

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE STONE ROLLED AWAY.

A Sermon

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“The angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.”—Matthew xxviii. 2.

As the holy women went towards the sepulchre in the twilight of the morning, desirous to embalm the body of Jesus, they recollected that the huge stone at the door of the tomb would be a great impediment in their way, and they said one to another, “Who shall roll us away the stone?” That question gathers up the mournful enquiry of the whole universe. They seem to have put into language the great sigh of universal manhood, “Who shall roll us away the stone?” In man’s path of happiness lies a huge rock, which completely blocks up the road. Who among the mighty shall remove the barrier? Philosophy attempted the task, but miserably failed. In the ascent to immortality the stone of doubt, uncertainty, and unbelief, stopped all progress. Who could upheave the awful mass, and bring life and immortality to light? Men, generation after generation, buried their fellows; the all-devouring sepulchre swallowed its myriads. Who could stay the daily slaughter, or give a hope beyond the grave? There was a whisper of resurrection, but men could not believe in it. Some dreamed of a future state, and talked of it in mysterious poetry, as though it were all imagination and nothing more. In darkness and in twilight, with many fears and few guesses at the truth, men continued to enquire, “Who shall roll us away the stone?” Men had an indistinct feeling that this world could not be all, that there must be another life, that intelligent creatures could not all have come into this world that they might perish; it was hoped, at any rate, that there was something beyond the fatal river. It scarce could be that none returned from Avernus: there surely must be a way out of the sepulchre. Difficult as the pathway might be, men hoped that surely there must be some return from the land of death-shade; and the question was therefore ever rising to the heart, if not to the lips, Where is the coming man? Where is the predestinated deliverer? Where is he, and who is he, that shall roll us away the stone?

To the women there were three difficulties. The stone of itself was huge; it was stamped with the seal of the law; it was guarded by the

representatives of power. To mankind there were the same three difficulties. Death itself was a huge stone not to be moved by any strength known to mortals: that death was evidently sent of God as a penalty for offences against his law—how could it therefore be averted, how removed? The red seal of God's vengeance was set upon that sepulchre's mouth—how should that seal be broken? Who could roll the stone away? Moreover, demon forces, and powers of hell, were watching the sepulchre to prevent escape—who could encounter these and bear departed souls like a prey from between the lion's teeth? It was a dreary question, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the sepulchre? Can these dry bones live? Shall our departed ones be restored to us? Can the multitudes of our race who have gone down to Hades ever return from the land of midnight and confusion?" So asked all heathendom, "Who?" and echo answered, "Who?" No answer was given to sages and kings, but the women who loved the Saviour found an answer. They came to the tomb of Christ, but it was empty, for Jesus had risen. Here is the answer to the world's enquiry—there is another life; bodies will live again, for Jesus lives. O mourning Rachel, refusing to be comforted, "Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, and they shall come again from the land of the enemy." Sorrow no longer, ye mourners, around the grave, as those that are without hope; for since Jesus Christ is risen, the dead in Christ shall rise also. Wipe away those tears, for the believer's grave is no longer the place for lamentations, it is but the passage to immortality; it is but the robing-room in which the spirit shall put aside for awhile her garments, travel-worn with her earthly journey, to put them on again on a brighter morrow, when they shall be fair and white as no fuller on earth could make them.

I purpose, this morning, to talk a little concerning the resurrection of our exalted Lord Jesus; and that the subject may the more readily interest you, I shall, first of all, *bid this stone which was rolled away, preach to you*; and then shall invite you to hear the angel's homily from his pulpit of stone.

I. First, LET THE STONE PREACH.

It is not at all an uncommon thing to find in Scripture stones bidden to speak. Great stones have been rolled as witnesses against the people; stones and beams out of the wall have been called upon to testify to sin. I shall call this stone as a witness to valuable truths of which it was the symbol. The river of our thought divides into six streams.

