

JESUS NO LONGER A MAN

Since His Resurrection He Is "The Lord of Glory."

Begotten and Born of the Spirit, "Put to Death in Flesh, Quickened in Spirit."



London, April 23.—Pastor Russell preached in London Tabernacle today to a crowded house. His theme was the resurrected Lord, no longer a man, but ascended where he was before—made partaker of the divine nature. His text was, "He was put to death in flesh, but quickened in spirit" (1 Peter iii. 18). The speaker said:

In the past those of us who continued to believe in the resurrection of the dead, held some inconsistent theories respecting the matter which served to make the resurrection doctrine the more absurd in the minds of those opposed. For instance, we claimed that the *Logos*, the Son of God, left the heavenly or spirit nature and, according to the Scriptures, was made flesh, and that He was resurrected from the dead a human or fleshly being and ascended to heaven with a body of flesh. In the same breath we acknowledged that human nature is a little lower than the angels; and thus, while still wishing to honor the Redeemer and to see wisdom and love in the Heavenly Father's Plan, we assumed that the Savior, since His ascension, has had a body inferior to that of the angels and out of harmony with His surroundings; and that this is to be all eternity a part of the cost of human redemption.

How absurd! Do not the Scriptures particularly tell us that in His resurrection the Son was highly exalted by the Father, far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named? Do they not tell us that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God"? Do they not tell us that the elect Church, in order to be the Bride of Messiah and His associate in the heavenly Kingdom, must be "changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," in order that she may be made like Him, and because "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom"? We have been too careless in our study of the Divine Word. On this subject, as upon others, we have assumed that our forefathers of the "Dark Ages" understood the matter thoroughly. We forgot that those who lost so much of the Holy Spirit that they could burn fellow-Christians at the stake were quite likely to be more or less confused on all questions. But "the path of the just is as a shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day," and it is now our privilege to learn the way of the Lord more perfectly, in the light now shining upon the Bible through the aid of our wonderful concordances and other Bible study helps.

Begotten of the Spirit—Then Born.
Our difficulty on this subject arose from our failure to understand that human and spirit natures are distinct, and that God has provided two distinctly different salvations for mankind—the salvation of this Age being exclusively spiritual, while that of the next Age will be exclusively human. We are not to think of these natures as blending, but, according to the Lord's Word, we are to view them as distinctly separate. Whoever is of the human nature is earthly, fleshly, whether perfect or degraded. Whoever is of the spirit nature is heavenly, whether perfect or degraded. Thus, when "the *Logos* was made flesh and dwelt among us," He was human, though unblemished. And the fallen angels are still spirit beings, although cut off from Divine favor and fellowship. In other words, human nature is not an imperfect form of spirit nature but a totally separate and distinct nature.

The *Logos*, the Only Begotten of the Father. "was made flesh" (John i. 14). He was not a spirit being incarnated in a body of flesh and wearing it as a garment, or living in it as a house. He became like others of the race, except that "He was holy, harmless, separate from sinners," while all others are sinners, imperfect. Like other men, the man Jesus was not a dual being—a spirit being living in a human frame. He was merely human.

But the Redeemer became a dual being when He received the begetting of the Holy Spirit at the time of His baptism. Thereafter, for three and a half years, until His crucifixion, He was dual. The flesh was the same; but the spirit-begetting received from the Father constituted Him a new *Ego*, a new person. He not only thereafter had new hopes, based upon Divine promises, but He had a new mind or new will specially illuminated, quickened, enlightened by the Holy Spirit. From the time of His baptism His flesh call that belonged to His human nature) was given up to die in the carrying out of the Heavenly Father's purposes. Thereafter the Spirit-begotten One waited merely for the accomplishment of His sacrifice according to the Father's will, and for a new

body, a glorious spirit body, in the resurrection—His completing or perfecting as a New Creature.

Three and One-half Years Our Lord Was a Dual Being.

Hence, during the period of our Lord's ministry, for three and a half years, He was a dual personage. So far as form and organism were concerned He was a man, but so far as mind and purpose and interests were concerned He was changed—a New Creature, a spirit being; earthly things had passed away. The New Creature followed the instructions of the Divine Word and providences to the extent of mortifying the flesh—surrendering it fully for the accomplishment in it of the Divine will. "The cup which My Father hath poured for Me shall I not drink it?"

