

A SAD INTERIOR AND A CHEERY MESSENGER NO. 2518

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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“And she went and told them that had been with Him, as they mourned and wept.”
Mark 16:10.

Some of you, dear friends, have seen those small pictures by famous Dutch artists where, with many little touches—very lifelike, very suggestive, and very homely—they depict an interior. Now Mark is that kind of painter. He delights to give us interiors. He is best pleased when he can record something which nobody else seems to have described, or when he can take a description by somebody else, and fill in the details, the finishing touches that have been omitted. I do not remember that we are told by Matthew, or Luke, or John, how the disciples behaved themselves while their Lord was in the grave. It is left to us to imagine their feelings, with this exception—that Mark tells us that “they mourned and wept.”

Remember, this was on the morning of the third day after our Lord's death. They had had the Jewish Sabbath for quiet reflection, and no doubt, for lamentation and mourning. But this is the morning of our own Lord's-Day, the first day of the week, and when Mary Magdalene comes into the room, she tells them that she has seen the risen Lord! And what is the scene which is presented to her eyes? In two or three words, Mark stipulates it in thus, “as they mourned and wept.” They were mainly men, I suppose. If Mary came only to the eleven, they were all men, yet this is how they are occupied—“They mourned and wept.” We know most of them. We have read so much of them, and they stand out in such clear light—these early leaders of the Church of Christ, these first few chosen men—that I seem to be almost able to see them all in my imagination just now. They were not grouped around a table as they are in that celebrated picture of the Last Supper, but sitting together in the room, and not able to restrain their emotions, they are all mourning, and most of them are expressing those emotions in a way not usual to men. “They mourned and wept.” There were sighs, cries, and salt tears. It was a scene of sad sorrow which Mary came in upon. You can almost picture her as she stands at the door with her hand upon the latch. She pauses a moment before she can communicate the news—they are so unhappy, they are so broken down, it is such a funeral gathering—that she can scarcely find her tongue! At last she breaks out, “Christ has risen! I have seen Him! He has risen from the dead! Cease your mourning. An angel has descended from heaven, and has spoken to me, and said, ‘He is not here: for He is risen, as He said.’” After she has delivered her message, she stands still, almost petrified, because she finds herself not believed. Perhaps nobody speaks. It may be no one says, “Mary Magdalene, you are mad! We do not believe you!” They weep on. They look around as much as to ask one another, “Do you believe it?” And each one seems to say, “I do not believe it myself,” and their eyes give themselves again to their copious weeping—and their hearts yield themselves, still, to their perpetual mourning. “She went and told them that had been with Him, as they mourned and wept.”

I want, at this time, to speak first about *the sorrowing assembly*—that mourning and weeping band of disciples to whom Mary came. Then I will say something about *the consoling messenger* whose message ought to have transformed that mourning and weeping into the opposite, namely, into joy and gladness. And, in the last place, I will tell you of *the reassuring reflection* that I see in this narrative.

I. First, let me take you to this interior which Mark has so beautifully painted, and bid you look at the sorrowing assembly. “She went and told them that had been with Him, as they mourned and wept.”

What made them weep? What makes men weep about the death of Christ? It does make them weep—we are not all turned to stone, we are not all brutish. There are times with some of us—we wish they were more frequent—when the cross of Christ seems to touch our inmost heart and makes the rock that lies within our nature stream with living floods of tears. Why do we mourn over Christ crucified?

First, *because, like these disciples, we have some faith in Him*. They had been with Him, and they had been with Him because they had believed in Him. They had so believed in Him that they had left all, and followed Him, and been subjected to reproach for His dear sake. They had heard Him preach, and the power of His teaching had won their hearts. They believed that He was the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God, and the Deliverer of men! Yet now He was dead, and the very fact that they had believed made them feel intense sorrow of heart as they looked back upon what He had been to them. If they had had no faith in Him, they would have said, “He was an impostor, and He is put away. That is the end of Him, and it is always a blessing when an impostor, at last, comes to his end.” But because they had believed in Him, therefore they sorrowed to think that He was gone!

