

Obedience From The Heart

by George E. (Jed) Smock

A Pharisee, who was a lawyer, tempted Jesus by asking, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets (Matthew 22:36-40). The Pharisees were angry with Jesus because He taught the spirit (purpose) of God's law, as well as the letter. Their anger turned to rage when Jesus made it clear that the spirit of the law is more important than the letter of the law. The Pharisees had been very clever at appealing to the letter of the law as a means of evading the spiritual requirement of the law. They neither loved God nor their neighbor but used their knowledge of the law to exalt themselves and repress their neighbor. Jesus exposed their hypocrisy, but instead of repenting, they chose to murder the Truthbearer.

The Stupid Question

Paul anticipated that, even as men used the law to promote their selfish interests, sophists would abuse his teaching with the captious objection: "If our sin afforded God the opportunity to demonstrate His grace, why not sin even more so God may demonstrate even greater grace?" History has certainly proven Paul to be correct in his concerns that men would pervert the doctrine of the grace of God and debase it into a license to sin. Therefore, Paul opens chapter 6 of his epistle by raising the question himself in order to put to silence their caviling: 1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? It is disgraceful that anyone would even entertain such thoughts. But throughout church history men have, in the name of extolling grace, actually degenerated grace into an excuse to sin. The popular C.S. Lovett makes the appalling claim: "Sin plays an important role in the believer's life. It is the battle AGAINST sin...and our failures...that builds spiritual muscle. When we're shaken by failure to the point of saying, 'I'm not going to let that happen again,' we build determination. We may not reach the place where it doesn't happen again, but in the process...WE CHANGE. We end up hating sin more than ever, something that could never happen without failure. For that reason, "GOD'S PLAN GUARANTEES WE'LL FALL AT TIMES" (Maranatha Family Mini-Magazine, November, 1989). This is a fatal concept of spiritual growth. The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). There is nowhere that the Scriptures indicate that sin builds our character or brings spiritual maturity. Instead, the Bible commands us over and over to live godly lives and avoid sin at all cost. Whereas it is true that God is able to turn our failures into victories, how much more can He turn our victories into even greater conquests? Far be it from the God of Righteousness to guarantee that we fall into sin. On the contrary, He has promised that we can live without it: There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it (I Corinthians 10:13). Sin was not given that we might be

overcomers, but the Scriptures were given to be profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Timothy 3:16-17). And what say the Scriptures? They teach that obedience was not even automatic for the Son of God, but He learned obedience by the things which He suffered (Hebrews 5:8). Jesus did not build strength against sin by sinning, but by suffering for righteousness. The Bible does guarantee that we will have to learn some hard lessons: All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:12). The Apostle Peter reminds us, Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin (I Peter 4:1). In a state of suffering, the mind loses its relish for sin. However, the minds of most so-called Christians are so preoccupied with the world that they loathe persecution and delight in sin. Paul tells us we are God's children, If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together (Romans 8:17). What sort of suffering was he talking about? The suffering that was commonplace in the first century church at Rome: tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and sword. Because of their testimony for Christ, the early Christians daily faced the possibility of martyrdom. But in all these things they were more than conquerors (Romans 8:35-37). These people were not suffering for sin's sake, but for the sake of righteousness. What damning evidence that the church is at ease in Zion, when a popular leader can teach that, "God has set things up so that it is guaranteed that you and I will sin." Leaders need to be aware that their sin-excusing doctrines are turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness (Jude 4).

