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THE SERMONS OF JOHN BRINE

Sin Reigns Not, Nor Shall Reign, In The Saints:

by John Brine

(London: George Keith, 1764)

*Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee;
that it may be displayed because of the truth
— Psa. 60: 4*



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SERMON 37

SIN REIGNS NOT, NOR SHALL REIGN, IN THE SAINTS:

**A DISCOURSE, DELIVERED AT A MONTHLY EXERCISE OF
PRAYER, WITH A SERMON, APRIL THE 20TH 1764.**

Published at the Request of MINISTERS and GENTLEMEN who heard it.

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ROM. 6:14.

For Sin shall not have Dominion over you: for ye are not under the Law, but under Grace.

IT is the evident Design of the Apostle, in this Context, to engage the *Romans* unto a Denial of their corrupt Inclinations, In the preceding Chapter he discourses largely of the super-abounding Grace of GOD over the abounding of Sin. In the Beginning of this, he obviates an Objection that some might be disposed to raise, against what he had expressed on that Subject. *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in Sin that Grace may abound? God forbid.* And proposes to Consideration the most weighty Arguments to enforce his End in view. *How shall we, that are dead to Sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his Death?*

I am apprehensive that you will easily observe that, ***The Words of my Text consist of three Branches.***

I. An express Assertion concerning Sin, with respect to the believing *Romans*: *For Sin shall not have Dominion over you.*

II. That they were not under the Law: *For ye are not under the Law.*

III. That they were under Grace: *But under Grace.* From both which it might justly be inferred, that Sin should not have Dominion over them.

I. *I begin with the express Assertion: For Sin shall not have Dominion over you. Two Things we are here to inquire into, namely, What is meant by Sin: And what is the Import of its having Dominion.*

1. Let us inquire what is meant by *Sin*. Considered as an Act it is a Violation of the Law. *Whosoever committeth Sin transgresseth also the Law; for Sin is the Transgression of the Law* (1Jo. 3: 4.). Such Actions as correspond not with the Law, which is a Rule of Conduct to us, are Sins. But, I apprehend, that this is not the Meaning of Sin in this Place. For the Attribution of Dominion to Acts is not proper. Sinful Actions follow upon, or result from, the Reign of Sin; but they do not rule the Subject of them. And, therefore, I think Sin here means a Disposition of Mind which is contrary to the Law, and is a Spring of evil Acts. And it is clear to me, that the Apostle uses the Term Sin in this Sense frequently. Thus he does several Times in this Context, *Let not Sin reign in your mortal Body, that ye should obey it in the Lusts thereof.* With what Propriety can Lusts be attributed to Actions? To an evil Disposition they may, which consists of numerous Lusts, and the Gratification of those Lusts is yielding Obedience to that Disposition: *Neither yield ye your Members as Instruments of Unrighteousness unto Sin.* To yield our Members as Instruments of Unrighteousness, is acting agreeably to that evil Disposition which is in us, called Sin by the Apostle. And in the seventh Chapter he designs by Sin, not criminal Actions, but a corrupt abiding Principle from which they flow: *Sin takes Occasion by the Commandment:* not as an Act, but as a Source of Actions; *Sin dwelt in him.* Actions are transient and passing, but that which the Apostle calls Sin had Residence in him, and therefore by it must be understood an evil Disposition, or corrupt Habits, and not sinful Actions. The same that he names *Flesh*, and *wherein dwelt no good Thing*, and out of which nothing that is good can possibly be educed. From all which it is exceedingly

clear, that Sin is to be interpreted of an impure Fountain, from whence spring criminal Acts.

2. I am to inquire what is the Import of Sin having *Dominion*. This Assertion, *Sin shall not have Dominion over you*, plainly suggests, that they were Subjects of it, or that it had a Being in them. I know that some have made large Pretensions to extraordinary Holiness, and have boasted of being very nearly, if not wholly free from the Presence and Working of Evil in their Hearts, which is not the Effect of their Eminency in Holiness, but is an Evidence of much Unacquaintedness with themselves. True it is of every Believer, that he is holy and unholy, that he is *Spirit* and also *Flesh*, the Subject of a pure and also of an impure Principle. There are two contrary Springs of Action in him: *If we say that we have no Sin we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us* (Joh. 1: 8.). Such as imagine themselves to be very near to Perfection, and can say to others, with an Air of Contempt, *Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou*, give melancholy Evidence not only of the Being, but also of the Power of Sin in them. Those who excel in Holiness, are best acquainted with, and are most humbled under a Sense of the natural Impurity of their Hearts.

