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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday evening 12 August 1934

TEXT:ROMANS 6 verse 14

"For sin shall not have dominion over you for
ye are not under the law but under grace"

We are a congregation of sinners, there is not a person in the congregation who does not deserve hell. Great is the mercy when there is sound conviction of sin and the man can say out of his heart, I have broken God's law, I have incurred His just anger, I deserve an endless hell, just, holy punishment, endless. Whether you believe it or not, that is so. Every man, woman and child in this congregation by nature deserves endless punishment at the hand of a holy, just God. There are two places in eternity for men, heaven and hell. How many of us believe in hell? How many of us have a right hope of heaven?

Now this chapter deals with two things - sin and grace. Grace shining in the Person of Christ; justice, infinite satisfied by the death of Christ on behalf of all whose sins were imputed to Him; the Covenant of Grace in which God wrote the names of the election of grace - it is called the Lamb's book of life. To make these elected people fit for the holy presence of Jehovah, the Son of God must needs become a Man and by dying voluntarily, vicariously, He put away sin, made an end of it. Now that great, infinite, glorious subject is dealt with in this chapter and the people He loved, and for whom He died, are said to be dead with Him. They are dead in respect of the guilt of their sins, they are free, they are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses and they are said also to be risen with Christ. Raised up by the glory of the Father, Christ was. So His people, being also raised up, are to walk in newness of life, not in the oldness of the letter, not in their former state, not in the flesh, not after the flesh, but in newness of life. Well do you know anything about that? Has God ever brought it to you? That He

took your sins away from you and laid them on His Son and that His Son did voluntarily die for you and that therefore you are dead, dead to sin, dead to the law. It wont be long before the question is answered. You will be either in heaven or in hell. May the Lord grant it may be in heaven. We shall soon be in eternity, we are hastening to it. God knows whether we are moving toward heaven or whether we are hastening to hell. O turn not away your faces from this truth, you are saved or you are lost. If lost, O how terrible. If saved, unspeakably blessed. Whatever your lot here is, miserable, poor, afflicted, troubled, whatever it be, how blessed your state is you cannot imagine. "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that wait for Him, for them that love Him". This being the case, with the church, she is exhorted not to yield her members to sin. She is to walk becomingly, her walk is to be according to the grace of God in her calling, with all lowliness, and meekness and gentleness. And the deeds of the flesh are to be put off. "Put off the old man with his deeds," anger, wrath, malice, murder, covetousness which is idolatry. Leave the world, for the friendship of the world is enmity with God. And these things the church is exhorted to because she is dead with Christ, raised with Christ, blessed with grace and run into the mould of divine truth by the Holy Ghost. The exhortations are not exhortations to dead people, they are exhortations to the children of the Most High God. May the Lord give His people here and everywhere an attentive spirit to the character of the exhortations, to the nature of them, and give each one to see that there is nothing incongruous in an exhortation addressed to a living child by its parent. And these people thus spoken to, are here also in the text spoken to. Flee sin, which you are exhorted to leave, the practice of which you are to flee. From all that is wrong you are to flee. They are spoken to in this blessed text, as if the Lord would, instantly meet a painful feeling - we are sinners, how then can we, being sinners, yea, being pieces of sin, and, as Rutherford said, pieces of hell, how can we abstain from sin? Oh, says the Spirit of God, meeting such a painful objection, the sin that you mourn, that you would not do, that you would not live in, shall not have dominion over you, much as

you fear it. That is one wonderful word. The ground of it follows - "For ye are not under the law, but under grace." Not under the law does not mean you are not under the Mosaic dispensation, for the Romans were not under that law, no Gentile ever was. It is the moral law, the law that was given in Eden, to our sinless parent Adam, the law that claims us for God, the law that reaches our affections, that says thou shalt have none other Gods before Me, that takes account of the thoughts - "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself". This is the law under which these gracious people were not, but under grace, the covenant of grace.

