

SAVED BY GRACE

by John Bunyan

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SHEWING,

1. WHAT IT IS TO BE SAVED.
2. WHAT IT IS TO BE SAVED BY GRACE.
3. WHO THEY ARE THAT ARE SAVED BY GRACE.
4. HOW IT APPEARS THAT THEY ARE SAVED BY GRACE.
5. WHAT IS THE REASON WHY GOD SHOULD CHOOSE TO SAVE SINNERS BY GRACE RATHER THAN BY ANY OTHER MEANS.

TO THE READER.

COURTEOUS READER,

In this little book thou art presented with a discourse of the GRACE OF GOD, and of salvation by that grace: in which discourse thou shalt find how each person in the Godhead doth his part in the salvation of the sinner.

1. The Father putteth forth his grace, thus.
2. The Son putteth forth his grace, thus.
3. And the Spirit putteth forth his grace, thus.

Which things thou shalt find here particularly handled.

Thou shalt also find in this small treatise the way of God with the sinner as to his CONVERSATION, and the way of the sinner with God in the same: where the grace of God and the wickedness of the sinner do greatly shew themselves.

If thou findest me short in these things, impute that to my love of brevity.

If thou findest me beside the truth in aught, impute that to mine infirmity.

But, if thou findest any thing here that serveth to thy furtherance and joy of faith, impute that to the mercy of God bestowed on thee and me.

Thine, to serve thee with what little I have,

J. BUNYAN

EPHESIANS 2:5

BY GRACE YE ARE SAVED.

In the first chapter, from the 4th to the 12th verse, the apostle is treating of the doctrine of election, both with respect to the act itself, the end, and means conducing thereto.

1. The act (he tells us) was God's free choice of some, ver. 4, 5, 11.
2. The end was God's glory in their salvation, ver. 6, 14.
3. The mean conducing to that end was Jesus Christ himself: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace," ver. 7. This done, he treateth of the subjection of the Ephesians to the faith, as it was held forth to them in the word of the truth of the gospel; as also of their being sealed by the Holy Spirit of God unto the day of redemption, ver. 12, 13, 14.

Moreover, he telleth them how he gave thanks to God for them, making mention of them in his prayers; even that he would make them see what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance with the saints, and what was the exceeding greatness of his power to themward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, etc. 15-21.

And, lest the Ephesians at the hearing of these their so many privileges, should forget how little they deserved them, he tells them that in time past they were dead in trespasses and sins, and that then they walked in them according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, 2, 3.

Having thus called them back to the remembrance of themselves, to wit, what they were in their state of unregeneracy, he proceedeth to shew them that their first quickening was by the resurrection of Christ their head, in whom they before were chosen; and that by him they were already set down in heavenly places; (ver. 5, 6) inserting, by the way, the true cause of all this blessedness, with what else should be by us enjoyed in another world; and that is the love and grace of God: "But God, who is rich in

mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ, (by grace ye are saved).” These last words seem to be the apostle’s conclusion, rightly drawn from the premises. As who should say, If you Ephesians were indeed dead in trespasses and sins; if indeed you were by nature the children of wrath even as others, then you deserve no more than others. Again, If God hath chosen you, if God hath justified and saved you by his Christ, and left others, as good as you by nature, to perish in their sins, then the true cause of this your blessed condition is the free grace of God. And just so it is; therefore “by grace ye are saved;” and all the good which you enjoy more than others, is of mere good will: “By grace ye are saved.”

The method that I shall choose in discoursing upon these words shall be this: I will propound certain questions upon the words, and direct particular answers to them; in which answers I hope I shall answer also (somewhat at least) the expectation of the godly and conscientious reader, and so shall draw towards a conclusion.

The questions are,

1. What is it to be saved?
2. What is it to be saved by grace?
3. Who are they that are saved by grace?
4. How it appears that they who are saved are saved by grace?
5. What might be the reasons which prevailed with God to save us by grace, rather than by any other means?

Now the reason, why I propound these five questions upon the words is, because the words themselves admit them: the first three are grounded upon the several phrases in the text, and the two last are to make way for the demonstration of the whole.

1. WHAT IS IT TO BE SAVED?

This question supposeth that there is such a thing as damnation due to man for sin. For to save, supposeth the person to be saved is at present in

a sad condition; salvation, to him that is not lost, signifies nothing, neither is it any thing in itself. To save, to redeem, to deliver, are, in the general terms, equivalent, and do al of them suppose us to be in a state of thralldom and misery: therefore this word ‘saved,’ in the sense that the apostle here doth use it, is a word of great worth; forasmuch as the miseries from which we are saved are of all miseries the most dreadful. They are no less than sin, the curse of God, and the eternal flames of hell. What can be more abominable than sin? What more insupportable than the dreadful wrath of an angry God? And what more fearful than the bottomless pit of hell? I say, what more fearful than to be tormented there for ever with the devil and his angels? Now to save (according to my text) is to deliver the sinner from these, with all things else that attend them.

And, although sinners may think that it is no hard matter to answer this question, yet I must tell you there is no man can feelingly know what it is to be saved, that knoweth not experimentally something of the dread of these three things; as is evident, because all others do even by their practice count it a thing of no great concern, although it is of all others of the highest concern among men:

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” Matthew 16:26.

But I say, if this word ‘saved’ includeth our deliverance from sin, how can he tell what it is to be saved that hath not in his conscience groaned under the burden of sin? Yea, it is impossible else that he should ever cry out with all his heart, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” that is, to be saved. Acts 2:37 The man that hath no sores or aches cannot know the virtue of the salve, (I mean not know it from his own experience) and therefore cannot prize, nor have that esteem for it, as he that hath received a cure thereby. Lay a plaister on a sound place, and it maketh not its virtue appear, neither can he, to whose flesh it is so applied, by that application understand its worth. Sinners, (you I mean who are not wounded with guilt and oppressed with the burden of sin) you cannot, I will say it again, you cannot, in this senseless condition of yours, know what it is to be saved.

Again, this word ‘saved,’ as I said, includeth deliverance from the wrath of God. How then can he tell what it is to be saved, who hath not felt the

burden of the wrath of God? He, who is astonished, and trembleth at the wrath of God, knows best what it is to be saved, Acts 16:29.

Further, this word ‘saved,’ includeth deliverance from death and hell. How then can he tell what it is to be saved, who never was sensible of the sorrows of the one, nor distressed with the pains of the other? The psalmist says, “The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow: then called I upon the name of the Lord (Mark — then called I upon the name of the Lord): O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.” Then, “in my distress,” when he knew what it was to be saved; then he called, because (I say) then he knew what it was to be saved, Psalm 18:4, 5; 116:3, 4.

I say this is the man, and this only, who knows what it is to be saved: and this is evidently manifest by the little regard the rest have to salvation, or the little dread they have of damnation. Where is he that seeks and groans for salvation? I say, where is he that hath taken his flight for salvation? because of the dread of the wrath to come:

“O, generation of vipers, who hath warned you
to flee from the wrath to come?” Matthew 3

Alas! do not most people set light by salvation? As for sin, how do they love it, embrace it, please themselves with it, hide it still within their mouth, and keep it close under their tongue? Besides, as to the wrath of God, they feel it not; they fly not from it; and, as for hell, it is become doubtful to some if there be any, and a mock to those whose doubt is resolved by atheism.

But to come to the question, What is it to be saved? To be saved, may either respect salvation in the whole, or in part, or both. I think this text respecteth both, to wit, salvation completing, and salvation completed: for to save is a work of many steps; or (to be as plain as possible) to save is a work that hath its beginning before the world began, and shall be completed before it is ended.

1. First, then, we may be said to be saved, in the purpose of God, before the world began. The apostle saith, that he

“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 before the world began,” 2 Timothy 1:9.

This is the beginning of salvation, and according to this beginning all things concur and fall out in conclusion: “He hath saved us according to his eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus.” God, in thus saving, may be said to save us, by determining to make those means effectual for the blessed completion of our salvation: and hence we are said to be chosen in Christ to salvation: and again, that he hath in that choice given us that grace that shall complete our salvation; yea, the text is very full;

“he hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world,” Ephesians 1:3, 4.

2. As we may be said to be saved in the purpose of God before the foundation of the world, so we may be said to be saved before we are converted or called to Christ. And hence ‘saved’ is put before ‘called;’ he hath saved us, and called us. He saith not he hath called us and saved us; but he puts saving before calling. So, again, we are said to be preserved in Christ, and called. He saith not called and preserved, Jude 1. And therefore God saith again, “I will pardon them whom I reserve;” that is, as Paul expounds it, “those whom I have elected and kept,” Jeremiah 50:20; Romans 11:4, 5: and this part of salvation is accomplished through the forbearance of God. God beareth with his own elect, for Christ’s sake, all the time of their unregeneracy, until the time comes which he hath appointed for their conversion. The sins that we stood guilty of before conversion, had the judgment due to them been executed upon us, we had not now been in the world to partake of a heavenly calling: but the judgment due to them hath been by the patience of God prevented, and we saved, all the time of our ungodly and unconverted state, from that death and those many hells that for our sins we deserved at the hands of God.

And here lies the reason that long life is granted to the elect before conversion, and that all the sins they commit, and all the judgments they deserve, cannot drive them out of the world before conversion. Manasseh, you know, was a great sinner, and for the trespass which he committed he was driven from his own land and carried to Babylon; but kill him they

could not, though his sins had deserved death ten thousand times. But what was the reason? Why, he was not yet called. God had chosen him in Christ, and laid up in him a stock of grace, which must be given to Manasseh before he dies; therefore Manasseh must be convinced, converted, and saved. That legion of devils that was in the possessed, Mark 5 with all the sins which he had committed in the time of his unregeneracy, could not take away his life before his conversion. How many times was that poor creature, as we may easily conjecture, assaulted for his life by the devils that were in him, yet could they not kill him, even though his dwelling was near the seaside; and the devils had power to drive him too, yet could they not drive him further than the mountains that were by the sea-side; yea, they could help him often to break his chains and fetters, and could also make him as mad as bedlam; they could also prevail with him to separate from men, and cut himself with stones, but kill him they could not; drown him they could not; he was saved to be called; he was, notwithstanding all this, preserved in Christ, and called. As it is said of the young lad in the gospel, Mark 9:22, he was by the devil cast oft into the fire, and oft into the water, to destroy him, but it could not be; even so hath he served others, but they must be saved to be called. How many deaths have some been delivered from, and saved out of, before conversion! Some have fallen into rivers, some into wells, some into the sea, some into the hands of men; yea, they have been justly arraigned and condemned, as the thief upon the cross, but must not die before they have been converted. They were preserved in Christ, and called.

Called Christian, how many times have thy sins laid thee upon a sick bed, and, to thine and others' thinking, at the very mouth of the grave? yet God said concerning thee, Let him live, for he is not yet converted. Behold, therefore, that the elect are saved before they are called: "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, (Ephesians 2:4, 5) hath preserved us in Christ, and called us."

Now this saving of us arises from six causes.

- (1) God hath chosen us unto salvation, and therefore will not frustrate his own purposes, 1 Thessalonians 5:9.
- (2) God hath given us to Christ; and his gift, as well as his calling, is without repentance, Romans 11:29; John 6:37.

(3) Christ hath purchased us with his blood, Romans 5:8.

(4) They are by God counted in Christ before they are converted, Ephesians 1:3, 4.

(5) They are ordained before conversion to eternal life; yea, to be called, to be justified, to be glorified; and therefore all this must come upon them, Romans 8:29, 30.

(6) For all this he hath also appointed them their portion and measure of grace, and that before the world began; therefore, that they may partake of all these privileges, they are saved and called; preserved in Christ, and called.

3. To be saved is to be brought to, and helped to lay hold on, Jesus Christ by faith; and this is called saving by grace through faith:

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,” Ephesians 2:8.

(1) They must be brought unto Christ, yea, drawn unto him: for

“No man (saith Christ) can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him,” John 6:44.

Men, even the elect, have too many infirmities to come to Christ without help from heaven: inviting will not do. As they called them so they went from them, therefore he drew them with cords, Hosea 11:2, 4.

(2) As they must be brought to, so they must be helped to lay hold on, Christ by faith; for, as coming to Christ by faith is not in our power, therefore we are said to be raised up with him through the faith of the operation of God. And again, we are said to believe according to the working of his mighty power, “which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead,” Colossians 2:12; Ephesians 1:18, 19, 20. Now we are said to be saved by faith, because by faith we lay hold of, venture upon, and put on, Jesus Christ for life; for life, I say, because God, having made him the Savior, hath given him life to communicate to sinners; and the life that he communicates to them is the merit of his flesh and blood, which whoso eateth and drinketh by faith hath eternal life, because that flesh and blood hath merit in it sufficient to obtain

the favor of God: yea, it hath done so that day it was offered through the eternal Spirit a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savor to him; wherefore God imputeth the righteousness of Christ to him that believeth in him, by which righteousness he is personally justified and saved from that just judgment of the law that was due unto him, John 5:26, 6:53-57; Ephes. 4:32, 5:2; Romans 4:23-25.

