

## THE BODY OF SIN TO BE DESTROYED.

AN Exchange asks: "When Paul says, 'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Christ, that the *body of sin* might be destroyed' (Rom. 6:6), what force could there be in such a crucifixion *with* Christ unless *his* crucifixion had reference to the same end – *the death of sin*? Or what meaning could there be in the next verse which says 'For he that is dead is freed from sin.' Was Christ *freed from sin* by death? In some sense he must have been, or the words would be without meaning. And this idea is not gained by mere inference. The tenth verse asserts it, 'For in that he died he died *unto sin once*, but in that he liveth he *liveth unto God.*' Some have endeavored to modify, we might say weaken this statement by translating it, 'In that he died he died by sin etc.' But the whole passage shows that the old translation is correct, as for instance the question 'How can we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?' This shows that the point is *leaving the sin state*. This is confirmed by the eleventh and following verses, the exhortation of which is based on the statement of the tenth verse that *Christ died TO SIN*: '*Likewise* reckon *ye also* yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body that ye should obey it.'" – *World's Hope*.

Though, at the first glance, the above *seems* to fit as it is applied, upon closer examination we will find it seriously out of joint in several particulars, chief among which is its unavoidable implication that our Lord, the holy, harmless, undefiled, was a sinner and *died to sin* as our example, to show us *how* to die to it. The writer of the above extract evidently saw the conflict between other Scriptures and the *construction he was putting upon Rom. 6:6-11*, and attempts to shield himself and his theory by saying "If the above position, based on Rom. 6, teaches that *Christ was a sinner*, it is the Apostle that so

taught. We simply quoted his words. To some it may seem that the apostle *contradicted himself* [Heb. 4:15], but we do not so regard it."

Assuredly, we answer, If the Apostle at one time (and the entire Scripture as well), teaches that our Lord was never anything else than holy and undefiled, and *if* in Rom. 6 he declares that he died to sin, that is, *ceased from sin*, he certainly did contradict himself. And *if* our contemporary is correct, its discovery of this contradiction would amount to a proof that Paul was not inspired, and lead to the expurgation of all his writings from the Bible. But there stands the word *if*, and we venture the assertion that the discord and contradiction is all in our contemporary's *theory* and the construction it forces upon the apostle's words in Rom. 6, in its endeavor to use those words to support its theory. Note carefully, then, the following exegesis of the Apostle's words, in harmony with the unanimous testimony of Scripture that our Lord had no sin to die to, or cease from.

To pick up a fragment of a discourse on any deep subject and attempt to apply it, without being aware of the underlying principle and fact upon which it is based, would more than likely lead to a false interpretation of it; and so with the apostle Paul's deep reasoning on the greatest of all sciences. We must first get his bearings and understand something of what he discourses upon, before we can know assuredly his meaning when he uses figures of speech as in this discourse.

That the epistle to the Romans was written to all the Church of believers in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints, and was intended as a vindication of the plan of God and his dealings with the world, Israel, and the gospel Church, past, present and future, is evident from the first chapter. In its conclusion he shows that God cannot be held responsible for the ignorance and degradation of the world, especially the heathen, for they had degraded themselves, and blotting out the image of God, had come to resemble more the beasts. God simply gave them over, or did not interfere with them. Paul shows that God is not guilty of producing the sin and degradation, but that the

entire responsibility rests upon man: upon Adam the representative first, and upon all since who wilfully departed further and further from God. He lays this broad premise in order to show afterward that God was just, and that man has no claim upon him for recovery (salvation or restitution) from this fallen and degraded state of condemnation and death.

Having shown up thus the state of the heathen world, Paul turns to the Jews, and in chapter 2, shows that they have no ground for *claiming* anything from God, – they could no more claim that they had a *right* to life everlasting, and salvation (restitution) to original perfection than the heathen. The *giving* of a perfect law to a man does not justify him – if he would be justified to life under the law given him he must *keep* it perfectly (ver. 13). And if he violated but one of its precepts he could claim nothing under it, but must be *condemned* as a violator, unworthy of life. (Jas. 2:10.) Hence the Apostle argues that while the Jew had a special Law on stones given him, which the heathen world did not have, yet they were not so much advantaged thereby as they had supposed; for *if* a man, not a Jew, could do *perfectly* the will of God, he would be acceptable with God (v. 26), and this and no more the Law offered to the Jew. God knew from the first what experience has since demonstrated to all men, namely, that because of our weakness and fallen dispositions inherited, *none can* live up to God's perfect law, no, nor even up to *his own warped idea of RIGHT*.

