

# Christian Messenger.

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"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

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## Poetry.

### The Song which Angels cannot sing.

REV. v. 9.—xiv. 3.

What shall it be? give me a theme,  
And I will sing to thee;  
Thy spirit's bright and golden dream  
Oh! whisper now to me.  
Or teach me more entrancing notes,  
Some holy music bring  
Which through the land of glory floats  
Which angels cannot sing:  
And tell, oh! tell  
The joys that swell  
Where saints in fadels glory dwell.

Or I will whisper words of love,  
And thou shalt bend to hear  
The happy strains of bliss above,  
In life's discordant sphere.  
Hark! hark! from yonder world of bliss  
What notes of rapture ring!  
Oh! tell me what new song is this  
Which angels cannot sing?  
From golden strings  
The rapture springs.  
While seraphs fold their shining wings.

The melody of earth is sweet,  
But this is all divine;  
The voices which my spirit greet,  
Make unison with mine.  
I know it!—canst thou learn this song?  
Oh! list and touch the string,  
And thou with me shalt sing, ere long,  
What angels cannot sing.  
Hark! hark! again  
The joyous strain,  
They praise THE LAMB THAT ONCE WAS SLAIN!

What dost thou say? It rolls along,  
So sacred and so clear,  
Again, again, that blessed song  
Delights my ravished ear.  
Oh! I will lure thy soul to love,  
And thou shalt music bring  
To emulate that song above  
Which angels cannot sing.  
E'en now it springs  
From golden strings,  
While seraphs fold their shining wings.

A. E. L.

## Miscellaneous.

### British Freedom vs. American Slavery.

The desire for domination is one of the prominent features of fallen humanity. The effort to bring his fellow man under control so as to be governed exclusively by his will, has risen and prevailed more or less through all the various ages of the world. It has manifested itself even in connection with religion, and often takes a more lasting and determined grasp under this guise than where it makes of him merely goods and chattels to be used only for earthly wealth and aggrandizement.

Although England has freed herself from the foul blot of sanctioning Slavery, yet the spirit which maintained it for so long a period, and held on to it so tenaciously, still lives and would fain take advantage of the very results of freedom as an argument in favour of slavery. A late writer in the *Times*, over the signature of "Expertus," has tried to shew that the negroes of the West Indies are not benefitted by the great boon, but that they are reduced to the lowest state of degradation. He represents them "as idle, improvident, naked, wanting nothing, and accordingly working for nothing, till industry had vanished from the islands, estates gone out of cultivation, buildings into decay, and all things as reverting to almost African barbarism. The grand complaint of all, however, was that the emancipated Negroes would not work; and that hence there was a universal want of labour, which must be supplied somehow."

Not only has "the thunderer" given currency to such statements, made by one who displays his ignorance no less than his malignity, but with the demand for Immigration Acts and denouncing of the African and Cuban squadrons for the suppression of the Slave Trade, he appears to endorse the same sentiments, and indicates pretty plainly his South American tendencies.

The London Freeman, in an excellent

article on the subject, exposes the false ground taken by the "leading journal." In discussing the allegation that the Negroes will not work, except in a state of slavery, he says:—

"Slowly and under every disadvantage, missionaries had diffused among the Negroes some knowledge of the spirit and duties of Christianity, and a little secular knowledge too; but the great mass of the population were, of course, wofully ignorant. Then, they have been treated like 'beasts' at any rate; and long treatment of that kind had not failed to give the sensual and the animal a sad predominance in a race originally heathens of the lowest class; and the example of too many of their masters was a stimulus, rather than the contrary, to all that was sensual and depraved among them. Lastly, work, to them, meant compulsory unrequited toil for another's profit. It was associated with all that could make it revolting and disgusting. If we bear in mind these too undeniable facts, what were we to expect from such a maltreated, and, as far as the greater number of their masters could make them so, such a brutalised race? To find them after emancipation willing to labour at all, to find them exhibiting, to any noticeable extent, the social duties of Christian civilisation, was at least as much as could be fairly looked for. But, thanks to the fact that their real emancipators, those who, as the people knew, had gained the boon for them, were Christians and Christian ministers, the Negroes have incalculably surpassed all that man, statesmen, and philanthropists could well have dreamed of.

