

OUR LORD'S KNOWLEDGE OF HIS PRE-EXISTENCE

"By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities." – Isa. 53:11.

THIS STATEMENT implies that our Lord's knowledge had some very important relationship to His work. Without this knowledge, although He had made His consecration, He might not have been able to withstand the attacks of Satan, and the misinterpretations of the Scriptures which the Adversary used to try to turn Him aside from that consecration. The knowledge which our Lord had at thirty years of age, a perfect man, was that of His miraculous birth, that in some manner Jehovah was His Father, and that in some manner He was to fulfil the Old Testament Scriptures. This was information enough to lead Him up to the point of consecration. With the larger knowledge which came to Him later, came testings to prove His loyalty. From the beginning He was loyal in His intention and thought; but we may infer from the Scriptures that there was, at least, a possibility that without the knowledge which He had, He might not have been competent to meet the besetments of the way.

This experience is similar to our own. When we consecrate ourselves, we have a sufficiency of knowledge for that step. As we proceed, we are guided into the knowledge of the Truth, which constitutes part of the grace of God to assist us in making our calling and election sure. As the Lord said, "The Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth and will show you things to come." (John 16:13.) So apparently the Holy Spirit guided Jesus Himself and showed Him both of the future and of the past – made the Plan of God as plain to Him as it now is to us. He understood it better, however, because His mind was perfect, while our minds are imperfect.

HIS LIFE PRINCIPLE TRANSFERRED TO A LOWER PLANE

When considering the question as to how and when our Lord Jesus, the *Man* Christ Jesus, came to an appreciation of His pre-human condition, we struggle with a question respecting which we have no direct revelation. We are, therefore, left to deductions, and different minds might draw different deductions from the facts and circumstances of the narrative. Of one thing we are assured, namely, that during our Lord's ministry He had a clear knowledge of the heavenly things, as His words indicate. He said to Nicodemus, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" (John 3:12.) Again, He said to His disciples, "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" (John 6:62.) On the night of His betrayal He said to the Heavenly Father, "Glorify Thou Me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the [R5157 : page 8] world was" (John 17:5), showing that He had knowledge of His pre-human existence. We question then, How and when did He obtain this knowledge?

Reasoning on this subject we see in the Scriptures nothing that says that the Logos, who was with the Father from the beginning, entered into the body of Jesus, and thus used the flesh of Jesus as a veil or covering. On the contrary, the record is that the Logos was *made flesh*, not that He got into flesh. Hence, we disagree with the theory of the incarnation; it is from a deranged theology. The Bible tells us that the Logos was made flesh and that He became the Man Christ Jesus, that He humbled Himself and took a bondman's form and was found in fashion as a man. (Phil. 2:5-8.) The Bible says that He laid aside the dignity and honor which He once had; that He became poor – not that He posed as poor while in the flesh, but that He who was rich became poor for our sakes. (2 Cor. 8:9.) The necessity of this procedure we see in the Bible arrangement that, "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the

dead." (I Cor. 15:21.) He came to be a corresponding price for the first man's life and life-rights.

From these Scriptures we are led to the conclusion that the spark of life previously vivifying the Logos was transferred from the spirit plane to the human plane – from the higher plane or nature to a lower plane or nature. This glorious being was begotten of the Holy Spirit and ultimately born a human being. The same spark of life, we believe, was maintained. The very fact that His spark of life could not come from the condemned Adamic race, assures us that the same spark of life was transferred to the womb of the Virgin Mary. This child that was born, then, was born like other human children, only that He was perfect, because of the perfect germ of life from which He was developed. He would certainly be a very peculiar boy, and wiser than other boys. We read further that he not only grew in stature, but in wisdom and in favor with God and man. (Luke 2:52.) Humanity perceived that He was different from others. The whole matter was pleasing to God, to whom Jesus became more and more pleasing as He neared maturity.

DEVELOPMENT OF HIS SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY

When He was twelve, Jesus had, apparently, much knowledge. He knew, probably from His mother, that He was miraculously born and that He was different from others. He had also His mother's explanation that He was to be the "Son of the Highest" and fulfil the predictions respecting the Messiah. (Luke 1:32,33,55.) At this time He began to inquire – not by way of showing His precocity, but in sincerity and in truth – whether or not this was the time when He should begin His ministry. He began to consider at what time a man should become a priest – thinking of His responsibilities *as a priest*. The doctors of the Law must have marveled that a child of twelve should think of such questions. We may suppose that a dialogue took place, the results of which satisfied His mind that this was not the time when He should begin His ministry. He did not have this knowledge

by any inductive process, but obtained it by inquiry of the Scriptures and of those who were best versed in the Scriptures. The decision was that there was nothing for Him to do until He was thirty years of age.

