

His law, and so they "rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment."

Their pious task accomplished, the friends of Jesus withdraw from the scene, and once more the foes appear. "The Chief Priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate." Travellers tell us that when the lion-hunters of Africa go out in pursuit of their lordly game, they surround, in large numbers, the place where the lion is concealed, and when he is discovered they endeavor, by hurling the spear or discharging the bullet, from a safe distance, to inflict upon him a mortal wound, while securing themselves as far as possible from their dangerous foe; but when their weapons have taken effect, and the kingly beast is stretched lifeless on the sward, even then the hunters will approach with the utmost caution, fearful that some lingering spark of life may yet be there, and that their victim, with a last expiring effort, may spring to his feet and take summary vengeance upon his foes. In the conduct of the Chief Priests and Pharisees, the superstitious fear of the lion-hunters seems to be repeated. "The Lion of the tribe of Judah" has been taken in the toils of the hunters, and behind the safe shelter of Roman authority, they have inflicted upon him a mortal wound. They saw his life-blood flow,—they heard his expiring groan,—they know that he has been laid in the tomb of Joseph,—and what need they fear from a dead man? They know that he was unjustly condemned,—but what matter? Dead men tell no tales; and these Chief Priests,—Sadducees nearly every one of them,—fear no haunting from angel or spirit. Still they are not at rest, they are disquieted by vague apprehensions; and so they come to Pilate, saying, "Sir, we remember." Ah! that's the secret—they *remember*. Spite of all their bravado, conscience has been working, and now *memory* is awakened never to sleep again,—fearful warning to those who "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." Time was when these Chief Priests and Pharisees thought that if Jesus was only put to death they would be rid of all further trouble concerning him; but now that the end is accomplished, and he lies cold and lifeless in Joseph's tomb, their trouble seems worse than ever. The dead Christ is an object of greater dread than the living Prophet.

"One of the striking ironies of God's judgment may be observed in the circumstance, that the members of the Sanhedrim are forced to go upon the morning of the Paschal Sabbath to the sepulchre of Jesus, for the purpose of sealing the stone, because the dead Christ allowed them no rest. . . . Upon this morning of the feast, it was no formal meeting of council they held: the most decided enemies of Jesus consulted among themselves, and then dropped in singly, as if by accident, to make their request to Pilate: and thus there came to be a kind of priestly council in the Governor's palace, to which the Evangelist here alludes. It was alleged by these priests, that the disciples might come and steal away the corpse; and this lying assertion reveals to us how well prepared they were for any emergency, even the worst. But, beneath all this disguise, they were the prey of fear, and the real motive was terror. Influenced by a monstrous superstitious belief in the power of the seal of Jewish authority, and of a Roman guard, they imagined themselves