

THE
PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY.

AN ADDRESS,

DELIVERED IN REHOBOTH CHURCH, IOWA,

JULY 4TH, 1860.

BY

J. M. M'DONALD.

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THE subject on which you have invited me to speak, is one of no ordinary magnitude and importance. The interest which it is awakening, the agitation which it is producing, and the "irrepressible conflict" which it has created between hostile parties, invest it with an importance possessed by few, if any other questions, in morals or politics. In the consideration of this subject the strongest emotions, and the tenderest sympathies of our nature are excited. The Creator "has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth." The human race, therefore, possesses a common nature, and forms one universal brotherhood, so that members of the human family ought to be able to say in the language of Juvenal, a native of Africa, and once a Roman slave—"I AM A MAN, AND I FEEL AN INTEREST IN EVERY THING THAT CONCERNS HUMANITY."

If it be so that men form one common brotherhood, and have a common nature, then the wrong done to one is wrong done to all. For the principle which justifies the enslaving of an African, will equally justify the enslaving of the European or American. The morality or religion which teaches that it is right to enslave the black man, also teaches the justice of enslaving the white man, for morality and religion know nothing of distinctions founded on the colour of the skin. Let it be proved that it is right to enslave the dark-skinned man and woman, and it is proved that we may take the proudest son of nobility, and the fairest daughter of luxury and refinement, and sell them like beasts in the market. Strange, then, it is indeed, that every one who cherishes a sacred regard for the invaluable right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, does not cry out against slavery as an intolerable wrong to humanity.

Additional importance is given to this question by the fact that the slaveholder and his abettors attempt to take shelter under the shield of the holy religion of Christ. The apologist for slavery turns with sanctimonious mien to the sacred Oracles, and triumphantly exclaims, "Here is my warrant for enslaving my fellow-men." Who, then, that regards the Bible as the great charter of human liberty, and the gospel as breathing the spirit of Him who was anointed to preach the gospel

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to the poor, was sent to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and to set at liberty them that are bruised, does not feel his soul kindling with indignation at the profanity of the man who thrusts his hands into that sacred ark, to bring forth chains and manacles for human limbs? Grant that the Bible sanctions slavery, and the star of human hope sets for ever, and the darkness of despair settles down on the oppressed and struggling races of men. But, blessed be its eternal Author, every page is full of encouragement. Its statutes secure to man his right to liberty, its divine songs breathe consolation for the oppressed, and teach him to sing of the vengeance treasured up for the oppressor.

The question is, then, very naturally suggested, Why is it that there are on the earth so many millions of oppressed, notwithstanding more than eighteen centuries have elapsed since heavenly messengers proclaimed at the advent of the Saviour, "On earth peace, and good-will to men?" Is it the practical application of that religion which he taught? Nay, it is the violation of its principles, the transgression of its precepts, the utter disregard and trampling under foot its laws, that has made one part of our race abject slaves, and the other tyrants and despots to harass and spoil them.

I shall, therefore, devote the time allowed me on this occasion to an examination of the laws and principles of the Old and New Testament, so far as they relate to this subject. The propriety and the necessity of such an examination, is obvious. 1. The Bible is the source to which the ablest advocates of slavery always appeal. Ministers of the gospel, with shame the confession is made, are the most unblushing defenders of the system, and their appeal is always to the Scriptures. It is proper, then, to meet them, and vanquish them, if possible, on their own chosen ground. 2. There are no doubt many persons deluded into the belief that slavery is sanctioned by the Scriptures of truth. 3. The teaching of pro-slavery ministers and churches has made, and is still making scores, yea hundreds and thousands of infidels. The very light of nature shows that the dogma, which asserts that one man may hold property in another, is the PROTON-PSEUDOS, or first lie of the age. And hence men very naturally conclude that if the Bible contains that doctrine, it cannot have proceeded from the same just and holy God who created them, and laid deep in their moral constitution "the self-evident truth that all men are created free and equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." 4. Political action alone is not sufficient to settle this great question. It may contribute to this end, but it may be safely said that history affords no instance of any great moral question being settled by mere political action. The ground on which, as a question of morals, it must be settled, is this—the law of God is the supreme rule governing men in every relation of life, and that law contains no warrant for slaveholding; but, on the contrary, expressly condemns it.

It is necessary to the successful examination of this subject, that we understand clearly and definitely what slavery is. It is impossible to speak intelligently on any subject, unless we understand it. And in defining slavery, the properties of a true definition must not be forgotten. A definition, to be complete, should "unfold the whole

of what is involved in the meaning of the word defined; that is, (when it is a connotative word,) the whole of what it connotes. In defining a name, however, it is not usual to specify its entire connotation, but so much only as is sufficient to mark out the objects usually denoted by it from all other known objects."* Webster thus explains:—"Definition. In logic, the explication of the essence of a thing by its kind and difference." No definition of slavery, then, can be regarded as adequate which does not give its distinctive attribute.

Guided by these rules, we readily perceive the imperfection of many of the definitions given by writers and speakers on this subject. Dr. Paley defines it to be involuntary servitude. He says:—"Servitude differs from slavery in this, that the servant contracts to work for his master; while the slave, without such contract, is compelled to labour."† This is incomplete, because it does not distinguish it from other kinds of service. A child is required to labour for its parents, without its consent; and if a parent or guardian binds a child or ward as an apprentice, it is required to labour without its consent, but who regards it as a slave? Dr. Rice's definition is still more defective. He defines it to be simply the claim of one man to the services of another. "If there is any thing necessarily included in slaveholding, except the claim of one man to the services of another, will Mr. B. please inform us what it is?"‡ But does this give us a single distinctive feature of slavery? If one man hires another, and pays him for his labour, he has a claim on his services, but is he his slave? The master has a claim on the service of an apprentice for the consideration of teaching him a valuable trade, is he therefore a slave? If we employ an attorney, and pay him his fees, we have a claim on his services. If a congregation calls a minister, and pays him a salary, there is a claim established to his services. If we employ a physician by the year, and pay him, we have a claim on his services. Are all these, therefore, slaves? They are, according to Dr. R's. definition. Is it not, however, a little remarkable, that it should be thought necessary to spend four days in an effort to prove that it is not in itself sinful for one man to have a claim on the services of another? Inasmuch as this has never been denied, his labour is briefly described in the following words—"carrying coals to Newcastle."

What, then, constitutes slavery? It is the holding of property in man. The master claims that the slave is his property, subject to bargain and sale, just as is his horse. Slavery not being a natural relation, is just whatever the laws regulating the system make it; and history shows that these laws have been much the same in every age and nation in which slavery has ever existed. According to the Roman law, the slave was the property of his master. Adams says:—"Slaves were not esteemed as persons, but as things, and might be transferred from one owner to another, like any other effects. They could not make a will, nor inherit any thing?"§ Another writer says that they were held, "*pro nullis, pro mortuis, pro quadrupedibus*:" that is, for nothing, for dead, for beasts. The same principle per-

* Mills' Logic, p. 77.

† Debates with Blanchard, p. 32.

‡ Moral Philosophy, p. 80.

