

In light proceeding from the source of light,
And backward from the cloudy pillar thrown,
To say that God His covenant remembers,
His covenant with man and with the earth.

VIII.

I love to listen to the dashing oar
That breaks the glassy bosom of the wave,
Ending led by a zephyr, while the barge
Is passing, bye with music, half obscured
Behind the whitish mist that lovers low
Upon the placid surface of the stream.
Harmonic numbers swell the trembling air,
That wafts the breathing melody of flute
And dulcet voice—rich, soft, deep, full, and sweet.
The balanced oar keeps time, and marks the bars
With downward stroke vibrating, and the blade
Dips true. Now brisk the bolder numbers rise;
Now sink in cadence sweet; pathetic now;
And now they die away in murmuring strains,
Mellowed by distance, till the attentive ear
Listens in vain. 'Tis audible no more . . .
To me; but musing let me sit awhile,
And in imagination hear, and back
Recall the fleeting pleasure for a space,
And feast in silence on the dulcet strains.
The voice of music spoke: that voice returns,
Borne on imagination's mystic wing,
And echoes through the chambers of the soul,
Which feasts, and rests, and rises satisfied.
For music for a feast was given to man;—
For sober feasting, not for riot given;
But first and chiefest for the praise of God,
That man might worship Him in highest feast,
And drink refreshment from the living fount,
And drink and live, and live and drink forever.

IX.

And now along the regions of the South,
Where the horizon meets the bending sky,
The distant thunder-clouds, in ridgy folds,
Hang on the burthened air with profile dark,
Even as the hills whose rocky sides,
Cliff above cliff, in rugged grandeur rise,
And to the skies heave their enormous heads.
There play the lightnings and the liquid fire,
Flash after flash, enkindles all the south
With sudden bursts of light, and all the clouds
Alternate seem a mountain wrapt in flame,
Or dark and blank. But now the rising moon,
In light subdued, lifts up her waning orb,
Mounting her nightly car to ride aloft
The radiant queen of heaven, and measure half
Th' ethereal circle ere her silver wheels,
Descending low, dip in the western main.

X.

Twilight is fully gone: all Nature rests,
Enjoying sweet repose, the special boon
Indulgent Heaven bestows on all its works.
Sleep kindly soothes the animated part,
Exhausted strength recruiting; while soft dews
Refresh the vegetable tribes that drink
The evening vapours, settled and condensed .
In shining drops upon their thirsty leaves.

XI.

The world at rest. But let my wakeful eyes
Close not for slumber: let me stay abroad
For contemplation, while with wing outspread,
Imagination soars among the spheres.

And I would linger out the midnight hour
Beneath that wondrous canopy of stars,
And visit them in thought, remote or near,
That mock the ken of astronomic eye,
Or roll in orbs familiar to the reach
Of optic science. Their unvarying rounds
Fair Science measures, and their ample orbs
True to the eye of Heaven, incessant wheel
In silent grandeur through the mighty void,
Whose boundary is not. Guided by the hand
Of Him that made them, on they journey round,
Bending their course precise. The central sun
Holds all within his grasp, or planet, bright
In borrowed splendour, sweeping on its way;
Or misty comet, whose elliptic arch
Far stretches into space. Harmonious these
Obey the will of Heaven: yet still ascend,
As if to mingle in the stellar groups
That outward lie; and there the glorious sun,
Diminished, sinks into a twinkling star,
And twinkling stars continue twinkling stars,
Mere telescopic dust, and still refuse
To show e'en the minutest magnitude!
But why such thoughts? It is that we may think
Of Him who made and gave to each his place,
Yet condescends to number all our hairs,
And suffers naught to perish through neglect:—
To think of Him "whose presence fills all space:"
Who for His pleasure made whatever is;
Who lighted up the sun, and hung the moon,
Balanced the earth, and named and set the stars,
To serve for signs, and seasons, days, and years.
The rainbow is a sign; the clouds are signs;
The thunder has a voice that man should know;
The rapid lightning he should understand;
The rain, the dew, the grass, the trees, the beasts,
The birds, the fishes, all should teach him truth.
Gold, silver, precious stones, the earth itself,
With all its furniture of mountains, hills,
Valleys, and streams, deserts, and fruitful plains;
The northern cold: the moulding of the snow;
The generation of the hail and storms;
The changing winds, the restless roaring sea,
That casts up mire and dirt;—these man should read,
And "look through nature—up to Nature's God!"
Not so!—He hath ordained another way.
The mystic ladder Isaac's son beheld
Of intercourse between the seen and unseen,
Prefigured naught of Nature. God in manhood,
Th' Eternal Word, made flesh! He is the Way
Up to the God of all. He lifts men up,
And seats them with Himself, and gives them power
Downward to look through all the works of God,
And read them in His light. For man was made
To have dominion over all creation:
So Adam names to all the creatures gave,
Because he saw them in the light of God,
From whom to them he went. God left him not
To grope his way, and win, by long induction,
The precious knowledge that we have a God;
But shewed Himself at once. Lifted is man
Within the sphere of Godhead by the Son;
Nor looks, nor passes upward, but as He
Reveals the Father by Himself, and leads
Heavenward the honored child of dust. The King
For wisdom far renowned, by light divine
Of beasts and fishes spake, of shrubs and trees,
And birds of every wing; and God to him,
That mystery divine imbedded deep
Close hidden in each one, revealed; and One