

In the ceremonies of death closely bound ;
Silent, and shrouded in darkness and gloom,
With the seal of the Casars affixed, to His tomb,
And Casar's stern warriors around ;

And I wept,
O Watchman, I weep for the Morning Star dead,
For the sepulchre sealed, and the sinless One dead,
And a world wrapped in darkness profound !

Second Voice.

Ah, foolish, and slow to perceive
That the cup that He drained in that hour was for you ;—
That the mocking and scorn,
The scourge and the thorn,
And the cross with its agony dread,
The anguish He bore and the blood that He shed,
And the death that He died were your due !

Ah, foolish, and heart-slow to learn
That, to save thee, dying, Himself must die,
While in dark eclipse in the sorrowing sky
The sun for a season hung ;—
That, His ransom to snatch from the pitiless tomb,
Himself must enter the ghastly gloom,
And sojourn among the dead !

But not long its awful eclipse beneath
Lingered the noon-day sun ;
Nor long 'neath the darker eclipse of death
Lingered God's holy One.

Death might not thus detain
The Conqueror in slumberous thrall,
Nor the grave in its icy fetters restrain
The victorious Lord of all.

But their fetters He burst
With His first warm breath,
And first-born from the dead,
His environments dread
Swept aside and walked forth in His might,
Thus life, immortality, bringing to light,
For those He atoned for in death !
Then higher, and brighter than ever before
From the east to the west, and from shore to shore,
Shone out in new beauty the Day ;

And all earth grew bright
In the beautiful light,
And demons slunk cowering to shadows of night ;
While holy ones sang in full chorus again ;
"Peace upon earth and good will towards men ;
"The sun rises higher and higher, and night,
"Forever and ever has taken its flight !"

First Voice.

But Watchman, long ages have since rolled away,
And ever our race has been asking for Day ;—
"Oh, when will it come, and the dark shadows cease,
"And the weary earth smile in the sunshine of peace ?
"We grope in our darkness, we falter, we die,
"And light—if there be light—comes not to our sky,
"Or coming, has faded so soon !"

Oh, what hast thou seen,
Watchman, what hast thou seen
In lands where this life-giving sunlight has been ?

Second Voice.

I have seen, as the years have rolled by,
Brave workers and strong,
Sowing seed for the Master 'midst trouble, and tears,
And suffering, and peril, and wrong.

I have seen them unmurmuring die,—
Cut down at their toil—and their blood
Wat'ring freely the sod
Where their patient feet trod ;—
Yet the seed grew apace 'neath the direful rain,
And angels, at harvest-time, gathered the grain,
And bore it with singing to God !

I have seen, looking down through the years,
With leaves from Life's tree in their hands—
Leaves freighted with health for the millions that lie
Palsied and stricken and ready to die—

Women patient and pure,
And men strong to endure
Speeding forth to earth's desolate lands ;
And healing, and life, and rejoicing, and mirth
They have left in the paths that they trod ;
And hymns of thanksgiving and gladness to-day,
From isles of the ocean and lands far away,
Are hourly ascending to God.

And still I behold—as, with steady increase,
God's servants speed forth with their message of peace
And hope and salvation for all—
Old systems of ignorance, error, and wrong
Giving way as they speed the glad tidings along
Of One able and willing to save,—
See the blood-cries of shrines of the idols give way,
And the idols themselves sink in hopeless decay,
Never, no never to rise ;
See the desolate dungeons of Error's long night
Op'ning slowly but surely to Heaven's sweet light,
Or hastening fast to their fall.

First Voice.

And Watchman, what more of the day ?
Look abroad o'er the world at this moment, and say,
Is the toil nearly done ?
Is the crown almost won ?
And does the sweet rest-time draw near ;
When the King in His glory again will appear,
And sit down on His throne
With all earth for His own
In the blessed, Sabbatical year ?

Second Voice.

Ah, foolish and slow of heart still !
For knowest thou not
That the day of thy Lord,
As He saith in His word,
Shall come as a thief in the night—
Unannounced and unheralded come ?
And happy those servants whom, coming, He'll find
Their appointed task doing with resolute mind,
Gath'ring and shaping with tireless hands,
In the quarries of home or in far away lands,
In mountain, or desert, or cavernous mine,
Precious stones in His temple's rich setting to shine,—
Find reaping His harvest, or sowing His grain,
Or turning the furrows in sunshine or rain,
List'ning over His footsteps to hear,
Who, whether thy labor, or suffer, or pray,
Rest assured they are bringing with each busy day
His kingdom and coming more near.

First Voice.

But is there no sign, Watchman, no herald Star
Such as guided the wandering shepherds from far,
And at length over Bethlehem hung ?—
No heavenly voices that, list'ning, you hear—
Voices of angels, that sing of Him near,
As of old to the shepherds they sung ?

Second Voice.

None ; down through the silence no angel songs come ;
No earthward-bound star leaves its heavenly home
His joyful herald to be ;
Nor yet dost thou need them ; for is it not writ
In words that unaltered yet stand :—
"WATCH, for ye know not the hour or the day,
Aye WATCH, for the Lord is at hand !"

And even more urgently rises the moon
Of creation in anguish and pain.