

# CHAPTER 6

## INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 6

The Apostle having finished his design concerning the doctrine of justification, refutes the charge brought against it as a licentious doctrine, and prevents any ill use that might be made of it by men of evil minds, justified persons by the strongest arguments, and with the best of motives to holiness of life and conversation: he saw, that whereas he had affirmed in the preceding chapter, that sin being made to abound by the law, in the condemnation of sinners, the grace of God the more abounded in their justification and pardon; that some would rise up and object, that this doctrine countenances men's continuance in sin, and opens a door to all manner of iniquity; and that others would abuse this doctrine, and encourage themselves in a vicious course of life, upon this mistaken notion, that the grace of God would be the more illustrious by it; all which is suggested in ([Romans 6:1](#)), to which an answer is returned in ([Romans 6:2](#)), with an abhorrence of everything of this kind; and by an argument, showing the absurdity and inconsistency of it, seeing persons dead to sin, as justified ones are, cannot live in it: and that they are dead to sin, and under obligation to live unto righteousness, he argues from their baptism into Christ's death, which represents their being dead with Christ, and buried with him, ([Romans 6:3,4](#)), and likewise the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and theirs by him, whereby they are both fitted and obliged to walk in newness of life; since they are, and should be like him, as in his death, so in his resurrection from the dead: and the rather, as they are implanted in him, as the branches in the vine, ([Romans 6:4,5](#)), and especially as it was the great end of his death, that by the crucifixion of sin with him, it might so be destroyed, that his people should be no more servants to it, ([Romans 6:6](#)), this being proved, that justified ones are dead to sin, the apostle argues upon it, that such are freed from sin, ([Romans 6:7](#)), and therefore ought not, and cannot live in it; for this must be given into as an article of faith, that such as are dead with Christ live, and shall live a life of communion with him, ([Romans 6:8](#)), which is inconsistent with living in sin: he further argues from the resurrection of Christ, which was not to die more, ([Romans 6:9](#)), and suggests, that in

like manner, those who have been dead and buried, and risen with him, which their baptism signifies, should not live in sin, which is no other than dying again; and to strengthen this, directs to the ends of Christ's death and resurrection, ([Romans 6:10](#)), the end of the one being unto sin, to finish, make an end of that, and be the death of it, and the end of the other, being living unto God; wherefore in like manner, such who profess to be Christ's, to be justified by his righteousness, to be baptized into his death, and to be risen with him, should account themselves dead unto sin, and so not live in it, and alive to God through the righteousness of Christ, and so live to his honour and glory, ([Romans 6:11](#)), and having thus answered the objection, and removed the calumny, and set this matter in a clear light, the apostle proceeds to dehort from sinning, and to exhort to holiness of life, ([Romans 6:12,13](#)), in which he compares sin to a tyrant, the lusts of it to the laws of such an one, and which therefore should not be obeyed; and the rather, as the wages of them are death, and have made the body already mortal; wherefore the members of it should not be employed in such service, but in the service of God: and whereas it might be objected, that sin is too strong and prevalent, and has got the mastery, and will keep its power, the apostle declares it as a promise of grace, that sin shall not have the dominion, ([Romans 6:14](#)), giving this as a reason, because such as are justified and sanctified, are not under the law, as a covenant of works, but under the covenant of grace, of which this promise is a part; and in order to prevent an ill use of this doctrine, and remove an objection that might be made, that if not under the law, men are under no restraints, but may go on in sin without control, he answers it with his usual detestation, ([Romans 6:15](#)), and argues the folly and absurdity of living in sin upon such an account, because it would make them servants of sin unto death, ([Romans 6:16](#)), and so they were before conversion, but now were otherwise, for, which they had reason to be thankful, ([Romans 6:17](#)), since through the grace of God they had yielded an hearty obedience to the Gospel; wherefore to obey sin would be to return to their former state of bondage; whereas being freed from the power and dominion of sin, they were now the servants of righteousness, and ought to act becoming such a character, ([Romans 6:18](#)), wherefore it was but acting the part of reasonable men, it was but their reasonable service, to yield themselves servants, not to sin and uncleanness, but to righteousness and holiness, ([Romans 6:19](#)), in order to engage to which, the apostle puts them in mind of their former state; how that when they were in subjection to sin, they had nothing to do with the exercise of righteousness,

(~~¶~~ Romans 6:20), and therefore as there was an alteration made in them, they ought to be just the reverse in their conduct and conversation; for he appeals to them, that they had no pleasure nor profit in their former course of life; which had brought upon them shame and confusion, and must have ended in death, had it not been for the grace of God, (~~¶~~ Romans 6:21), but now as they were delivered from the slavery and dominion of sin, they were under a better master, were servants to God; and the fruit of their service was holiness, and the issue of all would be everlasting life, (~~¶~~ Romans 6:22), which is illustrated by the contrary, (~~¶~~ Romans 6:23), the wages due from the service of sin, and which only could be expected from it, being death; whereas grace and holiness, the gift of God, issue in eternal life by Christ Jesus; in whose hands it is, and through whom it comes, and is enjoyed.

