not allow such a compromise. *"And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work,"* Romans 11:6.

Grace

What is grace? It is favor without recompense or merit. It is favor, not only to the undeserving but to the ill-deserving. It is God's exercise of love and mercy and kindness to those who deserve hatred, misery, and judgement.

Salvation by works means that man earns salvation by something he does. It represents God as a bookkeeper who

keeps accounts with men, charging them with the evil they do and crediting them with what good they do. If the good deeds outweigh the bad He takes them to heaven, otherwise He sends them to hell.

Salvation By Grace Established By Scriptures

We are to learn the way of salvation from the Scripture. Not by carnal reasoning. *"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe,"* I Corinthians 1:21. Every heathen religion teaches salvation by works. Every lodge that I know anything about does the same. It is a false gospel and I pronounce, in the name of Christ, a curse upon it, and upon the preachers of it. *"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 Ghost,"* Titus 3:5. *"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,"* II Timothy 1:9. *"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law,"* Romans 3:28.

The history of man is the history of sin. It is one long lurid record of fall and failure. Adam had the easiest opportunity of all. He was under but one commandment, a solitary test. And he fell. In Noah's day there was the flood, the world was soon defiled. With Moses there came a law to Israel. Did they obey it? Let the carcasses that strew the wilderness bear witness.

Why Salvation Is By Grace

No other way possible. A Holy God and a fallen sinful man make any other way of salvation impossible, and the thought of such an absurdity. Sin cannot merit salvation *"for the wages of sin is death,"* Romans 6:23. As long as God is Holy and righteous and men are sinners salvation must be by grace; without human merit.

Salvation is without human merit because all the merit necessary for salva-

tion is in Christ and His finished work. You cannot think of a human need with respect to deliverance from the guilt of sin that Christ did not meet when He died on the cross. *"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?"* Romans 8:32.

Stops human boasting. God hates boasters. *"Lest any man should boast."* Ephesians 2:9 is given as the reason why salvation is not by works. Man's right to boast depends upon his own achievements. If man could by his own works achieve salvation he would have the right to boast. Some of the harshest Christ ever spoke were spoken to the self-righteous people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others.

Makes a display of God's kindness and mercy in Christ. *"That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus,"* Ephesians 2:7.

Fills heaven with grateful beings, who will sing His praises. Heaven is full of perfect praise to God. Its every song is in honor of Father, Son and Spirit. *"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood...to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever,"* Revelation 1:5-6. But if salvation was by works the songs would be in praise of man. Each would praise his fellow or himself, and eternity would be spent in recounting personal virtues and victories. Oh! what a tiresome eternity that would be.

The black devil of unrighteousness has slain its thousands, but the white devil of self-righteousness has slain its tens of thousands.

If salvation is by works then none can be saved; if salvation is by grace then none need be lost.

Order of Grace and Works In Salvation

Our text puts grace before salvation and works after salvation. Grace is the cause of it and works are the effects of salvation.

There are two kinds of works spoken of in the Bible; good works and dead

works. Good works are pleasing to God; dead works are not acceptable to God and must be repented of. Dead works are works done for salvation. Works done for salvation are done by a sinner. To work for salvation is to confess that you are not saved. A sinner is a man dead in trespasses and sins, and the works of a dead man must be dead works.

Good works are works done because of salvation. A saved man is alive and his works are the result of life.

Good works are done by one who has been created in Christ Jesus. They are works of love. Two men can do the same thing outwardly; to the one it may be a good work, to the other a dead work. To the one who does it because he loves God, it is a good work; to the one who does it to bring God under obligation to save him, it is a dead work. The motive of love is essential to a good work. *"If ye love me, keep my commandments,"* John 14:15.

Essentials and Non-Essentials

There are some things of earth that no human pen or brush can do justice to-- storms, rainbows, cataracts, sunsets, icebergs, snowflakes, dew drops. Because God made them, man cannot describe them. Who can properly define and describe grace. Men have exhausted their vocabulary, only to confess that they have not fully defined grace.

A sign in a shop window said, "No article can be broken beyond repair; the more it is smashed the better we like it." Thus it is with the grace of God.

Grace reigns through righteousness, providing a righteousness that meets all the demands of the law. Grace is not pity; grace is not indulgences nor leniency; grace is not longsuffering. Grace provides what the law demands. Christ is the gift of grace. "Grace," cried Spurgeon, "is everything for nothing; Christ free! pardon free! heaven free!" Grace is the morning and evening star of our experience. It puts us in the way, helps us by the way, and takes us all the way.

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to "come" today. *"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near,"* Isaiah 55:6.

*In wondrous love the Saviour came
For sinners lost to die:
And to the glory of His name
To bring far off ones nigh.*

*He came to seek, He came to save,
He will not change His love;
It was "Himself" He gladly gave
To have His own above.*

*And now He waits exalted there,
And soon will come again,
The glory of His work to bear,--
No more to suffer pain.*

*"That Blessed Hope" is now in view,
And, while His people wait,
They know His every word is true,
Nor will He come too late.*

*Meanwhile the gospel message sounds,
The invitation "Come":
Free grace to sinners still abounds,
Nor can saved lips be dumb.*

*Christ came that souls to Him may come,
For such He comes again.
Their debt He paid: - how great the sum!
That such with Him may reign.*

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