“Saved by faith:” for, although salvation beginneth in God’s purpose, and cometh to us through Christ’s righteousness, yet is not faith exempted from having a hand in saving of us: not that it meriteth aught, but is given by God to those which he saveth, that thereby they may embrace and put on that Christ by whose righteousness they must be saved.

Wherefore this faith is that which here distinguisheth them that shall be saved from them that shall be damned. Hence it is said, “He that believeth not shall be damned;” and hence again it is that the believers are called the children, the heirs, and are blessed with faithful Abraham:

“That the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe,” Galatians 3:6-9, 26; Romans 4:13, 14.

And here let Christians warily distinguish betwixt the meritorious and the instrumental cause of their justification. Christ, with what he hath done and suffered, is the meritorious cause of our justification; therefore he is said to be “made of God unto us wisdom and righteousness;” and we are said to be “justified by his blood, and saved from wrath through him,” 1 Corinthians 1:30; Romans 5:9, 10: for it was his life and blood that were the price of our redemption: “Redeemed (says St. Peter) not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, (alluding to the redemption of money under the law) but with the precious blood of Christ.” Thou art therefore (as I have said) to make Christ Jesus the object of thy faith for justification; for by his righteousness thy sins must be covered from the sight of the justice of the law:

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved; for he shall save his people from their sins,” Acts 16:31; Matthew 1:21.

4. To be saved is to be preserved in the faith to the end:

“He that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved,”

Matthew 24:13;

not that perseverance is an accident in Christianity, or a thing performed by human industry: those who are saved are

“kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation,”

1 Peter 1:3, 4, 5.

But perseverance is absolutely necessary to the complete salvation of the soul; because he who falleth short of that state, which they who are saved are in possession of, cannot arrive at a state of perfect salvation. He that goeth to sea on purpose to arrive at Spain, cannot arrive there if he be drowned by the way. Wherefore perseverance is absolutely necessary to the saving of the soul, and therefore it is included in our complete salvation:

“Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation;
they shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end,”

Isaiah 45:17.

Perseverance is here made absolutely necessary to the complete salvation of the soul.

But (as I said) this part of salvation dependeth not upon human power, but upon him who hath begun a good work in us, Philippians 1:6. This part, therefore, of our salvation is great, and calleth for no less than the power of God to enable us to perform it, as will be easily granted by all those who consider:

(1) That all the power and policy, malice and rage of the devils and hell itself are against us. Any man who understandeth this will conclude that to be saved is no small thing. The devil is called a god, a prince, a lion, a roaring lion: it is said that he hath death and the power of it, etc. But what can a poor creature, whose habitation is in flesh, do against a god, a prince, a roaring lion, and the power of death itself? Our perseverance, therefore, lieth in the power of God: The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

(2) All the world is against him that shall be saved. But what is one poor creature to all the world? especially if you consider that with the

world is terror, fear, power, majesty, laws, gaols, gibbets, hangings, burnings, drownings, starvings, banishments, and a thousand kinds of deaths, 1 John 5:4, 5; John 16:33.

(3) Add to this, that all the corruptions that dwell in our flesh are against us; and that not only in their nature and being, but they lust against us, and war against us, to bring us into captivity to the law of sin and death, Galatians 5:17; 1 Peter 2:11; Romans 7:23.

(4) All the delusions in the world are against them that shall be saved, many of which are so cunningly woven, so plausibly handled, so finely polished with scripture and reason, that it is ten thousand wonders that the elect are not swallowed up with them; and swallowed up they would be were they not elect, and was not God himself engaged, either by power to keep them from falling, or by grace to pardon if they fall, and to lift them up again, Matthew 24:24; Ephesians 4:14; Romans 3:10.

(5) Every fall of the saved is against the salvation of his soul; but a Christian once fallen riseth not but as helped by omnipotent power: “O Israel, thou art fallen by thine iniquity, but in me is thy help,” says God, Hosea 13:9, 14:1; Psalm 37:23. Christians, were you awake, here would be matter of wonder to you, to see a man assaulted with all the power of hell, and yet to come off a conqueror. Is it not a wonder to see a poor creature, who in himself is weaker than the moth, (Job 4:19) to stand against and overcome all devils, all the world, all his lusts and corruptions? Or, if he fall, is it not a wonder to see him, when devils and guilt are upon him, to rise, and stand upon his feet again, again to walk with God, and, after all, to persevere in the faith and holiness of the gospel? He who knows himself wonders; he wonders who knows temptation; and he who knows what falls and guilt mean, wonders; indeed perseverance is a wonderful thing, and is managed by the power of God: for he only

“is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,” Jude 24.

Those of the children of Israel that went from Egypt, and entered the land of Canaan, how came they thither? Why, the text says that, “as an eagle

spreadeth abroad her wings, so the Lord alone did lead them.” And again, “He bore them and carried them all the days of old,” Deuteronomy 32:11, 12; Isaiah 63:9. David also tells us that mercy and goodness should follow him all the days of his life, and so he should dwell in the house of the Lord for ever, Psalm 23:6.

5. To be saved calls for more than all this. He that is saved must, when the world can hold him no longer, have a safe conduct to heaven; for that is the place where they that are saved must to the full enjoy their salvation. This heaven is called the end of our faith, because it is that which faith looks at, as Peter says, “receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” And again, “But we are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul,” 1 Peter I. 9; Hebrews 10:39. For (as I said) heaven is the place for the saved to enjoy their salvation in, with that perfect gladness that is not attainable here. Here we are saved by faith and hope of glory, but there we that are saved shall enjoy the end of our faith and hope, even the salvation of our souls. There is Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the general assembly and church of the first-born: there is the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect: there is God the Judge of all, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant: there shall our soul have as much of heaven as it is capable of enjoying, and that without intermission. Wherefore when we come there we shall be saved indeed.

But now for a poor creature to be brought hither, this is the life of the point. But how shall I come hither? there are heights and depths to hinder, Romans 8:38, 39.

Suppose the poor Christian is now upon a sick bed, beset with a thousand fears, and ten thousand at the end of that: sick-bed fears! and they are sometimes dreadful ones: fears that are begotten by the review of the sin perhaps of forty years’ possession: fears that are begotten by dreadful and fearful suggestions of the devil, the sight of death and the grave, and it may be of hell itself: fears that are begotten by the withdrawing and silence of God and Christ, and by (it may be) the appearance of the devil himself! Some of these made David cry,

“O spare me a little, that I may recover strength before I go hence
and be no more,” Psalm 39:13

“The sorrows of death (said he) compassed me, the pains of hell gat hold upon me, and I found trouble and sorrow,” Psalm 116:3.

These things, in another place, he calls the bands that the godly have in their death, and the plagues that others are not aware of:

“They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men,” Psalm 73:5.

But now out of all these the Lord will save his people; not one sin, nor fear, nor devil, shall hinder; nor the grave nor hell disappoint thee. But how must this be? Why, thou must have a safe conduct to heaven. What conduct? A conduct of angels.

“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation?” Hebrews 1:14.

These angels therefore are not to fail them that are the saved; but must, as commissioned of God, come down from heaven to do this office for them. They must come, I say, and take the care and charge of our soul, to conduct it safely into Abraham’s bosom. It is not our meanness in the world, nor our weakness of faith, that shall hinder this; nor shall the loathsomeness of our diseases make these delicate spirits shy of taking this charge upon them. Lazarus the beggar found this a truth; a beggar so despised of the rich glutton, that he was not suffered to come within his gate; a beggar full of sores and noisome putrefaction; yet, behold, when he dies the angels come from heaven to fetch him thither;

“And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom,” Luke 16:22.

True, sick-bed temptations are oftentimes the most violent, because then the devil plays his last game with us; he is never to assault us more; besides, perhaps God suffereth it thus to be, that the entering into heaven may be the sweeter, and ring of this salvation the louder. O, it is a blessed thing for God to be our God and our guide even unto death, and then for his angels to conduct us safely to glory! This is saving indeed. And he shall save Israel out of all his troubles: out of sick-bed troubles as well as others, Psalm 25:22; 34:6; 48:14.

6. To be saved, to be perfectly saved, calls for more than all this. The godly are not perfectly saved when their soul is possessed of heaven. True, their spirit is made perfect, and hath as much of heaven as at present it can hold; but man, consisting of body and soul, cannot be said to be perfectly saved so long as but part of him is in the heavens. His body is the price of the blood of Christ as well as his spirit; his body is the temple of God, and a member of the body, and of the flesh, and of the bones, of Christ; he cannot then be completely saved until the time of the resurrection of the dead, 1 Corinthians 6:13, 15, 19; Ephesians 5:30. Wherefore, when Christ shall come the second time, then will he save the body from all those things that at present make it incapable of the heavens:

“For our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change this our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body,”
Philippians 3:20, 21.

O what a great deal of good God hath put into this word ‘saved!’ We shall not see all the good that God hath put into this word ‘saved,’ until the Lord Jesus comes to raise the dead: “It doth not yet appear what we shall be,” 1 John 3:2, but till it appears what we shall be we cannot see the bottom of this word ‘saved.’ True, we have the earnest of what we shall be, we have the Spirit of God,

“which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession,” Ephesians 1:14.

The possession is our body; it is called a purchased possession, because it is the price of blood. Now the redemption of this purchased possession is the raising of it out of the grave, which raising is called the redemption of our body, Philippians 3:21. And when this vile body is made like unto his glorious body, and this body and soul together possessed of the heavens, then shall we be every way saved.

There are three things from which this body must be saved.

(1) There is that sinful filth and vileness that yet dwells in it, under which we groan earnestly all our days, 2 Corinthians 5:1, 2, 3.

(2) There is mortality, that subjecteth us to age, sickness, aches, pains, diseases, and death.

(3) And there is grave and death itself, for death is the last enemy that is to be destroyed:

“So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass that saying which is written, Death is swallowed up in victory,”

1 Corinthians 15:54.

So then, when this comes to pass, then we shall be saved; then will salvation in all its parts meet together in our glory, and then we shall be every way saved; saved in God’s decree, saved in Christ’s undertakings, saved by faith, saved in perseverance, saved in soul, and in body and soul together in the heavens, saved perfectly, everlastingly, gloriously!

Before I conclude my answer to the first question, I would discourse a little of the state of our body and soul in heaven, when we shall enjoy this blessed state of salvation.

1. Of the soul: It will then be filled, in all its faculties, with as much bliss and glory as ever it can hold.

(1) The understanding shall then be perfect in knowledge: “Now we know but in part;” we know God, Christ, heaven, and glory, but in part; “but, when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away,” 1 Corinthians 13:10. Then shall we have perfect and everlasting visions of God, and that blessed one his son Jesus Christ, a good thought of whom doth sometimes so fill us while in this world, that it causeth joy unspeakable and full of glory.

(2) Then shall our will and affections be ever in a burning flame of love to God and his son Jesus Christ. Our love here hath ups and downs; but there it shall be always perfect with that perfection which is not possible in this world to be enjoyed.

(3) Then will our conscience have that peace and joy that neither tongue or pen of men or angels can express.

(4) Then will our memory be so enlarged as to retain all things that happened to us in this world; so that with unspeakable aptness we shall call to mind all God's providences, all Satan's malice, all our own weaknesses, all the rage of men, and how God made all work together for his glory and our good, to the everlasting ravishing of our hearts.

2. For our body: It shall be raised in power, in incorruption, a spiritual body, and glorious, 1 Corinthians 15:44.

The glory of which is set forth by several things.

(1) It is compared to the brightness of the firmament, and to the shining of the stars for ever and ever, Daniel 12:3; 1 Corinthians 15:41, 42.

(2) It is compared to the shining of the sun:

“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear,” Matthew 13:43.

(3) Their state is then to be equally glorious with angels:

“But they which shall be counted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage, neither can they die any more, for they are equal to the angels,” Luke 20:35, 36.

(4) It is said that then this our vile body shall be like the glorious body of Jesus Christ, Philippians 3:20, 21; 1 John 3:2, 3.

(5) And now, when body and soul are thus united, who can imagine what glory they both possess? They will now be both in capacity, without jarring, to serve the Lord with shouting, thanksgivings, and with a crown of everlasting joy upon their head.

In this world there cannot be that harmony and oneness of body and soul as there will be in heaven. Here the body sometimes sins against the soul, and the soul again vexes and perplexes the body with dreadful apprehensions of the wrath and judgment of God. While we are in this world the body often hangs this way, and the soul quite the contrary; but when in heaven they shall have that perfect union as never to jar more; but there the glory of the body shall so suit with the glory of the soul, and

both so perfectly suit with the heavenly state, that it passeth words and thoughts.

3. Shall I now speak of the place that this saved body and soul shall dwell in? Why,

- (1) It is a city, Hebrews 11:16; Ephesians 2:19.
- (2) It is called heaven, Hebrews 10:34.
- (3) It is called God's house, John 14:1, 2, 3.
- (4) It is called a kingdom, Luke 12:32.
- (5) It is called glory, Colossians 3:3; Hebrews 2:10.
- (6) It is called paradise, Revelation 2:7.
- (7) It is called everlasting habitations, Luke 16:9.

