

Christian Messenger.

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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

The Creator in creation.

Thou wide, wide sea, rolling thy crested waves
Forever, ever on! Who can behold
In thought the wondrous secrets of thy caves,
Nor tremble at what hand thy deep unrolled;
Countless thy fleets—them thy might sinks or saves;
Paved are thy courts with pearls, gems, coral, gold;
Heaven thy pavilion is, the earth thy throne,
Thou restless, boundless, fathomless unknown!

Thou blue, blue sky—well may man gaze on thee!
Thou pure, clear ocean, in which worlds do sail
So swiftly, truly, wisely, noiselessly—
Man seeks thine azure boundries but to fail.
Ethereal mystery! if aught there be
Of beautiful, that calls aloud to hail
The unseen presence where all knees should bow—
Blue-vaunted altar of the world, 'tis thou.

Thou bright, bright sun—running thy golden race
Untiringly—sure thou art very blest!
Thine is the day! night fades before thy face,
Young nature laughs, by thy warm kiss caressed,
Worlds feel the influence of thy boundless grace;
To be good, do good—this is bliss confessed;
Happy were man, could he but copy thee,
Thou brightener of heaven, earth and sea.

Thou far, far space—decked out with stellar fires,
A bright, bright suns—throwing their ardent beams
O'er countless worlds—thy boundless deep inspires
Thoughts beyond utterance. O, these are themes
Whence the awed spirit in itself retires—
Unsatisfied from flights; on—on, where seems
Space infinite of worlds! O, pause, my soul,
And trembling, think what Being fills the whole.

Thou great, great God—Creator of all space;
Creator of bright suns and azure skies,
Giving to lands and seas their varying grace;
Creator of the soul, which never dies—
Creator of all good in every place,
Creator of all proper thoughts that rise,
Almost thou seem'st too wondrous great for prayer,
Endless is space—yet Thou art everywhere!

Thou good as great, O! teach me how to pray.
Be thou my guide in every act, word, thought;
Without Thee, man must wander from the way—
For all our strivings of ourselves are naught.
Then leave me not alone; but, day by day,
More and more make me love Thee as I ought;
Teach me to pray, O God! I ask but this:
Prayer, heaven-inspired, brings perfect happiness.

Miscellaneous.

For the Christian Messenger.

Stray Leaves.

"And I will bring thee blind by a way that they know not: I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them and not forsake them."—ISAIAH xlii. 16.

Let us dive deep into the spiritual meaning of this precious passage of the apt Isaiah, and from the elevated standpoint of genuine faith view it in all its length and breadth, and depth and height, and if we are true Christians, we shall not fail of discovering in it ample matter for a new song of wonder, and gratitude and praise. Like the radiant bow of promise, it spans the storm-darkened firmament of the pilgrim's way, with one bright foot resting on the desert shores of Egypt, and one that gilds with heavenly effulgence the distant hilltops of the Land of Rest. With golden links of God's own welding it connects the new-born soul with Deity,

And speaks from nothingness, a gem
To deck the Saviour's diadem.

Each word of mercy and of love that never ends, of electing, guiding, saving grace, from eternity to eternity.

By nature we are all rebels against God and His righteous government, and of Him who has been exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour we have said often in our hearts, and by our actions if not in words, "We will not have this man to reign over us." We have despised his rule and contemned his authority, and in the foolhardiness of blind unbelief, have gone on as if determined upon groping our way down to eternal perdition. God's all-seeing eye has seen our rebellion, beheld our ingratitude, as, surrounded by the many mercies that his gracious hand has ever vouchsafed to us, we still went on regardless of all his love, "heaping up to ourselves wrath

against the day of wrath," but instead of visiting us with the punishment due to our oft-repeated and aggravated transgressions of his law, He appears with the gracious declaration, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not."

O who that has been brought out of the darkness and bondage of corruption into the light and liberty of God's children cannot add his testimony to the truth that we are brought by a way that we know not; nor with all our wisdom, though it had equalled that of Gabriel, could ever have found, without the free grace of God in Christ Jesus. We may well say in contemplation of the way in which our feet were led to tread the narrow road, and our eyes opened to behold our situation as undone sinners, and our hearts to accept of the terms of the blessed gospel, and partake of the rich provision of our Father's board.

'Twas the same love that spread the feast,
That sweetly forced us in,
Else we had still refused to taste,
And perished in our sin.

