

## Romans 6:6-23 (Robert Arthur Fitzhardinge Kingscote) 53892

Christian Truth: Volume 25, Deliverance From the Power of Sin (6:6-23)

This chapter may be justly called the chapter of the New Testament that shows how God has delivered us from what we were as children of Adam, from sin—the sinful nature that is in us—and shows us too the real power for holiness of life and walk down here. The question of holiness is sometimes raised, and the fact that sin has power over them, instead of their having power over it, is what troubles many Christians. There are thousands of the Lord's people who are in that difficulty. But it is a remarkable thing that those who talk so much about holiness, and their difficulties as to it, often overlook what is to be found in this important chapter.

God will deliver us from sin and all its consequences when we are in glory; but there is also deliverance from its power now, although we still have it in us.

The word "holiness" is twice mentioned in this chapter, in verses 19 and 22, both of which speak of practical holiness of walk while in this world. It will help greatly to the understanding of the chapter to notice that its main truth is set forth in three consecutive verses—10, 11, and 12. I will first take them up as a whole, and afterward speak of them more in detail.

Verse 10 is what is true of Christ alone. In verse 11 the Spirit of God says, so to speak, "What is true of Him is true of you, because He took your place before God on the cross"; and faith believes this. Verse 12 is, "Carry it out in practice." We first get what is true of Christ. When the Spirit of God wants to teach us something about ourselves, He speaks of Christ first, then says that "what is true of Him is equally true of you," and ends with, "Now carry it out." "Likewise" in verse 11 is very significant. Likewise; that is, in the same way as Christ. Christ died unto sin once; likewise reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin. Christ is now alive unto God; likewise reckon ye yourselves to be alive unto God.

In verse 12 we get another word which is full of meaning—"therefore"—that is a conclusion drawn from what goes before. This verse implies two things: first, that the sin is in our mortal bodies; second, that instead of it having power over us, we have power over it. If I say to a man, "Don't let that child come into the room," I imply that he has the power to keep him out. So when God says, "Let not sin... reign," it implies that you have the power to carry it out.

This chapter unfolds the way of deliverance from the power of sin now, while we are down here in the body—"the end everlasting life" (v. 22). The end is coming by-and-by—the end of all exercises of soul, and trials and troubles. Precious thought! But let me now take up these verses a little more in detail.

In verse 10, is what is true of Christ only: "In that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." I am quite sure that numbers of the Lord's people read this verse as if it said, "died for sin."

But it is not so. What, however, does it mean when it says He "died unto sin once"? We will just look at one or two scriptures that might help us, as it is very important to the understanding of the next verse, that we should catch its meaning. "He [that is, God] hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." 2 Cor. 5:21. What a wonderful truth! I could not attempt to explain it, and I suppose we shall not fully comprehend it throughout eternity. He was not made sin in His life when He trod the earth in spotless purity. He was not made sin in the garden of Gethsemane when He prayed to the Father in such an agony that He sweat as it were great drops of blood. It was not then, but on the cross, when He hung there and was forsaken of God, that He was made sin. What passed between God and His Son during those three hours of darkness we are not told; but at the close that cry was heard, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" But Scripture is totally silent as to what took place during those hours when darkness covered all the land. God drew a veil over the scene. Ah! dear friends, just think of it; God made Him to be sin for me (speaking individually), because nothing else would fit me for His presence in glory.

Have you ever noticed the difference between this verse in Corinthians, and 1 Pet. 2:24? "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." There, you see, it is the sins—actual offenses committed. In 2 Cor. 5:21, He was made sin; that is different. It is important to see that the Lord Jesus was not only there to bear our sins, but all the depth of our evil, sinful nature—sin, root and branch—all came out before God then. He was made sin for us, who knew no sin.

The next scripture I will ask you to look at is Rom. 8:3. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." That expression, "sin in the flesh," means sin in our flesh, as children of Adam. The evil of our nature not only came out before God, but was judged and condemned there and then. God there saw an end of it. This verse is blessed: "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." It is not a mere, bare doctrine. Think of God's Son going under all the waves and billows of God's judgment! "God sending His own Son." Why does it say "own"? It reminds us of the love that He has to the beloved Son. Think how He loved His Son; or, as the Lord Jesus in Mark 12:6 speaks of it (let us turn to the passage), "Having yet therefore one son, his well beloved." He had only one Son. We know how fond parents are of an only son. That does not express all. He must add something—"His well beloved." So in Rom. 8:3 it is not dry doctrine, but a question of God's heart of love. The Spirit reminds us of it, so to speak. Just think of it! And then think of that God who "sent Him," "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all"; and then think of that beloved Son "made... sin for us." When He was on the cross, sin in the flesh was judged and condemned. He alone could sustain that awful weight, and not be crushed under it. He did sustain it.

