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INTERESTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED IN THE SAME BODY.

Question. – When our Lord appeared to the eleven apostles in the upper room and invited Thomas to thrust his hand into his side and put his finger into the nail prints, was it the same body that was buried in Joseph's tomb a few days before? If not, was it a deception practised upon Thomas?

Answer. – No: it was neither the same body nor was there a deception. Our Lord's body, buried in Joseph's tomb, was composed of flesh and bones, and could not have passed through the door into the room in which the disciples were met – "the doors being shut." To have dissolved it into gases, and to have thus brought it into the room and reorganized it there, would have been to destroy one body and to make another. Nothing of this kind was necessary, and we have some reason for supposing that the body which lay in the tomb is hidden away by the Lord as [R3387 : page 190] was the body of Moses, though for a different purpose. Possibly it is preserved incorruptible as a great object lesson for the future, that men may actually look upon him whom they have pierced, actually see the remains of him who died for them. The man Christ Jesus gave himself a sacrifice for our sins completely and forever; and that sacrifice was never taken back. To have taken it back would have meant the cancellation of our redemption. Instead, the heavenly Father gave to our Lord Jesus a spiritual body, glorious, honorable and immortal. Thus, as the Apostle declares, the Father exalted him far above angels, principalities and powers, and every name that is named. As we have already shown (MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. II., p. 123), there was a special reason why our Lord appeared at all to his disciples after his resurrection.

As a spirit being he would, of course, be invisible to them, and a miracle was performed every time they saw him; – he appeared to

them at different times, in different places and in different bodies, forms and appearances. As the writers declare, he "showed" himself. At any other time than when he thus showed himself he was hidden from human sight, as are other spirit beings. One of these manifestations was to the disciples in the upper room. Thomas, not being present, was informed, and inquired of the others whether or not they had noticed the nail prints or seen the wounded side. Apparently they had not, and Thomas declared his incredulity, saying that they might believe if they chose that Jesus was risen from the dead, but he would not believe unless he saw the nail-prints and the spear-mark.

When our Lord appeared in the upper room, the doors being shut, and Thomas present, the body in which he appeared must have been created or materialized inside the room; and when he subsequently vanished out of their sight it was merely a dissolution of the body. Not only so, but the clothing must also have been created or materialized in that room. Our contention with spiritualists is not that there is absolutely no foundation to their claim of materialization, for we believe that their seances are not all fraudulent; but our contention is that the materializations which they show are deceptions, in that they appear like deceased friends while in reality they are the fallen angels, the "demons" of the Scriptures. The Scriptures show clearly that the dead could not thus materialize, for they know not anything and will not know anything until the awakening on the resurrection morn. – Eccles. 9:5.

In our Lord's case the matter was different. "He was put to death in the flesh, but revived a quickening spirit," and it was quite within his ability as well as his rights to appear in any manner he might choose for the purpose of instructing his disciples, – teaching them that he was no longer deceased, but alive; and no longer man, but a spirit being – "Now the Lord is that spirit." Before he became a man he appeared to Moses in a flame of fire, in what appeared to be a burning bush, yet there was no deception in it; and he appeared unto

Abraham as a man on the way to Sodom. So after he had again become a spirit being by resurrection he appeared to Mary as the gardener, and to the two on the way to Emmaus as a traveler, and in the upper room to Thomas and others in a body similar to the one in which he had been buried.

LIFE AND EVERLASTING LIFE.

Question. – Is there any difference between life in its perfection, as Adam enjoyed it before he sinned, and everlasting life, which the Lord purposes to give eventually to the worthy of mankind, and as expressed to the sheep in Matt. 25:46, "These shall go away into everlasting life"?

Answer. – Death is the opposite, or antithesis of life. Man was created a living soul, a living creature, [R3387 : page 191] and death had no power upon him until after he sinned: then he came under its power, as the divine sentence expressed it, Dying thou shalt die. Where the dying began life in its perfection ceased. From this standpoint not a soul of humanity has life – neither perfect life nor a right to perfect life. All rights have been forfeited and death is reigning over all.

