

ROMANS IN THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

Chapter Six

(6:1) The questions in this verse are rhetorical in their nature so far as Paul is concerned, and he raises them in order that he might introduce his subject of the God-ordained method whereby a saint can live a victorious life over sin. But they were not original with him. He understood grace, and such questions would never occur to him. The questions were asked him over and over again after his messages on grace by those who were legalists and who did not therefore understand grace. He answers the first question regarding his doctrine of grace in verses 2-14 by declaring the mechanical impossibility of a Christian continuing to live a life of habitual sin. In response to this, the same objector asks another question of the same nature which Paul brings before his readers (v. 15). This second question proposes a life of planned infrequent, spasmodic acts of sin, since grace makes it impossible for a Christian to live a life of habitual sin. Paul answers this question in verses 16-23 by showing that the Christian has changed masters, and that serving the Lord Jesus, it is not his nature to sin.

So Paul proposes the question, "What shall we say then?" – *say then to what?* We go back to 5:20 for our answer which we find in the apostle's statement, "Where sin abounded, there grace was in superabundance, and then some on top of that. " The objector's thought was as follows; "Paul, do you mean to tell me that God is willing to forgive a person's sins as often as he commits them?" In response to Paul's affirmative answer, this legalist says in effect, "Well then, if that is the case, shall we Christians keep on habitually sinning in order that God may have an opportunity to forgive us and thus display His grace?" That is the background of this man's reasoning.

We will now consider the implications of his question. The first thing we must settle is regarding the word "sin", does it refer here to sin as an abstraction, namely, to acts of sin committed by the believer, or to the totally depraved nature still in him? A rule of Greek syntax settles the question. The definite article appears before the word in the Greek text. Here the article points back to a previously mentioned sin defined in its context. The reference is to sin reigning as king (5:21). There sin is personified since it reigns as a king. But one cannot conceive of acts of sin reigning as king in the life of a person. They are the *result* of some dominant factor reigning as a king. That can only be the evil nature still resident in the Christian. And here is the key to the interpretation of the entire chapter. Every time the word "sin" is used in this chapter as a noun, it refers to the evil nature in the Christian. Read the following verses and substitute the words "sinful nature" for the word "sin," and see what a flood of light is thrown upon your understanding of this section of God's Word (1, 2, 6, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23).

The key word in Romans 6 is "machinery." Here we have the mechanics of the Spirit-filled life. We see the inner workings of the machinery set-up God brings into being when He saves a sinner, the power of indwelling sin broken and the divine nature implanted. In Romans 8 we have the dynamics of the Spirit-filled life. There we have the Holy Spirit mentioned all through the chapter, the source of power and the Operator of the spiritual machinery in the inner being of the believer. In Romans 7 we see the monkey wrench, self dependence, which when dropped into the inner workings of this machinery, stops the works, preventing the Holy Spirit from giving the believer victory over the sinful nature and producing His own fruit. Thus we have a trio of chapters, The Mechanics of the Spirit-filled

Life (6), The Dynamics of the Spirit-filled Life (8), and The Monkey Wrench, Self Dependence

(7). Thus, in chapter six, Paul is not talking about what *kind* of a life the believer should live, but by what *method* or *how* he should live that life.

The question reads as follows, "Shall we continue in the sinful nature?" The word "continue" is *menō*, "to remain, abide." It is used in the New Testament of a person-abiding in some one's home as a guest, or of a person abiding in a home. It has in it the ideas of fellowship, of cordial relations, of dependence, of social intercourse. The question now can be further interpreted to mean, "Shall we continue habitually to sustain the same relationship to the sinful nature that we sustained before we were saved, a relationship which was most cordial, a relationship in which we were fully yielded to and dependent upon that sinful nature, and all this as a habit of life?" The idea of habitual action comes from the use of the present subjunctive which speaks of habitual action. The fundamental question therefore is not with regard to acts of sin but with respect to the believer's relationship to the sinful nature. This is after all basic, acts of sin in his life being the result of the degree of his yieldedness to the sinful nature.

Translation. *What then shall we say? Shall we habitually sustain an attitude of dependence upon, yieldedness to, and cordiality with the sinful nature in order that grace may abound?*

(6 :2) Paul now proceeds to deal with this question. His first reaction is an emotional one, "God forbid." His second answer is a rational one. He shows that for a Christian to habitually sustain the same relationship to indwelling sin, namely, that of a dependence upon it, a yieldedness to it, and a cordiality with it, is a mechanical impossibility. This he does in verses 2-14.

"God-forbid" in the Greek text is *mē genoito*, an optative of wishing. One could translate literally, "may such a thing never occur," or interpret, "away with the thought." He declares the mechanical impossibility of such a thing in the words, "How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

The word "how" is *pōs*, "how is it possible?" Paul is not asking a question for information, but is rather presenting a rhetorical question designed to declare the impossibility of the thing. He says that it is a mechanical impossibility for a Christian to habitually sustain the same relationship to the evil nature that he sustained before God saved him. "We" is *hoitines*, a relative and an indefinite pronoun put together to form a word which emphasizes quality or nature. It is, "How is it possible for such as we are, born-again children of God, to do such a thing. It is against our nature to habitually yield to the evil nature. We are not persons of such a nature as to do so."

