

"A SPIRIT HATH NOT FLESH AND BONES."

– JUNE 19. – MATT. 28:8-20. –

"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore."

– Rev. 1:18.

WOMAN had the honor of being first to be made acquainted with the fact of our Lord's resurrection, and to receive his first message thereafter. Perhaps this was in part because the feminine mind seems naturally to grasp such subjects more quickly than the masculine mind, by what is sometimes termed intuitive faith, in contradistinction to what might be termed analytical faith. Or this may have been as a special recognition of woman's tender sympathy, which sought the earliest opportunity to bring balms and spices and to otherwise show sympathy and love for the deceased. At all events the women, who were earliest at the sepulchre, had a rich reward for their service, and for the love which prompted it.

They were fearful and surprised when they received the angel's message that Jesus was risen; yet they grasped the fact by "intuitive faith." As they eagerly ran to carry the joyful news to the brethren, Jesus met them in the way, revealing himself in such a body as they could recognize. They worshiped at his feet, and held him fast, as tho fearful that he would leave them; but the Master consoled them, and sent them on their journey as bearers of his message to his disciples.

His words, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father...and to your Father, to my God and to your God" (John 20:17), were doubtless uttered at this time, and need examination; because they have been sadly misconstrued. Professor Young's Lexicon shows that the word here rendered *touch* has the significance of "**hold on.**" Mary evidently had already *touched* the Lord, for, as Matthew declares, they were holding the Lord by the feet. They evidently were fearful that the power which had raised our Lord would transport him

elsewhere. Probably, too, from the time the angels told them that he was risen, they had been discussing the matter and remembered that he had so told them and had said that he would "ascend up where he was before." So now, when they saw him and really embraced his feet they feared to let go, lest they should see him no more. From this standpoint of view our Lord's words plainly meant: Do not hold me as tho fearful that you will never see me more; my time to ascend to your Father and God and mine has not yet come. Go carry the news to the brethren. And remember that my God is your God, my Father in heaven is your Father in heaven.

In view of the fact that our Lord thus sent women as his special messengers, we may well consider it as an indication **[R2318 : page 174]** to us that while the Lord and the Apostles never commissioned women to take the chief and public place in the preaching of the Gospel, yet they have a good place in this great service of the truth, a not less noble, tho less public mission in connection with the promulgation of the gospel. It is safe for us to suppose that the natural tenderness and love supplemented by the holy spirit of love, fits and qualifies her for many important tho less obtrusive and aggressive services for the Lord and his people. And happy are the brethren, and happy the sisters in the Church of Christ, where their mutual helpfulness in the service is recognized, and where each cooperates with the other, and seeks to follow as nearly as possible the divine order and custom in the use of their respective talents. See "Man and woman in the divine order," in our issue of July, '93.

The narrative of the sealing of the sepulchre and the setting of the watch, lest the disciples should steal away the Lord's body, seems to show conclusively that the religious leaders of the Jews were thoroughly blinded, and that our Lord's character, works and teachings, had no influence whatever upon them; – that they had not the slightest suspicion of who he was, nor of the fulfilment of his prediction that he would arise from the dead. Their only thought was that a fraud might be perpetrated by his disciples. But their evil

suspensions were overruled by the Lord for good, and became a testimony of the truth, and an assistance to faith on the part of believers. It was not necessary to our Lord's resurrection that the stone before the sepulchre should be moved, and the body from within also be removed; because the body which he has now is no more his former body of flesh than that body of flesh was his former spirit body, which he had before he became a man: nor were the atoms of matter composing this earthly body transformed into spiritual atoms to compose his spiritual body, any more than our natural bodies will be our spiritual bodies, if we have part in the first resurrection, or their elements be required from which to construct our spiritual bodies. The Apostle Paul makes this very clear by his statement, "there is an animal body and there is a spiritual body."

These two kinds of bodies are dissimilar. A fleshly, an earthly or animal body is composed of flesh, blood and bones; but, as our Master declared, "a spirit hath not flesh and bones," etc. As our Lord could not use his heavenly or spirit body, when he came to be man's substitute and ransom price, and as he was therefore obliged to lay aside the glory of that higher nature and humble himself and take "the form of a servant, *for the suffering of death,*" so, when he had finished the suffering and death, finished the work that the **[R2318 : page 175]** Father had given him to do, and was to be received up again into the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, the human body would no longer be suitable. He must have again a spirit body. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." The form of a servant would not be suitable for him whom the Father delighted to honor and to highly exalt even above his former glorious station – "far above angels and principalities and powers and every name that is named." He therefore must be given a glorious body, "the express image of the Father's person;" – and such his resurrection body was.