The great Teacher Himself gives us the picture of a human birth as illustrating the experiences through which He passed and the similar experiences through which all of His faithful followers must pass in order to reach the plane of heavenly glory. This picture contains three distinctive views—(1) begetting—(2) quickening—(3) birth. These three steps were illustrated by our Lord's own experiences. He was begotten of the Holy Spirit at the time of His consecration at baptism. He was quickened or energized by that Holy Spirit after His forty days' experience in the wilderness when He began His active service as "the Messenger of the Covenant," selecting His Bride, the Church.

When He finished His sacrifice at Calvary the man Jesus was dead, and the New Creature Jesus, spirit-begotten and quickened and developed, was three and a half years old. According to the Divine Program He slept in *hades*, the tomb, and on the third day was born from the dead, raised up by Divine power as a New Creature, being given a spirit body of divine nature—glory, honor, immortality; "Him hath God highly exalted" (Philippians ii. 9). He did not lose His personality, His identity, and could therefore properly say, "I am He that liveth and was dead" (Rev. i. 18).

"Now the Lord Is That Spirit,"
II Corinthians iii. 17.

Thus was our Lord "put to death in flesh and quickened in spirit"—made alive in spirit, a Spirit Being. True, He was also quickened by the Spirit. It was the Father's Spirit or Power which raised Him from the dead, as the Scriptures declare (Romans viii. 11). Indeed, as the Apostle reminds us, all the blessings of Divine providence are of the Father. From Him cometh every good and every perfect gift.

He who thus ascended up on high, the Prince of glory and partaker of the divine nature, is the same who first descended to the earthly nature, *yes*, who was humbled even unto death, even the death of the Cross, and went to the tomb as the sinner's substitute or ransom-price. The forty days which intervened between the Redeemer's resurrection and His ascension taught two great lessons:

(1) That the crucified One was no longer held in the bonds of death, no longer a prisoner in the grave.

(2) It also taught that the Risen One was different in many respects from what He was before He died. No longer was He a man. No longer was He flesh. The body of flesh prepared for Him for the suffering of death had served its purpose. He needed it no longer. The Father had raised Him up to the plane of glory again. As a quickening spirit He was with the disciples during the forty days, instructing them during the few moments of each of His seven or eight appearances. But He was teaching them equally when invisible to them. He noted their perplexities. His several appearances were in different forms—as a gardener, as a traveller, as a purchaser of fish on the shore of Lake Tiberias, calling out, "Have you any fish?" and then, "Drop the net on the other side."

He "revealed" Himself to the disciples in various ways in connection with those materializations and then straightway He "vanished" out of their sight, to be present with them, unseen, for days. For identification He appeared on two occasions in a body bearing the marks of His crucifixion. During those forty days the faithful Teacher established the faith of His followers in Himself as the glorified Messiah, their Heavenly Bridegroom, who would later come again and receive them unto Himself and at that time give to them also a similar resurrection "change," that they should be like Him, "see Him as He is" and not as He *was*, and share His glory—because "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God" (I Corinthians xv. 50).

"Above the Brightness of the Sun."

St. Paul, the last of the twelve Apostles to be called to take the place of Judas, needed, as well as the others, to be able to witness to the resurrection of Jesus. Of this He tells us, saying, "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; after that He was seen of James; then of all the Apostles; and, last of all, He was seen of me also, as of one prematurely born" (I Corinthians xv. 5-8).

In the ordinary course of events St. Paul would not have seen the Lord until His resurrection, when he himself would come forth as a member of "the Church of the First-born." He therefore describes his view of Jesus on his way to Damascus as being like that of one born before the time. In other words, St. Paul saw the Lord as He is and not as He *was*. He saw the Lord of glory, and not the man Jesus. The appearance was glorious indeed. In various parts of the Bible's angels in their normal condition are pictured as bright-shining ones. Thus one of the

Prophets fell as dead before an angel of the Lord, whose face shone as the sun. Thus John the Revelator, granted a glimpse of the glorified Christ, fell as dead before Him. The effect of this great light above the brightness of the sun upon the eyes of Saul of Tarsus was destructive and a miracle was necessary for their repairment.