4. Shall I speak of their company? Why,

- (1) They shall stand and live in the presence of the glorious God, the judge of all, Hebrews 12:23.
- (2) They shall be with the Lamb, the Lord Jesus.
- (3) They shall be with innumerable company of holy angels, Hebrews 12:22.
- (4) They shall be with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of heaven, Luke 3:28.

5. Shall I speak of their heavenly raiment?

- (1) It is salvation: they shall be clothed with the garments of salvation, Psalm 132:16, 149:4; Isaiah 61:10.
- (2) This raiment is called white raiment, signifying their clean and innocent state in heaven: "And they (says Christ) shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy," Isaiah 57:2; Revelation 3:4, 19:8.
- (3) It is called glory: "When he shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory," Colossians 3:4.

(4) They shall also have crowns of righteousness, everlasting joy and glory, Isaiah 35:10; 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Peter 5:4.

6.. Shall I speak of their continuance in this condition?

(1) It is for ever and ever:

“And they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads, and they shall reign for ever and ever,”
Revelation 22:4, 5.

(2) It is everlasting:

“And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life,”
John 6:40, 47.

(3) It is life eternal:

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life,” John 10:27, 28.

(4) It is world without end:

“But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, they shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end,”
Ephesians 3:20, 21.

O, sinner, what sayest thou? How dost thou like being saved? Doth not thy mouth water? doth not thy heart twitter at being saved? Why, come then,

“The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely,” Revelation 22:17.

2. WHAT IS IT TO BE SAVED BY GRACE?

Now I come to the second question, to wit, What is it to be saved by grace? for so are the words of the text, “By grace ye are saved.”

But, first, I must touch a little upon the word ‘grace,’ and shew you how diversely it is taken.

- 1.** Sometimes it is taken for the good-will and favor of men, Esther 2:17; Ruth 2:2; 1 Samuel I. 18; 2 Samuel 16:4.
- 2.** Sometimes it is taken for those sweet ornaments that a life according to the word of God putteth about the neck, Proverbs 1:9, 3:22.
- 3.** Sometimes it is taken for the charity of the saints, as 2 Corinthians 9:6, 7, 8.
- 4.** But grace in the text is taken for God’s good-will, the good-will of him that dwelt in the bush, and is expressed variously.

(1) Sometimes it is called his good pleasure.

(2) Sometimes the good pleasure of his will, which is all one with the riches of his grace, Ephesians 1:7.

(3) Sometimes it is expressed by goodness, pity, love, mercy, kindness, and the like, Romans 2:4; Isaiah 63:9; Titus 3:4, 5.

(4) Yea, he styles himself

“The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty,” Exodus 24:6, 7.

Secondly, As the word ‘grace’ signifieth all these, so it intimates to us that all these are free acts of God, free love, free mercy, free kindness: hence we have other hints in the word about the nature of grace; as,

1. It is an act of God’s will, which must needs be free; an act of his own will, of the good pleasure of his will: by each of these expressions is intimated that grace is a free act of God’s goodness towards the sons of men.

2. Therefore it is expressly said, “being justified freely by his grace,” Romans 3:24.

3. “And, when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both,” Luke 7:42.

4. And again, “Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you,” Ezekiel 36:32; Deuteronomy 9:5.

5. And therefore grace and the deservings of the creature are set in flat opposition one to another:

“And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But, if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work,” Romans 11:6.

The word ‘grace’ therefore being understood, doth most properly set forth the true cause of man’s happiness with God; not but that those expressions, love, mercy, goodness, pity, kindness, etc. and the like, have their proper place in our happiness also: Had not God loved us, grace had not acted freely in our salvation; had not God been merciful, good, pitiful, kind, he would have turned away from us when he saw us in our blood, Ezekiel 16.

So then, when he saith, “By grace ye are saved,” it is all one as if he had said, by the good-will, free mercy, and loving-kindness of God, ye are saved: as the words conjoined with the text do also further manifest; “But God, (saith Paul) who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; by grace ye are saved.”

The words thus understood admit of these few conclusions.

1. That God, in saving of the sinner, hath no respect to the sinner’s goodness; hence it is said, he is frankly forgiven, and freely justified, Luke 7:42; Romans 3:24.

2. That God doth this to whom and when he pleases, because it is an act of his own good pleasure, Galatians I. 15, 16.

3. This is the cause why great sinners are saved; for God pardoneth according to the riches of his grace, Ephesians 1:7.

4. This is the true cause why some sinners are so amazed and confounded at the apprehension of their own salvation; his grace is unsearchable, and

by unsearchable grace God often puzzles and confounds our reason, Ezekiel 16:62, 63; Acts 9:6.

5. This is the cause why sinners are so often recovered from their backslidings, healed of the wounds which they get by their falls, and helped again to rejoice in God's mercy; and why

“he will be gracious to whom he will be gracious, and will have compassion on whom he will have compassion,” Romans 9:15.

But I must not yet conclude this point; we are here discoursing of the peace of God, and that by it we are saved; saved (I say) by the grace of God.

Now God is set forth in the word unto us under a double consideration.

1. He is set forth in his own eternal power and Godhead; and, as thus set forth, we are to conceive of him by his attributes of power, justice, goodness, holiness, eternity, etc.

2. But we have him also set forth in the word of truth, as consisting of Father, Son, and Spirit; and, although this second consideration containeth in it the nature of the Godhead, yet the first doth not demonstrate the persons in the Godhead: “We are saved by the grace of God;” that is, by the grace of the Father, who is God; by the grace of the Son, who is God; and by the grace of the Spirit, who is God.

Now, since we are said to be saved by grace, and that the grace of God; and since also we find in the word that in the Godhead there are Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we must conclude that it is by the grace of the Father, Son, and Spirit, that we are saved; wherefore grace is attributed to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, distinctly.

1. Grace is attributed to the Father, as these scriptures testify, Romans 7:25; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2; Philippians 1:2; Colossians I. 2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1; 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; Philippians 3.

2. Grace also is attributed to the Son; and I first manifest it by all those texts above mentioned, as also by these that follow, 2 Corinthians 13:9,

13:14; Galatians 6:18; Philippians 4:23; 1 Thessalonians 5:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:18; Philippians xxv; Revelation 22:21.

3. It is also attributed to the Holy Ghost, Zechariah 12:10; Hebrews 12:19. Now he is here called the Spirit of grace, because he is the author of grace, as the Father and the Son. So then it remaineth that I shew you,

- 1.** How we are saved by the grace of the Father.
- 2.** How we are saved by the grace of the Son.
- 3.** And how we are saved by the grace of the Spirit.

I. Of the Father's grace. How we are saved by the grace of the Father.

Now this will I open unto you thus:

1. The Father by his grace hath bound up those who shall go to heaven in an eternal decree of election; and here, indeed, as was shewn at first, is the beginning of our salvation, 2 Timothy 1:9; and election is reckoned not the Son's act, but the Father's:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world,” Ephesians 1:4, 5.

Now this election is counted an act of grace:

“So then, at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace,” Romans 11:5.

2. The Father's grace ordaineth, and giveth the Son to undertake for us, our redemption. The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world: “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness to usward through Christ Jesus,” 1 John 4:14; Ephesians 1:7, 2:7; John 3:16, 6:32, 33, 12:47.

3. The Father's grace giveth us to Christ, to be justified by his righteousness, washed in his blood, and saved by his life. This Christ mentioneth, John 6:37, and tells us, it is his Father's will that they should

be safe-coming at the last day, and that he had kept them all the days of his life, and they should never perish, John 6:38, 39, 17:2, 12.

4. The Father's grace giveth the kingdom of heaven to those whom he hath given to Jesus Christ:

“Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom,” Luke 12:32.

5. The Father's grace provideth and layeth up in Christ, for those that he hath chosen, a sufficiency of all spiritual blessings, to be communicated to them at their need, for their preservation in the faith, and faithful perseverance through this life;

“Not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began,” 2 Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 1:3, 4.

6. The Father's grace saveth us, by his blessed and effectual call, whereby he giveth us the fellowship of his son Jesus Christ, 1 Corinthians 1:9; Galatians 1:15.

7. The Father's grace saveth us, by multiplying pardons to us for Christ's sake, day by day: “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of grace.”

8. The Father's grace saveth us, by exercising patience and forbearance towards us all the time of unregeneracy, Romans 3:24.

9. The Father's grace saveth us, by holding of us fast in his hand, and by keeping of us from all the power of the enemy:

“My Father (said Christ), who gave them to me, is greater than all; and no man can pluck them out of my Father's hand,” John 10:29.

10. What shall I say? The Father's grace saveth us, by accepting of our persons and services, by lifting up the light of his countenance upon us, by manifesting of his love unto us, and by sending of his angels to fetch us to himself when we have finished our pilgrimage in this world.

II. Of the grace of the Son. I come now to speak of the grace of the Son; for, as the Father putteth forth his grace in the saving of the sinner, so doth the Son put forth his:

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich,” 2 Corinthians 8:9.

Here you see also that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is brought in, as a partner with the grace of his Father, in the salvation of our souls. Now this is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ: — He was rich, but for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich.

To inquire then into this grace, this condescending grace of Christ, and that by searching out how rich Jesus Christ was, and then how poor he made himself that we through his poverty might have the riches of salvation.

First, How rich was Jesus Christ?

To which I answer, first, generally; secondly, particularly.

First, generally. He was rich as the Father: “All things that the Father hath (saith he) are mine.” Jesus Christ, he is the Lord of all, God over all, blessed for ever. He thought it no robbery to be equal with God, being naturally and eternally God, as the Father, John 16:15; Acts 10:36; Philippians 2:6; Romans 9:4, 5; John 10:30: but of his Godhead he could not strip himself.

Secondly, Jesus Christ had glory with the Father, yea, a manifold glory with him, which he stripped himself of.

1. He had the glory of dominion; he was Lord of all the creatures; they were under him upon a double account.

(1) As he was their Creator, Colossians 1:16.

(2) As he was made the heir of God, Hebrews 1:2.

2. Therefore the glory of worship, reverence, and fear; from all creatures, was due unto him; the worship, obedience, subjection, and service of angels, was due unto him; the fear, honor, and glory of kings, and princes, and judges of the earth, was due unto him; the obedience of the sun, moon,

stars, clouds, and all vapors, was due unto him; all dragons, deeps, fire, hail, snow, mountains and hills, beasts, cattle, creeping things, and flying fowls, the service of them all and their worship, was due unto him, Psalm 148.

3. The glory of the heavens themselves was due unto him; in a word, heaven and earth were his.

4. But, above all, the glory of communion with his Father was his; I say, the glory of that unspeakable communion that he had with the Father before his incarnation, which alone was worth ten thousand worlds, that was ever his.

But again, As Jesus Christ was possessed with this, so besides he was Lord of life; this glory also was Jesus Christ's: "in him was life;" therefore he is called the prince of it, because it was in him originally as in the Father, Acts 3:15. He gave to all life and breath; and all things, angels, men, beasts, they had all their life from him.

Again, as he was Lord of glory and Prince of life, so he was also Prince of peace, Isaiah 9:6, and by him was maintained that harmony and goodly order which was among things in heaven and things on earth.

Take things briefly in these few particulars.

- (1) The heavens were his, and he made them.
- (2) Angels were his, and he made them.
- (3) The earth was his, and he made it.
- (4) Man was his, and he made him.

Now this heaven he forsook for our sakes: "He came into the world to save sinners," 1 Timothy 1:15.

He was made lower than the angels for the suffering of death, Hebrews 2:9.

When he was born he made himself, as he saith, a worm, or one of no reputation; he became the reproach and by-word of the people; he was born in a stable, laid in a manger, and earned his bread with his labor,

being by trade a carpenter, Psalm 22:6; Philippians 2:7; Mark 6:3. When he betook himself to his ministry he lived upon the charity of the people; when other men went to their own houses, Jesus went to the mount of Olives. Hark what himself saith for the clearing of this

“Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head,” Luke 8:2, 3; John 8:1; Luke 9:58.

He denied himself of this world’s good.

Again, As he was Prince of life, so he for our sakes laid down that also; for so stood the matter, that he or we must die; but the grace that was in his heart wrought with him to lay down his life: “He gave his life a ransom for many:” he laid down his life that we might have life: he gave his flesh and blood for the life of the world: he laid down his life for his sheep.

Again, He was Prince of peace; but he forsook his peace also.

1. He laid aside peace with the world, and chose upon that account to be a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and therefore was persecuted from his cradle to his cross, by kings, rulers, etc.
2. He laid aside his peace with his Father, and made himself the object of his Father’s curse, insomuch that the Lord smote, struck, and afflicted him; and in conclusion hid his face from him (as he expressed with great crying) at the hour of his death.

