

THE
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA,
No. LXXV.
AND
BIBLICAL REPOSITORY
No. CXXVII.

JULY, 1862.

ARTICLE I.

CHURCH-BOOK OF THE PURITANS AT GENEVA,
FROM 1555 TO 1560.¹

(PRESERVED IN THE ARCHIVES OF THE HOTEL DE VILLE, GENEVA.)

BY HORATIO B. HACKETT, PROFESSOR AT NEWTON.

WHO THE REFUGEES WERE.

THE existence of this document became known to the writer during a recent visit to Geneva, in the course of some investigations relating to the translation of the Scriptures into English known as the Genevan Version, and prepared under the auspices of the English refugees in that city, in

¹ This title may not be so exact, historically, as 'Notice of the English Colony'; but it may be sufficiently exact, even as characterizing the religious position of this class of men, and is adopted as more suggestive of the aspect of the document which sets forth its special claim to attention among us. This English Church at Geneva, according to Fuller, almost a contemporary historian, took stronger ground against traditions and ceremonies than any of the exiles who fled to the continent on account of their opposition to Romanism.

² Les persécutions d'Angleterre contre l'Evangile faisoient, de ce temps, venir beaucoup d'Anglois à Genève, qui y dressèrent Eglise pour leur nation, vivans paisiblement et en bonne conversation. — (Chronique de Michel Roset, Livre V. Chap. 71. Ms. des Archives.)

Gower. Now please you wit
The epitaph is for Marina writ. — *Peric.* iv. 4.

Demetrius. But, my good Lord, I *wot* not by what power
(But by some power it is) my love to Hermia
Melted, as doth the snow. — *Mids. Night's Dream*, iv. 1.

WORSHIP, respect. (δόξα.)

Have *worship* in the presence of them that sit at meat. — *Luke* xiv. 10.

Gloster. Was it not she and that good man of *worship*,
. . . . That made him send Lord Hastings to the tower.
Rich. III. i. 1.

ARTICLE IV.

THE BIBLE AND SLAVERY.

BY PROF. E. P. BARROWS, ANDOVER, MASS.

To charge all the sophistry with which the world abounds to the conscious design of deceiving men would be uncandid. The largest part of the false reasoning by which men practice imposition upon themselves and others, is probably more or less unconscious. They first adopt an opinion under the influence of prejudice or passion, and then set themselves at work to find arguments for its support. The opinion is not the result of the arguments, nor is it sustained by them; but the arguments were invented to adorn the opinion and give it a decent show of truth, and it is the opinion which sustains them. Some years ago, the people of a certain village in Ohio erected a neat house of worship. The front was adorned with a row of pilasters adhering to its body, which certainly added to its architectural beauty, and were designed to have the appearance of supporting it. But winter coming on before the pedestals of these pilasters could be placed under them, they were left till the ensuing summer hanging to the front of the house with nothing but empty air for their support, whereby their true office — to *seem*, not to *be* — was at once made manifest. In due time

the pedestals were nicely adjusted, as hollow as the pilasters which they seemed to support, and on which, in turn, the front of the building seemed to rest. There they were, an admirable representation of a vast amount of the arguments current in this world of vain show. They are not the grounds of the opinions which they seem to support, but they are appended to the front of them to give them an appearance of truth.

We are very far from denying that an opinion taken upon trust, without argument, may be true, and therefore capable of being afterwards supported by valid reasons. Children must receive their opinions at the outset mainly on the authority of their parents and teachers; and even in mature years a large part of our beliefs must continue to rest on the foundation of faith. This is a great law of God's moral government. Like every other general law, it is subject to much abuse in our crooked and perverse world; yet its influence is, upon the whole, highly beneficent. But, as already intimated, we have now to do with *sophistical* arguments, invented to give a show of truth to untenable positions. To classify and describe the numerous shapes which false reasoning assumes, is no part of our present design. We simply remark that one of its most common forms — and a form, too, that has been abundantly employed in the controversy concerning American slavery — consists in an evasion, whether conscious or unconscious, of the true point at issue by the confusion of things that differ essentially in their nature. Thus, it has been argued that, since the authority which God has delegated to parents over their children is absolute, there cannot be in the possession and exercise of such authority, anything in itself wrong; and, therefore, that slavery is not intrinsically a wrong institution — an argument which rests on the false assumption that absolute authority is the essence of the relation held by the master towards his slave. Again, it was a well-known usage of antiquity, nowhere disapproved of in the holy scriptures, that the bridegroom should pay for his bride a stipulated sum to the father or brothers.

