

## THE SACRIFICE OF THE CHRIST

AT JORDAN our Lord made a consecration of Himself, even unto death. That is to say, He was baptized, immersed. He said, "Henceforth, I shall have no will of My own. Whatever is Your will, Father, shall be My will. I shall do anything that You will have Me do; not merely those things required in obedience to the Divine Law – failure to do which would be sin – but all the things written in the Book. I have given up My life. Direct Me through Your providences and through Your words that I may see Your will and do it." This was not a giving away of life in the sense of giving it to the world; for He was giving Himself to God. When He made His consecration unto God, He was prepared to face even death itself and to give up His existence if such should be the Father's will. – Psa. 40:7,8; Heb. 10:7.

Following His consecration He began His ministry. As He advanced in the service of fulfilling the Father's will, He submitted Himself to everything that was written in the Book. The language of His heart was, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me), to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:7), and in His submission of Himself He gave out His power, strength, to such an extent that it is stated that great multitudes of people out of all Palestine and beyond, "came to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases; and they that were vexed with unclean spirits; and they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him; for there went virtue [vitality] out of Him and healed them all." (Luke 6:17-19.) He kept back nothing for the purpose of recuperating His vigor, but was daily yielding His life in obedience to what He understood to be the Father's will; He was, therefore, doing the things pleasing to God – everything that God wished to have Him do, as well as the things written in the Law.

## "IT IS FINISHED!"

When on the cross our Lord cried, "It is finished!" He had "poured out His soul unto death"; He had "made His soul an offering for sin" (John 19:30; Isa. 53:12,10); He had permitted His life to be taken from Him in obedience to the Father's arrangement. These things had all been prefigured in the type. On such a day and in such a month the passover lamb must be slain. Our Lord recognized everything particularized in the Law – whether by direct command or in type – as *God's will*. He declared that *men* did not take His life from Him, in the sense of doing something that He was *unwilling* to have them do. He had truly said, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; Thy Law is within [in the midst of] My heart" (Psa. 40:8), and He permitted them to put Him to death, because He was submitting to *God's will*.

Our Lord realized that His life was taken away *fraudulently*. He did not resist, but allowed this to be done. He had agreed that He would not resist, that He would do whatever the Father sent Him to do. After He had once made a consecration could He have withdrawn? No; for He had covenanted to submit to whatever Divine providence might indicate to be the Father's will. He had entered into a positive *contract* under which He had obligated Himself to be *faithful* to God's will, and God had bound Himself that He would give our Lord the exceeding great reward of exaltation to the divine nature because of that faithful obedience. God had given Him the Holy Spirit as a bond of that contract.

## HUMAN LIFE-RIGHTS BELONG TO OUR LORD

There is a wide difference between making an *exchange* and bestowing a *reward*. To *exchange* is to *part with* something in return for something else regarded as an *equivalent*. To *reward* is to give something in acknowledgment of *merit*. This word conveys no idea of *obligation*. Whoever gives a reward acts altogether of his own free will.

The arrangement made between the Father and our Lord did not, therefore, involve our Lord's right to earthly life; for the Father did not contract to give Him life on the highest plane of existence in exchange for His life as a human being. Had this been the case our Lord would have had nothing to give to any of the human race – either to the Church or to the world of mankind.

On the contrary, the Father was to *reward* our Lord by exalting Him far above angels, principalities and powers as an acknowledgment of the Son's obedience [R5086 : page 263] even unto death. The earthly life-rights are still our Lord's. The fact that He is to give human life to mankind is evidence that He has the *right* to that earthly life.

We do not understand that our Lord Jesus *agreed* with the Father merely to lay down *His life*. So great was His love for and His confidence in Jehovah, that He was eager to carry out the Father's plan for the blessing of mankind, whatever the cost might be to Himself. The Scriptures set forth His position at consecration, in the words, "Lo, I come to do *Thy will*, O God." How *much* of God's will did this assertion involve? "In the volume [the roll] of the Book it is written of Me," I come prepared to do *everything* that is *written in the Book*. Not only had He come with God's Law written in His heart, but He had offered to do everything written in the scroll of the Book.

