

JESUS DID NOT FORFEIT EARTHLY LIFE

AFORFEITED life is not a sacrificed life. If our Lord had forfeited his life it would not have been a sacrifice. A life that is forfeited is a life that is taken away for some just cause or reason; but his was taken without a cause. He suffered. As to how he suffered and why he suffered the Scriptures are quite distinct in telling us – "he presented himself without blemish unto God." That is to say, he purposed to do God's will; he bowed to God's will; he consecrated his whole life to the doing of God's will. To test his loyalty and obedience to the full, God required that he should be obedient, submissive, "unto death, even the death of the cross." His life was not taken from him, either by God or by men; as he himself declared, he could have called for Divine aid, according to Divine arrangement, and more than twelve legions of angels would have protected his life: "No man taketh away my life; I lay it down of myself." So, then, in this matter of Jesus' sacrifice, it was neither that man took away his life, nor that God demanded it, but God gave him the opportunity of demonstrating his loyalty. This involved a sacrifice in that it put him into the place where to do what God desired to have done, meant a giving up of all his earthly rights and privileges.

When he came to the time of his death he did not make application of his merit in advance, saying, "I do this for such a purpose and such a thing, and I apply whatever merit there is in my obedience to such a purpose." He did nothing of the kind. There was no such application made. When we speak of Christ's death as the Ransom-Price for the sins of the whole world; when we say that "he gave himself a Ransom for all," we are taking into consideration other features of the Divine arrangement by which it will be possible for the Lord Jesus to apply the merit of that sacrifice on behalf of the world of mankind as their Ransom-

Price. This will be accomplished in its due time. (I Tim. 2:5,6.) It was not accomplished when he died, but was to be accomplished subsequently.

After our Lord had manifested his obedience even unto death, the Father was well pleased to fulfil to him all and more than he had ever intimated or promised. Hence he raised him from the dead – not in the same condition in which he was previously – a man – but in the glorious condition of the divine nature, "far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named." It would have been possible for the Father to restore our Lord Jesus to the earthly nature; but that would not have been, as we understand it, in keeping with his promise that there would be a special reward for this special obedience – "the joy that was set before him."

JESUS HAD THE RIGHT TO THE EARTHLY NATURE

When our Lord Jesus, therefore, was raised from the dead by the Father on the third day, to this glorious nature which he now possesses – so much better than the earthly condition – he had a *right* also to the earthly nature. He would not, of course, have thought of exchanging the higher condition for the earthly condition; and especially since such a change would frustrate the entire plan of God. To explain: Suppose our Lord Jesus, having been raised from the dead to the glory of the Father, to the divine nature, had said, "Father, I greatly appreciate your kindness and favor towards me in thus highly exalting me; but now I prefer the human nature." If we could imagine his saying such a thing, we cannot see but that he would have had the *right* to it, as he had never forfeited his human life. He merely laid it down. He submitted himself in obedience to God; and if in his resurrection he had preferred the earthly nature, it would have been entirely proper that he have it back again. But to have taken it back would

have been to undo all the work he had started out to do. He would thus have given away the heavenly nature, which was far more desirable, and respecting which he himself said, "Father, glorify me with the glory that I had with thee before the world was." He would in this way have ignored not only his own expressed preference in the matter, but also the Divine Plan, order and arrangement, as it was God's will that he should have this high nature and that he should also have the *right* to earthly life, the earthly nature, that he might bestow the earthly nature, with all of its rights and privileges, as the "Ransom," or Corresponding Price, for Adam's forfeited life and all of its earthly privileges.

IMPUTING HIS MERIT NOW TO THOSE WHO COVENANT TO SACRIFICE IT

Actually our Lord has not yet ransomed all, but he gave himself, in the sense of performing the sacrifice, more than 1800 years ago. But he has not yet applied the merit as the Ransom-Price for all the world. What is he doing with the Ransom-Price all this time? The Ransom-Price was placed into the hands of the Father. When Jesus died he said, "Into thy hands I commit my spirit." The Lord Jesus, therefore, as the Great Messiah, has the right to all those things which he intends to bestow upon the whole world of mankind – Adam and all his race. He will give them all the opportunity of becoming people of God. What is he doing with the merit in the meantime? He is imputing it to any individual from amongst Adam's race who desires to come into full relationship with the Father, on condition that such individual follow in his footsteps and lay down his earthly life as he laid *his* down. To each one of this kind, who comes to him, the Lord imputes his merit at the moment he makes his consecration to sacrifice, and this imputation of the Lord's merit makes him acceptable with the Father, who begets him as a New Creature. Thenceforth such are New Creatures, and their earthly life is given up as Jesus' life was given up – in sacrifice. All of these,

therefore, who are now invited to come under this special arrangement through the use of the merit of Christ's death, come under the *imputation* of that merit, not the *bestowment* of it.

There is a difference between imputing the merit and bestowing it. For instance, if we hand you \$100 we bestow \$100 upon you, passing it directly to you. But if we endorse your note for \$100 we are imputing to you \$100. In the case of the Church it is an imputation; there is actually no passing of the merit over. What our Lord has to give is the right to human life, the human privileges which were Adam's originally and which he lost – all that he had. That right to human life our Lord has to give away, but he is not giving it away now. He is keeping it to give to the world in due time. He is now [R4638 : page 206] merely imputing to us the merit, or that which corresponds to the endorsement of our contract with the heavenly Father, if we desire to enter into such a contract.

THE WORLD WILL RETAIN THE EARTHLY LIFE- RIGHTS PURCHASED FOR THEM

Coming back to the statement made foregoing, that this merit is to be given on behalf of the world, we [R4638 : page 207] should qualify it and say that the merit is not to be given for the *whole* world, but merely, as the Scriptures outline, "for all the people." "The people," however, are not the entire world, but all who will come into Covenant relationship with God during the period of the Great Mediatorial Kingdom. These are the only people for whom the merit will be applied. Whoever will reject this opportunity and refuse to become one of the people, rejects all the opportunities that are to be granted and does not, therefore, receive restitution to human life. Such are not made perfect. They do not get human rights at all. They will receive an awakening from death, but this will not be Restitution. This will be merely the first step from which they may, if they choose, take the further

steps leading to the Restitution blessings. "It will come to pass that the soul that will not obey" that Great Mediator, that Great Prophet, Priest and King, the great "Prophet like unto Moses raised up from amongst your brethren" – of which Jesus is the Head and the Church of this Gospel Age are his Members – "the soul that will not obey that Prophet shall be destroyed from amongst the people." – Acts 3:19-21.

This is in harmony with the Scripture to the effect that "he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him," continues on him; he never gets out from under the wrath of God. He had the opportunity; he was brought to a knowledge of the Truth; he was brought to the place where it was his privilege to come under the arrangement of the New Covenant blessings which will be extended to all through Israel. But if he fails to make use of that opportunity and to become one of God's people, then he does not get out from under the wrath at all. He dies under the original wrath of God and without going to the end of the Millennial Age – without becoming one of the restored ones.

=====