

CHAPTER VIII

ROMANS 6:1-23 - THE REIGN OF GRACE AND SANCTIFIED LIBERATION

THREE interrelated elements confront the student of Romans 6 at this juncture that must be considered if a true and comprehensive understanding of the mind of God is to be grasped. They are continuity, progression, and polemic. To begin with, it ought to be obvious even from v. 1 that there is immediate continuity. Further, the vocabulary of this section covers most of the major doctrinal themes that have been taught thus far, even if not with the same proportion of emphasis. Here we continue to interact with grace, death, sin, law, life, righteousness/unrighteousness, even justification in v. 7. However there is also progression with a polemical tone that is now injected and continues through chapter 7 as well. There is a necessary negative response that confronts the perversion of what Paul has been so passionately teaching thus far. In this same vein there is the incorporation of the new themes of “freedom” vs. 7, 20, 22, and “sanctification” vs. 19, 22, that necessarily result from the nature of the challenge that is brought against the true gospel. Hence, while it is correct to state that chapter 6 formally launches us into the realm of explicit teaching on Christian sanctification, yet chapters 6-7 emphasize this truth reactively while in chapter 8, the air having been cleared so to speak, there is a positive, climactic, and exalted presentation.

The broad connection here with chapter 5 concerns the fact that justification has resulted in reconciliation, and such union has included the supremacy of eternal life in Christ over sin and death in Adam. This triumph of Christ over Adam’s sinful legacy and the Law’s condemnation is climactically described in v. 21 as “the reign of grace” that has vanquished “the reign of sin and death.” Hence, this sovereignty of grace, and the assurance it brings are yet open to gross misrepresentation, and thus the whole matter of the ongoing sanctified life of a true child of God is now dealt with in major detail.

Furthermore, the transition from justification to sanctification finds its fulfilment here without the necessary order, connectedness and distinctiveness of these doctrines being lost.¹ While the term “justification” is not mentioned in this chapter, yet this foundational truth undergirds the whole of its teaching. Therefore at this juncture it cannot be too strongly stated that the study of Romans in continuity is a most vital matter. Some holiness conventions have tended to focus only on Romans 5-8, and the relative neglect of Romans 1-4 in this regard has surely contributed toward a truncated understanding of biblical sanctification.

A. THE PERVERSION OF THE REIGN OF GOSPEL GRACE, VS. 1-14.

This section and vs. 15-23 are two units of thought that both commence with exclamatory questions concerning matters of great controversy. While some claim that Paul’s intent here is one of teaching style after the manner of 3:1-8, in view of the Apostle’s turbulent endeavors that have now reached the middle of his third missionary journey, it is difficult to avoid the inference here, concerning the matter of antinomianism, that we have a passionate

¹ For a succinct statement on this vital matter refer to J. C. Ryle, *Holiness*, pp. 29-32, as well as pp. 326-30 where an extract from Robert Trail provides added explanation.

response to a frequently encountered objection, as 3:8 seems to plainly indicate (cf. Acts 21:21, 28; 24:5-6). When the gospel is faithfully upheld in all of its purity in holy grace, it ought to be expected that a world indulgent in sin will “turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness” (Jude 4).

1. A perverse proposition, v. 1.

In the light of the sovereignty of grace in 5:21, says Paul’s challenger, ought we not logically conclude that such a doctrine gives no encouragement to quit sinning, but rather tends to promote continuance in sin and licentiousness? Further, could we not reason that the more we sin, the more that grace will be stimulated to rise to the occasion? Therefore, to sin more is to exalt grace. So let us give a round of applause for sinners and sinning! To use a human analogy, which reveals the absurdity of such reasoning, it could be suggested: “Let us encourage sickness so that healing might increase!”

Now this charge of antinomianism, which here surely envisages a disregard for law and moral conformity in the face of the certain availability of grace, seems to be the charge most often brought against Paul rather than legalism. And this rightly leads us to conclude that a true presentation of the gospel of free grace should tend to provoke such a response when the doctrine of sin is not rightly perceived. So Lloyd-Jones comments:

There is no better test as to whether a man is really preaching the New Testament gospel of salvation than this, that some people might misunderstand it and misinterpret it to mean that it really amounts to this, that because you are saved by grace alone it does not matter at all what you do; you can go on sinning as much as you like because it will redound all the more to the glory of grace. This is a very good test of gospel preaching. If my preaching and presentation of the gospel of salvation does not expose it to that misunderstanding, then it is not the gospel. . . . This particular misunderstanding can only arise when the doctrine of justification by faith only is presented.²

2. A radical rebuttal, vs. 2-11.

It is significant that vs. 2-5, 7-11 all explicitly deal with the subject of death or dying, and this truth is also implicit in v. 6 where the “self was crucified.” There is an obvious connection here with 5:21 where the “reign of death” is conquered by the triumphant “reign of grace” that results in eternal life. So here, the antithesis of death and dying is eclipsed by walking in “newness of life” v. 4 because we “live with him” v. 8 and are “alive to God in Christ Jesus.” v. 11.

a. Grace brings a radical breach with sin, v. 2.

Paul’s strong denial *μὴ γένοιτο*, *mē genoito*, literally, “Let it not come to pass,” or “Never let it be said,” unlike its usage in 3:4, 6 concerning unbelief and God’s faithfulness, here the same Jewish casuistry confronts a warped understanding of the grace of God.

² Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans, An Exposition Of Chapter 6*, pp. 8-9.

The KJV less accurately declares, “How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” Rather it should read, “Whoever we are who died to [the] sin [of Adam?], how shall we still live in it?” The Christian’s *present condition* is not here described as being “dead to sin.” Rather the aorist of ἀποθνήσκω, apothnē skō, points to a past event when we “died to [the] sin [of Adam?] But when did the believer “die to sin”? When he was truly converted, at that point of initial saving faith when he became justified and was joined in union with Christ. It was then that he was wrested from Adam’s clutches and engrafted into Christ, as signified by baptism, vs. 3-4.³ Thus Murray comments, “What the apostle has in view is the once-for-all definitive breach with sin which constitutes the identity of the believer. A believer cannot therefore live in sin; if a man lives in sin he is not a believer. If we view sin as a realm or sphere then the believer no longer lives in that realm or sphere.”⁴

The exact meaning of this statement “died to sin” cannot be over stressed here on account of the vital teaching, presumably consistent, that follows using similar terminology in vs. 10-11. In particular v. 10 declares that Christ “died [aorist tense] to [not for] sin once for all” in a most decisive manner. For this reason in v. 11 the believer is to likewise consider himself “dead to sin” in the same conclusive way, and thus it is consistent to see the same finality intended here in v. 2.⁵

The corollary of this truth is that it is inconceivable that such a person, being alive unto God, should live a life that is indicative of being dead to God. Thus Paul addresses the professing Christian, “how shall we still live in sin [which signifies deadness]?” That is, how shall a child of God have a lifestyle that conforms to the god of this world’s agenda? How shall a transient pilgrim seeking the Celestial City yet solicit entertainment and trade at Vanity Fair? The relationship between sin and grace is not that of necessary union, but of the widest contrast and exclusion. A patient just delivered from a serious infection does not return to the breeding ground of that infection. It is unthinkable that the prodigal son would desire to return to the pig pens he formerly served in the far country so as to stimulate more love from his father. Such reasoning is repulsive. Why would the son not do this? Because the father declares, “this son of mine was *dead* and has come to *life* again” (Luke 15:24). This then becomes the heart of Paul’s subsequent reasoning, that is of the true Christian being “dead to sin [and its lifestyle]” and “alive unto God [and His righteousness],” v. 11.

- b. Grace brings a radical identification with Christ, vs. 3-7.

Simply put, the almost cynical challenge of v. 1 evaluates Christianity in the most shallow of terms. It has no appreciation of the transformation that results from genuine conversion. Hence Paul responds with an explanation that involves a transfer between two opposing worlds, from death to life, from burial to

³ Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 357-8; Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 245.

⁴ John Murray, *The Epistle To The Romans*, I, p. 213.

⁵ James Montgomery Boice gives an excellent summary of the various interpretations that surround the meaning of “dead to sin.” Indebtedness here is to his alignment with Godet, Murray, Lloyd-Jones, and Stott in this regard. *Romans, The Reign of Grace*, 5:1-8:39, II, pp. 649-656.

resurrection, from an old self to a new self, from bondage to sin to the emancipation of the life of God.

(1) Being baptized into Christ, vs. 3-4.

The fundamental truth concluding v. 2, that the believer “died to sin,” becomes the stimulant of, what is to Paul patently obvious, the parallel truth of being “baptized into Christ Jesus,” that is being “baptized into His death.” When did the believer “die to sin?” At his conversion. So the “baptism into Christ” coincides with this conversion, and apart from theological predisposition, it is difficult to avoid the obvious truth that water baptism and its significance is involved in the thrust of this verse. Therefore, “Do you not know?” or literally, “Are you ignorant?” ἀγνοέω, agnoeō, suggests that the saints at Rome ought to understand what is about to be taught.⁶ Hence it seems inconceivable that Christians, as addressees, would conclude that, as some commentators have declared, the ordinance of baptism has no meaning in vs. 3-4 whatsoever.⁷

(a) Baptism into his death, v. 3.

“Baptism” is a word that suggests, to most people, the application of water in a Christian ordinance. This being so, misplaced focus is directed toward the sign rather than the far greater importance of its significance. Certainly Paul has water baptism in mind here, yet only in a secondary sense. What is of supreme concern is that which water baptism pictures, and that is real and personal union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

1) Baptism as thorough identification.