1. First, the stone rolled must evidently be regarded as *the door of the sepulchre removed*. Death's house was firmly secured by a huge stone; the angel removed it, and the living Christ came forth. The massive door, you will observe, was taken away from the grave—not merely opened, but unhinged, flung aside, rolled away; and henceforth death's ancient prison-house is without a door. The saints shall pass in, but they shall not be shut in. They shall tarry there as in an open cavern, but there is nothing to prevent their coming forth from it in due time. As Samson, when he slept in Gaza, and was beset by foes, arose early in the morning, and took up upon his shoulders the gates of Gaza—post, and bar, and all—and carried all away, and left the Philistine

stronghold open and exposed, so has it been done unto the grave by our Master, who, having slept out his three days and nights, according to the divine decree, arose in the greatness of his strength, and bore away the iron gates of the sepulchre, tearing every bar from its place. The removal of the imprisoning stone was the outward type of our Lord's having plucked up the gates of the grave—post, bar, and all—thus exposing that old fortress of death and hell, and leaving it as a city stormed and taken, and henceforth bereft of power. Remember that our Lord was committed to the grave as a hostage. "He died for our sins." Like a debt they were imputed to him. He discharged the debt of obligation due from us to God, on the tree; he suffered to the full, the great substitutionary equivalent for our suffering, and then he was confined in the tomb as a hostage until his work should be fully accepted. That acceptance would be notified by his coming forth from duress vile; and that coming forth would become our justification—"He rose again for our justification." If he had not fully paid the debt he would have remained in the grave. If Jesus had not made effectual, total, final atonement, he must have continued a captive. But he had done it all. The "It is finished," which came from his own lips, was established by the verdict of Jehovah, and Jesus was set free. Mark him as he rises, not breaking prison like a felon who escapes from justice, but coming leisurely forth like one whose time of gaol-delivery is come; rising, it is true, by his own power, but not leaving the tomb without a sacred permit—the heavenly officer from the court of heaven is deputed to open the door to him, by rolling away the stone, and Jesus Christ, completely justified, rises to prove that all his people are, in him, completely justified, and the work of salvation is for ever perfect. The stone is rolled from the door of the sepulchre, as if to show that Jesus has so effectually done the work that nothing can shut us up in the grave again. The grave has changed its character; it has been altogether annihilated, and put away as a prison-house, so that death to the saints is no longer a punishment for sin, but an entrance into rest. Come, brethren, let us rejoice in this. In the empty tomb of Christ, we see sin for ever put away: we see, therefore, death most effectually destroyed. Our sins were the great stone which shut the mouth of the sepulchre, and held us captives in death, and darkness, and despair. Our sins are now for ever rolled away, and hence death is no longer a dungeon dark and drear, the ante-chamber of hell, but the rather it is a perfumed bed-chamber, a withdrawing room, the vestibule of heaven. For as surely as Jesus rose, so must his people leave the dead: there is nothing to prevent the resurrection of the saints. The stone which could keep us in the prison has been rolled away. Who can bar us in when the door itself is gone? Who can confine us when every barricade is taken away?

"Who shall rebuild for the tyrant his prison?
The sceptre lies broken that fell from his hands;
The stone is removed; the Lord is arisen:
The helpless shall soon be released from their bands."

2. In the second place, regard the stone as *a trophy set up*.
As men of old set up memorial stones, and as at this day we erect

columns to tell of great deeds of prowess, so that stone rolled away was, as it were, before the eyes of our faith consecrated that day as a memorial of Christ's eternal victory over the powers of death and hell. They thought that they had vanquished him; they deemed that the Crucified was overcome. Grimly did they smile as they saw his motionless body wrapped in the winding-sheet and put away in Joseph's new tomb; but their joy was fleeting; their boastings were but brief, for at the appointed moment he who could not see corruption rose and came forth from beneath their power. His heel was bruised by the old serpent, but on the resurrection morning he crushed the dragon's head.

“ Vain the stone, the watch, the seal,
Christ has burst the gates of hell;
Death in vain forbids his rise,
Christ hath open'd Paradise.