You and I, dear friends, who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ at this present moment, cannot, without deep sorrow think of Him as dead. When once we have vividly realized that the Son of God died upon the cross, and mark how He died in utter and extreme anguish, we cannot but grieve. We ask, “Why should He die? Why should He thus be put to death?” And we begin to cry and sorrow because of this great crime of crimes! O You Christ of God, were You despised and rejected of men? O You Lover of men, were You hated and cast out, and crucified? O You who came to save the guilty, did man put You to death?—

*“Alas, and did my Savior bleed?
And did my Sovereign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?”*

In proportion as we believe in Him, we feel that we would melt away in tears of grief to think that He should die. Shall such brightness be eclipsed? Shall such glory be dishonored? Shall such immortality be dragged down to the gates of death? We cannot but mourn that Christ should die—and if we dwell upon that thought, we shall get into that vein in which the disciples were when they mourned and wept.

No doubt they mourned and wept, principally, *because they loved Him and, therefore, lamented for His loss*. Was Christ really gone? “Alas,” they said, “our Head is taken from us, our Master and our Lord, our perfect Teacher, our complete Example, our blessed Friend, our tender Comforter.” They had lost more than she who loses her husband, or than he who has lost his spouse, or than the child that is bereaved of its mother. They had lost “every precious name in one.” And, brothers and sisters, if we were to always think of Christ as dead; if we were so unwise as to forget that He always *lives*, it would seem, indeed, to be the greatest loss that heaven or earth could sustain, for the Son of God thus to be put to death! As it is, we love Him so that we cannot think of His being put away from the sons of men—being rejected by them, and put to death by them—without feeling our hearts breaking that He should suffer so! Love to Him, and our valuation of Him go to deepen the tides of our grief.

And the more is this the case *when we think of the sorrows He endured*. I fancy that I hear John saying across the table, “And I saw them pierce His side, and forthwith there came out blood and water.” And I hear James say, “And I saw them offer Him vinegar.” And I hear Peter say, “And I saw them scourge Him.” And I hear Bartholomew say, “And I heard from the distance His cry, ‘I thirst.’” And then they would break into a chorus of weeping again. It was not only that He was gone, and that they had lost Him, but that He had died in such a way as He did. They could not, without tears, contemplate His being put to the death of a felon in such extreme agony, deserted of the Father and crying, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” without saying to themselves, “How could it be? This is an affliction that cannot be borne, a deep sorrow that cannot be fathomed, that He should die, and die so!” I do admit I have sometimes felt within myself as if I would have stopped His dying if I could. What? Has He died to save *my* soul? The ransom price is altogether too great! Have you never heard of the two brothers, one of whom must die? Each was eager to suffer instead of his brother, and they contended with each other—as though they were rivals in love with death—which should die that the other might live. And, sometimes, when love is strong upon us, we seem to say to the great Master, “It were better that I should die and perish, than that You should be nailed to the cross.” He never left it to our choice! He bought us with His precious blood before we had an opportunity to debate with Him in a discussion of love! He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, and gave that matchless unequalled life that He might redeem you and me from going down into the pit. We cannot think of His suffering and grief without mourning and weeping.

Then, dear friends, I should think that the eleven, as they sat together, must have mourned and wept as *they thought of how they had treated this dear Lord of theirs*. If even a friend dies, and we have ever been unkind to that friend, how our unkindness comes home to us when it is too late to atone for it! An undutiful son, when his mother dies, must feel a sore fretting of heart to think of his unkindness. But what must these disciples have felt as they remembered how they had treated their blessed Lord? They

said to one another, "Oh, how we must have grieved Him when we disputed among ourselves which of us should be the greatest, while He was talking about being delivered into the hands of wicked men, and being scourged, and put to death upon the cross!" "Hold your tongues, all of you," cries poor Peter, "say nothing, for it is I who deserted Him and denied Him! With oaths and curses I denied that I even knew Him." And when Peter wept, they would all weep, I am sure, as each would say, "But, brother Peter, we all forsook Him and fled." "I," says John, "was asleep in the garden that night when He said, 'Could you not watch with Me one hour?'" And each one would be willing to confess his own wrong-doing towards the Blessed One, and all together would say, "Why did we not rally around Him? Why did we not stay with Him when they took Him away, and bound Him, and scourged Him? Why did we not bare our shoulders, and put ourselves between the Roman lictors, and His blessed flesh? At least, why did we not stand around the cross, and whisper comfort if we could not help Him, and quote, at least, some promises of the Father to Him, or remind Him that there were some who loved Him even if others were jibing and jeering at Him?" Then they wept and mourned afresh.

