

Grace.

the unmerited favor of God

A group of seminary students were having a debate about what made Christianity different than all other faiths. The discussion was inconclusive. Other religious groups held to belief in: incarnation, resurrection, charity, humility, miracles, etc. Towards the end of the conversation C.S. Lewis walked in and they ask him the question, "What makes Christianity different than all other religions?" "That's easy," he said, "grace." Yes, that's it, grace. Other faiths have their laws, their rituals, their holy men and orders. The story of Jesus Christ is the story of God's grace. Grace, beside being the unmerited favor of God, is also nothing less than the overshadowing and indwelling power of God. Paul described it saying, "It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do His good pleasure." Sometimes we hear people attempt to explain their actions or behavior (usually bad) as "I don't know what came over me," or "I don't know what got into me." Similar language may be used in describing grace, except we do know what came over us and what got into us. John Wesley described his salvation experience and what happened to him at Aldersgate, listening as someone read from Luther's *Preface to the Epistle to Romans*. "While he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed." Grace is the loving-kindness of God moving as a divine wind through the aeolian chambers of the heart and inner-man. The result is a certainty, be it conviction of sin or conviction of salvation, conviction it is, and it is the finger of God. Jesus told Nicodemus that the "wind bloweth where it listeth... and so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." The Book of Genesis speaks of the Spirit of God moving on the face of the waters. Unless God moves, unless God acts, nothing good happens. Grace is something good happening. "It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do His good pleasure." -id

