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FREEDOM FROM SIN NOW!

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"And now being made free from sin." Romans 6:22.

Paul was a master of simplicity. He wrote to be understood. Our translators, realizing this, have gone along with him. Whatever the original may have been the English is strikingly simple. Here is one of the most sublime facts related to human existence couched in words that leave no place for misunderstanding the meaning.

I am no scholar in any sense of the term, but the fact presented here is stated too clearly for even a layman to miss. All the words used in the above statement are common property wherever the English language is spoken. However, these are significant words. Being simple in definition they are the mightier in meaning, and a careful study of each is necessary if the fact they present is to be understood.

The word "AND", of course, is a joining word, uniting what the apostle has written with that which he is about to write. And that which he has written is his answer to the question: "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" Having met the question head-on with the explosive negation: "God forbid", he proceeds to present a soul-thrilling exposition of the whole plan and purpose of Salvation as it relates itself to the question at hand. He shows that Baptism, which identifies the believer with Christ, cries "No!" (verses 3-5). The crucifixion of "our old man", a glorious part of the believer's heritage in the Atonement, cries "No!" (verse 6-11). The whole transaction from Sin to grace cries "No!" "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the Law but under Grace." (verse 14). The great split-rock of moral classification is encountered here: The practice of sin, says the apostle, brands one the servant of sin; the practice of righteousness brands one a servant of God. "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". (verses 12-17). All through this chapter Paul allows for no middle ground. "Being then made free from sin ye became the servants of righteousness" (verses 18). "For when ye were the servants of sin ye were free from righteousness". (verses 20). There is no "this" and "that", it is "this" or "that".

Coming to the word "NOW" we are stopped in our tracks. So much of theology revolves around this word. Differences responsible for dividing the most learned and sincere men of the Christian Church meet us here. "Freedom from sin? Yes, of course! "But when?" No question whatsoever, about the necessity. All agree that Heaven is quarantined against sin and deliverance from sin must be had if Heaven is to be obtained, but when? Well, if we are not too difficult to enlighten, Paul seems to have the answer. And again, he is so implicit—"Now," is the only answer he ever gives. With him it is now or never. "The end of those things (sinful living) is death." (verse 21). "The wages of sin (sinful practice) is death." (verse 23).

A Minister's Seven Resolves

At the commencement of this new year, my purposes are seven:

- (1) I purpose to exercise greater discipline in the ordering of my time.
- (2) I purpose to keep a careful record of my pastoral activities.
- (3) I purpose to give myself entirely to the pursuit of holiness, and to the good pleasure of his will.
- (4) I purpose to strive toward more effectual prayer, much time in His presence, and thoughtful meditation upon His word.
- (5) I purpose toward greater reliance upon His presence in preaching, after I have studied and prayed over each message.
- (6) I purpose to love Jesus supremely, and make Him Lord over every detail of my life.
- (7) I purpose to abhor all that would make me false and counterfeit, and love all that would make me transparently true.

A Reformed Baptist Pastor.

GOD RULES OVER ALL

By the grace of God I never fret. I repine at nothing; I am discontented with nothing. And to have persons at my ear, fretting, murmuring at everything, is like tearing the flesh off my bones. I see God sitting upon His throne, and ruling all things well. Although, therefore, I can hear this also, to hear His government of the world continually found fault with (for in blaming the things He alone can alter, we, in effect, blame Him), yet it is such a burden to me that I cannot bear without pain; and I bless God when it is removed. I want to see God as acting in everything and disposing all for His own glory and His creatures' good.

—John Wesley

If this is the judgment that awaits sin then it is imperative that we find some remedy. If the present issues in judgment then it would appear that we should find freedom from sin in this present. It would also appear that unless we have an assurance, from Scripture, beyond all possible doubt, that sin (singular) is to be dealt with, mercifully, in some future state, then we have no right to suggest it, be we Pope or Priest, Preacher or Layman.

Again, to deny the possibility of being made free from sin NOW—Today, is to run headlong into a clear pronouncement of an inspired Apostle. I wouldn't care to take issue with Paul over this.

Just by way of emphasis, let me state what Funk and Wagnall's new College Dictionary has to say on the word "Now": "At once"; "At, or during the present time"; "Forthwith"; "Immediately".

Paul seems to be taking the position as he writes the Christians at Rome, that freedom from sin (carnality) can be expected, experienced, and enjoyed, at once, immediately, NOW. Well who says, Amen?