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THE BELIEVER'S RELATION TO SIN AND HOLINESS.

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"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord."—Rom. 6: 11.

My text leads us out on experimental and practical lines of thought. In chapters 3 and 4 of this epistle, Paul, in a very clear and logical manner, has discussed the doctrine of justification by faith. Having fully established the doctrine, he proceeds, in the 5th chapter, to speak of some of the blessed results that flow from salvation by grace through faith. We are brought into a state of peace with God; we have freedom of access to the Father; we glory in life's tribulations. Having thus spoken of some of the abiding fruits of justification, he now proceeds in this sixth chapter to consider the bearing of justification by faith on a *holy life*, or, in other words, to consider the relation of justification to sanctification. The apostle is led, very naturally, to discuss this point at this stage of his argument. In almost the last verse of the preceding chapter we read: "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Having made this statement, Paul seems to hear some objector to this way of salvation exclaim: "If we are justified freely by God's grace and not by works, if where sin abounded grace has much more abounded, then may we not *continue* in sin that grace may still more abound?" The apostle can hardly wait for the objection to be raised, so eager is he to show what a monstrous perversion of the truth such an objection is, and to seek to crush it forever. "What shall we say then, shall we *continue* in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we who are *dead* to sin live any longer therein?" So in this chapter in which my text is found, we have

Paul answering this objection, and proving most clearly and conclusively that the doctrine of justification by faith is utterly incompatible with living in sin, that it not only does not give license to sin, but pleads most forcibly for a holy and righteous life. He shows that justifying faith is sanctifying faith, and that the motives for a godly life are far stronger than if we were justified by works.

We have before us then in this sixth chapter of Romans a short treatise on sanctification, or, as it may be termed, the *practical outcome* of justification by faith. My text is found at about the middle of this chapter. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin," &c. I believe the greatest need of the church to-day is for its members to exemplify in their daily lives the truths contained in the above passage.

Having looked at the setting of the text, let us prayerfully examine its teaching. We have two leading thoughts presented—death to sin and life toward God. We will simply seek to unfold, illustrate and enforce these.

I. *The believer's relation to sin.* "Even so reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." We must go to the context in order to get at the full force of these words. See the close reasoning of the apostle. In the preceding verse he speaks of the death of Christ: "For in that He died, He died unto sin *once for all*" (see margin). Did Christ once in the end of the world appear to *put away sin* by the sacrifice of Himself? Was this death of Christ for sin *once for all*? "Even so reckon ye yourselves to