THE BELIEVER'S RELATION TO SIN AND HOLINESS.

Preached at Nova Scotia Western Association, and published by request of that body.

"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.

1. *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 be dead indeed unto sin." The believer then, in that act of faith and full surrender by which he is justified, dies with Christ unto sin once for all. Death to sin and resurrection to a life of holiness is not a mere theory, but a fact based on the most vital truths of the Word of God, viz.: the death and resurrection of Christ.

Justifying faith, then, does something for the inward life of the believer. It brings him into vital union with a crucified and risen Saviour. This union is set forth by the apostle in such language as "planted together," or more literally, "*grown together*." The union of the believer and his Lord is so organic that Jesus Himself compares it to the vital connection that exists between the vine and the branches. Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, gives utterance to the same truth when he says, "I have been *crucified with Christ*." When was Paul crucified with Christ? Was it many years after he had been a believer? No, he evidently refers to a definite time in the past; to the hour when, on his way to Damascus, he surrendered himself fully to his Lord and asked, "What will Thou have me to do?"

What the great apostle declared is true of every Christian, even the very weakest and youngest.

This fact of death to sin or of a complete separation from it, is developed and enforced by Paul by the use of three illustrations. (1) The *ordinance of baptism*, by which the believer professes his faith in Christ, proclaims in unmistakeable language the fact of death to sin. "Know ye not," exclaims Paul, "that so many of us as were *baptized* into Jesus Christ were baptized into *His death?*" "Therefore, we are buried with Him by baptism into death." By this sacred rite the Christian declares that he is buried as to his past life of sin and selfishness. Baptism is not the procuring cause of this crucifixion to sin, but the sign of that fact. As Andrew Fuller has well said, the soldier's uniform does not make a man a soldier, but is the sign that he is already a soldier in heart and purpose. No other mode of baptism save immersion can symbolize death to the old and resurrection to a new life. The symbol is important, inasmuch as it keeps continually before the eye and mind of the world the fundamental truths of the gospel. A symbol is worthless without the fact behind it, and the fact loses much of its power and significance without the symbol. The British flag is but a symbol, but when it floats in the breeze from some hill top, with what enthusiasm and devotion is it greeted! Why? Because it stands for power, freedom, enlightenment, and Christian civilization. If I want to impress upon you the fact and the value of freedom and of the highest type of civilization, I hold up before you the British ensigh. So Paul, when he would emphasize the fact of the believer's death to sin, and would press this fact upon the hearts of the Christians at Rome, turns at once to baptism, the symbol of this death, and holds it up before their eyes, exclaiming, "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death." My brother, your baptism means something; your baptism has a tongue, and it distinctly proclaims to the world your fellowship with Christ in His death. But how many believers, forgetting the significance of this solemn and impressive ordinance, fall back again into the arms of the world, and like the children of Israel after their deliverance from bondage, pine after the leeks and garlic of their old lives of sin and selfishness. How many need to have sounded afresh in their ears the startling words of Paul, "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death?"

(2) This separation from sin is further set forth in verses 16–19 under the figure of a servant who has *changed masters*. "Know ye not 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. Being then *made free* from sin, ye became the servants (literally bond servants) of righteousness." This figure gives us a very graphic picture of complete separation from sin as our old master, and of entire surrender to righteousness as our new master. "Being then made free (emancipated) from 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 masters 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 and years of struggling and of Christian service, but God puts us there at a single bound, even by the faith that justifies. This is our standing in the eye of the law and in the mind of God the moment we believe.