Lives again our glorious King!
'Where, O death, is now thy sting?'
Once he died our souls to save;
'Where's thy victory, boasting grave?'"

Brethren beloved in Christ, as we look at yonder stone, with the angel seated upon it, it rises before us as a monument of Christ's victory over death and hell, and it becomes us to remember that his victory was achieved for us, and the fruits of it are all ours. We have to fight with sin, but Christ has overcome it. We are tempted by Satan: Christ has given Satan a defeat. We by-and-by shall leave this body; unless the Lord come speedily, we may expect to gather up our feet like our fathers, and go to meet our God; but death is vanquished for us, and we can have no cause to fear. Courage, Christian soldiers, you are encountering a vanquished enemy: remember that the Lord's victory is a guarantee for yours. If the Head conquers, the members shall not be defeated. Let not sorrow dim your eye; let no fears trouble your spirit; you must conquer, for Christ has conquered. Awaken all your powers to the conflict, and nerve them with the hope of victory. Had you seen your Master defeated, you might expect yourself to be blown like chaff before the wind; but the power by which he overcame he lends to you. The Holy Ghost is in you; Jesus himself has promised to be with you always, even to the end of the world, and the mighty God is your refuge. You shall surely overcome through the blood of the Lamb. Set up that stone before your faith's eye this morning, and say, "Here my Master conquered hell and death, and in his name and by his strength I shall be crowned, too, when the last enemy is destroyed."

3. For a third use of this stone, observe that here is *a foundation laid*. That stone rolled away from the sepulchre, typifying and certifying as it does the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is a foundation-stone for Christian faith. The fact of the resurrection is the key-stone of Christianity. Disprove the resurrection of our Lord, and our holy faith would be a mere fable; there would be nothing for faith to rest upon if he who died upon the tree did not also rise again from the tomb; then "your faith is vain;" said the apostle, "ye are yet in your sins," while "they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." All the great doctrines of our divine religion fall asunder like the stones of an arch

when the key-stone is dislodged, in a common ruin they are all overthrown, for all our hope hinges upon that great fact. If Jesus rose, then is this gospel what it professes to be; if he rose not from the dead, then is it all deceit and delusion. But, brethren, that Jesus rose from the dead is a fact better established than almost any other in history. The witnesses were many: they were men of all classes and conditions. None of them ever confessed himself mistaken or deceptive. They were so persuaded that it was the fact, that the most of them suffered death for bearing witness to it. They had nothing to gain by such a witnessing; they did not rise in power, nor gain honour or wealth; they were truthful, simple-minded men who testified what they had seen and bore witness to that which they had beheld. The resurrection is a fact better attested than any event recorded in any history whether ancient or modern. Here is the confidence of the saints; our Lord Jesus Christ, who witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate, and was crucified, dead, and buried, rose again from the dead, and after forty days ascended to the throne of God. We rest in him; we believe in him. If he had not risen, we had been of all men most miserable to have been his followers. If he had not risen, his atonement would not have been proved sufficient. If he had not risen, his blood would not have been to us proven to be efficacious for the taking away of sin; but as he has risen, we build upon this truth; all our confidence we rest upon it, and we are persuaded that—

“Raised from the dead, he goes before;
He opens heaven’s eternal door;
To give his saints a blest abode,
Near their Redeemer and their God.”

My dear hearers, are you resting your everlasting hopes upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead? Do you trust in him, believing that he both died and rose again for you? Do you place your entire dependence upon the merit of his blood certified by the fact of his rising again? If so, you have a foundation of fact and truth, a foundation against which the gates of hell shall not prevail; but if you are building upon anything that you have done, or anything that priestly hands can do for you, you are building upon the sands which shall be swept away by the all-devouring flood, and you and your hopes too shall go down into the fathomless abyss wrapped in the darkness of despair. Oh, to build upon the living stone of Christ Jesus! Oh, to rest on him who is a tried corner-stone, elect, precious! This is to build safely, eternally, and blessedly.