§ Roman Antiquities, p. 43.

vades the slave laws of this country. The Civil Code of South Carolina contains the following statute:—"Slaves shall be deemed sold, taken, reputed and adjudged in law to be chattels personal in the hands of their owners and possessors, and their executors, administrators, and assigns, to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatsoever." * This principle is found in all the laws of the slave states, and in all the decisions of the courts in relation to slavery. In a suit brought for the recovery of the children of a slave mother, the children having been bequeathed by the will of the master before they were born, the claim of the plaintiff was sustained by the higher courts on the following ground:—"He who is the absolute owner of a *thing*, owns all its faculties for profit or increase, and he may, no doubt, grant the profits or increase, as well as the thing itself." † But there is no necessity to multiply proof. Take away this element from the laws, strip the master of the right to call his slave his property, and slavery is effectually and for ever abolished.

The question then is, Do the laws of the Old and New Testament sanction slavery; that is, the holding of property in man? This question must be answered in the negative. It is not sanctioned—

I. In the patriarchal servitude. To this the advocate of slavery refers, as affording very plain evidence that slavery is a Bible institution. He appeals to the fact that "Abraham had servants born in his house, and bought with money." But it is not easy to see where the force of this allegation lies. In order to establish the position which it is brought to prove, it must be shown that these servants were slaves; or, in other words, were goods and chattels personal to all intents and purposes whatsoever; for if they were not, it will never prove slavery to be right. That they were not slaves, appears from the following considerations:

1. They do not seem to have been regarded as constituting the wealth of the patriarchs. When their wealth alone is spoken of, language such as the following is used:—"And Abram was very rich in cattle, and in silver and in gold." (Gen. xiii. 2.) When his greatness is spoken of in connexion with his wealth, then his servants are mentioned. "And he said, I am Abraham's servant, and the Lord hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver and gold, and men-servants and maid-servants, and camels and asses." (Gen. xxiv. 34, 35.) Of Isaac it is said:—"And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew, until he became great; for he had possessions of flocks, and possessions of herds, and great store of servants." (Gen. xxvi. 13, 14.) So, when Rachel and Leah speak of the great riches which God had taken from their father, and given to Jacob, there is mention made of his cattle and his goods, but not of his servants. (Gen. xxxi. 16—18.) And when Hamor and Shechem were endeavouring to persuade the Shechemites to form an alliance with Jacob, they held out as an inducement that all Jacob's substance would be theirs, but they do not mention his servants as constituting any part of this wealth. (Gen. xxxiv. 21.) Now it is, to say the least, very remarkable that their servants are always left out of the enumeration when their wealth alone is indicated, if they were property in the hands of their masters.

* Prince's Digest, p. 446.

† Wheeler, p. 28.

2. The status of these servants must have been very different from that of a slave, because they were the legal heirs of their masters, in case the master had no children. "And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed; and lo, one born in my house is mine heir." Ishmael, too, the son of Hagar, Sarah's handmaid, was also entitled to a part of the inheritance. To prevent this, it was also necessary to drive out Hagar and her son from the family. "Cast out this bond-woman and her son; for the son of this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." (Gen. xxi. 10.) Now, was it ever heard that such a thing had occurred in the whole history of slavery? Was any Southern slaveholder ever under the necessity of driving out some dark-skinned Hagar, lest her son, and his son, a bright, copper-coloured Ishmael, should be an heir equally with the children of his white wife? The very law which creates the status of the slave, forbids it. When he is made the goods and chattels of his master, it would be as preposterous to speak of his being an heir, as it would to predicate the like of his horse or ox. "A slave is one who is in the power of a master, to whom he belongs. The master may sell him, dispose of his person, his industry, and his labour; he can do nothing, *possess* nothing, nor *acquire* anything but what must belong to his master."* Had they been slaves, then, of the same class with American slaves, they would have been, in relation to heirship, as well as every thing else, in the power of the master.

3. The children of female servants, when they became secondary wives of their masters, were on a perfect equality with the children of the first wife. Jacob first married two sisters, Leah and Rachel. Both of these had children. He also took their handmaids, Zilpah and Bilhah, as secondary wives. These two women also had children, Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. Now, when Jacob comes to die, and pronounce the patriarchal benediction on his sons, these children are placed on a perfect equality with the sons of Leah and Rachel. "Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel." "Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties." (Gen. xxx. 5—13; xlix. 16—21.) Had these female servants been slaves, their children never could have been on an equality with the sons of the first wife; for the law of slavery is *partus sequitur ventrem*, the child follows the condition of the mother. If they had been slaves, this law would have made their children slaves.

4. The fact of their being bought with money, is no proof that they were slaves. (1.) Because the Hebrew word, (*kana*,) translated "bought," signifies primarily, to *create*, to *found*; and secondarily, to *get*, to *obtain*, to *acquire*. When Cain was born, Eve says:—"I have gotten (*kanthe*) a man from the Lord." (Gen. iv. 1.) Solomon says:—"With all thy getting, get (*kena*) understanding." (Prov. iv. 7.) "He that heareth reproof, getteth (*kana*) understanding." (Prov. xv. 32.) In Isaiah xi. 11, it is translated "recover." "The Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover (*le-kanoth*) the remnant of his people." It is evident, then, that the word, as applied to servants, might with equal propriety be rendered "obtained," or "acquired." Now, how do men get hired servants?

* Civil Code of Louisiana; Stroud, p. 22.

(2.) Because there are many instances mentioned of the buying of persons, in which slavery is out of the question. It is plain that Jacob bought Leah and Rachel. It is true he did not pay money for them, but labour; nevertheless they say of their father, "For he hath sold us." Were they Jacob's slaves? Again, Boaz bought Ruth. "Moreover Ruth, the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased." (Ruth iv. 10.) Was she his slave? We read, too, that the prophet Hosea made a similar purchase:—"So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and a half homer of barley." (Hos. iii. 2.) Now all these must have been slaves—goods and chattels, if Abraham's buying or getting servants with money converted them into property.

5. The case of Hagar, and her being sent back by the angel, is no proof that they were slaves. It is, indeed, regarded as very conclusive by pro-slavery men. It is Dr. Rice's first Bible argument in favour of slaveholding. "My first proof is, that Hagar was the female slave of Abraham and Sarah." Great stress is laid on the meaning of the Hebrew word *shifha*. "Sarah calls her 'my maid.' The Hebrew word *shifha*, translated maid, signifies a female slave."* In determining the meaning of a word, it is in vain to parade lexicons and commentaries. There is a higher law by which even lexicons must be tried, and that law is usage or custom. A Roman rhetorician says, "*Consuetudo omnium domina rerum, tum maxime verborum est*;" that is, Usage is the mistress of all things, but especially of words. Horace, in his *Ars De Poetica*, speaking of the influence of usage, or custom, in retaining or rejecting words, says:—

"Si volet usus

Quem penes arbitrium est, et jus, et norma loquendi,"

which is thus freely rendered by Francis,

"Whose arbitrary sway

The words and forms of language must obey."

