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"NOW IS CHRIST RISEN FROM THE DEAD."

– *JUNE 11. – JOHN 20:11-20; 1 COR. 15:20. –*

UNDER divine supervision most elaborate proofs are furnished us of the death of Jesus – even tho the disciples and friends saw no necessity for this particularity, and indeed would have regarded all such proofs of his death as so many contradictions of their hopes and so many proofs of their disappointment. But the death of Christ was an all-important event, and hence it was necessary, from the divine standpoint, that the proofs respecting it should be indubitable. Let us note some of these proofs: –

(1) His side was pierced with a spear, and from the wound flowed blood and water – a positive proof that death, dissolution, had taken place. – Jno. 19:34,35.

(2) The centurion who had charge of the execution undoubtedly was a man of large experience in such matters,. And the record is that he was convinced of our Lord's death, and so reported to Pilate, the governor. – Mark 15:39,44,45.

(3) The corpse was buried in Joseph's *new* tomb, which contained no other corpses, and hence there could be no question respecting the body of Christ and its burial.

(4) The chief priests, anxious to prevent any spread of the doctrine of Jesus, remembered his words respecting his resurrection; and, while they placed no confidence in the matter, judging Jesus' disciples by [R2476 : page 133] themselves they surmised that they would be tricky and attempt to steal away the corpse and to claim the resurrection of their Master in harmony with his previous declarations. As a precaution against thus they requested Pilate to seal the tomb and place a guard of Roman soldiers there; but Pilate refused to act officially in the matter, nevertheless giving them, as was

probably customary, the privilege of hiring some of the soldiers as watchmen – much the same as anyone to-day can employ and pay a policeman for extra service as a watchman; thus the Pharisees appointed the watch and sealed the stone, and had full cognizance of Jesus' resurrection. – Matt. 27:62-66.

(5) The friends of Jesus were fully convinced of his death, and wrapped his body in linen clothes, with spices. (John 19:40.) Apparently his declaration that he would rise from the dead on the third day was not appreciated by his followers until after he had risen. Their minds were intent upon the promise of the Kingdom; they were amazed at his arrest, conviction and crucifixion, and, it would seem, forgot for the time many of his precious words. Indeed, we are to remember that our Lord's teachings were almost wholly in parables and dark sayings, and they may have misinterpreted his reference to a resurrection. (Mark 4:13.) After his resurrection they remembered his words, and particularly after Pentecost – after they had received the holy Spirit, which, according to promise, brought to their memories the things which he had spoken unto them while he was with them. – John 14:26.

If it were well that the facts respecting our Lord's death should be clearly set forth as a part of the Gospel, it is well also that all of the Lord's people should fully recognize the fact of this death, and the necessity of it, and its value as the offset or corresponding price for the redemption of Adam, and indirectly the redemption of all those who were in Adam when the sentence of death came upon him, – all redeemed by the one sacrifice, offered once for all. Strange to say, very many Christian people speak of our Lord's death and of his resurrection, and yet really do not believe in either. To believe that our Lord arose from the dead on the third day is to believe that *he was dead* from the time of his crucifixion on Friday afternoon until the time of his resuscitation or resurrection, early on Sunday morning, the first day of the week. And if he "*was dead*" (Rev. 2:8) during that period (parts of three days) and did not rise from the dead until the

morning of the third day, it means that our Lord Jesus was *not in any sense alive* during the interim, a period of about thirty-eight hours. It seems strange that it should be necessary to emphasize a point so emphatically and repeatedly set forth in the Scriptures. The necessity is twofold: –

(1) Because, through a false, unscriptural theory, many Christian people hold that there is no such thing as death; – that what appears to be death is merely a transformation to a larger degree of life; – that the real being cannot die, and that merely the body dies, and that so our Lord Jesus *did not die* for our sins, but merely shed off an outer covering of flesh.

(2) It is important to the true Christian's faith that the fact of our Lord's death be not only fully established by the statements of the Scriptures, but that the Christian's faith therein be fully and thoroughly grounded; because only those who realize that our Lord's death was for the time an extinction of his being can realize how his death was the payment of father Adam's penalty. Father Adam's penalty was death, extinction, and this penalty fell by inheritance upon all his posterity; "Christ *died* for our sins" – he suffered the death penalty for father Adam (and incidentally for all those who had come under the death sentence through Adam's transgression).