Then Paul tells us what there is in the inner spiritual and mechanical set-up of a Christian which prevents him from habitually obeying the behests of the sinful nature. These two things are the results of a major surgical operation which God performs in the inner being of every sinner He saves. They are the breaking of the power of indwelling sin, and the impartation of the divine nature. The first is referred to in verse 2 in the words "are dead to sin," and the second, in verse 4, in the words, "walk in newness of life."

Christians are dead to sin. Just what does that mean? Sin here, we have established, is the sinful nature. We are dead to the sinful nature. "Are dead" is *apethanomen*, a second aorist of *apothnēschō*, "to die."

Death means separation. Physical death is the separation of a person from his body, spiritual death, the separation of the person from God. There is a preposition prefixed to the verb (*apo*) which

means “off, away from,” and is used with the ablative case whose root meaning is separation. This teaches us that there was a cleavage consummated between the individual and his evil nature. God used His surgical knife to cut the believing sinner loose from his evil nature. This occurred potentially in the mind and purpose of God when that believing sinner, elected to salvation before the universe was created, was identified with the Lord Jesus in His death on the Cross (vv.3-7), and actually, the moment he placed his faith in Him as Savior. Now, while God separated the believing sinner from the evil nature, yet He did not take it out of him, but left it in his inner being. John in his first letter (1:8) is most careful to tell us that this evil nature remains in the Christian throughout his earthly life and is not eradicated until that Christian dies or is glorified. This is what he says in his Greek; “If we say that sin we are not constantly having, ourselves we are deceiving (nobody else), and the truth is not in us.” Sin here is the nature, not the act, and for two reasons; the word is without the article, and such a construction in Greek emphasizes nature, quality, and because the word is singular. The word “ourselves” is in the emphatic position, John’s thought being that any person who holds the theory that the sinful nature is eradicated at a certain point in the Christian’s experience is only deceiving himself. Others are not deceived, for they can see sin sticking out all over his life. Let us therefore hold to this, that while there is a definite cleavage between the believer and the sinful nature, yet that nature remains in him until he dies or is glorified. The tense of the verb is aorist, which speaks of a once for all act. God has wrought a cleavage or separation between the believer and the sinful nature which is a permanent one, a once for all disengagement of the person from the evil nature. This surgical operation is never repeated. So far as God is concerned, He has so thoroughly done His work that that separation would be permanent. But alas, because of the frailty of man, the Christian at infrequent intervals does yield to the evil nature and sin. *But the point is, God has so constituted him, that he need not do so.* He has imparted the divine nature which gives the Christian a hatred of sin and a love for righteousness. In addition to this, the Holy Spirit has been caused to take up His permanent residence in him to aid him in his battle against sin, and in his effort to live a Christian life. So Paul says, “How is it possible for such as we who have died off once for all with respect to sin, any longer to live in it?” Or to translate and interpret, “How is it possible for such as we, Christians, who have been separated once for all from the sinful nature, any longer to live within its grip?”

Let us use a few illustrations. The Christian has the same power over the evil nature that he has over his radio. When a program suddenly comes over the air unfit for Christian ears, he can shut the radio off with a “There, you cannot bring that smut into my life.” Before salvation, the evil nature had absolute dominion over the sinner. Since salvation has wrought its beneficent work in his inner being, he has absolute dominion over it. Believe this, child of God, and act upon it. The evil nature is a dethroned monarch. Paul personifies it as a king reigning (5:21, “as sin has reigned as king”). The Holy Spirit at the time of the sinner’s salvation, enthroned the Lord Jesus in the throne room of the believer’s heart. He stays on the throne so long as the believer keeps yielded to the Spirit and rejects the behests of the evil nature. When the believer sins, the dethroned king, the evil nature, mounts to the throne, with the consequent dethronement of the Lord Jesus. These are cold, hard facts, yet, nevertheless true to the Word of God in its teaching on this subject. However, such a procedure cannot go on indefinitely now often, for God puts a curb upon such a thing by sending suffering, chastening, and the Christian is made most miserable by a guilty conscience and the indwelling Holy Spirit who is grieved at such conduct.

To use an illustration that will show the definite cleavage between the Christian and the evil nature, the disengagement that took place when God performed that major surgical operation. A floor lamp is connected to a wall outlet. It derives its power to give light from the electric outlet in the wall. Just so, a sinner is connected to the evil nature, and derives his incentive and energy to sin, from the evil nature. Remove the connecting plug from the wall outlet, and the light ceases to function. Its source of power has been cut off. Cut the connection between the sinner and the evil nature, and he ceases to function as a sinner. His source of power has been cut off. Upon no other basis can one explain the instantaneous and radical change in the outlook and actions of a sinner saved in a rescue mission, this change more apparent because of the life of gross sin he has lived. Connect the floor lamp with the wall outlet, and it starts to give light again. Connect the Christian with the evil nature still in him, and he sins again. But the point is, he is under no compulsion to put himself back into the control of the evil nature again, nor can he do it habitually, nor frequently. God has so adjusted things in the Christian's life, that, while he remains a free moral agent capable of choosing between obeying the divine nature or the evil nature, yet, the preponderance of his choices are Godward. Thus does Paul declare the mechanical impossibility of a Christian habitually sustaining the same relationship to the evil nature which he sustained before he was saved.