He said, "It is finished." Let us turn to the chapter. "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost." John 19:30. Those who understand the Greek language say that the word for "gave up the ghost" means that

He gave up the ghost by the action of His own will. He laid down His life, we know. He had "power to lay it down" (John 10:18).

Now in verse 10 of Romans 6, "He died unto sin once." The death of the Lord Jesus was the death of One who had undergone the judgment of God against sin, and had died to it. He died to sin—has done with it forever. He is never going to come in contact with it again in that way for all eternity.

The illustration given in verse 16 of Romans 6 will help us to understand the application of this to us. It speaks of sin being a master, and we its slaves. However tyrannical a master may be, a slave cannot get rid of him by giving notice to leave, like our servants can. However hard a master he may have, he is bound to him for life. But the time comes when that slave reaches a deathbed, and now he slips out of his master's grasp, out of that state and condition in which he was a slave; he dies to his master.

"In that He died, He died unto sin once." He has done with it forever. But have you ever seen that you are as clear as He is in God's sight? You do not question for a moment whether He is clear of it, but do you question whether you are free of it? "If I am dead to sin, why should I feel this working of sin in me?" Many think that verse 11 means, "Carry this truth into practice." But it is rather that faith accepts what is true of me in God's sight, and believes what God says. And thus we can reckon ourselves to be dead unto sin, because in God's sight we are so. What foolishness it would be for me to say to you, Reckon yourself to be the king of some certain country. Why? Because it is not true of you. But in God's sight we have as much died to sin as that blessed One has, and thus God can say to us, You may reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin.

I purposely did not quote just now the latter part of verse 10—"In that He liveth, He liveth unto God"—because I wish to look at it separately in connection with verse 11. When John was in the isle of Patmos, and saw One like unto the Son of man, he fell at His feet. And He laid His right hand upon him. How would you feel to have the right hand of that living, glorified Christ laid upon you? He said to John, "Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living one: and I became dead, and behold, I am living to the ages of ages." Rev. 1:17, 18; J.N.D. Trans. He is the living One. "In that He liveth, He liveth unto God." It is not simply that He is alive. I cannot explain it, but I suppose that Christ as alive from the dead need never be occupied with sin again, or come in contact with it as the sin-bearer. He is free from death, judgment, and sin forever.

Now comes our side of it. You may count that you live to God in the same way. Have you ever done that? It is just as much an exhortation to reckon ourselves to be alive unto God as to reckon ourselves to be dead to sin. And in God's sight, as in Christ, we are as much delivered from sin as we shall actually be delivered from it when we shall be in glory. We have nothing about practice in this verse. It is faith that believes what God says about me. God says, as it were, "I have given Christ; He has died to sin; so have you. He is alive to God; so are you." As to a matter of fact, for a time, just for a little while, sin is in you still, but it is not for long.

Verse 12—"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body." Now as I said before, that verse proves first that sin is there; but it says also that you need not obey it. Do not pay any attention to what it says; you need not obey it. See what a power that gives us—that we have done with it as much as Christ has. I have only got it in me for a short time while I am in this body, but I have not to obey it any more than the slave of whom I have spoken, if he were to be raised, would have to obey his old master. "No," he could say, "I have died out of your hands, and am beyond your control." The old master has no power to tell you to do anything. I can say, "I shall not pay any more attention to what he says now; he has no right over me."

There is one more thing. Not only do not obey him, but do not let sin, that old master, have the members of your body as instruments to use. You used to use them in the service of sin; but now they are no longer to be used in the service of sin; they are to be used as instruments of righteousness unto God. The eyes, feet, hands, and the tongue—these are the members of our body. Ah! the tongue. You remember what we read in Jas. 3:5 about the tongue: "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things." And verse 6 too. Oh, how solemn! This is one of the members we are not to let sin have. So in verse 2, "In many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." I picked out this verse because the Spirit of God says that if you will not let sin have your tongue, you will be able to govern or bridle your whole body! How much the tongue can do! We often say things we are sorry for afterward. What mischief the tongue can cause! Yield not your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God. Sin may come in, and try to usurp a claim over them, but do not let it.

I would just refer to one more verse in the end of the chapter (v. 21)—"What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" But in verse 22, "Now"—what have you got now that ye are "become servants to God"? "Your fruit unto holiness, and the end" (there's the end you see)—"the end everlasting life." Instead of death, the wages of sin, when that bright and blessed end comes, for us it is "everlasting life." Then we shall not only be delivered from the power of sin but from its presence too.

But God looks at every believer as in Christ, as much delivered from sin now as we shall be in glory.

God grant that we may not give our members any more to the service of sin, but to His service who has done so much for us. Amen.

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