

city beloved of the Lord, surely the King of Glory dwells in the midst of thee! But that day is past, and the waning light of that wondrous dispensation grows dim. The sacred fire is dying out upon its altars,—the oracles are dumb, the voice of prophecy is silent, and Urim and Thummim give no sign. The dispensation of law hastens to its close, to make way for the dispensation of truth and grace.

Midnight in Jerusalem! but after midnight cometh the morning. "In the end of the [Jewish] Sabbath" a brighter light "began to dawn."

But see! the moon is sinking behind the western hills: let us hasten on our way. Here, close beside the highway, is the gloomy Hill of Blood, still crowned with the ghastly instruments of death. We linger not within its awful precincts, but with eager footsteps hasten towards you neighboring slope where the encircling wall of a terraced garden can be dimly traced in the waning light. We recognize the spot: it is the garden of Rabbi Joseph, and in its rocky sepulchre sleeps the crucified Nazarene. An irrepressible feeling of awe steals over us as we draw near. How oppressive the stillness!—a stillness like the lull of exhausted nature's forces after the rush of the storm. Nay, 'tis the unearthly quiet of an hour in which heaven and hell await, with breathless expectancy, the last scene of a tragedy that has already convulsed the world!

No marvel our minds are filled with awe, for we remember how *He* said: "After three days I will rise again." Very soon the third day will dawn, and then—Hold! what strange light was that which, like the flash of an angel's wing, shot athwart the heavens! 'Twas but a meteor, gleaming for a moment with supernatural brightness, and then vanishing again. Hark! heard you not a sound like the rush of invisible wings! Nay, 'twas but the sighing of the night-winds through yon group of aspens, hard by the tomb of Joseph. Fear not: "let us on by this tremulous light." See! yonder is the sepulchre, and within it this very hour is going on—a Mystery! In its dark recesses Life contends with Death! The Master of Life grapples with the King of Terrors, and upon the issue of that conflict hangs the destiny of the world. Let us draw a little nearer, but reverently, for this is holy ground. Look! Surely yonder are human forms close by the sepulchre. What seek they here at this untimely hour? Ah, we remember: the Jews besought Pilate to seal the stone, and to set a watch. He granted their request, and these are the soldiers of the guard. Now we see them more distinctly, grouped in various attitudes, while full in front of the sealed sepulchre the veteran captain leans upon his spear. Strange employment this,—watching a dead man's grave! No matter; soldiers know no law but obedience to commands, and so at the grave of Jesus they keep sleepless watch as they have been bidden, conversing at times in undertones to ward off drowsiness, knowing full well the doom which stern Roman law metes out to the soldier who sleeps at his post. Hark! that is the voice of the captain of the guard, and his tones seem full of awe. He speaks as though uttering half-consciously, some inward thought. Listen!—

"From East to West I've marched beneath the Eagles,  
From Pontus unto Gaul;