Translation. *May such a thing never occur. How is it possible for such as we who have died off once for all from sin (have been separated once for all from the sinful nature), any longer to live in it (in its grip)?*

(6:3,4) Paul now proceeds to show how this mighty cleavage was effected. He says that it was brought about by God's act of baptizing the believing sinner into Christ so that that person would share His death on the Cross, which identification of the believing sinner with Christ in His death, brought about the separation of that person from the sinful nature. He speaks of the same thing in verse 11, where he says that Christ died with reference to the sinful nature (ours) once for all. The death of our Lord had a two-fold aspect with reference to sin. In 3:21 – 5:11 He dies with reference to our acts of sin. He pays the penalty for us which the law demanded. In 6:11 He dies with reference to our sinful nature. His death brings about a separation between the believing sinner and the evil nature. We have this thought expressed in the words of the song, "Rock of Ages"— "Let the water and the blood, from thy riven side which flowed, be of sin the double cure, save from wrath and make me pure. " "Save from wrath" is justification (3:21 – 5:11), "make me pure" is sanctification, the breaking of the power of indwelling sin (5:12 – 8:27).

The word "baptized" is not the translation of the Greek word here, but its transliteration, its spelling in English letters. The word is used in the classics of a smith who dips a piece of hot iron into water, tempering it, also of Greek soldiers placing the points of their swords, and barbarians, the points of their spears in a bowl of blood. In the LXX (Lev. 4:6) we have, "The priest shall dip his finger in blood seven times and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the Lord," where "dip" is *baptō* (related to *baptizō*), and "sprinkle", *rantizō*, *baptō* referring to the action of placing the finger in the blood. In Luke 16:24, the rich man asks that Lazarus dip (*baptō*) his finger in water and cool his tongue.

The usage of the word as seen in the above examples resolves itself into the following definition of the word *baptize*, "the introduction or placing of a person or thing into a new environment or into union with something else so as to alter its condition or its relationship to its previous environment or condition." And that is its usage in Romans 6. It refers to the act of God

introducing a believing sinner into vital union with Jesus Christ, in order that that believer might have the power of his sinful nature broken and the divine nature implanted through his identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, thus altering the condition and relationship of that sinner with regard to his previous state and environment, bringing him into a new environment, the kingdom of God. God placed us in Christ when He died so that we might share His death and thus come into the benefits of that identification with Him, namely, be separated from the evil nature as part of the salvation He gives us when we believe. We were placed in a new environment, Christ. The old one was the First Adam in whom as our federal head we were made sinners and came under condemnation. In our new environment in Christ we have righteousness and life. Our condition is changed from that of a sinner to that of a saint.

But we were not only placed in Christ by God the Holy Spirit in order that we might share his death and thus be separated from the evil nature, but we were placed in Him in order that we might share His resurrection and thus have divine life imparted to us. This Paul tells us in the words, "that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The newness of life here does not refer to a new quality of experience or conduct but to a new quality of life imparted to the individual. Romans 6 does not deal with the Christian's experience or behavior. Paul treats that in chapters 12-16. In this chapter the key word is machinery, the mechanics of the Spirit-filled life being Paul's subject. The newness of life therefore refers, not to a new kind of life the believer is to live, but to a new source of ethical and spiritual energy imparted to him by God by which he is enabled to live the life to which Paul exhorts in Romans 12-16. "Walk is *peripateō*, "to order one's behavior, to conduct one's self". The word "should" (A.V.) throws us off track. There is no moral obligation imposed here. We have a purpose clause in the subjunctive mode introduced by the purpose particle *hina*. That is, we shared Christ's resurrection in order that we may order our behavior in the power of a new life imparted.

Here we have than the two-fold result of the major surgical operation God performs in the inner being of the sinner when he places his trust in the Savior. He is disengaged from the evil nature, separated from it, no longer compelled to obey it. He has imparted to him the divine nature (II Peter 1:4) which becomes in him the new source of ethical, moral, and spiritual life, which causes him to hate sin and love righteousness, and which gives him both the desire and the power to do God's will. Paul, speaking of the same thing in Philippians 2:12, 13, says, "Carry to its ultimate conclusion your own salvation, ... for God is the One who is constantly putting forth energy in you, giving you both the desire and the power to do His good pleasure."