The *Dominion* of Sin is its exercising Lordship over the Soul. So the Word used is rendered: *The Kings of the Gentiles exercise Lordship over them* (Luk. 22:25. *Οι βασιλεις των Εθνων κυριευουσιν αυγων*). The whole Heart is in Subjection to it as a Tyrant when it reigns, the Soul being destitute of a contrary Principle to oppose it, and prevent its Sway. The Mind is darkened by it, and is incapable of framing proper Conceptions of spiritual Things. Such who are under the reigning Power of Sin, *have their Understandings darkened, their Minds are alienated from the Life of God through the Ignorance that is in them. They cannot know the Things of the Spirit of God*; though they are the highest *Wisdom*, to them they are *Foolishness*. It is also a constant Spring of vain Thoughts: *The Imagination of the Thoughts of the Heart is evil, only evil, and continually*, when Sin possesses Dominion in a Person. It prevents holy Conceptions, and introduces a Crowd of unholy ones perpetually, the Mind being never free from its powerful Influence.

The Will is also determined by Sin in its Acts, when it reigns. This corrupt Principle causes the Will to refuse what is Good, and to make Choice of Evil. There is in it an Aversion to Holiness, and a constant prevailing Inclination to unholy Acts. It is the Subject of a Reluctancy to Obedience,

and of a fixed Propensity to Disobedience. This determining Influence of Sin upon the Will, is that Lordship which it exercises as a reigning Principle. If the Will is not in Subjection to Sin, it hath not Dominion. War and captivate it may, but rule it cannot; an habitual Opposition to Sin in the Will, is a full Evidence that it doth not possess a governing Power over the Soul.

Farther, the Affections are carnal, and inordinate. Sin as a reigning Principle causes them to tend, in a strong manner, towards vain Objects, and keeps them fixed thereon. All the Passions are irregular and exorbitant. So that there is no Pleasure taken in what is good, but Vanity and Folly are the pleasing Entertainments which a Man who is under the Dominion of Sin eagerly seeks after, and tires not in the Pursuit of. In these Things consists the Reign of Sin. If it prevents not holy Thoughts springing up in the Mind, nor spiritual Desires in the Will, neither a Tendency towards what is heavenly in the Affections, it hath lost its Dominion, notwithstanding its continued Subsistence in the Soul. If Sin is deprived of its Rule, it will never recover its reigning Power, with what Violence soever it may act its Part. This is the important Truth which the Apostle positively asserts, for the Encouragement of Believers.

II. *The Saints are not ‘under the Law’. Here we must consider the Law; who are under it, and its Insufficiency to take away, or subdue the reigning Power of Sin.*

1. Let us consider the Law. I shall not take up your Time in shewing that the ceremonial Law is not designed, it being very evident that the moral Law, or Covenant of Works, is here intended; which confirms of Precepts, an important Promise, and a very awful Threatning.

(1.) It consists of Precepts.. And they are comprehended summarily in two general Commands. One is this: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength. This is the first and great Commandment.* And the other is like unto it, namely, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself. On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets. Love is the fulfilling of the Law.* They comprise the Whole of our Duty to GOD and our Neighbour. The former includes in it, a holy Reverence and Adoration of GOD, Dependence on Him, Gratitude to Him, Submission and Obedience to his Will in all Things. The latter is also very comprehensive, *Love worketh no Ill.* We are under Obligation not to injure our Neighbour in his Person, Property, or Character; on the

contrary it is our Duty to be strictly equitable and just in all our Actions towards him, and this Command obliges us to perform good and kind Offices, to exercise Benevolence, Sympathy and Compassion, in all our Conduct. These Precepts are worthy of GOD, suitable to his infinite Holiness, Goodness and Wisdom, and a constant punctual Obedience to them in their utmost Extent, is fit and reasonable.