Dr. Campbell, in his *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, endorses this, and adds: "Every tongue whatsoever, is founded in use or custom." By this rule let the word *shifha* be tried. It is found in the following, among many other places. Ruth ii. 13:—"Thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid." Here Ruth calls herself the *shifha* of Boaz, and of course she must have been his female slave! In 1 Sam. i. 18, Hannah speaking to Eli says, "Let thine handmaid (*shifha*) find grace in thy sight." Was she Eli's female slave? The wife of Nabal thus addresses David:—"Let thy handmaid (*shifha*) abide a servant, to wash the feet of the servants of my lord." (1 Sam. xxv. 41.) See also 2 Kings iv. 2. It is applied to Bilhah and Zilpah, the handmaids of Leah and Rachel. (Gen. xxix. 24, 29.) Now, does the application of this word to them indicate that they were slaves? Josephus, a Jewish priest and historian, undoubtedly understood the Hebrew language better than any of our modern doctors of divinity, and he says:—"Zilpah was handmaid to Leah, and Bilhah to Rachel, *by no means slaves*; but, however, subject to their mistresses."† Will any assert that he did not know the meaning of the word *shifha*? The meaning of

* Debate with Blanchard, p. 260.

† Jewish Antiquities, p. 40, Morgan & Sanxay Ed.

the word, then, is a slippery foundation on which to stand in this argument.

Was there any thing, then, in her condition indicating that she was a slave? No. It has been shown that her son was Abraham's heir, and consequently her condition was not that of a slave. The treatment which she received at the hand of Sarah is no evidence that she was a slave. "Hagar," says Dr. Rice, "was punished by Sarah for contemptuous behaviour." * Another doctor, of the same school, says that "it was severe corporeal punishment." They both seem to think that this is pretty plain proof that she was a slave. It might be a question with some who are not favoured with so much light as doctors of divinity are supposed to have, where they got their information. The Bible says no such thing. It says, "When Sarah dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face." (Gen. xvi. 6.) This, however, is entirely consistent with the idea of her being a hired servant. It is no uncommon thing to hear hired labourers complaining that their employers have dealt hardly with them.

There is, moreover, no difficulty in accounting for the angel's directing her to return, and be subject to her mistress. For the subjection is no more than is required of them that are hired. The hired labourer is required to submit to the orders of his employer. Bilhah and Zilpah were subject to their mistresses, though by no means slaves. And she was under obligations to return, because she had become Abraham's wife, and as such bound to remain in the house of her husband. Even anti-slavery men advise wives not to leave their husbands.

If Hagar was a slave, why were Abraham and Sarah under the necessity of *driving her out*, to prevent Ishmael's inheriting part of the estate? Why did they not think of selling her and her boy, just as the pious Christian of the South sells his black concubine, and his and her children, whenever he wishes to be rid of their presence? How was it that they found it necessary to "cast her out," especially when Sarah was a mistress so very cruel, that she inflicted severe corporeal punishment upon her? The patriarchs of the South never find themselves under the necessity of doing so with their slaves. On the contrary, they have great difficulty to prevent their escaping on underground railroads. They find fugitive slave laws, and blood-hounds, and United States marshals, more ferocious, and incomparably meaner than blood-hounds, necessary in order to prevent their Hagars and Ishmaels from taking unceremonious leave for regions lying toward the North Star.

The query will no doubt be raised, If the patriarchal servants were not slaves, what were they? It is sufficient to say, If they were not slaves, it is no matter what they were, so far as this controversy is concerned. The argument for slavery, drawn from this servitude, must be futile. A little reflection, however, should convince any one that their condition was a voluntary one. The sacred historian relates an instance of Abraham, when a stranger dwelling in the plain of Mamre, arming three hundred trained servants, and pursuing after the captors of Lot to Hobah, on the left of Damascus. Now, calculating according to the usual proportion of those able to bear arms, Abraham

* Debate with Blanchard, p. 261.

must have had nearly two thousand servants. But what power had he to retain them in servitude, contrary to their will? What power had he to compel the three hundred armed soldiers to return with him from the region of Damascus? Evidently none at all. This, however, according to Paley's and Webster's definition, shows that they were not slaves. Webster says:—"Servant differs from slave, as the servant's subjection to a master is voluntary, the slave's is not."

There is little doubt that the servants of Abraham were his clients, and that he was their patron. This relation was very common in the Roman empire and in Oriental countries. "That the patricians and plebeians might be connected together by the strictest bonds, Romulus ordained that every plebeian should choose from the patricians any one he pleased, as his PATRON, or protector, whose CLIENT he was called, (*quod eum colebat.*) It was the part of the patron to advise and to defend his client, to assist him with his interest and substance; in short, to do every thing for him that a parent uses to do for his children. The client was obliged to pay all kinds of respect to his patron, and to serve him with life and fortune in any extremity. It was esteemed highly honourable for a patrician to have numerous clients, both hereditary and acquired, by his own merit. In after times, even cities and whole nations were under the protection of illustrious Roman families."*

II. In the Jewish servitude. This is regarded as the stronghold of slavery. Intrenched in this fortification, the defenders of the system defy all attempts to dislodge them. But however secure they imagine themselves, the hope of driving them from their retreat is not altogether a vain one. The truth is mighty, and before it the high towers of error tremble and fall. It is hoped, then, that not only can the slaveholding forces be driven from this Sevastopol, but also that the hosts of freedom will be able to take possession, and to run up on its walls the flag of victory, with the inscription, "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all the inhabitants thereof." For—

1. The word *evedh*, by which the Jewish servant is designated, does not prove that they were slaves. All who attempt to defend slavery, maintain that this word means a slave. This is their main argument. Dr. Rice says:—"The word used, and translated *servant* and *bondman*, is the proper Hebrew word for *slave*." "The *sakir* is the *hired* servant; and *evedh* is the *bondman*, or *slave*." Again, he says:—"They are designated by a word which uniformly means *slave*."† The amount of truth in these assertions will appear, when it is shown that the word, so far from uniformly signifying *slave*, is used in at least six different senses. The following passages, in which the Hebrew word *evedh* is used, and translated *servants*, will illustrate. It is used, then, to designate—

(1.) The subjects of a prince. "Is not this David, the servant (*evedh*) to Saul?" (1 Sam. xxix. 3.) It is applied to the whole army of Israel. "Am not I a Philistine, and ye servants (*avadim*) to Saul?" (1 Sam. xvii. 8.) So speaks Uriah to David, of the army:—"My lord Joab, and the (*avedhe*) servants of my lord are encamped in the field." (2 Sam. xi. 11.) "And all the men of Judah, the king's (*avedhe*) servants." (1 Kings i. 9.)

* Adams' Roman Antiquities, pp. 36, 37.

† Debate, pp. 290, 291, 406.

(2.) Military attendants. "Now Saul abode in Gibeah, under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his (*avadhai*) servants were standing about him." (1 Sam. xxii. 6.) The next verse shows the character of these servants. "Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites." They were his body guards.

(3.) The attendants and ministers of a king. Ahimaaz applies it to himself and Cush. "When Joab sent the king's servants, (*evedh*.) and me thy (*evedh*) servant." (2 Sam. xviii. 29.) "And Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's (*evedh*) servant." (1 Kings xi. 26.) Compare verse 28. "And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour; and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph."

