

Grace, a Free Ride to Heaven?

Appendix iii

## THE PROTESTANT'S INDULGENCES

**Roman Catholics and Indulgences.** "In the Sacrament of Penance the guilt of sin is removed, and with it the eternal punishment due to mortal sin; there still remains the temporal punishment required by Divine justice, and this requirement must be fulfilled either in the present life or in the world to come, i.e., in Purgatory. An "indulgence" (payment) offers the penitent sinner the means of discharging this debt during his life on earth." [newadvent.org/cathen/07783a.htm](http://newadvent.org/cathen/07783a.htm)

In a high school history text years ago I was taught (I think) that Luther's rebellion to Rome was due to the selling of indulgences for money that was needed to build on to Saint Peter's Basilica. I understood he was chagrined that the salesman from Rome would sell "indulgences" for future sins in addition to present ones in order to put more money into Rome's coffers. Luther had appealed to Rome to give the money to the poor and to use the Pope's gold to pay the expenses. It was followed by Luther's *Ninety-Five Theses*, his excommunication from the Western Church, the Emperor's outlawing him, his marriage (he was a priest and forbidden to marry), and his translating of the Latin Bible into vernacular German.

Someone has remarked that they thought the Reformation's basic doctrine was a knee jerk reaction to the abuses of the Roman Church. If so, then it can readily be seen how that the doctrine of "unmerited grace" would catch on so easily. The people were used to having to come up with money for the indulgences that was required of them. This new teaching replaced the obligation to pay indulgences. If grace took care of all sins and it was free without having to pay Rome (or the priest) money, then grace was more attractive. Money always talks. Luther's ideas were more acceptable than the old ideas of Rome.

It is easy to see how free "grace" in saving one's soul from all sins became the desired replacement for indulgences. Why, a person did not have to do anything to be saved. God did it all. Augustine's Latin writings had taught that man was not a free moral agent and relied solely upon God for sanctification. Luther and later Calvin revived his teachings. Eventually as some consistency set in among Protestants on grace not requiring works, babies were not "baptized" anymore for the remission of sins. Babies were still "baptized" but in a ceremony of dedication. God's free grace removed any need to be baptized or to do anything for salvation. God had done it all. Eventually, the idea of any works to be obeyed were "demoted" to ordinances of the various "churches".

That could be the excuse for the free grace when the Protestants sought to reform the Western Catholic Church. What would be the excuse for this revival of the Reformation's "grace" error within the Restoration Movement??? Are Jesus' commands that "grievous"? Jesus promised, "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:30). It doesn't cost you very much: just your heart and soul.

*"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1, NKJV)*

But look at the benefits and "returns"!