But perhaps some may say, What need was there that Jesus Christ should do all this? Could not the grace of the Father save us without this condescension of the Son?

Answer As there is grace, so there is justice in God; and, man having sinned, God concluded to save him in a way of righteousness; therefore it was absolutely necessary that Jesus Christ should put himself into our very condition, sin only excepted.

1. Now by sin we had lost the glory of God, therefore Jesus Christ lays aside the glory that he had with the Father, Romans 3:23; John 17:5.

- 2.** Man by sin had shut himself out of an earthly paradise, and Jesus Christ will leave his heavenly paradise to save him, Genesis 3:24; 1 Timothy 1:15; John 6:38, 39.
- 3.** Man by sin had made himself lighter than vanity, and this Lord God, Jesus Christ, made himself lower than the angels to redeem him, Isaiah 40:17; Hebrews 2:7.
- 4.** Man by sin lost his right to the creatures, and Jesus Christ will deny himself of a whole world to save him, Luke 9:58.
- 5.** Man by sin had made himself subject to death, but Jesus Christ will lose his life to save him, Romans 6:23.
- 6.** Man by sin had procured to himself the curse of God, but Jesus Christ will bear that curse in his own body to save him, Galatians 3:13.
- 7.** Man by sin had lost peace with God, but this would Jesus Christ lose also, to the end man might be saved.
- 8.** Man should have been mocked of God, therefore Christ was mocked of men.
- 9.** Man should have been scourged in hell, but to hinder that Jesus was scourged on earth.
- 10.** Man should have been crowned with ignominy and shame, but to prevent that Jesus was crowned with thorns.
- 11.** Man should have been pierced with the speak of God's wrath, but to prevent that Jesus was pierced both by God and men.
- 12.** Man should have been rejected of God and angels, but to prevent that Jesus was forsaken of God, and denied, hated, and rejected of men, Isaiah 47:22; Matthew 27:46; Proverbs 1:24-26; Psalm 22:7; Matthew 27:39; Psalm 9:17, 11:6; Matthew 27:26; Daniel 12:2; John 19:2-5; Numbers 24:8; Zechariah 12:10; John 19:37.

I might thus enlarge, and that by authority from this text, "He became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." All the riches he stripped himself of, it was for our sakes; all the sorrows he underwent, it was for our sakes; to the least circumstance of the sufferings of Christ

there was a necessity that so it should be, all was for our sakes: “For our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich.”

And you see the argument that prevailed with Christ to do this great service for man, the grace that was in his heart; as also the prophet saith, “In his love and in his pity he redeemed them.” According to this in the Corinthians, “You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: “both which agree with the text, “By grace ye are saved.”

I say this was the grace of the Son, and the exercise thereof; the Father therefore shews his grace one way, and the Son his another. It was not the Father, but the Son, that left his heaven for sinners: it was not the Father, but the Son, that spilled his blood for sinners. The Father indeed gave the Son, and blessed be the Father for that; and the Son gave his life and blood for us, and blessed be the Son for that.

But methinks we should not yet have done with this grace of the Son. Thou Son of the Blessed, what grace was manifest in thy condescension! Grace brought thee down from heaven, grace stripped thee of thy glory, grace made thee poor and despicable, grace made thee bear such burdens of sin, such burdens of sorrow, such burdens of God’s curse as are unspeakable! O, Son of God! grace was in all thy tears, grace came bubbling out of thy side with thy blood, grace came forth with every word of thy sweet mouth! Psalm 45:2; Luke 4:22; grace came out where the whip smote thee, where the thorns pricked thee, where the nails and spear pierced thee! O, blessed Son of God, here is grace indeed! unsearchable riches of grace; unthought of riches of grace; grace to make angels wonder, grace to make sinners happy, grace to astonish devils! And what will become of them that trample under foot this Son of God?

III. Of the grace of the Spirit. I come now to speak of the grace of the Spirit; for he also saveth us by his grace.

The Spirit, I told you, is God, as the Father and the Son, and is therefore also the author of grace; yea, it is absolutely necessary that he put forth his grace also, or else no flesh can be saved. The Spirit of God hath his hand in saving of us many ways; for they that go to heaven, as they must be beholden to the Father and the Son, so also to the Spirit of God. The Father chooseth us, giveth us to Christ, and heaven to us, and the like: the

Son fulfils the law for us, takes the curse of the law from us, bears in his own body our sorrows, and sets us justified in the sight of God. The Father's grace is shewn in heaven and earth; the Son's grace is shown on the earth and on the cross; and the Spirit's grace must be shewn in our souls and bodies before we come to heaven.

Question But some may say, Wherein doth the saving grace of the Spirit appear?

Answer In many things.

In taking possession of us for his own; in his making of us his house and habitation, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19; Ephesians 2:21, 22. So that, though the Father and the Son have both gloriously put forth gracious acts in order to our salvation, yet the Spirit is the first that makes seizure of us. Christ therefore, when he went away, said not that he would send the Father, but the Spirit, and that he should be in us for ever:

“If I depart (said Christ) I will send him, the Spirit of truth,
the Comforter,” John 14:16, 16:7, 13.

The Holy Spirit coming into us, and dwelling in us worketh out many salvations for us now, and each of them in order also to our being saved for ever.

- 1.** He saveth us from our darkness by illuminating of us; hence he is called the Spirit of revelation, because he openeth the blind eyes, and so consequently delivereth us from that darkness which else would drown us in the depths of hell, Ephesians 1:17.
- 2.** He it is that convinceth us of the evil of our unbelief, and that shews us the necessity of our believing in Christ: without the conviction of this we should perish, John 16:9.
- 3.** This is that finger of God, by which the devil is made to give place unto grace, by whose power else we should be carried headlong to hell, Luke 11:20-22.
- 4.** This is he that worketh faith in our hearts, without which neither the grace of the Father, nor the grace of the Son, can save us; for “he that believeth not shall be damned,” Romans 15:13; Mark 16:16.

- 5.** This is he by whom we are born again; and he that is not so born can neither see nor inherit the kingdom of heaven, John 3:3, 5-7.
- 6.** This is he that setteth up his kingdom in the heart, and by that means keepeth out the devil after he is cast out; which kingdom of the Spirit, whoever lacketh, is liable to a worse possession of the devil than ever, Matthew 13:33; Luke 11:24, 25.
- 7.** By this Spirit we come to see the beauty of Christ, without a sight of which we should never desire him, but should certainly live in the neglect of him, and perish, John 16:14; 1 Corinthians 2:9-13; Isaiah 53:1, 2.
- 8.** By this Spirit we are helped to praise God acceptably; but without it, it is impossible to be heard unto salvation, Romans 8:26; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Corinthians 14:15.
- 9.** By this blessed Spirit we are led from the ways of the flesh into the ways of life; and by it our mortal body, as well as our immortal soul is quickened in the service of God, Galatians 5:18, 25; Romans 8:1.
- 11.** By this good Spirit we keep that good thing, even the seed of God, that at the first by the word of God was infused into us, and without which we are liable to the worst damnation, 1 John 3:9, 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Timothy 1:14.
- 12.** By this good Spirit we have help and light against all the wisdom and cunning of the world, which putteth forth itself in its most cursed sophistications, to overthrow the simplicity that is in Christ, Matthew 10:19, 20; Mark 13:11; Luke 12:11, 12.
- 13.** By this good Spirit our graces are maintained in life and vigor; as faith, hope, love, a spirit of prayer, and every grace, 2 Corinthians 4:13; Romans 15:13; 2 Timothy 1:7; Ephesians 6:18; Titus 3:5.
- 14.** By this good Spirit we are sealed to the day of redemption, Ephesians 1:14.
- 15.** And by this good Spirit we are made to wait with patience until the redemption of the purchase possession comes, Galatians 5:5.

Now all these things are so necessary to our salvation, that I know not which of them can be lacking; neither can any of them be by any means attained but by this blessed Spirit.

And thus have I, in a few words, shewn you the grace of the Spirit, and how it putteth forth itself towards the saving of the soul.

And verily, Sirs, it is necessary that ye know these things distinctly; to wit, the grace of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the grace of the Holy Ghost; for it is not the grace of one, but of all these three, that saveth him that shall be saved indeed.

The Father's grace saveth no man without the grace of the Son; neither doth the Father and the Son save any without the grace of the Spirit; for, as the Father loves, the Son must die, and the Spirit must sanctify, or no soul can be saved.

Some think that the love of the Father without the blood of the Son will save them; but they are deceived: "For without shedding of blood there is no remission," Hebrews 9:22.

Some think that the love of the Father and blood of the Son will do, without the holiness of the Spirit of God; but they are deceived, also: for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." And, again, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Romans 8:9; Hebrews 12:14.

There is a third sort, that think the holiness of the Spirit is sufficient of itself; but they (if they had it) are deceived also; for it must be the grace of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the grace of the Spirit, jointly, that must save them.

But yet, as these three do put forth grace jointly and truly in the salvation of a sinner, so they put it forth (as I also have shew you before) after a diverse manner. The Father designs us for heaven, the Son redeems from sin and death, and the Spirit makes us meet for heaven; not by electing, that is the work of the Father; not by dying, that is the work of the Son; but by his revealing Christ, and applying Christ to our souls, by shedding the love of God abroad in our hearts, by sanctifying our souls, and taking possession of us as an earnest of our possession of heaven.

3. WHO ARE THEY THAT ARE TO BE SAVED BY GRACE?

I come now to the third particular, namely, to shew you who they are that are to be saved by grace.

1. Not the self-righteous; not they that have no need of the physician: The whole have no need of the physician, said Christ: "I come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," Mark 2:17. And again,

"He hath filled the hungry with good things,
and hath sent the rich empty away," Luke 1:53.

Now, when I say, not the self-righteous nor the rich, I mean not that they are utterly excluded, for St. Paul was such an one; but he saveth not such without he first awakeneth them to see they have need of being saved by grace.

2. The grace of God saveth not him that hath sinned the unpardonable sin. There is nothing left for him but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, which shall devour the adversaries, Hebrews 10:26, 27.

3. That sinner that persevereth in filial impenitency and unbelief shall be damned, Luke 13:3, 5; Romans 2:2-5; Mark 16:15, 16.

4. That sinner whose mind the God of this world hath blinded, that the glorious light of the gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, can never shine unto him, is lost, and must be damned, 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4.

5. The sinner that maketh religion his cloak for wickedness, he is a hypocrite, and, continuing so, must certainly be damned, Psalm 125:5; Isaiah 33:40; Matthew 24:50, 51.

6. In a word, every sinner that persevereth in his wickedness shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, or covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

“Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience,” 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Ephesians 5:6.

Question But what kind of sinners shall then be saved?

Answer Those of all these kinds that the Spirit of God shall bring to the Father by Jesus Christ. These, I say, and none but these, can be saved; because otherwise sinners might be saved without the Father, or without the Son, or without the Spirit.

Now, in all that I have said, I have not in the least suggested that any sinner is rejected because his sins, in the nature of them, are great: Christ Jesus came into the world to save the chief of sinners. It is not therefore the greatness of, but the continuance in, sins that indeed damneth the sinner: but I always exclude him that hath sinned against the Holy Ghost. That is not the greatness of sin that excludeth the sinner is evident,

1ST. From the words before the text, which do give an account of what kind of sinners were here saved by grace; as, namely, they that were dead in trespasses and sins; those that walked in their sins

“according to the course of this world, even according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others,”
Ephesians 2:2, 3.

2DLY. It is evident also from the many sinners that we find were saved, by the revealed will of God; for in the word we have mention made of the salvation of great sinners, where their names and their sins stand recorded for our encouragement. As,

1. You read of Manasseh, who was an idolator, a witch, a persecutor, yea, a rebel against the word of God, sent unto him by the prophets; and yet this man was saved, 2 Chronicles 33:2-13; 2 Kings 21:16.

2. You read of Mary Magdalen, in whom was seven devils. Her condition was dreadful, yet she was saved, Luke 8:2.

- 3.** You read of the man that had a legion of devils in him. O how dreadful was his condition! and yet by grace he was saved, Mark. 5:1, 19.
- 4.** You read of them that murdered the Lord Jesus, and how they were converted and saved, Acts 2:23.
- 5.** You read of the exorcists in Acts 19:13; how they closed with Christ, and were saved by grace.
- 6.** You read of Saul the persecutor, and how he was saved by grace, Acts 9:15.

Objection But thou sayest, I am a backslider.

Ans.

- 1.** So was Noah, and yet he found grace in the eyes of the Lord, Genesis 9:21, 22.
- 2.** So was Lot, and yet God saved him by grace, Genesis 20:36; 2 Peter 2:7, 8, 9.
- 3.** So was David, yet by grace he was forgiven his iniquities, 2 Samuel 12:7-13.
- 4.** So was Solomon, and a great one too, yet by grace his soul was saved, Psalm 89:28-34.
- 5.** So was Peter, and that a dreadful one, yet by grace he was saved, Matthew 26:69, 70, 72, 74; Mark 16:7; Acts 15:7-11.
- 6.** Besides, for further encouragement, read Jeremiah 3:33:25, 26, 51:5; Ezekiel 36:25; Hosea 16:1-4. And stay thyself, and wonder at the riches of the grace of God.