Nor should it be understood that the penalty upon father Adam was an extinction of life for merely thirty-eight hours: it was perpetual, the everlasting extinction of life and all the privileges of life he had received from his Creator. Our Lord's sacrifice – the death of the man Christ Jesus – was an everlasting death also, a death which fully off-set the penalty upon father Adam, and as Adam's *substitute* the *man Jesus* could never be released. The release of the *man* Jesus from the death penalty would be as impossible as the release of Adam himself without a substitute: for, as man's substitute, "*the man* Christ Jesus" took upon himself the entire penalty of Adam's transgression, and must bear to the full the death-

curse which rested upon Adam and indirectly upon his race. Hence, faith grasps firmly the thought that our Lord Jesus did not take back man's ransom-price – did not take back the sacrifice for sins, the human nature – in his resurrection.

In order that he might offer this, the only proper and acceptable ransom for man, our Lord left the glory which he had with the Father, left the higher nature, and was "made flesh," "that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (John 1:14; Heb. 2:9.) If he could pay man's penalty by remaining dead thirty-eight hours, then man could have paid his own penalty by remaining dead thirty-eight hours, and there would have been no necessity for a sin-offering, a ransom-price, to be paid. Indeed, Adam would have overpaid his penalty thousands of times. But since the penalty was death in the absolute sense, unlimited by time; and since this penalty would never permit a restoration of life to Adam, therefore it was necessary that a *ransom* should be paid for Adam; – that another life should be *substituted* for Adam's life; – that another, [R2477 : page 134] a perfect man, should die and *remain dead everlastingly*, that Adam and the race condemned in him might be released from death by a resurrection.

It was just this work, in harmony with the divine plan, that was accomplished by the man Christ Jesus, and finished in his death; and according to divine promise that ransom-sacrifice will never be abrogated, will never be taken back: and consequently all who are trusting in the merit of the great sacrifice of atonement may have full confidence that there will be a resurrection of the dead (of humanity), both of the just and the unjust; because Justice has been paid the full price, and because God has promised through the Gospel of Christ an opportunity for return to everlasting life, which shall eventually be offered to every member of Adam's race. – 1 Tim. 2:6.

In view of these facts, how and why do we speak of the resurrection of Jesus as essential to man's salvation? We answer that

neither we nor the Scriptures speak of the resurrection of Christ Jesus as a *man*. His coming to our low estate of manhood was merely for the purpose of effecting our ransom, and as the taking back of manhood by a resurrection would undo the entire work of redemption, it is preposterous to think of our Lord's resurrection as a restoration to human nature.

Quite to the contrary, all the evidences of the Scriptures, rightly and carefully arranged before our minds, show conclusively that our Lord was resurrected a spirit-being – not only higher than man, but higher also than angels, archangels, principalities and powers, a partaker of the divine nature. As such he was indeed a "new creature," and not in any sense of the word did this imply his taking back our ransom price. The Scriptures declare that he was "put to death in the *flesh*, but quickened in the *spirit*" – a spirit-being and the Apostle Paul declares our Lord's resurrection of the Church which is his body. (Rom. 6:5.) He declared that we with him will constitute the first (chief) resurrection; and then he explains our resurrection, and that explanation, therefore, must be equally an explanation of our Lord's resurrection, for he is the Head, the Firstborn from the dead amongst many brethren: and the experience of the "brethren" in resurrection will only be a duplication of the experiences of their Lord. With this in mind, let us note the Apostle's statement respecting the first resurrection and its operation upon the Church, assured that the same description, in general features at least, apply to our Lord's resurrection. He says, "Thus 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." – 1 Cor. 15:42-44; Phil. 3:10,11.

From this standpoint, and from no other, can the facts related in the Scriptures respecting our Lord's resurrection be harmonized with each other and with the object for which he came into the world and suffered death.

Our Lord's resurrected being was a direct gift from the Father, and not something which our Redeemer held over from a previous existence. When he left the glory of the spiritual condition and became the man Jesus, he had a *right to life*, under the divine law, because he had always fulfilled the conditions of life. In harmony with this the Scriptures assure us that his degradation from a higher nature to the human nature was not as a punishment, but of his own volition; not in obedience to a command of the Father, but in obedience to the will of the Father. As a man also he had a right to life, because the divine law guaranteed life to all who obeyed it; hence in no sense of the word was his human life forfeited. On the contrary, he *gave* it, he *sacrificed* it, he *offered* it, in harmony with the Father's plan, as man's *ransom-price*. But there he *lost* all right to life: that was the very thing which he surrendered or "offered" on man's behalf. And having surrendered on man's behalf his rights to life he had no such rights remaining, and consequently could plead no right to a future life by a resurrection o that score – he had given his rights for Adam and his race.