And when you and I think of the death of Christ, must we not feel much the same as these disciples did?—

*"'Twas You, my sins, my cruel sins,
His chief tormentors were!
Each of my crimes became a nail
And unbelief the spear."*

It was our sins that drew the vengeance down upon His guiltless head, yet we have not treated Him as we ought to have treated Him, for even we who have known Him longest, and who have loved Him best—what poor friends we have been to Him! He shows His wounds again to our penitent gaze, and He says, "These are the wounds which I received in the house of My friends." Oh, how little have we given to Him, how little have we done for Him, how few hours have we spent with Him in solitude, how feeble have been our testimonies for Him, how slack our prayers for His coming, and for the triumph of His kingdom! I, for one, feel ashamed, and say—

*"Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut its glories in,
When God, the mighty Maker died
For man, the creature's sin.
Thus might I hide my blushing face
While His dear cross appears,
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness,
And melt my eyes to tears."*

I cannot keep on with this sorrowful subject. That terrible passion of our Master is enough to wring the last drop of grief out of our hearts. If we could once get into true sympathy with it, it would be, to-night, in this Tabernacle as it was in that upper room at Jerusalem—we would be mourning and weeping because our Lord was dead. I had many things to say to you upon this sacred theme, but if you could bear to hear them, I cannot bear to speak them.

II. So, I prefer to ask you to look at THE CONSOLING MESSENGER who came to the disciples, and said, concerning their Lord and ours, "He is not dead: He is risen!"

It is very important that we should have right views concerning the resurrection as well as the death of our Lord. If I go down my garden, early tomorrow morning, with my spirit drooping and disconsolate, and say to myself, "Alas, the world is in a very bad state, and the church is almost as bad as the world! Everything is going wrong, everything is wretched, sad, and miserable." Why, even the very birds might begin to say, "What is that man doing? He is out of tune with us." And if I look at the flowers, surely they, also, might well begin to chide me, and say, "Master, what are you doing?" But if I go forth with many burdens, and many cares all cast upon the Lord, and with all the outlook, dreary as it is, still say, "The Lord lives, and blessed be my Rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted!" then surely the mountains and the hills shall break forth before me into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands! God means His people to rejoice, and the world, wilderness as it is, is to rejoice with them! "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." God fill your souls with sunlight, all of you who are His people! If there is any truth that can flood our souls with joy, surely it is contained in the cheering message which Mary brought to the weeping disciples!

You and I, beloved, by our sins, slew the Christ of God! He died the accursed death of the cross, but He is not dead! He is not dead now! Some professing Christians go through a kind of practical charade of the life of Christ, acting it all over again throughout what they call the Holy Year. And then they must

necessarily have the “three hours’ agony” on what they call, “Good Friday.” Well, now, if I believed that Christ died on Good Friday, I would celebrate it with joy from the first dawn of the morning to the setting of the sun at night! It seems to me that there is much of unbelief, after all, at the back of any attempt to go, even in imagination, through the three hours’ agony—the agony that was endured once and for all by Him who said, “It is finished.” If it were *not* finished, I would help to go through it, but if it is finished, what have I to do with it but to rejoice in the sweet fruit of it, and triumph and be glad that He is not here, for He is risen and gone into the glory of the Father? That message of Mary Magdalene has changed the whole aspect of affairs, and though we have wept and mourned, now we will begin to rejoice!