(4.) Ambassadors of high rank and distinguished honour. "And Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honourable than they." (Num. xxii. 15.) "And Balaam answered, and said unto the (*avadhe*) servants of Balak." (Num. xxii. 18.) If pro-slavery critics are correct, these honourable persons were Balak's slaves, for they are designated by a word which they assert uniformly means slaves.

(5.) The relation which Christ, as Mediator, sustains to the Father. "Behold my (*evedh*.) servant, whom I uphold." (Isa. xlii. 1.) Compare Matt. xii. 18. "Behold, my (*evedh*) shall deal prudently." (Isa. lii. 13.) See also Zech. iii. 8.

(6.) It is used as an expression of civility. Thus Jacob calls himself the servant of Esau. "They be thy (*evedh*) servant Jacob's." (Gen. xxxii. 18.) Judah styles himself, his brethren, and his father, the servants of Joseph. "And thy (*avadhe*) shall bring down the gray hairs of thy (*evedh*) servant with sorrow to the grave." (Gen. xlv. 31.) Nathan, the prophet, thus addresses David:—"But me, even me, thy (*avedh*) servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy (*evedh*) servant Solomon, hath he not called." (1 Kings i. 26.) Were Nathan and Solomon David's slaves?

It is most evident, then, that we cannot determine the status of the Jewish servant by the meaning of the Hebrew word *avedh*. We must first ascertain the status of the servant, and then we can ascertain the meaning of the word.

2. The Hebrew servant bought for six years, was not a slave. The servants, indeed, of this class, are designated by the term *evedh*, notwithstanding the assertions of doctors of divinity that they are never so styled. "He did, indeed, tell us in a former speech that the Hebrew servant sold for six years, is called *eved*; but such is not the fact. On the contrary, that class of servants is contrasted with the *eved*." * This serves to show that even doctors of divinity are not always as well acquainted with their Bible as they should be, for in Ex. xxi. 2 we have the following language:—"If thou buy an Hebrew (*evedh*) servant, six years shall he serve." If the Hebrew servant was a slave, then *evedh* means slave when applied to them; but if they were only hired servants, then it does not have this meaning. The main argument to show that they were slaves, is that they were bought. But

this, as before shown, utterly fails. In this case the word means to obtain by hiring. This appears very plainly in Deut. xv. 12—14, where the same class of servants is spoken of. "And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years, then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee." "And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty. Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine press; of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee, thou shalt give unto him." Moreover, the servant himself concluded the contract with his employer in the beginning of the term of service. The Hebrew reads thus:—"If thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, (*yimmaker*), sell himself unto thee." The word is in the niphal form of the verb, which, as the Hebrew scholar knows, is reflexive in its signification. Gesenius says:—"It is primarily reflexive, as to hide one's self, to grieve one's self." Accordingly, the word which in Deut. xv. 12 is rendered sold, is in Lev. xxv. 47 translated *sell himself*. This mode of obtaining servants was established by law in the Jewish commonwealth. "Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel; I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondmen, saying, At the end of seven years, let ye go every man his brother an Hebrew, which (*yimmaker*) hath been sold unto thee." (Jer. xxxiv. 13, 14.) In the margin it is translated "sold himself unto thee." This is the federal law of Israel. The conclusion, then, is unavoidable, that they were hired servants, notwithstanding they are styled *evedhs*. This, one of slavery's greatest champions admits. "The Jew, who had become poor, and sold himself for six years, and who was to be treated, not as a slave, but as a hired servant. (Lev. xxv. 40.) This class is spoken of also in Ex. xxi. 2."* "The Hebrew servant sold for six years, was not to be treated as an *eved*, a slave, but as a *sakir*, a hired servant."† Now, as this class is also styled *evedh*, how much is the famous argument for slavery, drawn from the meaning of the word, worth?

It is argued, however, that the law gave the father a right to sell his daughter for a slave. This is based on Ex. xxi. 7:—"And if a man sell his daughter to be a maid-servant, she shall not go out as the men-servants do." If this stood alone, there might be some plausibility in the argument; but the context clearly shows the nature and design of this transaction. The selling was only the conclusion of a marriage contract, and receiving a dowry, with the agreement also that she should labour in the service of her future husband until she arrived at maturity. In the next verse it is said:—"If she please not her master who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed; to sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her."

The advocate of slavery puts in the following plea:—"If a master gave his man-servant a wife, and she bore him children, then she should not go out with her husband, but she and her children should be her master's." (Ex. xxi. 4.) The answer, however, is easy. The law fixed the term of service, both for a man and a woman, at six

* Rice, Debate, p. 265.

† Id., p. 318.

years. (Deut. xv. 12—14.) Now, when the master obtained the woman as a servant, the law bound him to let her go out in the seventh year. If, then, she does not go out with her husband, to whom she has been given, it is simply because her term of service has not expired, and she was still bound by her own contract to her employer. So soon, however, as the six years expire, then she shall go out. She and her children shall be her master's only until the expiration of this period.

3. The heathen bond-men were not slaves. This class is mentioned in Leviticus xxv. 44, 45. "Both thy bond-men and thy bond-maids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bond-men and bond-maids. Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they beget in your land; and they shall be your possession." These servants, it will be perceived, were obtained from two sources. (1.) From resident Gentiles—"the stranger that is among you." (Verse 45.) Now this class of servants could not have been slaves, for the same law applied to them which applied to the natives of the land. "Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger, as for one of your own country." (Lev. xxiv. 22.) Applying this law, they too must have been hired servants. They made the contract themselves in reference to their servitude, and also went out at the expiration of their term of service. If it be denied that they made disposition for themselves, then we may ask, Who had the right to dispose of them? The Jewish civil ruler did not claim that right; and if he had, would not the exercise of such a power at once have prevented the foreigner from coming among them? Would it not also have been the means of driving every stranger from the land of Israel? Suppose such a law were passed in the United States, how long would the foreign population remain residents in this country? How many would be found emigrating to a land where the law consigned them to hopeless bondage? It will not be pretended that one foreigner had a right to lay hold on another, and sell him for a slave, for this would be kidnapping. The native Hebrew could not sell them, for the same reason. The conclusion is, that they hired themselves, or sold their time to the Hebrews.

(2.) From surrounding nations—"the heathen round about you." (Verse 44.) But the question at once arises, Were they bought of a third party? This cannot be admitted. For to have done so would have been man-stealing, according to Scriptural teaching. This case of Joseph will illustrate. "For indeed I was stolen *away out of the land of the Hebrews*." (Gen. xl. 15.) Who stole him? Did his brethren steal him *away out of the land of the Hebrews*? Where was Dothan? Not out of the land of the Hebrews. Who, then, stole him out of that land? The Ishmaelites. But did they not buy him? Yes, but from a third party, and therefore says Joseph, "Indeed I was stolen." According to Scriptural testimony, then, buying a man from a third party, is man-stealing. To this crime the law affixed the highest penalty. "And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hands, he shall surely be put to death." (Ex. xxi. 16.) This at once precludes the idea of buying from a third party. Moreover, the Hebrew law did not recognise the heathen servant as the lawful property of his master. Had this been the case, it never

could have forbidden the Hebrew to deliver the fugitive to his master. "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant that is escaped from his master unto thee." (Deut. xxiii. 15.) If he had been regarded as the lawful property of his master, no man, no organization of men, could have justly detained him. The man who detains or conceals the property of another is a thief, and therefore the injunction forbidding the Hebrew to deliver up the heathen servant is plain proof that he was not regarded as the property of the master by moral right. Never, then, could God permit his people to recognise this right by purchasing from them. They obtained them, therefore, in the same way that all the other servants were obtained, that is, by hiring them for a definite period.