Then we read that He returned home with His mother and her husband Joseph, and was subject to them. He did not then enter upon His work of ministry. He treated Himself as a minor, subject to those who had charge over Him. This was His condition until He came to John at Jordan. There is not a suggestion anywhere that He had previously manifested any teaching powers. He was a learner, not a teacher. Every Sabbath day He was in the synagogue to hear the Word of God read, to meditate upon it and to know the Divine requirements respecting Messiah and the wonderful things prophesied of Him. Evidently he was perplexed in the same manner that the Jewish nation was. But He had a different cast of mind from theirs. They wondered and queried as to His knowledge.

HIS KNOWLEDGE AT THE AGE OF THIRTY

At thirty years of age our Lord certainly must have had much knowledge which Adam did not possess when he was on trial. Jesus had a knowledge of what sin is [R5157 : page 9] and what the penalty for sin is; of the fact that God arranged for the redemption of mankind, to be accomplished through the great Mediator of the New Covenant – a Savior, a Redeemer, a Deliverer. He knew of the Divine Law written in the Decalogue; of the inability of *others* to keep the Law and of *His* ability to keep it. His mother had told Him of His miraculous birth, of the message that had come through Gabriel and of the prophecies of Anna and Simeon. This amount of knowledge would be very valuable to Him. He had also in mind the prophecy respecting the future of the great Messiah that was to come and deliver the world.

But what He evidently lacked was the knowledge of the *deeper* things of the Scriptures. He evidently found perplexities in the Bible. While He had not received the Holy Spirit, yet He was

much better qualified to understand the Scriptures than was the fallen race. But the Apostle says that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God...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 of the types of the Law.

But our Lord did not begin to teach until after He was anointed, when He invited His disciples to join Him. They were to proclaim the message without understanding the matter at all, that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand and that Israel should try to get near to God, to be prepared for this Kingdom when it should be revealed. Our Lord put His power upon them so that they cast out demons; for they had no power of the Holy Spirit until after Pentecost.

Similarly, now we see that no one is competent to be a teacher in the Church of Christ as an Elder except He be fully consecrated, except he come under the terms and conditions necessary to the begetting of the Holy Spirit. Apparently the people knew of our Lord's consecration. When our Lord had received the begetting of the Holy Spirit at His consecration at Jordan, John the Baptist both saw the descent of the Holy Spirit and heard Jehovah's testimony, and afterward said that he "*saw* and *bare record*." If the multitude had seen and heard, he would not have needed to bear record that Jesus was the anointed of God. – John 1:32-34.

HIS ILLUMINATION OF MIND AFTER SPIRIT-BEGETTING

After His baptism Jesus Himself became conscious of some great change in His own condition and in His relationship to the Father and to spiritual things; for we read that at the time when John saw the Holy Spirit descend upon Him, "the heavens were opened unto Him." (Matt. 3:16.) By "heavens" here is meant, not that Jesus was given a telescopic view of things beyond the sky, but that the higher things were opened to Him – the things which as a natural man He could not

receive. No matter how perfect a man may be, he cannot receive spiritual things. As St. Paul says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are *foolishness* [meaningless] unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." – I Cor. 2:14.

We assume that at the very moment when our Lord received the Holy Spirit an impression was made upon the convolutions of His brain which would give Him those very recollections of His pre-human condition which otherwise the natural brain could not have. In the natural man, every impression of the mind is recorded in the convolutions of the brain. We can see how the convolutions of our Lord's brain could have been so impressed that they would reproduce the experiences, the knowledge and the very thoughts which He had prior to His being made flesh. We know that that very moment marked the time of our Lord's spirit begetting, and we believe that He then received special knowledge of heavenly things.

