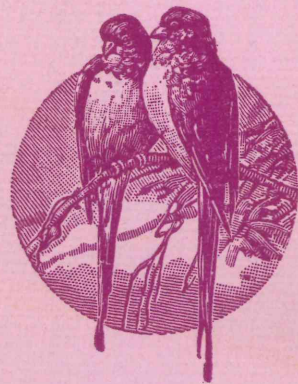


M. E. Beelderd

Eternal Springtime



OR

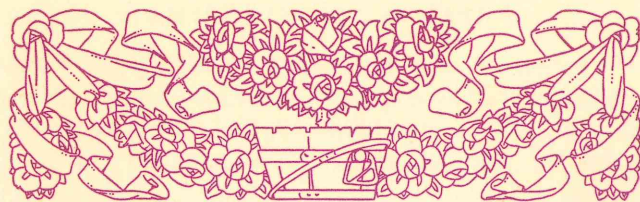
The Resurrection

By WM. B. HOGG
"JOSIAH HOPKINS"



Eternal Springtime





THE ROBINS are back again! The dog-wood blossoms lift their snow white petals like divinely sent announcement cards heralding the arrival of spring! Every tree and plant from the timid, blue-eyed daisy to the sedate old oak

tree are athrill with a renascence that has shaken off the lethargy that fell on hill and dale when winter blew its chilling breath across the landscape. The whole world is athrob with life, and romance! This is spring!

As I walk over these Goose Creek hills and rejoice that all Nature has burst into the joy of a new life, I find myself asking a question of the great Heart of Love who has so lavishly given Life and Beauty to all living things of the forest and field. Will He grant them a renewal of life after the frosts of winter have robbed them of their beauty, and, then, leave man, created in His own image to sleep in an eternal winter? Somewhere deep within me, a Voice is softly whispering, "No! The God of every bursting bud and blooming flower has planned Eternal Springtime for Man." Upon reflection, one discovers that this is exactly what the resurrection promises!

ETERNAL SPRINGTIME

The normal mind has difficulty believing that yellow jonquils are allowed to laugh at winter's blasts with life locked safely in their buried bulbs, while Shakespeare, Dante, St. Paul, and Moses have ceased to be! The world of leaf and flower is limited in expression to form and beauty and the silent message that is wafted in perfume to save the sordid world from ugliness. But man is like an ocean-going leviathan whose keel is laid in some shallow and quiet cove. He is built on vast dimensions! The senses can not fix the limits of his life; poverty need not enslave him; misfortune can cripple but is powerless to chain him. Man's mind, soaring on wings of thought, finds the universe his habitat, while his spirit knows no satisfaction 'til it communes with God.

Job found comfort in the assurance of immortality when every earthly dream lay withered in the dust. In Job 19:23-27, he says:

"Oh, that my words were now written!

Oh, that they were printed in a book!

"That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever.

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth;

"And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God;

"Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes behold, and not another."

or—THE RESURRECTION

Fifteen or twenty centuries before Job's Redeemer stood upon the earth in the person of the incarnated Christ, this suffering patriarch found a solution of the problem of human suffering and limitation, and longed to leave his faith expressed in an imperishable form. His wish was granted. Job's sublime faith was preserved on a far more enduring tablet than a thin granite slab inscribed with lead! His words were locked in God's eternal volume, and only Heaven's recording angel knows the number of despairing souls who have read Job's message of hope and have taken heart to travel on with courage and faith in a resurrection.