It is objected, however, that these were undoubtedly slaves, because they are contrasted with the hired servant. "The bond-men, and bond-maids here spoken of, are not only distinguished from, but put in contrast with *hired servants*. The contrast in which the hired servant is here placed with reference to the bond-servant, as well as the words by which the two are respectively designated, proves beyond question, that the latter was a slave."* This is by no means so unanswerable as its author seems to think. It fails to prove that the bond-men were slaves, for the same distinction is made in reference to those admitted to be only hired servants. It will be remembered that the same learned doctor admits that the Hebrew servant sold for six years, was a hired servant. But he is also contrasted with the class called hired servants. "It shall not seem hard unto thee when thou sendest him away free from thee; for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee in serving thee six years." (Deut. xv. 18.) Now, if the argument were a good one, it would prove that the Hebrew servant for six years, which he admits was only a hired servant, was a slave. The difficulty which is to this doctor of divinity insurmountable, is removed at once by making an accurate distinction between *evedh*, translated servant, or bond-servant, and *sakir*, translated hired servant. The *evedh* is one employed for a term of years, to perform all kinds of labour. The Hebrew verb *avadh*, which determines the meaning of the noun, signifies to labour. "Six days shalt thou (*ta avodh*) labour, and do all thy work." (Ex. xx. 9.) "And there was not a man to till (*leavodh*) the ground." (Gen. ii. 5.) Now this determines the meaning of the noun *evedh*, just as in English, when we say that the verb to labour means to perform any or all kinds of work, we thereby determine the meaning of the noun labourer to be one who performs all kinds of work. Such, then, was the *evedh*, or bond-servant. The *sakir*, translated hired servant, was a labourer receiving his wages daily. "The wages of him that is hired (*sakir*) shall not abide with thee all night until the morning." (Lev. xix. 13.) "Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant, (*sakir*.) At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it." (Deut. xxiv. 14, 15.) Compare Matt. xx. 1-8:—"So, when the even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire." This removes all difficulty arising from the contrast of *evedh*, or bond-servant, with the *sakir*, or hired servant. The one is a ser-

* Rice, Debate, 266, 267.

vant hired for a term of years; the other a labourer to whom wages were given daily, although he may have been employed for a definite period of time.

Again, great stress is laid upon the provision in the law by which these servants were to descend to the children of the master as an inheritance. "And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession." (Lev. xxv. 46.) The points in this argument are two. (1.) That the word "for ever" expresses an unlimited period of time. Dr. Rice says:—"Does this law mean a short apprenticeship? The Universalist tells us that for ever does not mean for ever, but only a limited time; but I never heard before that it signifies so short a period as *five years*! The term employed is the strongest in the Hebrew language, and yet it means *five years*!"* Another doctor, of high standing, uses the following language:—"If for ever means but thirty days, or ten days, or one day, then rejoice all ye devils, and damned spirits; rejoice, ye thieves, and liars, and drunkards, and profane swearers, and Sabbath-breakers; for behold we bring unto you glad tidings—we proclaim in hell a universal jubilee: you shall be punished, indeed, for ever; but then, glory be to licentious criticism, for ever means but thirty days, or one day."† These D. D's. seem to be quite amazed that any one should attempt to explain the word for ever in a limited sense. The latter, meditating on the licentiousness of criticism in this age, is grieved at heart. He has a regular mental spasm. His spirits are fearfully distracted. But, dear friends, be composed. Gird up the loins of your minds, and be sober; for it is even so that *for ever* is frequently used in a limited sense. In the following passages every one knows that its signification is limited:—"Ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever." (Ex. xii. 14.) "Therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations for ever." (Ex. xii. 17.) "And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever." (Ex. xii. 24.) Will these learned gentlemen inform us whether the passover was to be observed throughout an unlimited period of time? The strongest word in the Hebrew language is used! Again, we find it used with reference to the priesthood of Aaron and his sons. "And Aaron was separated that he should sanctify the most holy things, he and his sons *for ever*, to burn incense before the Lord." (1 Chron. xxiii. 13.) Where is the Aaronic priesthood now, if for ever always signifies unlimited duration? Jonah, too, says:—"The earth with her bars was about me for ever." (Jonah ii. 6.) How long was the for ever that Jonah was in the belly of the fish? If their arguments prove anything, they prove that they were to be their bond-servants eternally,—not in this life only, but in the world to come. If they do not mean this, then all their talk is idle rant. But do they not see that for ever is here limited by the nature of the case? At most it can only mean to the end of their lives; and if it can and must be thus far limited, then there cannot be anything in the meaning of the word forbidding us to limit it to a much shorter period. It is a word that can be limited, and the limitation will depend on the nature and circumstances of the case. In this instance it cannot be extended beyond the year of jubilee.

* Debate, p. 404.

† Junkin.

“And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof.” (Lev. xxv. 10.) (2.) That the word inheritance signifies property, being frequently applied to land, houses, and other kinds of property. The meaning of this word must also be determined by the nature of the objects to which it relates. When applied to houses, lands, cattle, it denotes property. But it is often used when the idea of property can have no place. “We have no part in David, neither *inheritance* in the son of Jesse.” (1 Sam. xx. 1.) “The Lord God of Israel was their inheritance.” (Josh. xiii. 33.) The same Hebrew word is used here that is applied to the bond-servants; and it is evident, therefore, that we cannot determine their status by its meaning.

The design of the law is obvious. While it guarded the rights of the servant, it also secured those of the master; and hence, if the master died after obtaining one of those servants, and before his time of service had expired, the law would not suffer the servant to defraud the master's family by refusing to fulfil his contract and complete his term of service. But it made the contract transferable by will, or by right of inheritance to his heirs.* This was the more necessary, inasmuch as the servant was often paid in advance, as is evident in the redemption of the servant by paying back to his employer a part of the money with which he was hired. “He shall give again the price of his redemption out of the money that he was bought for.” (Lev. xxv. 51.)

III. In the New Testament. There is no particular system of servitude described in the New Testament, yet the advocate of slavery is confident that he is able to bring from the glorious gospel of God's dear Son many very conclusive arguments in favour of his sacred and benevolent institution. These arguments it is proposed now to examine.

1. It is argued that it is not expressly forbidden. If it be meant that the New Testament does not say, in so many words, Thou shalt not have a slave, or slaveholding is a crime against both God and man, it is true. But what does that prove? Is every thing not thus forbidden, just and right? If so, then gambling, horse-racing, polygamy, must be innocent things. Who supposes that the New Testament sanctions such scenes as were exhibited in the Olympic or Isthmean games? No intelligent Christian can for a moment entertain the thought. Yet they are not expressly forbidden.