The Christian's will has been made absolutely free. Before salvation it was not free so far as choosing between good and evil is concerned. It was enslaved in the evil nature. But now, it stands poised between the evil nature and the divine nature, with the responsibility to reject the behests of the former and obey the exhortations of the latter. To constantly say NO to the former and YES to the latter becomes a habit, and then the victorious life has been reached.

Paul has answered the question, "Shall we as a habit of life continue to sustain the same relationship to the evil nature that we sustained before salvation?" by showing that this is a mechanical

impossibility and for two reasons; first, the power of the sinful nature has been broken, and therefore the Christian is not compelled to sin, and second, the divine nature is imparted, and the Christian does not want to sin. When a person does not have to do something which he does not want to do, he simply does not do it.

Translation. *Do you not know that all we who were placed into Christ, were placed into His death? We therefore were entombed with Him through this being placed into His death, in order that in the same manner as there was raised up Christ out from among those who are dead through the glory of the Father, thus also we by means of a new life may order our behavior.*

(6:5-7) In verses 1-4, Paul has brought out two major facts: first, that when God saves a sinner, He separates him from the indwelling sinful nature, which cleavage is so effective, that the believer is not compelled to sin anymore; he has been *permanently* delivered from its power, when at the same time that nature is left in him *permanently*, second, that God at the same time has imparted the divine nature, which gives him both the desire and the power to do God's will. Now, in verses 5-10, he repeats these great truths in the event that some of his readers may not have caught their full implications as presented in verses 2-4.

That "if" is the "if" of a fulfilled condition, the "in view of the fact", or the "since such and such a thing is so". "Have been planted together" is the perfect tense verb of *ginomai*, "to become", speaking of a past complete act and its abiding results, and the noun *sumphutoi*. The verb *phuō* means "to grow", and the prefixed preposition *sun*, "with", thus, the compound word means "to grow up together with". It speaks of a living, vital union of two individuals growing up together. The word could be used of the Siamese twins whose bodies were connected at one point, and whose blood stream flowed through two physical bodies as it does normally through one. Here the word speaks of that vital union of the believing sinner and Lord Jesus mentioned in verses 3 and 4 where God places him into Christ at the Cross, to share His death and resurrection. The word "likeness" is *homoīōma*, referring to a likeness or resemblance which Thayer says in this case amounts almost to an identity. That is, the believing sinner and the Lord Jesus were united in a death at Calvary, His death, a vicarious one that had to do with the salvation of the believing sinner from the guilt, penalty, and power of sin, the sinner's death, one which he in justice should have died as a result of that sin, but which in the grace of God was borne as to its guilt and penalty by His Son. Both deaths had to do with sin, but from different aspects.

The future aspect of the words "we shall be" is not that of a predictive future so far as time is concerned, but that of a logical future. Paul says in his Greek, "For, in view of the fact that we have become those permanently united with Him with respect to the likeness of His death, certainly also (as a logical result) we shall become those who have become permanently united with Him with respect to the likeness of His resurrection." The latter expression is defined by its context. The physical aspect of the resurrection, namely, the glorification of our bodies, is not in the apostle's mind here, for he is writing in a context of sanctification, not glorification. The aspect of our Lord's resurrection spoken of here is that of the new type of life He lives as the Man Christ Jesus since His resurrection, not now a life in which the soul life has prominence, since He as the Man Christ Jesus was surrounded with and had to take cognizance of the human life and limitations He possessed and which surrounded Him, but a life in which the human spirit is in prominence. So, the saint in his new condition orders his behavior in the power of a new life imparted, namely, the resurrection life of his Lord. The little word "also" (v. 4) tells us all this. Our Lord's resurrection life is being lived in a new sphere, and so is the Christian's.

Then Paul develops his thesis. As a result of the believer having become united with Christ in His death, the power of the sinful nature is broken, and this Paul treats in verses 6 and 7. In view of the fact that he has become united with Him in His resurrection, the divine nature has been imparted. And this Paul speaks of in verses 8-10.

In verse 6, three problems face us. Who is the old man, what is the body of sin, and what is involved in the word translated “destroyed”?

There are two words in Greek which mean “man”, *anthrōpos*, the generic, racial term which is used for a male individual at times, which also has the idea in it of mankind, and when speaking of the human race as a collection of individuals, can include men and women. The other word is *anēr*, which refers to a male person. The word *anthrōpos* is used here, referring to the individual man or woman. There are two words in Greek which mean “old”, *archaios*, which means “old in point of time”, and *palaios*, which means “old in point of use”. The second is used here. Trench defines the word as follows; “old in the sense that it is more or less worn out.” It describes something that is worn out, useless, fit to be put on the scrap pile, to be discarded. Thus, the old man here refers to that person that the believer was before he was saved, totally depraved, unregenerate, lacking the life of God.