(2.) The Law contains an important Promise in Care of Obedience, namely, the Enjoyment of Life: *The Man that dot them shall live in them.* It is agreeable to the Purity of GOD to approve of Innocence and Obedience, and therefore he will never treat the innocent and obedient Creature with Severity, and consequently such a Creature, according to the legal Constitution, cannot be deprived of the Continuance of that Good which the Promise of Life comprises.

(3.) A very awful Threatning is annexed to the Law, in Care of Disobedience. It hath a penal Sanction, which is Death. *The Soul that sins shall die*, is the Language of it. *The Wages of Sin is Death*, not only corporal, but also eternal, according to the Law. Obey and live, sin and die, are the Terms of the Covenant of Works: which Constitution is just and equal. It is becoming the Goodness of GOD to continue to an innocent obedient Creature the Enjoyment of Life, and it is agreeable to his Justice to punish a guilty disobedient Creature with Death.

2. All who are under the Dominion of Sin, are under the Law. Every unregenerate Man is under the Covenant of Works. The Elect, as well as the Non-elect, are under it, without Distinction. For that Covenant was made with *Adam*, as the Head and Representative of all his natural Descendants, and therefore all Men were included in that Covenant. *Whatsoever Things the Law saith, it saith to them that are under the Law, that every Mouth may be stopped, and all the World may become guilty before God.* Though Election to Salvation secures unto its Objects a Deliverance from that Covenant, it did not prevent, but necessarily supposes, their coming under this legal Constitution with the other Part of Mankind, from among whom they were chosen. Every Man in whom Sin reigns, is the Subject of the Law, as a Covenant. And it exhibits a Charge of Guilt, and denounces dreadful Menaces against him. Even such as are virtuous and religious in their Deportment, being under the Reign of Sin, they are under the Law in its Charges and Threatenings. The Apostle *Paul*, when unregenerate, was virtuous and religious in his Conduct, and yet he was then under the Law. He behaved himself in such a manner that

those who had Opportunity of knowing him best, could not charge him with sinful Neglects nor criminal Acts. For, *as touching the Righteousness which is in the Law, he was blameless*. Notwithstanding that, he was under the Dominion of Sin, and in Subjection to the Law as a Covenant, and condemned by it; as all are in whom Sin rules. But Believers, or such in whom Sin is deprived of its Dominion, they are not under the Law, that is to say, as in the Form of a Covenant, promising Life on Condition of Obedience, and threatening Death on Account of Disobedience. Under it they are as a Law, but not as it hath a penal Sanction annexed to it. They are *dead* to it as such by *the Body of Christ*, and it is *dead* to them. Indeed *they are not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ*. Some perhaps may say, Will not the Law subdue and keep Sin under, as it promises Life unto Obedience, and threatens Death for the Breach of its Precepts? Is not Man a reasonable Creature? and is it not agreeable to Reason to desire the Enjoyment of Good, and to avoid, if possible, the Suffering of Evil? What can be a more powerful Motive to engage unto the Practice of Duty, than the Hope of receiving a Reward is? And what can have a stronger Influence on the Mind to decline the Practice of Sin, than a Dread of its penal Consequences? Why therefore is it assigned as a Reason that Sin should not have Dominion over the *Romans*, Because they were not under the Law? In answer to there Inquiries I proceed to show,

3. The Insufficiency of the Law to conquer and subdue Sin, as a reigning Principle. It convinces of Sin, and condemns for it. *By the Law is the Knowledge of Sin*. Lust in the Heart becomes known, by this Prohibition in the Law, *Thou shalt not covet*.

It discovers what Actions are good, and what Actions are evil. Besides, the Law condemns all Sin, both in Heart and Life. More than these two Things respecting Sin it cannot do. For to convince and to condemn, is all that the Law is able to perform. It cannot change the Disposition of the Mind, that remains the same under a legal Conviction, and the most terrifying Apprehensions of that Curse unto which Sin subjects a Man. It is the Nature of Sin *to take Occasion by the Commandment to work all Manner of Concupiscence*. The Promise of Life will not allure or entice unto Obedience, nor will the Threatning of Punishment, deter from Disobedience. The Law may fill the Mind with Consternation and Terror by its Menaces, but it will never amend its Disposition to Evil. Nay, the Execution of Punishment threatened will never produce in the Soul a

