

GRACE – A Dehumanising Idea

Christianity today has to sell itself in the spiritual marketplace by claiming that if you accept God and Jesus into your life you will find your interest in the wellbeing of others growing.

It puts that down to grace. Obviously faith and belief alone cannot cause that so it is saying that there is a supernatural effect. It is something not of this world. There is no mention of the fact that you can become atheist and feel a new drive for helping others! If there is no God for people, you have to be God for them.

According to Christian doctrine, Jesus is God's grace. He is not just an agent of grace. He is grace. To ridicule grace is to ridicule Jesus.

WHAT IS GRACE?

Christianity is a religion of grace - it is a core and essential doctrine.

Grace means gift. God supposedly gives you the ability to live a holy life and to go to Heaven forever. It is a gift meaning God is under no obligation to do it. It is okay if he does not help. Also, a gift you are obligated to accept is not really a gift. A gift that is forced on you when you cannot speak for yourself is not a gift either.

Christianity says that it is a difficult faith and the faith of the cross. God will never ask you to do what he does not make possible for you to do he expects sainthood from everybody. So the doctrine by default is judgemental. It blames you for the starving children.

Christianity says that a proper relationship with God is hard work and that all worthwhile relationships are. It says it is not cruel in giving people this faith for they have God to help them with his grace. The problem for atheists is that it makes the issue very black or white. If there is no grace then Christianity is evil and a self-imposed prison. If there is then fair enough. But both informed atheists and informed Christians should not see becoming and staying Christian as a small affair. It is of great importance and not to be trivialised.

THE DOCTRINE EMPOWERS FAITH SYSTEMS

Christians however have no problem trying to force this gift on a baby in baptism. They tell you that you are obligated to accept God's grace for the only thing that keeps you out of Heaven is sin. And the only remedy for sin the grace of conversion and repentance and amendment of life. Is it really a gift to believe that God has the right to abandon us? Even if God does not abandon us, the fact remains that he would still be perfectly good and worthy of praise if he didn't. Would you adore a saint who feeds the starving and saves millions of lives but who believes that she has the right to have them executed if she feels like it?

Thus the notion of God's grace is incoherent. It is not as nice as it looks and has a sick nasty side. So what is going on with this grace doctrine?

Christianity only talks about grace for the following reasons:

To make people think that the Church's preaching enables grace

To make people think that the Church's sacraments enable grace

To invent an excuse for Jesus Christ having to die on the cross. He supposedly had to earn grace on our behalf.

To make people think that when they improve as people it is God's doing not theirs. Thus they will feel they need the religion and use it to handle the degradation of believing that your goodness is not really yours.

To get parents to bring the baby to the Church for the grace of forgiveness that is given through baptism. A gift given to a baby is not a gift in any real sense.

People who think they have experienced grace, mean, "If it were not for God I would be so bad." They may not react with hurt and anger if somebody verbally abuses them and they think they should. They think that God is responsible if they do

not. That is a terrible attitude towards yourself. Usually they see other people reacting with hurt and anger if it happens to them and they marvel that they are different and superior. That is where their attitude is coming from. In fact people reacting with hate and anger is just as usual and normal as people reacting with mercy and love. The real appeal of the doctrine of grace is in its implicit ignorance and cynical and narrow attitude to human nature. The person of grace will be nice for a while but the poison starts off with an imperceptible simmer and it will boil up in time. And the poison is grace itself - the arsenic of the religious world.

GRACE ASCRIBES ALL THE GOOD IN US TO GOD BUT NOT THE BAD

Believers insist that if God creates truly autonomous beings with the authority and power to choose his way or a bad way then he is not morally responsible for any choices they make. If he is then he is worse than them for he is the reason they do wrong. Now they are quick to make him responsible for their good choices. But it cuts both ways. He has to be responsible for the bad as well. Faith in God then is fundamentally immoral and immature for it is in denial of that. The ascription of goodness to God comes from the notion that God only creates good things and his gift of grace lifts you above your human tendency to sin. So here we have God not only making good but intervening miraculously with the help of grace to turn you from a vice person into a virtue person.

DESTROYS RAPPORT WITH OTHERS

If you find a sick stranger and help him, what if he holds that some God or supernatural power MADE you help him though you felt you were doing it freely?

If God comes first then if the person has a choice between believing you did it or God must choose God even if it is only erring on the side of caution.

In the past, if people in poor countries were suffering there was nothing you could do about it. That led to people ignoring the suffering and failing to notice that finally something could be done. Many suffered and died by the time they realised. Grace did nothing to stop the illusion but believers insult those who died by saying it did. But it was still very late and any lateness is too much.

BAD PLACEBO

Why is it so important to religionists to put out their ethics but have little or no concern about how and why most people disobey the moral codes? Is it because they hope for a miraculous change – do they think knowing the moral truth magically increases the odds of living that truth? They keep hoping that the incorrigible will change even when the evidence is that they don't. That is a clear example of religion promoting doctrines and sacraments to give useless help. Grace becomes an excuse for doing something about the problem that may as well amount to nothing.

The notion of grace is preposterous for we never get enough – we always need more. If God does not give us enough at a time or lets it fade away he is causing us to sin and is an evil God.

Some reason that when God heals some weaknesses that he must be exposing us to sin and be sinning. This is only right if the remaining ones will not affect us. He is not leading us to sin. The Church says that nobody can blame God for their sinning for we always get grace to fight temptation.

The Church says that no matter how great your struggle against temptation is, grace enables you to resist (2 Corinthians 12). The interesting thing about this is that if grace is with you then there is no huge struggle. God is wasting grace and energy for a small struggle would suffice. The doctrine of grace is proven false by interior struggles over abortion and divorce in the Catholics who feel they need to do one of these.