The work “body” is *sōma*, the human body. The word “sin” is in the genitive case, here, the genitive of possession. The reference is therefore to the believer’s physical body before salvation, possessed by or dominated and controlled by the sinful nature. The person the believer was before he was saved was crucified with Christ in order that his physical body which before salvation was dominated by the evil nature, might be destroyed, Paul says. The word “destroyed” is *katargeō*, “to render idle, inactive, inoperative, to cause to cease”. Thus, the entire idea is, “knowing this, that our old man, that person we were before we were saved, was crucified with Him, in order that our physical body which at that time was dominated by the sinful nature, might be rendered inoperative in that respect, namely, that of being controlled by the sinful nature, in order that no longer are we rendering a slave’s habitual obedience to the sinful nature”. The words “that henceforth we should not serve sin” (A.V.) imply an obligation on our part. There is such, but Paul is not discussing that in this chapter. He argues that point in 12:1, 2. Here the fact is stated, that this disengagement of the believer from the evil nature has been brought about by God with the result that the believer no longer renders a slave’s obedience to the evil nature habitually as he did before God saved him.

Let us use a rather simple illustration to make this clear. It is that of a machine shop in which there is a turning lathe operated by means of a belt which is attached to a revolving wheel in the ceiling of the room. When the workman wishes to render the lathe inoperative, in other words, wishes to stop it, he take a pole and slides the belt off from the wheel, thus disengaging the turning lathe from the revolving wheel which heretofore had driven it. That turning lathe is like the human body of the sinner, and the revolving wheel in the ceiling, like the evil nature. As the wheel in the ceiling makes the turning lathe go round, so the sinful nature controls the body of the sinner. And as the machinist renders the lathe inoperative by slipping off the belt which

connected it with the wheel, so God in salvation slips the belt, so to speak, off from the sinful nature which connected it with the physical body of the believer, thus rendering that body inoperative so far as any control which that nature might have over the believer is concerned.

The Christian is exhorted to maintain that relationship of disconnection which God has brought about between him and the indwelling sinful nature. God has not taken away the Christian's free will, and does not treat him as a machine. It is possible for the Christian by an act of his will to slip the belt back on, connecting himself with the evil nature, thus bringing sin into his life. But, he is not able to do this habitually, and for various reasons. In the first place, it is not the Christian's nature to sin. He has been made a partaker of the divine nature which impels him to hate sin and to love holiness. In the second place, the minute a Christian sins, the Holy Spirit is grieved and that makes the believer decidedly uncomfortable, spiritually. God also sends suffering and chastening into his life as a curb to sin. All these things taken together, preclude any possibility of the Christian taking advantage of divine grace.

Paul now reinforces his previous declaration to the effect that the believer is so disengaged from the evil nature that he no longer lives a life of habitual sin, by the statement, "For he that is dead is freed from sin." "Is dead" is aorist tense in the Greek text, namely, "he who died", referring to the historic fact of a believing sinner being identified with Christ in His death on the Cross. The prefixed preposition *apo* means "off, away from" and the aorist tense refers to a once for all action. Thus we have, "the one who died odd once for all", that is, off from the evil nature, this being a separation from that nature. "Is freed" is the word *dikaioō* and in the perfect tense. *Dikaioō* means "to justify, to declare righteous, to render or make righteous, acquit of a charge, to absolve". It is a term having to do with the law and the courts of law. In this sense Paul uses it in the section in Romans (3:21 – 5:11) where he deals with the doctrine of justification. But in Romans 6 he is presenting the doctrine of sanctification. Therefore, the idea of being "set free", growing out of the idea that a justified person is set free from the penalty of the law, is used. The one, Paul says, who died off once for all from the sinful nature, has been set free completely from it, with the present result that he is in a state of permanent freedom from it, permanent in the sense that God has set him free permanently from it, *and it is his responsibility to maintain that freedom from it moment by moment.*

Translation. *For in view of the fact that we are those who have become permanently united with Him with respect to the likeness of His death, certainly also we shall be those who have become permanently united with Him with respect to the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this experientially, that our old self was crucified once for all with Him, in order that the physical body dominated by the sinful nature might be rendered inoperative, with the result that no longer are we rendering a slave's habitual obedience to the sinful nature, for the one who died off once for all stands in the position of a permanent relationship of freedom from the sinful nature.*

(6:8-10) In verses 5-7 Paul presents the negative aspect of the surgical operation God performs in the sinner when he believes, namely, the separation between him and the evil

nature. Now, in verses 8-10, he gives the reader the positive angle. He says in his Greek, “Now, in view of the fact that we died off with Christ, we believe (dogmatically) that we also live with Him.” “With Him” is the personal pronoun, either the dative of respect or the instrumental of means. We will live with respect to Him. That is, the believer’s new life imparted to him at the moment of believing is Christ. We will live by means of Him. The believer derives his spiritual life from Christ in that sense. Paul is not speaking here of the believer’s fellowship with Christ here or in eternity. How long does the believer derive his spiritual life from the Lord Jesus? As long as He lives. Paul says He died once for all, and that death over Him will never again exercise lordship. Thus, the believer will be sustained in spiritual life for time and eternity, since Christ is his life.

