

The Reign of Grace

Chapter 2

By [Abraham Booth](#)

GRACE, in our text, is compared to a sovereign. Now a sovereign, considered as such, is invested with regal power, and the highest authority. Grace, therefore, in her beneficent government, must exert and manifest sovereign power, must supersede the reign, and counteract the mighty and destructive operations of sin; or she cannot bring the sinner to eternal life. For the Holy Spirit has compared sin to a sovereign, whose reign terminates in death.

As *sin* appears, clothed in horrid deformity, and armed with destructive power, inflicting temporal death, and menacing eternal flames; so *Grace* appears on the throne, arrayed in the beauties of holiness, and smiling with divine benevolence; touched with feelings of the tenderest compassion, and armed with all the magnificence of invincible power. Fully determined to exert her authority and gratify her compassion, under the conduct of infinite wisdom; to the everlasting honor of inflexible justice, inviolable veracity, and every divine perfection, by rescuing the condemned offender from the jaws of destruction; by speaking peace to the alarmed consciences of damnable delinquents; by restoring to apostate creatures and vile miscreants a supreme love to God and delight in the ways of holiness; and, finally, by bringing them safe to everlasting honor and joy. In a word, the heart of this mighty sovereign is compassion itself: her looks are love; her language is balm to the bleeding soul, and her aria salvation. Such a sovereign is **GRACE**. Those who are delivered by her must enjoy a complete salvation. Those who live under her most benign government must be happy indeed.

Divine grace, as reigning in our salvation, not only appears, but appears with majesty: not only shines, but triumphs: providing all things, freely bestowing all things necessary to our eternal happiness. Grace does not set our salvation on foot, by accommodating its terms and conditions to the enfeebled capacities of lapsed creatures; but begins, carries on, and completes the arduous work. Grace, as a sovereign, does not rescue the sinner from deserved ruin, furnish him with new abilities, and then leave him, by their proper use, to resist the tempter, to mortify his lusts, to attain those holy qualities, and perform those righteous acts, which render him fit for eternal happiness, and give him a title to it. No; for if the province and work of grace were circumscribed in this manner, things of the last importance to the glory of God and the felicity of man, would be left in the most uncertain and perilous situation. And, admitting the possibility of

any sinner being saved in such a way, there would be ample scope for the exertions of spiritual pride, and much room for boasting; which would be diametrically contrary to the honor of the Most High, and frustrate the noble designs of grace. This matchless favor, far from being satisfied with laying the foundation, rears the superstructure also: it not only settles the preliminaries, but executes the very business itself. The Pharisee in the parable made his acknowledgments to preventing and assisting grace: for, *God, I thank thee*, was his language. It is evident, however, that his views of grace were very contracted; and his hopes arising from it very deceitful. Would we then view grace as reigning, we must consider it as the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end of our salvation; that the unrivaled honor of that greatest of all works may be given to *the God of all grace*.

Having taken this general view of reigning grace, I would now ask, What think you, reader, of this wonderful favor? Is it worthy of God? Is it suitable to your case? Or know you not, that you are by nature under the guilt and dominion of sin? Of sin, that dreadful sovereign; of sin, that worst of tyrants. *Sin reigns*, says the apostle; and the end of its reign, where the sovereignty of grace does not interpose, is eternal death. Can you sleep away your time, and dream of being finally happy, while under the power of so malignant a sovereign. Shall the toys and trifles of a transitory world amuse, when your *soul*, your immortal ALL, is at stake? If so, how lamentable your condition! how dreadful your state! Awake!, arise!, Bow the knee to divine grace, O stubborn rebel! while she holds out the golden scepter of pardon and of peace. Acknowledge her supremacy, submit to her government, before justice ascend the throne and vengeance launch her bolts. For then an eternal bar will lie against every application for mercy, though arising from the most pressing want.

