

[R313 : page 3]

JESUS MADE PERFECT.

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (Heb. 5:9.)

Knowledge of both evil and good is essential to a hearty acceptance of the good and invariable rejection of evil. Therefore, we believe that Jehovah has given, and is giving such knowledge to every intelligent creature, both in heaven and on earth.

We see how all of the human family are getting their knowledge by contact and actual experience with sin and its penalty – misery and death. And we believe, as we have previously expressed, that the heavenly creatures – angels and arch-angels, are learning the same lessons by watching man's experiences. Thus mankind in general, and the church in particular, is made a "spectacle to angels." (1 Cor. 4:9.)

If we look backward, we see him who as a man was called Jesus, in his pre-human existence, "The beginning of the creation of God" – The agent and "righteous servant" of Jehovah, in the creation of all that has since been created.

Perfect as a being, as are all of Jehovah's creatures, yet he knew only good – had never experienced evil, nor witnessed its effects. Later, after angels and arch-angels had been created he witnessed the apostasy and rebellion on the part of Satan and his host, then the setting up of the rival spiritual kingdom defying the [R314 : page 3] power of Jehovah to overthrow it, and offering freedom from all restraints and from all obedience to God, to those who would join them.

Though the law of God was "The wages of sin is death and the soul (being) that sinneth, it shall die – yet the execution of that

sentence tarried and no evidence of his power to enforce it, was given, and even yet, though he declares that Satan shall, be destroyed, we see it not accomplished. How for ages he has seemed to triumph over Jehovah, his influence even reaching the intelligent creatures of earth, beguiling and alluring them into sin and consigning them to death. What a test of faith in, and love for Jehovah, was this spectacle! For hundreds and thousands of years they must walk by faith in the power of Jehovah to accomplish the destruction of evil doers, and reward the patient fidelity of the loyal and obedient.

Let us now in thought stand side by side with Jesus when tempted by Satan and imagine the trial of faith, he endured, for we believe that he, as we, walked by faith and not by sight. He had witnessed Jehovah's works of creation and preservation; he had marked the wise and loving benevolence that adapted competent means to glorious ends, and such was the strength of love and unbounded confidence awakened by this general knowledge of Jehovah's character, that he did not for a moment hesitate to submit all he had, even life itself, to his will, for the accomplishment of his purposes. The language of his obedient faith was "Though he slay me yet will I trust in him."

So he submitted to the Father's will to accomplish the work of redeeming mankind by exchanging his glorious body and heavenly honors for the form and the nature of man, that by so doing he might be obedient unto death – even the death of the cross, and thus become a ransom for man. All this he did by faith, for he had never yet seen any being restored from the death condition into which he volunteered to go, trusting alone in God's ability as promised, to restore him to a higher form of life, and through him to restore humanity to its perfection.

But when he had become a man, Satan again appeared to tempt him sorely, and we might thus paraphrase the temptation: Ah, says he,

how unwise you have been; once you were greater than me, now I am your superior – a powerful spiritual being, while you have become a man – "lower than the angels." How absurd to let Jehovah thus degrade you. True, he has made great promises and greatly boasts of his power to execute them, but he cannot. I have the power of death (Heb. 2:14.) and the human race are all subject to my "power" and never has Jehovah been able to liberate even one from death, nor destroy me as he threatened. Now, let me, as your friend, counsel you wisely: Since you have so unwisely forfeited your higher form of life, so that you may never regain it, don't give up, but keep the life you now have. If you die you never shall live again, neither will you be able to liberate mankind from death.

Why should you waste it in a fruitless effort for this race?

If you are the Son of God command that these stones be made bread (Matt. 4:3) – use your power for self-gratification and preservation, and don't present your body a living sacrifice, dying daily, when you have a perfect right to life. Jesus answers "Man shall not live by bread alone," I could not enjoy life, even with all my wants supplied, out of communion with my Father.

Your trust in Jehovah is misplaced; first prove Him and see if he will keep his word. Cast yourself down from this pinnacle of the temple – it is written, "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone."

Jesus replied: "It is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." We may not thus test the Almighty by needless exposure.

Then Satan showed Jesus the kingdoms and honors of earth, saying: I am the "Prince of this world." (John 14:30.) All the kingdoms of earth are under my control; you long for power yourself to do good to mankind; now, I propose that you shall be my representative in the

world and rule all these kingdoms. I will put all under your control, if you will yield allegiance to me. You will be great indeed, for you are a perfect man, while all others are imperfect, and you can live forever. Since your life is not forfeited, no one can take it from you. You can thus be Lord of lords and King of kings; to bless mankind throughout all generations. All this power you can have without suffering and you can enter upon the work of blessing at once. And by your wise and prudent ruling, you can greatly elevate and benefit them while they live, whereas, if you die, you simply waste your life and benefit no one.

But Jesus again replies – No matter what inducements you may offer, I will yield allegiance to none but Jehovah – It is written, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve." Thus, his faith in Jehovah's power and promise was tested beyond our power to comprehend; but faith founded on the knowledge of Jehovah's character triumphed – "By his knowledge, shall my righteous servant justify many." By lack of that knowledge of God, Adam fell into transgression while through his knowledge, Jesus remained the righteous servant – therefore, able to justify many.

By faith, he consecrated; by faith, he resisted all temptation; by faith, he endured the self-sacrifice even unto death, as a reward for which he was made perfect as a divine being – the first-born into the divine family.

Thus in Jesus' case faith ended in fruition of that which Jehovah had promised, and being thus perfected – "exalted," as a divine being – "he is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him."

Hence the author and finisher of our faith is he who was made divinely perfect, through the sufferings of the sinless human nature even unto death. (Heb. 12:2.)

This agrees with Phil. 2:8-11, where Paul declares that Jesus "being found in fashion as a man, (30 years old) humbled (sacrificed himself during 3½ years) and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore, God also HATH HIGHLY EXALTED HIM [to Glory – IMMORTALITY – DIVINITY –], and given him a name above every name... that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God, the Father.

As with the leader and forerunner so with the disciples: We are being made perfect through sufferings yet not the flesh (or human nature) is being perfected but our new nature. The outward man perishes but the inward man is renewed day by day until in our resurrection or change we shall be "raised spiritual" like unto Christ's glorious body – made perfect.