Paul says, “He died unto sin once for all.” The sin here does not refer to acts of sin. That aspect of the death of our Lord, namely, that of paying the penalty for our sins, Paul took care of in 3:21 – 5:11. Here he speaks of the relation of Christ’s death to the sinful nature of the individual. *Our Lord’s death not only paid the penalty of human sin, but it was used of God to break the power of indwelling sin in the believer’s life.* This is what the song writer meant when he wrote concerning the blood of Christ, “be of sin the double cure, save from wrath and make me pure.”

Translation. *Now, in view of the fact that we died off once for all with Christ, we believe that we shall also live by means of Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised up out from among those who are dead, no longer dies. Death over Him no longer exercises lordship. For the death He died, He died with respect to the sinful nature once for all. But the life He lives, He lives with respect to God.*

(6:11-14) We come now to another aspect of the method whereby the saint obtains victory over sin. In verses 1-10, Paul has presented two main facts; first, the believer stands in the position of a permanent relationship of freedom to the sinful nature, and need not obey it, and second, the divine nature is imparted by which he is given both the desire and the power to do God’s will. This is the inner spiritual machinery God has installed whereby the believer lives his Christian life. But, like an automobile engine, this machinery works best when it is serviced regularly. There is always a change for the good in a new convert’s life. But if he does not understand this inner change and adjust himself properly to it, he lives a mediocre Christian life. This adjustment Paul speaks of in verses 11-13, namely, that which the believer must do if he expects the best results from this inner change God wrought in him.

He is to do two things, *one*, reckon himself dead to sin, *two*, reckon himself alive to God. The word “reckon” is *logizomai*, “to reckon, count, compute, to take into account”. Here Paul is exhorting the saints that in their endeavor to live a life in accordance with the Word of God, they should take into account the fact that they are dead to sin, that they have been disengaged from the evil nature, that it has no power over them anymore, that they are scot free from it and can say a point blank NO to it, also to take into account the fact that they are alive to God, that is, that the divine nature has been imparted with the result that that nature gives them bot

the desire and the power to regulate their lives in accordance with the Word of God. Now, reckoning one's self dead to sin and alive to God does not make one so. God constituted the saint so when He saved him. But the act of reckoning brings into better operation with beneficial results, the working of this inner spiritual machinery. For instance, there is a game in which a blindfolded person is brought into the room, and made to stand on a table board which rests on some books on the floor. Two young men lift the board about a foot, and warn the young man not to bump his head against the ceiling. Thinking that he is near the ceiling, he loses his balance and falls off. He lost his balance and fell because he reckoned himself where he was not. Just so, a Christian who fails to count upon the fact that the power of the sinful nature is broken in his life, fails to get consistent victory over it, with the result that he lives a mediocre Christian life. He reckoned himself where he was not.

Another young man is blindfolded and stood on the board. He knows the game. When the board is lifted and he is warned not to bump his head against the ceiling, he remains perfectly straight and maintains his equilibrium, because he reckoned himself where he was. And so it is with a Christian who counts upon the fact that the power of the sinful nature is broken. He knows that he does not have to obey it, and that he has the power to say NO to it, and he turns his back on it and does what is right.

The Christian who does not count upon the fact that the divine nature is implanted in his inner being, goes on living his Christian life as best he can more or less in the energy of his own strength, with the result that he exhibits a mediocre Christian experience. But the believer who counts upon the fact that he is a possessor of the divine nature, ceases from his own struggles at living a Christian life, and avails himself of the life of God supplied in the divine nature. So the first adjustment the Christian should make is that of counting upon the fact that the power of the indwelling sinful nature is broken and the divine nature imparted, and order his life on that principle.

When the saint counts upon the fact that the power of the sinful nature over him is broken, he obeys the exhortation of Paul, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body." "Reign" is *basileuō*, "to exercise kingly power". The verb is present imperative with the negative *mē*, which construction forbids the continuance of an action already going on. It is, "Stop allowing the sinful nature to reign as king in your mortal body." The sinful nature is a dethroned monarch. The believer has the responsibility of keeping it from mounting into the throne of his heart, the place which the Lord Jesus should occupy. The believer is well able to do this. His will is free. He has the divine nature and the Holy Spirit to urge him on, and give him the desire and the power to refuse the sinful nature and obey the Word. Paul says, "Order your behavior in the sphere of, by means of, the Spirit, and you will positively not fulfil the desires of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16).

Paul says, "Stop allowing the sinful nature to reign as king in your mortal body with a view to obeying it in the sphere of its passionate cravings." Now, to what does the word "it" refer, to the sinful nature or the body? Logic would lead us to relate the pronoun to the sinful

nature, but Greek grammar refers it back to the body, since the pronoun is neuter, the word “sin” is feminine, and the word “body”, neuter. The pronoun in Greek agrees with its antecedent in gender. It is true that the sinful desires originate with the evil nature, not with the physical body. But why does Paul in this instance relate them to the body? The answer is found in the fact that the sinful nature is an intangible, invisible entity, and cannot be watched. It is an unseen enemy whose tactics cannot be observed and therefore cannot be guarded against. But the saint is able to keep watch over the members of his body, what his eyes look at, his ears listen to, his mind thinks about, his hands do, and where his feet carry him.