But while the rights of our Lord were gone – paid to Justice as Adam's ransom, nevertheless the heavenly Father's power and right to re-create on a higher plane were in no sense of the word abridged. Justice might properly object to the re-creation of Jesus as a *man*, but would have no ground whatever for objecting to the creation of a new creature – of a nature higher and superior to all others of God's creatures – of the divine nature. And this is that the Apostle tells us did occur; after describing our Lords; humility and obedience to the Father unto death, even the death of the cross, the Apostle declares, "God hath highly *exalted* him and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." – Phil. 2:9-11.

While it doth not yet appear what we shall be, when we are changed by a share in the first resurrection to the same divine nature,

and while consequently it does not yet appear to us clearly what our Lord is in his very high exaltation, we can nevertheless appreciate the fact that amongst all who are honored with the title of sons of God upon the different planes or natures there is a measure of identity. Thus, for instance, our [R2477 : page 135] Lord, in his prehuman condition as Michael, the Logos, could be transferred to a lower condition, the human, and yet could preserve a good recollection and appreciation of his previous experiences, and did so, as the Scriptures relate. (John 8:58; 17:5,24.) And similarly it was possible for the perfect man Jesus, the image of God in flesh, to be so duplicated as a still higher image of God in the divine nature, "the express image of the Father's person," that his identity is absolutely assured. The Scriptures clearly indicate that our Lords; experiences as a man, and the lessons of patience and obedience and sympathy which he then learned, are present with him now as experiences, altho no longer flesh, but spirit of the highest order. Only from this standpoint can we rightly appreciate the various facts set forth in this lesson.

Woman's love and tenderness, specially endearing charms of the sex, are well illustrated in this lesson – in the coming of Jesus' female friends "very early in the morning," "while it was yet dark," and the :dawn." They came with no thought of the Lord's resurrection, but to embalm his body more elaborately than there had been time and opportunity for doing on the evening of his burial. They ad bee hindered from coming the previous day, because it was the Jewish Sabbath (the day now known as Saturday), the seventh day of the week. It does not appear that they all came together, but rather that Mary Magdalene was the first to arrive; but before her arrival there had been an earthquake, the keepers were affrighted, and fled to the chief priests. (Matt. 28:2,11-15.) Mary's perplexity respecting the events connected with the crucifixion was evidently intensified by the finding of the stone tolled away from the sepulcher, and full of the thought that the Lord's enemies were still pursuing him, and had even removed his body, she ran with haste to make the matter known to Peter and John, saying, "They have taken away the Lord out of the

sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him." Meantime the other women arrived, and saw the two angels, who explained to them that Jesus had risen as he had foretold, and they also returned to the city to report to the apostles. – Luke 24:2-10.

Peter and John were immediately interested by Mary's narrative, and hastened to the sepulcher; John, the younger and more active one, arriving there first, looked in and saw the place vacant, and the linen clothes lying; but Peter, the courageous, coming up, was the first to enter the sepulcher. Now they began to think of the words which our Lord had spoken respecting his resurrection on the third day, and John tells us of himself that looking at these evidences "he believed" – yet no doubt with much confusion of thought at first. The two disciples went to their home, but Mary remained at the sepulcher, weeping, and looking in she saw what Peter and John had not seen – two angels. They were doubtless there when Peter and John went into the sepulcher, but as we have heretofore seen from the Scriptural testimony, angels are invisible to human sight, except as a miracle may be performed. Such a miracle was performed in this instance, and the two angels assumed human form and white raiment, and asked Mary why she wept. While she told them that she was weeping because some one had taken away the Lord's corpse, she heard as a footstep near her, and turning saw what she took to be the gardener, the keeper of Joseph's garden in which this tomb was. **[R2478 : page 135]** She did not recognize him as the Lord, but asked him if he had removed the body to tell her where, that she might take charge of it – her thought seeming to have been that Joseph was unwilling to have his tomb cumbered longer, and had therefore ordered that our Lord's body be removed, and that probably the gardener had attended to the matter.

