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Orthodox Remnant Testimony

Gospel Tract No. 4.

The Gospel of The Grace of God— God The Great Philanthropist

Titus iii. 4.

R.T.9.

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“Jehovah your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away His face from you, if ye return to Him.” What a beautiful message to the Israelities of old smarting under the sorrows of the invasion of their country and the transportation of their relatives and friends and many compatriots to slavery by the Assyrians! II Chronicles xxx., 9. God is still the same to-day, gracious and merciful. If He were not so I would not be writing this tract. By the grace of God alone I am what I am. But for grace I would be a heinous sinner. I would have no reason to speak to you.

But we have much more reason for speaking of the grace and mercy of Our God to-day, for He has revealed Himself as a Saviour God after a much more wonderful sort than was ever known by the children of Israel. He has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ the Son come as Man, dwelling amongst men, *The Word of God made flesh*. There was never such a message as Jesus was in *Himself*. He was the Word from God the Father to sinful men, full of *grace* and truth; John i., 14. Thus did the common people wonder when they heard the *gracious* words that proceeded out of the mouth of Jesus; Luke iv., 22. What a wonderful Teacher He was! How simple yet profound! How *gracious* He was! He could be approached by anybody, and even rough soldiers sent to arrest Him knew He was no criminal and confessed: Never man spake like this Man! John vii., 46.

Sometimes I feel the theologians have rendered a disservice in talking as they have done of a “state of grace,” and the common use of the phrase “falling from grace” is mistaken. The theologians seem to treat the word “grace” as a sort of maid-of-all-work; and the great and precious thought of God as *gracious and merciful* to guilty undeserving sinners like you and me seems to be obscured if not lost. When Jesus was a child we read the grace of God was upon Him; Luke ii., 40; but He *deserved* the kindly favour of the Almighty. We do not, not one of us. I remember, in my childhood days, one Saturday morning when I had been a young scamp, (too frequent an occurrence, I fear). My Mother was feeling very angry with me just as the family doctor arrived. He was a man of God of patriarchal age and a simple but unassuming piety and holiness; and he heard with concern of my misdoings. He was obviously not in the least minded to doubt my Mother’s assertion that I did not deserve his care and treatment. He replied; “No my dear, but then if we got what we deserved, we would *all* be in hell.” I did not then realise quite how right he was. I do now. Do you? I am sorry if you are one of “the good people” who think they have no need of repentance. God has been merciful to us, or we should all be in hell.

Yes, God is *gracious and merciful*. He is not giving us what we deserve. In the Gospel He is offering us mercy and forgiveness for our sins, a free pardon for all our offences! All He requires is that we should *truly* repent for our sins and believe from our hearts in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now this grace is not a favour in the sense that there are some who benefit and some who do not. It is offered to all. Whosoever will may come! If you



miss this gracious offer you have only yourself to blame. God is not telling you what a wonderful Church He has made ready to receive you, so do not bother to tell me what you think of some of the Church people you know. He is telling you that you deserve nothing but judgment. But He is not laying a charge against you (II Cor. v., 19), and if you repent and believe, He will forgive your sins and put everything right between Himself and you. He can and will make a new man of you. If some of the Church people you know are very imperfect, perhaps you are just the man needed to help them! But you must get right yourself first, and you can get right with God by His grace and only that way.

Those who believe are justified freely by His grace; Romans iii., 22-24. That is the wonder of God's grace. God the Judge of all (Hebrews xii., 23) declares that the one who believes is cleared of every charge, not because he is innocent, but because, though he is guilty, he has truly repented and believed. These are the terms of the pardon He offers, and if you accept those terms, His pardon is yours. Our God is a Saviour God, and the message of His Gospel is that He is gracious and offering salvation to all men; Titus ii., 11. But although the offer is open to all, how sad that more do not take it up!

Let me give you an illustration. Let me suppose that you wickedly had killed my son. (That is what we men have done to God; we killed His Son). I might well be very angry, but remembering the mercy that God has shown to me, I might feel that I must not be hard or bitter about it. Now we will suppose that when you see my distress, and think about the seriousness of your offence, you feel very sorry about it and you want to put things right. You want to write me a letter, but you wonder whether you can make me understand how you feel the gravity of your wrong to me. Now the first thing you have got to do is to put across to me the sense of guilt you have and that you realise what a terrible thing you have done. Then you would want to make me feel, that you had some sense of the distress you had caused me, and that you were most anxious to make amends.