**Ver. 1.** *What shall we say then?* etc..] The apostle here obviates an objection he saw would be made against the doctrine he had advanced, concerning the aboundings of the grace of God in such persons and places, where sin had abounded; which if true, might some persons say, then it will be most fit and proper to continue in a sinful course of life, to give up ourselves to all manner of iniquity, since this is the way to make the grace of God abound yet more and more: now says the apostle, what shall we say to this? how shall we answer such an objection? shall we join with the objectors, and say as they do? and

*shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?* that is, shall we persist in a vicious way of living with this view, that the grace of God may be magnified hereby? is it right to commit sin on such an account? or is this a fair inference, a just consequence, drawn from the doctrine of grace? To be sure it was not, the objection is without any ground and foundation; sin is not “per se”, the cause of the glorifying God's grace, but “per accidens”: sin of itself is the cause of wrath, and not of grace; but God has been pleased to take an occasion of magnifying his grace, in the forgiveness of sin: for it is not by the commission of sin, but by the pardon of it, that the grace of God is glorified, or made to abound. Moreover, grace in conversion is glorified by putting a stop to the reign of sin, and not by increasing its power, which would be done by continuing in it; grace teaches men not to live in sin, but to abstain from it; add to this, that it is owing to the want of grace, and not to the aboundings of it, that men at any time abuse, or make an ill use of the doctrines of grace; wherefore the apostle's answer is,

**Ver. 2.** *God forbid*, etc..] By which he expresses his abhorrence of such a practice, and that this was a consequence which did not follow from the premises, and was far enough from his thoughts, and which he had in the greatest detestation: and he further argues against it by asking,

*how shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?* There is a death for sin, a death in sin, and a death to sin; the latter is here mentioned, and persons may be said to be “dead to sin”, both as justified and sanctified: justified persons are dead to sin, inasmuch as that is not imputed to them to condemnation and death; they are discharged from it; it cannot hurt them, or exert its damning power over them; it is crucified, abolished, and made an end of by Christ: sanctified persons are dead to sin; sin is not made their business, it is not their course of life; it is no longer a pleasure to them, but is loathsome and abominable; it is looked upon, not as a friend, but an enemy; it does not reign, it has not the dominion over them; it is subdued in them, and its power weakened; and as to the members of the flesh, and deeds of the body, it is mortified: to live in sin, is to live after the dictates of corrupt nature; and persons may be said to live in it, when they give up themselves to it, are bent upon it; when sin is their life, they delight in it, make it their work and business, and the whole course of their life is sinful: now those who are dead to sin, cannot thus live in it, though sin may live in them; they may fall into sin, and lie in it some time, yet they cannot live in it: living in sin, is not only unbecoming the grace of God revealed in the Gospel, but is contrary to it; it is detestable to gracious minds, yea, it seems impossible they should live in it; which is suggested by this question, “how shall we?” etc.. The thing is impracticable: for, for a gracious soul to live in sin, would be to die again, to become dead in sin, which cannot be; he that lives and believes in Christ shall never die, spiritually or eternally.

**Ver. 3.** *Know ye not that so many of us as*, etc..] You must know this, you cannot be ignorant of it, that whoever

*were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death:* and therefore must be dead to sin, and consequently ought not to live, nor can they live in sin. This does not suppose, that some of this church were baptized persons, and others not; but that some might be baptized in water who were not baptized into Christ: there is a difference between being baptized in water in the name of Christ, and being baptized into Christ, which believers in their baptism are; by which is meant, not a being brought by it into union with Christ, which is either secretly from eternity, or openly

at conversion, and both before the baptism of true believers; nor a being brought by it into the mystical body of Christ the church, for this also is before it; but rather it designs a being baptized, or a being brought by baptism into more communion with Christ, into a participation of his grace and benefits; or into the doctrine of Christ, and a more distinct knowledge of it: the power of which they feel upon their hearts, and so have really believed in Christ, heartily love him, and make a sincere profession of him; though rather the true meaning of the phrase “baptized into Christ”, I take to be, is to be baptized purely for the sake of Christ, in imitation of him, who has set us an example, and because baptism is an ordinance of his; it is to submit to it with a view to his glory, to testify our affection for him, and subjection to him, without laying any stress or dependence on it for salvation; such who are thus baptized, are “baptized into his death”; they not only resemble Christ in his sufferings and death, by being immersed in water, but they declare their faith in the death of Christ, and also share in the benefits of his death; such as peace, pardon, righteousness, and atonement: now this proves, that such persons are dead to sin, who are so baptized; for by the death of Christ, into which they are baptized, they are justified from sin; by the death of Christ, their old man is crucified, and the body of sin destroyed; besides, believers in baptism profess themselves to be dead to sin and the world, and their baptism is an obligation upon them to live unto righteousness.

**Ver. 4.** *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death*, etc..] The nature and end of baptism are here expressed; the nature of it, it is a “burial”; and when the apostle so calls it, he manifestly refers to the ancient and only way of administering this ordinance, by immersion; when a person is covered, and as it were buried in water, as a corpse is when laid the earth, and covered with it: and it is a burial with Christ; it is a representation of the burial of Christ, and of our burial with him as our head and representative, and that “into death”; meaning either the death of Christ as before, that is, so as to partake of the benefits of his death; or the death of sin, of which baptism is also a token; for believers, whilst under water, are as persons buried, and so dead; which signifies not only their being dead with Christ, and their communion with him in his death, but also their being dead to sin by the grace of Christ, and therefore ought not to live in it: for the apostle is still pursuing his argument, and is showing, from the nature, use, and end of baptism, that believers are dead to sin, and

therefore cannot, and ought not, to live in it; as more fully appears from the end of baptism next mentioned;

*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*; for the end of baptism is not only to represent the death and burial, but also the resurrection of Christ from the dead, which is here said to be “by the glory of the Father”, some read the words, “unto the glory of the Father”; meaning either, that the Father might be glorified hereby; or that Christ, being raised from the dead, might enjoy glory with the Father, as he does in human nature; but rather the phrase expresses the means by which, and not the end to which, Christ was raised from the dead: and by the “glory of the Father” is meant, the glorious power of the Father, which was eminently displayed in raising Christ from the dead; and as baptism is designed to represent the resurrection of Christ, which is done by raising the person out of the water, so likewise to represent our resurrection from the death of sin, to a life of grace: whence it must be greatly incumbent on baptized believers, who are raised from the graves of sin by the power of Christ, to “walk in newness of life”; for since they are become new creatures, and have new hearts and new spirits given them, new principles of light, life, grace, and holiness implanted in them, and have entered into a new profession of religion, of which baptism is the badge and symbol, they ought to live a new life and conversation.