Adam before he sinned possessed everlasting life, a life which would have lasted forever had he remained obedient to God. As is well known to our readers, the word "everlasting" in our English language has a stronger meaning than any word either in the Hebrew or the Greek language: the strongest Greek or Hebrew word would properly be translated lasting. Adam had the lasting life and lost it; Jesus has redeemed for mankind that which was lost by Adam, and the Millennial age is to be the time of restoration – restitution. What men will get eventually through Christ's redemptive work and their acceptance of it and obedience to its terms will be the same lasting life which father Adam lost – human life, unimpaired either by sentence or by disease.

This Gospel age is the anti-typical Day of Atonement, in which the Church, typified by the goat, fills up or participates in the work of sacrifice with her Lord Jesus, who in the type was represented by the bullock. The entire Gospel age is devoted to the sacrificing of these – Christ Jesus, the Head, and the Church, the members of his body, who "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." With the close of this Gospel age the Atonement Day will be ended, and, as expressed in the type, an atonement will have been accomplished for the sins of the whole world, and forthwith the forgiveness of all sins under the original curse will be decreed for men. As the Apostle expresses the matter, – As by the offence of one [Adam], judgment [sentence] came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift will come upon all men to justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, "even so through the obedience of one shall the many be made righteous" – that as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

With the completion of the "better sacrifices" (Heb. 9:23) the Atonement will be complete and the sentence will be removed from mankind. Thenceforth no man will be under sentence of death for Adam's transgression, but whosoever then shall die will die for his own sins. The Life-giver, the merit of whose sacrifice accomplished all this, will be present with his associated Church, his Bride, as the great Physician, to heal and to bless and to uplift all who will to be blest.

From the moment the sentence of death shall be lifted the dying processes will cease to reign, and the living processes will begin to reign in mankind. More and more throughout the thousand years life will reign, will become ascendant in mankind, and more and more the weaknesses and imperfections resulting from the death sentence will abate, until at the close of the Millennial age life in its perfection will be attained by mankind – any unwilling to progress, by obedience to

the great Prophet, having been cut off from amongst the people from time to time. (Acts 3:23.) Thus righteousness will be reigning – unto life – during the Millennial age, as sin has reigned – unto death – during the past 6,000 years, under the curse.

Thus seen, life will begin in mankind in a small way, but will be in the ascendancy: all will live, except as they shall wilfully reject the provisions of life. Thus every man will get lasting life at the hands of his Redeemer at his awakening, and the measure will increase according to his obedience until he shall have attained it in its fullest measure at the close of the Millennium, and then standing trial to see whether or not his heart is fully loyal to the Lord. If determined that he is in full loyalty his testings will be at an end, and the same life will be his in perpetuity – so long as he remains in accord with the spirit and laws of his Creator.

Thus seen, our confidence that the future life will be an everlasting one, is not based upon any immortal quality which mankind possesses, or will ever possess, but based upon the principles of the divine arrangement revealed to us in the Word, namely, that God was pleased to create and is pleased to continue everlastingly those of his creatures in harmony with himself – that there is no penalty nor suggestion of death to any intelligent creature of God, except upon condition of sin – the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

IT WAS "FINISHED" AT CALVARY.

Question. – One of the preaching brethren suggested in my hearing that our Lord's sacrifice was not finished until he ascended up on high and appeared in the presence of the Father, and that the evidence of its being finished was the sending of the holy Spirit at Pentecost. Is this the correct thought?

Answer. – No. The correct thought is that the Lord's sacrifice was completed at Calvary, where he cried, "It is finished!" Possibly you misunderstood the conversation referred to, and the speaker may

have said, or probably intended to say, that satisfaction for our sins was not accomplished at the cross, but when our Lord Jesus appeared in the Father's presence and offered the merit of his sacrifice on our behalf – appropriating to believers their share in his Atonement work. That the Atonement work at Calvary was satisfactory to the Father was demonstrated by our Lord's resurrection from the dead. That he had offered the merit of the sacrifice as a covering for the sins of believers, and that it was so accepted of the Father, was witnessed by the holy Spirit at Pentecost.

