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WOMAN AT THE SEPULCHRE.

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The most hallowed scenes of Christian Life cluster around Easter Day. Calvary's tragedy, the sleep in the sepulchre, and Easter Morning's Resurrection, are the ROCKS upon which your salvation and mine are built.

This is nature's season of resurrection. Buds are bursting from their winter sepulchres. The grasses refuse longer to remain in their graves. The forests are laughing on account of new life, and the inhabitants of earth and air are clothing themselves in Easter dress. All nature, animal and vegetable, arising from winter's tomb of death like inactivity,- joins with man in singing-

"Christ is risen! Hallelujah!
Gladness fills the world to-day;
From the tomb that could not hold Him,
See the stone is rolled away."

The world has discussed the resurrection for nearly two

thousand years, in every conceivable shape and form, and it would be something more than remarkable if I could present to you a new phase of this most sacred subject, here, to-night. You have already heard such a scholarly, instructive and soul inspiring discourse, that I am fearful, lest I mar the beautiful Easter Gem, which you have just heard.

He who paints the great picture of the resurrection and fills it with figures heroic, blends in the light and shade, and colors in with a power that makes the painter, almost god-like and his hand almost divine- wants no ameteur to touch his sacred work; and therefore upon that mighty and sacred theme, I shall not venture, but shall confine my very few words to that band of heart-broken, inconsolable, undaunted, loving women, who were there beholdafar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering un-

to him. Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebidee's children." These women had followed him and ministered unto Him. They did not desert Jesus during the trying and awful scenes of His crucifixon. They did not leave His dead body, when Joseph begged it for Pilate. And when Joseph had taken the body,- wrapped it in a clean, linen cloth, laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock, and rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre and departed- there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary sitting over against the sepulchre.

Much has been said in criticism of the acts of the first woman in Eden. Be that as it may: for we feel that what she lost in Eden's Garden, she more than recovered at Calvary's Hill; for, in the crucifixion of our Lord, no woman's hand was bloody. But, among the twelve- his chosen twelve- there was a Judas to betray him to the mob in Geth-

semane; then came the flight of the entire twelve, leaving Him alone in the hands of his bloodthirsty enemies- John, the Beloved, Peter, the zealous- although our Lord had told them, that he could summon more than twelve legions of angels!

Next came the oaths and denials hot and bitter, from Peter. And finally, even after our Lord had suffered what no tongue can tell, no words describe- upon the ignominious Cross of Calvary; even after he had been sealed and riveted in Joseph's new tomb; after He had gone down through the portals of death and arose the third day- King of Kings and Lord of Lords, with all powers in His hands; even after three years of daily contact, praying, teaching and preaching with them, our Lord had to delay his departure for the courts of glory, until He could say to one of the same Twelve who had been with Him and learned of Him-"Reach hither thy finger and

behold my hands; reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless but believing." BUT- THESE - WERE MEN! JESUS' DAILY- COMPANIONS!

But, my dear friends, I must return to the women; those women which we left gazing at the sepulchre, with the great stone at the door hiding Jesus' body from them, and barring them from access to him. How their sorrowing hearts must have ached! How hot tears of grief must have flowed! What anguish they must have suffered! What a day they had experienced! They had seen him marked, scourged, his body bleeding and torn. They had seen his death, agony and heard that awful cry, which shook creation from Eden to Golgotha, that agony which this world can never know nor express- when He exclaimed, "My God, my, why hast thou forsaken me?"

But the Sabbath drew on and they must return to Jerusalem and rest on the Sabbath Day according to the commandment, But the next morning, before the sun had risen, while yet it

was dark- and doubtless while the men yet slumbered and slept- these WOMEN whose HEARTS were in that new tomb of Joseph's wherein never a man had laid before- these women were on their way to the supulchre-" and they said among themselves, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?"