The English words “baptize/baptism” are transliterations of βαπτίζω, baptizō / βάπτω, baptō / βάπτισμα, baptism, and as such give no indication of their meaning. Greek lexicons are in common agreement that the essential meaning is to dip, immerse, wash (and cleanse in a thorough sense), plunge, sink, drench, overwhelm.”⁸ Note that in the New Testament there is an alternative word for “sprinkling,” ραντίζω, rhantizō, (only Mark 7:4; Heb. 9:13, 19, 21; 10:22).⁹ Thus Christian baptism, as an ordinance, is a literal overwhelming or plunging or dipping with regard to water (Matt.

⁶ Moo comments: “By the date of Romans, ‘baptize’ had become almost a technical expression for the rite of Christian initiation by water, and this is surely the meaning the Roman Christians would have given the word.” In a footnote he also suggests that most, perhaps even all, of Paul’s references to βαπτίζω, baptizō, are analogous to Christian water baptism. *Epistle to the Romans*, p. 359.

⁷ Lloyd-Jones declares: “I go further and suggest that to argue that the Apostle has water baptism in his mind in any shape or form here is to give prominence to baptism that the Apostle Paul never gives to it.” *Romans, An Exposition Of Chapter 6*, p. 34.

⁸ W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, pp. 131-2.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 741.

28:19; Acts 8:36-39). More figurative usage still retains the same basis idea of thorough identification, whether with suffering (Luke 12:50), the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:13), or individuals such as Moses (I Cor. 10:1-2), Paul (I Cor. 1:13), or Christ (Gal. 3:26-27).

2) Baptism as thorough identification with Jesus Christ.

Here the child of God was “baptized [aorist tense] into Christ Jesus,” that is he has, through faith, really and intensely united to his Savior and also ritually identified with him as well, just as Israel intensely identified with Moses and this union was represented by their passage through the Red Sea (I Cor. 10:1-2). But further, the believer was also “baptized [aorist tense] into His [Christ’s] death,” that is he who was justly under sentence of death through sin identified with Christ’s substitutionary death, as if entombed with Him. Death with Christ is a radical breach with the former life in which sin reigned. To die with Christ in intimate union is to renounce the dominion of the past economy of sin, especially in a personal, though not a perfectionist, sense.

In contemporary conversation, it is often said concerning a disputed matter: “That is a dead issue!” In other words, the point under discussion has become settled; it is over with and put to rest. That is the attitude of the Christian who, through justification by faith in Christ, has now become joined to Christ. As Christ died for sin, so we who are united with him have died to sin. Boice puts it this way: “[A]s a result of our union with Christ in his death and resurrection, that old life of sin in Adam is past for us also. We can never go back to it. We have been brought from that old life, the end of which was death, into a new life, the end of which is righteousness.”¹⁰ Therefore the suggestion that we can blithely put a word in for sin since grace will be enhanced is a travesty of gospel truth. Not surprisingly, in the history of the Christian church, baptism has always been regarded as a radical, once and for all, signification of Christian commitment. And dare I say it? It is the thoroughness of immersion that best pictures the saved sinners thorough renunciation of sin and envelopment in Christ (Gal. 3:26-27).

(b) Baptism into his life, v. 4.

The “therefore” here indicates an obvious connection with v. 3, as does the word “baptism.” However, added truth concerns the concept of being “buried,” then “raised” and resultant “newness of life.” The most contentious matter to be faced here concerns whether the baptism picture of vs. 3 continues on into vs. 4, that is whether the burial/resurrection picture is an extension of the baptism picture of the

¹⁰ Boice, *Romans, The Reign of Grace*, II, p. 653.

believer's thorough identification with the Lord Jesus Christ. In rejecting the baptism/burial/resurrection association, as we shall see, John Murray "protesteth too much" when he declares: "The assumption of so many commentators, non-baptist as well as baptist, to the effect that the apostle has in view the mode of immersion as vividly portraying our burial with Christ and emergence with him in his resurrection is without warrant."¹¹

1) Buried with Christ in his death.

Here the child of God was "buried together [entombed with Christ]¹² through [the] baptism into the death [of Christ]," presumably at conversion. That is baptism also pictures placement in the tomb with Christ. Now the reality here is that the "I", that is my old sinful self was crucified and buried with Christ, v. 6. A radical and thorough disjunction took place that even the new convert probably did not fully grasp at that initial stage. Nevertheless, in true conversion such is the overwhelming breach that takes place. And the question that then must be faced is, in the light of water baptism being indicated in v. 3, what mode of baptism best preserves this thorough immersion into Christ's death?¹³

2) Raised with Christ in his life.

The obvious continuity drives us to the essential point that, negatively speaking, while the believer has thoroughly identified with Christ's death, that is his death to sin, positively speaking it is inevitably true that the genuine child of God has been made alive, regenerated, granted "newness of life," cf. 8:9-11, even as he thoroughly identified with Christ's resurrection according to "the glory of the Father."

Christ being "raised," ἐγείρω, egeirō, another aorist passive like "died" v. 2, "baptized" v. 3, and "buried" here, continues the

¹¹ Murray, *Epistle To The Romans*, I, p. 215. Boice is similarly dismissive when he comments that, "the [6th] chapter [of Romans] has nothing whatever to do with baptism." Ibid., p. 641.

¹² Note that συνθάπτω, sunthaptō, here and βαπτίζω, baptizō, in v. 3 are not only appositional in the text but also both are aorist passives.

¹³ To avoid the thrust of this argument, Murray makes a rather astonishing comment: "[W]e have no more warrant to find a reference to the mode of baptism in συνετάφημεν, ἑταυρώθη [crucified together] in vs. 6, ἐνεδύσασθε, [clothed] in Gal. 3:27, all of which bear no analogy to the mode of baptism." *Epistle To The Romans*, I, p. 215. Yet here in vs. 4 there is the closest possible relationship drawn between "burial" and "baptism"! Further, where is there justification for demanding that union with Christ must be tied to one illustration? Certainly Luke 12:50 gives good reason for Christ's crucifixion being understood as "a baptism to be baptized with." As for Gal. 3:27, either it has no reference to baptism at all, and in context this perspective is difficult to digest, or else it incorporates a distinctive description of baptism into the essential truth of union with Christ. This being the case, which mode of baptism best parallels the thorough identification of being "clothed [thoroughly outfitted] with Christ"?

conversion identification that results in the new believer becoming “alive unto God” v. 11, and therefore a “slave to righteousness” v. 18. The agency of Christ’s resurrection, and thus the regeneration of the child of God, cf. Tit. 3:5-7, is “the glory of the Father,” an encompassing term probably focusing on, “the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe” (Eph. 1:17-19). This being true, it is inconceivable that a new believer would commence¹⁴ to “walk in newness of life” and at the same time direct his steps toward his former life of carnal indulgence.

Of course, if the burial proposition commencing this verse is pictured by immersion in baptism, it is difficult to deny that the linked resurrection proposition is likewise representative of emergence in baptism. Thus Haldane gives an excellent description of the relationship that exists here between God’s appointed sign and its significance.

Christians are therefore represented as buried with Him by baptism into His [Christ’s] death, in token that they really died with Him; and if buried with him, it is not that they shall remain in the grave, but that, as Christ arose from the dead, they should also arise. Their baptism, then, is the figure of their complete deliverance from the guilt of sin,¹⁵ signifying that God places to their account the death of Christ as their own death: it is also a figure of their purification and resurrection and resurrection for the service of God.¹⁶

(2) Being united to Christ, vs. 5-7.

While the same essential truth is described as in v. 4, that of Christian conversion bringing about a radical breach with sin, yet it is presented here with new and developed features. The baptism representation recedes and a new picture, not wholly unrelated, emerges of the believer’s close identification with Christ, that is of “growth together” that results in emancipation and resurrection. The major theme of death retains its importance in reflecting the glory of deliverance from bondage, and resurrection life.

¹⁴ The ingressive aorist here of περιπατέω, peripateō, indicates the beginning of this walk.

¹⁵ Though this statement is good in general, we would at this point side with Moo’s comment on v. 2: “The idea, then, is of a decisive separation from sin. This separation could be a separation from the penalty [guilt] due because of sin [referring to Haldane at this point], but the context demonstrates that Paul is talking not about the penalty, but about the power, of sin (cf. v. 6b).” *Epistle to the Romans*, p. 357. Lloyd-Jones rejects Haldane’s reference here to the primacy of “guilt” on similar grounds. *Romans, An Exposition Of Chapter 6*, p. 19.

¹⁶ Robert Haldane, *Commentary on Romans*, p. 253. Note that there is no explicit reference here to the mode of baptism. However, in the light of this exposition it is hardly necessary. In support of this baptism/burial/resurrection association, refer to C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle To The Romans*, p. 123; G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism*, p. 133; W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, p. 162.

(a) Raised up with him from death, v. 5.

The “if” clause here assumes the assertion to be true. Hence, to paraphrase, “Since we have become joined with Him in the likeness [cf. 5:14] of His [Christ’s] death, then certainly we shall [continue to be joined with Him in the likeness] of His resurrection.” The term σύμφυτος, *sumphutos*, is stressing growth together while the associated meaning of planting or grafting is not altogether out of sight.¹⁷ Moule well describes this union as being, “vitally connected. Not implanting but coalescence is the idea.”¹⁸ John 12:24 has application here in that the fruit of redeemed souls that Christ produces originates from the burial of he as a grain in the ground that then emerges as a fruit bearing plant. That spiritual produce comes forth with Christ in fruitful union.

