

## WHAT CHRIST, AS OUR ADVOCATE, IMPUTES

IN speaking of our Lord as our great Advocate, through whom we have justification, and considering what he does for us that makes us acceptable to the Father, a variety of expressions are sometimes heard. One may say that he imputes to us his life-rights. Another may say that he imputes to us his righteousness. Another may say that he imputes to us the merit of his sacrifice. Let us try to get this matter clearly before our minds. What is the thing that is really imputed?

First of all, we suggest that what Christ imputes to us is *not* the *heavenly nature* nor the *divine life* nor the *right* to divine life. *None of these things are imputed.* These things come to us *from the Father.* To these things we are begotten by the holy Spirit. It is as the result of our becoming New Creatures that we have a right to these things. What our Lord Jesus, as our great Advocate, does for us is to make us acceptable sacrifices; because it is only upon our becoming acceptable sacrifices that we can present our bodies; this being done, the Father accepts them. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the *mercies* of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." – Rom. 12:1.

We see that our Lord Jesus was the first that responded to this call. We see that he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." We see that there was a merit in *laying down that life which he had a right to retain.* We see, on the other hand, that we who *will* to walk in his steps and to accept a share of that same call to enter into covenant relation with God by sacrifice, are imperfect; therefore, that we have no right to life, and having *no right* to an earthly life, we could not offer our earthly life in sacrifice to God. It is then – when we realize our condition – that we are drawn by Divine grace unto Christ and it is indicated to us that *he* has merit and is willing to appropriate of this to us, so as to make our sacrifices acceptable.

It is not the Divine proposition that our sacrifices shall be set aside and counted as nothing. The Divine proposition, on the contrary, is: You have something, but it is imperfect. Now, if Jesus will appear as your Advocate, he has the ability to make your sacrifice acceptable – because he has the power of imputing to it of *his merit*. If you have the perfect mind, the perfect will, you have then, to begin with, the most important thing in my sight in the form of sacrifice. But the whole difficulty lies in the fact that you have imperfection inherited from your first parents. Christ will do something for you that will make your sacrifice acceptable to me. [R4764 : page 55]

But what will he do for us? What will he give us? Will he give us his righteousness? No, if he gave away his righteousness he would not be righteous. He maintains his own righteousness. What, then, will he give us? We answer that he has already made the gift, so far as Justice is concerned. Eighteen centuries ago he appeared to satisfy the demands of Justice against our race. The demands of Justice were "A life for a life" – a ransom-price. He laid down his life a corresponding price. He did not, however, appropriate the merit of that life to the world. It is still his to control and to dispense. He did not, when he ascended up on high, appropriate that merit to the Church in the sense of *giving it up*. But he did *impute*, to all of those who willed to come unto the Father, a sufficiency of the merit of his sacrifice to make them whole and complete.

How could he do this? Because he had a sufficiency of merit to have applied it, had he chosen so to do, for the satisfaction of the sins of the whole world. But instead of doing so, he has loaned the merit of that righteousness, and all the rights that go with it, to all those who, during this Age, desire to become his footstep-followers. So, when they take this position, he becomes their Advocate by virtue of the application of enough merit to cover all their defects. His merit appropriated to these imperfect sacrifices, makes each one of them acceptable to the Father. Thus each one of the Church is enabled to suffer with him – sharing of his cup and being baptized with him into

death. When the [R4765 : page 55] Father begets them of the holy Spirit, they need the great Advocate to stand as *their* Advocate, and in every time of need he still stands ready. As the Apostle says, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous." – I John 2:1.

## **OUR LORD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS AS A MAN AND HIS RIGHT TO HUMAN LIFE IN THE HANDS OF JUSTICE**

What, then, was it that he gave? The answer is, that when he sacrificed himself he was *righteous as a man*. It was, then, that *righteousness and consequently that right to human life* that he possessed when he consecrated and then gave up. It is *that* which is in the hands of Justice. In this is *included life-rights for all the world*. And the basis was *his own rights as a man*. But he does not *give those things up to us*, but merely *imputes* to us the *benefit* of them.

Suppose we had in the bank a thousand dollars, and suppose we said to the banker, "I wish to leave this in your hands in favor of certain notes which I am going to endorse." We then, accordingly, endorse notes for *you*. Now, our thousand dollars that was in the bank is merely a security. We are imputing the merit of that thousand dollars to you on the notes which we endorse.