Hence it has been maintained that to buy a human being cannot be anything in itself wrong or sinful; as if the vital question were not *into what relation* the so-called act of purchase brings the person purchased; whether that of a lawful wife, with the divinely sanctioned rights and privileges of a wife, or that of an article of merchandise, to be used according to the arbitrary pleasure of the owner, and sold again at his option. Once more, it is one of the most certain laws of human society that where a weaker race coexists in intimate relation with a stronger race, the former must come naturally into a state of dependence upon the latter, like that of India upon Great Britain, or the North American tribes upon the United States. From this the very illogical inference has been drawn that the normal condition of the African, as one of the weaker races, is that of servitude to the stronger Japhetic race; as if the relation of India to Great Britain, or of the aboriginal tribes of North America to the United States were that of slavery; or, as if the essence of slavery were that of the dependence of the weaker upon the stronger.

In all the above-named arguments, and many others of a kindred character, the essential nature of slavery is kept out of view. This is nothing more nor less than *the conversion of human beings into articles of merchandise*. To know what slavery is as an institution, we must go to the statutes of the slave-states, where it is defined in the clearest and most express terms.

“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, his labor; he can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire anything but which must belong to his master.”¹

“Slaves shall be deemed, taken, reputed, and adjudged to be chattels personal in the hands of their masters and possessors, to all intents and purposes whatsoever.”²

These definitions are explicit enough, and they settle at once the nature of American slavery. It consists in con-

¹ Louisiana Code, Art. 3.

² Laws of South Carolina, — Brevard's Digest, 229.

verting men and women into *property*, in the literal sense of the word — as literal as the nature of the case admits; for it makes them “chattels personal in the hands of their masters and possessors, to all intents and purposes whatsoever.” See how deliberately the slave-codes, while they cannot make the slave anything else than an immortal being, made in God’s image, yet proceed to strip him of all his rights as a man. He is not only “in the power of a master,” as a minor or apprentice may be, but he belongs to him as his property. He has no right to his own industry or labor; for the master may dispose of these for his own interest. He has no right to himself; for the master may sell him at pleasure. In a word, he has no right of any kind; for “he can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire anything but which must belong to his master.” He is an article of merchandise, to be bought, sold, and used, not for his own good, but for the profit or convenience of his master. *This*, and nothing else but this, is the essence of American slavery.

But it may be said: “True, this is American slavery abstractly and theoretically considered; but in actual practice the system is something widely different. In other words, the masters do not avail themselves of all the tremendous powers conferred upon them by the slave-code. To this it is obvious to reply: *first*, that, even were the assertion universally true, it would still be proper to judge of slavery from its laws. Suppose, for example, that a statute were to be made in Massachusetts, releasing every citizen from all his existing debts. It would be a poor apology for such a law to say that it was only a dead-letter, the citizens being too honest to avail themselves of its provisions. Men would justly reply: The statute is infamous, because it *empowers* men to be dishonest. So the slave-codes must be pronounced infamous, because they authorize one part of the community to hold another part as articles of merchandise; and that, too, without regard to the question how far men avail themselves of its provisions.