It will be noticed in this case, and in the various instances of our Lord's appearances after his resurrection, that his nearest and dearest friends did not recognize him. He appeared in various forms and under varying circumstances. He spoke to them only briefly on each

occasion, and during the forty days of his presence from the time of his resurrection to the time of his ascension was seen of his disciples only as a few times, and all of his conversations together probably did not occupy over an hour. These appearances, nevertheless, were for the purpose of teaching them very important lessons. (1) They were to recognize the fact that he was no longer dead, but alive. (2) That he was no longer the *man* Jesus, and subject to *human* limitations as before his crucifixion, but with the same loving disposition and characteristics was to as a "new creature," not subject to earthly conditions and limitations – able, as the angels, to appear and to disappear, to go and come like the wind, as he himself had explained that all "born of the spirit" in resurrection can do. – John 3:8.

In this view of the matter we are not surprised that Mary did not know her Lord until he revealed himself by speaking her name in as a familiar manner. Then how quickly her faith surmounted every obstacle; with as a woman's intuition she stopped not to inquire why there were no marks of the nails in his hands and in his feet but crying, "Master!" she clasped him by the feet with as a fervency that meant, Now that I have found you again I will not let go of you! Her love, her devotion, her persistence, gained for Mary the great honor of being the first to whom the Lord revealed himself after his resurrection. She had been forgiven much, and she loved much, and our Lord manifested his appreciation [R2478 : page 136] of her devotion. Nevertheless, he must tell her that she was neglecting a great privilege and as a great duty, for under divine providence it had fallen to her to be the first to announce to the disciples positively that the Lord was alive again. Instead of holding the Lord tightly by the feet, and thinking never to leave him, she should rather gladly become the servant both of the Lord and the apostles, and carry the good tidings.

And this in substance is what our Lord said to her. Our common translation "Touch me not," is faulty: the passage should rather be rendered, – Cling not to me, but go to my brethren, and say to them

that I have not ascended to my Father, but that I am to ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and to your God. Announce to them the fact of my resurrection, and that I will be with them awhile before I go to the Father: thus you will do as a work of preparing them for my subsequent manifestations. And having the true love which manifests itself in obedience, Mary immediately undertook the mission assigned her. According to Matthew's account (28:1,9) "the other Mary" must have been near by, and have come forward by this time, and received as a commission with Mary Magdalene to tell the disciples.

We will not stop to call special attention to the words of our Lord, in which he declares that our heavenly Father is his heavenly Father, and our God his God, for the expression is simple enough for all unprejudiced minds. We pass on to notice that the second appearance of our Lord was in the afternoon of the same day, toward evening, when he overtook two of the disciples going to Emmaus, as a suburban village: one of these was Cleopas, and the other evidently was Simon Peter. – Luke 24:13-32,34.

The third appearance was in the evening of the same day. While Simon and Cleopas (who immediately returned to Jerusalem to tell the disciples) were relating their experiences Jesus himself appeared in their midst. The disciples were nervous from the experiences of the preceding days, and were fearful of what the rulers of the Jews would do against them as the followers of Jesus, and were together in conference, "the doors being shut," – barred and bolted, we may reasonably suppose. What could be more astonishing to them than that as a stranger should appear in their midst? And altho he said, "Peace be unto you," no wonder they were affrighted. They thought of this as the manifestation of an angel in their midst, for who but as a spirit being could appear while the doors were shut? They had not yet learned the lesson that our Lord, in his resurrection, was a spirit being and no longer a human being, and that like the angels he now had power to appear and disappear – to assume a human body with

clothing, etc., and to dissipate the same at will. This lesson they must learn, and must needs be taught it by practical illustrations. Simon, who had been at Emmaus, and who had noted how the Lord vanished out of their sight as soon as they recognized him, would undoubtedly be prepared, better than the others, for this miraculous appearance while the doors were shut. He would know that he one who could disappear and vanish out of their sight at Emmaus would similarly have power to appear in any place.

Our Lord's interview was not a lengthy one; it was a first lesson, and the disciple would get the more good of it by reflection after he would leave them. He wished them, however, to be at ease in his presence, and to now that they were not *seeing* a spirit being, for, as he explained, "a spirit hath not flesh and bones." What they *saw* was not spirit, but matter. This does not mean that our Lord was not a spirit being at this time, as is clearly set forth by other Scriptures (1 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 3:17; Phil. 3:21): it merely means what it says, namely, that what they *saw* was not spirit, and hence that they had no cause for affright.