Some Protestant groups following Roman Catholicism tell us that people can do real good without grace but that these kindnesses are not pleasing to God. It is only works that are done with his help that please him. The Catholic A Catechism of Christian Doctrine says, "We can do no good work of ourselves towards our salvation; we need the help of God's grace" (page 23).

The Protestants will deny that salvation depends on works but will agree that God cannot be pleased by good deeds which his grace has not brought about. The Christian religion says that faith and charity are supernatural gifts from God.

So we cannot trust or serve God unless he enables us to. This is really a denial of free will. If we cannot please God without his help then there is no free will. And if we can believe and do good without grace then God is refusing to respect our free will by pouring scorn on our efforts. If he belittles it then it is bad and if he is good then we are not free and if we are not free he is wicked for letting us sin and suffer.

If we possess free will and cannot love God by ourselves then God must magically prevent us from choosing him by limiting our power of choice. His so-called grace is just restoring the freedom and so is no more a grace than the ability to choose anything else.

It is approbation for unjust discrimination to maintain that God will not be pleased by graceless good works and only pleased by ones done with his assistance. If God is good then to do any good is to please him and is indirectly honouring him. God rejects the honour. He says it does not please him and slanders those who offer it by saying that they cannot do anything for him.

HOW?

How could God give grace? By putting thoughts or feelings or both in us. He cannot force us to choose by making our will go the way he wants for then he is not giving us grace but is controlling us. If it is good of him to force, then we should not be free at all and only able to do good when he has put us here to choose between good and evil. If God makes me give alms then I have not done it but God has given the alms. He made the decision for me. If God puts feelings in us to influence us then it is crazy if he will only be pleased by actions that are caused by the feelings he caused and not by our own feelings. That would be pettiness and eccentricity and outright injustice. But if he puts thoughts in us the same problem happens. The Christian understanding of grace is unacceptable and many would add insulting and bigoted. If God influences our will it is not because he thinks that any good we do will not please him without it.

We want people to find us lovable. If we think we are causing people to love us say by magic that love will not satisfy us. It is manipulation that is causing the love. The love isn't real for it is not us that is found lovable but magic making people think we are lovable. It is about the magic and not us. Christianity teaches that God enables his true followers to love one another and that this love is not natural but a supernatural gift of God called grace. It is another way of saying that real love is magic. The Church says love needs to be a gift from God and not our creation for we are so bad and stupid and imperfect. This wouldn't be love. God and love are irreconcilable. Prayer is basically asking God to help us love him and others far more or to start loving others as God wants. Prayer is evil. To derive satisfaction from it is delusional.

IT DOES NOT WORK

Grace has God helping us to do evil by making us foolish and disordered and then he gives grace proving that he should not have made us sinful. What sense does any of this make?

GRACE AND SALVATION

The Protestant Church, like the Catholic Church, views grace as being absolutely essential for salvation and tells us we cannot even try to love God without grace. It says we cannot please God by our natural powers alone.

Protestants and Catholics both believe you can get grace by prayer. The Catholics add the idea that the priests are the channels of grace through their power to give the sacraments. The sacraments of the Catholic Church are seven rites that are believed to give grace. An example is baptism. Another one is the sacrament of ordination which the Catholic Church maintains only a properly ordained bishop can give. The sacrament is defined as an outward symbol of grace that actually gives the grace it pictures to the soul.

The word grace means unmerited favour. Grace cannot be earned but it is a free gift from God. It is a favour. When God forgives you, his pardon is an act of grace.

The Bible says that grace has made Christians God's children (John 1).

Paul states that only by the power of the Holy Spirit can one pray or believe (1 Corinthians 12:3).

Ephesians 3:16 asks that people will be strengthened by the Holy Spirit. Paul blessed the people he wrote to asking that God's grace would be with them. Paul declared that if anyone is in Christ he is a new creature and that this change is from God (2 Corinthians 5:17-18). Jesus said that it is impossible for a rich man to get himself into the kingdom of God but only God can make him fit to enter so he cannot get saved on his own.

All people would agree that they are weak and need a magic or paranormal power to help them overcome their baneful tendencies. Religion offers God's grace as the solution for it supposedly enables all to be nicer and holier.

God is grace. God is spirit and he is his power so to receive his help is to receive him. If God is one and infinite then he can't give you a bit of himself but all of himself. He gives all of himself for he has no bits or parts. The notion of getting

some grace is mathematically absurd. If we have grace then we are not weak. We are weak so we have no grace.

Christians reply that God offers us perfection but we do not take it and we restrict the work he wants to do in us. This is absurd for God commanded perfection and none of us can achieve it so weakness must be to blame. Grace is supposed to heal weakness not be blocked by it. Their answer doesn't work.

If you do not ask for all of God then you are asking for none. Some think that religion says that it is a sin to ask to be perfect for God has revealed that we will sin until we die if we are lucky enough to go to Heaven. This would be a sin in the sense that you are trying to prove to God you are right and you can be perfect. But God has commanded us to strive for perfection even if we will never attain it. Religion has pronounced that there is no grace in one that does not want it.

It doesn't bother religionists that grace makes nobody perfect. It should.

The doctrine of grace is offensive and makes no sense. It is often really an excuse for sectarian bigotry and arrogance. "Oh we are better than those people for at least we have some grace.

We have God's favour."

Conclusion

The doctrine of divine grace is stupid and dangerous. It is just a ploy for Catholic priests to get controlling you and make you think you need them to give grace to you in their sacrament rites. Grace given to the deserving is still a gift but what difference does that make? Gift or not you think you deserve it and it will make you as proud as it would if you earned it.