Let us look then, as enabled, at the first part of the promise "For sin shall not have dominion over you". Sin is that horrible thing which God hates. Sin is rebellion against God, it is daring to do what He said we are not to do, it is contemning the words of the Most High. It is saying the ways of the Lord are not equal, it is daring to be our own lords instead of humbly and constantly submitting ourselves to Him. It is saying "our lips are our own, who is Lord over us?" It is saying "we do well to be angry". Sin is casting unlawful looks, bowing down to images, which are in our minds. Yea, you may hang on the walls of your imagination pictures of the world, pictures of success in this or that pursuit, pictures of pleasures, pictures of doing what you wish to do if possible. Sin! Who can describe it in the horrible nature of it, in the blackness of it, in the hardness of it, in the daring of it? And who can express it in the guilt of it? And if any of us die with that on our souls, there is no place in heaven for us. If you die in your sins you will be in hell when you die. This sin in the child of God, is not to have dominion over him, not to rule him. It is difficult for an exercised child of God to distinguish between indwelling sin, its subtlety, its violent working, and its dominion. Yet they may be distinguished. Anger, malice, wrath, revenge, bitterness, evil speaking. Is there a child of God here who does not know what these sins are? Is there one here who can say I am free from all ^{sin}. Nay, these very sins struggle, lust, envy, perplex and seek indulgence and there is that in the child of God that wants to indulge them. You may say with holy Jonah "I do

well to be angry". You may say with holy Paul "the good that I would I do not" yet sometimes that "would" is not out of your sight. You do not realise it is there, but this is to be noticed, that where the life of God is, where a person is dead to sin, by the death of Christ, the sin that is in him struggling, lusting, working, deceiving, violently moving against him, forces him to the throne of grace, chases him, as it were, to the throne of grace, and there if you could follow him, you would find him, you would hear him sighing and groaning without uttering a word and yet his sighs and his groans would be saying - Lord deliver me. Let not any iniquity have dominion over me. "Hide Thy face from my sin and blot out all my transgressions". "Wash me thoroughly". "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." No-one can prove out of the word of God that a person so exercised, and so praying, is under the dominion of sin. No, he is free. He is Christ's freed man. Hunted, persued, troubled, provoked by sin, yet fleeing from it as from hell. And you find this person one day in a sad condition, ready to give up all hope. If you said to him - well now, what do you love, what book do you love? he would say O I love the Bible if I love anything. Where would you live if you could live as you would? I would live before God, I would live at the throne of grace, I would be pouring out my heart before Him. Well, say what you will against yourself, the word of God says concerning you, sin has not dominion, it has a being, yes it has a being, but it is not easy to distinguish between the being of sin and the working of sin in a godly mind and the dominion of sin. But God sees where the dominion is not. "Shall not". This is one of the Lord's wonderful "shalls" "Shall not" It is an absolute promise, there is no condition in it. The condition of freedom from sin was on Christ, and He met it when He said "It is finished". He made then and there an end of sin, and if one should say shall you, a professor of God's name, will you live in sin now?, your whole soul would, on occasions, rise up with holy, godly fear, and with the strength of grace in you, say, "God forbid" I would be holy, I would fear His Name, I would walk in His ordinances, I would love His people, I would be an ornament for Christ to adorn His garment with. I would be a jewel which He would count when He makes up His jewels, I would be His. Then I say, lift your head up O

tried saint, lift your head up, for now is your salvation nearer than when you believed.

Sin. But you say, it has prevailed. Yes, it prevailed in Abraham, it prevailed in Jacob, in David, in Peter, in all the saints. O the foul, dreadful falls that saints have had. Thanks be to God for the Bible in one particular among others, namely, that the falls of saints are left on record, not to encourage sin but to encourage poor mourners. Sin shall not have dominion. Do not look for an absence of sin to prove that you are inside this promise, for if you so look, you will always be in perplexity. Look, as enabled, at the promise - dominion, it shall not have that. God has quickened the soul, the life of Christ is in the soul, the grace of Christ is in the heart, the fear of God is in the conscience, hence the trouble, the struggle of a poor afflicted sinner, rather a child of God, a saint. Look then dear friends in Christ at this gracious promise and endeavour by the help of the Spirit to distinguish between that which troubles you and what is promised you. What troubles you is sin, what is promised you is that the sin you are troubled with shall not have dominion. The stone cut out of the mountain without hands is to fill the earth, is to fill every saint, is to destroy the kingdom of sin and of the devil. Bless God for a promise like this - "Sin shall not have dominion over you" That is the promise.

