

bought on Sabbath evening. Sweet spices—"Aromatic herbs to mix with ointment" (Meyer). Luke says "spices and ointments" (23: 56). Nicodemus brought aloes and myrrh (John 19: 39). Such ointments were generally composed of olive oil with various fragrant vegetable resins such as nard and myrrh. They were very expensive. Compare Mark 14: 2-9; John 12: 2, 3. Anoint him—It was not customary among the Jews to embalm the dead body. Their reverence for it as "in the image of God" forbade the mutilation necessary. It was anointed with fragrant oils and wrapped in spices. Probably these women did not know what Nicodemus had already done (John 19: 40). The fact that they made the usual preparations in such a case shews that Christ's disciples did not expect him to rise again in three days.

2. **Very early**—While it was yet dark (John 20: 1) they left their homes, and, since there is scarcely any twilight in Palestine, the sun was up before they reached the grave. **The first day of the week**—Henceforth to be called "the Lord's day," the Christian Sabbath.

3. **They were saying among themselves**—They knew nothing about the sealed stone and the Roman guard. Their question shews that nothing could have been farther from their minds than a resurrection, either fraudulent, as the priests tried to make out, or real, as they found to be the case. It also shews that those who first discovered the empty grave were persons unable to open it themselves. **Roll away the stone**—"In a garden at the foot of Calvary, is one of these chambers hewn out of the rock, evidently the burial place of a rich man. I do not say that this is the sepulchre, but it is very like it, and I believe it to be the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. There is a deep groove, about three feet wide, cut out of the rock, by the side of the doorway, under which the rock is hollowed to the same width for two or three feet. In the groove is a huge circular stone, of a diameter greater than the height of the door, like a huge millstone. To close the tomb, this stone was worked by handspokes into the socket under the doorway which it completely filled; and it could be moved back only by the application of great force through levers or handspokes." (Tristram).

4. **And looking up they see** (R. V.)—The tomb has been opened by an angel (Matt. 28: 2). Matthew tells us that the angel sat upon the stone. It could not therefore have been the rolling "millstone" referred to by Canon Tristram, but round like a huge boulder. **For it was exceeding great** (R. V.)—The stone was so large that they saw, when at a distance, that it had been rolled away. Others connect this clause with the questioning of the women as giving the ground of their anxiety. "When christian love undertakes a difficult duty, God will remove the obstacles which are too great for its own strength." (Abbott). Mary Magdalene seems at once to have turned

and running back told Peter and John that the sepulchre had been opened and the body of the Lord taken away (John 9: 1, 2). She must have assumed this for she did not go up to the sepulchre nor see the angels, else she would have known that he was risen.

II. **A LIVING SAVIOUR. 5. Entering**—All except Mary Magdalene. They must have been too astonished and bewildered to be afraid. Their anxiety overcame their fears. They had no suspicion that anything supernatural had occurred. **A young man**—This seems to have been the usual appearance of angels when they made themselves visible to human eyes. The idea that angels have wings would be thought as grotesque as it is unscriptural were we not so accustomed to it. As they stood perplexed two angels suddenly stood by them (Luke 24: 4) and Mary saw two again sitting in the sepulchre (John 20: 12). It is not easy to explain all these angelic appearances consistently. "Cold discrepancy-mongers, do ye not then see that the Evangelists do not count the angels? There were not only two angels, there were millions of them. They appeared not always one and the same, not always the same two; sometimes this one appeared, sometimes that; sometimes in this place, sometimes in that; sometimes alone, sometimes in company; sometimes they said this, sometimes they said that" (Lessing). **Sitting on the right side**—and therefore at the left of where the body had lain. **Arrayed in a white robe** (R. V.)—The symbol of purity. The whiteness appears to have been supernatural. Compare Matt. 28: 3; Mark 9: 3; Luke 24: 4; also Acts 1: 10; 10: 30; Rev. 3: 4, 5, 18; 7: 9-13. **Affrighted**—R. V. "amazed." They were more astonished than afraid. The same word occurs in Mark 9: 15; 14: 33.

6. **Be not amazed** (R. V.)—Matthew makes "ye" emphatic, "Fear not ye." Contrasting them with the sentinels, the agents of Jewish enemies. "Ye, his friends, have no reason to fear." In Matthew's account the angel reminds them that what had happened was just what Jesus had predicted. **He is risen**—Angel voices proclaimed his birth, and it was fitting that an angel first should tell men of his completed work. **Behold the place**—"He was not snatched away, see everything laid in order as when one rises in the morning from slumber." (See John 20: 5-7). "The deceased was usually dressed, not merely in the shroud, but also in the upper vestments of ordinary life; while the turban was always placed on the head, with this difference, that its folds were made to cover the entire face." (Tristram). The term "napkin," when our Bible was translated, included all such pieces of linen as would be used for handkerchiefs, or turbans.

7. **But go**—The "but" is significant and means "Do not linger here by an empty grave but go and tell the glad news to others." Through woman, death was first introduced