Further, it is true of all Christians whether they realize it or not. It is not simply a truth for a few illustrious saints like Paul, or a Baxter, or a Spurgeon. It is the privilege of every Christian, even the weakest, to put the language of the great apostle into his lips and say, "*I have been* crucified with Christ." We say, then, that in the mind and purpose of God, the believer becomes dead to his old carnal life in the hour when he is united to Christ by faith. God's plan for us is, then, to begin the Christian life believing that we are crucified with Christ, and so from this high vantage ground to fight our battles and win our victories. As we recognize this fact and claim it by faith, we will find it made real to us in our daily experiences. So says Paul, "*Reckon* yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." This teaches that Christians are to understand what they are as Christians. That is to say, start out believing it is a fact, and as you go forward you will find it true in your daily lives. Just as the captain takes his course by the compass for some foreign port, and steers on day after day, believing that what he now accepts by *faith* will be *realized* one day, and after weeks of sailing the harbor is safely reached. It makes a great difference with us whether, when we set out on the Christian course, we recognize the fact that we *have been crucified* with Christ, or whether we are all the time seeking *to be crucified*. We get strength, we get courage for the mortifying of the old man in our daily experiences, when we remember that our standing in the sight of God is *dead already* to sin, by reason of our fellowship with Christ.

(*b*) Observe, further, that it is the *believer* that becomes dead to sin and *not sin to him*. This distinction must not be lost sight of. Erroneous views of sanctification have been advanced just because this fact has been overlooked. The believer is *dead* to sin, in that he separates himself from it, puts it away from him as a thing of the past, is no longer a slave to it; but nevertheless the most devoted Christians find that sin is not dead in them or toward them. The old man will seek yet again to get upon the throne; but, says Paul in verses following our text, "Let not sin *therefore reign* in your mortal bodies that ye should *obey* it in the lusts thereof." Again, "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace." These passages clearly teach that sin is not dead toward the believer, though the believer is dead toward it, and must treat it accordingly. The above and kindred passages go to prove that the old master is not taken away root and branch, but is to be daily mortified through the indwelling Spirit. For confirmation of this fact see Romans 8: 13: "But if ye through the *Spirit* do *mortify* the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Let no one think, however, that the scriptural standard of sanctification is a low one. On the contrary, it is very high. "Sin shall not have dominion over you" is strong language, and means that you shall have dominion over sin. No less than this is God's purpose for the believer, viz., *continual victory* over sin in every form and shape. The old man is to be daily and hourly put off, and the new man daily and hourly put on.

(*c*) Before leaving this part of our subject, I would impress upon you *the practical conclusion* that the apostle draws from the fact of the believer's death to sin. "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin." The word "members" as here read, seems to represent all of the powers and faculties of our entire being. "Dead to sin" then must be written on the head, on the hands and on the feet of every Christian. Suppose an angel should be commissioned to visit our churches, and singling out every member, should write on the forehead, "dead to sin," on the ear "dead to sin," on the eye "dead to sin," on the tongue "dead to sin," on the hands and the feet "dead to sin," and having done so, say, "Now, go forth to life's work." An angel is not sent to do this, but the Holy Spirit, speaking through Paul, declares that that should be the attitude of the believer towards sin in all its varied forms. If every follower of Christ realized his position in the sight of God and his relation to God and to the world, what a stupendous power for good there would be in a single church, and what a separation from the world would follow! Let "dead to sin" be written on that little member the tongue; and let every Christian feel that God has written those words there, and then let every church member go forth to life's duties and to the work of the master, and what a transformation there would be in the state of affairs in the community, in the church and in the family. From what heartaches, from what alienations, discords, bickerings and schisms would the church be saved if every believer realized that God had written on the tip of his tongue, "Dead to sin." "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to *be dead indeed unto sin*.

II. We now pass to consider the second thought contained in our text—*the believer alive unto God*. Life is imparted to the soul by the same faith by which we die to sin. Alive unto holiness is just as much a fact as is Christ's resurrection, and, indeed, rests on that truth. "For in that He died, He died unto sin once for all, but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Even so account yourselves to be dead unto sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Does Christ live unto God no more to die? Even so is the soul that is united to Him by faith made alive unto God for evermore.

