

## EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

## General Statement.

BY ROBERT R. DOHERTY, PH.D.

It was sunset on Friday evening of passover week when the body of Jesus was laid in its niche in Joseph's new tomb. There it rested for, say, thirty hours behind a stone door fastened by the Roman seal and watched by the Roman guard. The first ray of what we call Sunday morning touches the sky—the first Easter morning; and the Saviour rises from his grave. Angels roll away the stone, angels take their station within the deserted sepulcher, but he is there no more. A sad company of women approach that grave, anxious thoughts mingling with their purposes of holy ministry. Their alarm deepens as they find it empty, and they marvel greatly when they behold an angel, who tells them that he whom they seek has risen and departed. They are bidden to bear the news to his disciples, and especially to repentant Peter. Perplexed in thought, but with new hope rising in their hearts, they hasten from the garden. They have not yet seen the Lord, and they can scarce believe that he whom they saw pierced and dead upon the cross, and wrapped in garments of the grave, can now be living; but all save one hasten upon their errand. Mary Magdalene remains to weep by her Master's empty grave, and her eyes first behold the risen Saviour. The date is April 9, A. D. 30. As the site of Calvary is not certainly known, we cannot speak with assurance of the location of the Saviour's grave.

**Verse 1. When the Sabbath was past.** The Jewish Sabbath, our Saturday, during which our Lord's body lay in the tomb. Technically, the Hebrew Sabbath ended at sundown. The women probably started on their journey soon after midnight. **Mary Magdalene.** Mary of Magdala, a town near the Sea of Galilee (Luke 8. 2). She is not to be confused with "the woman that was a sinner," who washed the Saviour's feet (Luke 7. 37), nor with Mary, the sister of Lazarus (John 12. 2, 3). **Mary.** The wife of Cleophas (John 19. 25). Her son is called "the less," or "the little," perhaps from his size or to distinguish him from James, the brother of the Lord, a well-known leader in the early Church. **Salome.** Probably the wife of Zebedee, and mother of the apostles James and John. While Mark names but three women, Luke mentions a fourth, Joanna, and adds "and others with them." Those who had remained to the last at the cross are now the earliest at the sepulcher. **Had bought.** Revised Version, "bought." The word simply indicates past time, and may refer to a purchase made either before or after the Sabbath, which closed at sunset on Saturday. **Sweet spices.** Myrrh, aloes, and other perfumes and preventives of decay, to be wrapped in the folds around the body. (1) *Love counts no cost too great to expend upon the object of its affection.* **Anoint him.** Their purpose is itself sufficient evidence that they did not expect him to rise from the dead. They wished to add their token of love to what Nicodemus had already provided (John 19. 39), or perhaps they did not know of it.

**2. Very early in the morning.** On Sunday morning, the first Easter day. (2) *Let that day be kept joyfully which marks the triumph of Christ.* **They came.** Probably Mary Magdalene was in advance, first saw the sepulcher open, and without waiting ran to bring word to the disciples, as related in John 20. 1-3. While she was gone the

other events of this lesson took place, and on her return occurred the Saviour's first appearance, as related in John 20. **At the rising of the sun.** "When the sun was risen," Revised Version. John's gospel says, "while it was yet dark." The gloom of the garden may not yet have been penetrated by the early rays of the rising sun. (3) *Though darkness was on the earth, yet the Sun of righteousness had arisen and was soon to shine.*

**3. Said among themselves.** They were unaware of the sealing and the guard, as these had been ordered late on Friday night, after their departure. See Matt. 27. 62-66. **Roll us away the stone.** It was as large as a millstone, rolled flat across the door of the tomb, and fitted into a groove at one side. It was characteristic of their impetuous love not to think of the obstacle until just as they were coming near to it. (4) *Love to Christ counts no stone too great to keep back from his presence.*

**4. And when they looked.** This clause is parenthetical, and the word "although" or "afterward" should be supplied in the thought. **Stone was rolled away.** There had been an earthquake, and an angel had rolled away the stone, while the keepers first fell to the ground in fear and then fled. (5) *Often the difficulties that threaten us in the way of serving God we find removed when we draw near to them.* **For it was very great.** In the order of thought this sentence belongs at the end of the previous verse.

**5. Entering into the sepulcher.** Perhaps this means no more than entering the door and looking within. It was probably a cave, with niches in the side for bodies, and, until the burial of Jesus, unoccupied. **They saw.** Perhaps all the women except Mary Magdalene, who had already gone. **A young man.** Luke says, "two men in shining garments." Matthew says, "an angel." Angels appear to herald the birth, the

return  
Cloth  
rayed  
white  
with  
here  
(7) C  
as his  
were a  
lation  
which  
a supe

6. I  
guards  
women  
mies, b  
fright  
like th  
are re  
Nazare  
hesitat  
express  
and his  
ashame  
The fig  
earth's  
women  
to the  
rested.  
since Je

Jesus  
day and  
morning  
reckoned  
is a stra  
as that v  
age, who  
the follo  
day, Ma  
called th  
afternoon  
still Sat

Verse  
Matthew  
Saturday  
could pu  
Sabbath,  
Saturday  
women p  
evening,  
had rem  
hence the  
the Sal  
Magdal  
seven m  
been cur