But, *secondly*, the provisions of the slave-code are not intended to be, and are not in practice, a dead letter. Every

man is empowered to use them, and some do use, them to their full extent. Most cheerfully do we admit that, among the masters, many are just and merciful, and would reject with abhorrence the idea of using all the prerogatives conferred upon them by the slave-laws. But then there are other masters of an opposite character, and these laws sustain them in their selfishness and unmerciful severity, so long as they do not transcend the letter of the statutes. Thus it happens that slaveholders of all grades of character live together in the same community, all enjoying alike the protection of the state. Here, for example, there lives, on one side of the street, a family where the slaves are well fed and clothed, allowed the rest of the sabbath, and carefully instructed in the Christian religion; and where, too, the relations of parent and child, as well as husband and wife, are sacredly recognized. On the other side of the street lives one belonging to the meanest of all classes of slaveholders — a negro-grower. He raises slaves, as the farmer does horses and cattle, for the market. He makes his money by selling the children of his female slaves, though some of them should chance to be his own offspring. A little way off is the pen of a professional slave-trader, whose business is to make merchandise of human beings. What if the slave-grower and the slave-trader be, to all good men, objects of abhorrence: the law declares their nefarious business lawful, and protects them in the exercise of it. Does it not say that “a slave is one who is in the power of a master, to whom he belongs;” that “the master may sell him, dispose of his person, his industry, his labor;” that “slaves shall be deemed, taken, reputed, and adjudged to be chattels personal in the hands of their masters and possessors, to all intents and purposes whatsoever?” What are these men doing but carrying out the provisions of the law? It was made for the especial benefit of such miscreants, and it compels all the good and merciful in the community to uphold them, and, if need be, fight for them. Well do we remember how, in the days of boyhood, we often had occasion to pass by the pen of a celebrated slave-trader, with its accompaniment

of sturdy mastiffs. It lay in what was then the border of a large southern city. To the general abhorrence which the community felt for him and his traffic in human flesh, we can testify. The common remark of the boys, when they saw him on the streets, was: "There goes old W k." "Old W k" was, with us, at that day, a near synonym for Satan. Yet the whole power of the state was pledged to uphold him in his business; for its statutes made it, and to this day make it, a legitimate business. Had necessity required, every man in the community might have been summoned to defend his slave-pen at the hazard of his own life.

Such is the essential nature of American slavery.¹ It converts a large class of the community into articles of merchandise, and compels the just and good, who scorn to avail themselves of the monstrous prerogatives conferred upon them by the slave-code, to uphold the selfish and hard-hearted, whom no scruples of conscience deter from making themselves rich by using these prerogatives to their full extent. Thus it offers a high premium to rascality. We come, now, to examine this institution in the light of revelation.

¹ When one proposes to defend the institution of slavery, "not as it exists in this country, or as it ever existed anywhere, on the whole"; admitting great abuses, but affirming that these are "not reasons for subverting foundations laid by the providence of God, but for building upon them a superstructure more conformable to his will, and more subservient to his designs" (see a Northern Presbyterian's Second Letter, pp. 10, 11), we understand him as assuming that the institution in its principle, aside from all separable accidents, has God's sanction. This is undoubtedly the true method of investigating any institution. We wish it understood, however, that we have to do with an actual, not with an ideal, system. We propose to discuss *American slavery as it is*; not as it is in the hands of very good or very bad men, but as it is in principle. Passing by all minor points, we shall examine the fundamental provisions of the slave codes — those provisions which are either inseparable from the very idea of the system, or which grow out of it so naturally and certainly, that they have never been in fact separated from it, and may properly be regarded as integral parts of it. And the conclusion at which we shall arrive is, that slavery is not simply abused by bad men, as are good institutions, but that it is itself an abuse, like polygamy and divorce, and standing in a common relation with them to the divine sanction.

Respecting any organic arrangement in human society, but two positions can be taken; first, that it is a *normal arrangement*; secondly, that it is an *abuse*. If it be decided that it is an abuse, the further question arises: What is the attitude of God's word in relation to it?