But he not only brings the blind by a way that they know not, He leads them afterwards in paths that they have not known; before, they had travelled only the broad way that leads to death, with the world posting headlong to eternal ruin, but now, their feet are turned into the narrow way of life, and with faces set Zionward, their only care is to make their calling and election sure. Nor is it against their inclination thus to have their previous plans of worldly pleasure thwarted, their energies thrown into a new channel, and the stream of life and enjoyment, as it were turned back upon itself, and forced in its upward progress to battle with all and every obstruction that presents itself. No! the will is changed, that which before was carnal is now spiritual, that which before was earthly is now heavenly: the soul that before found all its enjoyment in the sinful pleasures of this passing world, has now its affections set upon things above, and being made joint-heir with Christ of an inheritance incorruptible, it can afford to spurn the richest offers that the world can present, and though perhaps poor, in a worldly point of view, can rejoice in the possession of that enduring wealth that earth is alike incapable of bestowing or taking away. While in a state of alienation from God, they loved sin and could roll it under their tongue as a sweet morsel, now it is their utter hatred, and the hardest part of the spiritual conflict, is with the sinfulness and deceitfulness of the human heart; that sink of iniquity is ever sending forth its mire and dirt, and it is only through the grace of God, that grace which bringeth salvation with it, that they should ever be enabled to conquer, or even to sustain the warfare for a single day. How true it is that he leads us in paths that we have not known. He makes darkness bright before us too, and crooked things straight. What Christian cannot remember the new light that shone upon the sacred pages, as with renewed vision, and a happy grateful heart, he perused the Bible in the days of his first love. Did it not seem as if a miracle was wrought for your special benefit, as if a ray of Heaven's own sunshine illumined the words, and revealed a deep spiritual meaning undreamed of before? Oh, he was making darkness light before you then, the thick veil of unbelief was removed by his hand, who alone could do it; grace was in this also, the free unmerited grace of God in Christ Jesus.

Many previously conflicting passages of God's word were then reconciled; you could see the beautiful harmony that existed through all the statements, and declarations, the denunciations of punishment, and promises of forgiveness, that filled the pages of the sacred volume; you could then see how God could be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus; and though you know that your sins have reached to heaven, and your transgressions to the clouds, you could still rejoice in the assurance, that they were forever blotted out from the book of God's remembrance, no more to be remembered against you; and, in joyful anticipation of the time when freed from your burdensome body of sin, you would sit down in endless rest in the kingdom of your Heavenly Father, you could "rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." Forgiveness, even of an

offence against an earthly monarch brings a blessing with it, and calls for gratitude to our latest days, but what the sense of that forgiveness is, which confers the boon of a blessed immortality, and elevates the soul from the depths of despondency, and fear, and conscious guilt, to the enjoyment of inexpressible peace, the sweetest confidence, and perfect assurance of pardon and reconciliation with offended Deity, they only can conceive, who have experienced those blessings themselves, and who have a personal interest in the great atonement once made for sinners.

But still more blessings are vouchsafed "and grace for grace" and as if the possession of those mentioned in the former part of the verse were not sufficient, He crowns the whole, with the promise of his grace through all the journey. Oh brother, it may be a weary way that you have to travel, and your heart may faint within you as you view your present salvation, and look anxiously to the future of your pilgrimage, begirt with dangers in this waste howling wilderness, but however dark the night may appear, you will find when the morning breaks, that the manna has been falling around your tabernacle, and so will it continue to fall, till the day in which you shall eat "the old corn of the land," in the promised mansions of your home on high. Why is it said by some that *our* fidelity is the price of our salvation? "He brings us by a way that we know not. He leads us in paths that we have not known. He makes darkness light before us and crooked things straight," and then pledges His faithfulness to keep us to the end. "We are saved by grace through faith," and even that faith is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. Where is our ground for boasting? What have we that we did not receive? From the first faint glimpse of his sinfulness, through the life long catalogue of his mercies, till the crown of victory encircles his brow in the home of the Conqueror, the Christian loves to trace the workings of a Father's hand, the gifts of a Father's love; and the first chords of the golden harp, that shall throb to the touch of his fingers, and speak the rapt adoration of his heart, there will be those that in loudest strains shall swell the universal anthem, "Salvation and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might unto our God and to the Lamb forever."

GERSHOM.

"The Slave Republic."