2. It is alleged that the piety of a man is never called in question in the New Testament, because he was a slaveholder. “And I state it as a fact, that the piety of a man was never called in question by the apostles because he was a slaveholder.”† This takes for granted that whatever is done by a man, whose piety has never been called in question, must be right. We read, however, of some pious men who have been guilty of very aggravated sins. The piety of Noah has never been called in question, yet Noah was so drunken that he was incapable of avoiding indecent exposure. Is drunkenness, therefore, an innocent thing? Lot, too, was a man whose piety has never been questioned, but he was guilty of drunkenness and incest. David was

* The Roman patrician sometimes obtained his client by inheritance. They were “both hereditary, and acquired by merit.”—*Adams' Rom. Ant.*, p. 37.

† Rice, Debate, p. 378.

a man after God's own heart; nevertheless, he was guilty of adultery and murder.

3. It is said that the apostle exhorts servants to be submissive to their masters, and patiently to remain in their condition, which they could not have done if slaveholding is sinful. I answer—(1st.) This takes for granted that which must be proved—that the apostles, by master and servant, mean slaveholder and slave. This, however, cannot be done. The main reliance is on the meaning of the Greek word *doulos*, which is used in as great a variety of applications as the Hebrew *evedh*. One passage will be enough to show that it does not prove the servant to be a slave, and consequently the property of his master. "A certain king taking account of his servants, (*tōn doulōn*.) found one that owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made." (Matt. xviii. 25.) How would this operate with a slaveholder? He claims that one of his slaves owes him a sum of money, but he is unable to pay. "Well," says the master to his slave, "I must have my own; and if you cannot pay it, I will just sell you, and pay myself." Query, How much richer would he be when he had sold the slave, and got the money? It would be very much like a man whose horse runs away and breaks his buggy, selling the horse to get payment for the buggy. (2.) The exhortation to be submissive and patient, does not prove slavery to be right. If it did, then it would be morally right for us, if we were able, to beat and abuse our fellow-man, for the Redeemer himself thus exhorts us—"And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak, forbid not to take thy coat also." (Luke vi. 27.) Is it right to smite a man on the cheek, and take away his cloak and his coat? "But," says Dr. Spring, referring to 1 Cor. vii. 21, "'Art thou called being a servant? care not for it.' How wise! how kind! How different from some modern reformers! I seem to see the great apostle laying his paternal hand on the head of the poor slave, and hear him say, 'Care not for your slavery. You are the Lord's freeman. Stay where you are, you shall have a throne hereafter.'"* Now, suppose a man with the spirit of Patrick Henry reduced to the condition of a slave, and some hoary-headed doctor of divinity to approach him, and lay his paternal hand on his head, and say, "Care not for your slavery, stay where you are." I seem to see that form erect, and that flashing eye, as he exclaims, "Infamous traitor to humanity, begone! Give me liberty, or give me death!"

4. It is maintained that Paul sent back Onesimus, a fugitive slave, to Philemon, his master. I reply—(1.) That it cannot be proved that Onesimus was a slave. It rests for proof altogether on his being called *doulos*; which is, as before shown, not conclusive. (2.) That it was evident he was not the property of Philemon, for Paul declares he might have retained him. (3.) That his return was voluntary. Paul was then a prisoner at Rome, and Philemon's place of residence was in Colosse, as is evident from this epistle being addressed to Archipus, the minister of the church at Colosse, (verse 2,) and from Paul's

* Obligations of the World to the Bible, pp. 193, 194.

referring in his epistle to the Colossians to the sending to them Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother. (Col. iv. 9.) Now the distance between these two places, either by land or water, could not be less than eight hundred miles. Then, how preposterous the idea that his return was involuntary. Paul, a prisoner in Rome, writes a letter to Philemon in Colosse, and gives it to Onesimus, with directions to return to his master. But had he been unwilling to return, how could Paul have compelled him? He could have taken the letter from Paul, and gone his way rejoicing. (4.) That Paul did not send him back to be a slave. "For perhaps he departed for a season, that thou shouldst receive him for ever; not now as a *servant*, but above a servant, a brother beloved." (Verses 15, 16.) Now suppose, for the sake of argument, that *doulos*, rendered servant, signifies a slave. Then, according to the pro-slavery critic's own reading, we will have this injunction given to Philemon by Paul—"That thou shouldst receive him for ever; not now *as a slave*, but above a slave." How much would the Southern patriarch consider himself indebted to some minister of the gospel at the North, were he to send back a fugitive from Chicago or New York to Charleston, with a letter to his master directing him not to receive the fugitive as a *slave*, but above a slave, a brother beloved? The case of Onesimus is an unfortunate one for the defender of slaveholding.

5. The concessions of those who attempt to justify slaveholding from the Bible show the falsehood of their assumptions and arguments. The great champion of slavery in the West, Dr. Rice, uses the following language:—"In the slaveholding, as well as in the free states, it is admitted and maintained, that to reduce a freeman into a state of slavery, is a crime of the first magnitude."* Now, I here submit one question. If an act is, in the beginning, a crime of the first magnitude, how long must a man continue to perform that act, before it is sanctified, and becomes morally right in God's sight? Again he says:—"Nor is the question before us, whether slavery is an evil, a very great evil, which should be removed as speedily as it can be done by the operation of correct principles. This we cheerfully admit."† "That slavery, wherever it exists, is an evil of enormous magnitude, we do not doubt."‡ Now evils are of two kinds, physical and moral. Now if he means that it is a physical evil, how puerile and silly to spend precious time in proving that it is not in itself sinful! What would be thought of the man who would stand up gravely in the face of open day, to prove from the Bible that a carbuncle, or the gout, was not in itself sinful? The conclusion would be quite unanimous that the benevolent should do something to secure him a place in one of those charitable institutions called lunatic asylums. If he means that it is a moral evil, surely his moral sense cannot be so depraved and obtuse that he does not perceive the inexpressible wickedness of attempting to press into its justification God's holy, just, and good law. Or is it so that the malign influence of slavery so blinds the mind, and sears and petrifies the conscience, that a man can really believe that the holy God approves moral evil or sin? But he declares again:—"I do not defend slavery as an institution that ought to be perpetuated. I am not a pro-slavery man. I am opposed to slavery."§ How is this?

* Debate, p. 26. † Idem, p. 30. ‡ Presbyterian Expositor, Oct., 1858, p. 588,
§ Debate, p. 33.

The Bible, he would have us believe, is favourable to slavery. Is he not then for what the Bible sanctions? Is he opposed to what the Bible approves? Or is he so much more humane and merciful than the Author of that book? I have quite an admiration of any man who becomes so much better than the holy Scriptures require him to be!