We have, in the next place, the ground and reason of that promise - "For ye are not under the law". This, as I remarked at the beginning, is not the Mosaic law. The Romans were not under it, we are not under it. God never gave the Levitical law of sacrifice to the Gentiles, it was confined to the elect nation, it was typical. But the moral law, that we are under. Every Jew, every Gentile is under the moral law, the law which God gave in Eden to our unfallen parent. That law is an everlasting law, and we must answer it, we must obey it, or be lost, with this grand exception if we be among the people that God the Father gave to His Son to redeem. This moral law, it asserts its authority in every quickened conscience. It can never, never lose its hold of a sinner until Christ comes. Then it loses its hold, then its authority ceases, then its claims on us have no

longer a being. Its claims were met by Christ, the debt we owed, He took on Himself to pay, the death we deserved, He died for us, the curse we had incurred, He bore for us. It is written, it is said often in our national church, He descended into hell. How could He? Hell must be considered in two ways, first as a state, second as a place. In the first sense, Christ endured hell. Hart in one hymn says - we deserved hell, He that hell endured. Hell, it is God's curse, God's wrath. Hell is the awful fulfilment in a person of that threat in Eden - "in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Ah, if any of us die under that law, we cannot escape hell. But here Christ comes and He endures that hell for His people. Almighty wrath smote Him, the dreadful curse of the law came into His bones like fire. God hid His face from Him, poured anger upon Him, smote Him, said to His law, as a sword, "Awake O sword against My shepherd against the Man that is My fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts" O sinner, if you are going to heaven you will see that one day before you get there. You will see Jesus in your place, Jesus in the sinner's place, Jesus saying - this sinner deserves hell, pour that hell into my soul that he may be delivered. "Not under the law". No! Blessed be God, there is a deliverance from that law that never was and never will be abrogated, never. This is a doctrine of the Bible, may we be well instructed in it, that the law, the moral law, never will be abrogated. Well then, one says - woe is me that I ever was born. But Christ came not to destroy the law, He came to fulfil it for the people His Father gave Him to save. He says in the Gospel according to John, "the men Thou gavest Me." God, His Father, gave Him some men to redeem. Do you want to know if you were among them? Yes! some of you may be saying. Ask Him to tell you, He does tell people secrets and this is one of them. If you can ask Him, He will give you an answer. Not under the law commanding you to be perfect, for that is what the law does command. Not under the law to order your steps, to manage your thoughts, to control your mind, to keep your conscience clear. O if we were under that law we could never hope in God. Well, but if we are not under the law, are we without law? No! The law of Christ here, the law of grace, you are under grace, under its control. Grace is to be considered in two regards, first in the covenant, the covenant of grace, called

the covenant of peace. The covenant which is ordered in all things and sure, that is the doctrine. Grace given to Christ to save His people, grace given to Christ in the covenant, so that He is the covenant. I have given Thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles. Ah, child of God, you will never live on your graces. You will want more grace than you have got, more faith, more hope, more love, but you will never live on them. You will live on the grace that God the Father gave His Son Jesus Christ for you before the world began. This is the grace of which we shall sing in heaven if we get there. "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; unto Him be glory for ever and ever." This is the first consideration, that God, in choosing His people, gave them out of His own hand, so to speak, into the hand of His Son, gave them to Him to save, with an everlasting salvation. How am I to know this belongs to me? This is a question. A profession of religion may be quite easy, but this question, when really asked by a sincere soul, is not an easy matter, for sin and the world, and your personal interests, and the devil, and many temptations will stand in the way. Appollyon sometimes will straddle, as Bunyan puts it, across the way and says you shall go no further. But grace in the second consideration, under which some of us are, as we believe, means the moving, the operations of the Holy Ghost on the heart, on the conscience, the affections. Christ will have a throne. Where shall it be? In the heart of a sinner. Christ shall have a spouse espoused to Him. Who shall it be? One born again who says - "Here's my heart, Lord take and seal it" It is a poor heart, but I have nothing better to give, take it and seal it. Christ will have jewels. Whence will He have them? Sinners, vile people, born of the Spirit, saved from living in sin persistently and constantly. Lord, keep us from being mistaken here. If we live constantly and persistently in sin we are not the people of God. Grace. One day you are in a bad temper with something or somebody and conscience says you are wrong. O says nature, I have been wronged and I will be revenged. Grace comes and you kneel down and say Lord forgive me this bad spirit, and help me to pray for my enemy who has despitefully used me. Grace reigneth. One day the world comes