It is difficult for some, because of long-established habits of incorrect thought on this subject, to realize what the Apostle Paul

means when he says, "Tho we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him [so] no more;" or what the Apostle Peter means when he says, "He was put to death in the flesh, but quickened in spirit." Just what this means may be seen with greatest clearness, perhaps, from the words of the Apostle Paul, in describing the resurrection of the overcoming Church, the first [chief] resurrection," in which all the members of the body of Christ are to share, with their Head and Lord. Since we are to know "the power of his resurrection" as members of his body (Phil. 3:10), it follows that any description that we can obtain of what our resurrection will be, must of necessity be a description also of his resurrection, since we are to share his resurrection – the first resurrection.

Concerning this first resurrection, the Apostle teaches that not the body that is sown will be raised, but another body, according to divine arrangement. And contrasting these two bodies, the one which we now have, and the one which we shall have, he declares that the body which dies is sown in corruption, the body which shall be raised in incorruption; the body which dies, dies in weakness, the body which shall be raised will be raised in power; the body which dies, dies in dishonor, the body which is raised will be raised in glory. The body which dies is a natural body, an animal body, an earthly body; the body of the resurrection will be a spiritual body, a heavenly body, not flesh and blood – not a human body.

The point of connection between our Lord's earthly body and his spiritual body is confused in the minds of many by reason of a certain fact which is not generally taken into consideration, namely, that our Lord, after his resurrection, had a work to do with his disciples to establish their faith in his resurrection, and to prepare and equip them for the work before them, of proclaiming the gospel to every creature. Because they were still *natural men*, and had not yet fully received the baptism of the holy spirit which came upon them at Pentecost, after Jesus was glorified, therefore they were not prepared to understand or appreciate spiritual things; as the Apostle Paul declares,

"The *natural man* receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." But it was necessary that the disciples should believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, before he ascended to the Father, in order that they might be in the proper attitude of heart to be made the recipients of the holy spirit at Pentecost, for it was not to come upon unbelievers, but upon believers.

In choosing how he would reveal himself to his disciples and make known his resurrection from the dead, our Lord surely chose the best method; and yet his method was different from that which he afterward adopted in dealing with the Apostle Paul. To Paul he showed his real body, the brightness of which affected his eyesight, making him blind, and felling him to the earth; shining, as he declared, with greater brightness than the sun at noonday. Had our Lord appeared thus to the women when they went to the sepulchre, or to the disciples, as he met them subsequently, the effect would have been much less favorable than by the method which he did pursue; they were already astounded enough, at the wonderful things which had transpired in the preceding few days. He therefore adopted the method which had been in vogue previously, the method used by angels sent on special missions to men, and by our Lord himself on some of these missions, before his nature was changed – before he "was made flesh" – while he was still a spirit being. For instance, he appeared as a man to Abraham, and talked with him and ate with him; but that appearance to Abraham was not a change of nature, but merely a vailing of the heavenly nature in a body of human flesh. Thus veiled, he could talk with Abraham and Sarah and do so without alarming them. Just so it was after his resurrection; altho he was no longer a man, but had become a partaker of the divine nature, and the express image of his Father's person, yet he appeared *as a man* – and in different forms at different times; once as the gardener, to Mary; again as a stranger, to the two who went to Emmaus; and again, in the upper room, he appeared in a body like to his former self, bearing marks of the nails and of the spear. This was to convince Thomas,

who declared that otherwise he would not believe in the resurrection; nevertheless with the desired evidence the Lord gave a gentle reproof to the effect that others, who could believe without demanding that physical test, were the more blessed.