4. A fourth voice from the stone is this: here is *rest provided*. The angel seemed to teach us that as he sat down upon the stone. How leisurely the whole resurrection was effected! How noiselessly, too! What an absence of pomp and parade! The angel descended, the stone was rolled away, Christ rose, and then the angel sat down on the stone. He sat there silently and gracefully, breathing defiance to the Jews and to their seal, to the Roman legionaries and their spears, to death, to earth, to hell. He did as good as say, “Come and roll that stone back again, ye enemies of the risen One. All ye infernal powers, who thought to prevail against our ever-living Prince, roll

back that stone again, if so ye dare or can!" The angel said not this in words, but his stately and quiet sitting upon the stone meant all that and more. The Master's work is done, and done for ever, and this stone, no more to be used, this unhinged door, no more employed to shut in the charnel house, is the type that "it is finished"—finished so as never to be undone, finished so as to last eternally. Yon resting angel softly whispers to us, "Come hither, and rest also." There is no fuller, better, surer, safer rest for the soul than in the fact that the Saviour in whom we trust has risen from the dead. Do you mourn departed friends to-day? O come and sit upon this stone, which tells you they shall rise again. Do you soon expect to die? Is the worm at the root? Have you the flush of consumption on your cheek? O come and sit you down upon this stone, and bethink you that death has lost its terror now, for Jesus has risen from the tomb. Come you, too, ye feeble and trembling ones, and breathe defiance to death and hell. The angel will vacate his seat for you, and let you sit down in the face of the enemy. Though you be but a humble woman, or a man broken down, and wan, and languid with long years of weary sickness, yet may you well defy all the hosts of hell, while resting down upon this precious truth, "He is not here, but he is risen: he has left the dead, no more to die." I was minded, as I thought over this passage of my discourse, of that time when Jacob journeyed to the house of Laban. It is said he came to a place where there was a well, and a great stone lay upon it, and the flocks and herds were gathered round it, but they had no water till one came and rolled away the great stone from the well's mouth, and then they watered the flocks. Even so the tomb of Jesus is like a great well springing up with the purest and most divine refreshment, but until this stone was rolled away, none of the flocks redeemed by blood could be watered there; but now, every Sabbath day, on the resurrection morning, the first day of the week, we gather round our Lord's open sepulchre, and draw living waters from that sacred well. O ye weary sheep of the fold, O ye who are faint and ready to die, come ye hither; here is sweet refreshment; Jesus Christ is risen: let your comforts be multiplied.

" Every note with wonders swell,
Sin o'erthrown, and captived hell;
Where is hell's once dreaded king?
Where, O death, thy mortal sting?
Hallelujah."

5. In the fifth place, that stone was *a boundary appointed*. Do you not see it so? Behold it then, there it lies, and the angel sits upon it. On that side what see you? The guards affrighted, stiffened with fear, like dead men. On this side what see you? The timid trembling women, to whom the angel softly speaks, "Fear not ye: for I know that

ye seek Jesus." You see, then, that stone became the boundary between the living and the dead, between the seekers and the haters, between the friends and the foes of Christ. To his enemies his resurrection is "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence;" as of old on Mar's Hill, when the sages heard of the resurrection, they mocked. But to his own people, the resurrection is the head-stone of the corner. Our Lord's resurrection is our triumph and delight. The resurrection acts much in the same manner as the pillar which Jehovah placed between Israel and Egypt: it was darkness to Egypt, but it gave light to Israel. All was dark amidst Egypt's hosts, but all was brightness and comfort amongst Israel's tribes. So the resurrection is a doctrine full of horror to those who know not Christ, and trust him not. What have they to gain by resurrection? Happy were they could they sleep in everlasting annihilation. What have they to gain by Christ's resurrection? Shall he come whom they have despised? Is he living whom they have hated and abhorred? Will he bid them rise, will they have to meet him as a Judge upon the throne? The very thought of this is enough to smite through the loins of kings to-day; but what will the fact of it be when the clarion trumpet startles all the sons of Adam from their last beds of dust! Oh, the horrors of that tremendous morning, when every sinner shall rise, and the risen Saviour shall come in the clouds of heaven, and all the holy angels with him! Truly there is nothing but dismay for those who are on the evil side of that resurrection stone. But how great the joy which the resurrection brings to those who are on the right side of that stone! How they look for his appearing with daily growing transport! How they build upon the sweet truth that they shall arise, and with these eyes their Saviour see! I would have you ask yourselves, this morning, on which side you are of that boundary stone now. Have you life in Christ? Are you risen with Christ? Do you trust alone in him who rose from the dead? If so, fear not ye: the angel comforts you, and Jesus cheers you; but oh! if you have no life in Christ, but are dead while you live, let the very thought that Jesus is risen, strike you with fear, and make you tremble, for tremble well you may at that which awaits you.