Now have you got any true sense of what *your* guilt is before God? Men *just like you and me* crucified God's Son. We are just as guilty as they were in A.D.29. If we had been there we would have done the same. We just cannot get any true sense of what it meant for God to look down from heaven and see men crucifying His Son, but we ought to try to realise what it meant. And God sent His Son to die the death of the Cross so that we should realise how much we hate God and how much He loves us. Now if you would feel you wanted to make amends to me if you had killed my son, would you not wish to make amends to God for your part in the crucifixion of Jesus? Are you really humbled by what you have done and what you are? True repentance means being broken-hearted about your sin against a loving, holy God. Now let me continue my illustration.

Suppose that instead of showing any true regret, you merely made some civil apology and then wanted to forget about your wrong. Would not that attitude be worse than the sin you committed in the first place? I cannot forget about it, can I? It hits me all the time. God cannot forget about the Cross, because Jesus is His King destined to reign over all the earth, and instead of receiving and crowning Him, men refused Him and still refuse and dishonour Him; *and* are making a terrible mess of God's world. I have gone into that in my tract "Treason and Murder—Guilty Men."

Now, to continue, I am concerned about your attitude. I want the wrong put right and a proper basis of reconciliation to be found. The first thing I must do is to bring home to you just what you have done; but suppose that I *also* make it quite clear to you, that I am willing to forgive you, if you will only show you realise the gravity of your sin and wish to make amends. What if you then say: "Why cannot you leave me alone?" Would it not be worst of all to be like that? And if I wait, patiently hoping that one day you will show a change of heart, could it not be said that every day you remain hard and unconverted from your blind indifference, you are adding to the measure of your guilt?

God is waiting to bless you, and yet every day His love and grace are ignored. One day you will have had your last chance. It might be to-day! One day you will stand before the Great White Throne of God's Judgment. The Lord Jesus Christ will be seated on that Throne. He is Judge of all. Then His face will be one from which you will wish to flee. Rev. xx., 11-15. You will then have to confess every sin of your life, the lies, the selfishness, the thefts, the lustful thoughts and acts, the little thought you have given to your Maker and the central place you have given to yourself in your life. But more than that, you could roll every such sin of your life into one as it were, and it would still be the graver sin that you failed to repent. By failing to repent you are more than *doubly* guilty.

But what of the offer of God's grace in the Gospel? God is gracious, merciful, willing to forgive, extending His hand of blessing to you with a full and free pardon for all your trespasses against Him! It is yours for the taking! Will you be guilty of spurning the love and grace and mercy of Our Saviour God? Thus you would be *thrice* guilty, guilty of sinful life, guilty of failure to repent, and guilty of refusing grace! This last is worse than *all* the rest. Suppose you are 40 years of age. Ignoring the first 12 years of your life, we will assume in your favour that you have only committed one sin each day. The indictment against you before God's Judgment-Seat will already contain some 10,220 counts. Imagine the recounting of *every* sin, with all the accuracy of an infallible tape-recorder which notes all you *think* as well as all you say and do. I will not speculate on the sins of your youth, of your maturer years or of this last year. But is there going to be another Count No. 10,221—"for that you on the day of 196—received a Gospel Tract expounding the Gospel of the Grace of God and you spurned God's offer of grace and mercy and consigned

the tract to the waste-paper basket?" *Be warned, it might be the last count of that indictment.* After death you must face the Judgment of God. It is appointed unto men once to die and after death the judgment; Heb. ix., 27.