Dr. Spring, notwithstanding he apologizes for slavery, is constrained to make the following admission:—"Thus do the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament treat the subject of slavery. They sanction no other slavery than this. The exclusive title of man over a fellow-worm, who belongs not to him, but to God; the assertion of any human will as supreme over a fellow-creature, when there is no supreme will in heaven or earth but the Divine will; the lording it over the conscience of the slave, when God alone is Lord of the conscience—this they rebuke and indignantly condemn."* Now let it be remembered that slavery creates an absolute title of one man over another, and that this is its distinctive and essential element, and Dr. Spring says that the Bible indignantly rebukes this. We say, Amen.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church adopted, in 1818, the following on the subject of slavery:—

"We consider the voluntary enslaving of one part of the human race by another, as a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature; as utterly inconsistent with the law of God, which requires us to love our neighbour as ourselves, and as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the gospel of Christ, which requires that "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Slavery creates a paradox in the moral system; it exhibits rational, accountable, and immortal beings in such circumstances as scarcely to leave the power of moral action. It exhibits them as dependent on the will of others, whether they shall receive religious instruction; whether they shall know and worship the true God; whether they shall enjoy the ordinances of the gospel; whether they shall perform the duties, and cherish the endearments of husbands and wives, parents and children, neighbours and friends; whether they shall preserve their chastity and purity, or regard the dictates of justice and humanity. Such are some of the consequences of slavery—consequences not imaginary, but which connect themselves with its very existence."†

IV. I shall state and illustrate a few principles contained in the Old and New Testaments, which will show their hostility to slavery.

1. All men are on an equality as respects natural rights. Whatever rights man possesses are given him by God, the Supreme Ruler and source of all power. The extent of his dominion is fixed in the original grant given to man. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth on the earth." (Gen. i. 26.) Over the lower ranks of creation God made him lord, but over man he gave him no authority. Every one bearing the image of God, stands on a perfect equality in this respect. The pious Job teaches us the same doctrine. "If I did despise the cause of my manservant, or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me; what

* Obligations of the World to the Bible, p. 195.

† Digest, p. 274.

then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? Did not he that made me in the womb, make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb? (Job xxxi. 13—15.) The great apostle Paul says, "He hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth." (Acts xvii. 26.) The man, then, who claims lordship over his fellow—who claims property in his fellow-man, is a usurper of the prerogatives and dominion of the Almighty.

2. We are enjoined to honour all men. "Honour all men." (1 Pet. ii. 17.) The term, "all," is here used in its most extensive signification. And according to this teaching, honour is due to every man, whatever may be his country, his condition, or colour. There is given to the very nature of man a dignity that elevates him above the condition of a chattel. He is made in the image of the great Creator. He possesses a rational and immortal nature. This elevates him in dignity, not only above the inanimate parts of creation, but also above the irrational order of animate beings. "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour." (Ps. viii. 5.) This gives dignity to every human being, and obedience to the injunction of the apostle requires us to treat him as one possessed of this high dignity and honour. Acting on this principle toward our fellow-man, giving to every one the honour due to the immortal nature which he possesses, will abolish slavery throughout the earth. Before we can reduce our brother-man to the condition of an irrational animal, or inanimate matter, before we can regard him as our property, and make him "goods and chattels," we must lose sight of the native nobility of his nature, and every emotion of regard or honour for him must be extinguished in the soul. All reverence, too, for God, in whose image man was created, must be lost before he can be so treated. Among the Romans, the trampling upon, or breaking the image or statue of a person of rank, was regarded as a mark of deep dishonour. So, in modern times, when men would express great contempt for a man, or fix upon him public disgrace, they burn, or hang, or shoot him in effigy. Now this same principle holds in reference to God, in whose image man is created. "He that oppresseth the poor, reproacheth his Maker." (Prov. xiv. 31.) "Whoso mocketh the poor, reproacheth his Maker." (Prov. xvii. 5.) Whoso enslaveth man made in the image of God, reproaches God himself.

3. We are commanded to love our neighbour as ourselves. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; I am the Lord." (Lev. xix. 18.) "And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Matt. xxii. 29.) If any one should be disposed to ask, like the lawyer of old, "Who is my neighbour?" let the Saviour teach him. Having referred to the case of the man who fell among thieves, and related the manner in which he was treated by the priest, Levite, and Samaritan, he asks, "Which of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour to him who fell among the thieves?" "He said, He that showed mercy on him." (Luke x. 29—37.) This Jesus recognises as a correct answer, thus teaching us that every one to whom we can do good is our neighbour. Now if we love him as ourselves, we cannot require him to labour for us without remuneration, "For love worketh no ill to his neighbour." (Rom. xiii. 10.) But to defraud him of wages, is evidence most conclusive that we do not love him as ourselves. Much

more is it evidence of our want of love when we make him a slave—chattelize him, and sell him as stock in the market. It is, moreover, an act of the highest injustice—one against which the Divine indignation is denounced. “Wo unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour’s service without wages, and giveth him not for his work.” (Jer. xxii. 13.) “Behold the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them that have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.” (Jas. v. 4.)

4. Kidnapping, or man-stealing, is forbidden. “He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.” (Ex. xxi. 16.) This law lays the axe to the root of slavery, especially to the slavery of this country. Every one knows that it originated in piracy—in stealing men and women in Africa, bringing them over to this country, and selling them in the market like any other articles of merchandise. Now, the law quoted above, fixes the penalty of death upon all concerned in this inexpressibly wicked transaction. (1.) Those that stole them ought to have been put to death. “He that stealeth a man, shall surely be put to death.” (2.) Those who buy or inherit them, should be treated in the same manner. “Or if he be found in his hands, he shall surely be put to death.” All, therefore, who are concerned in slaveholding in this land, are thieves of the worst class, and deserve death, according to the Divine law. To all who apologize for them the following language is applicable. “When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him.” (Ps. i. 18.) It will not do for the advocate of slavery to say that the law in reference to man-stealing is repealed, for then he must admit the repeal of all those laws to which he appeals for its justification. If they are still in force, so is the law quoted above. Moreover, we find that this law is brought over and incorporated in the New Testament. “Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient—for men-stealers.” The Greek word signifies slaveholders. It is *andrapodistais*, which Robinson thus defines:—“*Andrapodistes*, (*andrapodidzo*, to enslave, from *andrapodon*, a slave,) a man-stealer, a kidnapper.” Now the apostle declares the law was made for him. But to what law does he refer? Clearly to the law recorded Ex. xxi. 16, requiring all such characters to be put to death. In this connexion he also teaches that slaveholding is contrary to the doctrines and precepts of the gospel. “The law is made for man-stealers, (slaveholders,) and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God.” (1 Tim. i. 9—11.)

The following note was appended by the Presbyterian Church, 1793, to the enumeration of sins forbidden in the eighth commandment:—“1 Tim. i. 10. The law is made for MEN-STEALERS. This crime, among the Jews, exposed the perpetrators of it to capital punishment, (Ex. xxi. 16;) and the apostle here classes them with sinners of the first rank. The word he uses, in its original import, comprehends all who are concerned in bringing any of the human race into slavery, or in retaining them in it. *Hominum fures, qui servos vel liberos abducunt, retinent, vendunt, vel emunt*. Stealers of men are all those who bring off slaves or freemen, and keep, sell, or buy them.”