Question But how shall we find out what sinners shall be saved? all it seems will not: besides, for aught that can be gathered by what you have said, there are some saved as sinful as others who were damned (setting him aside who hath sinned the unpardonable sin.)

Answer True, there are some saved as bad as those that were damned. But to this question.

1. They that are effectually called are saved.
2. They that believe on the Son of God shall be saved.
3. They that are sanctified and preserved in Christ Jesus shall be saved.
4. They that take up the cross daily, and follow Christ, shall be saved.

Take a catalogue of them thus:

1. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," Mark 16:16; Acts 16:31.
2. "Confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, and thou shalt be saved," Romans 10:9.
3. "O justified by the blood of Christ, and thou shalt be saved," Romans 5:9.
4. "Be reconciled to God by the death of his Son, and thou shalt be saved by his life," Romans 5:10.
5. "And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," Romans 10:13. See some other scriptures.
 - (1) "He shall save the humble person," Job 22:20.
 - (2) "Thou shalt save the afflicted people," Psalm 18:27.
 - (3) "He shall save the children of the needy," Psalm 72:4.
 - (4) "He shall save the souls of the needy," Psalm 72:13.
 - (5) "O thou, my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee," Psalm 86:2.
 - (6) "He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him; he will hear their cry, and will save them," Psalm 145:19.

But, sinner, if thou wouldst indeed be saved, beware of these four things:

1. Beware of delaying repentance. Delays are dangerous and damnable: they are dangerous, because they harden the heart; they are damnable,

because their tendency is to make thee outstand the time of grace, Psalm 95:7; Hebrews 3 to 12.

2. Beware of resting in the word of the kingdom, without the Spirit and power of the kingdom of the gospel; for the gospel, coming in word only, saves nobody; for the kingdom of God, or the gospel, where it comes to salvation, is not in word but in power, 1 Thessalonians 1:4, 5, 6; 1 Corinthians 4:20.

3. Take heed of living in a bare profession, a life that is provoking to God: for that is the way to make him cast thee away in his anger.

4. Take heed that thy inside and outside be alike, and both conformable to the word of his grace. labor to be like the living creatures which thou mayest read of in the book of the prophet Ezekiel, whose appearance and themselves were one, Ezekiel 10:22.

In all this I have advertised thee not to be content without the power and the Spirit of God in thy heart; for without him thou canst not partake of the grace of the Father or Son, but wilt certainly miss the salvation of thy soul.

4. HOW IT APPEARS THAT THEY WHO ARE SAVED ARE SAVED BY GRACE?

This fourth question requireth that some demonstration be given of the truth of this doctrine; to wit, they who are saved are saved by grace.

What hath been said before hath given some demonstration of the truth; wherefore, first repeating, in a few words, the sum of what hath been said already, I shall come to further proof.

1. That this is true the scriptures testify, because God chose them to salvation before they had done good, Romans 9:11.

2. Christ was ordained to be their Savior before the foundation of the world, Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:19-21.

3. All things that concur, and go to our salvation, were also in the same laid up in Christ, to be communicated, in the dispensation of the fullness of

time, to them that shall be saved, Ephesians 1:3, 4; 2 Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 1:10, 3:8-11; Romans 8:30.

Again, as their salvation was contrived by God, so, as was said, this salvation was undertaken by one of the three, to wit, the Son of the Father, John 1:29; Isaiah 48:16.

Had there been a contrivance in heaven about the salvation of sinners on earth, yet, if the result of that contrivance had been that we should be saved by our own good deeds, it would not have been proper for an apostle or an angel to say, "By grace ye are saved." But now, when a council is held in eternity about the salvation of sinners in time, and when the result of that council shall be, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, will themselves accomplish the work of this salvation, this is grace, this is naturally grace, grace that is rich and free; yea, this is unthought of grace. I will say it again, this is unthought of grace; for who could have thought that a Savior had been in the bosom of the Father, or that the Father would have given him to be the Savior of men, since he refused to give him to be the Savior of angels? Hebrews 2:16, 17.

Again, Could it have been thought that the Father would have sent his Son to be the Savior, we should in reason have thought also that he would never have taken the work wholly on himself, especially that fearful, dreadful, soul-astonishing, and amazing part thereof! Who could ever have imagined that the Lord Jesus would have made himself so poor, as to stand before God in the nauseous rags of our sins, and subject himself to the curse and death that were due to our sin? But thus he did to save us by grace.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace," Ephesians 1:3-7.

Again, if we consider the terms and condition upon which this salvation is made over to them that are saved, it will further appear that we are saved by grace.

- 1.** The things that immediately concern our justification and salvation, they are offered, yea, given to us freely, and we are commanded to receive them by faith. Sinner, hold up thy lap: God so loved the world that he giveth his Son, that he giveth his righteousness, that he giveth his Spirit, and the kingdom of heaven, Job 2:16; Romans 5:17; 2 Corinthians 1:21, 22; Luke 12:32.
- 2.** He also giveth repentance; he giveth faith; he giveth everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, Acts 5:30, 31; Philip. 1:29; 2 Thessalonians 2:16.
- 3.** He giveth pardon; and giveth more grace, to keep us from sinking into hell, than we have sin to sink us in thither, Acts 5:3; Proverbs 3:34; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5.
- 4.** He hath made all these things over to us in a covenant of grace: we call it a covenant of grace, because it is set in opposition to the covenant of works, and because it is established upon the best promises made to him, and to us by him:

“For all the promises in him are yea, and in him Amen,
unto the glory of God by us,” 2 Corinthians 1:20.

But, to pass these, and to come to some other demonstrations for the clearing of this.

First, Let us a little consider what man is, upon whom the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, bestows this grace.

By nature he is an enemy to God, an enemy in his mind: “The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,” Romans 8:7; Colossians 1:21.

So that the state of man was this: he was not only over-persuaded on a sudden to sin against God, but he drank this sin like water into his very nature, mingled it with every faculty of his soul and member of his body: by the means of which he became alienated from God, and an enemy to

him in his very heart. And wilt thou, O Lord, (as the scripture hath it) “and dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one?” Job 14:3. Yea, open thy heart, and take this man, not into judgment, but into mercy with thee?

Further, man by his sin had not only given himself to be a captive slave to the devil, but, continuing in his sin, he made head against his God, struck up a covenant with death, and made an agreement with hell; but for God to open his eyes upon such an one, and to take hold of him by the riches of grace, this is amazing, Isaiah 28:16-18.

See where God found the Jew when he came to look upon to him to save him: “As for thy nativity, (says God) in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. No eye pitied thee, to do any of these things unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out into the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. And when I passed by thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee, when thou was in thy blood, Live. No, when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine,” Ezekiel 16. Sinner, see further into the chapter. All this is the grace of God: every word in this text smells of grace.

But, before I pass this, let us take a little notice of the carriage of God to man, and again of man to God in his conversion.

First, Of God’s carriage to man. He comes to him while he is in his sins, in his blood; he comes to him now, not in the heat and fire of his jealousy, but in the cool of the day, in unspeakable gentleness, mercy, pity, and bowels of love; not in clothing himself with vengeance, but in a way of entreaty, and meekly beseecheth the sinner to be reconciled unto him, 2 Corinthians 5:19, 20.

It is expected among men, that he which giveth the offense should be the first in seeking peace: but, sinner, betwixt God and man it is not so; not that we love God, not that we chose God; but God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses to them.

God is the first that seeketh peace; and, as I said, in a way of entreaty, he bids his ministers pray you in Christ's stead; "as if God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." O sinner, wilt thou not open? Behold, God the father, and his son Jesus Christ, stand both at the door of thy heart, beseeching there for favor from thee, that thou wilt be reconciled to them, with promise, if thou wilt comply, to forgive thee all thy sins. O grace! O amazing grace! To see a prince entreat a beggar to receive an alms would be a strange sight; to see a king entreat the traitor to accept of mercy would be a stranger sight than that; but to see God entreat a sinner, to hear Christ say, "I stand at the door and knock," with a heart full, and a heaven full of grace, to bestow upon him that opens; this is such a sight as dazzles the eyes of angels. What sayest thou now sinner? is not this God rich in mercy? hath not this God great love for sinners? Nay, further, that thou mayest not have any ground to doubt that all this is but complimenting, thou hast also here declared, that God "hath made him (Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." If God would have stuck at any thing, he would have stuck at the death of his Son,

"but he delivered him up for us freely; how shall he not then with him freely give us all things?" Romans 8.

But this is not all; God doth not only beseech thee to be reconciled to him; but, for thy further encouragement, he hath pronounced in thy hearing exceeding great and precious promises, and hath confirmed them by an oath, "that by two immutable things, in which it is not possible that God should lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us," Hebrews 6:18, 19; Isaiah 1:18, 55:6, 7; Jeremiah 51:5.

Secondly, Let us come now to the carriage of these sinners to God, and that from the first day he beginneth to deal with their souls, even to the time when they are to be taken up into heaven. And,

1. To begin with God's ordinary dealing with sinners, when at first he ministereth conviction to them by his word, how strangely do they behave themselves? They love not to have their consciences touched; they like not to ponder upon what they have been, what they are, or what is likely to

become of them hereafter: such thoughts they count unmanly, hurtful, disadvantageous;

“therefore they refuse to hearken, they pull away their shoulder, they stop their ears that they should not hear,” Zechariah 7:11.

And now they are for any thing rather than the word: an alehouse, a playhouse, sports, pleasures, sleep, the world, and what not, so they may but ward off the power of the word of God.

2. If God now comes up closer to them, and begins to fasten conviction upon the conscience, though such conviction be the first step to faith and repentance, yea, and to life eternal, yet what shifts will they have to forget them, and wear them off! Yea, although they now begin to see that they must either turn or burn, yet oftentimes, even then, they will study to wave a present conversion: they object, they are too young to turn yet; seven years hence will be time enough, when they are old, or on a sick-bed. O what an enemy is man to his own salvation! I am persuaded that God hath visited some of you often with his word, even twice and thrice, and you have thrown water as fast as he hath by the word cast fire upon your conscience. Christian, what had become of thee, if God had taken thy denial for an answer, and said, Then will I carry the word of salvation to another, and he will heart it? Sinner, Turn, says God. Lord, I cannot tend it, says the sinner. Turn or burn, says God. I will venture that, says the sinner. Turn and be saved, says God. I cannot leave my pleasures, says the sinner; sweet sins, my sweet pleasures, and my sweet delights. But what grace is it in God thus to parley with the sinner! O the patience of God to a poor sinner! What if God should now say, Then get thee to thy sins, get thee to thy delights, get thee to thy pleasures, take them for thy portion, they shall be all thy heaven, all thy happiness, and all thou shalt have!

3. But God comes again, and shews the sinner the necessity of turning now; now, or not at all; yea, and giveth the sinner this conviction so strongly, that he cannot put it off. But, behold, the sinner has one spark of enmity still: if he must needs turn now, he will either turn from one sine to another, from great ones to little ones, from many to few, or from all to one, and there to stop. But, perhaps convictions will not thus leave him: why then he will turn from prophaneness to the law of Moses, and will

dwell as long as God will let him upon his own seeming goodness. And now observe him; he is a great stickler for legal performance; now he will be a good neighbor, he will pay every man his own, will leave off his swearing, the alehouse, his sports, and carnal delights; he will read, pray, talk of scripture, and be a very busy one in religion, such as it is; now he will please God, and make him amends for all the wrong he hath done him, and will feed him with chapters, and prayers, and promises, and vows, and a great many more such dainty dishes as these; persuading himself that now he must needs be fair for heaven, and thinks, besides, that he serveth God as well as any man in England can: but all this while he is as ignorant of Christ as the stool he sits on, and no nearer heaven than was the blind Pharisee, only he is got in a cleaner way to hell than the rest of his neighbors are:

“There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness,” Proverbs 20:12.

Might not God now cut off this sinner, and cast him out of his sight; might he not leave him here to his own choice, to be deluded by, and to fall in, his own righteousness, because he trusteth to it, and commits iniquity? Ezekiel 33:13. But grace, preventing grace, preserves him. It is true, this turn of the sinner, as I said, is a turning short of Christ. But,

4. God in this way of the sinner will mercifully follow him, and shew him the shortness of his performances, the emptiness of his duties, and the uncleanness of his righteousness, Isaiah 28:20, 64:6. This I speak of the sinner, the salvation of whose soul is graciously intended and contrived of God; for he shall be gospel-light be wearied out of all; he shall be made to see the vanity of all, and that the personal righteousness of Jesus Christ, and that only, is it which of God is ordained to save the sinner from the due reward of his sins. But, behold, the sinner now, at the sight and sense of his own nothingness, falleth into a kind of despair; for, although he hath it in him to presume of salvation, through the delusiveness of his own good opinion of himself, yet he hath it not in himself to have a good opinion of the grace of God, in the righteousness of Christ: wherefore he concludeth that, if salvation be alone of the grace of God through the righteousness of Christ, and that all of a man’s own is utterly rejected, as to the justification of his person with God, then he is cast away. Now, the

reason of this sinking of heart is the sight that God hath given him, a sight of the uncleanness of his best performances. The former sight of his immoralities did sometimes distress him, and make him betake himself to his own good deeds to ease his conscience; wherefore this was his prop, his stay: but, behold, now God hath taken this from under him, and now he falls; wherefore his best doth also now forsake him, and flies away like the morning dew, or a bird, or as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind, and the smoke out of a chimney, Hosea 9:11, 13:3.