Chapter 3 shows how the Law given to the Jew, though of no advantage in the way of *justifying* them to salvation (restitution) from death, was of great benefit as an *educator* to show them their own weakness and their need of salvation, by grace (favor) and not by law and merit. He on the other hand shows that the Jew is in no worse case than the Gentile, for *all* are under sin, *all* are condemned, *all* are unworthy of life; as it is expressed by the prophet, "There is none righteous, no, not one." – See Rom. 3:9,10.

So then he argues, the Law, written to the Jew and unwritten to the heathen, *condemns* all the world as guilty and unworthy of life, and silences them from any reply as appeal from this eminently just verdict. – Verses 19 and 20.

The Apostle then introduces faith in Christ as a door of hope for all, both Jews and Gentiles. He says, But now, aside from the Law [though in perfect harmony with it], God has provided a plan [for man's recovery] in perfect harmony with justice; and under this plan it is, that favor and recovery is offered, conditioned on faith in Jesus Christ – to *all that believe*; for there is no distinction, all are fallen sinners. And this plan which God has adopted and put into operation, aside from the Law, but in perfect harmony with its spirit, is this: He will *justify*, clear from guilt, freely, by his divine *favor* [not because of their merit, but] THROUGH THE REDEMPTION accomplished in Christ Jesus; whom he set forth as the one in whom *satisfaction* was made, for all who exercise faith in his blood (verses 24-26). Thus God not only exhibits his love for his condemned creatures, but He makes it at the same time an exhibition of his own unswerving justice, while enabling him justly to forgive sins that are past as well as those that are present. This plan was so arranged that in releasing the sinner from the penalty justly upon him, and giving him another, an individual trial for life or death, God might still be *just*, and his law be manifested to all as unchangeable and perfect, even when pardoning the sinners he had once condemned, who by faith laid hold of Jesus as their *justifier* from their guilt and condemnation.

Ah! who can boast now? (ver. 27.) All boasting of works of charity, all boasting of the slaying of sin in one's self, is shut out; for by the terms of this plan of God, each must confess at the outstart that he is a sinner and POWERLESS *to justify himself* [R930 : page 3] before God, in any sense, or by any works: he must fling from him, all hope of self-justification in order to grasp with both hands, life, favor, forgiveness and reconciliation as an *unmerited* favor of God,

obtainable through faith in the merit and sacrifice of Christ, and in no other way.

In Chapter 4 Paul shows that *favor* in response to faith and not as a reward for works, has in all the past been foreshadowed as being God's plan for reconciling the world to himself. David attests this when he says, "Happy are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered; happy the man to whom the Lord shall not impute his sins." Our sins by the arrangement of God are imputed to the Lamb of God, who "bore our sins in his own body on the tree" – "*died* for our sins."

Nor is there ground for supposing that this favor of forgiveness was to come only to those under the Law (Israel) whose sign was circumcision, for Abraham himself received the promise of a blessing to all nations through his posterity *before* he was circumcised. No; the plan of God embraces *all who believe*, for Jesus our Lord was delivered to death for our trespasses and raised from it for our justification (ver. 25).

Having proved the justification (clearing from guilt and condemnation) of all believers, in chapter 4, the Apostle in chapter 5 exhorts all believers to *rest* upon Christ's finished work on our behalf. Realizing our forgiveness and acceptance through him, let us cease from picking our own characters and those of our fellow saints to pieces by the Law, which we could not keep, but which Christ kept for us. It is our hearts' intentions and best endeavors that we must look to now, and not expect *absolute* perfection of thought, word and deed. If we grasp God's free favor and forgiveness *through Christ*, we must let go of the Law entirely and abandon all hope of *self*-justification, else we will not have full peace with God. Therefore having been justified (cleared, forgiven) by faith, we may have *peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (verse 1.) And in addition to the peace we obtain through being justified or cleared of guilt before God, we have more, we also then gain *access into* the additional favor (wherein we now are

rejoicing) of hope and opportunity for gaining a share with Christ in the *glory* soon to be bestowed upon our Lord and Redeemer (verse 2). In other words, we are granted the privilege of walking in his footsteps, following our Lord and being associated with him as joint-sacrifices and joint-sufferers in the present, as well as joint-heirs of future glory. And this enables us to rejoice even in present tribulations. – Verse 3.

This favor of God is so great that we might reasonably doubt it, but reflect, says Paul, how much he loved us and did for us *while* we were yet sinners: It was while we were enemies that he gave the price of our reconciliation and opened the door to our acceptance with God – much more now that WE ARE RECONCILED we may readily believe and accept of all the marvelous favors promised us as followers of the Lamb who justified us. – Verses 6-11.