What did this little company of women mean, trudging along in the dark to the sepulchre, knowing there was an unsurmountable barrier at the door of the sepulchre? How did they expect to reach the body of Jesus through that ponderous stone? They were not giants, but simply frail, weak women, who, in their eagerness to reach the body of Jesus, had gone off alone without even the strong men. And although they knew that great stone was there, and knew they could never budge it so much as an inch, they didn't hesitate, didn't wait for daylight, didn't wait for anything or anybody, didn't stop because they were weak and helpless, didn't

stop because they couldn't roll the stone away- but on they went trusting God: on, On, On to the very door of the sepulchre and when they reached there, there was NO STONE in the door, for God had sent down his Angel who had rolled the stone away.

I don't know that good, strong, sensible men who would have gone off in the darkness, knowing that the sepulchre's mouth was blocked by a huge stone which they could not roll away, as these weak women did. I rather incline to the belief that they would have held a meeting, discussed the matter, then passed resolutions setting forth their helplessness, or decided that it wasn't just the time, or to wait until God, in his own way and time, saw fit to roll the stone away.

But these women, whose <u>hearts</u> were in that sepulchre faced the crisis and when they faced it there was no obstruction, <u>NO STONE</u> in the way. Difficulties are things which we

very largely create in our minds. As we approach them, they disappear. And those which do not disappear when faced singly vanish when faced unitedly by the many. Women are different from the men. They believe in doing their duty and leaving the results with that God who is omnipotent and who has never yet failed to roll every stone away when we act with one mind, one intent and one purpose. We can do anything just as soon as we learn the lesson of UNITY.

A few years ago we were told that the St. Luke Organization would certainly die, because it was dominated by women. But is this TRUE? We were told by some of our men when we started to build our hall that the stone was too heavy, that we couldn't move it. But the Hall is there and paid for, too!

When we started the St. Luke Herald, direful and disheartening were the words of the prophets in our own ranks.

We were adding a stone that we would never be able to move.

But the Herald has started into the 5th year of her publica-

tion and will doubtless be here when every man, woman and child

in this house will have been laid away in his sepulchre.

When our BANK came into existence, this was called

by those whose business it is to forecast the future- the

wild fancies of a very badly diseased mind. In short that we

were crazy. But the growth of our BANK and the increasing

patronage it is receiving daily- not from those, who like

Peter, are following afar off- but from those who are true

to their obligations, loyal hearted and sincere in their

efforts to make the St. Luke Cross an emblem of Negro Res-

urrection, this growing patronage at home and from every sec-

tion of the country tells us that we, too, are rolling the

stone away and the day is not so far in the future when

there will be no stone in the way.

When the St. Luke Bank and the St. Luke Emporium opened on Broad St., in Richmond, our local, Wise men, declared that we had reached the limit of our folly. It wasn't time. We were trying to do too much. It would be a mill stone around our necks, which would sink us into the depths of the sea of destruction, and some of our disciples- some of our male disciples actually fled. But they have all returned, much ashamed of their cowardice and fears.

We were told a hundred times that the St. Luke Order would never prosper in Washington; but the WOMAN who organized the first council is here looking on to-night, still working, not one bit tired and feels that there is no stone that the St. Lukes of Washington are not able to roll away. As she looks upon this gathering to-night, has she not a right to feel proud of her work? It is true that a few doubting Thomases have delayed our growth and have hindered that

perfect union which characterizes our organization. But where is the power that can keep good seed in the ground after it has been planted in good soil: rich soil. While we are trying to sow good seed an enemy may enter our ranks and sow tares; but we can't stop sowing on account of tares: we will have to let them grow together until the harvest. For we are determind, by the grace of God, to make Washington a St. Luke center.

We are going to enlist an army of Ten Thousand (just one out of every ten) in this district. We are striving to make this a veritable resurrection- to awaken those who are inactive, indifferent and dead to their opportunities. With such an army there can be no obstacles. Hindrances and difficulties melt and pass into thin air at the approach of the St. Luke Banner. We are Cross Bearers and STONE ROLLERS. No stone is too heavy, no difficulty too great. Jesus is our

Captain, has never lost a battle nor have we, so come and join us to roll the stone away.

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IF CHRIST CAME TO WASHINGTON.