The “likeness “ of the believer to his Savior in death and resurrection must not be pressed too far any more than the analogy of John 12:24. However, the perfect tense of “become” γίνομαι, *ginomai*, indicates that this correspondence began at conversion and is ongoing, even maturing. Suffice to say that the Son of God and His spiritual progeny both encounter death and resurrection, even as one thief on the cross encountered death and life with the Lord Jesus.

(b) Raised up with him from our old self, v. 6.

The death and resurrection analogy continues, except that a new undergirding element called “our old self” NASB, NIV, or more literally “our old man” KJV, NKJV, is introduced; compare “the old man” (Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9).

1) The old man identified.

Here and in Colossians 3:9, it is clear that this “old man” was put to death in the past, that is the point of conversion. Thus a present conflict between two natures is rejected. Rather the “old man” is, as Moo well puts it, “what we were ‘in Adam’ —the ‘man’ of the old age, who lives under the tyranny of sin and death.”¹⁹ Significantly, in John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, Faithful relates that, having been converted, he later encountered and spurned Adam the First who is further described as “the old

¹⁷ C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle To The Romans*, pp. 306-7.

¹⁸ H. C. G. Moule, *The Epistle Of Paul The Apostle To The Romans*, p. 113.

¹⁹ Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, p. 373. Barrett similarly writes: “[T]he ‘old man’ is Adam—or rather, ourselves in union with Adam, and that the ‘new man’ is Christ—or rather, ourselves in union with Christ. Compare Gal. 3:27; I Cor. 15:22, 47 ff.” *The Epistle To The Romans*, p. 125. Lloyd -Jones comments: “The ‘old man’ is the man that I used to be in Adam. . . . It is the man I once was, but which I am no longer.” *Romans, An Exposition Of Chapter 6*, pp. 62-3. Likewise Stott describes the “old man” as, “the person we used to be in Adam. So what was crucified with Christ was not a part of us called our old nature , but the whole of us as we were in our pre-conversion state.” *The Message of Romans*, p. 176.

man.”²⁰ Here a right understanding of the present imperatives in Ephesians 4:22-24 is illustrated, that is a present repudiation of “the ‘powers’ of that old age [that] continue to influence the believer and must be continually resisted.”²¹

2) The old man crucified.

So this “old man” was “crucified,” aorist passive again of *συσταυρόω*, *sustauroō*, for the purpose that, “the body of sin might be nullified [cf. 3:3], dethroned [aorist passive of *καταργέω*, *katargeō*].” This crucifixion is not to be confused with Galatians 5:24 where present mortification of the body is involved (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5). Rather here the decisive cleavage was made at conversion between sin’s kingdom and its human head, and the Lord Jesus Christ’s redemptive kingdom.²² As a result “the body of sin,” that is the present sin-dominated, earthly body, the vehicle of the new man, is rendered “de-fanged,” alienated from its former head.²³

3) The new man identified.

While the “new man” here is implicit, in Ephesians 4:22 and Colossians 3:9 he is explicitly described. He is what the believer is in Christ, that is a “new creature [species]” (II Cor. 5:17). However the identifying feature here is that, according to his new classification, he is no longer a “slave to sin [and thus Adam’s racial legacy].” The “new man” has a new Master, and therefore he is not subject to the dominion of the former economy and its despotic head (6:9, 14). This new transfer of allegiance is well illustrated by Christian in *The Pilgrim’s Progress* when he informs assailing Apollyon:

I was born, indeed, in your dominions, but your service was hard, and your wages such as a man could not live on. . . . But I have let

²⁰ John Bunyan, *The Works of John Bunyan*, ed. George Offor, III, p. 118.

²¹ Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, p. 374. Lloyd-Jones gives a similar and longer explanation concerning Ephesians 4:22-24, as well as a helpful illustration. *Romans, An Exposition Of Chapter 6*, pp. 63-64.

²² John Stott puts this matter very clearly: “There are in fact, two quite distinct ways in which the New Testament speaks of crucifixion in relation to holiness. The first is our death to sin through identification with Christ; the second is our death to self through imitation of Christ. On the one hand, we have been crucified with Christ. But on the other we have crucified (decisively repudiated) our sinful nature with all its desires, so that every day we renew this attitude by taking up our cross and following Christ to crucifixion. The first is a legal death, a death to the penalty [power?] of sin; the second is a moral death, a death to the power of sin. The first belongs to the past, and is unique and unrepeatable; the second belongs to the present, and is repeatable, even continuous. I died to sin (in Christ) once; I die to self (like Christ) daily. It is with the first of these two deaths that Romans 6 is chiefly concerned, although the first is with a view to the second, and the second cannot take place without the first.” *The Message of Romans*, p. 176.

²³ Lloyd-Jones, *Romans, An Exposition Of Chapter 6*, pp. 68-80; Murray, *The Epistle To The Romans*, I, pp. 220-21.

myself to another, even to the King of princes. . . . O thou destroying Apollyon! to speak the truth, I like his service, his wages, his servants, his government, his company, and country, better than thine; and, therefore, leave off to persuade me further; I am his servant, and I will follow him.²⁴

4) The old man/new man illustrated.

There was once a rugged horseman, advanced in years and renowned for his lusty ancestry and lifestyle. His lively horse seemed agreeably to know of his master's every sordid and profane haunt, so much so that where his master went, so his steed was eager to go as well. Likewise, where the horse desired to go, so the master was happy to comply; for the horseman and his horse were of one mind in their travels. Arriving at a favorite haunt, it was frequently said, "Hear comes the old man riding his old companion. But one day, this "old man" stopped for lunch at a roadside inn he had never visited before. Inside he found the food different from anything he had ever tasted in his life. There he also conversed with a man who told of good news which he gladly received; the result was that the "old man" was old no longer. He had, in repudiating his carnal ancestry, become a "new man," and now he pondered all of the new destinations he intended to visit. His whole itinerary would now change. Thus he went on his way, mounted his trusty horse, only to discover an unexpected problem. As a "new man" he now wanted to go to places his old companion did not want to go (Gal. 5:16-18). So he faced the necessity of commanding his horse to obey his orders. The horse continued to oppose its new master. But the "new man" was committed to keeping his rebellious horse in check. He learned to continually pull in and direct with the reins this earthly vehicle so that he might arrive at his newly assigned destination (I Cor. 9:27).

(c) Raised up with him by the power of justification, v. 7.

An accurate translation here is of vital importance. The KJV reads, "For he that is dead is freed from sin." The NASB reads, "for he who has died is freed from sin." Both correctly indicate the close connection with v. 6, but a more literal rendering would be, "for he who has died [aorist] has been justified [perfect of δικαιόω, dikaiōō] from sin." Note that "being freed" as a result of justification in vs. 18, 20, 22, is a different Greek verb, [ἐλευθερώω, eleutheroō].

Hence Paul here has more in mind than an illustrative Hebrew proverb declaring that a dead man is free from sin, which thought is not ultimately true.²⁵ Rather, the believer "who has died [with Christ],"

²⁴ Bunyan, *Works*, III, p. 111-12.

²⁵ So Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, p. 377, yet such a secular use of δικαιόω, dikaiōō, is so out of keeping with the Apostle's usage of this term elsewhere, namely always "to justify." Lloyd-Jones argues that Paul's use of

who has been “baptized into His death” v. 3, has been “buried with Him” v. 4, has “become united with Him in the likeness of His death” v. 5, has been “crucified with Him” v. 6, has been “justified from sin,” raised to newness of life, emancipated unto righteousness, vs. 4-6, 8-10, 17-18.

Murray puts the matter so well:

The decisive breach with the reigning power of sin is viewed after the analogy of the kind of dismissal which a judge gives when an arraigned person is justified. Sin has no further claim upon the person who is thus vindicated. The judicial aspect from which deliverance from the power of sin is to be viewed needs to be appreciated. It shows that the forensic is present not only in justification but also in that which lies at the basis of sanctification. A judgment is executed upon the power of sin in the death of Christ (cf. John 12:31) and deliverance from this power on the part of the believer arises from the efficacy of this judgment.²⁶

Simply put, the justified believer, in his sin having been crucified with Christ, has been set free *from* that sin, its powerful claim, its ownership, its dominion. Such a release directs him to respond to grace, but not abuse it. As Isaac Watts has written:

Shall we go on to sin
Because thy grace abounds;
Or crucify the Lord again,
And open all his wounds?
Forbid it, mighty God!
Nor let it e'er be said,
That we whose sins are crucified
Should raise them from the dead.
We will be slaves no more,
Since Christ has made us free;
Has nailed our tyrants to his cross,
And bought our liberty.

- c. Grace brings a radical reckoning with Christ, vs. 8-11.

While the effecting union of the believer with Christ remains Paul's ongoing concern, the focus now changes direction toward Christ's vital, risen, and exalted relationship with God. Such a perspective is then intended to enlarge the believer's appreciation of his vital participation with this risen Christ.

“he” here rather than the expected “us” suggests “a general, universal, axiomatic statement,” *Romans, An Exposition Of Chapter 6*, p. 88. But again, it seems better to regard this as perhaps a stylistic touch rather than blur the Pauline use of δικαιόω, dikaioō. Of course it is possible that in quoting a popular epigram Paul incorporates δικαιόω, dikaioō, to make a distinctive point, as Cranfield suggests, *Epistle To The Romans*, pp. 310-11.