**Ver. 5.** *For if we have been planted together*, etc..] This is not to be understood of an implantation of Jews and Gentiles together in One body; nor of an implantation of believers together in a church state; but of an implantation of Christ and his people together; which is openly done at conversion, in consequence of a secret union with him before; when they are transplanted from a state of nature, and are ingrafted into Christ; have the graces of the Spirit of God implanted in them, and grow up under the dews of grace, and shinings of the sun of righteousness upon them, and bring forth much fruit; now as these persons, by virtue of their secret union with Christ from eternity, as their head and representative, with whom they were crucified, in whom they died representatively, share in his death, enjoy the benefits of it, and feel its efficacy, and through it become dead to the law, sin, and the world, which is meant by

*the likeness of his death*; so these same persons shall be also planted

*in the likeness of his resurrection*; that is, they shall share in the benefits, and feel and enjoy the effects of it; not only their bodies will be raised at the last day, as their souls are now regenerated by virtue of it, and in resemblance to it; but their are, and shall be so influenced by his Spirit and grace, which has raised them from death to life, that they shall walk in newness of life; of which baptism is a lively representation, and to which it is a constant obligation.

**Ver. 6.** *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him*, etc..] By the old man is meant the corruption of nature; called a man, because natural to men; it lives and dwells in them; it has spread itself over the whole man; it rules and governs in men; and consists of various parts and members, as a man does: it is called “old”, because it is the poison of the old serpent, with which man was infected by him from the beginning; it is derived from the first man that ever was; it is as old as the man is, in whom it is, and is likewise called so, with respect to its duration and continuance; and in opposition to, and contradistinction from, the new man, or principle of grace: it is called “ours”, because continual to us; it is in our nature, it cleaves to us, and abides in us. This name the apostle took from his countrymen the Jews, who were wont to call the vitiosity of nature hereby; so R. Aba on that passage, “the firstborn said to the younger, our father is old”, (<sup><0198></sup>Genesis 19:31), asks, what is the meaning of this, “our father is old?” this, answers he, is the evil imagination, or corruption of nature, which is called <sup>^</sup>qz, “old”, according to (<sup><2043></sup>Ecclesiastes 4:13); and is said to be old, <sup>μ</sup>dah <sup>μ</sup>[ <sup>dl</sup> <sup>wnc</sup>, “because it is born with the man” <sup>f109</sup>; or as the reason is elsewhere given <sup>f110</sup>, because it is joined to him from his birth, to his old age: this, they say <sup>f111</sup>, is with a man as soon as he is born, from the hour of his birth, as soon as ever he comes into the world. Now this is said to be “crucified with him”; that is, with Christ, when he was crucified: the Jews <sup>f112</sup> have a notion that the evil imagination, or corruption of nature, <sup>lj</sup> <sup>bty</sup> <sup>al</sup>, will not be made to cease, or be abolished out of the world, till the King Messiah comes, and by him it is abolished: this is so crucified by the death, and at the cross of Christ, as that it cannot exert its damning power over believers; and is so crucified by the Spirit and grace of Christ in them, as that it cannot reign over them, or exercise its domineering power over them; wherefore they are dead unto it, and that to them, and therefore cannot live in it; which is done,

*that the body of sin might be destroyed:* by “the body of sin” is meant sin itself, which consists, as a body does, of various members; and also the power and strength of it, which the Jews <sup>f113</sup> call [rh rxyd al yj], “the power of the evil imagination”; this is crucified with Christ, and nailed to his cross by his sacrifice and satisfaction, that its damning power might be destroyed, abolished, and done away: and it is crucified by the Spirit and grace of Christ, that its governing power might be took away, and that itself be subdued, weakened, and laid under restraints, and its members and deeds mortified:

*that henceforth we should not serve sin;* not that it should not be in us, for as yet, neither by virtue of the sacrifice of Christ, nor by the power of his grace, is sin as to its being removed from the people of God: but that we should not serve it, make provision for it, indulge it and obey it, in the lusts thereof.

**Ver. 7.** *For he that is dead, is freed from sin.*] This is not to be understood of a natural or a corporeal death; for this is the effect of sin, and is inflicted by way of punishment for it, on Christless persons; so far is it from being an atonement for sin, as the Jews <sup>f114</sup> fancy; besides, there are many persons, who as they die in their sins, they will rise in them; though a natural death is alluded to, when persons are free from those laws and obligations to service and duty they are under whilst living: but here it is to be understood of a spiritual or mystical death, and of persons who are dead to the law, by the body of Christ; dead to sin by the sacrifice and grace of Christ; who are baptized into the death of Christ, and in imitation of him: such are “freed from sin”; not from the being of it; nor from the burden of it; nor from a continual war with it; nor from slips and falls into it; no, not even freed from it, in the most solemn services and acts of religion; but they are freed from the dominion of it, from servitude to it, and also from the guilt of it, and from obligation to punishment on account of it: they are, as it is in the Greek text, and as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read, “justified from sin”.

**Ver. 8.** *Now if we be dead with Christ,* etc.] This does not imply any doubt about it, but is rather a taking it for granted: seeing we are dead with Christ by union with him, as our head and representative, and by communion with him in the benefits of his death, and being planted together in the likeness of it; or being dead to the law, sin, and the world, through the virtue and efficacy of Christ's death:



*we believe that we shall also live with him*; not only a life of justification by faith in his righteousness; and a life of sanctification from him, and to his glory; the continuance of which, and a perseverance in it, are firmly believed; but a life of glory and happiness with him hereafter, both in the new Jerusalem, in the new heavens, and new earth, in the glorious state of the church on earth, and in heaven to all eternity; where they shall be personally and visibly with him, in soul and body, and shall live in the most intimate and uninterrupted communion with him, enjoying the highest pleasure, and the most consummate happiness; and are therefore under the greatest obligation, whilst here on earth, to live, not in sin, but to righteousness, and to his praise and glory; with whom they are now dead to sin, and with whom they not only hope, but believe they shall live throughout the endless ages of eternity.

