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THE REFUGE OF LIES

BY: C.D. COLE

"Judgments also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place," Isaiah 28:17.

The word "refuge" implies danger or distress. A refuge is a place one flees to for protection or safety in time of danger or distress. Back in 1937, the flood waters in Kentucky and other states forced many thousands to flee from their inundated homes to other parts of the country for safety. These people were called refugees. Whole cities like Paducah had to be evacuated and smaller towns like Benton and Mayfield had to house these refugees in schoolhouses, church buildings and private homes. There are many displaced persons in the world today. People who have had to flee from home and country to escape the wrath of wild men like Hitler.

Now the Bible is our authority for saying that a great peril is confronting this world of mankind. God the Creator and Judge of all the earth has been insulted and rebelled against by men, and His righteous wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

Because of sin and judgment to come, every man in his natural state is in danger. He faces an awful peril. He needs a place of refuge; a place of safety in the coming day of judgment.

Numerous are the stratagems of Satan to ruin men, but I believe his most successful trick is to get men to trust a false refuge. Satan does not object to a man getting religion if he can get him to take the wrong kind. He does not care for the soul becoming sin-sick, if he can prescribe the remedy. He does not object to the sinner becoming frightened, if he can designate

the refuge. And Satan's refuges are all refuges of lies, they are false plans of salvation.

SINNERS OFTEN FEEL THE NECESSITY OF A REFUGE.

This feeling is sometimes:

1. From a sense of guilt. I suppose every man has at one time or another had a feeling that he was a guilty sinner before God. Even the heathen have these workings of conscience, these pangs of guilty fears. And they have their refuge from the danger of approaching judgment.

2. From the tragic events of life. Sudden adversity, like the loss of property, or health, or a loved one sometimes awakens the conscience of men and arouses them to think about a refuge.

3. From the supposed nearness of death. Men who mock at religion in health have been known to quail and tremble at the approach of death. Nearly all criminals become religious before they go to the chair or scaffold. People turn to preachers when their time comes to die.

4. Under the alarming influences of the preached word. Felix trembled at the preaching of Paul. Many tremble who never trust. Like Felix they put off the matter of a refuge for a more convenient time.

SINNERS OFTEN BETAKE THEMSELVES TO REFUGE OF LIES.

There is only one safe refuge. Only one refuge that will be a shelter in the coming storm of judgment. Let us think of some of these refuges of lies:

1. Reformation. Reformation is self-improvement. It is giving up the grosser sins of life, such as drinking, gambling, swearing, etc. These things ought to be given up, but this is not the way of salvation. This would make self the Saviour and

give no place for Christ, the real Saviour.

2. The general mercy of God. Under a sense of guilt, men often find relief in the thought that God is merciful; too merciful to punish them in hell. I shudder as I think that for years this was my only refuge. In those days if you had asked me how I expected to escape punishment for my sins, I would have said that God is a merciful God, and that His mercy would take care of me. I did not then see that the channel of mercy is the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is God's mercy-seat. Come to Him.

3. Joining the church. There are others who think the church is a safe refuge. And under a sense of guilt, they will join some church and vainly hope they are safe.

4. The virgin Mary is the refuge of many. From the R.C. Mass Book we read: "We fly to thy patronage, O Holy Mother of God! Despise not our prayers in our necessities, but deliver us from all danger, O ever glorious and blessed virgin."

THE ONLY SAFE REFUGE IS JESUS CHRIST.

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," Acts 4:12. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," I Timothy 2:5. "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," Hebrews 9:26. "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high," Hebrews 1:3.

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THE REIGN OF GRACE

BY: C. D. COLE

INTRODUCTION: Grace is God's disposition of favor towards the sinner; His work of favor for the sinner, and His product of favor in the sinner. It will help us to understand grace if we see that it is contrasted with law in its origin and nature; with sin in its issue, with works in the plan of salvation, and with debt or obligation as the moving cause of salvation.

Every aspect of salvation is of grace, it is always God doing good for those who were against him.

In Romans 5:20-21, Paul personifies sin and grace and speaks of them as two royal figures, two queens on their thrones. He then shows what each gives to her subjects. Sin has death in her painted hand; grace has eternal life in her white and charming hand. Our text suggests several thoughts:

1. Grace is more powerful than sin. Here is the sinner's only hope although he does not know it until quickened by the Spirit of grace. No man can rescue himself from the tyranny of sin. Men may reform, but they cannot regenerate themselves. They may give up their crimes and vices, but 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.

2. Grace reigns lawfully. It reigns through righteousness. Grace is not against law and justice. God in grace honored His law by giving His Son to satisfy the law through suretyship engagements.

3. Grace reigns by Jesus Christ. Christ not the source but medium of grace. Grace has its source in the sovereign will of God. The word reign suggests a king or queen on a throne. And a throne speaks of power and resources. Power and resources of nations are thrown into war. The power of grace is the power of God. This makes it fitting to speak of irresistible grace. Surely we can speak of an irresistible God! God is irresistible in salvation as well as in judgment. *"There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou*

that judgest another?" James 1:12.

