

General Statement.

The tragedy on Calvary came to its close with rending veil and opening graves, and the form of the Nazarene hung dead upon the cross. John had already led the sorrowing mother to his home, and the rest of the disciples were hidden in fear. Joseph, a nobleman of Arimathea, went into Pilate's presence, and risked his own life by asking the privilege of burying the body of Jesus. The consent was given, and Joseph reverently took down the corpse from the cross, and laid it in his own new, unused tomb. A stone was rolled in front of the cave, and by the governor's command sealed with the official signet, while a Roman guard took its station around it, so that none might bear away the body. All these events took place on Friday evening, the day of the crucifixion. For thirty hours the soldiers watched the tomb, while all Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread, and the disciples of Jesus wept in secret over the ruin of their hopes. The first Sunday morn-

ing after the passover was about to dawn, when suddenly the tomb was rent asunder by an earthquake, the soldiers fell upon the ground in fear, and an angel descended to herald the rising, as angels had heralded the birth of the Son of man. A little group of women were on their way to the sepulcher, bearing spices and balm for the further anointing of the body, when they saw that the stone was rolled away and the tomb was empty. One of them, Mary Magdalene, ran to bear word to the disciples; the others looked within the tomb, and heard from an angel the astounding news that Jesus had risen from the dead. Mary Magdalene returned, and was first to meet her risen Lord, as is related by John; the other women met him a few moments later, and heard his greeting, "All hail!" On that first Easter Sunday the risen Christ appeared five times, to various disciples, at the tomb, on the way to Emmaus, and in the upper room of the supper.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 1. In the end of the sabbath. That is, late on Saturday night, just before the dawn of Sunday morning. **Came Mary Magdalene.** That is, "Mary of Magdala," a town on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. Out of her Jesus had cast seven devils. **Mark 16, 9.** There is no reason for the current supposition that she was the "woman who was a sinner," mentioned in Luke 7, 36, 50. We know nothing of her life except this one event, which is given at greater length in John 20, the other Mary. This was the mother of James the less and of Joseph (Matt. 27, 56), who is supposed to have been a cousin of the mother of Jesus. Besides these two were Salome, and Joanna, and perhaps other women. To see the sepulcher. The burial of Jesus had been hastened in order to avoid breaking the Sabbath, which began at sunset on Friday evening; and these women were bringing spices and other material for the more complete embalming of the body. So until they were almost there did they remember that a stone lay before the door, which they could not roll away; but as they approached they saw that it was gone. **Mark 16, 3.** (1) *Those who work for Christ will find obstacles removed from their path.*

2. There was a great earthquake. This had just taken place when the women arrived. It may not have been an ordinary earthquake, but was perhaps a supernatural event, unnoticed at a distance. **The angel.** Rev. Ver., "an angel." From the more precise accounts of Luke and John it would appear that there were two angels, though one may have been more prominent. The birth, the temptation, the agony, and the resurrection of Jesus were all attended by angelic manifestations. (2) *When the King comes we may expect to see his servants. Roll'd back the stone.* The stone was probably in shape like a large millstone, round, and set into a groove, on which it was rolled. The coming of the angel was not to open the door for the risen Saviour, for he needed no aid to pass through it; but to show to the guards, the women, and the disciples that an almighty power was at work.

3. His countenance. Rev. Ver., "his appearance," not merely his face, but his entire manifestation. **His like lightning.** There was a human figure (Mark), but shining with an intense brightness. **Raiment white as snow.** Such as is elsewhere described as the garments of the one who dwell in heaven. (3) *May we be ready to wear those white robes of glory!*

4. For fear of him. Both the women and the keepers feared, but the weak women drew near out of love to their Lord, while the strong men fell and then fled in mortal terror. **The keepers did shake.** Rev. Ver., "did quake;" the verb being of the same form as the word "earthquake" in verse 2. **Became as dead men.** "Utterly unstrung in their strength, unwarmed, unmanned."—Morrison. Such is the effect always when a heavenly being is manifested to a mortal. (4) *These earthly vessels must put on the heavenly before we can look upon the King in his beauty.*

5. Said unto the women. Not deigning to speak to the keepers, who were in no condition to hear them; for only those whose spiritual natures are quickened can apprehend the spiritual. **Fear not ye.** In

almost all instances the first words of an angel, as recorded in Scripture, are, "Fear not." **Ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.** To the angels as well as to us he is Jesus the crucified; the Lamb that was slain. (5) *In earth and in heaven the highest glory of Christ is his cross.*

6. He is not here. Already the tomb was empty, and the Saviour had risen. (6) *Since Jesus has risen, we can say this of every tomb where the body of a saint lies buried. He is risen, as he said. Many times had Jesus predicted his own resurrection, but his words had either been misunderstood as figurative, or made no impression. See Matt. 16, 21; 17, 22, 23; 20, 17-19. Come, see the place.* Comparing the accounts of the four gospels and the plan of ancient tombs, we conclude that the sepulcher consisted of two rooms, an outer and an inner, between which stood the stone. The women were already in the outer room when the angel spoke to them. They now looked within and saw the linen cloths and the napkin which had been fastened upon the body. **Luke 24, 12; John 20, 6, 7.** **Where the Lord lay.** So an angel speaks of Jesus as "the Lord," implying in the term his divine nature.

7. Go quickly. This was probably spoken after the women had looked into the inner tomb. **Tell his disciples.** Mark adds "and Peter;" to whom the news would be most welcome of all. (7) *How quickly Christ sets believers at work. He goeth before you.* Not in visible form, as he had walked with them in other days, but as their invisible Leader. (8) *So now he walks before his people. Into Galilee.* As he had promised on the night before his crucifixion. **Matt. 28, 22.** This was to be not his first appearance, but his first official meeting with his disciples; the one witnessed by more than five hundred people, 1 Cor. 15, 6, when his commission was given. He appointed it in Galilee, as a place retired from the notice of his enemies. **Lo, I have told you.** This was the seal of his authority as God's messenger.

8. They departed quickly. Glad to bear the joyful message. **With fear and great joy.** Joy at the news; fear at the angelic appearance. **Did run, and bring his disciples word.** Mark says, "They said nothing to any man;" that is, to no one on the way, but withheld the tidings until they saw the disciples. (9) *Those that are sent on God's errands must not loiter or lose time.*—M. Henry.

9. And they went. From a comparison of the accounts it is inferred that Mary Magdalene had been in advance of the other women, saw the sepulcher open, and went at once to notify Peter and John, so that she was not present when the angel spoke to the other women; but returning and their departure first saw the risen Saviour, as related by John. **Jesus met them.** This was his second appearance, a few minutes later than to Mary Magdalene. **All hail.** Literally, "rejoice;" the customary form of greeting. (10) *So will he greet his saints at his second coming. He'll meet him by the feet.* To assure themselves of the reality of his appearance, and to express their joy, love, and homage. **Worshiped him.** Often did Jesus receive divine honors, and never did he refuse them. **Not so did the**