Aroused, however, by the calumnies of "EXPERTUS" and *The Times*, the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society drew up a series of questions on the subject of labour principally—the want of it, its remuneration, the number of immigrants, and the effect of introducing them into the colonies. These questions they forwarded to persons whom they thought most competent to answer them in the several islands, and a large number of the replies have just been published in a pamphlet of forty pages. As a compilation of testimonies from persons on the spot, it is of high value on the main question—the want of labour, and the disposition of the Negroes to work. The latter is, of course, the point of greatest moral importance, since it would be hopeless to expect an indolent population to be a Christian, or even a civilized one. We have looked through the pamphlet, therefore, with no small interest in the question—Are the black population industrious? Remembering that industry had previously depended on fear, we asked—What will there be of it now, when they have nothing to fear—nothing, at least, worse than nakedness, in a land where clothing is required for decency only, not for comfort, and where food is procured by a minimum of exertion—a land, too, where a blistering and burning sun indisposes all to superfluous exertion?

With regard to the want of labour, the reports are various. The circumstances of different islands, and of different parts of the larger islands themselves, vary much. In the Barbadoes, labour is, by all accounts, abundant. In one part of Jamaica, on the contrary, we are told there is "little doubt of a real want of labour," the proof being "the number of properties which have gone out of cultivation;" "labour from many causes is deficient, but the idleness of the lately emancipated is not among them." Forty thousand of the labourers in that district (St. Thomas ye Vale) had died of small pox; land is plentiful, and the peasantry buy or hire it, and maintain themselves well upon it. Wages also are very low, one shilling or ninepence a day; there is, therefore, little temptation to work for hire. But so industrious are they, that the roads are "crowded, periodically, with them and their stock;" they maintain the export of coffee, keep up the supply of ground provisions; they are manifestly a thriving people, a fact incompatible with idleness; they form numbers of small settlements, rival the Europeans in dress, possess numbers of houses, mules and

asses; are liberal to charities, and sometimes lend their late owners money! "My district," adds the writer, "is chiefly peopled by the labouring classes, and no one could ride through it and say that the people's affairs are not prosperous; here a corn-field, there a coffee-piece; here a plantain walk, there a lot of yam hills." These, be it observed, are the statements of a writer who thinks there is a deficiency of labour, that is, of estate labour. Of such industry as we desire to hear of on moral grounds, there appears to be the reverse of deficiency.

One evidently well informed writer observes, that the immigration really needed is that of "a body of small farmers;" men, we presume, who should be able to attend personally to the properties they cultivate, yet have capital enough to employ several labourers each. The proprietors of estates beggared themselves in the days of monopoly and slavery; the emancipation money was merely a gratuity to mortgagees here who otherwise would have had nothing to seize. We paid twenty millions, as we supposed, to give emancipated labour a noble start, but in reality to fill the pockets of despairing mortgagees in England—men whose money had been lent to uphold, till that time, the curse of slavery.

All the writers indignantly repudiate the general wanton abuse of the Negroes by *The Times* and "EXPERTUS." They confess to the idleness and vice of individuals, but deny that the labourers, as a body, are more vicious than those of other countries. They point to the difference of the amount of labour possible under a burning sun, and in countries where work is partly a mitigation of the climate or congenial with it. They direct attention to the large sums raised by the peasantry for education, for chapels, for worship, and for charitable objects, as proofs that they must have been both industrious to earn the money, and possessed of a higher class of sentiments than "beasts," so to apply it. They most of them mention, like the writer above quoted, the various kinds of tropical produce which they raise on their own grounds, not only for sale in the island, but for exportation also: sugar, coffee, pimento, arrowroot, are thus very largely furnished by them: and the evidence seems quite satisfactory that, when the wages are worth working for, and regularly paid, there is no difficulty at all in procuring labour. The truth seems to be, that the planters of the "EXPERTUS" school want not merely labour, but—SLAVE LABOUR; and they are moving heaven and earth, and stimulating the French to emulation, to get fresh slaves under the name of immigrants.