The eyes of the world are upon the neighbouring States, and the great problem which is there being solved awakens the attention of all thinking men. The points in dispute are not very apparent to many who have not given their attention to the nature of the United States Constitution. The following article from the *Boston Watchman and Reflector* gives a concise but comprehensive view of the question as it stands between the Union and the Southern Confederacy.

There is an old proverb to the effect that Truth travels slowly. It is a matter of rejoicing, however, that history, in its unerring march, does generally, in the end, vindicate truth. We have never entertained a doubt but this would eventually be the case in reference to the controversy between the North and the South on the subject of slavery. But according to present appearances, this end is to be realized sooner than we anticipated. We will state the question at issue between the two sections, and then show the solution which recent events are giving to it.

It has been claimed by Southern statesmen that the framers of the Federal Constitution never contemplated Africans and their descendants on this continent as capable of enjoying an equality of personal rights with the white race; that they gave negro slavery such a recognition in that instrument as to afford it protection in all the national territories; in short, that they intended to give slave property the same protection in the national domain accorded to every other description of property, and by consequence, that the master is secured in his right over his slave wherever the authority of the Constitution extends. Of course, if all this were so,

this would be a Slave Republic, and slavery would be legalized on every inch of the soil of the United States.

The men of the North, who have resisted these claims, have contended, on the other hand, that the fathers of the Republic looked upon all men, Africans and Europeans, Indians and Asiatics, as equal in respect of natural rights; that they regarded slavery as at war with Nature and Religion; that while they recognized it in the Constitution, for certain purposes, they did it more by implication than in set terms, and in a way which, in the event of the speedy extinction of the system, which they considered both desirable and probable, would obviate the necessity of any changes in that instrument, to adjust it to the new order of universal freedom; and in resisting the spread and perpetuation of slavery, the Northern party is only following out the spirit and aims of the framers of the Constitution.

If the Southern claim be correct, the North has been guilty of denying or trying to obstruct the Constitutional rights of the South. If, on the other hand, the second position which we have stated be the true one, the ground of the North is strictly conservative, while our Southern friends have assumed the attitude of innovators and aggressors. We of the North have been so persistently and boldly charged with trampling on the Constitution, by politicians and journalists, both North and South, that the expression "Constitutional Rights" and "National Men," have come to be construed as referring to the rights of slavery, and men who in favor of the extension of slavery. We have always regarded those charges as unjust towards the North, if not dishonest on the part of those who uttered them; and we are glad now that we have the means of showing, on authority which no fair-minded man can gainsay, that they are unfounded. At last it comes out that the trouble between the two sections of the country has not grown of the perversion of the Constitution by Northern opinions and interests, but out of the fundamental ideas on which the Federal Constitution is based. This is distinctly stated by Hon. Alexander H. Stephens, Vice President of the Southern Confederacy, in a speech delivered at Savannah, on the twenty-first of March, 1861. Mr. Stephens is one of the ablest and most candid of the secession leaders, who has done his utmost to engraft Southern ideas on the machinery of our government. It would seem that he has been drawn into secession, not by the triumph of the Northern party merely, but from the conviction that the policy of that party is too deeply seated in the historic basis of the Federal Government to admit of such a change as he desires. We quote his words, and beg our readers who have been in the habit of attributing our present troubles to Northern fanaticism, to mark them well. Speaking of Jefferson, he says:

"The prevailing ideas entertained by him and most of the leading statesmen at the time of the formation of the old Constitution, were that the enslavement of the African was in violation of the laws of nature; that it was wrong in principle, socially, morally and politically. It was an evil they knew not well how to deal with, but the general opinion of the men of that day was, that somehow or other in the order of Providence, the institution would be evanescent and pass away. This idea, though not incorporated in the Constitution, was the prevailing idea at the time. The Constitution, it is true, secured every essential guaranty to the institution while it should last, and hence no argument can be justly used against the Constitutional guarantees thus secured, because of the common sentiment of the day. Those ideas however, were fundamentally wrong. They rested upon the assumption of the equality of races. This was an error. It was a sandy foundation, and the government built upon it, when the storm came and the wind blew, fell."

"Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations are laid, its corner-stone rests upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man. That slavery—subordination to the superior race—is his natural and normal condition."

"Thus, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth. This truth has been slow in the process of its development, like all other truths in the various departments of science. It has been so even amongst us. Many who hear me, perhaps, can recollect well that this truth was not generally admitted even