The Obvious Answer

Paul answers all defenders of sin with a resounding denial that sin is in any way part of God's plan under grace. 2 God forbid! How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Paul appeals to simple logic. He expects his readers to answer the question like this: "Obviously not--never!" One does not need a Doctor of Theology degree to answer Paul's question. It is conceivable for those who are dead to sin to keep living in it. Yet, instead of accepting the obvious and sensible answer, sophisticated theologians and ministers spend a lifetime figuring a way that man can be dead to sin and continue in it. One is either dead in sin or dead to sin. These are voluntary states. Death to sin involves the demise of selfishness and the rise of perfect love to both God and man in heart and life. The one who is dead to sin has no other will but God's will as his chief pursuit in life. Death to sin results in a life of self-denial with eternal aims. In contrast, to be dead in sin implies a life committed to self-indulgence with temporal aims. Death to sin means a life committed to giving to others at the expense of oneself. Death in sin represents a life of taking for oneself at the expense of others. Others is the first concern of those dead to sin; self is the primary consideration of those dead in sin. Some apologists for sin have had the audacity to appeal to Paul's testimony to the Corinthians, I die daily, to excuse continuing in sin. But Paul was not saying that he died to sin daily. The context makes clear that his life was constantly in danger, even to the point of having to fight with beasts at Ephesus. Then after warning the brethren to avoid bad company, he cries, Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame (I Corinthians 15:30- 34). What could be more simple? Stop sinning! What a

reproach it is to Christianity that many who claim to be Christians do not even understand the basics of righteousness and abuse the doctrine of grace to excuse their lukewarmness and low living. 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? It is questionable whether Paul is referring to water baptism in these verses, or the spiritual baptism which occurs when one is born again. Few things in the Church have caused more controversy and division than the issue of water baptism. Should it be by immersion, or is sprinkling adequate? Must it be in Jesus' name, or in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost? Or for that matter, is water baptism even necessary today? In all the debate, most miss the really important point: baptism is supposed to represent the fact that we have made a commitment to forsake all sin. Just as no spark of life remained in Jesus' body after His death on the cross, no sin is to remain in our lives as a result of our faith in Christ. Sin is to have no more influence on us than a dead body has on its departed spirit. "Don't you know this?" Paul is asking. "This is something you are supposed to know! These are the basics."

Death and Resurrection

4 Therefore, we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. The evidence that our baptism is valid is not the formula, but that we are living a new life as a result of being dead to the old. Christianity is a new life. At conversion, we step out of Satan's kingdom into God's kingdom, out of darkness into light. Baptism is supposed to represent this great change; if we have not changed, then we are just wet sinners. If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin (I John 1:7). 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: By faith we are united with Christ in His death, evidenced by His physical death and our death to sin. We have not yet obtained our resurrected bodies, so we are still subject to weaknesses and infirmities; and we have limited understanding and knowledge. However, we are not still prone to sin. Since we walk in the light that we understand, with a pure heart, we are disposed to obey God. Paul prayed, That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:10-12). The perfection Paul had not yet acquired was his glorified body which, if he endured unto the end, he would receive after his physical death. Just after claiming he has not yet reached perfection, Paul asserts, Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded (Philippians 3:15). In the latter verse, he is claiming a moral perfection which he and others had already received. The perfection he is pursuing in the former verse is physical. This kind of perfection he hoped to obtain in the next life, when, The Lord Jesus Christ shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body (Philippians 3:21). Our present body is "vile," not in the sense of being intrinsically evil, but it is the body of our humiliation which has been mentally and physically weakened and subject to death because of sin. After we have endured unto the end, we shall receive our glorified bodies and be like Jesus Christ physically. 6 Knowing