What did Mary say? *She came with the best of news*, for she said, “I have seen our risen Lord! First I saw an angel, and he told me that Christ was not there, for He was risen. And I ran to tell you that good tidings, and on the road I saw *Him*. I did not know Him at first, but He called me, ‘Mary,’ and I said to Him, ‘Rabboni,’ and I tried to touch Him, but He said, ‘Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God.’ I am sure that it was none other than the Christ. I am not deceived, for the tones of His voice are well known to me. I am an eyewitness that He is risen, for I saw Him and I heard Him.”

Brothers and sisters, that our Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead is a great fact of history, testified by eye-witnesses—hundreds of faithful men and women saw Him after He rose from the dead! They could not have been deceived—they knew Him too well. They were not impostors, for they lost everything by the witness that they bore. Many of them died in consequence of bearing this witness, but they could not help it. They were so sure that they had seen Him, they told it though they died for it! Yes, beloved, the Lord Christ, whom you and I slew by our sins, is risen from the dead! He is not on the cross, He is not in the grave! It is true that He is not here in bodily presence, for He has gone up on high. A cloud has received Him, but He still lives. He lives triumphant in the skies at His Father’s right hand! Let that truth be the great joy and comfort of our hearts as we believe it.

Let us also, like Mary, tell the glad news to others as often as suitable occasions arise. This is an age of infidelity, and we are very glad of any arguments that are used to prove the inspiration of Scripture, and the truth of its teaching, but, after all, the defense of the external bulwarks of the city of truth is but a poor affair. The real defense is from within, where men can speak of what they know, and testify what they have seen. Do not merely say to your children and neighbors, “Christ is risen,” but tell them what He has done for you! Tell what a gracious influence His death and resurrection have had upon your own heart to renew you, to comfort you, to guide you, to make you “strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.” There is no getting over personal evidence! One eye-witness is better than 20 ear-witnesses! Men will believe what you have seen if they do not believe what you have heard. Be not slow, therefore, to bear your witness, for, “Jesus Christ, who is the faithful Witness” and who, Himself, has said, “You are My witnesses.” If the risen Christ has been revealed to you, be sure to testify concerning Him as you have opportunity.

But, alas, *at first, the disciples did not believe the good news*. They had the common and sad failing of unbelief upon them, and they dishonored the King’s messenger by doubting her word. Worse still, they dishonored their Lord and Master by doubting His assurance when He told them that the third day He would rise again from the dead. Let us not doubt the great truth that He is risen. Dear friends, Mary Magdalene fell asleep 1,800 years ago, but her testimony is as true today as it was that first Lord’s-Day morning, for the truth is always true! And those hundreds of people who saw Christ after His resurrection, just as certainly saw Him as if they had seen Him only yesterday, for if they saw Him 1,800 years ago, it was a fact—and a fact is as much a fact after two thousand years as it was at the first! Christ is risen! We must believe this glorious fact! If we do believe it, what then?

In the first place, the sin of Christ’s murder is condoned. All that sin of ours which occasioned His death is condoned. If He has risen from the dead, He has forgiven us the sin of putting Him to death! Let your penitent spirits rejoice that the evil which you thought to do Him has been turned to good account. He is no longer dead—neither are you condemned to die if you believe in Him, nor shall you be forever and forever—

**“The Lord is risen indeed!
The grave has lost its prey.
With Him is risen the ransomed seed,
To reign in endless day.”**

Listen. Inasmuch as Christ rose from the dead, all the sins of those who trust Him are put away. You have often heard me explain this wondrous story, how Christ became the Surety for His people, and how He paid their debt, otherwise it should not be all paid. He was kept in the prison house of the tomb till a

