

"THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH"

OUR FINITE MINDS have difficulty in understanding some of the deep things of Scripture because of our insufficiency of knowledge and of experience. All that we know of our Lord's pre-human existence is revealed in the Word of God. The Scriptures state that our Lord was rich and became poor; not that He remained rich and seemed to become poor, but that He actually became poor that we might become rich. The Apostle says that He divested Himself of those conditions that He had before He became human, and that He took a bondman's form. He was made flesh. The explanation is given, "A body hast Thou prepared Me," a human body, and thus He was made "a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death." – Heb. 10:5; 2:9.

Putting together the Scriptural statements on the subject we have this: In His pre-human existence our Lord was the *Logos*, "the beginning of the creation of God," the Alpha of all God's creation, and the Omega in that Jehovah created only this One. Of the *Logos* it is written, "All things were made by Him, and without Him [R5064 : page 229] was not anything made that was made." (John 1:3.) He was on the spirit plane, next to the Father.

In the Divine Plan of the Ages, formulated long before, a proposition was made our Lord with a view to the redemption of mankind; provision was made that if obedient to the Father's will, the *Logos* would receive still further exaltation, even to the divine nature. For this joy set before Him, our Lord took the various steps necessary to complete the great work of redemption. The contract into which He entered with the Father was one which involved much humiliation. While there was a sacrifice of power, of honor, of glory, yet no sacrifice of life was involved in the first step taken; namely, His acceptance of the Father's arrangement that He should be made flesh; that He should become a human being, that He should give up His existence on the heavenly plane.

Originally, as the *Logos*, our Lord was a soul on the spirit plane, in the sense that any intelligent being is a soul; for the word "soul" signifies being; and the transfer of the life principle to a human body brought Him to the earthly plane. The life principle was the same that He had before, therefore the personality was the same. It was important to have identity of mind; and this He had by Divine arrangement.

A BODY GIVEN FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEATH

The Scriptures do not explain how the spark of life belonging to the spirit being known as the *Logos* became transferred to the human plane. When our Lord was thus changed, He merely took the step of getting ready to become the sacrifice for sinners. In His pre-existent state He could not have given the corresponding price for Adam; for He had not the human life to offer. But when He became a human being and had reached the age of maturity, He was in condition to be the Sin-offering.

We would say that our Lord as a human being was the *same soul* as in His pre-existent condition; for He had the same life principle as before; and that when He became human He did not die as a spirit being. The Scriptures declare that our Lord was "made flesh," a human being; and that the difference between Him and mankind in general was that He was perfect – "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" – separate from the remainder of the human race. (Heb. 7:26.) The Scriptures also explain that this difference resulted from the fact that He was specially begotten. The life principle by which He was conceived came directly from the Heavenly Father.

This explanation is altogether different from the theory known as Incarnation. The thought of the theory of incarnation is that a spirit being took possession of an earthly being – became incarnate, dwelt in the flesh, in the same way that some are possessed of evil spirits which dwell within them. This, we believe, is a wrong thought respecting our Lord which has come down from the "Dark Ages."

There is nothing in the Scriptures about *incarnation*. The Scriptures do not say that our Lord's *body* died, while the *spirit being* within it remained alive. But the Bible says that our Lord left the glory which He had with the Father and was found in fashion as a man; that He humbled Himself unto death, even unto the death of the cross; that He was "put to death in the flesh." – John 17:4,5; I Pet. 3:18; Phil. 2:8.

"MADE FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US"

From what we know of childhood we recognize it as the period of development. And so we read of our Lord: "And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him...And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (Luke 2:40,52.) His was not a mind that had all the experiences and intelligence of His pre-existent state. We read that He *grew* in wisdom. His *mind* grew. Of course, being perfect He would learn much more rapidly and accurately than would others; and this accounts for the fact that as a child He was able to confound the Doctors of the Law. With His natural qualities of mind He was able to grasp the situation, to take in things rapidly.