In order to see clearly the firm foundation upon which our *reconciliation rests*, consider the philosophy of the plan of God. Note that all were *condemned* in one man, Adam, and see now the same principle operating for our release, for all are justified through the obedient sacrifice of Christ, as all were condemned through the disobedient act of Adam (verses 12-20). The law covenant given to the Jew has nothing whatever to do with this plan of free favor extended to all, on condition of their acceptance of Christ as the satisfaction for sin. That law was given (ver. 20,21) that the sin and weakness of the race might be more fully recognized; it did not *cure* sin, but exposed it, showed it up. But where sin was greatest, because of greatest light to see it, there God's favor was great in proportion, and the light to recognize it was fullest.

## **ROMANS 6.**

What then, shall we say, seeing that God's favor is thus bountiful, and covers sins past and weaknesses present and future? Shall we feel indifferent on the subject, and transgress when we please, trusting to God's provision for our forgiveness in Christ? No, God forbid. Rather, seeing the evil of sin, seeing that it cost the death of our Lord as our

substitute, our ransom, we should regard that substitute's death "*for our sins*" as though it was our former sinful selves that had died. In that Christ has paid our penalty for us, we should regard the sin which caused his death, as though it had caused our death once and we had gotten free from it. We should repulse and oppose sin as our great enemy, which had *once* caused our death. How could we, under such circumstances, take pleasure in sinning, and thus attempt to take advantage of the favor and forgiveness provided us in Christ, to continue in sin?

While this is a good reason why all *believers* should abstain from (wilful) sinning, *some* of us have another and still more powerful reason for abstaining from sin, says Paul (verse 5): I refer to those of us who *after* being justified from sin by our Lord's sacrifice, advanced another step and consecrated ourselves to walk in his footsteps, to drink of his cup of ignominy, reproach and dishonor; and to be baptized [immersed] into his death, that thus sharing with him his sufferings and death, we might according to God's promise be reckoned overcomers and joint-heirs with him, and [R930 : page 4] granted a share with him in the "divine nature" in his future glory and kingdom. "Know ye not that *so many* of us as are baptized [immersed] into Jesus Christ [as members of his body] are immersed into his death?" It is by consecrating ourselves entirely to him, [*after* being cleansed from sin by his blood], reckoning ourselves dead to the world and alive in God's service even unto death, *as he did*, that we gain a place in his "body" and become joint-heirs with him. And in thus becoming dead with him, we trust the Father's promise of also having a share in *his* resurrection (see Phil. 3:8-15); a resurrection not to human nature, such as others will enjoy, but to the fulness of the divine nature, "*like him*" and "with him." And this is illustrated in our water immersion, which to us thus symbolizes our death *with* Christ: our rising from the water symbolizing our coming resurrection as new creatures. For if we are sharers in his sacrifice, his death, we shall unquestionably share also in *his* resurrection. – Verses 3-5.

Realizing the matter thus, – that our former selves as justified human beings are delivered up to die (be crucified) with Christ, as the condition upon which we may be associated with him, in the great work of utterly rooting out and destroying *Sin*, the great Monarch, at present ruling the world, we must see that we can no longer, in any sense, serve Sin, the Destroyer, whom we are pledged to help overthrow. (ver. 6.)\* We once were sin's slaves, but we were justified or released from his dominion [by Christ] before we consecrated ourselves to die with Christ [consecrated to death as our baptism showed, v. 4], because we believed we should be granted life with him. – Verse 8.

\*Sin is here represented in figure as the great oppressive Monarch whose reign with his servant death has brought so much distress on the world, all of whom he has enslaved, but from whose power we have been delivered by Christ's ransom, and regaining our liberty we have become associated with the Redeemer of all the slaves of sin and death, offering to suffer with him now and share his ignominy for the joy of future association in the next age in the great work of destroying the usurping ruler Sin, and setting at liberty his captives. – See Rom. 5:21; Isa. 42:7; 61:1; Psa. 102:19,20; Luke 4:18.

The "Body of Sin" which is to be overthrown is here contrasted with the "Body of Christ" which is to overthrow it. As once we were slaves to this monarch, Sin, opposing God, now as soldiers under Christ, our chief Captain, we have become *bondservants* [slaves] to God, to carry out his plan in the overthrow of Sin.

For Christ, though he had our sins reckoned to him, or "laid upon him," and though he died for our sins, is no longer subject to death since his resurrection. For the death which he died was because of sin [*our* sins] once for all, while his life since resurrection, as a spiritual being, is a gift of God. And so we must reckon ourselves, though [after being first justified by his sacrifice] we be joined with our Lord in the great sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, like him, our sin-bearing and suffering, is not *for* our own sins [which were blotted out by his sacrifice] but *for* the sins of others, even as was his death. And, let us thus keep on reckoning ourselves in our entire course, as represented and illustrated by our Leader, in whose footprints we are walking. Let



us reckon ourselves dead to all things earthly, hopes, ambitions, and often comforts; cut off from them all, crucified to them all, by or because of Sin. Thus we will hate Sin, and do our utmost to destroy it.