²⁶ Murray, *Epistle To The Romans*, I, p. 222. In further support that v. 7 here involves the doctrine of justification, refer to Fraser, Haldane, Hodge, Morris, Moule.

(1) We are alive with Christ, vs. 8-9.

The thought of “walking in newness of life” v. 4 is now expounded upon. Formerly dead in sin, the Christian is now spiritually alive, awakened in his desolate soul, regenerated. Of course such animation is inseparably connected with God’s holy character (John 14:26), so that the imparted life is morally pure and a stimulant to holy affections. Further, as in Ephesians 2:1-6, Christ is the initial and ongoing mediator of this life. Here is the feature that distinguishes a genuine from a counterfeit child of God.

(a) We live because he lives, v. 8.

Paul will not leave us contemplating the benefits of death as described in v. 7. To paraphrase here, “Since we died with Christ, we believe that we shall live in union with Him.” The protasis is a repetition of the teaching of vs. 3-6, while the apodosis is the point of new emphasis, the transmission of sustaining life from Christ to those who are joined with Him in His resurrection. The future tense here of συζῶ, suzō, describes the enlivening that, having commenced at conversion, yet continues until the future day of resurrection.

Sterile evangelicalism tends to focus on Jesus Christ’s substitutionary, transactional, justifying death as a notion to be acknowledged; but the necessity of consequent new life in the saved soul united to Christ is not accentuated as Paul does here and in the verses that follow. Such new life has evident symptoms that concern new appetites and capacities in much the same way as the man born blind in John 9, having received new sight, desired to know about Christ and testify about him, “one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see,” v. 25.

(b) He lives because he mastered death, v. 9.

The doctrine of the believer’s death/burial/resurrection identification with Jesus Christ is based on objective truth, the real, historic event of the Son of God’s encounter with and conquest of death. The life that has come to the regenerated and justified believer, v. 8, is based upon the resurrection life that the dead Jesus Christ subsequently manifested.

However, this divine resurrection was unique and climactic. With regard to the raising of the widow’s son at Nain (Luke 7:11-17), Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:21-24, 35-43), and Lazarus (John 11:1-46), here Jesus meets the *works* of death and temporarily defeats them. These were all instances of resurrection to physical life. But at his own crucifixion Jesus encounters death itself as the Son of God. J. Gresham Machen appropriately comments here:

Do you not see, my friends? What we are trying to establish is not the resurrection of an ordinary man, not the resurrection of a man who is to us a mere *x* or *y*, not the resurrection of a man about whom we know nothing, but the resurrection of Jesus. There is a tremendous presumption against the resurrection of any ordinary man, but when you

come really to know Jesus as He is pictured to us in the Gospels you will say that whereas it is unlikely that any ordinary man should rise from the dead, in His case the presumption is exactly reversed. It is unlikely that any ordinary man should rise; but it is unlikely that *this* man should not rise; it may be said of this man that it was impossible that He should be holden of death.²⁷

So it is in this capacity that Jesus is “never to die again; death no longer is master [κυριεύω, kurieuō, has lordly dominion] over Him.” His resurrection was unto eternal glory (Rev. 11:15). To Timothy the Apostle declares that this Christ, “abolished [nullified, canceled] death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (II Tim. 1:10). Thus Paul exalts, “thanks be to God, who gives us [in union with His Son] the victory [over death] through our [victorious] Lord Jesus Christ” (I Cor. 15:57).

(2) We are alive unto God, vs. 10-11.

Now follows, as an expansion of v. 8, the theological truth concerning the historic reality of Jesus Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection maintained in v. 9. This doctrinal explication leads to the believer’s responsibility as he intimately participates in this truth.

(a) Christ has finally broken with sin, v. 10.

For what *purpose* did Christ conquer death by resurrection, never to die again? Like I Corinthians 15:3, where “Christ died *for our sins*,” so here, “He died *to sin* once for all.” Yet the language here suggests that this was a death like none other, a distinguishing death.

1) He died to sin.

There is terrible encounter described here. The language, “He died *to* [not *for*] sin,” is identical here with the believer having “died to sin” in vs. 2, 11, cf. vs. 6-7. Yet Jesus, being sinless, could not have died to sin indwelling his nature (II Cor. 5:21; I John 3:5). However, ask yourself, “When did Jesus Christ draw closest to sin and death? When did he descend into the deepest abyss of darkness?” The answer is obvious, so that as the believer is to have a radical death breach with sin, so the Son of God likewise, though in an infinitely greater, inaugural degree, had a death breach with sin; that is he met it, suffered by it, plunged to its very courts, yet still died to it in his absolute repudiation of its hellish nature and thus vanquished its overtures. Simply put, Jesus “died to death, and sin which it represents.” Thus Jesus “died to sin” when, as he himself declared, “I have authority to lay it [My life] down, and I have authority to take it up again” (John 10:18).

²⁷ J. Gresham Machen, *The Christian Faith in the Modern World*, pp. 214-5.

Lloyd-Jones explains that, “He [Christ] died to that whole relationship to sin into which He once put Himself voluntarily for our salvation. He has died unto it as a power, as something that reigns, as we have seen in chapter 5 – something that has a realm and a rule and an authority.”²⁸

There is also decisive victory described here, for He died to sin “once for all” ἐφάπαξ, ephapax, (cf. Heb. 7:27; 9:12; 10:10), a strengthened form. Thus Christ so dealt death a fatal blow, he so triumphed over sin, that his victory has an eternal finality to it, a complete satisfaction in it, and an unrepeatable glory about it. Therefore, that past historic triumph is also a present and eternal triumph for the Christian who is united to Christ.

2) He lives to God.

So the resurrection of Jesus and his ascension to the Father is a corollary of the fact that he “died to death and sin.” Thus he now “lives to [or *for*] God,” that is, in an exalted sense, he continues to “do the things that are pleasing to Him” (John 8:29). In other words, that will relate to the practical thrust of v. 11, Jesus having returned to the Father is consumed with being godly in the presence of God.²⁹

(b) Christians have finally broken with sin, v. 11.

Paul has not left behind the gross proposition of v. 1. Rather he now assaults it with new and logical vigor, except that his approach is one of practical exhortation. Vs. 1-10 have all been concerned with doctrine; now the application is forcefully pressed home to the Christians in Rome

Therefore, in the light of your identification with this Christ who really “died to sin” and now really “lives to God,” so “reckon yourselves” to be “dead to sin” and “alive to God.” Here λογίζομαι, logizomai, means “to account as true, to focus on the reality of a situation, to regard as the actual state of affairs.” It does not mean to assert what in fact is not true, to mentally conceive above the reality of this world, to think with determination so as to bring about change.³⁰ Rather it means to live in

²⁸ Lloyd-Jones, *Romans, An Exposition Of Chapter 6*, p. 103. Also refer to the similar explanation of Murray, *Epistle To The Romans*, I, pp. 224-5.

²⁹ While it is true, as Lloyd-Jones states, that “Christ is no longer ‘in the realm of sin and death’. He is in the realm of God, and of glory, and of majesty,” *Romans, An Exposition Of Chapter 6*, p. 110, yet the text here describes a state of active being, of “living to God.” Thus, “his [Christ’s] resurrection has given him new power to carry out God’s will and purpose,” Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, p. 379. Morris comments: “The life that follows is a life singly devoted to God (for living ‘to’ cf. 14:7-8). *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 255.

³⁰ As John Stott writes: “This ‘reckoning’ is no make-believe. It is not screwing up our faith to believe what we do not believe. We are not to pretend that our old nature has died, when we know perfectly well it has not.” *The Message of Romans*, p. 179. Murray similarly states that, “it is not by reckoning these to be facts that they become facts.” *Epistle To The Romans*, I, p. 226.

conformity with the reality of your being. Thus it is vital to understand that Paul's address is to genuine Christians. For the counterfeit believer, it is futile for him to attempt this accounting of one's self. Such reckoning becomes a fatal delusion.

Thus a life is to be lived that is consistent with and appreciative of the reality of authentic conversion, and this emphasis will be expanded upon in vs. 12-14. But first, the life lived starts with a mental reckoning and agreement. This is what Paul calls for here. The true child of God is to embrace who he is; he is to know who he really is.

Consider the Prodigal Son of Luke 15. Having been reconciled to his Father, yet imagine that his body, having been used to pig-pen living, makes some lustful suggestions to the soul of this young man. He in turn tells his father how disturbed he is about this. In response the father gives a strong exhortation: "My son, realize that you are dead to the kingdom of the pig-pen and alive unto your new home with me. You have died to that former lifestyle and are now live in my kingdom. Wake up to your present status; then live in accord with it."

- 1) The reality is, you *have* died to sin.

Its power and reign, its condemnation and captivity, have been dethroned. Its establishment in the heart has been cast down, as has the law as a handmaiden (Rom. 7:4).

- 2) The reality is, you *have* become alive unto God.

As a son of God (Rom. 8:14) and new species (II Cor. 5:17), your former life of servitude, degradation and shame has been supplanted by a new nobility and heirship (Rom. 8:17).