Or, if awake in your conscience, do you think it possible to effect your own deliverance? Alas! you are entirely without strength to perform any such thing; and grace was never intended as an auxiliary to help the weak, but well-disposed, to save themselves. The mercy of God and the gospel of Christ, were never designed to assist and reward the righteous; but to relieve the miserable and save the desperate, to deliver those who have no other assistance, nor any other hope. Were you acquainted with your abject vassalage, were you convinced by the Spirit of truth, that there is no possible way of escape, but by reigning grace; then would you cry for help, and then the relief that grace affords would be *all your salvation, and all your desire*.

If, on the other hand, you are burdened with sin and harassed by clamorous fears of being east into hell; if, sensible of your native depravity, the multiplied iniquities of your life, the many shameful defects attending your best services, and your present absolute unworthiness, you are ready to sink in despondency; O remember, that *grace* has erected her throne! This forbids despair. For her wonderful throne is erected, not on the ruins of justice, not on the dishonor of the law; but on the **BLOOD OF THE LAMB**. The inconceivably perfect obedience,

and the infinitely meritorious death of the Son of God, form its mighty basis. Here grace is highly exalted: here grace appears in state, dispensing her favors and showing her glory. To such a benevolent and condescending Sovereign, the basest may have free access. By such a powerful sovereign the most various, multiplied, and pressing wants may be relieved with the utmost ease and greatest alacrity. Remember, disconsolate soul, that the name, the nature, the office of **GRACE ENTHRONED**, loudly attest, that the greatest unworthiness and the most profligate crimes are no bar to the sinner in coming to Christ for salvation; in looking to sovereign favor for all that he wants. Nay, they demonstrate, that the unworthy and sinful are the *only* persons with whom grace is at all concerned: This is amazing! this is delightful!

Ho! all ye children of want and sons of wretchedness! hither ye may come with the utmost freedom. Be it known to you, be it never forgotten by you, that **JEHOVAH** considered your indigent case, and designed your complete relief, when he erected this wonderful throne. Your names are not omitted in the heavenly grant: nay, ye are the *only* persons that are blessed with a right of access to this mercy-seat. Did sinners more generally know their state, and the glorious nature of grace as *exalted in Majesty*; how would the throne of this mighty sovereign be crowded!, crowded, not by persons adorned with fine accomplishments, but, with *the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind*. With longing hearts and uplifted hands, big with expectation and sure of success, they would throng her courts. Thither they would flee, as a *cloud* for number, and as *doves* for speed: for there is provision made to supply all their wants. As persons of all ranks and of every character are equally destitute of any righteous or valid plea for admission into the eternal kingdom; so, feeling their want of spiritual blessings, they have equally free access to this munificent sovereign, and the same ground to expect complete relief. Here, and in this respect, there is no difference between the devout professor, and the abandoned profligate; the chaste virgin, and the infamous prostitute. For, being all criminals, and under the same condemnation, they have not the smallest gleam of hope, except what shines upon them in that compassionate proclamation which is issued from the throne of grace by the eternal Sovereign. (Isa. 55:1-3. Matt 11:28. John 6:37, and 7:37. Rev 22:17.) But, as that proclamation is expressive of the freest favor and the richest grace; including offenders of the worst characters, publishing pardon for sins of the deepest dye, and all ratified by veracity itself; it affords sufficient encouragement to the vilest wretch that lives, who is willing to owe his all to divine bounty, without hesitation to receive the heavenly blessing, and with gratitude to rejoice in the royal donation." Yes, thine it is, **O SOVEREIGN GRACE!** to raise the poor from the dunghill, and the needy out of the dust. Thine it is, to set them on thrones of glory, and to number them among the princes of heaven." Remember this, my soul, and be this thy comfort: and may the Lord enable both the author and the reader to see eye to eye the riches of *reigning grace!*

Having endeavoured to show how grace reigns in our salvation in general; I shall now proceed, in the following chapters, to make it appear that grace reigns more particularly, in our *election, calling, pardon, justification, adoption, sanctification, and perseverance* in the faith to eternal life. These are so many essential branches of our salvation; and in the vouchsafement of these capital blessings, grace reigns; manifesting an authority and exerting a power truly divine and infinitely glorious.

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