Besides, this revelation of the emptiness of his own righteousness brings also with it a further discovery of the naughtiness of his heart, in its hypocrisies, pride, unbelief, hardness of heart, deadness, and backwardness to all gospel and new-covenant obedience; which sight of himself lies like millstones upon his shoulders, and sinks him yet further into doubts and fears of damnation. For, bid him now receive Christ, he answers, he cannot, he dares not. Ask him why he cannot, he will answer, he has no faith nor hope in his heart. Tell him that grace is offered him freely, he says, But I have no heart to receive it. Besides, he finds not, as he thinks, any gracious disposition in his soul, and therefore concludes, he doth not belong to God's mercy, nor hath an interest in the blood of Christ, and therefore dares not presume to believe; wherefore, as I said, he sinks in his heart, he dies in his thoughts, he doubts, he despairs, and concludes he shall never be saved.

5. But, behold, the God of all grace leaveth him not in this distress, but comes up now to him closer than ever: he sends the Spirit of adoption, the blessed Comforter, to him, to tell him, God is love, and therefore not willing to reject the broken in heart; bids him cry and pray for an evidence of mercy to his soul, and says, Peradventure you may be hid in the day of the Lord's anger. At this the sinner takes some encouragement, yet he can get no more than that which will hang upon a mere probability, which by the next doubt that ariseth in the heart is blown quite away, and the soul is left again in his first plight, or worse; where he lamentably bewails his miserable state, and is tormented with a thousand fears of perishing; for he hears not a word from heaven, perhaps for several weeks together: wherefore unbelief begins to get the mastery of him, and takes off the very edge and spirit of prayer, and inclination to hear the word any longer; yea, the devil also claps in with these thoughts, saying, that all your prayers,

and hearing, and reading, and godly company; which you frequent, will rise up in judgment against you at last; therefore better it is, if you must be damned, to choose as easy a place in hell as you can. The soul at this, begin quite discouraged, thinks to do as it hath been taught, and with dying thoughts it begins to faint when it goeth to prayer, or to hear the word; but, behold, when all hope seems to be quite gone, and the soul concludes, I die, I perish, in comes on a sudden the Spirit of God again, with some good word of God, which the soul never thought of before; which word of God commands a calm in the soul, makes unbelief give place, encourageth to hope and wait upon God again: perhaps it gives some little sight of Christ to the soul, and of his blessed undertaking for sinners. But, behold, so soon as the power of things do again begin to wear off the heart, the sinner gives place to unbelief, questions God's mercy, and fears damning again; he also entertains hard thoughts of God and Christ, and thinks former encouragements were fancies, delusions, or mere conjecture. And why doth not God now cast the sinner to hell, for his thus abusing his mercy and grace? O no!

“He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and he will have compassion on whom he will have compassion; wherefore goodness and mercy shall follow him all the days of his life, that he may dwell in the house of the Lord for ever,” Psalm 23:6.

6. God therefore, after all these provocations, comes by his Spirit to the soul again, and brings sealing grace and pardon to the conscience, testifying to it that its sins are forgiven, and that freely, for the sake of the blood of Christ; and now has the sinner such a sight of the grace of God in Christ, as kindly breaks his heart with joy and comfort. Now the soul knows what it is to eat promises; it also knows what it is to eat and drink the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ by faith: now it is driven by the power of his grace to its knees, to thank God for forgiveness of sins, and for hopes of an inheritance amongst them that are sanctified by faith which is in Christ: now it hath a calm and sunshine: now he washeth his steps with butter, and the rock pours him out rivers of oil.

7. But after this perhaps the soul grows cold again; it also forgets the grace received, and waxeth carnal; begins again to itch after the world, loseth the life and savor of heavenly things, grieves the Spirit of God, woefully

backslides, casteth off closet duties quite, or else retains only the formality of them; is a reproach to religion, grieves the heart of them that are awake and tender of God's name, etc. But what will God do now? Will he take this advantage to destroy the sinner? No. Will he let him alone in his apostasy? No. Will he leave him to recover himself by the strength of his now languishing graces? No. What then? Why he will seek this man out till he finds him, and bring him home to himself again;

“For thus saith the Lord God, Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out, as a shepherd seeketh out his flock, in the day that he is among the sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away; I will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick,” Ezekiel 34:11, 16.

Thus he dealt with the man that went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves; and thus he dealt also with the prodigal you read of, Luke 10:30-36, 15:20.

Of God's ordinary way of fetching the backslider home I will not now discourse, namely, whether he always breaketh his bones for his sins, as he broke David's; or whether he will all the days of their life, for this, leave them under guilt and darkness; or whether he will kill them now, that they may not be damned in the day of judgment, as he dealt with them at Corinth, 1 Corinthians 11:30, 31, 32. He is wise, and can tell how to imbitter backsliding to them he loveth.

He can break their bones and save them; he can lay them in the lowest pit in darkness, in the deep, and save them; he can slay them as to this life and save them. And herein again appears wonderful grace, that Israel is not forsaken, nor Judah of his God, though their land be filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel, Jeremiah 51:5.

8. But suppose God deals not either of these ways with the backslider, but shines upon him again, and seals up to him the remission of his sins a second time, saying, I will heal their backslidings, and love them freely: what will the soul do now? Surely it will walk humbly now and holily all its days: it will never backslide again, will it? It may happen it will not; it

may happen it will; it is just as his God keeps him; for, although his sins are of himself, his standing is of God; I say, his standing while he stands, and his recovery if he falls, are both of God. Wherefore, if God leaves him but a little, the next gap he finds, away he goes again: "My people (says God) are bent to backsliding from me." How many times did David backslide? yea, Jehoshaphat and Peter? 2 Samuel 11:24; 2 Chronicles 19:1, 2, 3, 20:5; Matthew 26:69, 70, 71; Galatians 2:11, 12, 13. As also in the 3d of Jeremiah it is said, "But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return unto me, saith the Lord," ver. 1. Here is grace! So many times as the soul backslides, so many times God brings him again, (I mean the soul that must be saved by grace;) he renews his pardons and multiplies them: "Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man," Job 33:29.

9. But see yet more grace. I will speak here of heart-wanderings and of daily miscarriages; I mean of these common infirmities that are incident to the best of saints, and that attend them in their best performances; not that I intend, for I cannot mention them particularly, that would be a task impossible: but such there are, worldly thoughts, unclean thoughts, too low thoughts of God, of Christ, of the Spirit, words, ways, and ordinances of God, by which a Christian transgresses many times; may I not say, sometimes many hundred times a day; yea, for aught I know, there are some saints, and them not long-lived neither, that must receive, before they enter into life, millions of pardons from God for these; and ever pardon is an act of grace, through the redemption that is in Christ's blood. Seventy times seven times a day we sometimes sin against our brother; but how many times in that day do we sin against God? "Lord, who can understand his errors! cleanse thou me from my secret sins," said David. And again, "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared," Matthew 18:2, 22; Psalm 19:12, 130:3, 4.

But to mention some of them: sometimes they question the very being of God, or foolishly ask how he came to be at first; sometimes they question the truth of his word, and suspect the harmony thereof, because their blind hearts and dull heads cannot reconcile it; yea, all fundamental truths lie open sometimes to the censure of their unbelief and atheism; as, namely, Whether there be such an one as Christ? Such a thing as the day of

judgment? Or whether there will be a heaven or hell hereafter? And God pardons all these by his grace. When they believe these things, even then they sin, by not having such reverend, high, and holy thoughts of them as they ought; they sin also by having too good thoughts of themselves, of sin, and the world; sometimes, let me say often, they wink too much at known sin, they bewail not, as they should, the infirmities of the flesh; the itching inclinations which they find in their hearts after vanity go too often from them unrepented of; I do not say but they repent them in the general. But all these things, O how often doth God forgive through the riches of his grace!

They sin by not walking answerable to mercies received; yea, they come short in their thanks to God for them, even then when they most heartily acknowledge how unworthy they are of them; also how little of the strength of them is spent to his praise, who freely poureth them into their bosoms: but from all these sins are they saved by grace.

They sin in their most exact and spiritual performance of duties: they pray not, they hear not, they read not, they give not alms, they come not to the Lord's table, or other holy appointments of God, but in and with much coldness, deadness, wanderings of heart, ignorance, misapprehensions, etc. They forget God while they pray unto him; they forget Christ while they are at his table; they forget his word, even while they are reading of it.

How often do they make promises to God, and afterwards break them? Yea; or, if they keep promise in shew, how much doth their heart even grudge the performing of them? How are they shocked at the cross? and how unwilling are they to lose that little they have for God, though all they have was given them to glorify him withal? All these things, and a thousand times as many more, dwell in the flesh of man; and they may as soon go away from themselves as from these corruptions; yea, they may sooner cut the flesh from their bones than these motions of sin from their flesh; these will be with them in every duty; I mean some or other of them; yea, as often as they look, or think, or hear, or speak, these are with them, especially when the man intends good in so doing: "When I would do good, (says Paul) evil is present with me." And God himself complains, that "every imagination of the thought of the heart of man is only evil, and that continually," Romans 7:21; Genesis 6:5.

By these things therefore we continually defile ourselves, and every one of our performances, I mean in the judgment of the law, even mixing iniquity with those things which we hallow unto the Lord; “For from within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceits, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, foolishness; all these things come from within, and they defile the man,” Mark 7:21, 22. Now, what can deliver the soul from these, but grace? “By grace ye are saved.”

5. WHAT MIGHT BE THE REASON THAT MOVED GOD TO SAVE SINNERS BY HIS GRACE, RATHER THAN BY ANY OTHER MEANS?

I come now to answer the fifth question; namely, to shew why God saveth those whom he doth save by grace, rather than by any other means.

- 1.** God saveth us by grace, because since sin is in the world he can save us no other way: sin and transgression cannot be removed but by the grace of God through Christ: sin is the transgression of the law of God, who is perfectly just. Infinite justice cannot be satisfied with the recompense that men can make; for, if it could, Christ Jesus himself needed not to have died: besides, man having sinned and defiled himself thereby, all his acts are the acts of a defiled man: nay, further, the best of his performances are also defiled by his hands; their performances, therefore, cannot be a recompense for sin. Besides, to affirm that God saveth defiled man for the sake of his defiled duties, (for so I say is every work of his hand, Haggai 2:14), what is it but to say God accepteth of one sinful act as a recompense and satisfaction for another? But God, even of old, hath declared how he abominates imperfect sacrifices; therefore we can by no other means be saved from sin than by grace, Romans 3:24.
- 2.** To assert that we may be saved any other way than by the grace of God, what is it but to object against the wisdom and prudence of God, wherein he aboundeth towards them whom he hath saved by grace? Ephesians 1:5-8. His wisdom and prudence found out no other way, therefore he chooseth to save us by grace.

3. We must be saved by grace, because else it follows that God is mutable in his decrees; for so hath he been determined before the foundation of the world; therefore he saveth us not, nor chooseth to save us, by any other way than by grace, Ephesians 1:3, 4, 3:8-11; Romans 9:23.

4. If a man should be saved any other way than by grace, God would be disappointed in his design to cut off boasting from his creature; but God's design to cut off boasting from his creature cannot be frustrated or disappointed; therefore he will save man by no other means than by grace; he (I say) hath designed that no flesh should glory in his presence, and therefore he refuseth their works; "Not of works, lest any man should boast." Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of faith, Ephesians 2:8, 9; Romans 3:24-28.

5. God hath ordained that we should be saved by grace, that he might have the praise and glory of our salvation

"That we should be to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved," Ephesians 1:5, 9.

Now God will not lose his praise, and his glory he will not give to another; therefore God doth not choose to save sinners but by his grace.

6. God hath ordained and doth choose to save us by grace, because, were there another way apparent, yet this is the way that is safest, and best secureth the soul. "Therefore it is by faith that it might be by grace, to the end the promise (the promise of eternal inheritance) might be sure to all the seed, Hebrews 9:14-16. No other way could have been sure: this is evident in Adam, the Jews, and I will add, the fallen angels, who, being turned over to another way than grace, you see in short time what became of them.

To be saved by grace supposeth that God hath taken the salvation of our souls into his own hand; and to be sure it is safer in God's hand than ours. Hence it is called the salvation of the Lord, the salvation of God, and salvation, and that of God.

When our salvation is in God's hand, himself is engaged to accomplish it for us.