3. A radical exhortation, vs. 12-14.

We know move from the realm of right "reckoning," which really involves focus of the soul and mind,³¹ to consequent "active response." A young man talks with a friend of the girl he loves, though with many doubts. But his friend responds. "Man, wake up! Realize that she truly loves you!" The young man, then revives. "Yes, she really does love me. How could I ever doubt it?" But this is not enough, merely to reckon on this fact. He must respond and go and ask her to marry him. So here, we are now to act upon that which we understand to be real concerning our Christian status.

The Apostle Peter addresses this same matter. As a Christian *is* holy being part of a "holy nation" in a declarative sense, having been "called out of darkness into His marvelous light" (I Pet. 2:9), so he has to grasp this truth as a present reality. Thus in

³¹ John Stott is correct when he writes: "So the major secret of holy living is in the mind. It is in knowing, v. 6, that our former self was crucified with Christ, in knowing, v. 3, that baptism into Christ is baptism into his death and resurrection, and in considering, v. 11, that through Christ we are dead to sin and alive unto God. We are to recall, to ponder, to grasp, to register these truths until they are integral to our mindset that a return to the old life is unthinkable." *The Message of Romans*, p. 180.

accounting or reckoning the truthfulness of this present state of being, as a consequence he is to live a consistent lifestyle, that is “die to sin and live to righteousness” (I Pet. 2:24).

a. Do not let sin reign in your body, v. 12.

In this exhortation, a right understanding of the expression, “your mortal body,” is of crucial importance. In an expanded translation we have described, “your physical body that is subject to death on account of corruption,” and Haldane, Lloyd-Jones, and Murray have good reasons for strongly asserting this point.³² Reasons for this include parallels with “our body of sin” in v. 6, “the members of your body,” v. 13, “the weakness of your flesh,” v. 19, being “in the flesh, [with its] sinful passions, . . . the members of our body,” 7:5, “the law of sin which is in my members. . . . the body of this death,” 7:23-24.

Clearly Paul describes our physical bodies as being the source of lustful propositioning, of desires that confront the “new person in Christ Jesus,” so that a continuous conflict rages in this life (7:14-25; Gal. 5:17). These solicitations are of the nature of the human body so that it seeks “obedience to its lusts.” But the “therefore” here, in the light of the “reckoning” of v. 11, directs us “not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies.” In other words, the believer, with his heavenly nobility through being united with Christ, is to direct this vehicle of the flesh and not be driven by it. His renewed mind is to order his steps.

Lloyd-Jones well encapsulates this whole matter as follows:

I myself as a new man in Christ am dead indeed unto sin, I have nothing more to do with it, and it has nothing more to do with me [cf. Gal. 6:14]. I have finished with it as such – I myself. But it is here still in my mortal body, and it will continue to worry me, and I shall have to deal with it as long as I am in the mortal body. Thank God, I know that it can never get me back under its dominion; never again can it master me, never again can it ruin my soul. Impossible! All it can do is to worry me in the body. It cannot affect my salvation, it cannot affect my final destiny – ‘sin shall not have dominion over you.’ ‘Reckon ye yourselves therefore to be dead indeed to unto sin, but alive unto God.’ Yes! but in the meantime it will go on worrying you. But do not let it master, do not let it reign over your mortal body.³³

b. Do sanctify your body unto God, v. 13.

Here the relationship between the “new man” and his “mortal [carnal] body” is expounded upon. While the KJV translates here: “Neither *yield* ye your members . . . but *yield* yourselves” the NASB more accurately translates the verb as follows, “and do not go on *presenting* . . . but *present* yourselves,” and thus avoids the misunderstanding that Paul is here exhorting a passive response of yieldedness.³⁴

³² Haldane, contra Calvin who interprets “sinful nature,” *Commentary on Romans*, p. 263; Lloyd-Jones, *Romans, An Exposition Of Chapter 6*, pp. 151-5; Murray, *Epistle To The Romans*, I, p. 227.

³³ Lloyd-Jones, *Romans, An Exposition Of Chapter 6*, p. 155. Also refer to a similar exposition of this truth by Boice, *Romans, The Reign of Grace, 5:1-8:39*, II, pp. 681-3.

³⁴ A major thrust of J. C. Ryle in his classic *Holiness* is the repudiation of a popular view of sanctification that claims that the Christian life is advanced by a passive, decisive act of faith, a response to “let go and let God,” akin to the prior act of faith that justifies. He writes that, “the word [‘yield yourselves’] will not bear the

The meaning of πατίσθημι, paristēmi, is to “[actively] present,” that is “offer by way of sacrificial service” as 12:1 so well illustrates.³⁵ The “members of your body” refer, in parallel with “our body of sin” in v. 6, to the physical components that comprise the body as a whole that accommodates the “new man.” Note the right dualism here where the person of the believer is distinct from the physical vehicle which he temporarily inhabits in this life.

(1) Negative sanctification, v. 13a.

The present tense here of πατίσθημι, paristēmi, refers to a pattern of ongoing behavior that is to stop. Because of the radically new status and allegiance of the Christian, v. 11, he is to cease offering his bodily parts as “instruments/weapons” as if in the constant military service of unrighteousness personified, that is sin as a commanding, tyrant. As Thomas Manton suggests, this activity could be likened to spiritual treason, “because sin is a usurper, whereas God hath full and clear right both to our bodies and our souls, for he made them both. . . . Now he is a traitor to his country that supplieth the enemy with arms; you wrong God, and wrong your own bodies and souls.”³⁶

(2) Positive sanctification, v. 13b.

The (ingressive) aorist tense here of πατίσθημι, paristēmi, refers to a pattern of behavior, a presentation that is to be immediately commenced and continued. The body is to be offered in the service of righteousness personified, that is Jesus Christ the righteous one (I John 2:1; cf. I Cor. 1:30). But from where comes the dynamic that initiates this commitment? It is the presupposition that such a person has become “alive from the dead,” and thus alive unto God. Haldane adds: “Here again Christians are addressed as those who know their state. They are already in one sense raised from the dead. They have a spiritual life, of which they were by nature entirely destitute, and of which unbelievers are not only altogether destitute, but which they cannot even comprehend.”³⁷

c. Do yield to the reign of grace, v. 14.

Here is an inclusive, grand and triumphant declaration. In an expanded form we translate: “The accomplishment of serving God with your body shall be on account of the fact that sin shall not have lordly dominion over you. The reason

sense of ‘placing ourselves passively in the hands of another.’ Any Greek student can tell us that the sense is rather that of actively ‘presenting’ ourselves for use, employment, and service. . . . But, on the other hand, it would not be difficult to point out at least twenty-five or thirty distinct passages in the Epistles [of Paul] where believers are plainly taught to use active personal exertion, and are addressed as responsible for doing energetically what Christ would have them do, and are not told to ‘yield yourselves’ up as passive agents and sit still, but to arise and work.” p. xvi.

³⁵ Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 258.

³⁶ Thomas Manton, *The Complete Works of Thomas Manton*, XI, p. 249.

³⁷ Haldane, *Commentary on Romans*, p. 264.

for this is that you are not subject to bondage under the law's tyrannical reign, but rather are under the new and conquering administration of grace."

Because the obvious sense of this verse has been frequently challenged, some definitions are in order here. "Sin" in context here concerns "our body of sin," v. 6, that is the "presenting [of] the members of your body to sin," v. 13. "Be master," κυριεύω, kurieuō, describes the dominion that sin normally exercises over the "mortal body," v. 12. "Law" is the law of God incorporated in the Old Testament, but principally the Mosaic administration of that statutory righteousness in terms of demand and condemnation (Gal. 3:10-12, 19; 4:21; 5:3-4).³⁸ The parallel here with 7:1, 4, "you also were made to die to the Law," gives strong support for this definition. "Grace" in context here must refer to "the reign of grace," 5:17, 20-21, that is grace as a new gospel administration that triumphs over sin and law.

The expressions, "under law" ὑπο νόμον, hupo nomon, and "under grace" ὑπο χάριν, hupo charin, describe being "under," that is "being subject to the dominion and mastery of," as 3:9 illustrates where Jews and Greeks are all "under sin." The present tense here also confirms the fact that "not being under law, but under grace," is an essential truth with regard to ongoing sanctification, in contradistinction to the emphasis of Westminster Calvinism, which promotes the Decalogue as a sanctifying stimulus.³⁹ Thus spiritual growth in the Christian involves not being under the administration of Moses, but rather under the administration of reigning grace.⁴⁰ Jesus Christ does not embody or improve upon Moses; He has superseded him (Matt. 17:5; John 1:17). So John Bunyan writes in his pamphlet, *Of the Law and a Christian*, "[T]he Christian hath now nothing to do with the law, as it thundereth and burneth on Sinai, or as it bindeth the conscience to wrath and displeasure of God for sin; for from its thus appearing, it is freed by faith in Christ."⁴¹ Joseph Hart has well written:

³⁸ Consider the most immediate context of v. 15 which suggests Jewish casuistry, as well as 5:20 where "the Law came in" and 7:1 concerning "those who know the law," both of which references Murray attributes to Moses yet not here in v. 14. *Epistle To The Romans*, I, pp. 207, 228-9, 240. Refer to Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 387-91.