St. Luke tells us that at the age of twelve years our Lord accompanied His mother and Joseph to Jerusalem. The Jewish children were accustomed to attending religious services; and it was a custom that Jewish boys should make a consecration at the age at which Jesus did. Jesus knew that He was different from other boys. Very likely He told them the facts relating to His miraculous birth. It is assumed by some that He was even charged with having an illegitimate birth. But since we do not know definitely about this, we must confine ourselves to the Scriptures.

Our Lord came into the world in a miraculous manner for the purpose of fulfilling the prophecies, which were all to attain fulfilment in Him. Naturally He would avail Himself of the first opportunity of ascertaining the requirements. When at twelve years of age He learned from the Doctors of the Law that He could not assume the priestly

function as a boy, He made no further attempt, but was subject to His parents, or to Mary and her husband, who properly enough were His guardians until He reached thirty years of age, when His first step was to make *full* consecration of Himself.

"I COME TO DO THY WILL"

Our Lord at thirty years of age certainly had much knowledge that Adam did not possess when he was on trial. Our Lord had some knowledge of what constitutes sin and its penalty. He had also knowledge of the fact that God had arranged for the redemption of mankind, through the great Mediator of the New Covenant – a Savior, a Redeemer, a Deliverer. He knew that the *inability of others* to keep the Divine Law written in the Decalogue and *His ability* to keep that Law, constituted the difference between Himself and others.

Doubtless our Lord's mother had told Him of His miraculous birth and of the message that had come through Gabriel and of the prophecy of Anna and of Simeon. And He had in mind the prophecy respecting Himself and the future of the great Messiah that was to come and deliver the world. All this knowledge was very valuable.

But the thing that our Lord evidently lacked was the knowledge of the deeper things of the Scriptures. He evidently found perplexities in the Bible; for He had not received the Holy Spirit. Although He might be better qualified to understand these things than were the fallen race, yet, as the Apostle says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,...neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (I Cor. 2:14.) Jesus had not been begotten of the Holy Spirit; therefore He did not have the understanding of the prophecies and symbols.

"THE HEAVENS WERE OPENED"

All this knowledge began to come upon Him when He was begotten of the Holy Spirit. He began to understand the higher things,

the deep things of God. He had understood in a measure about the Lamb that was slain as [R5064 : page 230] the sin-offering and the things about the putting away of sin, but nothing to identify the One who was to be the great Deliverer or to explain the wonderful pictures in the Scriptures. Just as soon as He was begotten of the Holy Spirit He began to see that if He would reign, it would be by a manifestation of loyalty to God and to righteousness. As soon as He was illuminated He saw the things pertaining to the suffering.

During our Lord's earthly ministry He learned obedience through the things which He suffered. (Heb. 5:8.) And thus He received the great illumination which was so powerful an addition to Him – just as it is a great illumination to us to see the terms and conditions of our calling – that we must walk in the steps of our Lord if we would reign with Him.

Just in what manner the higher things were revealed to our Lord we may not know. St. Paul tells us of wonderful revelations which were made to him. Doubtless our Lord also had revelations, but just what was revealed to Him thus, in order that He might understand His pre-human conditions, etc., we may not know. Nor do we know how all the acts and experiences during the previous period of His existence before He became flesh could have been impressed suddenly upon His mind. The same God who is able to give us a spirit body which will assimilate all the experiences of the present life, could also [R5065 : page 230] impress upon Jesus all the previous experiences which He had had.

The impress of previous experiences did not come to Him during His boyhood; for He was then *growing* in knowledge and in stature, and in favor with God and man. We believe that the impress came at the time of His consecration at Jordan; and that not only had He there given to Him the impress of His previous experiences with the Father and of the remote past, but also that He had light given to Him upon

the Scriptures so that He could grasp the full purport of what He had done when He gave Himself in consecration.

As the "heavens" continued to open to our Lord, He would see that the experiences of the Messiah, which could not have been commanded under the Law Covenant, were nevertheless to be His privileges as He would see these to be the Divine will, as He would see these to be the Divine Law in the Prophecies. As a sheep would be dumb before its shearers, so He would not rebel as His rights were taken from Him. He would know that He was to be put to death; and that He was to be an innocent victim. He was to be the crucified One, the antitype of the brazen serpent.