**Ver. 9.** *Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead*, etc..] That Christ is risen from the dead, is a certain fact, well attested, thoroughly known, and firmly believed; the prophets prophesied of it, Christ himself foretold it, angels affirmed it, and the apostles were witnesses of it, as is also the Holy Ghost: and it is as certain, that he

*dieth no more*; he is raised to an immortal life, and will live for evermore; there is no need of his dying again, his death having been a full atonement and expiation of all the sins and transgressions of his people:

*death hath no more dominion over him*: it once had dominion over him; it held him under its power for a time, according to the divine determination, and by his own consent: but it was not possible he should be holden of it longer; both on account of the dignity of his person, as the Son of God, and the virtue and efficacy of his sacrifice, as the surety of his people, having put away sin for ever by it. He is the holy man the Jews<sup>f115</sup> speak of,

“who is the mystery of the name Jehovah, and in him there is no sin, neither shall death have the dominion over him.”

**Ver. 10.** *For in that he died*, etc..] The death of Christ was settled and agreed to in the covenant and council of peace; it was spoken of by the prophets, and typified by sacrifices; Christ came into the world in order to die, and actually did die the death of the cross; in which the great love of God and Christ is expressed to us; and which is a fundamental article of the Christian faith: and when he died,

*he died unto sin once*: he died to that, which we by nature are dead in, and could never make atonement for; which he himself never lived in, and which men naturally love to in; and which had he not died for, we must have died for to all eternity; and he died not for any sin of his own, or of angels, nor for the sins of every man, but for the sins of his people; it may be rendered, he died in sin: in the likeness of sinful flesh, in which he was sent; having as a surety sin laid on him, and bore by him, and for which he was wounded, bruised, and died: or rather to sin; that is, to make atonement for it, procure the pardon of it, take it away, and utterly abolish it: and this he did “once”; this is observed, in reference to the repeated sacrifices of the old law, which could never expiate or remove sin; and to show, that Christ's dying once was enough, his sacrifice was fully satisfactory to the law and justice of God:

*but in that he liveth*: which must be understood, not of his life as God, but as man; and that not on earth, but in heaven; where he lives with God, at the right hand of God, and by him, by the power of God: and

*he liveth unto God*; to his glory, and to make intercession for us.

**Ver. 11.** *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves*, etc..] Two things the apostle would have believers consider of themselves, and reckon themselves, to be, in consequence of their relation to Christ, who was dead, but is alive, and as agreeable thereunto: the one is, that they would look upon themselves

*to be dead indeed unto sin*: believe their discharge from it, and not fear condemnation and death on account of it; and that it shall not be imputed to them, or have any damning power over them, since Christ has died unto it, or for it; and therefore should have no fellowship with it, nothing to do with it, as being dead unto it, and that to them: the other is, that they would consider themselves

*alive unto God, through, Jesus Christ our Lord*; and that either in a legal sense, as justified persons; men in a state of nature, or of “Pharisaism”, think themselves alive, when they are not; but when they come under a work of the Spirit of God, they see themselves otherwise, and are convinced both of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the insufficiency of their own righteousness to justify from it; and when they have the righteousness of Christ revealed unto them, and faith is wrought in them to look unto it, and lay hold upon it, they are in themselves, and in their own apprehensions, alive, and that “unto God”, in the sight of God; and their

life of faith on the righteousness of Christ, is unto the glory of God, and will be followed with an eternal life with God, to which the justifying righteousness of Christ gives them a title; and this is all through Christ, and his righteousness: or this is to be considered by them of themselves as sanctified persons, who are quickened by the Spirit of Christ, and can feel the burden of sin, see the corruption of their nature, hear the voice both of law and Gospel, breathe after spiritual things, speak the language of Canaan, walk by faith on Christ, and work and act for him; which life of faith and holiness is “unto God”, to his glory and honour, and is “through Christ”, and is maintained and supported by him: or they should consider themselves not only as being justified before God, and made alive by his Spirit, but as such who shall live to and with God, through Christ, for evermore; for as Christ died and rose again, and lives unto and with God for ever, so they being dead to sin through him, and being quickened together with him and by his Spirit, shall never die the second death, but shall have everlasting life.

**Ver. 12.** *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body*, etc..] Since grace reigns in you, sin should not: seeing ye are dead to sin, are baptized into the death of Christ, and are dead with him, and alive through him, sin therefore should not reign in you, and over you. This exhortation does not suppose a freewill power in man naturally, for this is spoken to persons, who had the Spirit and grace of Christ, and in whom God had wrought both to will and to do of his good pleasure; nor is this exhortation unnecessary to believers, though they are dead to sin, and though God has promised it shall not have the dominion over them, and though reigning sin, as divines say, cannot be in regenerate persons; for though they are entirely dead to sin as justified persons, yet not perfectly so as sanctified: they are indeed dead to sin, but sin is not dead in them; it struggles, it makes war, leads captive, and threatens absolute and universal dominion, wherefore such an exhortation is necessary; besides, though God has promised that sin shall not have the dominion, yet making use of means, such as prayer to God that it may not, striving against it, opposing it, in order to hinder its dominion, are no ways inconsistent with the promise of God, whose promises often have their accomplishment in the use of means: moreover, whereas some divines say, that reigning sin may be and others that it cannot be in regenerate persons, it should be observed, that if by reigning sin is meant, sinning against God out of malice and contempt, with the whole heart, without any struggle against it, or repentance for it, or so

as to lose the grace of God, and never rise more, then it must be said that it cannot be in a regenerate man; but if by it is meant, falling into sin against their consciences, knowingly and willingly, so as to distress their minds, lose their peace, and grieve the Spirit of God, so as to be held under it, and be led captive by it, such power sin may have in them, and over them; and therefore the exhortation is not needless; and when the apostle says, let it not reign “in your mortal body”, by it is either meant the whole man, or rather the body only, which is the instrument of sinning, and is become mortal through sin; and being so, is a reason why it should not reign in it, since it has done so much mischief to it already: and this also denotes the time of sin's being in us, and of the danger of its reigning in us; it is only whilst we are in this mortal body; and the consideration of our mortality should quicken us to war against sin, and be careful not to