Let us analyze Job's faith. He says: "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." One asks: "How did he *know*?" There was only one way he could have known: that is, the whisper of God to Job's spirit. As one is convinced that there is a person at the other end of the telephone line when a voice is heard, just so Job knew there was *Someone out there* who spoke to his heart of immortality and promised to satisfy every longing of his soul. In our quest for knowledge, we are pitifully limited to the senses, the mind, and the Spirit. All else is "hear-say" information! The senses of smell, touch, taste, hearing, and sight are the telephone lines that keep us informed about the physical world in which we find ourselves located for the moment. The mind, in addition to receiving the messages of sense, can hold a royal court and receive em-

ETERNAL SPRINGTIME

bassies from afar! It can meditate upon what other intelligences have recorded in literature and history, and can fill its libraries with the story of the earth and its creatures, and can even weigh the stars! The privileges of the unfettered mind defy description! But the mind is not the highest function of personality. The spiritual capacity of man occupies the throne room. When God created Adam, He "breathed upon him the breath of *lives* (it is "lives" in the original writing) and man became a living soul." Man functions normally only when he is fully orb'd in his three-fold being! To live only in the physical and mental realms is to live, not only a shrivelled and starved existence, but also to miss the divine purpose of life.

Job was functioning in his whole triune being when he said that he knew that His redeemer was then alive somewhere, and that one day He would visit this earth. Such a message was not born of the mind of man: it flashed out of the infinite—yea, from the very heart of God!

Job connected his resurrection hope with this visit of his Redeemer to earth! As soon as he announced his faith in the personal visit of God to the earth as a Redeemer, Job went on to say: "And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." He had no fear that death would end all, even for his physical body, declaring that in *his flesh* would he see God. There is the doctrine of the *Eternal Springtime for*

Page Eight

OR—THE RESURRECTION

the soul! But this has to do with only the physical part of Job—his flesh. What about the *mind* that expressed that sublime faith, and the *spirit* that received the Heavenly assurance?

This leads us to another discussion. Do the mind and spirit die? Let us separate the term for meditation. There is nothing in the Bible to ever suggest that the mind dies. It is the one part of the trinity called man that defies death. Man's body was doomed to mortality when Adam and Eve sinned at the time that this divine judgment was pronounced: "Dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return" (Genesis 3:19). But this was not spoken of the mind of man! It was the grasping of the rebellious minds of Adam and Eve for more wisdom that wrecked Paradise on earth. The mind of Cain, even after "he went out from the presence of the Lord," built the civilization which the Flood destroyed. The mind is the one part of man that can defy death, and even God Himself, for we are told that "the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7). How startling! The mind of man can be an eternal rebel, never bowing to the will of God, and eternally existing while the universe grows old and totters to its fall, and, still defying God, the mind may function forever in a godless existence! It is true the mind may be dimmed like turning down a light, but the Bible, far from stating that the mind of man is ever destroyed, declares positively that

Page Nine

ETERNAL SPRINGTIME

"the worm (man's consciousness) dieth not" (Mark 9:44)

This defiant and rebellious part of man can keep the doors of the spiritual compartment closed, even forbidding the Holy Spirit to quicken the capacity to know and commune with God.

The Bible leads us to conclude that only the physical and spiritual parts of man can die. Man's body "dies" when the organism ceases to function in its present environment, and crumbles into the chemical elements from which it was made. But "spiritual death" is in another realm. Just as physical life is possible only when the body is normally functioning in its earthly environment, so the spiritual part of man "lives" only when it is properly adjusted to the divine. This is what Jesus meant when He said to Nicodemus: "Marvel not that I say unto you, Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). This is merely the statement of the necessary beginning of life for spiritual existence like natural birth is the beginning of physical being. Man should live in three realms: the physical, the mental, the spiritual. Until the Holy Spirit is allowed to quicken the dormant bulbs of this higher capacity of man, he is "spiritually dead."

Now let us go back to Job's message. He says: "Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold." Job added to his belief in his physical resurrection the statement that his spirit would accompany his spiritual nature after death, and that it would be the medium which enabled him to "see" God. The spiritual part of Job, still

Page Ten

or—THE RESURRECTION

accompanied by the mind that he had on earth, would make its home in a resurrected body. Here we have the doctrine of a resurrection which allows body, mind, and spirit to continue their triune functioning.

Now what is the condition of those who never have their spiritual nature quickened into existence? The Bible assures all such persons a resurrection also, for it teaches a double resurrection. Daniel says: "*Many* of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, *some* to everlasting life, and *some* to shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:2). In fact the Bible goes so far as to state that there will be a thousand years difference in time between the two resurrections. (Read Revelation 20:5.)