Thus the Lord identified Himself in glory with His former self, the man Jesus. These lessons of the Lord should not have gone unheeded. We should not have thought of the glorified Messiah as a man. The effect of the wrong thought has not only beclouded our appreciation of the Savior in glory, but has also confused many respecting His Second Advent. It is safe to say that even yet the majority of those who are expecting the Second Coming of the Son of God and His establishment of His Messianic Throne are looking for Him as a glorified man, forgetting that He sacrificed Himself as a man, and that He took not back that sacrifice, but received exaltation to the more excellent glory than that which He had left to become our Redeemer.

These wrong expectations respecting Messiah's Kingdom have turned the hearts of many in a contrary direction. They have reasoned correctly—that the establishment of an earthly Kingdom, with Christ the King in the flesh and His saints joint-heirs with Him in His Throne, also in the flesh, and with an earthly court—would be a condition of things inferior to the present one and apparently very inadequate for the accomplishment of the great things which the Bible promises Messiah's Kingdom will secure.

The proper thought respecting the resurrection of our Lord and His present glory shows us clearly that His Kingdom, when it shall be established, will, indeed, be a heavenly Kingdom, a spiritual one. From this standpoint only can we see the force of the Apostle's contrast, when he pictures to us how Satan, ambitious and scheming to be the Emperor of the world, took the path of disobedience. He indeed gained his desire and is the "Prince of this world"—over a sorry Empire, in which sin and death reign. On the other hand, the Apostle points us to the fact that our Redeemer, loyal to the Heavenly Father to the core, humbled Himself to take the human nature, to be crucified; and that therefore God has exalted Him and will give to Him the Kingdom now usurped by Satan, the Prince of this world.

Satan will be bound for the thousand years of Messiah's reign. The spiritual Prince of darkness will be deposed and the spiritual Prince of Light and Truth, as the Father's honored Agent, will be inaugurated as King of kings and Lord of lords. And "He must reign until He shall have put all enemies under His feet"—the last enemy being death, Adam's death, the death introduced through the deceptive lie of "Satan, who was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the Truth" (John viii. 44).

St. Paul, according to the Greek text, institutes a comparison between Satan's course and that of the *Logos* (Philippians ii. 6). He there implies that Satan was ambitious and sought to grasp Divine prerogatives, but that the *Logos* "did not meditate a usurpation to be equal with God," but, on the contrary, humbled Himself and made Himself of no reputation. Nevertheless, eventually, in the outworking of the Creator's great Program, the One who humbled Himself will be the Exalted One, and the one who exalted himself will be abased. The Apostle urges the Church to follow the example of Jesus—"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time" (I Peter v. 6).

Church of the First-born.

As the Only-Begotten of the Father was begotten of the Holy Spirit at the time of His consecration, as an embryo New Creature, and as He was born of the Spirit or perfected as a New Creature in His resurrection, so also the Scriptures indicate must be the course along which the Church is to follow Him. None can be born of the Spirit unless first he has been begotten of the Spirit and quickened of the Spirit. It is through this spirit-begetting, quickening and birth that the "elect of God," called during this Age to a change of nature, are made New Creatures—"members of the Anointed One," the Christ, the Messiah, the Mediator between God and the world, under-kings, under-priests, under-judges, in association with their Lord, the Chief Priest and Bridegroom.

In the present life the new nature is merely begun, and, as the Apostle declares, we have it as a treasure in earthen vessels—in earthly bodies. He again declares that all the spirit-begotten ones are in a condition in which it is required that they shall prove themselves "overcomers." Their special conflict is with their own flesh. The New Creature, the new will, must mortify the deeds of the flesh, the desires of the flesh. It must "fight a good fight" and demonstrate its loyalty to God and the principles of His righteousness. Otherwise it will not be accounted worthy or "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. i. 12).

The First Resurrection, or Chief Resurrection, is to be that of the Church. It must be completed before the world's resurrection can begin. And concerning this First Resurrection it is stipulated that none can have share in it except the blessed and the holy. And for these a reward is promised, that they shall be priests unto God and shall reign with Christ a thousand years—on the earth, over the earth, as earth's spiritual Empire and Ruling Government, to put down sin and to uplift righteousness.

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