*obey it in the lusts thereof*; the lusts of the body, or flesh, which are therefore sometimes called fleshly lusts, are many, and have great power and influence; and may be said to be obeyed, when provision is made to fulfil them, when these are the business of a man's life, and the whole of his conversation is taken up in them, without struggle against them, or opposition to them; and herein lies the reign of sin.

**Ver. 13.** *Neither yield ye your members*, etc..] The apostle more fully explains what he means by obeying sin in the lusts thereof; a presenting, or making use of the “members, as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin”: by their “members” he means the several powers and faculties of the soul, and so the Ethiopic version renders it, “your souls”; or the several parts of the body, or both; by “yielding”, or presenting of them, is designed the employment of them in the service of sin,

*as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin*: that is, as means of performing unrighteous actions, in obedience to sin, or the corruption of nature with its lusts: the word translated “instruments”, signifies “arms” or “weapons”: so the ancients<sup>f116</sup> formerly reckoned weapons the members of soldiers; and here the apostle calls the members weapons, which he would not have the saints use in favour of sin, an enemy and a tyrant; for that would be unrighteous in itself, and injurious to God and themselves: says he,

*but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead*: that is, present themselves soul and body to God, give up and devote themselves to him, and to his service, and yield a cheerful obedience to him; considering themselves as under great obligation so to do, inasmuch

as they are freed from condemnation and death, by the righteousness of Christ; and quickened, when dead in trespasses and sins, by his Spirit and grace; and therefore should yield

*your members*, their whole selves,

*as instruments*, or weapons

*of righteousness unto God*; by fighting against sin, revenging all disobedience, and fulfilling obedience to the commands of God: the same is here meant, as is by putting on “the armour of light” (<sup>6132</sup>Romans 13:12), and wearing and making use of “the armour of righteousness, on the right hand and the left”, (<sup>4017</sup>2 Corinthians 6:7).

**Ver. 14.** *For sin shall not have dominion over you*, etc..] It has dominion over God's people in a state of unregeneracy: and after conversion it is still in them, and has great power oftentimes to hinder that which is good, and to effect that which is evil; it entices and ensnares, and brings into captivity, and seems as though it would regain its dominion, and reign again, but it shall not. This is not a precept, exhortation, or admonition, as before, though some read it as such, “let not sin have dominion over you”; nor does it express merely what ought not to be, but what cannot, and shall not be; it is an absolute promise, that sin shall not have the dominion over believers; and respects not acts of sin, but the principle of sin; and means not its damning power, though that is took away, but its tyrannical, governing power: “it shall not lord it over you”, as the words may be rendered; for in regeneration, sin is dethroned; Christ enters as Lord, and continues to be so; saints are in another kingdom, the kingdom of Christ and grace; could sin reign again over them, they might be lost and perish, which they never can: now this is a noble argument why saints should use their members as weapons of righteousness for God and against sin; since they are sure of being conquerors, and are secure from the tyrannical government of sin over them. The Jewish doctors say <sup>f117</sup>, there are three persons, [rh rxy ^hb j l ç al , “over whom the evil imagination”, or “sin, had not the dominion”; and these are they, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but these are not the only persons, for all Abraham's spiritual seed, all that are of the faith of Abraham, enjoy the same favour: the reason of this is,

*for ye are not under the law*; by which is meant, not the law of nature; nor the civil law of the Jews; nor their ceremonial law; but either the law of sin,

as a governing principle; or rather the moral law: this they were under, so as to obey it, but not in order to obtain righteousness by it; or as forced to obey it by its threats and terrors; they were not under its rigorous exaction; nor under its curse and condemnation; nor as irritating sin, and causing it to abound; or as a covenant of works:

*but under grace*; under the covenant of grace, and in the enjoyment of the blessings of it; under the Gospel, and the dispensation of it, which leads and teaches men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; under and in the possession of the grace of justification and pardon, which strongly influence to righteousness and holiness; and under regenerating and sanctifying grace as a reigning governing principle in the soul. The apostle's view in this is, to affect the saints with their present privilege, and to engage them in a cheerful conflict with sin, and to stir up in them an abhorrence of living in it.

**Ver. 15.** *What then? shall we sin*, etc.] Does it follow from hence, that therefore we may sin, and go on and continue in it,

*because we are not under the law, but under grace?* here the apostle meets with an objection of the adversary, saying, that if men are not under the law, and are free from all obligation to it, then they may live as they list; nor can they be chargeable with sin, or that be objected to them; since where there is no law, there is no transgression, and sin is not imputed where there is no law; and if they are under grace, or in the love and favour of God, from which there is no separation, then they cannot be damned, do what they will: but this objection proceeds upon a mistaken sense of the phrase, "under the law"; for believers, though they are not under the law as the ministry of Moses, yet they are under it, as it is in the hands of Christ; and though not under its curse, yet under obligation to obedience to it, from principles of love and grace; and a transgression of it is sin in them, as in others; and which is taken notice of by God, and visited with stripes in a fatherly way, though his loving kindness is not removed: and to argue from the unchangeableness of God's grace, or the doctrines of it, as encouraging licentiousness, is greatly to abuse the grace of God, and manifestly betrays such persons to be ignorant of it and its influence; since nothing more powerfully engages to a love of holiness, and hatred of sin; wherefore the apostle, answers to this objection in his usual way,

*God forbid*; signifying his abhorrence of everything of this kind.