How could Jesus know what was written in the Book? There is every reason to believe that He did not, at the time of His consecration, know all that was therein written. The things written in the Book, written in the types and shadows of the Old Testament, were understood by none of the Jews. Many of them, doubtless, our Lord did not fully understand before His baptism. God's will is expressed in the types of the Law Covenant. Our Lord had said, "Everything written in the Book." But who will say that at that time He knew *how much* was involved? As a matter of fact, He did not know until after His baptism, when the higher things were opened to Him and made

known to Him; and following this enlightenment He went into the wilderness to study and meditate upon them.

## DEAD TO EVERYTHING BUT THE WILL OF GOD

Although prior to His consecration, Jesus did not know everything written in the Book about Himself, yet His *consecration* was *complete*. He had pledged His whole life to the doing of *God's will*. His own will was *dead* to all else. Later, He realized that His Covenant meant also actual death as a *malefactor*.

The question has been asked, Did Jesus after His resurrection have human life-rights by reason of the fact that they were not relinquished in death, or by virtue of the fact that He had been appointed "Heir of all things"? – Heb. 1:2.

This, like many other subjects, is capable of various shades of thought and expression. Our Lord possessed a right to human life and to all earthly things. This right to life and all its blessings Adam had forfeited by disobedience, but Jesus had secured it by obedience and held it absolutely free from *risk of loss*. Then, if some one, contrary to Law, cut Him off from His rights, this *cutting off* did not cause Him to *forfeit* any of them.

In other words, we cannot see how anyone could deprive our Lord of His life-rights in a judicial way. To our understanding, Jesus was cut off from His life and **[R5086 : page 264]** from all the rights that pertained to it by a fanatical company of fallen men; but their action could not *destroy* any right which God's Law had given to Him. So, then, when God raised Him from the dead and rewarded Him with a higher nature and certain wonderful blessings connected therewith, this exaltation could not interfere with the RIGHT which God's LAW had given and which He had neither *given away* nor *forfeited*. He had merely allowed men to take His *life* from Him, thus separating Him from His RIGHTS, which remained His.

## HOW OUR LORD BECOMES FATHER OF MANKIND

Since our Lord therefore had neither forfeited those rights nor given them away, then when God highly exalted Him because of His obedience unto death, this right to human life was amongst the things that He possessed. This right was His irrespective of anything which the Father *gave* Him. It is because He holds this right to human life as an *asset* – His *legally* and not as a *gift* – that He is said to be the LIFE-GIVER.

During the Millennial Age, in fulfilment of the Divine promise, our Lord will give mankind restitution to perfect human nature. In doing this He will not be giving something that the Father has given Him, but He will be acting in a special sense in His own name. If He did not have this right to everlasting life to give, then He could not be spoken of as the LIFE-GIVER. But since He possesses this right to human life, it is His to bestow during the thousand years of His reign.

At the end of the thousand years our Lord will no longer be the Life-Giver. He cannot be the Life-Giver to angels nor to any other than mankind, for His right appertained merely to Himself as a perfect *human being*. What He will *give away* to humanity in general, is what He now imputes, or *loans*, to the Church, to permit us to share with Him in sacrificial work and in His glorious work of the future.

## RIGHT TO HUMAN LIFE OUR LORD'S PERSONAL GIFT TO MANKIND

We do not see how as "Heir of all things" our Lord could gain any additional control of His *earthly* nature and *earthly* life-rights which were His by obedience to the Law. As Heir of all things He will be the representative of the Father to all eternity. He takes the position at the right hand of authority on High. In due time, every knee shall bow to Him, and even the angels shall be subjected unto Him.

All these things came to our Lord as a part of the reward which the Father promised. But this one particular feature, the restitution of all things lost by Adam, is a special privilege coming as His own gift to humanity – that which He purchased at His own cost; that is to say, the laying down of His earthly life is the basis upon which He obtained the new nature and the right to control that earthly life, which shall be applied in restitution in behalf of the world.

