

had cast seven demons out of her (Luke 8, 2), and she had dedicated her life and means to him. Comp. also chap. 15, 40, *sq.* Talmudic legends show that she was well-known, probably for her wealth and beauty. The Christian tradition identifying her with the "sinful woman" of Luke 7, 37 rests on a fundamental mistake as to the nature of demoniacal possession, and it is otherwise extremely improbable. *James*. "The Little," son of Alphaeus, and one of the twelve. Alphaeus is not the same as Clopas, for it seems certain that four women are mentioned in John 14, 25. By comparing that passage with the synopsists it follows that Salome, mother of James and John, was the Virgin Mary's sister. How well womanly devotion is illustrated by the fact that the mothers of three apostles were so early at the tomb while their sons were too stupefied with grief to think of rendering this last loving service. The body had been hastily wrapped in cloths with spices on the Friday, the elaborate work of embalming being left till after the Sabbath. *VER. 2. Was risen.* John tells us that Mary started "while it was yet dark," the brief equinoctial twilight just covering the journey. Jesus thus rose with the sun, a chosen emblem of himself. One of the rare gems of poetry in the Rigveda calls the dawn the "banner of immortality," and ever since the poets of nearly three millennia have recognized the argument implied. *VER. 3. Were saying.* A vivid description of the anxious and repeated question. They did not halt, for all their perplexity. *Roll away.* The tomb was hewn in the side of the rock, and the stone lay at its mouth (comp. John 11, 38). *VER. 4. Looking up.* Raising their downcast eyes. So the stone had been rolled away before they came. Matthew omits this detail. *For.* This gives the reason why they could see it from a distance in the early morning light. *VER. 5. Entering in.* John, a young man, was restrained at first by awe. *A young man.* So appeared the inhabitants of a world which knows not age or decay. Both the number and the positions of the angels differ in the four accounts; the place was full of heavenly visitants. *Wrote comp.* chap. 9, 3; Rev. 3, 4; 4, 4, etc. It is the emblem of the purity of heaven, "the white radiance of eternity." *VER. 6. Nazareth.* How significant that his humblest title should be used now! *Hath been.* The vivid perfect describing an event whose consequences abide. *Risen.* This single word with its astounding message is duly placed first. The clause is not genuine in Luke. *Behold!* The perfect order of the grave-clothes brought conviction to John's mind, but the women were too startled to reason. *VER. 7. And Peter.* Peter's disciple alone records this exquisitely tender message sent to the penitent apostle. *Galilee.* This does not exclude earlier manifestations in Jerusalem, but points to the supreme importance of the appearance foretold (Matt. 26, 22). *VER. 8.* Mark omits their recognition of his words and the joy that followed, laying stress on the wonder of the sights and sounds which had confused all powers of thought. *Said nothing.* Except, of course, to the disciples (Matthew and Luke). *Afraid.* Here abruptly ends Mark's Gospel, cut short either by the writer's death or by the accidental loss of a leaf in a very early copy. Some early authorities fill the gap with the following patently unauthentic words: "But they reported to Peter, and thence with him, all things commanded them. And after these things Jesus himself, from sunrise to sunset, went forth through them the holy and incorruptible proclamation of the eternal salvation." The existing conclusion stands on a much higher basis. It is clearly a condensed fifth narrative of the forty days drawn from traditions anterior to the general acceptance of the canonical gospels, whose statements it does not attempt to harmonize. Its independence of Mark's Gospel is shown

by the entire lack of sequence between verses 8 and 9, and the complete difference of style. *VER. 9. Comp.* John 20, 14. *VER. 11.* The unbelief of the disciples is constantly dwelt on, to show how far they were from persuading themselves into the belief. *VER. 12.* This summarizes the exquisite story told by Luke (24, 13-32). *VER. 13. Neither.* Not certainly inconsistent with Luke 24, 34, for they may have thought the appearance to Simon incompatible with the other. But in all these records we are confronted with difficulties of harmony which remind us of their strictly fragmentary character and the supernatural phenomena they narrate. Had we a full account instead of a series of isolated pictures the difficulties would disappear. Note that not one of the four describes the ascension; (see Luke 24, 51, Rev. Ver., marg.) It was out of place at the end of a gospel, for it would have seemed the end of his life on earth. Rather was it the beginning of the Church's history as sketched in the Acts. Jesus departed to send the Spirit (John 16, 7), but the Gospel record closes with its gladdest tidings, that he should be ever with his own.

### Lesson Word-Pictures.

Three women stealing along through the shadows of the early morning. The sun is not up, but when he comes he will make a window of that bright rent in the eastern clouds and so look down upon the earth. But O, all the shining of all the suns in the universe cannot make this a happy hour for those three women! Their dearest Friend is dead, the great Friend, too, of all the people. Why, less than a week ago they would have put a crown on his head. Since then, he has met an awful death and been laid away in a garden tomb—he whom men called the Lord's anointed, Messiah, Israel's King. And now the only trace of him is a dead body, and those packages in the women's hands are sweet spices for its anointing. The women go as in a dream. They talk like those in sleep. It cannot be, must not be. Every sorrowing one feels with them. When will life, not death, reign over our beloved? But here is the garden they seek. They enter. It is dusky still, but out of that window in the eastern sky more light is falling, and you can trace the outlines of that awful tomb devouring so much; devouring all! When will death cease?

Suddenly, one of the women halts. She gasps, "The door!" The others stop and look agast. They had forgotten all about the door of the sepulcher! It is a heavy stone. Who would roll it away for them? They have thought of every thing else; had planned for a visit at the hour when none would disturb them on the way, and they had not forgotten to bring spices, but there was that door! It always is so. Something is always in the way—disease, death, and now that big, clumsy stone! With sober faces, with wailing voices, they near the sepulcher. That stone, that stone, who will roll it away? Alas, alas! But why do they start forward? Why do they excitedly clasp their hands? Why those exultant cries? No stone is there! It is rolled away! Just like Peter, impulsive Peter, to have got together a band, and rolled that stone away. May be the Roman soldiers, who have gone somewhere, kindly tipped the stone out of place, though in doing it they would have broken the great seal of the governor. The soldiers could not have done it, no, no! Who then? The women cannot say. However, the sepulcher is open, the dead body is there, and the three women will lavish on it their wealth of spices. Yes, he is sleeping there, and they enter. Into the chilling dark—but, why is the tomb so light? That window in the eastern sky,