

DISTINCTION BETWEEN KEEPING AND FULFILLING THE LAW

THE QUESTION, Did the keeping of the Law Covenant require the death of Christ? is a peculiar and very deep one. On one side it might be argued that the death of Christ was sacrificial, that no law would be just which would require the death of an innocent person; that since God's Law is just, it did not require the death of an innocent man, and that therefore it was not necessary for Jesus to die in order to fulfil the Law. But this is only one side of the question.

The other side of the argument is that our Lord Jesus, who loved His God with all His heart, soul, mind and strength, and who had consecrated His life to do the Father's will, must do that will and avoid everything contrary to it, in order to live in harmony with His consecration. As soon, therefore, as He learned that it was God's will that a redemption price of a perfect human life should be paid for Adam and the world of mankind, He would present Himself in consecration and faithfully carry out all that is implied in that consecration, because He loved God with all His heart, soul, mind and strength.

It would be reasonable, also, to expect that if our Lord knew that the hundreds of millions to whom He had become "neighbor" by becoming human were in great difficulty and could be delivered only by a sacrifice on His part, He would, if He loved His neighbor as Himself, want to do something for their relief. This desire would lead Him to make the sacrifice.

If to this we add the thought that God would not permit our Lord to perish, but would restore Him to life and glory, and that Jesus had in mind the promise that He would not be suffered to

remain in death, we at once perceive that He would be willing to die for His unjust neighbor, because He loved His neighbor as Himself.

These two views, so directly opposite, nevertheless coincide in that it was left open for our Lord to *will* what He would do. The Father gave Him an opportunity and set before Him a great reward; the Father did not entrap our Lord into an engagement from which He could not draw back. When we come to view the subject from this standpoint, we see the reasonableness of the whole arrangement.

In His consecration at baptism our Lord had said, "Lo, I come...to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:7); I will keep nothing back that You require. Such obedience would have been as much as the Law could require of any one. On the other hand, Justice would not require a sacrifice, for Justice could not demand it. *Willingness* to do anything that Justice would demand constituted His keeping of the Law. This point is *so fine* that it is *almost impossible* to explain it in language. We can know, however, that the Father set before Jesus the great reward, and that for the joy set before Him He endured the cross and despised the shame. – Heb. 12:1,2.

GOD'S WILL EXPRESSED IN THE TYPES

There is a distinction between *fulfilling* the Law and *keeping* the Law. The Jews did *neither*. They partially kept the Law and *endeavored* to do still further than they were *able* to do. But they could not fulfil the Law; for it is so great that it is beyond the power of man to fulfil all of its requirements.

The Law consists of two different parts. The one is a regulation of the morals – the duty of all toward God and toward fellow-men. In this sense of the word, the Law stands for justice – for what is right. The Jews endeavored to do right and thus to keep the Law, but were unable to do so on account of hereditary weaknesses.

Our Lord Jesus, however, kept the Law in this sense. By so doing He earned the right to everlasting life on [R5165 : page 22] the human plane. This the world will do in the next Age. They will be enabled to keep the Law and will get everlasting life, the reward of obedience to the Law. But Jesus did more than keep the Law of Justice. He also *fulfilled* that part of the Law which was applicable to Him, and He is *still fulfilling* the Law.

The other part of the Law consists of the ceremonial features, which constitute the types and shadows mentioned by St. Paul. (Heb. 10:1.) These prophetic features of the Law represent the Divine will in respect to the means by which mankind will be restored from the plane of degradation, sin and death to Divine favor. This prophetic fulfilling of the Law consisted in the carrying out in antitype of one important feature – the Passover institution. The killing of the lamb, the sprinkling of the blood and the eating of the flesh, were prophetic – typical.

Jesus fulfilled His part of the type when He was put to death. It was only by virtue of His sacrifice of His will entirely to the Divine will that He was able to fulfil the prophecies, for these were not commands to mankind in general. In these was a suggestion of things which were not commanded, but which God desired to have accomplished at some time through some one, and through which the Redemption of the human race and the Restitution of all things lost by Adam would be effected.