(1) Here is the mercy of God engaged for us, Romans 9:15.

(2) Here is the wisdom of God engaged for us, Ephesians 1:7, 8.

(3) Here is the power of God engaged for us, 1 Peter 1:3-5.

(4) Here is the justice of God engaged for us, Romans 3:24, 25.

(5) Here is the holiness of God engaged for us, Psalm 89:30-35.

(6) Here is the care of God engaged for us, and his watchful eye is always over us for our good, 1 Peter 5:7; Isaiah 27:1, 2, 3.

What shall I say?

(1) Grace can take us into favor with God, and that even when we are in our blood, Ezekiel 16:7, 8.

(2) Grace can make children of us, though by nature we have been enemies to God, Romans 9:25, 26.

(3) Grace can make them God's people who were not God's people, 1 Peter 2:9, 10.

(4) Grace will not trust our salvation in our own hands, "He putteth no trust in his saints," Job 15:15.

(5) Grace can pardon our ungodliness, and justify us, by Christ's righteousness: it can put the Spirit of Jesus Christ within us, and help us up when we are down; it can heal us when we are wounded, and can multiply pardons, as we through frailty multiply transgressions. What shall I say?

(1) Grace and mercy is everlasting.

(2) It is built up for ever.

(3) It is the delight of God.

(4) It rejoiceth against judgment.

(5) And therefore it is the most safe and secure way of salvation, and therefore hath God chosen to save us by his grace and mercy rather than any other way, Isaiah 43:25; Romans 3:24, 25; Isaiah 44:2, 4; Psalm 37:23; Luke 10:33, 34; Isaiah 55:7, 8; Psalm 136., 89:2; Malachi 7:18; James 2:13.

7. We must be saved by the grace of God, or else God will not have his will:

“They that are saved are predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace,” Ephesians 1:5, 6.

(1) But, if it be his will that men should be saved by grace, then to think of another way is against the will of God. Hence they who seek to establish their own righteousness are such as are accounted to stand out in defiance against, and that do not submit to, the righteousness of God, that is, to the righteousness that he hath willed to be, that through which alone we are saved by grace.

(2) If it be his will that men should be saved through grace, then it is his will that men should be saved by faith in that Christ who is the contrivance of grace: therefore they that have sought to be justified another way have come, short of and perished, notwithstanding that salvation that is provided of God for men by grace, Romans 9:31-33.

(3) God is not willing that faith should be made void and the promise of none effect; therefore they who are of the righteousness of the law are excluded: “For, if the inheritance be of the law, then it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise,” Romans 4:14; Galatians 3:18.

(4) God is not willing that men should be saved by their own natural abilities; but all the works of the law, which men do to be saved by, they are the works of men’s natural abilities, and are therefore called the works of the flesh, Romans 4:1; Galatians 3:1-3; Philippians 3:3. But God is not willing that men should be saved by these; wherefore there is no way but by his grace.

8. We must be saved by grace, or else the main pillars and foundations of salvation are not only shaken but overthrown, to wit, election, the new covenant, Christ, and the glory of God, but these must not be overthrown. Therefore we must be saved by grace.

(1) Election, which layeth hold of men by the grace of God. God hath purposed that it shall stand: “The election of God standeth sure,”

Romans 9:11; 2 Timothy 2:19. Therefore men must be saved by virtue of the election of grace.

(2) The covenant of grace, that must stand:

“Brethren, I speak after the manner of men: though it be but a man’s covenant, yet if it be confirmed (as this is, by the death of the testator, no man disalloweth, or addeth thereunto,”
Hebrews 9:16, 17.)

Therefore man must be saved by virtue of a covenant of grace.

(3) Christ, who is the gift of the grace of God to the world, he must stand because he is a sure foundation, “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,” Isaiah 28:16, 17; Hebrews 13:8. Therefore men must be saved by grace, through the redemption that is in Christ.

(4) God’s glory, that also must stand, to wit, the glory of his grace, for that he will not give to another. Therefore men must be saved from the wrath to come, that in their salvation praise may redound to the glory of his grace.

9. There can be but one will of the master in our salvation; but that shall never be the will of man, but of God. Therefore man must be saved by grace, John 1:11, 12; Romans 9:16.

10. There can be but one righteousness that shall save a sinner; but that shall never be the righteousness of men, but of Christ. Therefore men must be saved by grace, that imputeth this righteousness to whom he will.

11. There can be but one covenant by which men must be saved; but that shall never be the covenant of the law, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. Therefore men must be saved by the covenant of grace, by which God will be merciful to our unrighteousness, and our sins and iniquities he will remember no more, Hebrews 8:6-13.

POSTSCRIPT.

A few words by way of use, and so I shall conclude.

I. — 1. Is the salvation of the sinner by the grace of God? Then here you see the reason why God hath not respect to the personal virtues of men in the bringing of them to glory. Did I say personal virtues? how can they have any to Godward who are enemies to him in their minds by wicked works? Indeed, men one to another seem to be some better, some worse, by nature; but to God they are all alike, dead in trespasses and sins.

We will therefore state it again: Are men saved by grace? Then here you may see the reason why conversion runs at that rate among the sons of men, that none are converted by their good deeds, nor rejected for their bad; but even so many of both, and only so many, are brought home to God, as grace is pleased to bring home to him.

1. None are received for their good deeds, for then they would not be saved by grace, but by works. Works and grace, as I have shewn, are in this matter opposite to each other; if he be saved by works, then not by grace; if by grace, then not by works; Romans xi.

That none are received of God for their good deeds is evident, not only because he declares his abhorrence of the supposition of such a thing, but hath also rejected the persons that have at any time attempted to present themselves to God in their own good deeds for justification. This I have shewn you before.

2. Men are not rejected for their bad deeds. This is evident by Manasseh, by the murderers of our Lord Jesus Christ; by the men that you read of in the 19th of the Acts; with many others, whose sins were of as deep a dye as the sins of the worst of men, 2 Chronicles 33:2; Acts 2:23.

Grace respecteth, in the salvation of a sinner, chiefly the purpose of God; wherefore those whom it findeth under that purpose, those it justifies freely through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.

At Saul's conversion Ananias of Damascus brought in a most dreadful charge against him to the Lord Jesus Christ, saying, "Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem; and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name." But what said the Lord unto him? "Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me," Acts 9:13-15. This man's cruelty and outrage must not hinder his conversion, because he was a chosen vessel. Men's

good deeds are no argument with God to convert them; men's bad deeds are no argument with him to reject them; I mean those that come to Christ by the drawing of the Father: besides, Christ also saith, "I will in no wise cast them out," John 6:37, 44.

2. Is the salvation of the sinner by the grace of God? Then here you see the reason why some sinners, who are wonderfully averse to conversion by nature, are yet made to stoop to the God of their salvation: grace makes them willing, because grace has designed them to this very thing. Hence some of the Gentiles were taken from among the rest; God granted them repentance unto life, because he had taken them from among the rest, both by election and calling, "for his name," Acts 11:18, 15:14. These men, that were not a people, are thus become the people of God; these men, that were not beloved for their works, were yet beloved by the grace of God: "I will call them my people which were not my people, and her beloved which was not beloved," though their minds are averse. But are they the people of whom God doth magnify the riches of his grace? Why then they shall, in the day of his power, be made willing, and be able to believe through grace, Psalm cx. 3; Acts 18:27. But doth the guilt of the burden of sin so keep them down that they can by no means lift up themselves? Why, God will, by the exceeding greatness of that power by which he raised Christ from the dead, work in their souls also by the Spirit of grace, to cause them to believe and to walk in his ways, Ephesians 1:18-20.

St. Paul tells us in that epistle of his to the Corinthians, that it was by grace he was what he was:

"By the grace of God I am what I am (says he); and his grace, which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain,"

1 Corinthians 15:10.

This man kept always in his mind a warm remembrance of what he was formerly by nature, and also how he had added to his vileness by practice; yea, moreover, he truly concluded in his own soul that, had not God by unspeakable grace put a stop to his wicked proceedings, he had perished in his wickedness. Hence he lays his call and conversion at the door of the grace of God:

“When it pleased God (says he) who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me,” Galatians 1:14, 15.

And hence it is again that he saith he obtained grace and apostleship: grace to convert his soul, and the gifts and authority of an apostle, to preach the gospel of the grace of God.

This blessed man ascribes all to the grace of God.

- (1) His call he ascribes to the grace of God.
- (2) His apostleship he ascribes to the grace of God.
- (3) And all his labor in that charge he also ascribes to the grace of God.

This grace of God was that which saved from the beginning.

- (1) Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and was therefore converted and preserved from the flood, Genesis 6:7, 8.
- (2) Abraham found grace in the sight of the Lord, and therefore he was called out of his country, Genesis 12:1, 2.
- (3) Moses found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and therefore he must not be blotted out of God’s book. Exodus 33:12, 17.

Neither may it be imagined that these men were, before grace laid hold of them, better than other men; for then they would not have been saved by grace: grace should not have had the dominion and glory of their salvation. But, as St. Paul says of himself, and of those that were saved by grace in his day,

“What are we better than they? No, in no wise; for we have proved before that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin,” Romans 3:9.

So it may be said of these blessed ones; for indeed this conclusion is general, and reacheth all the children of men, Christ Jesus only excepted. But,

3. Is the salvation of the sinner by the grace of God? Then here you may see the reason why one backslider is recovered, and another left to perish in his backsliding.

There was grace for Lot, but none for his wife; therefore she was left in her transgression, but Lot was saved notwithstanding. There was grace for Jacob, but none for Esau; therefore Esau was left in his backsliding, but Jacob found mercy notwithstanding. There was grace for David, but none for Saul; therefore David obtained mercy, and Saul perished in his backsliding. There was grace for Peter, but none for Judas; therefore Judas is left to perish in his backsliding, and Peter is saved from his sin. That text stands good to none but those who are elected by grace:

“Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace,” Romans 6:14.

It may be said that repentance was found in one but not in the other. Well, but who granted and gave the one repentance? The Lord turned and looked upon Peter; he did not turn and look upon Judas: yea, the Lord told Peter before he fell that he should follow him to the kingdom of heaven, telling him also that he should deny him first; but withal that he should not let his heart be troubled, that is, utterly dejected, for he would go and prepare a place for him, and come again and receive him to himself, John 13:36-38, 16:1-3. That is a blessed word of God,

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way: though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand,” Psalm 37:23, 24.

II. My second use shall be to them that are dejected in their souls at the sight and sense of their sins.

First. Those that are saved, are they saved by grace? Then those who would have their guilty consciences quieted must study the doctrine of grace.

It is Satan’s great design either to keep the sinner senseless of his sins, or, if God makes him sensible of them, then to hide and keep from his thoughts the sweet doctrine of the grace of God, by which alone the conscience getteth health and cure: for he

“hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,” 2 Thessalonians 2:16.

How then shall the conscience of the burdened sinner be rightly quieted if he perceiveth not the grace of God?

Study, therefore, this doctrine of the grace of God. Suppose thou hast a disease upon thee, which is not to be cured by such or such medicines, the first step to thy cure is to know the medicines. I am sure this is true as to the case in hand. The first step to the cure of a wounded conscience is for thee to know the grace of God, especially as touching justification from the curse in his sight.

A man under a wounded conscience naturally leans to the works of the law, and thinks God must be pacified by something that he should do; whereas the word says,

“I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, for I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance,” Matthew 9:13.

Wherefore thou must study the grace of God. It is a good thing (saith the apostle) that the heart be established with grace. Thereby insinuating that there is no establishment in the soul that is right, but by the knowledge of the grace of God, Hebrews 13:9.

I said, that, when a man is wounded in his conscience, he naturally leaneth to the works of the law; wherefore thou must therefore be so much the more heedful to study the grace of God; yea, to study it as rightly, not only in notion, but in thy practices, to distinguish it from the law:

“The law was given by Moses,
but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,” John 1:17.

Study it, I say, so as to distinguish it, and that not only from the law, but from all those things that men blasphemously call this grace of God.

There are many things which men call the grace of God that are not so.

1. The light and knowledge that is in every man.
2. That natural willingness that is in man to be saved.
3. That power that is in man by nature to do something, as he thinketh, towards his own salvation.

I name these three: there are also many other, which some will have entitled the grace of God: but do thou remember that the grace of God is his good-will and great love to sinners in his son Jesus Christ; by the which good-will they are sanctified, through the offering up of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, Hebrews 10:10.

Again, when thou hast smelt out this grace of God, and canst distinguish it from that which is not so, then labor to strengthen thy soul with the blessed knowledge of it: “Thou, therefore, my son, (said Paul) be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus,” 2 Timothy 2:1. Fortify thy judgment and understanding; but especially labor to get down all into thy conscience, that they may be purged from dead works to serve the living God.

And, to enforce this use upon thee yet further, consider that a man gets still more advantage by the knowledge of, and by growing strong in, this grace of God.