Thus Christ imputes to us his merit; and the great One to take note of this and act upon it is the Heavenly Father. The Father immediately accepts the sacrifice and the person is begotten of the holy Spirit and that person is reckoned, so far as his flesh is concerned, dead. This means that this merit of Jesus will continue to be imputed to such persons until they shall have either been born of the Spirit or become subjects of the Second Death. And so they must each one die, in one or the other way, that every bit of merit that was used in the case of any one of them will be released, to be used for the world in a different way; namely, to *give them*, under the terms of the New Covenant, the rights which Jesus sacrificed at Calvary.

We have not a sufficiency of merit for the Father to accept it as a sacrifice. To illustrate: He that is guilty of the violation of one point of the Law, is guilty of the one hundred points. Any one with ninety-nine points in his favor would fail just as thoroughly as the one who had only fifty.

Now, then, that is just the position of mankind as a race. Justice cannot accept anything but a perfect sacrifice. We might say that we are in various degrees of imperfection, and that we range all the way from twenty-five points to seventy-five points. What must be done to make us acceptable? The one with twenty-five points needs seventy-five points; and the one who has seventy-five points would just as much need the Advocate and just as much need the imputation of Christ's merit as the one with only twenty-five points; but he would not need *so large an amount*. The Lord placed the full amount in the hands of the Father, and then made it applicable to all such as recognize their need, and it is just as free to the one with twenty-five points of character as to the one with seventy-five points.

The Church's sacrifice is *not to get the world free*, but to *get herself into a sacrificial condition*. In God's arrangement, in God's purpose, our sacrifice is *not necessary for the world*. Christ's sacrifice is all that is necessary for the satisfaction of Justice for the sins of the world.

All this arrangement is purely for us, in order that we may, through it, have an opportunity of entering into the "high calling." But actually we are not anything, because the whole thing is arranged for us in the Father's hands. We add nothing to it. Our sacrificing is that we may suffer with the Lord; and, consequently, reign with him. "For unto you it is given in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." – Phil. 1:29.

But one asks if in any way, either individually or collectively, the Church in any sense of the word purchases the heavenly inheritance.

## HOW THE SPIRITUAL NATURE IS OBTAINED

The glory, honor and immortality which the Lord purposes to give to the Church, *is not given free*. Jesus never purchased for the Church the divine nature or any spiritual thing whatever. The only things that he did purchase were the *human* rights and the *human* nature. This which we get free, through the imputation of his merit, we may use and purchase with it that with which we may obtain the spiritual nature. This is the Father's "high calling." He invites us to *make the exchange*, or *barter*, giving up our *all*.

In the case of our Lord, the matter is somewhat different. He received it as a *reward*, and besides, held a certain merit which he had to give away as he pleased. We make consecration, and are acceptable to God by means of the *imputation* of Christ's merit, which covers our imperfections, in order that we may share with our Lord in his great work of uplifting mankind and with a view of sharing with him his Kingdom glory, as members of his Body – members of the Royal Priesthood.

Above we used the expression twenty-five, fifty and seventy-five points of character. We did not mean to say that principle is to be sacrificed, that good character is to be sacrificed. No; we used the word *character* in the sense of proper conditions or elements of character, elements of a proper *human* character. With the thought in mind that we have seventy-five elements of character and twenty-five that are blemished (and all humanity is blemished twenty-five, fifty or seventy-five points, as the case may be) we realize our helplessness, our necessity. Now this that our Lord imputes to us, is to *make [R4765 : page 56] good our deficiency*; then all that we have would *stand for* or *represent* a perfect human being – nothing *more*, nothing *less*. It was an *imperfect* human being the moment before; but the *imputation of Christ's merit* constituted it a *perfect* man or woman.

The Divine terms upon which life might be enjoyed perpetually were the keeping of the Law; so any one who could keep the Law

perfectly could have claimed life eternal – "The man that doeth those things shall live by them." (Rom. 10:5.) God had given this Law to the Jewish nation, whose typical sacrifices foreshadowed the real sin-offering.

The middle wall of partition being broken down, there was an opportunity for each member of that race to present himself in sacrifice; none being totally depraved, all had some elements of character and possessed some degree of merit, even though not a sufficient degree to claim life under the Law. It was to such of these, then, as had willing minds and honest hearts, that Christ applied of his merit for the very purpose of enabling them to be sacrifices. God has no dealings with those who are rebellious in their minds; they are out of the list. Christ has not appeared for them at all, and has never proposed to do so. He is proposing to be the Advocate of those only who have first turned away from sin desiring to be in harmony with God. It is the man whose mind is fully submitted to God, and only such a one, who is being dealt with.