**Ver. 16.** *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves,* etc..] The apostle goes on with his answer to the above objection, by making use of an argument from the nature of servants and their obedience, a thing well known to everyone, and which none could be ignorant of; which he delivers by way of distribution, that such who yield themselves

*servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness:* such who obey sin, are the servants of sin; they are at the beck and command of sin; they give up themselves to the service of it with delight and diligence, and are perfect drudges to it: this is a very unhappy situation; their service is very unreasonable; and they are rendered incapable of serving God, for no man can serve two masters; they are hereby brought into the drudgery of the devil; into a state of bondage, out of which nothing but grace can extricate them; into a very mean and contemptible condition, and even a deplorable one; for if grace prevent not, they will have the wages of sin paid them, which is death, for their obedience is “of sin unto death”; which will lie in an eternal separation from Father, Son, and Spirit, in a sense of divine wrath, and in the company of devils and damned spirits: now this is added, to show the malignant nature and just demerit of sin, and to deter and dissuade persons from the service of it: on the other hand, such as obey the Lord, are the servants “of obedience unto righteousness”: but why is not this obedience, which is the obedience of faith to the Gospel, of Christ, and of the new man to God or Christ, said to be “unto life”, as the antithesis seems to require? because though death is the fruit of sin, yet life is not the fruit of obedience, but the fruit of obedience is righteousness; by which is meant, nor a justifying one before God, but righteousness before men; or a course of living soberly and righteously, which is the effect of being under grace; and hence it appears, that true believers can make no such ill use of their privilege, as is suggested in the objection.

**Ver. 17.** *But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin,* etc..] Not that the apostle must be thought to give thanks to God for that these persons had been the servants of sin, than which nothing is more disagreeable to God, or caused more shame to themselves; but that inasmuch as they had been in the drudgery and service of sin, they were now freed from it. Just as if a person, that has been a slave for some time in Algiers, should bless God, or be thankful to the instrument of his deliverance, that whereas he had been in such slavery, he is now redeemed from it: wherefore it is added,

*but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.* By “the form of doctrine”, is meant the Gospel, which is the “doctrine” of the Scriptures, of Christ and his apostles, and is sound and according to godliness; and is a “form”, or contains a summary and compendium of truths, and is a pattern or exemplar, according to which ministers are to preach, and people to hear and receive. So the word **spwj** which is the same with **τυπος** here, is used by the Jewish<sup>f118</sup> writers for a form, copy, pattern, or exemplar of any sort of writings This form of doctrine is **hl bq**, “a Cabala”, but not like that of the Jews' oral law, or form of traditions<sup>f119</sup>, handed down, as they say, from one man, and set of men, to another; but this is delivered from the Father to Christ, from Christ to his apostles, and by them to the saints; and “into which they were delivered”, as it may be rendered, as into a mould; and so received the impression of it, and were evangelized by it: so such are who have a spirit of Gospel liberty, in opposition to a spirit of bondage; who live by faith on Christ, and not by the works of the law; who derive their comfort from him, and not from anything done by them; whose repentance and obedience are influenced by the grace of God, and who are zealous of good works, without any dependence on them. This form of doctrine was “obeyed” by them; by which is meant, not a mere obedience to the ordinances of the Gospel; nor a bare hearing of the doctrines of it, and giving an assent unto them; but an embracing of them by faith for themselves, so as to lay hold on Christ in them, submit to his righteousness therein revealed, and be willing to be saved by him, and him alone, in his own way; and this is the obedience of faith: the reason why faith is expressed by obedience is, because faith receives truth upon the veracity of God, and not upon the dictates of carnal reason; and is always more or less attended with external obedience to the will of God; and that is rightly performed only by faith. And this obedience did not lie in words, or proceed on mercenary views, and in an hypocritical way; but was “from the heart”; and was real and sincere: and good reason there is why a hearty, cheerful, and voluntary obedience should be yielded to the Gospel; since it is from God; Christ is the substance of it; it is truth, and the word of our salvation. The Alexandrian copy reads, “from a pure heart”; and the Arabic version, “from the sincerity of your heart”; and the Ethiopic version, “with your whole heart”.

**Ver. 18.** *Being then made free from sin,* etc..] Not from a sinful nature; nor from a corrupt heart; nor from vain thoughts; nor from sinful words;



nor from sinful actions altogether; but from the damning power of sin: sin brought all men under a sentence of condemnation; Christ has bore the execution of this sentence in himself for his people; hence, as considered in him, they are free from it; and such as are born again have passed from death to life, and shall never enter into condemnation: likewise, such persons are free from the guilt of sin; men are in a legal sense arraigned for sin, accused of it, and being convicted, are pronounced guilty before God; and awakened souls have a sense of it in themselves; but the blood of Christ sprinkled on their consciences frees them from it; though fresh sins committed bring fresh guilt, which requires the continual application of the blood of Jesus for pardon and cleansing; but what is chiefly designed here is freedom from the servitude of sin, as appears from the context. Now God's elect are not released voluntarily by their former masters; nor is their freedom obtained by their own power and will; but it is of God, Father, Son, and Spirit; and the Gospel is generally the means of it, and happy are those persons who are blessed with it! They are rid of a bad master; are freed from the worst of bondage; will be no more servants, as before; are delivered from the power, and out of the kingdom of darkness; are heirs of heaven, and shall enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God: and for the time present are

*become the servants of righteousness*; servants to God, whose Gospel they obey; servants to Christ, whose righteousness they submit to; and servants to the law of righteousness, as held forth by Christ; they give up themselves to a course and life of righteousness, in which there are true honour, peace, and pleasure.