full search had been made, and it was proved that He had suffered the whole penalty, and that the debt of His people was paid. To do this leisurely, three days and nights were spent, and when, in heaven's high court, it was declared that the Messiah had finished transgression, and made an end of sin, "Go, Gabriel," said the Father. And like a flash of flame the angel descended, bearing the warrant that the debt was paid, and that the Surety must go free! There He lay, sleeping that grand sleep of death for us! When He woke, He unwound the napkin and the grave clothes, and laid the napkin in one place, and the grave clothes in another, for He was in no hurry. He folded them up, and laid each in its proper place, and then, when all was quite finished, He, in the splendor of His resurrection life, went to the open doorway where stood His servant who had opened the gate for his Lord—and out He came in the majesty of His resurrection body! He was risen from the dead, and in that moment God set His seal to the clearance of every soul for whom Christ was the Substitute! All of us who believe in Christ may know for sure that He died for our sins, and that He was raised, again, for our justification, that is, for our clearance. As the cross paid the debt, resurrection took the bond, and tore it in pieces. And now there is nothing standing in the records of eternity against any soul that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ! His rising from the dead has made us clear from every charge. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again." That rising again has cleared us from all the sins that can ever be laid to our charge!

Nor is that all. Those poor disciples thought, when Jesus died, and remained awhile in the tomb, that all was over with His kingdom. The King was dead, and so far as they could see, there was no one to occupy the vacant throne. He had taken the scepter of sovereignty in His hand, and ruled mankind in love—but that scepter had dropped from His dead fingers. He had preached righteousness in the great congregation, but His powerful voice was silent. But when they knew that Christ was risen, they understood that His resurrection meant a living King, and a triumphant cause, and that the truth would conquer, and righteousness rule—and that the race of mankind should not go down into perdition! O dear friends, dry up your tears! While you think of how your Lord died, you may well let them flow, but, as He lives, and reigns, there is now no cause for sorrow! Tell it out among the nations that the Lord has risen from the dead, and by His rising He has brought to all His people life, light, joy, hope, purity, and everlasting redemption!

III. Finally, beloved, there is, in this resurrection of Christ from the dead, A REASSURING REFLECTION to all who believe in Him.

It should relieve our worst grief to know that *Christ was the Representative of His people*. When He died, we who believe died in Him. And when He rose again, we rose in Him. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Therefore, if you believe in Jesus, have no fear of death! Dread it not for yourselves, and lament it not for those who have already fallen asleep in Christ. It seems to us a very painful thought that this poor body, which has been the companion of our souls so long, must gradually grow feeble and worn out—its senses by degrees ceasing to assist the mind, and the whole fabric, at length, decaying and turning to a handful of dust—lying moldering beneath yonder dark grass in the cemetery far away from the place where it was known to work and live. Ah, but, concerning even this mortal body, we have good news, for He who died and rose again, did not merely live as to His soul, but He lived as to His body, too! When His disciples "were terrified and frightened, and supposed that they had seen a spirit," He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see I have." Then He took a piece of broiled fish, and a honeycomb, and did eat before them, to let them see that it was His corporeal self, His very body that died upon the cross, that was alive again! Every believer can say with Job, "Though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another." Therefore is there no fear of death for us—for sin—the sting of death, is taken away, and we can cry even to the last enemy, "O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?"

And, further, Christ being the Representative of His people, *they, also, shall live again!* When our Lord Jesus said to Martha, "Your brother shall rise again," she answered, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." You may say the same concerning your brother, or father, or mother, or child, or sister, or husband, or wife! They who have fallen asleep in Jesus have only gone over into the better country where we will follow them in the Lord's good time! We will not sit and mourn, and weep, for the woman stands with her hand on the door, and she looks at us while we are mourning and weeping, and she says, "Christ is risen! I saw Him in His resurrection glory." To me, the very hinge of the gospel is the resurrection of Christ. Whenever I get to doubting, I always fall back on that great truth—He did rise from the dead! The disciples saw Him. The best witnesses that could be found saw

Him, heard Him, and touched Him. He did rise from the dead! Then there is a future state, there is a resurrection! I am in Christ, I am trusting in Him, I shall rise, and I shall live in Him! He has said, "Because I live, you shall live also," so I shall live, and with the psalmist, I can say, "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices: my flesh also shall rest in hope." Though my body shall see corruption, yet it shall be raised in glory, and power, and incorruption, like that risen body of my Lord!

There is the gospel. Perhaps some of you will say, "We do not understand that to be the gospel," but it is. This is the gospel—that Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that He rose from the dead the third day, and that whoever believes in Him has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation.