Liking to Holiness, and a Disinclination to Sin. The Will is in the Interest of Sin, when it reigns; and therefore, there is not in it a Reluctance to Sin as Sin. Could Sin and its Consequences be separated, a Person under its Dominion would make no Difficulty of obeying its Dictates. I am not afraid to say that we are like the Devil, when Sin reigns in us: He *believes and trembles*, but he cannot love. The Penalty he suffers begets not the least Inclination to Holiness, nor Aversion to Sin. We also may believe and tremble, under a Sense of divine Wrath, but we cannot love. Suffering the greatest Penalty, though ever so long continued, will not make us better in the Temper of our Minds.

No Provision is made in the Covenant of Works for taking away the reigning Power of Sin. So long therefore, as a Man is under that Covenant, Sin will retain its Dominion in the Heart. All unregenerate Persons are under the Law, and it is their Duty to live unto GOD according to it. But I am sure, that Faith in CHRIST for Salvation, evangelical Repentance, and Gospel Obedience, are not Duties contained therein. Against which I have known it objected, that if so, then it is the Duty of Sinners to work for Life, which they are naturally inclined to do. This is so weak an Objection that it is strange it should be made by any Man of a tolerable Capacity. It is the Duty of Unbelievers and Believers to work, but it is not the Duty of either to work for Life, or with a View of obtaining Life thereby. *Adam* in his innocent State was allowed to expect the continued Enjoyment of Life by working; but his Breach of the Law cut off all Hope of obtaining Life by future Obedience. Right to Life being once forfeited by Sin, it can never be recovered by the Sinner, even though he should for the future yield a perfect Obedience to the Law. The Covenant of Works allows none that are under it to hope for Life, but upon the Foundation of an uninterrupted Obedience to all the Precepts it contains. And consequently, though the Obligation to work remains on Sinners, it by no means follows, that it is their Duty to work for Life: or with a View to obtain Life, even though they could perfectly obey the Law in all its Commands. A Right to Life being once forfeited by Disobedience, can never be recovered by the Transgressor; let his future Conduct be ever so regular and exact.

III. Believers are ‘under Grace.’ Here I shall endeavor to show what Grace is: what is meant by being under it: and that Grace will effectually prevent the Dominion of Sin over those who are under it.

1. I am to show what Grace is. GOD is benevolent and good to all his Creatures, as their Creator, Upholder, and Preserver. *He is good to all, his tender Mercies are over all his Works.* He made them all good and perfect in their Kind; such as it became his infinite Wisdom to make them: and suitably provided for their Sustentation: they all share in his Bounty. But Grace does not design this universal Benevolence and Goodness of GOD, as Creator; though some seem to have no other Notion of it: for a Deliverance from Sin, and the Effects thereof, springs not from that. If it did, every guilty sinful Creature would certainly be saved. No Sinner would ever perish if Salvation from Sin and its penal Consequences, took its Rise from this Benevolence, which is of universal Extent. The obedient Creature may expect from it the Enjoyment of Benefits, because it is agreeable to the Goodness of GOD to bestow Favours upon his Creatures, in Case they do not displease him by Disobedience. But it cannot be a Foundation of Hope to any who have by Sin demerited the Resentment of their Maker. If the essential Goodness of GOD directed him to treat a sinful Creature kindly, the Infliction of Punishment for Sin would be impossible to him. To suppose which is a gross Absurdity. For, if so, GOD could not act differently towards his Creatures, whatever Difference there might be in their Conduct towards him.

Grace designs special and peculiar Goodness, Favour which is absolutely free and sovereign. Divine Love, unto which Salvation from Sin owes its Rise, is without any Motive or Inducement in its Objects. GOD loves not Sinners because it is fit that he should show Kindness to them, but merely because it is his Pleasure. Grace and Works are incompatible in the Business of Salvation, as the strong and nervous Reasoning of the Apostle most clearly proves. *Even so then, at this present Time, there is a Remnant according to the Election of Grace. And if by Grace, then it is 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* (Rom. 11: 6, 7.). *By Grace are ye saved, through Faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the Gift of God. Not of Works, lest any Man should boast* (Eph. 2: 9.). The Persons beloved of GOD, are not *better than others*. They are Subjects of the same Depravation. No good Disposition is in them, nor is a holy Obedience yielded by them. And therefore, it cannot reasonably be thought, that divine Favour towards them is occasioned by any amiable Qualities which they possess. Whatever spiritual Excellency is in them, it is the Effect, and not the Cause of the Love of GOD. Consequently, his Favour to them must be sovereign and absolutely free. This is what gives

