

CHAPTER 4

HOW IT APPEARS THAT THE SAVED, ARE SAVED BY GRACE?

This fourth question requireth that some demonstration be given of the truth of this doctrine — to wit, that **THEY THAT ARE SAVED ARE SAVED BY GRACE**.

What hath been said before hath given some demonstration of the truth; wherefore, first repeating in 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 times, to them that shall be saved (**Ephesians 1:3, 4**; **2 Timothy 1:9**; **Ephesians 1:10**; **Ephesians 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? (^{<3216>}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 upon himself, especially that fearful, dreadful, soul-astonishing, and amazing part thereof! Who could once 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” (^{<4008>}Ephesians 1:3-7).

Again; if we consider the terms and conditions upon which this salvation is made over to them that are saved, it will further appear 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 (^{<8816>}John 3:16; ^{<8857>}Romans 5:17; ^{<4012>}2 Corinthians 1:21, 22; ^{<4023>}Luke 12:32).
- 2.** He also giveth repentance, he giveth faith, and giveth everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace (^{<4153>}Acts 5:30, 31; ^{<5012>}Philippians 1:29; ^{<5216>}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 (^{<4451>}Acts 5:31; ^{<1034>}Proverbs 3:34; ^{<4046>}John 4:6; ^{<1035>}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 to us in the doings of Christ, founded in his blood, established upon the best promises made to him, and to us by him.

“For all the promises of God in him *are* yea, and in him amen, to the glory of God by us” (^{<4002>}2 Corinthians 1:20).

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

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” (^{<4807>}Romans 8:7).

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?”
(^{<4443>}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 riches of grace, this is amazing (^{<2316>}Isaiah 28:16-18).

See where God found the Jew when he came to look upon 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. None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, *when thou wast* in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee, *when thou wast* in thy blood, Live. — Now 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 sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.” Sinner, see further into the chapter, ²³⁰¹Ezekiel 16. All this is the grace of God; every word in this text smells of grace.

But before I pass this, let us a little take 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 (⁴¹⁵⁹2 Corinthians 5:19, 20).

It is expected among men that he which giveth the offence should be the first in seeking peace; but, sinner, betwixt God and man it is not so; not that we loved God, not that we chose God; but “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto 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 though 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 complementing, thou hast also here declared that God hath made his 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 anything, he would have stuck at the death of his Son; but he “delivered him up for us” freely; “how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (^{<483>}Romans 8:32). ^{f11}

But this is not all. God doth not only beseech thee to be reconciled to him, but further, for thy encouragement, he hath pronounced, in thy hearing, exceeding great and precious promises; “and hath confirmed *it* by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us” (^{<306>}Hebrews 6:18, 19; ^{<231>}Isaiah 1:18; ^{<250>}Isaiah 55:6, 7; ^{<250>}Jeremiah 51:5).

Second. 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 that they are to be taken up into heaven.

And, 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 like to become of them hereafter; such thoughts they count unmanly, hurtful, disadvantageous; therefore “they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear” (^{<3071>}Zechariah 7:11). And now they are for anything rather than the Word; an alehouse, a whorehouse, a playhouse, sports, pleasures, sleep, the world, and what not so they may stave ^{f12} off the power of the word of God.

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,^{f13} yet oftentimes even then they will study to wave a present conversion: they object, they are too young to turn yet; seven years hence time enough, when they are old, or come upon 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.^{f14} 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 hear it? Sinner, turn, says God. Lord, I cannot tend^{f15} 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, sweet pleasures, sweet delights, says the sinner. 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 thy portion?

But God comes again, and shows 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 sin to another, from great ones to little ones, from many to few, or from all to one, and there stop. But perhaps convictions will not thus leave him. Why, then, he will turn from profaneness 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.^{f16} 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 has got in a cleaner way to hell than the rest of his neighbors are in —

“There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness” (²⁸⁰⁰Proverbs 30:12).

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”? (²⁸³⁸Ezekiel 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, God in this way of the sinner will mercifully follow him, and show him the shortness of his performances, the emptiness of his duties, and the uncleanness of his righteousness (²⁸³⁰Isaiah 28:20; ²⁸⁴⁶Isaiah 64:6). Thus I speak of the sinner, the salvation of whose soul is graciously intended and contrived of God; for he shall by 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 performance; the former sight of his immoralities did somewhat 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 (²⁸⁰¹Hosea 9:11; ²⁸³³Hosea 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.

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 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, being 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 does 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 encouragement's were fancies, delusions, or mere think-so's. 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"

(⁴²⁰⁶ Psalm 23:6).

Sixth. 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" (⁴²⁰⁶ Job 29:6).

Seventh. But after this, perhaps the soul grows cold again, it also forgets this 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 hearts 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, and will bind up *that which was broken*, and will strengthen that which was sick”
(²⁸⁴¹Ezekiel 34:11, 16).

Thus he dealt with the man that went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves; and thus he dealt with the prodigal you read of also
(²¹¹⁸Luke 10:30-35; ²¹⁵¹Luke 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 (⁴¹¹³1 Corinthians 11:30-32). He is wise, and can tell how to embitter 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 was
filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel”
(²⁵¹⁵Jeremiah 51:5).

Eighth. 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 a little, the next gap he finds, away he is gone again. “My people,” says God, “are bent to backsliding from me.” How many times did David backslide; yea, Jehoshaphat and Peter! (¹⁰¹²2 Samuel 11:24; ¹⁴⁸⁰2 Chronicles 19:1-3; ¹⁴⁰⁰2 Chronicles 20:1-5; ¹²⁶⁹Matthew 26:69-71; ⁸⁰¹Galatians 2:11-13). As also in the third of Jeremiah it is said, “But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return unto me, saith the Lord” (verse 1). Here is grace! So many time 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~~ Job 33:29).

Ninth. 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 either, that must receive, before they enter into life, millions of pardons from God for these; and every pardon is an act of grace, through the redemption that is in Christ’s blood. ^{f17}

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 secret *faults*” [*sins*], said David. And again, “If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But *there is* forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared” (~~Mat~~ Matthew 18:21, 22; ~~Psa~~ Psalm 19:12; ~~Psa~~ Psalm 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 reverent, high, and holy thoughts of them as they ought; they sin also by having too, 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 answerably 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 show, how much doth their heart even grudge the performing of them; how do they shuck^{f18} 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!^{f19}

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 corruption's; 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 thoughts of the heart of man *is* only evil," and that "continually" (⁸⁷²Romans 7:21; ⁰⁰⁶Genesis 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 men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication's, murders, thefts, covetousness,

wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evil things come from within, and defile the man”

(⁴⁰⁷²Mark 7:21-23).

Now what can deliver the soul from these but grace? “By grace ye are saved.”