**Ver. 19.** *I speak after the manner of men*, etc..] This refers either to what the apostle had said already concerning service and liberty, things which were known among men, and easy to be understood; or to the following exhortation: what he was about to say, he delivered in a manner suited to their understandings, and was *ανψρωπινον*, “that which was human”; not angelic, or what required the power, purity, and perfection of angels; or what was unreasonable or impossible, but what was their reasonable service, as men; and might be done through the grace of God, in the strength of Christ, and by the assistance of the Spirit: and though he might have insisted upon it with good reason, that they ought to be more diligent and industrious in the service of God than they had been in the service of sin; yet

*because of the infirmity of their flesh*, considering that they had flesh, or corrupt nature, and were attended with weakness in knowledge, faith, and obedience; he only pressed this upon them, that in like manner as they had been servants to sin, they would be servants to righteousness:

*for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity*; what they yielded to the service of sin were their “members”; by which, as before, may be meant, either the powers and faculties of their souls, or the parts and members of their bodies, or both; and particularly the latter, as the eyes and ears, the tongue, the mouth, the hands, and feet, which are all employed by a natural man in the drudgery of sin: these are yielded to sin under the form and character of “servants”; and as such are governed, directed, and ordered to fulfil this and the other lust, which is done willingly and readily: these members are “yielded”, presented, and given up cheerfully to this slavery; which is both scandalous and unrighteous: it is “to uncleanness”; which designs all sorts of pollution and filthiness, both of flesh and spirit: “and to iniquity”; everything that is contrary to the law, all unrighteousness and ungodliness; and it is added, “unto iniquity”; which may design all sorts of sin, a progress in it, adding continually to it; which shows them to have been thorough hearty servants of sin. Now what the apostle exhorts to, and requires of them, is, that

*even so now they would yield their members servants to righteousness unto holiness*; that is, let the same members that have been employed in the service of sin, be made use of in the service of righteousness: let your eyes be employed in looking and diligently searching into the Scriptures of truth; your ears in hearing the Gospel preached; your lips, mouth, and tongue, in expressing the praises of God, for what he has done for you; your hands in distributing to the interest of religion, and the necessities of the saints; and your feet in hastening to attend on public worship, and observe the testimonies of the Lord: let them be employed under the same form and character as servants, waiting upon the Lord, ready to fulfil his will; and in the same manner, freely, willingly, and cheerfully, and that constantly and universally, in all acts of righteousness and holiness.

**Ver. 20.** *For when ye were the servants of sin*, etc.] This is an argument used, or a reason given, why regenerate persons should be diligent in the service of righteousness; because when they were employed in the drudgery of sin, they

*were free from righteousness*; they had no righteousness, nor were they desirous of any; yea, averse to it, threw off the yoke of the law of righteousness, and lived in a very unrighteous manner: hence may be observed what is the free will of man in an unregenerate state; not free to, but “from” righteousness; free enough to evil, but from all that is good; and also what obligation lies upon believers, who are delivered from the bondage of corruption, and the servitude of sin, to a life and service of righteousness; inasmuch as they were before free from it, and unconcerned about it, but are now made by the grace of God free to it, they ought therefore cheerfully to pursue it, and neglect no opportunity of performing it.

**Ver. 21.** *What fruit had ye then in those things?* etc..] That is, what profit, pleasure, satisfaction, or comfort, had ye in the commission of sin? Sin yields no real profit to the servants of it. If a man, by sinful practices, could amass together the riches of the Indies, or gain the whole world, yet if his soul is lost thereby, what advantage would it be to him? he would be infinitely the loser by it; nor would all his wealth and riches profit him in the day of God's wrath and righteous judgment: nor is there any true pleasure in sin; persons may imagine within themselves they enjoy a real pleasure whilst they are serving divers lusts; but this is but imaginary, it is not real; and this imaginary pleasure is but for a season; it issues in bitterness and death: nor is there any satisfaction in it; when men have endeavoured to gratify their carnal lusts and sensual appetites in every way that can be devised, they still remain as they were; nor can they reflect with real satisfaction, and without some slinging remorse, upon the methods they have pursued to gain it: nor is there any true honour in sin, nothing but what is scandalous and disgraceful to human nature; shame, sooner or later, is the fruit of sin:

*whereof ye are now ashamed*; some men may be indeed for the present so hardened as not to blush and be ashamed at the commission of the vilest sins; such are they who have no sense of sin, have no fear of God, or regard to men; and so sin openly, and without any guise, glory in it, and make their boast of it: but when persons are wrought upon by the Spirit of God, they are ashamed of sin; which might be exemplified in the case of Adam and Eve, of Ephraim, of the prodigal son, and of the poor publican; the reason is, because light is struck into their hearts; and this makes manifest the odious and detestable nature of sin; sin is hereby seen in its own proper colours, as exceeding sinful, loathsome, and abominable:

besides, the grace and goodness of God are discovered in the forgiveness of it; and the glory of God's purity and holiness, and the beauty and loveliness of Christ, are discerned by such persons; all which have a tendency to make them ashamed of sin, out of love with it, and to abhor it: and a good thing it is to be brought to be ashamed of sin here; for such who are not ashamed of it here, shall be brought to everlasting shame and confusion hereafter. Nay, this is not all; not only shame will be the fruit of sin, but it will also issue in death:

*for the, end of those things is death:* the profit, the reward, and wages of them is death: sin not only brings a spiritual or moral death on persons, on all the powers and faculties of their souls, and is followed with a corporeal death; but if grace prevent not, it will end in an eternal one; for however right and good the ways of sin may seem to the carnal mind, “the end thereof are the ways of death” ((~~3142~~ Proverbs 14:12 16:25)).