Instead of beginning the ministry for which He had prepared for thirty years, He turned aside into the wilderness and studied the Scriptures for forty days. He had already had many times forty days to think over these Scriptures, and if He had had the same power of understanding before His consecration that He afterwards had, He would not have needed those forty days for study, but would have given them for service in His ministry. Very evidently, then, all the years of His life on the human plane had brought Him no such perception as He now had through this glow and *illumination* of *mind*, received when He came up out of the water. He began to have the full scope and appreciation of the mission upon which He had entered, and everything written in the Scriptures respecting Messiah.

As He now studied the Law and the Prophets, He saw the terms of the Covenant of sacrifice in the light of this illumination; He saw the hitherto hidden meaning of the various types. He began to see that

if Messiah 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 through which He afterwards learned obedience in the fullest sense possible. Thus He received the illumination which was so powerful to Him – just as it is a great illumination for us to see the terms and conditions of our calling – that we must walk in His steps if we would reign with Him. The Scriptures act as an enlightening power to those who are taught of God. Only those begotten of the Spirit can understand the real depth of God's Word.

In bewilderment our Lord saw the meaning of the Atonement Day sacrifices and of all the things written in the Book – the things which He had covenanted to do when He entered into consecration. He had already **[R5158 : page 9]** pledged Himself to do "everything written in the Book." But now He was finding out what this really meant – *death*, even the *death of the cross!*

HIS FURTHER ILLUMINATION AFTER SPIRIT-BIRTH

We see that when our Lord was raised from the dead a spirit being an equally miraculous work must have taken place; for again He received a change of nature. The One that was raised from the dead was the Spirit-begotten New Creature, who had all the record of His previous experiences, on both the spirit and the human plane.

How, then, did the Father raise our Lord from the dead a spirit being, and how could this spirit being have any knowledge of the things experienced in the flesh and also of the things of His previous existence before He was made flesh? We answer that this is impossible to understand, except that it is done by Divine Power. Whatever may have been the operation, after reaching the spirit plane His mind must have been stamped by Divine Power with recollections of both the earthly and the pre-human experiences. Otherwise all of our Lord's human and pre-human experiences would be valueless.

We see this also respecting the Church. We also are embryo spirit beings. And when we shall be raised in His likeness in the resurrection, we shall not have our fleshly brains for recollection, and we therefore shall be dependent upon the Divine Power for the memory of all [R5158 : page 10] the experiences of the present time. So when we read, "So also is the resurrection of the dead; it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (I Cor. 15:42-44), we have this thought, that the Divine Power will impress this spirit body with the knowledge of all the blessed experiences of the present time, so that these experiences shall not be fruitless, but profitable to us, making us better qualified and more able for the Divine service, as well as for the carrying on of the work of the New Covenant.

OUR LORD "THE BRIGHTNESS OF JEHOVAH'S GLORY"

If our Lord had not been found perfect, loyal, faithful, in His pre-human condition, He would never have had the privilege of becoming a man in order to redeem man. He never showed any defects of character to be rectified, therefore, He did not need any of the experiences which aid in making character. His experiences as a man with adverse conditions were given to test His loyalty and obedience to the utmost.

Our Lord was faithful under all the favorable conditions of His pre-existent condition; He was faithful as a man; and having been glorified to the Divine nature He is still faithful. We may conclude, therefore, that His experiences on these three planes have all cooperated to demonstrate His character to the very highest degree – "the express image" of Jehovah. – Heb. 1:3.

THE YEAR BEFORE US

Standing at the portal of the opening year,
Words of comfort meet us, hushing every fear;
Spoken through the silence by our Father's voice,
Tender, strong and faithful, making us rejoice.
Onward, then, and fear not, children of the Day;
For His Word shall never, never pass away.

"I, the Lord, am with thee, be thou not afraid;
I will help and strengthen, be thou not dismayed.
Yea, I will uphold thee with Mine own right hand;
Thou art called and chosen in My sight to stand."
Onward, then, and fear not, children of the Day;
For His Word shall never, never pass away.

For the year before us, oh, what rich supplies!
For the poor and needy, living streams shall rise;
For the sad and mournful, shall His grace abound;
For the faint and feeble, perfect strength be found.
Onward, then, and fear not, children of the Day;
For His Word shall never, never pass away.

He will never fail us, He will not forsake;
His eternal covenant He will never break;
Resting on His promise, what have we to fear?
God is all-sufficient for the coming year.
Onward, then, and fear not, children of the Day;
For His Word shall never, never pass away.

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