Rise to, and effectually secures our Recovery and Happiness. It is the kind Intention of GOD to at certain eternal Glory to some, which can only be done by divine Grace. And *it is of Faith, that it might be by Grace, to the End the Promise might be sure to all the Seed.* The Promise meant is the Enjoyment of eternal Life, which *God who cannot lie promised before the World began.* And therefore, the everlasting Felicity of those, whom that Promise respects, is not precarious; but is certain and sure, notwithstanding the many and great Difficulties and Obstructions, which lie in the Way of its Accomplishment. For divine Love is infinitely superior to them all.

2. Believers are under Grace. When in an unregenerate State, or under the Dominion of Sin, they were Objects of the special and peculiar Love and Favour of GOD. That had not Beginning, as it will never have an End. All the happy Subjects of Salvation were eternally beloved of GOD, than which nothing can be more evident: His Choice of them to Salvation was an Act of sovereign and infinite Love to their Persons: His Ordination and Appointment of CHRIST to be their Mediator and Savior, was the Effect of his absolutely free Favour and Goodness to them. The Gift of them to CHRIST to be saved by him, was the Result of his special and peculiar Kindness. The Grant of all spiritual Blessings to them in CHRIST, as their federal Head, was an Act of infinite Love. And the Gift of CHRIST for them, in order to their Redemption, sprung from his immense and distinguishing Goodness towards them: And is a high Commendation of his Love towards them, *even while they are yet Sinners.* Divine Love does not begin upon the Dominion of Sin being taken away, but it certainly is antecedent to it; for it is the Cause thereof. *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 with Christ* (Eph. 2: 4, 5.). A Cause is prior to its Effect, the great Love of GOD is the Cause of our Quickening when we are dead in Sin, and, therefore, even while we were under the Dominion of it, we were Objects of Divine Love. That Grace, whereof Believers are Subjects, springs from Grace in the Heart of GOD towards them: Consequently, before the Being of Grace in them, they were interested in the Kindness, Grace and Mercy of GOD. From all which it is clear, that the Phrase, under Grace, is not to be understood of an Interest in the Love of GOD: That is evidently supposed; but it is not the Thing intended.

The Import of the Phrase is, being under Grace *influentially*, which all shall be who are Objects of it. The powerful and effectual Influence of

Divine Grace is meant. The Grace of GOD operates upon the whole Soul. The Understanding, the Will, and the Affections are under its Influence. And it fails not of effecting what it designs to produce in its Operations. It is impossible it should be frustrated of accomplishing that which it intends, in Favour of those upon whom it works. It enlightens the Mind, sanctifies the Will, and spiritualizes the Affections. If Divine Grace will *work*, nothing shall *let*, or prevent the Production of what it aims to effect. All its Purposes are formed by infinite Wisdom, and, therefore, none of its Intentions exceed the Extent of its Power. Equal it is unto all it undertakes for the Benefit of its Objects, consequently, it cannot be disappointed of attaining the wise and holy Ends it proposes to itself, in any of its Operations on the Souls of Men. The infinitely wise and almighty Agent meets with no Disappointment in the Works of Nature, and shall we imagine it is possible he may, in his Works of Grace? In those Works his highest Glory is peculiarly concerned, and, therefore, at is most unreasonable, to think, that Divine Grace, is ineffectual in any of its benign Influences, on those who are the Objects of it. The Grace of GOD not only resolved to pardon Sin; but also to take away the reigning Power of it in the Heart, and in the Issue to expel it out of the Mind, which is absolutely necessary to complete Happiness. For no intelligent Creature can be perfectly happy, so long as he is the Subject of moral Impurity.

