

sin, ye became the bond servants of righteousness." There is no *middle* ground here. It is not half breaking with the old master and entering into half service under the new, but it is a complete emancipation from the service of the old, to be fully possessed and controlled by the new master. In fact it is not only a change of masters, but a change of kingdoms as well, for we are said to be delivered from the powers of darkness and to be translated (carried over) into the kingdom of God's dear Son. It is the poor crouching slave of Africa coming out from under the whip of his old master to serve, as a freeman, a new master in the land of the free. Brethren, if we have changed masters and changed kingdoms, we are dead then to the old life and to the old service under the galling yoke of sin. We are voluntarily and gladly the bond servants forever of a new master, even the Lord Jesus Christ. How many there are in our churches who do not realize what justifying faith has done for them! How many are trying to break away from their old master little by little, forgetting that in that act of faith by which they were united to Christ, they parted with the old master and his service once for all! There is no such thing as breaking with sin by degrees, keeping one foot in the kingdom of Satan and the other in the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hear the words of the apostle on this point: "For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness" (ver. 20). No half-way ground there. Listen again, "But now being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness" (ver. 22). No mixture of fruit there. No half-way meeting place for the child of God and the man of the world to grasp hands, and say our masters are on good terms; we will each help the other a little. Brethren, there is too much between the church and the world of what is known among farmers as "*changing works*." The world comes along, locks its arms into that of the church, and says, come, put your neck under my yoke for a while; come, conform to our customs; come, go with me

to the dance hall, to the theatre, to the horse race, to the circus; come, take a social glass, &c., and then I will pull with you for a time; I will help you in your bazaars, your fairs, and your tea meetings; I will sing in your choir and teach in your Sabbath-school. Put alongside of this the inspired words, "Ye cannot serve two masters;" "Being made free from sin, ye became the bond servants of righteousness"; and again, "Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." These passages give no uncertain sound. They clearly declare that we have changed masters, and that we have said farewell forever to the old life and its service.

(3) Again this death to sin or separation from it is emphasized by the apostle under the figure of the marriage relation. He cites the case of the woman whose husband has died. The death of the husband has loosed the wife from the obligations of the marriage law. Henceforth she is at perfect liberty to be married to another. This woman has become dead to the marriage law, and that by virtue of her union with the husband. When the husband died, the wife virtually died in the eye of the marriage law. So says Paul, "We have become dead to the law by the body of Christ" (through His slain body). The phrase "dead to the law," is used with nearly the same meaning as "dead to sin," and the apostle is pursuing the same thought, only it is a step in advance. The believer then, by reason of his faith, has become united to Christ, and the old sin-condemned life is laid down and slain with Christ; hence the Christian is looked upon as being dead to the law or to sin, as stated in my text. It is the old truth of the believer's crucifixion with Christ viewed in a new light. We are slain with Christ, that is to say as to our old man, and so dead to the law, that we may be married to a risen Saviour and walk in newness of life, bringing forth fruit unto God.

(a) We note in passing that this death to sin is the *starting point* with the believer and not the *goal*. This death is symbolized in the very *first act* of obedience on the part of the believer. We do not become dead to sin after years