this, that our old man is crucified with [Christ], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. If we are going to be free from sin, we need to have knowledge. Faith is based upon knowledge. Jesus said, "Know the truth and the truth shall make you free." We need to know that they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. We are to consider the death of the flesh as an accomplished fact. When we accept Christ as Savior, we immediately receive a new nature, the Divine nature. However, many teach that we still keep the old nature (the old man or Adamic nature) as long as we live on earth. C.S. Lovett is representative of this view: "The Christian has one nature which can ONLY SIN and another which CANNOT, he lives in the valley of decision between his two natures, he suffers those stresses which make for Christian growth. Without those two natures, there is no way for any believer to mature in the likeness of the Lord....To my mind this truth is second only to the truth of our salvation through faith in Christ" (Maranatha Family Mini- Magazine, October, 1989). Utter deception! The old man is not an actual entity lodged within the believer, struggling to take dominion once again, but merely the old way of life committed to self-indulgence. The old man refers to the body ruled by sin. We are the creators of the old man; he was conceived by our wills. We are responsible for him. The old man dies at conversion and should be buried and forgotten. Paul affirms this in 2 Corinthians 5:17: Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. The old man cannot be living and dead at the same time. The new man, the Christian committed to a life of self-denial, is alive. The new man is the body ruled by righteousness. The old man can only be resurrected should we choose selfishness; in which case the new man would be dead in sin and dead unto Christ. Sin can still slay the new man and bring the old to life again. The phrase, body of sin, is used synonymously with the old man. The body of sin denotes the body, willfully enslaved to the power and dominion of sin; but, as a result of our faith in Jesus Christ, this body has been destroyed to be replaced by a body of righteousness, devoted to the service of God and man. This is figuratively speaking. The new birth does not produce any physical change, but a moral and spiritual change. Our bodies are now employed to love our neighbor (the moral obligation) and our Creator (the spiritual obligation), as He originally intended. Paul makes clear in another epistle that he did not consider that the old man still lived as a warring sibling with the new: Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him (Colossians 3:9- 10). Our nature is what we do naturally as a result of our choice to live either selfishly or lovingly. No one has two natures existing in him at the same time. For those living selfishly, it is natural to sin; for those living lovingly, it is natural to do what is right. They do not have to struggle to keep from sinning. Generally, it would take a great effort in order to get them to sin because they hate sin. God's commandments are not difficult for those who love Him (1 John 5:3). Christ's yoke is easy and His burden is light. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now this is not talking about physical death. Many believe that we will not be free from the power and dominion of sin as believers, until our spirits--our souls--leave this body, until we die physically and the old nature drops off. We learn from the context of verse 2--How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?--that the reference is about death to sin, not a physical death. If it is physical death that ultimately is going to bring us victory over sin, then that makes death our savior. What? Are we to

believe the penalty of sin becomes the destroyer of sin? No! Physical death is not our savior; Jesus is our Savior. It is His death, His blood, that cleanses us from all sin. It is ironic that fundamentalists who are so quick to condemn Roman Catholics for their unscriptural doctrine of Purgatory, must themselves believe in Death Purgatory, unless they believe that there will be sin in Heaven, or unless they conclude that the body itself is sinful, which is a pagan doctrine. One wonders what these people think happens to the Christian's sin nature at death. Does it go to Hell? Rot in the grave? Or is it finally cleansed and taken to Heaven? Actually, all sin must be purged in this life by repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ or it will never be removed. There is nothing in our physical bodies that has ever caused us to sin. The source of sin is in our wills. Sin is not objective, but subjective. It has no existence independent of our wills. Lucifer brought sin into existence when he rebelled against God. Adam chose to follow Satan into sin. And men have all chosen to follow Adam into sin. The body is morally neutral. In the unbeliever the body is the instrument of sin. In the believer it becomes an instrument of righteousness--yes, even a weapon of warfare battling to destroy sin in the world. Physical death will change nothing in our spiritual nature. We will enter eternity with the same character and personality that we had at the moment of our departure from this world: He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still (Revelation 22:11). 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: "If" is the biggest little word in the English language. If we be dead with Christ,--that is dead to sin, dead to the world, dead to the lusts of the flesh--then we shall live with Him. If we are still alive to sin, the world and the flesh, then we will not live with Christ, but will die in our trespasses and sins. 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. Since Christ has been once raised from the dead, He will never die again. He conquered death. 10 For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Paul's epistle to the Hebrews clarifies his meaning: But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever, sat down on the right hand of God....For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Hebrews 10:12-14). Under the old covenant the priests daily offered sacrifices for sin. But Jesus once, for all and forever, made an atonement for sin. He is now living in unbroken fellowship with His Father.

I Reckon So

11 Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. As Christ has dealt with sin once and for all, so, through repentance and faith in the work of Christ, should we make sure that our sins are in the past. Forevermore, we need to consider ourselves dead, in practice, unto sin, not merely in theory. Anyone who is professing Christ, but is still sinning, is deceived and dead, indeed, to God.