But not only will the saint who counts upon the fact that the power of the sinful nature is broken, stop allowing it to reign as king over him, but he will obey Paul’s exhortation, “neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin.” The verb is again present imperative with *mē*, “Stop yielding.” The verb is *paristēmi*, “to place beside or near, to present, to proffer, to put at one’s disposal”. We are to stop putting the members of our body at the disposal of, at the service of the sinful nature. The word “instruments” is *hoopla*. In classical Greek the word referred to the weapons of the Greek soldier. Paul thinks of the members of the Christian’s body as weapons to be used in the Christian warfare against evil. The saint, counting upon the fact that he has been disengaged from the evil nature, does two things, he refuses to allow it to reign as king in his life, and he stops putting his members at its disposal to be used as weapons of unrighteousness.

Now, the saint who counts upon the fact that the divine nature has been implanted, will obey Paul’s exhortation, “Yield yourselves to God, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” The word “yield” is again *paristēmi*, but in the aorist imperative, which commands a once for all action to be done at once. Paul says, “Put yourselves at once, and once for all, at the disposal of God, as those who are actively alive out from among those who are dead, and your members as weapons of righteousness, at the disposal of God.” This is a once for all act of the saint dedicating himself to God and His service, an act to be lived by, and upon the basis of its implications, moment by moment. The saint should live his life every day with the consciousness of that fact in his mind.

When the saint obeys the instructions laid down in these verses relative to his adjustment to the evil nature and the divine nature, Paul says, “The sinful nature will not exercise lordship over you,” and he gives the reason, “You are not under law but under grace.” To be under law refers to an unsaved person who attempts to live in obedience to the law of God. To be under grace is to be a saved person who has been the subject of the surgical operation in which the power of the sinful nature has been broken and the divine nature implanted. The poet says, “Do this and live, the law commands, but gives me neither feet nor hands. A better word the gospel brings. It bids me fly and gives me wings.” Wings in Scripture speak of supernatural power.

Translation. *Thus also be constantly counting upon the fact that on the one hand, you are dead ones with respect to the sinful nature, and on the other, that you are living ones with*

respect to God in Christ Jesus. Stop therefore allowing the sinful nature to reign as king in your mortal body with a view to obeying it (the body) in its passionate cravings. Moreover, stop putting your members at the disposal of the sinful nature as weapons of unrighteousness, but by a once for all act and at once, put yourselves at the disposal of God as those who are actively alive out from among the dead, and your members as weapons of righteousness at the disposal of God, for (then) the sinful nature will not exercise lordship over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

(6:15) In verses 2-14, Paul has answered his listener's question regarding the proposed habitual yieldedness of the believer to the evil nature, by showing that that was a mechanical impossibility considering the way the believer's inner mechanical set up was arranged by God, the power of indwelling sin broken and the divine nature implanted. His listener comes back with another question. He says in effect, "Well then, since grace makes it impossible for the believer to sin habitually like he did before he was saved, may we Christians live a life of planned, occasional sin, since we are not under the uncompromising rule of law, but under the lenient sceptre of grace?" The verb in verse one is in the present subjunctive, speaking of habitual, continuous action. The verb in verse fifteen is in the aorist subjunctive, referring to a single act. Arthur S. Way, in his excellent translation and paraphrase of The Pauline Epistles, has read this man's mind aright when he speaks of the uncompromising rule of law and the lenient sceptre of grace. The man simply did not know grace. Law is uncompromising. But grace is never lenient. It is far stricter than law ever could be. It is a far greater deterrent of evil than law ever was. A half dozen motorcycle policemen with their motors tuned up are a far greater deterrent to speeding than any number of placards along the road indicating the speed limit. The Holy Spirit, indwelling the believer, takes notice of the slightest sin and convicts him of it, whereas the law could act only generally and then only when the conscience of the individual cooperated with it. Grace not only forgives, but teaches (Titus 2:11-14).

Just because the believer now is set free from the law, does not mean that he can sin with impunity. There is a new propelling and compelling deterrent to sin, divine love, produced in the believer's being which causes him to hate sin and obey the Word of God (Gal. 5:13, John 14:21-24).

Translation. *What then? Shall we sin occasionally, because we are not under law but under grace? Away with the thought.*

(6:16) Paul answers the question of the man by showing that the believer has changed masters. The argument is based upon the meaning of the Greek word translated "servants". Adolph Deissmann, in his *Light From the Ancient East*, says that the English word totally obscures Paul's argument here. The word is *doulos*, the most abject, servile term for a slave in the Greek language. The believer was a slave of Satan before salvation, but since he has been saved, he is a slave of the Lord Jesus. He has changed masters because he has a new nature, the divine, and the evil nature which compelled him to serve the Devil has had its power over him broken. In the various meanings of this word *doulos* we will trace Paul's argument to the effect

that it is an impossibility for the believer to live a life of planned occasional sin. The believer does sin at times, but he does not provide in his life's plan for occasional acts of sin. He hates sin and endeavors to keep it out of his life, and in the event that he does commit an act of sin, he deals with it in confession to the Lord Jesus, putting it out of his life and receiving the cleansing the blood of our Lord offers.