My dear unconverted hearers, do you think that our Sabbaths are mere days of sport, and that when we get to our congregations, we do it just to while away the time? If so, you think very unworthily of high and holy things! No, sirs, preaching the gospel is to us a matter of life and death! We throw our whole soul into it. We live, and are happy if you believe in Jesus, and are saved! And we are almost ready to die if you refuse the gospel of Christ! Do not let any preacher be to you what Ezekiel was to the people of the age in which he prophesied. The Lord said to him, "You are unto them as a very lovely song of one that has a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument, for they hear your words, but they do them not." Oh, that the Spirit of God would come to close grips with you, and make you feel that the Lord's message is not sent to be criticized, but to be accepted and obeyed! God grant it, for His mercy's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *MATTHEW 28.*

Verse 1. *In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher.*

While the Jewish Sabbath lasted, they paid to it due respect. They did not even go to the sepulcher to perform the kindly offices of embalment. But when the old Sabbath was dying away, and the new and better Sabbath began to dawn, these holy women found their way back to their Lord's tomb. Woman must be first at the sepulcher as she was last at the cross. We may well forget that she was first in the transgression—the honor which Christ put upon her took away that shame! Who but Mary Magdalene could be the first at the tomb? Out of her, Christ had cast seven devils, and now she acts as if into her He had sent seven angels! She had received so much grace that she was full of love to her Lord. "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher." You can just see them in the gray light of the dawn. It is not clear enough to make out their form and shape, but in the twilight they are coming into the garden, and finding their way to the new sepulcher.

2. *And, behold, there was a great earthquake.*

—The women must have wondered as they felt that tremor beneath their feet. If you have ever felt an earthquake, you will never forget it. And this was a great one, not one of an ordinary kind—"a great earthquake." Death was being heaved up, and all the bars of the sepulcher were beginning to burst. When the King awoke from the sleep of death, He shook the world! The bedchamber in which He rested for a little while trembled as the heavenly Hero arose from His bed—"Behold, there was a great earthquake." Nor was the King unattended in His rising.

2. *For the angel of the Lord.*

—It was not merely one of the angelic host, but some mighty presence angel—"the angel of the Lord."

2. *Descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.*

Jesus was put in the prison of the tomb as a hostage for His people. Therefore He must not break out by Himself, but the angelic sheriff's officer must bring the warrant for His deliverance, and set the captive at liberty. He was imprisoned because of human debt, but the debt is paid, so He must go free. Like a flash of fire, the angel descends from the right hand of God! He stands at the mouth of the tomb. He touches the great stone, sealed as it was, and guarded by the soldiers—and it rolls back! And when he has rolled back the stone from the door, he sits upon it, as if to defy earth and hell ever to roll it back again! That great stone seems to represent the sin of all Christ's people, which shut them up in prison! It can never again be laid over the mouth of the sepulcher of any child of God. Christ has risen, and all His saints must rise, too! The angel "rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it." I think I see there

one of the grandest sights that ever man beheld, for one greater than an earthly king is sitting on something better than a throne!

3. *His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.*

Dazzling in its purity, like the raiment worn by Christ upon the Mount of Transfiguration, whiter than any fuller can make it!

4. *And for fear of him, the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.*

First a palsy of fear, and then a stiffening of fright fell upon them, for they had never seen such a sight as this before. They were Roman soldiers who knew nothing of the meaning of cowardice—yet at the sight of this messenger of God, “the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.”

5. *And the angel answered and said unto the women.*

—We had almost forgotten them! We had been thinking of the earthquake, and the angel, and the flaming lightning, and the frightened soldiers. But this angel’s thought is all about the women. He whose countenance was like lightning, and whose garments were white as snow, said to the women.—

5-7. *Fear you not, for I know that you seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead.*

Notice the angel’s words. First, “See,” and then, “Go.” You cannot tell the message till you know it. You who would serve God must first be instructed yourselves. “Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” And then, “Go quickly.” If you have seen, then go! Do not sit down and admire the sight, and forget the thousands who have never seen it! But come, see the place where the Lord lay, and then go and, “go quickly.”