Even as it was, with all these precautions and evidences to the "natural man," we are informed that [R2318 : page 176] tho they worshiped him, "*some doubted.*" If he had appeared to them as he appeared to Saul of Tarsus later, can we doubt that they would have been perplexed more than enlightened? They would have been unable to recognize that it was the Lord who had previously been a spirit being, and who became a human being for our redemption, who had now been revived from death, no longer a man but a spirit being: that now he possessed all the powers of a spirit being, to appear in any form found desirable – as a burning bush or as a man, as a fisherman, or as a gardener, or as a wayfarer, or as his former self. As the Apostles had time to gradually take in the situation, they understood that it was he, their Lord, yet that he was now *changed*, and totally unlike his former self, and without human limitations. They were not prepared to understand the meaning of the teaching that we must all be "changed," in the twinkling of an eye, during the last trumpet, in order that we may "be like him, and see him as he is" – not as he *was*, nor as we *are*.

Our Lord's message, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," is in sharp contrast with his previous utterances, prior to his resurrection, while he was finishing the work of sacrifice which the Father had given him to do. Then he had said repeatedly, "Of my own self I can do nothing; as I hear I speak." What was the change? Why now speak of himself so differently – as possessing a power which he previously disclaimed? It was because he had been "changed." – He was no longer the man Christ Jesus, to suffer death; but having suffered it he was now risen, glorified, "Lord of all." His own trial and testing for worthiness to be heir of all was past. His resurrection as a spirit being was the evidence that he was accepted as "worthy to

receive glory and honor, dominion and [R2319 : page 176] might, forever and ever." And not only so, but by his death he had purchased humanity and all the hopes, privileges, rights and interests originally belonging to humanity, as well as those conferred upon it through the divine oath of promise to father Abraham, to Isaac and Jacob, and David. These words, then, were a modest announcement of the great victory won for himself, and for Adam and his race. Such an announcement of his own victory and of the purchase of mankind, and of his present power, therefore, to uplift mankind out of sin and out of death, was a proper prelude or preface to the commission which he then and there gave to the Apostles, saying, "Go ye, *therefore*, and teach all nations."

His own teaching and that of the apostles had previously been confined to the Jewish nation, in harmony with God's covenant with that people, through Moses; but now, having sealed the New Covenant with his blood, having consummated this New Covenant, ratifying it at Calvary, he was authorizing that it be put into operation. Now was the proper time, therefore, to declare it to be both broader and deeper than the Law Covenant instituted by Moses, (1) in that it is not confined to Israel after the flesh, but is for all nations, (2) in that it is efficacious to the *perfecting* of all those who come unto the Father through its mediator, and according to its terms, and not merely a temporary assistance.

The teachings which were to be presented to the nations are specified by our Lord as being – "whatsoever I have commanded you." This, then, proves that the kernel of the Gospel is not the Jewish Law, nor certain scientific theories and abstruse problems; but the simple teachings which our Lord delivered to the apostles. What were these?

(1) He taught that all men were sinners.

(2) That he came into the world to "give his life a ransom" – a corresponding price for the sins of the whole world.

(3) That no man could come unto the Father, but by him.

(4) That all who would come by him must, in addition to the exercise of faith in him, also take up his cross and follow him.

(5) That all believers are one with him, as the branches of a grapevine are parts of the vine.

(6) That every branch to abide in him must bring forth fruit, else it will be taken away.

(7) That those who trust in him are to hope for and to expect his second coming – "I will come again, and receive you unto myself."

(8) That the ultimate end of our hope for all promised blessings is in and through a resurrection of the dead.

(9) That Love is the law of the New Covenant – "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul and strength; and, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

We are fully authorized, therefore, to teach and to believe that these are the points of faith and practice which are necessary to both Jews and Gentiles who shall be favored with the call of this Gospel age; and that nothing else is necessary or pertinent to the "doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ" or "the faith once delivered to the saints." Whoever makes *tests* greater or lesser than these is in error.

Our Lord's statement that he would be with his people always even unto the end of the age, no more signifies that he did not leave the world, than it signifies that his hearers would continue to live until the end of the age. His words here are not to be understood as contradictory of his words elsewhere; but they should be understood in harmony with other statements, to the effect that, while he would be absent from his people during this age, having "ascended up on high, there to appear in the presence of God for us," nevertheless, his power and spirit and care and love would be with his people

throughout the age; to guard their interests, to overrule in their affairs, and to cause that all things should work together for good to them that love him; – until in the end of the age, according to his promise, he would appear a second time, not as a sin-offering, but unto salvation – to receive his Church unto himself in glory, and to bless the sin-sick and blinded world with the true light which, it is promised, shall enlighten every man. – John 1:9.