Thus you are a sinner, utterly dependent upon God's mercy, destined for most solemn judgment if you die unrepentant, and yet God in gracious patience is waiting for you, pleading with you to accept His forgiveness. He has so great a judgment of the worth of every individual human being, that He sent His Son to die on the Cross, to give us men a chance to show what hopelessly evil, corrupt sinners we are, and so that we can see what His love is like. So God the Son became Man, in order that He might die in agony on the Cross, and thus at the cost of His own terrible suffering meet the need of man. In the Cross of Jesus we see both the enormity of sin and the majesty of God's grace. As the Lord Jesus Christ hung upon the Cross, He was mocked and reviled; yet *He was at that very moment maintaining the universe in being.* He was not less than God the Son at that moment merely because He was so evidently truly Man. Yes, *He* was maintaining in being, in life and health, the very men who maltreated Him! He is upholding *your* life now by the word of His *power*. If He chose you would drop dead. The Lord Jesus is "God in whose hand thy breath is." Have you glorified Him or dishonoured Him? Will you receive or reject Him? Consider Daniel v., 23.

The whole situation at the Cross of Jesus was utterly absurd. Fancy God letting men put Him out of His own world! And then to turn round and tell them that in the Cross of Jesus, one can learn that God the Son has died to save us from our sins! Absolute folly we would say. Yes, that is just what the Apostle Paul said. God has behaved like a fool! By the foolishness of preaching the Cross of Jesus, God is saving those that believe. What would we do if we were in God's position? Disobedient sinners defile themselves, rebel against His law, despise His mercy, insult His grace, mock at His forbearance and long-suffering, and still the *goodness* of God would lead you and all men on to repentance. If we were in the Throne of the Almighty, would we not be inclined to give such impertinent rebels seven days to lick the dust or be consigned to destruction? But God is love. When He is foolish (!) He is wiser than men. He loves you and wants love from you in return. While He mercifully warns you of judgment to come, He also implores you in His wondrous grace to respond to His patient, long-suffering love by repentance and obedience to Himself. God is, as it were, going down on bended knee to urge you to be reconciled to Him. The whole position is so absolutely incongruous it beggars comparison.

May I bid you consider these words from a Christian poet, not of great importance or distinction, nor devoid of imperfection, but vibrant with the grace and vitality of the Gospel message?

Hark, hark to the trumpet of grace from the glory
God's mercy proclaiming, so matchless and free.
It calls to a world, wretched, wrinkled, and hoary—
O youth, in thy morning it calleth to thee.
'Tis the voice of the Saviour, the Son of the Father,
Who calls from the heavens in fathomless love,
Who died that in grace He might righteously gather
The wanderers home to His glory above.

And thine eye is bright,
And thy heart is light,
And thine arms are stout and strong,
And upon thine ear
Falls loud and clear
The noise of the dance and song.
But the Saviour calls
From celestial halls
To thee on the wide world's brim;
And what dost thou say
In thy spring time gay,
O how dost thou answer Him?

O say, "I am Thine: Thou hast died to redeem me,
And borne on Golgotha the smart of my sin;
Thou hast paid the full price, from the judgment to free me,
And life everlasting, my Saviour, to win.
I am Thine, Thou art mine, my eternal salvation,
My justification, my Lord, whom I own.
In Thee do I stand clear from all condemnation,
Where flame forth the bright shining beams of His throne.
And before Thee now
In the dust I bow
And confess Thee Lord of all.
O Saviour subdue
My proud spirit thro'
Thy great love's immortal thrall.
For Thy voice still calls
From celestial halls,
And it calls in grace to me.

O Saviour Divine,
I claim Thee mine—
And this must my answer be.”
For that voice still calls
From celestial halls
Sweeter than seraphim,
And what dost thou say?
Is it Yea? or Nay?
O what dost thou say to Him?

II

Extract from “ A CONTRAST ”

Now, thou poor benighted sinner,
Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee,
By those heights of highest honour,
By those depths of misery;
By the deep despair of dying
Hopeless, Christless, and alone;
By His love all thought defying,
By His Cross and by His throne.

Trifle not: the shadows lengthen,
And the night of woe and fear,
That eternal night of weeping,
Canst thou tell thy soul how near?

Worldling, tell me, man of pleasure,
Tell me, ye who seek for gold,
Can ye save your vaunted treasure
Through the fires of judgment hold?

Tell me, will it give you pleasure
Then to know that once you fled
Far from love that knows no measure
To the dwellings of the dead?

Will your idol wealth then hanker
After you to ease your dole?
No, the rust will as a canker
- Burn and blister in your soul.