The great characteristic of a Christian, then, is *life*. It is this that primarily and radically distinguishes a believer from an unbeliever. There is a broad chasm between a regenerate and an unregenerate man; a chasm so broad that no effort of man, however arduous and persistent, can bridge it. To bridge this gulf is solely the work of the Holy Spirit. "And you hath He quickened (made alive) who were dead in trespasses and sins." Here, again, this life toward God is the starting point with the believer and not the goal. He works from life and not for life. This life toward God, as well as the death unto sin, is impressively symbolized at the threshold of the Christian course by the sacred rite of baptism. "Buried with Christ in baptism, that like as He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Without seeking to develop this thought more fully, we come now to notice *the practical outcome of this truth, "alive unto God."* We have it stated in verse thirteen: "*Yield yourselves* unto God, as those that *are alive* from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness." *Consecration follows life.* We do not consecrate ourselves to God to get life, but because God has given life. "Yield yourselves as those that *are alive*," &c. Because the believer has been set free from sin's heavy yoke, because all the powers of his being have been ransomed by the precious blood of the Son of God, out of gratitude and love to his Emancipator, he comes to Christ, lays all down at His feet, and exclaims, "Let me use all these powers in Thy service and for Thy glory." The pastor of this band of Christian workers to whom I have referred, had his heart deeply stirred on different occasions, as some brother or sister in somewhat straitened circumstances laid on the altar of foreign missions some article of jewelery or some highly prized keepsake. A returned missionary, at the Baptist anniversaries at Denver, spoke of the self-denying spirit of some of the converts from heathenism. As an illustration he referred to a woman who brought to the missionary a silk dress, the proceeds of which were to aid some of her poorer brothers and sisters. The missionary at first remonstrated, thinking she could not spare the dress, but she replied she had a calico at home and that was good enough. He also told of a young man who brought his first month's wages, in order to help bring relief to some of the destitute. Verily, brethren, the heathen will rise up in the judgment to condemn us. We have many professing Christians who spend more annually in cigars and tobacco than they give in five years for the evangelization of the world. We have money enough among the Baptists of these provinces to do five times the amount of work that we are doing. But we do not believe that we are *all* the Lord's. This life toward God is not abounding, else we would be constrained to greatly enlarge our offerings for the carrying on of the Lord's work.

God is calling for a people who shall show to the world, by their living and by their giving, these two fundamental truths, death to sin and life toward God. "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, *we are the Lord's*."

Literary Notes.

The Missionary Review of the World for August covers a broad field of missionary thought and study. It opens with a sermon preached by the editor-in-chief, Rev. A. T. Pierson, D. D., before the London Missionary Society at the City Temple, London, on May 10, 1893; subject, "God's Season—Man's Opportune Time." Rev. W. J. Mornan, missionary to Cuba, contributes a very interesting article on Missions to Romanists, discussing their necessity, the extent of the field, the importance of the work, the difficulties in the way, and the power of the Romish church. Rev. James Douglas, M. A., of Brixton, London, gives a biographical sketch, covering eight pages, of Louis Harmes, the African missionary. Rev. Albert R. Fenn, of Madrid, Spain, contributes an article on the "Madrid Undenominational Mission," and L. D. Wishard, of New York, one on "A New Movement Among the Students of the Old World," reviewing the organization of College Young Men's Christian Associations in foreign lands. Rev. A. J. Gordon, D. D., writes in his usual forcible style on "Education and Missions," taking for his text the statement made before the Decennial Conference in India by Rev. Maurice Phillips, that "the only organized opposition which Christianity has yet had to meet has been from the efforts of the Hindu graduates of our universities," and showing that higher education, unless accompanied by Christian education, does not seem to prepare men for the acceptance of the gospel. Rev. Samuel Mateer, of Travancore, India, writes on "A Romish View of the British Indian Government." The second article on "The Present Aspect of Missions in India" is contributed by James Kennedy, of Hampstead, London. The International Department contains an account of the International Missionary Union held at Clifton Springs, N. Y., June 14–21. The other departments are full of interest, as usual. Published monthly by Funk & Wagnalls Company, 18 and 20 Astor Place, New York, at $2 a year.