3. The Grace of GOD will effectually prevent the Dominion of Sin over those who are under it.

(1.) Sin dwells in them as an active Principle. Evil is ever present in Believers. Regenerating Grace takes not away the Being of Sin. Nor doth it alter its Nature, it remains what it was, as to its Nature before Regeneration, it is not less vile and abominable. No Change for the better takes Place therein upon the new Birth. And it is active in all the Powers of the Soul, the Mind, the Will, and the Affections. Sometimes it exerts itself with very great Strength and Violence, much to the Vexation, Sorrow and Affrightment of the Saints. It indisposes to Duty, interrupts in it, and prevents, in a great Measure, the spiritual Performance thereof often. Though regenerate Persons are dead to Sin, it is not dead in them. It is not disabled for Action. It can act, and does act constantly in Opposition to the gracious Principle, in the holy Thoughts, heavenly Desires, and spiritual Motions, which spring from that Principle, in the Mind, the Will, and the Affections. So that, a Believer is never wholly pure and holy in the Actings of his Soul. The best of his Duties have an evil Tincture in

them, by Reason of the perpetual Presence of Sin in him. His Meditations, Prayers, and all his other religious Services, even the most spiritual of them, are mixed, partly holy and partly unholy. Unto what Height soever his Hatred of vain Thoughts is raised, in-dwelling Sin will produce them in his Soul, he cannot possibly prevent their Production. And though he abhors corrupt Desires, the Sin which is in him, is able to excite such in his Heart, and frequently does, to his great Sorrow and Grief. And though he detests evil Motions in his Affections, this corrupt Principle hath a Power of acting upon them, and too often ensnares and captivates them, to the Gratification of itself, and his inexpressible Grief.

(2.) The Dominion of Sin is taken away in Believers. Regenerating Grace deprives it of its Rule, though the Being of it is continued in the Soul. The Grace of GOD, in an immediate, instantaneous Manner, produces a holy, spiritual Principle in the Heart, which opposes Sin, by Reason whereof, it cannot exercise that Lordship over the Mind, which before it did. This Principle is a Spring of new Thoughts, new Desires, and new Motions, in the happy Subject of it. In-dwelling Sin now cannot prevent holy Conceptions, in the Understanding, spiritual Desires in the Will, nor heavenly Tendencies in the Affections, which it had a Power of doing, when it possessed Dominion over the Soul. That indeed opposes all the Actings of this new Principle, and lusts against it perpetually; but it is not able to keep the Heart in Subjection to itself. Because that which *is born of the Spirit*, under his gracious Influence, causes the Soul to act in direct Opposition to the *Flesh*. And, therefore, though it wars and sometimes captivates, rule it does not. Evil is the Object of the Hatred and Aversion of the Soul, and Good is the Object of its Approbation and Choice. *It consents to the Law, that it is good. Delights in it, and serves it.* So long as Sin reigns in the Heart, there is no Abhorrence of Sin, as Sin, no Approbation of Holiness, nor Desires after a Conformity to the Law. Reigning Sin totally prevents the Subject of it, *serving* the Law of GOD. Believers, though *with the Flesh they serve the Law of Sin: With the Mind they serve the Law of God.*

(3.) Sin may gain a Prevalency in some particular Acts in the Conduct of a Believer, though it hath lost its Dominion over him. The Reign of Sin doth not consist in its Eruption into external Acts. For a Man who is under its Dominion, may conduct himself in a blameless Manner, an the Course of his Conversation, as the Apostle *Paul* did before his Conversion. A Person may be just, benevolent, compassionate, temperate, and modest in his

Behaviour, and deservedly gain the Esteem of those with whom he is conversant, and yet Sin may reign in him. And Sin may in some Instances break forth into external Acts, in one who is not under its Dominion, through an Interruption in the Exercise of Grace, Want of Watchfulness, the Power of Temptation, and the Treachery of Lust in his Heart. This is so evident, that I think it cannot be scrupled. We have the very same Proof of its Truth, as we have, that real Saints did exist. And, therefore, we must conclude, that the Dominion of Sin doth not consist in its Eruption into external Acts. Indeed when it hath lost its Dominion, it breaks not forth in outward Acts, in the general Course of a Man's Behaviour. But it may in particular Acts, unto the Shame, and deep Sorrow of one who is truly regenerate, and not under its reigning Power. This hath been the Case of some of the most eminent Saints, that ever lived in the World. The Consideration of which should cause us to be humble, and excite us to Prayer and Watchfulness over ourselves, lest Sin, which dwells in us, gain a Prevalency, in its opposite Actings to Grace, and in its Solicitations to Evil. For, though Faith shall *not fail*, or become extinct, upon the Breaking forth of Sin into external Acts, through the Influence of Temptation, the Effects thereof will be such, as we shall have great Cause to lament all our Days.