**Ver. 22.** *But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God,* etc..] In what sense regenerate persons are free from sin, and are become the servants of God, has been observed already; the consequence of which is, that such have their

*fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life:* holiness is a fruit of freedom from the bondage of sin, and of serving God; holiness begun in regeneration, calling, and conversion, is a fruit of the Spirit; a course of living righteously is a fruit of holiness, as a principle implanted; a gradual increase in holiness is carried on by the Spirit of God in a course of righteousness; and a course of righteousness, from a principle of grace, issues in perfect holiness; “without which no man shall see the Lord” ((~~8243~~ Hebrews 12:14)): here it seems to design, that holiness is fruit, or that which is gain and profit to persons, in opposition to sin, in which there is no profit: it is not indeed profitable to God in point of merit; yet holiness, as a principle of grace, is profitable to the saints in point of meetness for glory; and holiness, as it denotes an external course of life, is useful and profitable on many accounts; hereby God is glorified, the doctrine of Christ is adorned, religion is honoured and recommended, our own credit, reputation, and peace, are preserved, and our neighbour's good promoted.

*And the end is everlasting life:* as sin issues, if grace prevent not, in everlasting death; holiness issues in eternal life, not by way of merit, but of free gift.

**Ver. 23.** *For the wages of sin is death*, etc..] By sin, is meant every sin, original sin, actual sin, every kind of sin, lesser and greater: the “death” which sin deserves, is a corporeal death; which is not owing to the original nature and constitution of men; nor merely to the divine appointment; but to sin, and the decree of God, on account of it; which is inflicted on Christless sinners, as a punishment for sin, though not on believers as such, because Christ has took away the sting and curse of it: a death of diseases and afflictions also follows upon sin, as its proper demerit; which are properly punishments to wicked men, and are occasioned by sin in believers: there is a death of the soul, which comes by sin, which lies in an alienation from God, in a loss of the image of God, and in a servitude to sin; and there is an eternal death, the just wages of sin, which lies in a separation of soul and body from God, and in a sense of divine wrath to all eternity; and which is here meant, as is clear from its antithesis, “eternal life”, in the next clause. Now this is “the wages” of sin; sin does in its own nature produce it, and excludes from life; it is the natural issue of it; sin is committed against an infinite God, and righteously deserves such a death; it is its just wages by law. The Greek word **οθωνια**, signifies soldiers' wages; (see ~~ⲁⲓⲃ~~ Luke 3:14 ~~ⲁⲃⲟⲩ~~ 1 Corinthians 9:7) and in

“At which time Simon rose up, and fought for his nation, and spent much of his own substance, and armed the valiant men of his nation and gave them wages,” (1 Maccabees 14:32)

Sin is represented as a king, a mighty monarch, a tyrannical prince; sinners are his subjects and vassals, his servants and soldiers, who fight under him, and for him, and all the wages they must expect from him is death. So the word is interpreted in the Glossary, **μισθος στρατιωτικος**, “soldiers' wages”; and so it is used by the Jewish writers, being adopted into their language; of a king, they say <sup>f120</sup>, that he should not multiply to himself gold and silver more than to pay **aympsa**, which they <sup>f121</sup> interpret by **twl yyj rkç**, “the hire of armies”, or the wages of soldiers for a whole year, who go in and out with him all the year; so that it denotes wages due, and paid after a campaign is ended, and service is over; and, as here used, suggests, that when men have been all their days in the service of sin, and have fought under the banners of it, the wages they will earn, and the reward that will be given them, will be death: and it is frequently observed by the Jewish doctors <sup>f122</sup>, that **aj j al b htym `ya**, “there is no death without sin”: sin is the cause of death, and death the fruit and effect of sin:

*but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* These words, at first sight, look as if the sense of them was, that eternal life is the gift of God through Christ, which is a great and glorious truth of the Gospel; but their standing in opposition to the preceding words require another sense, namely, that God's gift of grace issues in eternal life, through Christ: wherefore by "the gift of God" is not meant eternal life, but either the gift of a justifying righteousness, or the grace of God in regeneration and sanctification, or both, which issue in eternal life; the one is the saints' right and title, the other their meetness for it: so that as death is the wages of sin, and is what that issues in, and brings unto, eternal life is the effect of grace, or what the grace of God in justifying and sanctifying his people issues in; even a life free from all sorrow and imperfection; a life of the utmost perfection and pleasure, and which will last for ever: and as the grace of God, which justifies and sanctifies them, is "through Christ", so is the eternal life itself which it brings unto: this is in Christ, comes through his righteousness, sufferings, and death; is bestowed by him, and will greatly consist in the enjoyment of him. All grace is the gift of God, and is freely given, or otherwise it would not be grace; particularly the justifying righteousness of Christ is the gift of God; and the rather this may be meant here, since the apostle had been treating of it so largely before, and had so often, in the preceding chapter, called it the gift of righteousness, the free gift, and gift by grace, and justification by it, the justification of life, because it entitles to eternal life, as here: it may be said to issue in it; for between justification and glorification there is a sure and close connection; they that are justified by the righteousness of Christ, are certainly glorified, or enjoy eternal life; and though this may be principally intended here, yet is not to be understood to the exclusion of other gifts of grace, which have the same connection and issue: thus, for instance, faith is the gift of God, and not of a man's self, and he that has it, has eternal life, and shall, Or ever possess it; repentance is a free grace gift, it is a grant from the Lord, and it is unto life and salvation; and on whomsoever the grace of God is bestowed, so as to believe in Christ for righteousness, and truly repent of sin, these shall partake of eternal glory. It may be observed, that there is a just proportion between sin, and the wages of it, yet there is none between eternal life, and the obedience of men; and therefore though the apostle had been pressing so much obedience to God, and to righteousness, he does not make eternal life to be the fruit and effect of obedience, but of the gift of the grace of God.