in, O how you love it. I know what love of the world is. When God met with me I was in the world, O I did love it. I was not half a christian and half a worldling, I was just entirely in the world, and I loved it, but He, so to speak, slammed the door of the theatre in my face, He stopped the Sabbath breaking. What then? Well I wanted Him, but I thought it was impossible for me to have Him because I was a sinner and He a holy God. Grace comes and reigns. It delivers from the world. You say, well I am in it today, business, ambition, want, loving it, I am in it. One day a light shines into your heart and you see the world is just passing away and the fashion of it, and you see yourself just as the grass in the field and the flower of the field, perishing, and then, in that light, you see the things of God in their beauty and desirableness and you say in your heart - O deliver me from the world. You see the friendship of it to be enmity with God and you want God to be your friend and you to be His friend and so you pray to be kept from, to be delivered from, that world that is set in your heart, after which you were running naturally. You slip away from prayer sometimes. A prayerless condition in a gracious person is an affliction. Then you pray to have a prayer given you - Lord teach me how to pray. Make me a praying person. Keep me on my knees, for you really come to believe that he makes the best speed and takes the surest steps who walks, so to put it on his knees. Yes, you believe it. When you are taught it you will understand it. Under grace. Sometimes you do not feel any love to God; Christ is nothing; the world comes and shuts Him out of your heart and thoughts. Then you are instructed and rebuked, and you get a sight of Him, and you say O what a lovely, what a glorious, Person is the Lord Jesus and everything goes away from your heart and affections and mind and will and understanding and you say "Thou O Christ art all I want, all in all in Thee I find" Yea, you can humbly say such words as this and bless God that it is grace that is reigning. Grace reigns, not only to pardon crimson sins, but to captivate and hold the affections of a sinner. Do you know what it is? If you are God's people, you do. You have changes but you must know what this is. If you have grace you belong to the Lord and He says - "This people have I formed for Myself, they shall show forth my praise" and that, in the language of the

Apostle Paul is living to the praise of the glory of His grace, grace that has captured you, grace that holds you, grace that brings you back, grace that smites you with grief, grace that comforts you with love, grace that sets heaven before you and says follow after it. This is sure to be seen in your outward conduct. Now you say I did yield my members servants to sin, now what fruit I then had is my shame and now I would live to God. I would be His, I would have my heart set on Him and my judgment informed and my affections won, captivated and held fast. Sin shall not have dominion, it shall not be the Lord, it shall not rule. Well now, ought we not to be thankful to God for this great word - "shall not have dominion over you". If indeed the dominion has been broken and is from time to time, again and again broken, should we not bless God for so great a mercy, so wonderful a thing in our hearts.

The man who lives, according to his foolish and vain and wicked pretension, without sin is, according to scripture, a liar. If we say we have no sin we make God a liar, one of the greatest sins that can ever be committed, but if we confess our sins, if grace causes us to drop a tear before the Lord in secret, if grace comes and we can say, and do say - Lord Thou knowest we would not do this, but what good we would we do not, what evil we would not that we do, but O wretched man that I am, I have got a body of death tied on my back, who shall deliver me from it, then it may be said of such grace reigns in them. Grace is there, grace has the victory, grace gives sweetness to the ways of God, grace gives beauty to obedience, grace makes obedience lovely, changes duty into choice, as one writes and we sometimes sing. "O to grace, how great a debtor" every child of God will sing.

And lastly there is to be a finish put to the building of grace. The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of the house, His hands shall finish it. And what shall be the finish? They shall bring forth the headstone crying grace, grace to it. All grace, sin done away by grace, holiness imparted by grace, consistency given by grace, a godly walk maintained by grace, a good hope kept alive by grace, love moved by grace. Grace, grace

unto it, in trouble. Grace, grace unto it, in deliverance. The whole of it is just that, grace, grace unto it. The Lord keep us from being deceived. The Lord grant that we may not be left to confuse conflict with resistance against sin with its dominion. The man, who does not allow sin is delivered from its dominion. The man who lives in sin constantly and persistently is under the dominion of sin and dying as he is living, hell is his portion. The Lord save us.

AMEN.