(4.) Sin shall never recover Dominion over Believers. They are *ordained to everlasting Life. Are chosen to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit. Are called by the God of all Grace unto his eternal Glory. Are begotten again to an Inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, referred in Heaven for them.* GOD chose them to complete Holiness, in his immediate Presence. Now, if Sin were to recover its Dominion over them, the gracious Intention of GOD concerning them, would be frustrated. His *Counsel would not stand*, nor his *Pleasure be accomplished*. To imagine which, is most unworthy of GOD. For, it is infinitely dishonorable to him, to conceive, that he forms Designs, which are not actually carried into Execution. Created Goodness may be disappointed of effecting all it intends, in Favour of its Objects; but it is impossible, that increated, infinite Goodness, should be prevented of performing in Favour of its Objects, what it designs concerning them, in any Instance, or in the least Degree.

(5.) The Influence of Divine Grace, which took away from Sin its reigning Power, will not suffer it to regain its Dominion. Almighty Power is at the Command of sovereign and infinite Love. That was exerted to produce a

holy spiritual Principle in the Souls of Believers, by the Production of which, Sin lost its Rule, though its Being remains in the Heart. And as Omnipotence, at the Motion of infinite Love, put forth itself to infuse, or create a gracious Principle, it will preserve and maintain the Being of that Principle, whereby Sin will be prevented recovering that Command over the Powers of the Soul, which before it had, with what Violence soever, it may act, under Temptation, For, the Being of Grace in the Heart, is that which frees from the reigning Power of Sin. So long therefore, as its Subsistence is maintained, Sin cannot rule the Mind, though it may war and captivate. Expel the gracious Principle it cannot, by its most violent Opposition to the Actings thereof in the Believer, because there is a continual Influx of Divine Power to uphold and prevent its becoming extinct. As the most vigorous Actings of Grace in the Saints expel not Sin: So the most vigorous Actings of Lust in them, expel not Grace. That gracious Influence which was effectual unto depriving Sin of its Dominion, cannot but be sufficient to prevent it recovering its lost Reign. And that Power which gave Being to Grace in the Heart, must certainly be sufficient to prevent its Extinction. And the Saints *shall kept by the Power of God, through Faith, unto Salvation*. The Dominion of Sin therefore, is gone for ever in them. *It is absolutely irrecoverable*: Let Lust war as it may, Grace will be Conqueror.

(6.) And lastly, The Operations of Divine Grace upon Believers will never cease. If the GOD of all Grace should withdraw his Influence from the Saints, Sin would again rule in them. Grace in that Case would become extinct. But that he will never do. At the Time of Regeneration, he takes his People under the Conduct of his Grace, and they shall not be removed from under it. So long as he continues to love them, he will not fail to operate on them by his omnipotent Power for their Security. His Love to them is absolutely immutable. He *rests in his Love*. Because he loved them, therefore, he produced a holy Principle in them, whereby they became free from the Dominion of Sin. And they will eternally be under Grace *influentially*, by Reason they are interested in sovereign and infinite Love, which cannot abate nor change. The sensible Influence of Divine Grace, on the Souls of Believers, may be suspended for a Season. And when it is, their Graces are languid, and interrupted in their Exercise, and the carnal Part in them gains Strength. But even then, there is a secret imperceptible Influx of Divine Power, which preserves the Being of the gracious Principle in them, and prevents Sin recovering its Dominion in their Hearts. But a Cessation of the gracious Influence of GOD on the

Souls of Believers will never be. As GOD will not cease to love, he will not cease to act in a powerful and effectual Manner, in the Minds of those who are the Objects of his Love. Grace in the Heart of GOD towards Believers will cause him to exert his infinite Power, to preserve the Being of Grace in their Hearts. Once under Grace, and always so. For nothing can possibly remove a Person from under Grace *influentially*, who hath once come under the Influence of it. Sin therefore shall never have Dominion over him.

