

EASTER

by Rev. Hugo L. Odhner

The Lord is all-powerful. He rules the whole world, and makes the sun rise and set. No one can have power over the Lord.

And yet, the Lord came down among people to help them. And He suffered and died, without even defending Himself at all, even though He might have called on a thousand angels to take Him up into heaven in glory. He died amid great pain and greater sorrow. And then His friends took Him, and bound Him up in linen clothes with spices, and buried Him in a sepulcher.

We may well wonder why the Lord let this happen.

As a child, did you ever wonder why there are different seasons of the year? Winter comes, and the trees lose their leaves, the plants wither, and the earth lies dead under a blanket of snow. But buried in the soil there are lots of little seeds and, when winter is over, they spring up out of the dark earth and rise to new life. They receive a new body and quickly grow and flower and bear fruit.

The Lord let Himself be buried so that He could show Himself to His disciples in a new form, in a new body. Before His burial He had looked almost like any other man. He had been born a babe, and had grown up. And while He was always far more good and wise than other people, and had done miracles and wonderful works, yet even the disciples thought of Him mostly as a great and kind prophet who had been given special powers by Jehovah.

So when He died on the cross, they felt broken-hearted. They gave up all hope, thinking they would never see their Master again. And early Sunday morning, so early that it was still dark out, a number of the women took balm and spices and perfumed ointments and went to the sepulcher outside the city.

Imagine their fear and confusion when they found the stone rolled away by an angel and the tomb empty. Although the others left to spread this strange news, Mary lingered at the entrance to the sepulcher. She was weeping bitterly, for she did not understand that the Lord had really risen. As she finally turned to go, she saw a man standing before her, dimly, as through tears. She thought it was the gardener. But it was Jesus; and He said, "Mary." And then she recognized His voice and knew Him as her Lord.

The Lord had risen! He had become glorified. Ever afterwards people—if they were pure in heart—could see God, which had never before been possible. God had spoken to people through angels, but had never before been seen in His Person. But, since that Easter morning, the Lord God can be seen! Hopefully, we will all see Him after we die. But we do not have to wait until then. We can, in a way, see Him now, if our hearts are right.

When we read the story of His rising from the sepulcher, does not the Lord appear before the eyes of our minds? Does He not touch our hearts? The Lord is present with us, always and everywhere, since His rising. And when we read the Word, He can be seen by us.

Sometimes it can seem that while we are in this world, it is just as if we were in a dark cavern, like a sepulcher before sunrise. We are so full of worries and fears and sadness, that the Lord may be right beside us, and yet we cannot recognize Him!

But He is present in the world, just as He is present in heaven. And, even if we are not ready to *see* Him very clearly, perhaps, if we love Him, we can at least recognize His voice! For all the time He is calling us—to do what is right, to shun what is wrong. He is trying to make us hear Him. He is calling each of us, by name, for He knows everyone of us better than we know ourselves.

He is calling us by name, even as He called to the lone woman at the sepulcher, who recognized His voice, although she could not yet clearly see His Divinely Human Form.