I was preaching on campus, and a student who claimed to be a Christian asked me, "Well, aren't you a sinner?" I said, "No, I'm not a sinner. We Christians are saints." He said, "You mean to tell me that you don't sin daily in thought, word, and deed?" I replied, "No. Do you?" He answered, "Yes, everybody sins daily in thought, word, and deed." "You

mean to tell me that you can't go a day without sinning?" "No!" I asked, "Well, could you go an hour without sinning?" "I don't see how." I inquired, "Could you go five minutes without sinning?" He reluctantly answered, "Oh, I suppose." "Well, friend, if you can go five minutes without sinning, you ought to be able to go an hour; if you can go an hour without sinning, you should be able to go a day; if a day--a week, if a week--a month, if a month--a year. And if you can go for a year without sinning, by the grace of God, you ought to be able to live above sin for the rest of your life!" His answer was, "Well, if you don't sin a little bit every day, I don't see how you can call yourself a Christian!" and he stomped off. He had a problem. He did not reckon himself to be dead indeed unto sin. First, you must believe it to be so, because we cannot rise above our faith. If we are going to think of ourselves as sinners, and think of ourselves as sinning daily in thought, word and deed, then we probably will. It is very important that we have our theology straight and our doctrine correct. We must reckon ourselves dead to sin. If we are not thinking correctly, then we will probably not be acting rightly. 12 Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Paul personifies sin as a tyrant, a dictator whom we should thrust from the throne of our lives so that righteousness might rule. Clearly, Paul teaches that sin is a choice, not a causation dwelling somewhere in the depths of our person. It is our responsibility to turn sin away, whenever it should try to regain the throne of our lives. Sin can be obeyed or disobeyed. True Christians disobey sin and obey righteousness. If we allow any form of sin to live in us, it will take dominion over us. It must be totally cast out or it will be our king. This verse refutes the erroneous view that the body of the regenerate man is the source of sin, and that the spirit is holy and cannot sin. The truth is that the inner man decides what the body will do.

Yield to the Right

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. The word "yield" shows that sin is an act of the will, not a mysterious substance behind our will causing us to sin. The exhortation to "yield" our members as instruments of righteousness reveals that righteousness is also a choice, not something that God infuses into a believer at conversion. Believing implies yielding our wills unto God, submitting completely unto Him. This is saving faith. Paul challenges, in Romans chapter 12, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Notice, Paul does not say, "God knows that you are only human and can't help but sin." Instead he makes it clear that it is but our reasonable service--after all that Christ has done for us--to present our bodies as a holy sacrifice. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. What is the will of God? It is the will of God for you to be holy. This is the will of God, Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, even your sanctification. He wills that we be separated from sin, the world and the lusts of the flesh, so that we may be vessels of honor fit for the Master's use. People are seeking the will of God about going here or there, taking this job or that job, or marrying this one or that one, or even about what ministry to enter while they are

continuing to live in sin. This is nothing but hypocrisy and gross deception. God wants obedience, not sacrifice. God desires people who delight in pleasing Him with a pure life, not with sacrifices that cover their selfishness. Anyone with sin in his life cannot possibly be in the will of God.

Law or Grace

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. When Paul says that we are not under the law, in what sense are we not under the law? We are not under the curse of the law which is condemnation and death. But that doesn't mean that we, as Christians, are free from the obligation to obey the moral law of God. Not under the law also means that we are not under the law as our means to justification. We are justified by the grace of God, through faith in the atonement of Christ Jesus. Having transgressed the law, we cannot simply say, "Okay, God, I see that I have lived wrong. Please forgive me, from now on I'm going to obey you." We cannot expect God to reply, "All right, I forgive you." God must, in the interests of the common good, uphold the authority of His moral government. A just God has to condemn sinners eternally, unless an atonement be made that will as impressively uphold the authority of the law. The sufferings and death of the Son of God provided the condition, rendering it righteous for the Father to justify sinners upon the requirements of their repentance and faith in Jesus' atonement. We are not under the rites and rituals of the ceremonial law with all the embellishments of the rabbis. We do not have to offer animal sacrifices, nor are we obligated to keep kosher or be circumcised, etc.