Thus I have endeavored briefly to explain my Subject: From which some important Observations may be made.

Observ. 1. The Law is to be preached. Some have seemed shy of preaching the Law; but it ought to be done. There is a lawful, and an unlawful Use and Preaching of the Law. *The Law is good, if a Man use it lawfully.* It Is necessary to explain the legal Constitution, in the Extent and Spirituality of its Precepts. Proof should be given, that the Law respects not only external, but also internal Acts. Our Thoughts, Desires, and the Tendencies of our Affections. That it strictly prohibits all Vanity in the Mind, all Irregularity in the Will, and all Carnality in the Affections. That it requires perfect Purity of Heart, no less than unblemished and uninterrupted Obedience in Life. That the Enjoyment of Life is only to be expected, on the Foundation of an universal Conformity to the preceptive Part of the Law, and that the want of such Conformity renders us worthy of Death. That as it is agreeable to the Goodness of GOD to promise Life, in Care of Obedience, it is becoming his Justice to threaten Disobedience with Death. The Law is to be preached to Sinners, in order to bring them to despair of obtaining Life by their own Works, until which they will not cordially embrace the Doctrine of Salvation by JESUS CHRIST. Unless a Man is convinced, that Happiness is unattainable by the Law, he will not stoop to the Grace of the Gospel. And the Law should be preached to Saints, in order to produce Gratitude in their Minds, for that great Salvation, which the Gospel is a clear Revelation of. In Proportion to that Acquaintance, which we have with the Doctrine of the Law, will the Sense of our Misery be, and by how much the greater that is, by so much the more shall we prize the Gospel.

Observ. 2. The final Perseverance of the Saints is certain. Their Conflicts with Sin which dwells in them are often sharp, and sometimes it gains Predominance in acting against the spiritual Part, but it shall never

recover its Dominion. That being irrecoverable, Believers at no Time fall *totally*. A total Fall supposes, the Expulsion of Grace, and Sin's regaining its Reign in the Heart; which shall never be. They may fall *foully*, to the Dishonor of GOD, the Grieving of the Holy Spirit, and wounding of their own Souls. But the worst of the Saints Falls are not *total*. The Being of Grace continues in their Hearts, and that prevents Sin's Reign over them in its greatest Prevalency, as to some particular Acts. And therefore, there is sufficient Ground for Believers to triumph, even in their sharpest Conflicts with Sin. How violently soever it may exert itself in Opposition to the gracious Principle, it will never be able to recover its lost Dominion. And consequently, the final Perseverance of the Saints, is not what may be, and which may not be, but it is certain and sure, notwithstanding their numerous Temptations, dangerous Snares, and the treacherous Lusts, which are in them.

Observ. 3. The Doctrine of the Grace of GOD is to be preached, for the Encouragement and Consolation of those who are mourning under a Sense of the Being and Power of Sin in them. They are the only Persons that have a Right to evangelical Consolation. Such who are insensible of their Guiltiness, Pollution and Misery, have no Title to that Consolation, which is provided in the Gospel. The absolute Freedom and Sovereignty of the Love of GOD, ought to be clearly explained, and solidly proved for the Comfort of the Saints, who sometimes mourn greatly under a deep Sense of their Unworthiness. Its Immutability should be demonstrated. And the glorious Designs of Divine Grace concerning Believers, must be unfolded, for the Confirmation of their Faith, and the Help of their Joy. They must be informed, that the Grace of GOD, eternally resolved upon their complete Deliverance from sin, and all its Consequences, and determined to make them perfectly holy and invariably happy for ever. And we must acquaint them that, as in their Regeneration, Grace was effectual to take away the Dominion of Sin in their Hearts, it will certainly be effectual unto the utter Ruin of it in the Issue, which is what they earnestly desire. Then will *the Days of their Mourning be ended*, and their Joys be full and perpetual. Thus we must comfort those who *mourn in Zion, to whom God will appoint, to give unto them the Oil of Joy for Mourning, and the Garments of Praise, for the Spirit of Heaviness.*

