

The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

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R. R. No. 1

VOL. XXXVIII.

MONCTON, N. B., MARCH 31ST, 1950

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EASTERTIDE

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"Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept."
1 Cor. 15:20.

Hail! Easter morning. Flowers! Flowers! All of them a-voice, all of them a-tongue, all of them full of speech today. I bend over one of the lilies and I hear it say: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin, yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." I bend over a rose, and it seems to whisper: "I am the Rose of Sharon." And then I stand and listen. From all sides there comes the chorus of flowers, saying: "If God so clothed the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

Flowers! Flowers! Braid them into the bride's hair. Flowers! Flowers! Strew them over the graves of the dead, sweet prophecy of the resurrection. Flowers! Flowers! Twist them into a garland for my Lord Jesus on Easter morning, and "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be."

Why, if a rainbow this morning had fallen and struck the galleries and struck the platform, the scene could not have been more radiant. Oh, how bright and how beautiful the flowers, and how much they make me think of Christ and His religion, that brightens everything it touches, brightens our life, brightens our character, brightens society, brightens the Church, brightens everything! The women came to the tomb of the Savior and dropped spices all around the tomb, and those spices were the seed that began to grow, and from them came all the flowers of this Easter morn. The two angels robed in white took hold of the stone at the Savior's tomb and they hurled it with such force down the hill and it crushed in the door of the world's sepulchre, and the stark and the dead must come forth.

It care not how labyrinthine the mausoleums or how costly the sarcophagus or how beautifully parterred the family grounds, we want them all broken up by the Lord of the resurrection. They must come out. Father and mother—they must come out. Husband and wife—they must come out. Brother and sister—they must come out. Our darling children—they must come out. The eyes that we close with such trembling fingers must open again in the radiance of that morn. The arms we folded in dust must join ours in an embrace of reunion. The voice that was hushed in our dwelling must be returned. Oh, how long



some of you seem to be waiting for the resurrection. And for these broken hearts today I make a soft, cool bandage out of Easter flowers.

Six years ago the night before Easter I received an Easter card on which there was a representation of that exquisite flower, the trumpet creeper, and under it the words: "The trumpet shall sound and the dead shall rise." There was special reason why at that time I should have that card sent to me, and I present the same consolation today to all in this house; and who has escaped?

This morning I find in the risen Christ a prophecy of our own resurrection, my text setting forth the idea that as Christ has risen so his people will rise. He, the first sheaf of the resurrection harvest. He "the first-fruits of them that slept." Before I get through this morning I will walk through all the cemeteries of the dead, through all the country graveyards, where your loved ones are buried, and I will pluck off these flowers, and I will drop a sweet promise of the Gospel—a rose of hope, a lily of joy on every tomb—the child's tomb, the husband's tomb, the wife's tomb, the father's grave, the mother's grave; and while we celebrate the resurrection of Christ, we will at the same time celebrate the resurrection of all the good. "Christ, the first-fruits of them that slept."

If I should come to you and ask you for the names of the great conquerors of the world, you would say Alexander, Caesar, Philip, Napoleon I. Ah! you have forgotten to mention the name of a greater conqueror than all these—a cruel, a ghastly conqueror. He rode on a black horse across Waterloo and Atlanta and Chalons, the bloody hoofs crushing the hearts of nations. It is the conqueror Death. He carries a black flag, and he takes no prisoners. He digs a trench across the hemispheres and fills it with carcasses of nations. Fifty times would the world have been depopulated had not God kept making new generations. Fifty times the world would have swung lifeless through the air—no man on the moun-

tain, no man on the sea, an abandoned ship ploughing through immensity. Again and again has he done this work with all generations. He is a monarch as well as a conqueror; his palace is a sepulchre; his fountains the falling tears of a world: Blessed be God in the light of this Easter morning, I see the prophecy that his sceptre shall be broken, and his palace demolished. The hour is coming when all who are in their graves shall come forth. Christ risen, we shall rise. Jesus, "the first-fruits of them that slept."

Now, around this doctrine of the resurrection there are a great many mysteries. You come to me and say, If the bodies of the dead are to be raised, how is this, how is that? and you ask me a thousand questions I am incompetent to answer; but there are a great many things you believe that you are not able to explain. You would be a very foolish man to say: "I won't believe anything I can't understand." Why, putting down one kind of flower seed, comes there up this flower of this color? Why, putting down another flower seed there comes up a flower of this color? One flower white, another flower yellow, another flower crimson. Why the difference when the seeds look to be very much alike—are very much alike? Explain these things. Explain that wart on the finger. Explain the difference—why the oak leaf is different from the leaf of the hickory. Tell me how the Lord Almighty can turn the chariot of His omnipotence on a rose-leaf. You ask me questions about the resurrection I cannot answer. I will ask you a thousand questions about every day life you cannot answer.

I find my strength in this passage: "All who are in their graves shall come forth." I do not pretend to make an explanation. You go on and say: "Suppose a returned missionary dies in Brooklyn. When he was in China his foot was amputated; he lived years after in England, and there he had an arm amputated; he is today buried in Greenwood; in the resurrection will his foot come from China, will the arm come from England, and will the different parts of the body be reconstructed in the resurrection? How is that possible?"

You say that the human body changes every seven years, and by seventy years of age a man has had ten bodies; in the resurrection which will come up?" You say, "A man will die and his body will crumble into dust, and that dust be taken up into the life of the vegetable; an animal may eat the vegetable; men eat the animal; in the resurrection, that body, distributed in so many directions, how shall it be gathered up? Come in, and ask them. I do not pretend to answer them. I fall back upon the announcement of God's Word: "All who are in their graves shall come forth."

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