Christians are not under law in the sense that they are not primarily motivated to obey out of fear of punishment for transgression, or hope of reward for obedience. Christians are under grace; that is, they are motivated to keep the law's moral precepts by the love that extended grace to them in the first place. Those under grace are free to obey; those under the law are slaves to sin. Usually, we hear grace defined as the undeserved, unmerited favor of God. Certainly, we have done nothing to merit salvation. All moral agents deserve Hell, since all have sinned. But the description of grace that we find in Titus chapter 2, in verses 11- 14, implies much more: For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. This is the grace of God that brings salvation. Salvation from what? Salvation from sin! Grace redeems us! Redeems us from what? From all iniquity, all sin! The Angel said, And His name shall be called Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. Not in their sin, but He shall save His people from their sins. Grace changes and purifies men. Anyone who has not been delivered from all sin has not the grace of God. The same grace that forgives our sin, keeps us from sin. Grace is the favor of God. We cannot be under God's favor if we are indulging in sin. "But is there not a growth in grace?" Yes, but this does not mean that we are gradually to put off sin. Repentance and faith are conditions for being under grace. Repentance requires a complete break with all known sin. Justifying faith is a complete

trust in the blood of Christ to cleanse us from all sin at the moment we acknowledge His death on our behalf. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18). Growing in grace implies maturing in the Lord as we better understand His character and ways and expectations for us. Holiness is walking in the light we understand with a right intention of heart. As we gain more light, through our study of His Word and communion with Him, we gain a deeper walk in the Spirit. As our knowledge of God increases, we will always be growing in grace, even in eternity. "What if I am a Christian, and I still sin every day?" Either you were never truly converted or else you have fallen from grace. This is the only reasonable conclusion in the light of Romans 6:14: For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. Contrapositive logic would infer that if sin does have dominion, you are under law and not grace. Grace excludes sin. If sin still has control, then you are still under the curse and the penalty of the law. And, if you are sinning daily, then sin obviously has dominion. If you cannot get through a day without sinning, then sin certainly has control over your life. Preachers of holiness are often labeled legalists. The legalist label can do more harm to a minister's acceptance by the church world than if he was exposed as an adulterer. For this reason pusillanimous preachers are afraid even to allude to God's law for fear of being rejected or misunderstood. 15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid. If the law forbids sin, how much more does grace? For if we sin wilfully [since all sin is wilful this would imply continuing in sin without repentance] after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace? (Hebrews 10:26-29). Many are under the impression that grace covers sin even though they continue to sin. They are insulting the Spirit of Grace. How much more does sin condemn the individual who knows that Christ died for the sins of mankind than the person who remains ignorant of this fact? Because guilt is always measured according to knowledge, the individual who has received the grace of God will be judged more severely, should he return to sin, than the person who has never come to a knowledge of Christ (Luke 12:47). There never was, nor will there ever be, a sacrifice that provides forgiveness for unrepentant sin, whether committed before or after the new birth, under either the old or new covenant.

Slaves to Habit

16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? Jesus said, No man can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Now, either sin is your master, or righteousness is your master--one or the other. You cannot be serving two masters. Nevertheless, many teach that the Christian is serving two masters: sometimes he is serving righteousness, and sometimes he is serving sin. Some even declare that he is serving both at the same time. But all this is impossible. It defies simple