Having consecrated to fulfil all things written in the Book Jesus was fully prepared for His every experience. This we see also is the purport of that beautiful picture in Revelation of the scroll sealed with seven seals. The proclamation was made, "Who is worthy to open the Book, and to loose the seals thereof?" (Rev. 5:2.) Up to that time no one had been found who could open the Book. But at that time our Lord was found worthy to open the Book, and to Him was given all the knowledge in the Divine Plan, that He might carry out these things in the sacrificing of the flesh.

At His consecration at Jordan our Lord gave up the human life – He gave up all rights and privileges as a human being. The ultimate purpose of this full surrender of His life was that He might bring everlasting life to mankind. The Father's arrangement with Him, however, was such that He might retain His personality, His identity. But after He was begotten of the Holy Spirit, He was a New Creature; and as a New Creature He had the human body in which to develop character, in which to have His experiences. This New Creature was developed to perfection during the three and one-half years of His ministry, and was ready for the spirit body which had been promised to Him.

If our Lord had not been found perfect, faithful, loyal, in His pre-human condition, He never would have had this privilege of becoming a man and the Redeemer of men. Because of His obedience as a man He received the greater glory, immortality. He was perfect under all the favorable conditions before He became a man; He was faithful as a man, and being glorified, He is still faithful. Therefore He maintains the same relationship to God and to righteousness that He ever had. Consequently He would not specially need any of those things which assist in making character; for He has never shown any defects to be rectified. But we may suppose that the experiences which He had in His pre-existent state, and while He was a man, and since He was glorified, all cooperate to make His character intelligent and loyal in the very highest sense.

HE "MANIFESTED FORTH HIS GLORY"

Let us examine some Scriptures which might be understood to imply that our Lord had a clear recollection of His pre-human experiences with the Father.

(1) "Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." (John 5:19.) These words were used in connection with the healing of the sick. They do not, of course, mean that the Lord had seen the Father healing the sick, but that He had seen the Father's will, the Father's Plan.

Our Lord was simply carrying out the Father's will concerning Him: "The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart"; etc. (Isa. 35:5,6.) These miracles of healing were some of the things that He was to do, as written in the Scriptures. He knew that He was to do these miracles and that they were a foreshadowing of the things to be done by and by. As we read, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus... and manifested forth His glory." – John 2:11.

(2) "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth." (Prov. 8:23-25.) This passage may be viewed either as a prophecy of what our Lord understood of His previous condition, or as a figure of speech setting forth the Wisdom of God all through the ages. But since the Wisdom of God is specially revealed in our Lord Jesus, so this was a foreshadowing of what Jesus might know respecting His pre-human condition.

(3) When our Lord at twelve years of age asked, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2:49) He would have in mind the Heavenly Father, just as any consecrated child of God might think of Him. From the information which He had received from His mother, Mary, He would know of His miraculous birth and of His special mission in the world. His mother knew that He could not be true to Himself and His mission unless she told Him about these things. Having been told that He was specially holy and miraculously born for this very purpose, He now turned to Mary and asked, Is it possible that you should not know that I should be about My Father's business? Did not you tell me of this thing? He was surprised that Mary [**R5065 : page 231**] and Joseph should not understand that this was the very thing for Him to do.

MEMORY THE MEANS OF IDENTIFICATION

(4) Our Lord's statement, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58), serves to identify the man Jesus with His previous condition as the *Logos* before He was made flesh and dwelt among us. He is the same today, although He has been received to the spirit plane. He says, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore." (Rev. 1:18.) Originally He was on the spirit plane. Later as a man, He lived; He died. At His resurrection He was made alive

on the spirit plane, far above angels, principalities and powers. But the identity, the personality, is the same.

And we can readily believe that the memory of things past is still with our Lord. We also think that He remembers the experiences which He had in the flesh and also those which He had before He became flesh. Otherwise, He could not identify Himself. Memory seems to be the means of identification of our personality. Nothing in this Scripture would seem to imply that our Lord was born into the world with the knowledge of all His previous experiences. After His consecration He received the knowledge by some means which we are not great enough to understand – by some power the Father used; for the Father has all power.