4. Grace reigns in every phase and step of salvation. "T'was grace that brought me safe thus far and grace will lead me home." Salvation is a comprehensive all inclusive word including all the aspects and stages of deliverance from sin. Sin is an awful thing and salvation is a glorious work. It takes many words to fully set forth the whole of salvation. In its full sense, salvation began back in eternity, in the purpose of God and is completed when the sinner is raised from the dead with a body fashioned like unto the body of Christ. Last enemy to be destroyed is death.

a. Grace reigns in election. What was the first thing God ever did for His people? It was to choose them for Himself and to Himself with the purpose of saving them. Election is of grace. *"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace,"* Romans 11:5. *"And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth,"* II Thessalonians 2:10-13. Two things in this text: first, why men are saved; and second, how they are saved. Saved because God chose them to salvation, therefore, God is to be thanked for their salvation. And they are saved by being sanctified by the Spirit and by believing the truth, Gospel truth. Now why did God choose us? Was the ground of His choice something foreseen in us, or was it grace in Himself. *"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace,"* Romans 11:5.

b. Grace reigns in conversion. In conversion a change is wrought in the sinner. Change from darkness to light and from death to life, and from the power of Satan unto God. Change of opinion so he believes what he once rejected; a change of

affections so he loves what he once hated. What explains such a change? Does the sinner convert himself? Does darkness create light? Does death beget life? Now if God converts the sinner, does he do it as a matter of obligation or of grace? *"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,"* Ephesians 2:8-9. Paul said in I Cor. 15:10, *"But by the grace of God I am what I am."*

c. Grace reigns in our calling. *"And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood,"* Galatians 1:14-16. *"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. *"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"* Romans 8:31.

d. Grace reigns in justification. *"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,"* Romans 3:24.

e. Grace reigns in glorification. *"Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified,"* Romans 8:30. Glorification is the completion of salvation. God puts the finishing touch on the product of His grace. Crowning act of salvation when we shall be made personally glorious in a glorious environment. It is the redemption of the body for which we groan and wait. *"And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body,"* Romans 8:23. Let time put wrinkles upon the brow, let sorrows scalding tears wet the cheeks, let sickness and pain twist and torture it into a shapeless mass, let it lie on foreign soil the victim of Hitler's rage, let death turn it into a veritable dustheap, still grace

shall win for us and fashion this body into a glorious body. *"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ,"* I Peter 1:13.

Grace first contrived the way
To save rebellious man
And all the steps that grace display
Which drew the wondrous plan.

Provisions of Grace. Grace like the good Samaritan not only meets the present emergency, but makes provision for future needs. Grace overlooks nothing. Conversion is grace's first aid station on the field of battle; glorification is our complete recovery in the Father's house. Grace turns nobody away in this day of salvation. In grace Jesus said in John 6:37, *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me: and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."* He gives all a gracious invitation and assures a hearty welcome. Tho vile as Manassah, filthy as Magdalene, guilty as the cross thief, he will turn none of the poor in spirit away. His heart is lined with sweet compassion and his hands hold the richest gifts. He has supplies for all wants, legs for a lame beggar, eyes for a blind beggar, cordial for a faint one, garments for a naked one, a fountain for a filthy one, and a rope for a sham beggar who asks for mercy and talks of merit.

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be.

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**THE HAIL OF JUDGMENT
SHALL SWEEP AWAY
THE REFUGE OF LIES.**

The day of judgment will test all the refuges. One religion is as good as another until the day of judgment comes. Psychiatrists are recommending religion, just any religion, to their patients as a cure for mental and physical disorders. And most any religion will help so far as the ills of this life are concerned. But when the day of judgment comes, when the wrath of God is poured out there is only one Ark that will come through, the Ark of Christ. Those in Him will be safe; all others will be lost.

Let us look a moment at this idea that

one religion is as good as another if one is sincere. Now I cannot judge as to the sincerity of any man in his religion. I cannot judge motives. So far as I know every communist is sincere in his religion that there is no God. So far as I can judge the heathen are as sincere in their worship of idols as I am in worship of the true and living God. Sincerity is no substitute for the truth. Isaiah describes the worship of the idolater. He holds his idol in his right hand and does not know that he is holding a lie, trusting something that cannot save him. He is sincere but ignorant.

Was Paul's religion before he trusted Christ as good as after his faith in Christ? He was just as sincere before as he was after. He was just as sincere when he rejected Christ and persecuted His people as when he trusted Him and gave his life in service for Him. Paul's old religion as a Pharisee was better for him so far as the comforts of this life were concerned. Before his faith in Christ, Paul was popular with his own people, but after trusting Christ to be his Saviour, he suffered many things, and his life of suffering ended in death as a criminal under the law of Moses and Caesar.

The only safe refuge is saving faith in Jesus Christ our Lord. All the elements in saving faith may be brought out by the use of an old illustration. The thoughts, feelings, and actions of a person who stands by a boat upon a small island which is threatened by rising waters, will represent the whole of saving faith. The person first regards the boat from a purely intellectual point of view. He believes the boat actually exists, just as the sinner believes there is a God and that there is a Saviour. As the stream rises and swells, the man will look at the boat with some sense of emotion and feeling of interest. And so the sinner under conviction of sin has a feeling of concern for his safety. When the man sees the rushing tide is about to sweep him into the raging waters, he gets into the boat as the only way of escape. Getting into the boat is what actually saves him, and he cannot be said to have trusted the boat until he gets into it. And so the sinner may believe that Christ is the Saviour, but he is not saved until he gets into Him by faith, not saved until he relies upon Him for salvation. The very essence of faith is reliance or trust. Every believer gladly confesses: "I broke God's law, Christ came between, I'm depending on Him to save."

My dear reader, if you are lost, let me urge you to acknowledge before God and men that you have no righteousness of your own, and then trust Jesus Christ for the righteousness He has provided by His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross. Then you can say with Isaiah, *"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation: He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness,"* Isaiah 61:10.