1. It ministereth to him matter of joy; for he, who knows this grace aright, knows that God is at peace with him, because he believeth in Jesus Christ, who by grace tasted death for every man:

“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God,” Romans 5:2.

And indeed what joy or what rejoicing is like rejoicing here? Rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, is to rejoice in hope to enjoy him for ever with that eternal glory that is in him.

2. As it manifesteth matter of joy and rejoicing, so it causeth much fruitfulness in all holiness and godliness.

“For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world,” Titus 2:11, 12.

Yea, so it naturally tendeth this way, that it can no sooner appear to the soul, but it causeth this blessed fruit in the heart and life: “We ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures; living in malice and envy; hateful, and hating one another: but, after the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared.” What then? Why then, “he that believeth,” being justified by his grace, and expecting to be

an heir according to the hope of eternal life, “is careful to maintain good works,” Titus 3:3-8.

See also that in St. Paul’s epistle to the Colossians,

“We give thanks (says he) to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which is come unto you, as it is also in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth,” Colossians 1:3-6.

3. The knowledge of, and strength that comes by, the grace of God, is a sovereign antidote against all, and all manner of, delusions that are or may come into the world. Wherefore St. Peter, exhorting the believers to take heed that they were not carried away with the errors of the wicked, and so fall from their own steadfastness, adds, as their only help, this exhortation:

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” 2 Peter 3:18.

(1) Suppose it should be urged that man’s own righteousness saveth the sinner: why then we have this at hand, God hath saved us, and called us, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ, etc. 2 Timothy 1:9.

(2) Suppose that it should be urged that by the doctrine of free grace we must not understand God’s extending free forgiveness as far as we have sinner, or do sin. The answer is, But where sin abounded grace hath much more abounded; that, as sin hath reigned unto death, so grace might rein through righteousness (through the justice of God being satisfied by his Son) unto eternal life, Romans 5:20, 21.

(3) Suppose it should be urged that this is a doctrine tending to looseness and lasciviousness, the answer is ready:

“What shall we say then? shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid: how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?”

for the doctrine of free grace believed is the most sin-killing doctrine in the world, Romans 6:1, 2.

(4) Suppose that men should attempt to burden the church of God with unnecessary ceremonies, and impose them, even as the false apostles urged circumcision of old, saying, Unless ye do these things ye cannot be saved. The answer is ready:

“Why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they,” Acts 15:1, 10, 11.

But not to enlarge.

4. This doctrine, of being saved by grace, is the only remedy against despairing thoughts at the apprehension of our own unworthiness: as,

(1) Thou criest out, O, cursed man that I am, my sins will sin me into hell!

Answer Hold, man, there is a God in heaven that is the God of all grace, 1 Peter 5:10. Yet thou art not the man of all sin; if God be the God of all grace, then, if all the sins of the world were thine, yet the God of all grace can pardon; or else it should seem that sin is stronger in a penitent man to damn, than the grace of God can be to save.

(2) But my sins are of the worst sort; blasphemy, adultery, covetousness, murder, etc.

Answer All manner of sins and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon,” Matthew 12:31; Mark 3:28; Isaiah 55:7, 8.

(3) But I have a stout and rebellious heart, a heart that is far from good.

Answer

“Hearken to me, (saith God) ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness; I bring near my righteousness; that is the righteousness of Christ, by which stout-hearted sinners are justified, though ungodly,” Isaiah 46:12, 13; Philippians 3:7, 8; Romans 4:5.

(4) But I have a heart as hard as any stone.

Answer

“A new heart also will I give you, (says God) and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh,” Ezekiel 36:26.

(5) But I am as blind as a beetle, I cannot understand any thing of the gospel.

Answer

“I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight: these things I will do unto them, and not forsake them,” Isaiah 42:16.

(6) But my heart will not be affected with the sufferings and blood of Christ.

Answer

“I will pour upon the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication; and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for an only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born,” Zechariah 12:10.

(7) But, though I see what is likely to become of me if I find not Christ, yet my spirit, while I am thus, will be running after vanity, foolishness, uncleanness, and wickedness.

Answer

“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; from all filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you,” Ezekiel 36:25.

(8) But I cannot believe in Christ.

Answer But God hath promised to make thee believe:

“I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord.” And again, “There shall be a root of Jesse, and he shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, and in him shall the Gentiles trust,” Zephaniah 3:12; Romans 15:12.

(9) But I cannot pray to God for mercy.

Answer But God hath graciously promised a spirit of prayer:

“Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God,” Zechariah 8:22, 12:10, 13:9.

(10) But I cannot repent.

Answer

“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree: him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sins,” Acts 5:30, 31.

Thus might I enlarge, for the holy Bible is full of this exceeding grace of God. O, these words ‘I will,’ and ‘You shall,’ they are the language of a gracious God; they are promises by which our God has engaged himself to do that for poor sinners which would else be left undone for ever.

III. Those who are saved, are they saved by grace? Then let Christians labor to advance God's grace.

1. In heart.

2. In life.

First, in heart, and that in this manner:

1. Believe in God's mercy, through Jesus Christ, and so advance the grace of God; I mean, venture heartily, venture confidently, for there is a sufficiency in the grace of God. Abraham magnified the grace of God when he considered not his own body now dead, neither yet the barrenness of Sarah's womb; when he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, Romans 4:19, 20.

2. Advance it by heightening of it in thy thoughts; have always good and great thoughts of the grace of God: narrow and slender thoughts of it are a great disparagement to it.

And, to help thee in this matter, consider,

(1) This grace is compared to a sea: "And thou wilt cast all our sins into the depth of the sea," Micah 7:19. Now a sea can never be filled by casting into it.

(2) This grace is compared to a fountain, to an open fountain: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." Now a fountain can never be drawn dry, Zechariah 13:1.

(3) The psalmist cries out concerning the grace and mercy of God, "It endureth for ever:" he says so twenty-six times in one psalm. Surely he saw a great deal in it; surely he was taken a great deal with it, Psalm 136.

(4) St. Paul, says, "The God of all grace can do more than we ask or think," Ephesians 3:20.

(5) Therefore, as God's word says, so thou shouldst conclude of the grace of God.

3. Come boldly to the throne of grace by hearty prayer, for this is the way also to magnify the grace of God. This is the apostle's exhortation:

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need,”

Hebrews 4:16.

See here a little, and wonder.

We have been all this while discoursing of the grace of God, and now we are come to this throne; as Job says, even to his seat; and, behold, that is a throne of grace. O, when a God of grace is upon a throne of grace, and a poor sinner stands by and begs for grace, and that in the name of a gracious Christ, in and by the help of the Spirit of grace, can it be otherwise than that such a sinner must obtain mercy and grace to help in time of need? But, not to forget the exhortation, “Come boldly.” Indeed we are apt to forget this exhortation; we think, being such abominable sinners, that we should not presume to come boldly to the throne of grace, although we are bidden so to do; and to break a commandment here is as bad as to break it in another place.

You may ask me, What is it to come boldly?

Answer (1) It is to come confidently:

“Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water,” Hebrews 10:21, 22.

(2) To come boldly is to come frequently: At morning, at noon, and at night, will I pray. We used to count them bold beggars that come often to our door.

(3) To come boldly is to ask for great things when we come: that is the bold beggar who will not only ask, but also choose the thing that he asketh.

(4) To come boldly is to ask for others as well as ourselves; to beg mercy and grace for all the saints of God under heaven as well as for ourselves;

“Praying with all prayer and supplication
in the Spirit for all saints,” Ephesians 6:18.

(5) To come boldly is to come and take no nay: thus Jacob came to the throne of grace: “I will not let thee go except thou bless me,” Genesis 32:26.

(6) To come boldly is to plead God’s promises with him, both in a way of justice and mercy, and to take it for granted that God will give us (because he hath said it) whatever we ask in the name of his Son.

4. Labor to advance God’s grace in thy heart by often admiring, praising, and blessing God in secret for it. God expects it: “He that offereth praise glorifieth me,” says he. By Jesus Christ therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks in his name, Psalm 50:23; Hebrews 13:15.

But again, secondly, As we should advance this grace in our hearts, so we should do it in our life: we should in our conversation adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. It is a great word of the apostle, “Only let your conversation be as becomes the gospel of Christ,” which is the gospel of the grace of God, Philippians 1:27. God expecteth that there should in our whole life be a blessed savor of the gospel; or that in our life among men there should be preached to them the grace of the gospel of God.

The gospel shews us that God did wonderfully stoop and condescend for our good, and to do accordingly is to stoop and condescend to others.

The gospel shews us that there was abundance of pity, love, and bowels of compassion, in God towards us; and accordingly we should be full of bowels, pity, love, and compassion, to others.

The gospel shews us that in God there is a great deal of willingness to do good to others.

The gospel shews us that God acteth towards us according to his truth and faithfulness, and so should we in all our actions one to another.

By the gospel God declares that he forgiveth us ten thousand talents, and we ought likewise to forgive our brother the hundred pence.

And now, before I conclude this use, let me give you a few heart-endearing considerations to this so good and so happy a work.

- 1.** Consider God hath saved thee by his grace. Christian, God hath saved thee, thou hast escaped the lion's mouth, thou art delivered from wrath to come; advance the grace that saves thee in thy heart and life.
- 2.** Consider, God left millions in their sins that day he saved thee by his grace: he left millions out and pitched upon thee: it may be hundreds also, yea thousands, were in the day of thy conversion lying before him under the preaching of the word, as thou wert, yet he took thee. Considerations of this nature affected David much, and God would have it affect thee to the advancing of his grace in thy life and conversation, Psalm 78:67-72; Deuteronomy 7:7.
- 3.** Consider, perhaps the greater part of those whom God refused that day, when he called thee by his grace, were, as to conversation, far better than ever thou wert. I was a blasphemer, I was a persecutor, I was an injurious person; but I obtained mercy! O, this should affect thy heart, this should engage thy heart to study to advance this grace of God! 1 Timothy 1:14, 15.
- 4.** Perhaps in the day of thy conversion thou wast more unruly than many; like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, hardly tamed, thou wast brought home by strong hands: thou wouldst not be driven; the Lord Jesus must take thee up, lay thee upon his shoulder, and carry thee home to his Father's house. This should engage thy heart to study to advance the grace of God, Luke 15:1-6.
- 5.** It may be many did take even offense at God in his converting and saving of thee by his grace, even as the elder son was offended with his Father for killing the fatted calf for his brother, and yet that did not hinder the grace of God, nor make God abate his love to thy soul. This should make thee study to advance the grace of God in thy heart and life, Luke 15:25-33.
- 6.** Consider, again, that God hath allowed thee but a little time for this good work, even the few days that thou hast now to live; I mean for this good work among sinful men; and then thou shalt go to receive the wages that grace also will give thee for thy work to eternal joy.
- 7.** Let this also have some place upon thy heart; every man shews subjection to the god that he serveth, yea, though that god be none other

but the devil and his lusts. And wilt not thou, O man, saved of the Lord, be much more subject to the Father of spirits, and live? Alas! they are pursuing their own damnation, yet they sport it, and dance all the way they go: they serve that god with cheerfulness and delight, who at last will plunge them into the everlasting gulf of death, and torment them in the fiery flames of hell: but thy God is the God of salvation, and to God thy Lord belong the issues from death. Wilt not thou serve him with joyfulness in the enjoyment of all good things, even him by whom thou art to be made blessed for ever?

Objection This is that which kills me: honor God I cannot; my heart is so wretched, so spiritless, and desperately wicked, I cannot.

Answer What dost thou mean by cannot?

1. If thou meanest that thou hast no strength to do it, thou hast said an untruth; for “stronger is he that is in us, than he that is in the world,” John 4:4.
2. If thou meanest that thou hast no will, then thou art out also; for every Christian (in his right hand) is a willing man, and the day of God’s power hath made him so, Psalm 110:3.
3. If thou meanest that thou wantest wisdom, that is thine own fault:

“If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not,” James 1:5.

Objection I cannot do things as I would.

Answer No more could the best of the saints of old: “To will is present with me, (said Paul) but how to perform that which is good I find not:” and again,

“The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would,” Romans 7:18; Galatians 5:17.

And here indeed lies a great discovery of this truth, “Ye are saved by grace;” for the children of God, whilst here, notwithstanding their conversion to God, and salvation by Christ through grace, are so infirm

and weak, by reason of a body of death that yet remaineth in them, that, should even the sin that is in the best of their performances be laid to their charge, according to the tenor of a covenant of works, they would find it impossible ever to get into glory. But why do I talk thus? It is impossible that those who are saved by grace should have their infirmities laid to their charge as before, for they are not under the law, they are included by the grace of God in the death and blood of the Son of God, who ever liveth to make intercession for them at the right hand of God: whose intercession is so prevalent with the Father, as to take away the iniquity of our holy things from his sight, and to present us holy, and unreprouable, and unblameable, in his sight. To him, by Christ Jesus, through the help of the blessed Spirit of grace, be given praise, and thanks, and glory, and dominion, by all his saints, now and for ever. Amen.

CONCLUSION