If He had already applied that life and had actually given it up, then we do not see how He could accomplish anything special for mankind. But since He has this asset of earthly rights and privileges to give away, the process of bestowing it will continue during the Millennial reign; and what He will give is what He has by reason of His obedience to the Law. – Lev. 18:5.

### **SCRIPTURAL USAGE OF THE TERM "SACRIFICE"**

The word "sacrifice" may be used from different standpoints. If an animal were killed for some benevolent reason or purpose, it might be spoken of as a sacrifice, particularly if it were something done in harmony with the Divine arrangement. But the mere killing of an animal would not be sacrifice. A dog might be killed without being sacrificed. But if the dog's life were surrendered for the purpose of scientific experiment, we might say that it was given in sacrifice to science. From this standpoint we should view the matter of sacrifice. The lives of God's consecrated people are surrendered for a purpose.

At our consecration we present our bodies as living sacrifices. We give up to the Lord our life, our human bodies and everything that we possess. It does not follow, however, that God accepts this sacrifice to be put to death in some *special* manner. Some may spend their lives in serving the Lord's Truth, and may be said to be *sacrificed* as truly as though they had died at the stake. We may say to the Lord, All my life is in Your hands; do with it as You please. If it means joy or pain, sacrifice or pleasure, we surrender our own will in the matter and

become like unto Jesus, who said, "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." – John 6:38.

## WHAT DO WE SACRIFICE?

The sacrifice of Jesus was made at Jordan, but it was finished at Calvary. His consecration was absolute. The killing of the bullock is symbolical of what Jesus did when He surrendered His *will*. And so with us. Following in His footsteps we become dead in the sense that we sacrifice our wills. But in what manner the Lord may accept that sacrificed will is His affair. We give it freely, that the mind of Christ may dwell in us richly.

We part forever with the right to our wills, but we do not sacrifice our lives, although we know that the giving up of our wills ultimately leads to the giving up of our lives. But we have nothing to do with the *parting with our rights*. When Jesus becomes our Advocate, He takes us in charge. From the time we give up our wills, our bodies are counted as His Body. We merely give up our wills in the matter and leave everything for *Him* to dispose of. *He* attends to the sacrificing; for He is the High Priest; *we* are not.

Similarly, the great *outcome* is in the Lord's hands. During the Gospel Age He imputes of His merit to the Church. When He has finished the work of sacrificing He will apply the merit of this great sacrifice, which He calls His own, for sealing the New Covenant for the world. But we have nothing to do with the *sacrificing*. We leave it all to our Attorney, or Advocate.

The New Creature is certainly the owner, or controller, of the body and is made so by the Lord. We as New Creatures have a work to perform with our body. When our Lord accepts us as His servants, we are to use all our talents as His stewards. In that sense of the word, the body will be under the control of the New Creature until death.

## LIFE-RIGHTS MERELY IMPUTED TO THE CHURCH

Our position is somewhat different from that of our Lord. We had no earthly life-rights to begin with; and we had, therefore, none to give away. They were forfeited by Adam's sin. But if we become the Lord's disciples, if we surrender all to Him and accept the merit that He is willing to *impute* to us, our great Advocate will *count* us as members of His Body and permit us to share in His sufferings. When He imputed His merit to us *all rights passed to Him*. He gave His members whatever right they have and whatever privilege of earthly right comes to them.

When it shall be necessary for our Lord to use these rights in the future for the world, He will be quite competent and privileged to do so. Having never violated [R5086 : page 265] the Divine Law He will have the full right to use, command and direct in respect to all of His earthly rights, which He did not *forfeit*, but which He laid down with the understanding that He should *use them again* in giving life to the world, so that He would be called the Father of mankind, in respect to their future life.

Nowhere in the Scriptures is the statement made that Christ came to *sacrifice Himself*. What the Scriptures say is that He came to *do the Father's will*. He did not refuse to drink the "cup" which the Father prepared for Him, but drank it to the dregs. And for His obedience to this Will, even unto death – no matter how long or how short a time the Father should be pleased to have that life continue – He received the reward. He gave over *all* into the Father's hands. *This* was a *sacrifice*; for He had a right to use His life. But His obedience to His Father's will led to the sacrifice for which He obtained the reward.

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