In the performance of the Atonement Day sacrifices the blood was taken into the Most Holy and typically made satisfaction for sin. Jesus accomplished a part of this work. Since then He has ascended on High and made satisfaction for us, the Church class, by means of which we may walk in His footsteps by consecration. (Heb. 9:24.) All down through the Gospel Age He has been accepting this class, and eventually will accomplish their sacrifice. This was typified by the killing of the Lord's goat.

Jesus, we see, has been fulfilling the Law during these eighteen hundred years, as well as during His ministry. This work will not be finished until the end of the Age. Jesus said that He came not to destroy, but to fulfil the things of the Law (Matt. 5:17); and He will continue the fulfilment of the types of the Law during the thousand years, until all is fulfilled at the close of the Millennial Age. Some of these things are future; such as the sprinkling of the blood of the antitypical Lord's goat, the sending away of the antitypical scape-goat, and the appearance **[R5165 : page 23]** of the antitypical High Priest to bless the people. It will take the entire thousand years of Christ's reign to get back all that was lost through Adam's disobedience and that is to be restored to mankind through the merit of Christ.

THAT FEATURE OF THE LAW FULFILLED BY CHRIST'S DEATH

The moral Law – the Ten Commandments – and the Covenant, of which it is a part, promised life to those who would keep its requirements. Jesus could have had that everlasting life by doing everything that the Law required, for the Law demands no more than justice. He could have obeyed every command of the Law without sacrificing any of His rights. But the prophetic features of the Law could not have been fulfilled unless some one had sacrificed his life, and the one who would do this must be the equivalent of the one who had sinned. Since the one who had sinned was perfect, in the image of God, the one who would be a corresponding price to fulfil the Law and to bring out all those blessings to the world that the Law prophesies, must be one who could fully keep the Law. Only such a person would be competent to make the sacrifice and thus to fulfil the prophetic features of the Law.

This requirement was fully met by Jesus, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners" – everything that Justice could expect. He gladly kept the Law, and did even more.

He proposed to do everything written in the Book; for He had said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (Psa. 40:8) – everything that had been written. His consecration went beyond the moral Law and embraced everything that God had written prophetically. All this He fulfilled. As a result He is the Savior, "able to save to the uttermost" all that come to the Father through Him. – Heb. 7:25.

We cannot think that God would be offended with any one who came up to the requirements of the Law, but who did not go *beyond*. Since God had said, "If any one keep all this Law, I will do My part and give him everlasting life," Justice could ask no more. If such a one should not go forward to sacrifice, Justice *could not* be offended, for it could not *demand* that he do so.

In fact, the Father does not *require* the righteous of this Age to sacrifice, nor will He expect the world to do so in coming to the plane of human perfection. But if God should set before any of the human family an *opportunity* to offer their lives in doing the Divine will, they should esteem this a privilege. The Father would not consign one to death, however, who should fail to do this. But every one who loves the Lord should think, "Here is my opportunity to show my trust, my loyalty to God." In this respect the example of Jesus will stand out for all eternity to angels and to men, so that if ever God gave even a *hint* of what His will would be, they would hasten to do that will and not hesitate for any consideration.

There is a lesson also of love in the matter. We are not to content ourselves with saying, "I did not lie; I did not steal; I did unto my neighbor as I would wish done unto myself." We are not to stop with this as a sufficiency; no one will get life on any plane if he does no more than this. Our privilege is to anticipate God's will through watching the types of the Law and the words of our Lord and Head. We are to count all things as loss and dross in comparison with this opportunity which we have. Nothing else should be counted so great a privilege as that of following in the footsteps of Jesus.

FOR CHILDREN OF BELIEVERS
MORNING PRAYER

Dear Father, hear a little child
Who offers thanks to Thee;
Through all the darkness Thou hast kept
A watch-care over me.
O Father, keep me through this day,
I would to Thee belong;
May love control my little hands,
May kindness rule my tongue.
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done
Upon this earth again;
Dear Father, hear my little prayer
For Jesus' sake. Amen.

EVENING PRAYER

Dear Lord, before sweet slumber comes
To close my weary eyes,
Up to Thy Throne of Heavenly grace
My voice in prayer would rise.
For all the blessings of this day
I give Thee thanks and praise.
Forgive me, Lord, for Jesus' sake,
For all my naughty ways;
And as I lay me down to sleep
Do Thou an angel send
To watch beside me all the night
For Jesus' sake. Amen.

– *Rebecca F. Doney.*

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