In our Lord's appearance to the Marys and on the way to Emmaus there is no suggestion that he appeared in a body scarred with the marks of the nails. Can we suppose that Mary would have clasped him by the feet and not have noticed the great wounds made by the nails? Can we suppose that the two going to Emmaus, and looking curiously at their companion, asking hi, if he were a stranger to those parts, would to have noticed if his hands and his feet had great wounds in them? The evidence, therefore, seems conclusive that in neither of these manifestations did our Lord appear in bodies bearing wounds and thus resembling his crucified form. But now, at this third showing wishing to emphasize the identity of his risen self with the crucified one, he appeared to his followers in a form exactly like the one that was crucified, and showed them the spearmarks in his side and the nail-prints in his hands and feet. And while they still wondered and feared that what they saw was merely an apparition, he asked them to

give him food, and ate some fish and honeycomb in their sight. – Luke 24:39-43.

Nothing in this implies of necessity that the flesh which they saw was the identical flesh which had hung on the cross. On the contrary that flesh, like all other flesh, was subject to the laws of nature and could not have been brought into the room while the doors were shut, nor subsequently caused to vanish out of it. The body of flesh which our Lord displayed to the disciples, was evidently created, and its clothing as well, in their presence, and dissolved when he vanished from their sight after the interview. Such powers are beyond human comprehension, but quite within the range of divine power. [R2478 : page 137]

What became of the body of flesh that was crucified, and that laid in Joseph's tomb, and that disappeared therefrom, we are not told, except that the Apostle and Prophet declare that, "His flesh saw no corruption." (Acts 2:31; Psa. 16:10.) We incline to the opinion that the flesh, which was man's ransom-price, will never see corruption, but that it will be preserved by divine power as an everlasting testimony of the grace of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ in man's redemption, and will thus be a witness and a testimony to the divine love throughout eternity. Where God may have that body in preservation we know not. He who could hide the body of Moses, who was only a type, surely could hide the body of his Son – the antitypical redemption price. – Jude 9.

These various appearances of our Lord under peculiar circumstances were continued at long intervals during the forty days. Apparently he appeared in all some four or five times after the appearance above noted, which were on the day of his resurrection, and the Apostle Paul assures us that at the time he wrote his Epistle to the Corinthians over two hundred and fifty witnesses of our Lord's resurrection were still living, and this epistle was written about twenty-four years after the crucifixion. When we remember how

close a reasoner the Apostle Paul was, and how logical were all his conclusions, we may rest assured that he did not receive this testimony respecting our Lord's resurrection upon any slight evidence, but had full confirmation of it. Moreover, he attests as a witness to the resurrection himself, saying, "Last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born before due time." – 1 Cor. 15:6-8.

The Apostle Paul did not see Jesus under a veil of flesh, as he appeared to the others before the spirit dispensation began. To Paul he manifested himself in the glory of this spirit being, "shining above the brightness of the sun at noonday." The effect, as is well [R2479 : page 137] known, was disastrous to the eyes of the Apostle, because, altho he saw the Lord *as* one born before the time, yet not having been thus born himself by a resurrection change to the newness of nature, the sight was a calamity to his flesh.

It surely is a great relief to us to understand correctly respecting our dear Redeemer's resurrection, for several reasons: –

(1) It permits us to see how he arose without taking back our ransom price.

(2) It shows us that, altho, in obedience to the Father's arrangement, he willingly and gladly left a higher condition in order to be made flesh and to give a ransom, nevertheless he has not been permitted to be a loser to all eternity by this arrangement – he is not hampered by the lower or fleshly organism, but has, in his resurrection, attained to the highest form of spirit nature, the divine nature.

(3) It is a comfort to us to know that he does not bear now, in glory, the scars of the thorns, the spear and the nails; nor any of the evidences of the things which he suffered on our behalf: but instead his is an "excellent glory" – "the express image of the Father's person." – Heb. 1:3.

(4) It comforts us also to know that the Church, the body of Christ, will not to all eternity bear the marks of imperfection, the blemishes of sin, nor the marks of the wounds endured for righteousness' sake. No, the promise to the Church is the same as the promise to her Lord, that in the resurrection the Father will give (not the body that died, with wounds and imperfections, but) "a body as it hath pleased him," a glorious body, a likeness of the Lord. "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he *is*" – not as he *was*. – 1 Cor. 15:38; Phil 3:21; 1 John 3:2.