³⁹ The Westminster Confession of Faith describes the Moral Law, that is the Ten Commandments, as applicable to "true believers . . . as a rule of life, informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; . . . It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin." Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, III, pp. 641-2. Presbyterian Robert Dabney writes: "A third and equally essential use [of the Decalogue] appears to the believer, after his adoption. He is 'chosen in Christ that he should be holy'; 'redeemed from all iniquity to be Christ's peculiar people, zealous of good works.' This great end, the believers sanctification, can only be attained in practice, by giving him a holy rule of conduct. Such a rule is the Law. It is to be as assiduously observed, as the guide to that holiness which is the fruit of adoption, as though its observance could earn adoption." *Systematic Theology*, p. 354. We would suggest that Paul here, and elsewhere, 7:1-4; I Cor. 9:20-21; II Cor. 3:1-18; Gal. 3:23-26, is teaching the opposite of these declarations.

⁴⁰ Moo writes of not being under "a force that brought condemnation of sin," that is "the old Realm [of Moses]," that which meant being "subject to the constraining and sin-strengthening regime of the old age." On the other hand, "to be 'under grace' is to be subject to the new age in which freedom from the power of sin is available [which teaching proceeds from 5:20-21]. *Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 389.

⁴¹ John Bunyan, *The Works of John Bunyan*, ed. George Offor, II, p. 388.

The law was never meant to give
 New strength to man's lost race;
 We cannot act before we live,
 And life proceeds from grace.
 But grace and truth by Christ are given;
 To him must Moses bow;
 Grace fits the new-born soul for heaven,
 And truth informs us how.
 By Christ we enter into rest,
 And triumph o'er the fall;
 Whoe'er would be completely blest
 Must trust to Christ for all.

(1) The relationship between sin and the law.

If "sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law," then it follows that, if "you are under law, [then] sin shall be master over you" (cf. Gal. 3:22-23; 5:18). How is this so? Because the law is free to enflame sin (7:8-9). The law locks me up to demands that cannot be personally attained; it magnifies this cancer; it condemns my tawdry, futile efforts at self-reformation and ethical performance that reveal my continued inability; it is incapable of providing ability; it leaves me more miserable, that is frustrated by a clearer perception of my pollution and captivity (John 8:34).⁴²

(2) Living under law and grace in the life of a local church.

James 2:1-13 provides a clear and practical illustration of two groups of professing Christians, some of live under law and the others under grace.

- (a) In vs. 1-4, 6-7, 9-11, 13a, these Christians are mastered by law, so that they make legal distinctions, are partial according to their own estimation, "judging with evil motives." Yet they are thoroughly condemned by that same law, even if they only "stumble at one point." They claim to be saved by grace through faith, yet are dominated by legal performance, especially that of others.
- (b) In vs. 5, 8, 12, 13b, these Christians are mastered by grace, so that they make no judgmental distinctions; rather they are merciful without

⁴² John Owen writes: "Wherefore, those who are 'under the law' are under the dominion of sin. . . . Those who are under the law will at some seasons endeavor to shake off the yoke of sin, and resolve to be no longer under its power. . . . They will attend unto what the law saith, under whose power they are, and endeavor a compliance therewith; many duties shall be performed, and many evils abstained from, in order to the quitting themselves of sin's dominion. But, alas! The law cannot enable them hereunto,—it cannot give them life and strength to go through with what their convictions press them unto; therefore, after a while they begin to faint and wax weary in their progress, and at length give quite over. It may be they may break off from some great sins in particular, but shake off the whole dominion of sin they cannot." "A Treatise of the Dominion of Sin and Grace," *The Works of John Owen*, VII, pp544-5. John Stott adds: "To be under law is to accept the obligation to keep it and so come under its curse or condemnation (Gal. 3:10)." *The Message of Romans*, p. 181.

discrimination even as their heavenly Father. Thus they are motivated according to grace stimulated desire rather than legal demand (John 13:34; Rom. 7:1-4; II Cor. 5:14-15; I Pet. 4:8; I John 2:7-8; 4:19) and fulfill “the royal law,” that is “the law of liberty.” Lloyd-Jones writes, commenting on vs. 12-14 here: “The Christian is not a man who is looking at a code of morals outside of himself; he has them inside himself. They are in his mind, and written in his heart [Jer. 31:3; Heb. 8:10; 10:16], a vital principle of his being, within himself.”⁴³

(3) Living under law and grace according to John Owen.

A posthumous work of John Owen titled *A Treatise of the Dominion of Sin and Grace*, based on Romans 6:14, was published in 1688. The impotence of the law is described as follows:

First, the law giveth no strength against sin. . . . Secondly, the law gives no liberty of any kind. . . . Thirdly, the law doth not supply us with effectual motives and encouragements. . . . Fourthly, Christ is not in the law; he is not proposed in it, not communicated by it,—we are not made partakers of him thereby. This is the work of grace, of the gospel.⁴⁴

Owen further comments that,

to be ‘under grace’ is to have an interest in the gospel covenant and state, with a right unto all the privileges and benefits thereof, to be brought under the administration of grace by Jesus Christ,—to be a true believer. . . . [T]he gospel, or the grace of it, is the means and instrument of God for the communication of internal spiritual strength unto believers. By it do they receive supplies of the Spirit or aids of grace for the subduing of sin and the destruction of its dominion. By it they may say they can do all things, through Him that enables them. . . . We are ‘under grace’ [when] [we are in such a state as wherein we have supplies in readiness to defeat all the attempts of sin for rule and dominion in us].⁴⁵

B. THE PERVERSION OF THE REIGN OF GOSPEL EMANCIPATION, VS. 15-23.

The commencement here of the second major division of Romans 6 reminds us that Paul has an ongoing polemical intent, even if only for the purpose of using this approach as a preferred teaching method. Though as was earlier suggested concerning vs. 1-14, it is difficult not to assume that the Apostle here responds to another casuistical challenge that he frequently faced, particularly from the Jews (Acts 18:12-13; 21:21, 27-28; 24:5-6). Obviously the introduction of contrast between law and grace in v. 14 is the basis of the new outrageous hypothesis that the absence of the restraint of law encourages sin and

⁴³ Lloyd-Jones, *Romans, An Exposition Of Chapter 6*, p. 187.


⁴⁴ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, VII, pp. 542, 549-51.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 545, 547.

licentiousness. Though it needs to be kept in mind that the subject of the “law” is not dealt with in substance until Chapter 7.⁴⁶

1. A perverse proposition, v. 15.

An expanded translation reads as follows: “What therefore [shall we say] in response to your declaration that the Christian is ‘not under [the reign of] law but under [the greater reign of] grace’? Shall we not find encouragement to sin with unconcerned abandon because we are ‘not under sin [and consequent condemnation] but rather under ever available grace’”? A comparison of vs. 1 and vs. 15 is as follows:

Romans 6:1	Romans 6:15
<i>Let us sin because this causes grace to abound.</i>	<i>Let us sin because we are not under law but grace.</i>
Hence we can sin freely because grace is cheap, plentiful.	Hence we can sin freely because grace does not constrain.
This ignores the motive of righteousness through regeneration.	This ignores the motive of righteousness through regeneration.
This implies the love of sin remains.	This implies the love of sin remains.
 <p>Both propositions assail the truth of salvation by grace alone.</p>	

In both instances, the expression, “Let us sin . . .” reveals a yearning after sinful indulgence that, having only been held back by legal restraint, ignores the change of heart for righteousness that true conversion brings about. In *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, Christian disputes concerning this matter of salvation by grace alone with Ignorance, who protests:

This conceit would loosen the reigns of our lust, and tolerate us to live as we list; for what matter how we live, if we may be justified by Christ’s personal righteousness from all, when we believe it.” To this Christian responds: “Ignorant thou art of what justifying righteousness is, and as ignorant how to secure thy soul, through the faith of it, from the heavy wrath of God. Yea, thou also art ignorant of the true effects of saving faith in this righteousness of Christ, which is, to bow and win over the heart to God in Christ, to love his name, his Word, ways, and people, and not as thou ignorantly imaginest.”⁴⁷

2. Grace converts from sin *slavery* to righteousness *slavery*, vs. 16-19.

As Paul progresses in his teaching that is derived from the gospel, especially that which commences at Chapter 5, he injects a series of new, connected ideas and themes such as

⁴⁶ The frequency of the word “law” or νόμος, nomos, is 3 in ch. 5, 2 in ch. 6, 21 in ch. 7, and 5 in ch. 8 up to v. 7.

⁴⁷ Bunyan, *Works*, III, p. 158.

“reconciliation,” 5:6-11, “Adam and Christ,” 5:14-21, “death and resurrection,” 6:1-11,” and now “slavery and freedom,” 6:16-23. This new emphasis expands upon the thought of v. 6, namely that Christians are no longer to be “slaves to sin.” In the world in which he lived, the Apostle was able to draw a very meaningful analogy concerning the human soul’s predicament and a large body of slaves, especially in Rome, that, in their misery and captivity, confronted everyday life. However, Paul’s major thrust concerns, not the blessing of freedom in contrast with slavery, but rather the incomparable benefit of being a slave of righteousness, inheriting eternal life, rather than a slave of sin inheriting death. All of mankind are under one kind of slavery or another; the question then is simply what realm of lordship we are under, and which is best.⁴⁸

a. Christian emancipation in general, vs. 16-18.