6. Sixthly, I conceive that this stone may be used, and properly too, as *foreshadowing ruin*. Our Lord came into this world to destroy all the works of the devil. Behold before you the works of the devil pictured as a grim and horrible castle, massive and terrible, overgrown with the moss of ages, colossal, stupendous, cemented with blood of men, ramparted by mischief and craft, surrounded with deep trenches, and garrisoned with fiends. A structure dread enough to cause despair to every one who goeth round about it to count its towers and mark its bulwarks. In the fulness of time our Champion came into the world to destroy the works of the devil. During his life he sounded an alarm

at the great castle, and dislodged here and there a stone, for the sick were healed, the dead were raised, and the poor had the gospel preached unto them. But on the resurrection morning the huge fortress trembled from top to bottom; huge rifts were in its walls; and tottering were all its strongholds. A stronger than the master of that citadel had evidently entered it and was beginning to overturn, overturn, overturn, from pinnacle to basement. One huge stone, upon which the building much depended, a corner-stone which knit the whole fabric together, was lifted bodily from its bed and hurled to the ground. Jesus tore the huge granite stone of death from its position, and so gave a sure token that every other would follow. When that stone was rolled away from Jesus' sepulchre, it was a prophecy that every stone of Satan's building should come down, and not one should rest upon another of all that the powers of darkness had ever piled up, from the days of their first apostacy even unto the end. Brethren, that stone rolled away from the door of the sepulchre gives me glorious hope. Evil is still mighty, but evil will come down. Spiritual wickedness reigns in high places; the multitude still clamour after evil; the nations still sit in thick darkness; many worship the scarlet woman of Babylon, others bow before the crescent of Mohammed, and millions bend themselves before blocks of wood and stone; the dark places and habitations of the earth are full of cruelty still; but Christ has given such a shiver to the whole fabric of evil that, depend upon it, every stone will be certain to fall. We have but to work on, use the battering-ram of the gospel, continue each one to keep in his place, and like the hosts around Jericho, to sound the trumpet still, and the day must come when every hoary evil, every colossal superstition, shall be laid low, even with the ground, and the prophecy shall be fulfilled, "Overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him." That loosened stone on which the angel sits is the sure prognostic of the coming doom of everything that is base and vile. Rejoice, ye sons of God, for Babylon's fall draweth near. Sing, O heavens, and rejoice, O earth, for there shall not an evil be spared. Verily, I say unto you, there shall not be one stone left upon another, which shall not be cast down.

Thus has the stone preached to us; we will pause awhile and hear what the angel has to say.

II. THE ANGEL PREACHED two ways: he preached in symbol, and he preached in words.

Preaching *in symbol* is very popular with a certain party nowadays. The gospel is to be seen by the eye, they tell us, and the people are to learn from the change of colours, at various seasons, such as blue, and green, and violet, exhibited on the priest and the altar, and by lace and by candles, and by banners, and by cruets, and shells full of water;