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August 2.

Sabbath Scho

BIBLE LESS

THIRD QUART

Lesson VII. Aug. 13. Act

PAUL AT JERUSA

GOLDEN TEXT.

"For unto you it is given of Christ, not only to bel but also to suffer for His 1: 29.

EXPLANATORY.

27. *The seven days* of th *Jews which were of Asia.* province of Asia Minor, Ephesus was the capital. known to them, having pr years there, and been opponent. *When they saw temple.* In the court of where was the apartment to the Nazarites. The ent court was by the Beautiful *laid hands on him.* Not a for they had no authority, b ning of the mob violence.

28. *That teacheth all men* A sweeping charge, yet extensively the apostle's i been felt. *Against the* Jews. *And the law and this* he had really taught, we sa lesson. But to them it se them and their law and t *further brought Greeks a temple.* He had not done t supposed he had (ver. 29). refers to the inner court could enter the outer c Gentiles. Within this wa terraces, rising one above t balustrade of stone fenced c sacred enclosures. This w wall of partition alluded to This was four and a half fe small obelisks at regular di ing inscriptions in Greek that no Gentile might ente death." The recent excava Palestine Exploration Soc for 1871, p. 132) have brou slab with an inscription, di deciphered by M. Clermo which must have formed low wall just mentioned: alien race is to enter withi trade and fence that goe temple. If any one is tak let him know that he ha blame for the penalty of d lows." This, according punishment which the were now seeking to bring and on his friends. *And this holy place.* By bringin uncircumcised Gentiles, in Place, *i. e.* beyond the mi partition.

29. *For they had seen bef in the city Trophimus a* Trophimus was one of th which accompanied Paul f in Macedonia to Jerusalem Ephesian, he would be we sight to many of the Jew *Whom they supposed.* Com

30. *And all the city was m* ed, excited. *Ran together,* of the Gentiles. *And the and drew him.* Rev. Ver. hold on Paul, and dragge Their design was probably out of the temple precincts proceeded to further viole *the temple.* The inner s *Forthwith the doors were sh* obviously the act of the keepers. The doors were Gate Beautiful, between the Women and the Court of They were of Corinthian b high, and it took twenty m them. The obvious reas doors were shut was, (1 against the spaces of the t stained by the shedding of b as it was already suppos inner court had been poll entrance of a Gentile, to further pollution. The must be guarded against th excited mob.

31. *And as they went about* They were already beating and would have soon put an life. *Tidings came unto the* Greek *chiliarch*, or comm thousand men. His name Lysias (23: 26). *Of the ba* a body of 1000 men, wh Roman garrison at Jerusal stationed in the castle An joined the temple area on th

32. *Centurions.* Captain pany of 100 men. *Left beat* The mob probably knew law would do justice; and apostle were found by the c to have been wrongfully t would be brought to an acc

33. *Bound with two chains* each of his arms to a soldier of him (compare chap. 1 secured the prisoner, yet ie walk away with his guards tachment was marched o phecy of Agabus was here 11). The chains were at h as Josephus states, every R carried with him a chain thong. *And demanded.* for "asked." Inquired of th

34. *Some cried one thing,* As in the riot at Ephesus (1 did not know just what Pa *Carried into the castle of An*

35. *And when he came up* The stairs which led from the Gentiles to the top o cloisters adjoining the casti *He was borne of the soldiers.* of the pressure of the mob, lest they might lose their w after him with the intent to

37. *Paul . . . said* (in G the *chief captain* would un not Hebrew), *May I spea . . . Canst thou speak Gre* prise that he was not t brigand he supposed.

38. *Art not thou that E* The "Egyptian," whom t tain took St. Paul to be, by Josephus. A short tim probably at Pentecost tw force, he had gathered a discontented Jews on Mt. he had deluded into the b was the Messiah, declari walls of Jerusalem would his word. Felix marched o insurgents and dispersed Egyptian escaped. Amon ers were 4000 of the *Sicarii*