The argument here is not simple, and it needs to be carefully followed. Consider the situation here of a person offering himself for slavery rather than suffering forced servitude. Secular instances of this voluntary servitude were a practice that guaranteed a person a degree of basic security in a very insecure world. However, there is the Old Testament practice of voluntary servitude (Deut. 15:12-17), and the more likely allusion here to this practice may emphasize personal responsibility. It also needs to be remembered that the perverse understanding of “not being under law, but under grace,” suggested in v. 15, is here more clearly exposed as being thoroughly fallacious. As Moo well states: “Those who are joined to Christ by faith live in the new age where grace, not the law of Moses, reigns. . . . But Paul sees in God’s grace not only a liberating power but a constraining one as well: the constraint of a willing obedience that comes from a renewed heart and mind and, ultimately (cf. Gal. 5:17-24; Rom. 8:4-9), the impulse and leading of God’s Spirit.”⁴⁹

(1) Slavery options, v. 16.

No middle ground is considered here. We are either in one realm of servitude or the other, and remember that Paul is here addressing professing Christians about their former and present allegiance. The idea of “presenting” as in v. 13, that of “sacrificial service,” is reintroduced, and the direction of this “presenting” indicates particular allegiance. The parallel here is not exactly as we might expect.

(a) Offering servitude to sin results in death.

Our service of “sin” indicates our master (John 8:34); our activity reveals our allegiance (Prov. 23:7); our speech indicates our heart (Matt. 12:34-35; 15:18-19). If you habitually sin according to the sinful inclination of your heart, then clearly sin is your master, and he pays wages “to death.” This principle ought to be obvious to all Christians, though v. 17 indicates that such status is the norm of the unconverted.

⁴⁸ Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 396-7.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 398.

- (b) Offering servitude to obedience results in righteousness.

On the other hand, our service of “obedience” indicates an alternative master and he pays wages “to righteousness.” But why is “obedience” rather than say “Christ” or “righteousness” contrasted with “sin”? The “obedience of faith” (1:5; 16:26; cf. v. 17; I Pet. 1:2, 22) may be in mind, or more likely the Christian life of holy obedience which is so contrary to the licentious suggestion of v. 15. Further, why is “righteousness” rather than “life” contrasted with “death”? Again the Apostle has a behavioral purpose in mind in answer to v. 15. Grace is productive of righteousness (Eph. 1:4). However, notice in v. 23 how “sin” is contrasted with “grace (the free gift)” and “death” is contrasted with “eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

- (2) Slavery transition, v. 17.

Here the process leading to conversion is described as translation from darkness to light, death to life, sin to righteousness, that is from “you were” to “you became.” Such a transformation is a decisive event rather than an evolutionary development. There is also the fundamental acknowledgment that such radical change in a man is all of grace: But thanks [free acknowledgment] be to God,” χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ, charis de tō theō. An expanded translation reads: “But let thankful acknowledgment be given to God, for while you were living as obedient slaves of sin, you subsequently obeyed, from a sincere heart, that form of teaching to which you were sovereignly delivered.” The order of Paul’s thought is outlined as follows.

- (a) Sovereign recruitment.

The passive expression at the end of this verse, “teaching to which you were committed/delivered,” is more accurate than the KJV, “doctrine which was delivered you” (John 6:44, 65; Col. 1:13). Luther, in agreement with this passive voice translation, calls the active voice, “the wisdom of the flesh [which] is opposed to the Word of God, . . . For even to the ungodly the doctrine of the Gospel has been delivered, but they do not deliver themselves over to it or conform themselves to it; . . . Very similar is this statement to the Corinthians (cf. I Cor, 13L12; Gal. 4:9).”⁵⁰ God’s elect are delivered over to saving gospel truth.

- (b) Exposure to teaching.

So God opens up the way for the troubled sinner to hear that τύπον διδασκῆς, tupon didachēs, that “specific body/pattern of gospel teaching” that includes sanctifying influence. It is “the apostles’

⁵⁰ Martin Luther, *Works, Lectures on Romans*, pp. 317-8. C. K. Barrett similarly comments: “Christians are not (like the Rabbis) masters of a tradition; they are themselves created by the word of God, and remain in subjection to it. In fact, though being a Christian means on the one hand emancipation, on the other it means enslavement.” *The Epistle To The Romans*, p. 132.

teaching” (Acts 2:42; cf. Titus 1:9), “my *gospel* . . . the *revelation* of the mystery” (Rom. 16:25), “*sound teaching*” (I Tim. 1:10), “the standard of *sound words*” (II Tim. 1:13), “*sound doctrine*” (II Tim. 4:3; Titus 2:1), “*the faith* which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 3). Whether in the synagogue, marketplace, house meetings, or church assembly, the Gospel was delivered as living truth, a heaven bestowed deposit (I Tim. 6:20; II Tim. 1:12, 14). Implicit in this teaching are the doctrines of revelation, God, man, sin, Christ, justification, etc., not a simple three point evangelistic message.

(c) Heart confrontation.

Clearly the truth received hits its mark and lodges deep within the soul, that is the “heart” (5:5), which in the New Testament represents the core of man’s inner being that includes intellect (10:8), will (10:9-10), and emotions (10:1). Thus Thomas Manton explains that, “the doctrine of the gospel is in conversion imprinted on . . . the heart,”⁵¹ as it were with a receptivity of acknowledgment. Such teaching came with the force of a “form/pattern” *τύπον*, *tupon*, with the result that the “very heart and soul was modeled [stamped] according to the tenor of the gospel and the truths revealed therein.”⁵²

(d) Obedience of faith.

The “obedience” here is that “obedience of faith” (1:5; 16:26) which more specifically contrasts with “lust/sin obedience” vs. 12, 16. It is thoroughly works renouncing and Christ embracing, yet also decisive as the aorist of *ὑπακούω*, *hupakouō*, indicates. Here the will is employed so that it agrees with the truth that has been embedded in the heart. Such a response is hardly casual or tentative; rather there is the intimation of a bowing in utter submission to Christ as Lord in contrast with a former obeisance given to Satan. This obedience represents a transfer of allegiance as v. 16 suggests.

(e) Holy casting.

The result is a heart that is gospel-formed and sealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13) so that the new casting is set firm, completely different from its former shape. So Lloyd-Jones comments: “The man who is saved is a man who has undergone this profound change. He is in the ‘mold’, shaped by the doctrine. . . . God be thanked, that we, who were the slaves of sin, have been taken up by God and put into the divine mold, ‘the form of doctrine’, with the result that we now obey from the heart His every dictate, and it is our ‘supreme delight’ to do so.”⁵³ And this being so, the proposition of v. 15 is proved to be absurd.

⁵¹ Thomas Manton, *The Complete Works of Thomas Manton*, XI, p. 320.

⁵² Ibid. pp. 320-1.

⁵³ Lloyd-Jones, *Romans, An Exposition Of Chapter 6*, p. 220.

(3) Slavery righteousness, v. 18.

The “obedience of faith” in v. 17, that is the faith that yields to Christ’s lordship and gracious salvation according to the gospel doctrine embraced, also admits a transfer of allegiance in terms of ownership and moral subservience. While the soul-gratifying thought of “emancipation” is introduced (cf. 8:2; Gal. 5:1), yet the necessity of the argument introduced in v. 15 requires that it yield to the idea of a new realm of custody, that is an inclination or captivity to righteousness. In other words, the freedom that Christ obtains results in total servitude to that Christ. Moo significantly comments:

In a world in which ‘freedom’ has taken on all sorts of social and historical baggage, we must remember that Paul’s concept of freedom is not that of autonomous self-direction but of deliverance from those enslaving powers that would prevent the human being from becoming what God intended. It is only by doing God’s will and thus knowing his truth that we can be ‘free indeed’ (John 8:31-35).⁵⁴

So George Matheson has written:

Make me a captive, Lord,
And then I shall be free;
When by myself I stand;
Imprison me within Thine arms,
And strong shall be my hand.
Force me to render up my sword,
And I shall conqueror be.
I sink in life’s alarms

Thus we expand in our translation: “Therefore, [at conversion,] having been set free [from slavery to sin], at the same time you became enslaved to righteousness.” The passive here of δουλόω, doulōō, describes the new convert as becoming “enslaved” rather than actively a “slave” as the KJV, NKJV, NASB, NIV, and ESV translate.⁵⁵ The point here is not that we have aspired to righteousness at the beginning of conversion, but rather that we were taken captive by righteousness and thus became “partakers of the divine nature” (II Pet. 1:4). Thus at the heart of Christian conversion is a resultant change in affections that is an inevitable consequence of justification. For the heart made right with God is also enlivened so that it is attracted to the righteousness of God in such a way that adoration and emulation are living principles of the heart, and not simply based upon legal statutes and requirements. Thus Jonathan Edwards writes:

Holy persons, in the exercise of holy affections, love divine things primarily for their holiness [hence righteousness]; they love God, in the first place, for the

⁵⁴ Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, p. 402.

⁵⁵ In support of the passive here refer to Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, p. 208; Lloyd-Jones, *Romans, An Exposition Of Chapter 6*, pp. 225-8; Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 396, 403; Murray, *Epistle To The Romans*, I, p. 233. Note the parallel passive references in vs. 17, 22.

beauty of his holiness, or moral perfection, as being supremely amiable [agreeable] in itself. . . . The holy nature of saints and angels in heaven (where the true tendency of it best appears) is principally engaged by the holiness of divine things.⁵⁶

b. Christian emancipation in the flesh, vs. 19.

The first sentence seems an interruption, an injected explanation, since Paul is aware that he is making much of the freedom/slavery analogy, even as it relates to the problem which the flesh presents. It is as if he were to say: “This illustration [predominant in vs. 6-18], so close to your daily lives, is necessary on account of your human weakness and carnal fallenness that require clarification. Yes, as already mentioned [vs. 6, 12-13], the lusting physical body in its opposition to righteousness [Gal. 5:17] is a constant foe. But let this illustrative exhortation direct you as follows.” Especially note how Paul immediately returns to a consideration of the problems that our lusting bodily “members” present, and how these are distinguished from the new “you” who is “alive unto God” (v. 11), and a “slave of righteousness” (v. 18; cf. v. 12). The opposing propositions that follow are similar to those found in v. 13.