they are even to be taught or led by the nose, which is to be indulged with smoke of incense ; and drawn by the ears, which are to listen to hideous intonings or to dainty canticles. Now, mark well that the angel was a symbolical preacher, with his brow of lightning and his robe of snow ; but you will please to notice for whom the symbols were reserved. He did not say a word to the keepers—not a word. He gave them the symbolical gospel, that is to say, he looked upon them—and his glance was lightning ; he revealed himself to them in his snow-white garments, and no more. Mark how they quake and tremble ! That is the gospel of symbols ; and wherever it comes it condemns. It can do no other. Why, the old Mosaic law of symbols, where did it end ? How few ever reached its inner meaning ! The mass of Israel fell into idolatry, and the symbolic system became death to them. You who delight in symbols, you who think it is Christian to make the whole year a kind of practical charade upon the life of Christ, you who think that all Christianity is to be taught in semi-dramas, as men perform in theatres and puppet-shows, go your way, for ye shall meet no heaven in that road, no Christ, no life. You shall meet with priests, and formalists, and hypocrites, and into the thick woods, and among the dark mountains of destruction shall ye stumble to your utter ruin. The gospel message is, “ Hear, and your soul shall live ; ” “ Incline your ear, and come unto me. ” This is the life-giving message, “ Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. ” But, O perverse generation, if ye look for symbols and signs, ye shall be deluded with the devil’s gospel, and fall a prey to the destroyer.

Now we will listen to the angel’s sermon *in words*. Thus only is a true gospel to be delivered. Christ is the Word, and the gospel is a gospel of words and thoughts. It does not appeal to the eye ; it appeals to the ear, and to the intellect, and to the heart. It is a spiritual thing, and can only be learned by those whose spirits are awakened to grasp at spiritual truth. The first thing the angel said was, “ Fear not ye. ” Oh ! this is the very genius of our risen Saviour’s gospel—“ Fear not ye. ” Ye who would be saved, ye who would follow Christ, ye need not fear. Did the earth quake ? Fear not ye : God can preserve you though the earth be burned with fire. Did the angel descend in terrors ? Fear not ye : there are no terrors in heaven for the child of God who comes to Jesus’ cross, and trusts his soul to him who bled thereon. Poor women, is it the dark that alarms you ? Fear not ye : God sees and loves you in the dark, and there is nothing in the dark or in the light beyond his control. Are you afraid to come to a tomb ? Does a sepulchre alarm you ? Fear not ye : you cannot die. Since Christ has risen, though you were dead yet should you live. Oh, the comfort of the gospel ! Permit me to say there is nothing in the Bible to make any man fear who puts his trust in Jesus. Nothing in the Bible, did I say ? There is

nothing in heaven, nothing on earth, nothing in hell, that need make you fear who trust in Jesus. "Fear not ye." The past you need not fear, it is forgiven you; the present you need not fear, it is provided for; the future also is secured by the living power of Jesus. "Because I live," saith he, "ye shall live also." Fear! Why that were comely and seemly when Christ was dead, but now that he lives there remains no space for it? Do you fear your sins? They are all gone, for Christ had not risen if he had not put them all away. What is it you fear? If an angel bids you "Fear not," why will you fear? If every wound of the risen Saviour, and every act of your reigning Lord consoles you, why are you still dismayed? To be doubting, and fearing, and trembling, now that Jesus has risen, is an inconsistent thing in any believer. Jesus is able to succour you in all your temptations; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for you, he is able to save you to the uttermost: therefore, do not fear.

Notice the next word, "Fear not ye: for I know." What! does an angel know the women's hearts? Did the angel know what Magdalen was about! Do spirits read our spirits? 'Tis well. But oh! 'tis better to remember that our heavenly Father knows. Fear not ye, for God knows what is in your heart. You have never made an avowal of anxiety about your soul, you are too bashful even for that; you have not even proceeded so far as to dare to say that you hope you love Jesus; but God knows your desires. Poor heart, you feel as if you could not trust, and could not do anything that is good; but you do at least desire, you do at least seek. All this God knows; with pleasure he spies out your desires. Does not this comfort you—this great fact of the knowledge of God? I could not read what is in your spirit, and perhaps you could not tell me what is there. If you tried, you would say after you had done, "Well, I did not tell him exactly what I felt; I have missed the comfort I might have had, for I did not explain my case." But there is one who deals with you, and knows exactly where your difficulty is, and what is the cause of your present sorrow. "Fear not ye," for your heavenly Father knows. Lie still; poor patient, for the surgeon knows where the wound is, and what it is that ails thee. Hush, my child, be still upon thy great Parent's bosom, for he knows all; and ought not that content thee; for his care is as infinite as his knowledge?