The word refers to one who is born into a condition of slavery. As we were born by natural generation, we inherited a totally depraved nature through our parents from Adam, a nature which made us love sin and compelled us to serve it habitually. Now, being born again by the act of regeneration through the agency of the Holy Spirit, we are given a new nature, the divine, which gives us both the desire and the power to do God's will. With our liberation from the compelling power of the evil nature and our acquisition of the divine nature, we have changed masters, from Satan to our Lord. Paul argues that the believer does not want to live even a life of planned, occasional sin because, in the first place he does not have to, since the power of the evil nature over him is broken, and in the second place, he does not desire to do so, since his new nature causes him to hate sin and love righteousness, and when a person does not have to do what he does not want to do, he simply does not do it. The believer has changed masters.

Again, *doulos* means, "one whose will is swallowed up in the will of another". Paul argues that before salvation, the person's will was swallowed up in the will of Satan, but since he has been saved, his will is swallowed up in the sweet will of God. And since that is so, he does not desire to live a life of planned occasional sin.

Again, *doulos* refers to one who is bound to another in bands so strong that only death can break them. The believer's identification with the Lord Jesus in His death, broke the bands which bound him to Satan. Now, he is bound to the Lord Jesus as His bondsman in bands so strong that only death can break them. Since Christ is the believer's life and He will never die again, the believer is bound to Him forever. The only way he could live a life of planned occasional sin is to become the slave of the evil nature and Satan. But his bands binding him to the Lord Jesus are unbreakable, and therefore a return to Satan and his slavery is an impossibility.

Doulos also means, "one who serves another to the disregard of his own interests". The sinner serves Satan to the disregard of his own best interests. He does so because he is compelled to do so. He gets sin and death, sorrow and suffering. The believer, with his own will and accord, serves the Lord Jesus with an abandon that says; "Nothing matters about me, just so long as the Lord Jesus is glorified." Now, Paul argues, a person who does that, who disregards himself for the sake of the Lord Jesus, does not want to live a life of planned occasional sin.

Translation. *Do you not know that to whom you put yourselves at the disposal of as slaves resulting in obedience, slaves you are to whom you render habitual obedience, whether slaves of the evil nature, resulting in death, or obedient slaves (of Christ) resulting in righteousness?*

(6:17) It is true that according to the A. V., the doctrines of salvation were delivered to us, and we by the grace of God believed them. However, that is not what Paul said in his Greek. The verb “delivered” is second person plural. The Greek text reads, “the form of doctrine into which you were delivered.” That is, in salvation, God constituted the believer according to this chapter (vv. 1-14) inwardly so that he would react to the doctrines of grace by nature (the divine nature) in such a way as to receive and obey them. We were delivered into the teaching (doctrine, *didachē*) in that we were constituted in salvation so that we would obey it. Paul thanks God that whereas before salvation we were slaves of the evil nature, we were in salvation delivered (handed over *paradidōmi*) to the teachings of grace so that we become slaves of righteousness.

Translation. *But God be thanked, that you were slaves of the evil nature, but you obeyed out from the heart as a source, a type of teaching into which you were handed over.*

(6:18) “Being made free” is *eleuthero*, “to liberate, set free from bondage, to set at liberty”. Having been set free from the evil nature, the believer was constituted a slave of righteousness.

Translation. *Having been set free once for all from the evil nature, you were constituted bondslaves to righteousness.*

(6:19, 20) Paul apologizes for using the illustration drawn from human relations, that of a slave, but says that he was forced to do so because of the frailties of humanity.

Translation. *I am using an illustration drawn from human affairs because of the frailties of your humanity. For just as you placed your members as bondslaves at the disposal of uncleanness and lawlessness resulting in lawlessness, thus now place your members as bondslaves at the disposal of righteousness resulting in holiness. For when you were slaves of the evil nature, you were those who were free with respect to righteousness.*

(6:21-23) “Wages” is *opsōnion*, “whatever is bought to be eaten with bread, as fish, flesh. Corn, meat, fruits, salt, were given the soldiers instead of pay. That part of a soldier’s support given him in place of pay (i.e., rations) and the money in which he is paid” (Thayer). Paul used a military term *hopla*, the weapons of a Greek foot soldier, translated “instruments” (6:13). Now, he uses the illustration of a soldier’s wages. The battle is between Satan’s hosts of wickedness and the people of God. The wage that Satan doles out is death.

Translation. *Therefore, what fruit were you having then, upon the basis of which things now you are ashamed? For the consummation of those things is death. But now, having been set free from the evil nature and having been made bondslaves of God, you are having your fruit resulting in holiness, and the consummation, life eternal. For the subsistence pay which the evil nature doles out is death. But the free gift of God is life eternal in Christ Jesus our Lord.*