(1) Former bodily servitude to sin.

The concept of slavery under lordship, so prevalent in Paul’s world, continues to be an illustrative base here. The “old you” of the past offered its body in active and devoted service to the tyrannical masters of “impurity,” or “uncleanness,” ἀκαθαρσία, akatharsia, and “lawlessness,” ἀνομία, anomia, “upon lawlessness,” that rolled on with ever-increasing infatuation and commitment. As sin commanded, so the sinner dutifully followed with relish and deepening involvement (1:32).

(2) Present bodily servitude to righteousness.

By way of contrast regarding the Christian norm, the “new you” of the present is exhorted to offer the same body, with the same intensity of devotion formerly offered to sin, in the singular service of “righteousness” or “right behavior” and resultant “sanctification” or “encompassing holiness.” Why does Paul do this? Because true Christian conversion results in a change of heart (II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15) that is ready and able to obey when such teaching is proposed. Thus he repeats a fundamental point that destroys the argument of v. 15, cf. vs. 4, 11, 18. Therefore the grace that saves through faith alone also produces a radical, even revolutionary renewal of the soul that manifests holy motives and affections. As Thomas Manton states: “True grace is an effectual principle, both to produce its own operations and to restrain sin.”⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, I, pp. 279-80.

⁵⁷ Manton, *Works*, XI, p. 343.

3. Grace converts to sin *freedom* and righteousness slavery, vs. 20-23.

While v. 19 described the consequences of slavery to sin as increasing lawlessness and slavery to righteousness as sanctification, Paul now expands upon the “benefits [fruit]” of these opposite employments. For as a man invests, so there are inevitable dividends, or their lack, that are dispensed if a good master holds him captive. “Benefit” here is “[good] fruit,” καρπός, *karpos*, since Paul never elsewhere implies “[bad] fruit,” cf. 1:13; 7:4, 5; 15:28, but rather the “works of the flesh” (Gal. 5:19-23). The intent here is to prove the superiority of grace that results in righteousness and eternal life rather than law that fosters sin and resultant death.

There is also intentional parallelism in these verses, further expounding upon the paradox of freedom described in v. 18, which may be diagrammed as follows:

Lord	⇒	Sin	or	God
		↓		↓
Relationship	⇒	Slavery	or	Slavery
		(from righteousness		(from sin
		to sin)		to righteousness)
		↓		↓
Employment	⇒	Works	or	Grace
		↓		↓
Wage/fruit	⇒	Shame &	or	Sanctification &
		Death		Eternal Life

For Paul, freedom and slavery are not opposites, but complementary elements since perfect freedom is slavery to God while the most confining slavery is freedom to sin. The Prodigal Son left home to seek freedom in the far country with the result that he ended up in bondage. However, upon returning home he found perfect freedom having yielded to captivity in his father’s house (Luke 15:11-24). Secular man’s quest for freedom from God requires slavery to human depravity (Ps. 2:1-3; Acts 4:23-28), even as the demand for absolute free speech leads to the bondage of blasphemy, libel, perjury, profanity, etc.

a. Slavery to sin has a death benefit, vs. 20-21.

Further reflection by the Christian, on his unconverted manner of life, is intended to arouse his holy affections to a point of revulsion and shame concerning his former downward course that would have reaped a hellish destiny.

(1) The absence of righteousness, v. 20.

To paraphrase: “For when you were living as dutiful slaves to sin you claimed to be freemen,⁵⁸ that is you boasted in your moral autonomy and aversion to serving holiness (Matt. 6:24). However, this lifestyle only evidenced the absence of any yielding to the lordly claims of righteousness as mandated by the God of Abraham.” While in v. 18 Paul describes the converted state, here in reversal he describes the unconverted state and thus adds further stimulus for obeying the exhortation of v. 19. For the sinner here to be “free in regard to righteousness” is for him to have the freedom of the rails that lead downhill to sin and death. Man has neither the power nor the inclination of heart to go uphill in a reverse direction that has righteousness and life for its destination.⁵⁹ Ephesians 2:1-2 describes this “slavery to sin” here as being “*dead* in trespasses and sins,” while being “free in regard to righteousness” is expressed as “*walking* according to the course of this world.”

(2) The outcome of death, v. 21.

To further paraphrase: “Therefore what good fruit were you having [producing] from that former sinful lifestyle which you now look upon as utterly shameful? There was no resultant good fruit whatsoever, only death as a suitable wage.”⁶⁰ The intensive form of “utterly shameful,” ἐπαισχύνομαι, epaischunomai, stresses the new attitude of heart that is “now” operative and thus averse to the suggestion of v. 15. But in the past, instead of being fruitful through the operation of grace, there was only harsh, shameless employment under sin with the resultant wages of death. However death here is a comprehensive term that encompasses not merely the body, but also the soul, its separation from God and ultimate eternal confinement in hell. Thus the unbeliever, presently being alive to sin, is dead to God in his whole being.

b. Slavery to God has a life benefit, vs. 22-23.

“But now,” νυνὶ δέ, nuni de, introduces an emphatic contrast, cf. 3:21. The paradox of vs. 17-18, 20 reaches a climactic and enthralling explanation, namely that man’s quest for freedom can only be fulfilled when he is “enslaved to God.” Further, the wonder is that whereas man’s works approach to emancipation leads inevitably to captivity to sin, God’s emancipation through grace leads to captivity to God, or “the freedom of the glory of the children of God,” 8:21. Furthermore, this gospel that results in sinners becoming captive and awakened to God is also

⁵⁸ Note the contrast here between “slaves,” δοῦλοι, douloi, and “freemen,” ἐλεύθεροι, eleutheroi.

⁵⁹ Moo adds: “Paul makes it clear that those outside Christ, to varying degrees, can recognize right and wrong (cf. Rom. 1:18-32; 2:14-15); but the power to do the right and turn from wrong is not present. ‘All are under sin’ (3:9) and therefore incapable of doing God’s will.” *Epistle to the Romans*, p. 406. Also cf. Lloyd-Jones, *Romans, An Exposition Of Chapter 6*, pp. 273-7, where he exposes the “so-called good moral man who is not a Christian.”

⁶⁰ This paraphrase follows the punctuation of the NASB and assumes a negative response concerning fruit. In support refer to Murray, *Romans*, I, pp. 235-6. The alternative rendering of Moo reads: “Therefore, what fruit did you have then? That of which you are now ashamed. For the end of these is death.” *Romans*, p. 406. Here “fruit” is given a negative quality and remains undefined, though shameful.

productive of the fruit of sanctification and eternal life, 7:4. Here is the final answer to v. 15 since such fruitfulness stems from a heart awakened to righteousness, not sin.

(1) The outcome of eternal life, v. 22.

The punctiliar aorists of “having been *freed* from sin and enslaved to God” describe initial conversion. As a consequence, “you have [present tense] your fruit,” that is “sanctification,” and then ultimately “the perfection/completion,” τὸ τέλος, to telos, which is “eternal life” in a consummate sense. Becoming “enslaved to God” is a result of being “obedient from the heart,” v. 17; it is that glad submission which grace has obtained, just as a bride offers in being joined to her bridegroom. The resultant “sanctification,” identical with v. 19, is “encompassing holiness” that includes the holy status that conversion brings along with consequent holiness of lifestyle. Thus such holiness is a present reality for the Christian. Lloyd-Jones writes: “You have got it! This is true of every Christian. There is no such thing as a Christian who does not bear fruit [holiness]; you cannot be a Christian without bearing fruit [holiness]. . . . Holiness is not a feeling, holiness is not an experience; holiness is to be devoted to God.”⁶¹

(2) The grace gift of eternal life, v. 23.

By way of expanded translation: “For the wages that sin pays is death, but the free, gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” As described in v. 22, the superior lordship of God, in contrast with that of sin, is even more attractively portrayed. Not only is this a conclusion of great contrast, and a transitional statement that leads us into chapter 7, but also, as Murray points out, it is similar to the conclusion of chapter 5.⁶² In particular, the distinction between law/sin and grace is illuminated. If we are under the lordship of sin, then appropriate remuneration is paid, or “the wages,” τὰ ὀψώνια, ta opsōnia, that is monetary compensation such as that paid to a soldier by a general. Here sin suitably pays death to its subjects, as if acknowledging, “Here is what you have toiled for and earned.” However God bestows “eternal life” to repentant, justified sinners on the basis of pure grace, τὸ χάρισμα to charisma, mediated through the Lord Jesus Christ. For a man aware of his bankrupt soul, this gospel of free grace is the bargain of human history!

As Isaiah 55:1-3 declares: “Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance. Incline your ear and

⁶¹ Lloyd-Jones, *Romans, An Exposition Of Chapter 6*, pp. 296-7.

⁶² “The contrast between sin and grace is maintained. . . . In 5:21 the apostle had said that grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life *through* Jesus Christ our Lord. Here in 6:23 he speaks of eternal life *in* Christ Jesus our Lord.” *Romans*, I, pp. 237-8.

come to Me. Listen, that you may live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you according to the faithful mercies shown to David.”