Then the angel went on to say, "Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified." There was room for comfort here. They were seeking Jesus, though the world had crucified him. Though the many had turned aside and left him, they were clinging to him in loving loyalty. Now, is there any one here who can say, "Though I am unworthy to be a follower of Christ, and often think that he will reject me, yet there is one thing I am sure of—I would not be afraid

of the fear of man for his sake. My sins make me fear, but no man could do it. I would stand at his side if all the world were against him. I would count it my highest honour that the crucified One of the world should be the adored One of my heart. Let all the world cast him out, if he would but take me in, poor unworthy worm as I am, I would never be ashamed to own his blessed and gracious name"? Ah! then, do not fear, for if that is how you feel towards Christ, he will own you in the last great day. If you are willing to own him now, "Fear not ye." I am sure I sometimes feel, when I am looking into my own heart, as if I had neither part nor lot in the matter, and could claim no interest in the Beloved at all; but, then, I do know this, I am not ashamed to be put to shame for him; and if I should be charged with being a fanatic and an enthusiast in his cause, I would count it the highest honour to plead guilty to so blessed an impeachment for his dear sake. If this be truly the language of our hearts, we may take courage. "Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified."

Then he adds, "He is not here: for he is risen." Here is the instruction which the angel gives. After giving comfort, he gives instruction. Your great ground and reason for consolation, seeker, is that you do not seek a dead Christ, and you do not pray to a buried Saviour; he is really alive. To-day he is as able to relieve you, if you go to your closet and pray to him, as he was to help the poor blind man when he was on earth. He is as willing to-day to accept and bless you as he was to bless the leper, or to heal the paralytic. Go to him then at once, poor seeker; go to him with holy confidence, for he is not here, he would be dead if he were—he is risen, living, and reigning, to answer your request.

The angel bade the holy women investigate the empty tomb, but, almost immediately after, he gave them a commission to perform on their Lord's behalf. Now, if any seeker here has been comforted by the thought that Christ lives to save, let him do as the angel said, let him go and tell to others of the good news that he has heard. It is the great means for propagating our holy faith, that all who have learned it should teach it. We have not some ministers set apart, to whom is reserved the sole right of teaching in the Christian church; we have no belief in a clergy and a laity. Believers, ye are all God's *cleros*—all of you. As many of you as believe in Christ are God's clergy, and bound to serve him according to your abilities. Many members there are in the body, but every member has its office; and there is no member in the body of Christ which is to be idle, because forsooth, it cannot do what the Head can do. The foot has its place, and the hand its duty, as well as the tongue and the eye. O you who have learned of Jesus, keep not the blessed secret to yourselves. To-day, in

some way or other, I pray you make known that Jesus Christ is risen. Pass the watchword round, as the ancient Christians did. On the first day of the week they said to one another, "The Lord is risen indeed." If any ask you what you mean by it, you will then be able to tell them the whole of the gospel, for this is the essence of the gospel, that Jesus Christ died for our sins, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures—died the substitute for us criminals, rose the representative of us pardoned sinners—died that our sins might die, and lives again that our souls may live. Diligently invite others to come and trust Jesus. Tell them that there is life for the dead in a look at Jesus crucified; tell them that that look is a matter of the soul, it is a simple confidence; tell them that none ever did confide in Christ and were cast away; tell them what you have felt as the result of your trusting Jesus, and who can tell, many disciples will be added to his church, a risen Saviour will be glorified, and you will be comforted by what you have seen! The Lord follow these feeble words with his own blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON:—Matthew xxviii.