The moral tendency of immigration, come from whence it may, seems to be almost uniformly bad. We think the whole scheme a disgrace to the West Indies and to us. What an insurrection would there be in London and Manchester, if masters were aided by the public taxes to which all contribute, or even by any Act of Parliament, in importing operatives from France or Belgium to compete with our own at home. It is remarkable (and, so far as we remember, unexplained) that there has been no immigration of escaped Negroes from Canada. The climate there must be ill-suited to them, and it seems as if it must be desirable for them to seek a warmer part of the British territories.

We cannot conclude without remarking that it is shamefully untrue to represent the state of our West India possessions as offering any discouragement to Negro emancipation in America. Let any impartial Christian "look on this picture and on that," and he will not hesitate to pronounce which has the approval of the Great Author of our faith. That is enough. Tell us not of exports and imports, though these are highly creditable to the emancipated Negroes. America surely might blush to weigh articles of commerce against civil freedom and all the rights of man. America may rave and rant about her domestic institution, but she does feel ashamed of it; she knows herself to be, as a whole, the most degraded state of civilised Christendom. We do not blush for Jamaica—we

cannot. In due time we shall point to a black race, vying in production, industry, and social and commercial condition, with anything in America; but even now we can point to something better than cotton bags, slave gangs, slave markets, and all the infamies and vice of Southern slavery. We can point to freedom whose freedom we preferred to dollars; we can point to beings whom we have raised to the dignity of men, to govern whom we need not even a militia, for since emancipation the militia has been disbanded, and who look to the old country with tears of loyalty and gratitude. May penitential sympathy with the groans of the South be the first fruits of the present revival in the Northern States!"

## Religious Conversation.

From a discourse by REV. RUFUS W. CLARK, in "THE NEW YORK PULPIT, in the REVIVAL of 1858."

The law of moral providence is: "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and this applies universally. You go to a man and strive to do him good with Christian words, with earnest counsel and entreaty, and he may turn away coldly from you, he may spurn your instructions. Are your words lost? You derive the benefit from them. You obtain the blessing of giving, if he does not of receiving. We hear, indeed, about casting pearls before swine, but they are pearls still, and you can pick them up and put them into your pocket, if the swine do not want them.

These, however, are the exceptions and not the rule; and this brings me to our next point, namely: *The influence of religious words upon others.* And first, their influence upon other Christians. Here we are not ready to admit the exception to the rule, for a real child of God will always be benefited by the religious conversation of another. There is a principle in his soul that will respond to an affectionate, judicious, earnest Christian appeal; and this may be just what he needs, the kind, sympathizing words of a Christian brother. He may be in despondency; clouds of affliction, or trouble, or doubt, may be hanging over him; he needs one to cheer him, to lead him to the light. Modesty may keep him back; he needs some one to press him into the front ranks. He may be sleeping at his post; he needs a trumpet blast, close to his ear, to wake him.

This is certainly a very easy mode of doing good. It requires no elevated station in society. It costs no money. It costs no time. One hour rescued from those wasted out of the twenty-four, and devoted to this duty, would create influences and forces for good that would live long after the pyramids have crumbled, and the stars faded from the heavens.

Consider the themes of this conversation. They are such as angels delight to dwell upon, such as the noblest and loftiest intelligences in the universe delight to explore; such as swell the anthems of celestial choirs, and such as are pleasing to the infinite Father. They pertain to the duties of this life. They enter into all our relations to our fellow-men. They touch human happiness at every point. They relate to a dying hour—to the flight of the spirit to far off regions—to the ages of immortality. They pertain to the moral government of God—to the grandeur of redemption—to the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus—to the mission of the Holy Spirit—to regeneration, sanctification, and the preparation of the soul for glory. Can any themes be more profitable, elevating, and thrilling? "Visionary!" says the skeptic. The only realities, we reply. The only subjects worthy of earnest attention of enthusiastic pursuit. Visionary! Then all things are visionary. Life is a phantom—government a mockery—revelation a fable, the present all darkness, and the future all hopelessness! Let the skeptic hug, if he will, his fatal delusion. Let him be silent concerning the goodness of God and the treasures of a Saviour's love. Let him be blind to the prizes hung out in the skies, and deaf to the music that floats from the regions of bliss. The