logic. God demands entire obedience, and anything less than this is not service to Him. So you are either the servant of sin, or you are the servant of righteousness. Jesus made this clear: Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them (Matthew 7:17-20). James also illustrates this point: Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh (James 3:11-12). 17 But God be thanked, that ye were (past tense--you were!) the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. God expects obedience from the heart. We need, not only to live righteously, we need also to love righteousness. We need to obey from the heart, that is, with the right motive. Our motive for obedience to God is our love for God and our love for our fellows. The love of God enables us to perform all that He requires. This love empowered Jesus to become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Christ's path in the Garden was an almost overwhelming burden to His soul. But His delight in doing His Father's will encouraged Him to say, Not My will, but Thine be done. Fear is not our motive--or our primary motive--as Christians. We are motivated by benevolence. Our churches are filled with people who have made professions of faith, out of the primary incentive of escaping Hell and hoping for Heaven. If that is your main reason for obedience to God, or for making a profession of faith, you have not arrived at true Christianity. You are a mere legalist. You are like the wife who marries a man for his money. The husband discovers this and he is struck with grief. She is still his wife, but the legal relationship brings no joy. Since God knows our heart, He refuses to enter into a covenant relationship based on mere law; it must be rooted and grounded in love from both parties. God did not simply give His Son so that we could eat of the loaves and fishes and be filled. Jesus died to restore man to a loving relationship with His Maker. We must obey out of a right heart, a right intention. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. God is looking at our hearts for a pure motive. The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him (2 Chronicles 16:9). Those who have selfish hearts, in fact, know not God. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. Some wrongly assume that as a Christian you can sin and not be condemned for it. They call this freedom. But true Christian liberty is to be set free from the power and dominion of sin itself. We no longer have to sin; we owe no debt to sin--our debt is to our Savior, Who declared, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed (John 8:34-36). Sin enslaves; and slaves to sin will not have eternal life. But the Son sets us free from sin, so that we may serve righteousness and live with Him forever. 19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: You are so blinded by the infirmity of your flesh that you cannot see the obvious: you do not have to sin anymore. You have been set free. Wise up! Paul has been appealing to common sense. We do not find the meat of the Word in Romans 6. This is milk, just basic Christianity. Anyone in his right mind should understand that when we become Christians, our sinning days are over. Right-minded people are saints who refuse to sin; wrong-minded people are sinners who are bound to

sin until they change their mind, that is, REPENT. To him it is sin (James 4:17). 19b For as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. Sin demanded our all. Why should holiness require anything less? Should not our present zeal for righteousness and holiness surpass our former zeal for every possible sensuous indulgence? In my ministry, when I preach the new birth, I am often asked, "How can you know you're born again?" I used to answer, "Well, if you're born again, you'll know it." I no longer think that is a very good answer; it implies that the new birth is some sort of feeling. But here is the test: If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (2 Corinthians 5:17). What the things that are passed away? Our sins! And all things are become new. For all things to become new, all the old has to go. Now we are committed unto righteousness (obedience unto the Divine will) and unto holiness (conformity to the Divine nature or character). Holiness is the principle under which we operate: righteousness is the fruit, or practice. 20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. But now we are servants of righteousness, so we are free from sin.

Think about It!

21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. The shame of sin should be enough to keep any Christian far from it. Suppose a promiscuous woman is converted, marries and then returns to her former paramours. She is confronted by her husband. She explains to him, "I have this sexual nature that I can't completely control. Surely, you don't expect me to be totally faithful to you. I love you more than all others, but I simply can't help going back occasionally to my former boyfriends. Only when I die and go to Heaven will I be free from lust." Obviously, such a woman would be a shame to her husband. Likewise "Christians" who daily indulge ever-so-little in sin are a disgrace to the Spirit of Grace. 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. His end will be everlasting destruction in Hell-fire. 23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This verse has been used in evangelism as part of "the Roman road to salvation" so that most never think of applying it to the regenerate; however, Paul does. The oldest lie of the Devil is that sin is not deadly--our first parents fell for that one in the Garden. Today, multitudes of professing Christians, who are convinced that sin is deadly to the unregenerate, have believed Satan's greater deception, that sin is not fatal to those who have once been born again. Remember, it took but one act of disobedience on the part of Adam and Eve to cast them out of the Garden. Yet so-called Christians still think that they can continue in sin and remain in the Kingdom of God. God does not have a double standard--The soul that sinneth, it shall die (Ezekiel 18:4). The Christian who decides to sin, by default chooses to return the gift of eternal life to God. Sin is the evidence that one has lost saving faith (Ephesians 6:16; Acts 15:9; 1 John 3:3). Eternal life implies so much more than going to Heaven when we die. This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent (John 17:3). Eternal life is an

intimate and holy relationship with the Father through His Son, so that we are able to say with our beloved brother, Paul, I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me (Galatians 2:20). There is no chapter in Scripture any clearer than Romans 6. Paul makes it plain that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ have provided total deliverance for all who believe. As we look into Romans 7, Paul shows us that this glorious freedom was never attained by those under law. Instead, all who struggle to please God in the flesh are doomed to a miserable existence. Paul makes this so vivid that no right-thinking Jew or Gentile would dare look to the Mosaic Covenant for salvation.