And reckon your life as a new gift of God, as a life not subject to Sin, and not under bondage to Sin in any sense, but wholly subject to the will of God. And thus viewing Sin as the foe you are dying to destroy, and God as the new Master who promises life, let not Sin REIGN in your mortal body, let it not control you. True, sometimes it may overtake you and stumble you through the weakness of the flesh, but see that you encourage it not. Let not your mortal body, nor any talent or power you possess come into the service of this your enemy, but bring your talents more and more into the active service of the new master – God. – Verses 11-14.

What then shall we say to the original question (verses 1, and 15), Shall we sin because we are not under the Law but under *favor* through Christ? By no means; for though we *claim* to have changed over from being the servants of Sin, our former master, to be the servants of God, yet if we are really and willingly serving Sin and forwarding it, we are *really its servants*, [R931 : page 4] no matter what profession we have made of a change. His servants we are to whom we render service. But, thank God, your change is not merely a change in name or profession, but a change indeed. You obeyed the doctrine delivered to you [laying hold by faith upon Christ's sacrifice for your sins], and were thus set free from sin, and then by consecration ye became the servants of righteousness. Now, remember to be as faithful to your new service, to your new master, as you were formerly to your old master, Sin. As formerly you disregarded the claims of God upon your time and talents, now disregard and ignore the claims of Sin.

You know how much evil fruit you bore while in Sin's service, for the reward of death; see, now, how much fruit you can bring forth in your new service whose end is lasting life. The wages of Sin is death,

but God's free gift through the anointed one is *lasting* life. – Verses 17-23.

Carefully compare the above with the first six chapters of Romans, and then note the gross error of the exposition of Rom. 6 by our *Exchange* quoted in the beginning of this article. To one who is wholly ignorant of the plan of salvation revealed in the Scriptures, or who forgets all the other testimony of the preceding five chapters, our *Exchange's* theory might be delusive. To such, its claim that the plan of salvation is, that each sinner shall slay his own sinful nature as Christ slew his sinful nature, and that thus each should commend himself to God or *justify himself*, might seem to find support in Rom. 6. Such erroneous teaching would indeed be delusive to the worldly, for their ideas always have run in that direction. They always have desired to justify themselves by works of their own, or what they term the sacrificing of their *sins*, and have disdained or ignored God's favor as a free gift secured to them by Christ's sacrifice. Thus it has ever been – the cross, the sacrifice of Christ for *our* sins, has been from the first what it is to-day, – "To the Jew a stumblingblock and to the Greek [worldly-wise] foolishness." But to *us* it still is, what it was to the apostles – "The power of God and the wisdom of God." – 1 Cor. 1:24.

The idea of a sinner sacrificing his sins to God, as our *Exchange* claims, is too foolish for a heathen mind to entertain. The Bible everywhere declares, in types as well as literal statements, that blemished or imperfect sacrifices are *not* acceptable to God. Over and over again the Israelites were told that their sacrifices for sin must be without spot or blemish, to typify the perfect sacrifice for *our* sins, which our Lord gave.

Cannot all see, then, that *we* could have no share *in* Christ's sacrifice as members of his "body," until first we had been cleansed or justified by his sacrifice – by his blood, shed for the remission of our sins?

Who is so blinded with prejudice that he cannot see that the apostle, in Romans, sixth chapter, is not addressing *sinners*, but saints? He is not, therefore, telling them how they should *justify themselves* by crucifying their sins, but he is telling those who *are* already justified by faith in the sacrifice of Christ, how they have consecrated to death in God's service their *former selves* – the "old" or former manhood which Christ had justified fully and freely and made acceptable as a sacrifice. Remembering that our former selves (as human beings – justified) *are* crucified with Christ, and remembering *why* we so consecrated – that we as new creatures in Christ might be members of the "body of Christ," whose great work is to destroy the adversary – "the body of Sin," we therefore cannot *consent* to serve or obey, in any sense, the great enemy, from whose control Christ's redemption has delivered us, and whose empire we are pledged with Christ to destroy.

Thus seen, "our old man" which is crucified (consecrated to death) with Christ *is not* the "*body of Sin*" (verse 6). Far from it, the "Body of Sin" is a figurative personification of Evil or Sin, the great enslaver and destroyer of our race, while our old man represents our *justified* manhood, which we consecrated to death, in order that thus sharing with Christ in his death as a *ransom* for all, (to deliver all from Sin, the Destroyer) we might share also with Christ as the great Deliverer and Restorer of the race. Such should no longer be slaves of Sin (ver. 2); for he that hath died *with* Christ (as symbolized in baptism, verses 4 and 5) was first released or justified from Sin by Christ, and should now seek life with Christ, and not again to Sin for its wages of death. He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear.

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