7. *Behold, He goes before you into Galilee; there shall you see Him: lo, I have told you.*

That is a very beautiful touch of condescension on the Savior’s part—that He would go before His disciples into Galilee. Why, Galilee was the very opposite of a classic region—it was a district that was much despised! The clod-hoppers, the boors, the illiterate people of no account lived in “Galilee of the Gentiles.” “Yet,” says Christ, “I will meet you there.” It was the King’s own rendezvous—not in the courts of earthly monarchs, nor in the palaces of the priests, but away down in Galilee! What cares He for the grandeur of men, and their empty pomp, and boasted wisdom? He goes to places that are despised, that He may lift them up by the glory of His light! “Behold, He goes before you into Galilee; there shall you see Him: lo, I have told you.”

8. *And they departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy.*

That seems a strange mixture, “fear and great joy.” Yet there was plenty of reason for both emotions! Who would not fear that had felt an earthquake, and seen an angel, and marked the tomb broken open? Yet who would not rejoice that had had such a cheering message, and such an assurance that the crucified Christ had risen from the dead? Experience is the best explanation of experience! You must feel for yourself these two emotions working together before you can understand how they can live in anyone at the same time. “They departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy.”

8. *And did run to bring His disciples word.*

Good women! “They did run.” These staid matrons did run, and who would not run to tell of a risen Lord?

9. *And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them.*

—Happy are the ministers who meet their Lord when they are going up the pulpit stairs! Blessed are the teachers who meet Jesus when they are going to the class! They will be sure to preach and teach well when that is the case. “As they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them.”

9. *Saying, all hail. And they came and held Him by the feet, and worshipped Him.*

These holy women were not Unitarians! Knowing that Jesus was the Son of God, they had no hesitation in worshipping Him. Perhaps these timid souls clung to their Lord through fear that He might be again taken from them. So, “they held Him by the feet, and worshipped Him.” Fear and faith striving within them for the mastery.

10. *Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell My brethren to go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me.*

Note how Jesus dwells upon this despised district of Galilee. I should like to dwell upon it, too. He said nothing about classic Corinth, or imperial Rome, or proud Jerusalem! His message is, “Tell my brethren to go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me.” If we will be humble. If we will cast aside the pride of life, there shall we meet Him who is meek and lowly of heart!

11-13. *Now when they were going, behold, some of the guards came into the city, and reported unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had*

taken counsel, they gave large sums of money to the soldiers, saying, Say you, His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept.

You must often have noticed what a mixture of falsehood this was. “You were asleep. Are you sure that you were asleep?” “Yes.” “Yet you say that the disciples came—you knew they were the disciples though you were asleep? And they stole Him away? You know how they did it? You can describe the stealthy way in which they took away the body of Jesus? You were the witnesses of it, although you were sound asleep all the while?” Go, sirs, it is worse than trifling to listen to the lying of a witness who begins by swearing that he was fast asleep all the time! Yet this was the tale that the soldiers were bribed to tell. And many a worse lie than this has been told to try to put the truth out of countenance. The modern philosophy which is thrust forward to cast a slur upon the great truths of revelation is no more worthy of credence than this lie put into the mouths of the soldiers! Yet common report gives it currency, and among a certain clique it pays. But the soldiers naturally said, “We shall be put to death for sleeping while on duty.” So the chief priests said.

14. *And if this come to the governor’s ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.*

“We can give some more of those arguments that have been so telling in your hands—and they will prevail with the governor as they have prevailed with you.”

15. *So they took the money, and did as they were told.*

—Plenty still do this, and I have no doubt they will continue to do so as long as the world is what it is. “They took the money, and did as they were told.”

15-17. *And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him: but some doubted.*

Where will not Mr. Doubting and other members of his troublesome family be found? We can never expect to be quite free from doubters in the Church, since even in the presence of the newly-risen Christ some doubted! Yet the Lord revealed Himself to the assembled company, although He knew that some among them would doubt that it was really their Lord who was risen from the dead.

18-20. *And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

And we say, “Amen,” too! May He be most manifestly with us here even now, for His sweet love’s sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—317, 301, 286.

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