(5) "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever." (Heb. 13:8.) This statement would not identify our Lord with His previous condition; for in His pre-existent state, He was not *Jesus*. He was called Jesus at His birth. He became Jesus Christ at His baptism. "By His knowledge shall My Righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities." (Isa. 53:11.) Our Lord began to bear the iniquities of the world at His consecration, and finished so doing at His crucifixion. Since then He has been reckoning certain persons to be members of Himself. When the Holy Spirit came upon Him and the heavens were opened unto Him, He probably received the knowledge which would enable Him to overcome.

Before His consecration, when our Lord was a perfect man just as Adam was, we know not what force Satan's temptations would have had; but when His mind was opened, then Satan came to tempt Him along the very line of His work, along the line of the consecration which He had already made. Satan attempted to overthrow His consecration and to thwart its completion. How much knowledge our Lord had we do not know; but the Heavenly Father gave Him sufficient to enable Him to come off conqueror. And so with us. Our Lord gives us knowledge of Himself and of the Father. He shows us

the relation between the sufferings of this present time and the glories that are to follow. Thus by knowledge all the members of the Body of this Great Righteous Servant will be permitted to come off "more than conquerors" by His grace.

THE NATURAL MAN CANNOT PERCEIVE SPIRITUAL THINGS

(6) "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness." (John 3:11.) The intimation is that our Lord could tell heavenly things, but that He was not disposed to do so, because Nicodemus and others found it difficult to receive even the earthly things. How could Jesus tell of the heavenly things? By that time He may have had the impress of memory in respect to His pre-existent condition.

We are to tell the heavenly things, but not to the natural man. "Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." (Matt. 7:6.) Our Lord said that He had many things to tell His disciples, but that they could not receive them until the Holy Spirit came. (John 16:12,13.) And, "The Holy Spirit was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." (John 7:39.) "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"; "but God hath **[R5066 : page 231]** revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (I Cor. 2:14,10.) Now if the Holy Spirit reveals some of the deep things to *us*, how much *more* could the perfect mind of our Lord enter into the holy things?

"THE GLORY WHICH I HAD WITH THEE"

(7) Our Lord's words, "Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine Own self, with the glory which I had with Thee, before the world was" (John 17:5), would not signify that He had no knowledge of His prospective share in the divine nature. He had the assurance of the Scriptures, one

of which was that He should be very high; another that the Lord would give unto Him the Kingdom; another says that Jehovah God would "divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out His soul unto death" (Isa. 53:12); still another says, "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." (Psa. 110:4.) He was to be both a Priest and a King of very high state and honor.

Probably our Lord knew these things fully after He was begotten of the Holy Spirit, even as St. Paul was caught away to the third heaven and received knowledge of wonderful things "which it is not lawful for a man to utter." (2 Cor. 12:4.) And so it is most probable that our Lord Jesus had some special revelation; for we read that He said that "as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (John 5:26); thus indicating His knowledge of the fact that both He and the Church would share in the divine nature and inherency of life.

Our Lord's words show that He was not wishing to aspire to these glorious things. Very humbly He said, "Father, I have come to do Thy will. Father, I shall perform the work Thou hast given Me to do and I shall be glad to be returned to the glory I had with Thee – to ask nothing as a favor. I am glad that I have had this privilege, and I think that I shall not suffer by reason of My obedience to Thy will. I shall be glad, therefore, to be with Thee in the glory that I shared with Thee before the world was."

He did not say to the Father, "Do not forget to pay Me; do not forget what Thou didst promise." No. He did the Father's will without any thought of compensation connected with it. So with us. Anyone who looks for the divine nature merely *as a reward* and feels that it is due him, is taking an improper view. We should feel that to be on the side of righteousness and to be identified with our Lord Jesus is a great privilege, if there be no reward of the divine nature at all; but the thought of the reward is a great incentive to run patiently for

something super-abundant, exceedingly beyond what we could have asked or thought.