The mind demands an answer to a question right here. If a person never has the spiritual nature quickened for knowledge and communion with God, then dies physically, where does that mind go after death? The body is in the grave awaiting the physical resurrection, but the spirit of such a person cannot be in any sense with God, or in communion with Him, for he had no quickened spiritual nature, which alone makes communion with God. No more can such an unregenerated individual realize God than a fish could adjust itself to an environment of air and dry land! There is only one logical conclusion, since the Bible promises no change in spiritual nature after death: the mind unaccompanied by a spiritual recreation and separated from the body will be forever out of touch with God, even though it be reunited

Page Eleven

ETERNAL SPRINGTIME

with the resurrected body. This is what it means to be "lost." As to the actual location of such a "lost" mind, if we can think of locating a mind in the universe, there is no satisfactory answer in the Bible. The nearest to an answer would be the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31. Notice the great "gulf" fixed between the mind of the rich man whose body is understood to be still buried on the earth and the fellowship that Abraham and Lazarus enjoyed in a higher realm.

The scientific mind revolts at the thought of a physical body being reconstructed in the resurrection after all the chemicals that composed it have been released. Such persons ask: "Will the resurrected bodies be composed of the identical chemical atoms that once made up the body before death? Will it have the same sulphur, potassium, iron, lime, etc.?" The Bible teaches the contrary! In I Cor. 15:35-38, Paul says:

"But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?"

"Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:

"And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain:

"But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body."

Page Twelve

OR—THE RESURRECTION

The wheat that is sown decays, but there appears on the stalk another grain so much like the one that dies beneath the stalk, that no one can tell the difference between them. So will our physical resurrection be: our new body will be so like the one we wore in this earthly life that all who once knew us will recognize us in the heavenly existence. God evidently will not be required to search the dust of the earth for the same chemicals that once composed the body. Notice right here that the text says: "To every seed his own body." Buried wheat does not grow grains of oats upon the stalk! O, yes, we shall know each other in the realm to which we go after death! And keep in mind the post-resurrection life is divided by the Bible into two realms: one with God, and the other without Him.

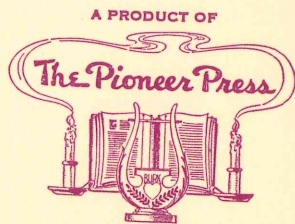
Let us add a corollary: there is only *one resurrection*. There is no mental resurrection, for the mind never dies! There is no spiritual resurrection, merely a continuation of the spiritual life that began when the individual was "born from the above." The resurrection of the physical body is the only resurrection taught in the Bible! In one sense, conversion is a resurrection. The spiritual nature of man, rendered dormant by the fall of man in Eden, and slumbering in the race through successive generations in each individual like the lily bulbs under the winter snows, is quickened into life. The breath of the Holy Spirit generates life in this inert part of man's trinity, and the spiritual part of man unfolds, making it possible

Page Thirteen

ETERNAL SPRINGTIME

for that person to appropriate God like the lily petals take the sunshine and moisture and food from the good earth. All that went into the making of the lily was in the ground and air all the time of its inactivity, but the life germ had to function before the lily really lived.

So the message of spring in Nature has moved my soul to sing! I, too, with a spiritual awakening, have the promise of spring where flowers will never fade, and the birds sing forever! As I look upon the fading cheeks of those I love, let me sing to them of God's Eternal Spring for the human soul—the Resurrection Hope! Thank God for this Easter season which reminds me that Christ arose! I praise god that He lovingly lingered in His transformed body for forty days in order that Thomas could make certain his identification and hush every clamorous doubt with a knowledge that He was the very Christ whom he had known through those blessed years of His earthly ministry! How comforting to weary and bereaved hearts is the assurance that Christ was "the first fruits" of this resurrection, and that the bodies of all those who sleep in Him shall one blessed day arise and follow Him up that shining pathway to the city of Eternal Spring!



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