5. Slaveholding will bring down the judgment of God on all who are engaged in it. "He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor." (Ps. lxxii. 4.) "He shall redeem their souls from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in his sight." (Ps. lxxii. 14.) "The Lord executeth righteous judgment for all that are oppressed." (Ps. ciii. 6.) And where is the nation of antiquity, guilty of slavery, that has not felt the Divine vengeance? Egypt, once a powerful and wealthy kingdom, was desolated by Divine judgment for this sin. "Also that nation whom they serve, will I judge." (Gen. xv. 13, 14.) As the fulfilment of this, witness the ten terrible plagues on that land. "He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land. He smote their vines also, and their fig trees, and broke the trees of their coasts. He smote, also, all the first-born in the land, the chief of their strength." The beautiful and wealthy Tyre, also, was guilty of this sin. To her Ezekiel is sent, to reprove her sins, and threaten her with Divine judgment. Commissioned by the Most High, he charges the following, among other sins, upon her:—"Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, they were thy merchants, they traded the PERSONS OF MEN and vessels of brass in thy market." (Ezek. xxvii. 13.) On this proud and haughty city he denounces vengeance. "Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, *by the iniquity of thy traffic*; therefore will I bring forth a fire in the midst of thee; and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth, in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee; thou shalt be a terror, and never shall be any more." (Ezek. xxviii. 18, 19.) Whether this has been accomplished or not, let the slaveholder and his defender answer. In Rome, that proud empire of the world, multitudes of slaves were found. And where is Rome? Her glory has been trodden in the dust. The blood of the slave, so remorselessly shed, was precious and dear in God's sight, and he clothed himself with vengeance as with a garment, while he passed in desolating fury over the empire. The slave population itself was an element in Rome's weakness, and was made contributory to her decline and fall. Gibbon, speaking of the slaves in Rome, says:—"Whose desperate insurrections had more than once brought the republic to the brink of destruction." Israel, in the days of Jeremiah, was guilty of reducing men to involuntary servitude. "But ye turned and polluted my name, and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid, whom he had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection, to be unto you for servants and for handmaids." (Jer. xxxiv. 16.) Now hearken to their doom. "Therefore thus saith the Lord: Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour: behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; and I will make you to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth." (Jer. xxxiv. 17.)

So far is it from being true that slavery is sanctioned by the Scriptures, that every page of these sacred writings flashes with fiery wrath against oppression. Can there be anything more infamous than the representation that the righteous and merciful God approves, in his word, such atrocities as are perpetrated in connexion with the very existence of slavery? What, I ask again, is slavery? It is the chat-

tellizing and brutalizing of man, made in the image of God. It is a system that clothes man with irresponsible power over his fellow, that authorizes him to buy and sell men and women like cattle in the market, to separate husbands and wives, parents and children, lovers and friends, that he may gratify his lust for gain; and if they give expression to their anguish of heart, he may whip them, like brutes; if they attempt to escape, he may chain them, like felons; if they resist, he may murder them, and the law throws the shield of its protection around him. O, listen to the piercing scream of the slave mother, as her child is heartlessly torn from her bosom, and sold to that most brutal and cruel of tyrants, the slave driver. Then turn and listen to the teaching of the Junkins, the Rices, the Springs, as they stand forth in sacred garb proclaiming that slavery is not inconsistent with Christian character—that Christ and his apostles did not condemn slavery—that there is nothing in the gospel which, fairly interpreted, would exclude slaveholders from the communion of the church. Listen, first to the one, and then to the other, and you must exclaim with the poet:—

“Just God! O what must be thy look,
When such a man before thee stands,
Unblushing with thy sacred book,
Turning its leaves with haughty hands,
To wring from out its text sublime,
This creed of blood, and hate, and crime!”

If ever fallen spirits of darkness are jubilant, it is when the ministers of the gospel—who stand forth in the name of Jesus to teach the revelation of the holy God, the gospel of the Prince of Peace, the precepts of the Father of Mercies—sanction a system that snaps asunder the bonds of natural brotherhood, devotes man as a sacrifice to be offered on the altar of Mammon—

“Dooms and devotes him as lawful prey,
Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat
With stripes, that Mercy, with a bleeding heart,
Weeps when she sees inflicted on a beast.”

Let us, then, be stimulated to labour for the overthrow of this system of iniquity and blood. The love which every one should have for the land of his birth, or adoption, should prompt to this. It is a crime that will bring down the terrible retribution of Heaven on the land. Did God devote Israel of old, for this sin, to the sword, pestilence, and famine? Did he waste Egypt with plague after plague, and make Tyre a perpetual desolation? And shall this nation, not merely following in these footsteps, but far surpassing them in violence, cruelty, and blood, escape? “When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them; he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.” Then let every patriot, every lover of his country, call upon the oppressor to “break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.”

Slavery is exposing this country to reproach among the nations of the earth. Does not the true American blush when England’s poet sings—

“United States, your banner wears
Two emblems—one of fame;
Alas! the other that it bears
Reminds us of your shame.

Your standard's constellation types
 White freedom by its stars,
 But what's the meaning of the stripes?
 They mean your negroes' scars."

Until this foul stain is wiped from the national escutcheon, until the freemen of this nation divorce themselves from this gigantic system of wrong, oppression, and cruelty, they must be silent in regard to the despotisms of the old world.

"O, shall we scoff at Europe's kings
 While freedom's fire is dim with us,
 And round our country's altar clings
 The damning shade of slavery's curse?"

Labour, then, to overthrow this system of oppression and tyranny, unsurpassed by European or Asiatic despotism, that we may consistently stand forth and invite the oppressed of all lands to our shores, to the home of the free and the asylum of the oppressed.

Let the friends of liberty be encouraged. You are sure of success and victory. Your cause is the cause of humanity—the cause of righteousness, the cause of God and his Christ. The law of God is on your side, and you must therefore prevail, for he will vindicate the honour of his violated law. If God be for you, who can be against you? His hand is mighty in battle. How encouraging, then, his declaration, "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, and set him in safety from him that puffeth at him." There is also encouragement in the signs of the times. The hosts of freedom are rapidly augmenting. Day after day the ranks are swelling; and the streaming white banner borne aloft by the leaders of freedom's hosts is floating on the breeze, and on its gorgeous folds is emblazoned LIBERTY TO THE OPPRESSED. The old political parties that have so long pandered to the oppression are dissolving and crumbling, as if smitten by the stone cut out of the mountains without hands. The minions of oppression are trembling, their leaders are quailing, and liberty, which has been immolated on her own altars, or buried by traitorous hands beneath the thrones of despotism, is about to burst the cerements of the tomb, and stand forth in regenerated life, and vigour, and glory. The human heart in every clime throbs in unison with the noble impulse that animates the friend of the slave—the foe of the oppressor. When the great Magyar chief uttered his voice against Austrian despotism, the thunder tones of his eloquence reverberated throughout commoved and sympathizing nations. A lone man, John Brown, of immortal memory, lifts his arm in behalf of the slave, and their conscience-stricken oppressors quail at his presence. He dies as a hero and a martyr, and a cord is touched which vibrates from east to west, and from west to east; one mighty wave of sympathy with the sufferer, and his cause rolls over the land; one vehement burst of indignation breaks from the heart and lips of many a noble spirit, and prayers are now on record in the court of Heaven—"How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge his blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Blessed augury! It indicates the dawning of a better day—a day of liberty to the oppressed, of love and good-will to man—a day when the jubilee trumpet shall sound; and as its gladdening notes swell on the breeze, we shall hear the proclamation of "Liberty throughout all the land to all the inhabitants thereof!"