A *normal institution*, then, is one that is in harmony with the constitution and circumstances of the human race, and, therefore, adapted to meet and satisfy its wants. Examples of such institutions are the sabbath, marriage and the family, and civil government — civil government we here mean in its essence, without respect to its particular outward forms. All these are ordinances of God, and have their foundation in the unchangeable wants of man as man, and are therefore in place everywhere and in all ages. It is no objection to say that they have been and are shamefully perverted by human wickedness, and thus turned, in particular instances, into curses instead of blessings. Whole volumes might be filled, no doubt, with examples of the cruel abuse, on the part of husbands, of the power conferred upon them by the marriage relation, whereby the companions to whom they ought to have been a solace and support, have been compelled to drag out a miserable existence. Other volumes might be filled with cases in which wives have, by their misconduct, embittered the lives of the husbands to whose comfort they were appointed to minister. But here the evil arises, not from the intrinsic nature and tendency of the marriage relation, but from the perverseness of one or both of the parties. It still remains true that marriage is adapted to the wants of man as man, and that its legitimate tendency is to promote human virtue and happiness. Whatever evils are incident, through human depravity, to its existence, it is still an unspeakable blessing to the race; nay more, it constitutes the very foundation of social purity and virtue. We need not wonder, therefore, that God who instituted it has hedged around its sanctity by one precept of the decalogue; as he has the relation of parents and children, which grows immediately out of this institution, by another.

The same line of argument might be pursued with regard to civil government. Some forms of government are undoubtedly better than others, because better adapted to man's complex nature, and the scale of his progress in religion, morality, and general intelligence. But under every form that has yet been devised, immense evils have existed, and will continue to exist till the masses shall become righteous in their individual character. Nevertheless, civil government is, in its proper design and tendency, beneficent. Its very end is the administration of justice to all, and the protection of all in their persons and estates. Like marriage, it is an indispensable want of man as man, and therefore it must be maintained. The worst form of government is better than anarchy, and will be gladly accepted instead of it, as abundant experience proves.

An *abuse*, that is, an organic abuse, embodying itself in a system, is, on the contrary, at war with the constitution of man and the circumstances in which God has placed him. Its proper tendency, therefore, is to evil.¹ It is in its

¹ Mr. Ross, in his work on slavery, denounces the idea "that right and wrong are eternal facts," — we should say *principles*, — which "exist *per se* in the nature of things," as atheism; and appends to it the monstrous inference that, if this be so, God "must study, to know them, as really as man"; and that "he comprehends them more clearly than man, only because he is a better student than man." According to him, "right and wrong are results brought into being, mere contingencies, means to good, made to exist solely by the will of God, expressed by his word; or, when his will is not thus known, he shows it in the human reason by which he rules the natural heart" (pp. 39–41). This theory, that right and wrong are pure creations of God's will, is liable to some objections which Mr. Ross might find it hard to dispose of. After Dr. Ross's example, we "begin at the beginning of eternity." If the universe is not eternal, God must once have existed alone, as it is written: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God." If, now, a world of intelligent moral beings was to be created, MUST he not have proceeded according to certain immutable principles — immutable because they were essentially and eternally right? Must he not, for example, have made benevolence, as opposed to malevolence, his own law of action, and imposed it on them as their law of action? Could he by any nude act of will have made malevolence right, and benevolence wrong? We need not place this principle outside of God's being. One may, if he will, call it a part of his being. The essential thing is that it is eternal and unchangeable. We can no more conceive of God's making or un-

regular operation adapted to increase human wickedness and misery. In particular cases, its evils may be almost wholly abated by the personal excellence of those involved in it ; but it remains no less true that the system is in itself evil, and that wherever it prevails, it will sow broadcast

making it, than of his making or unmaking his self-existence, eternity, omnipotence, or omniscience. Once more, Dr. Ross defines sin to be *self-will*. " I, the creature, will not submit to *thy WILL*, God, the Creator. It is the I AM, *created*, who dares to defy and dishonor the I AM, not created—the Lord God, the Almighty, Holy, Eternal" (p. 42). Very well. We ask, now, MUST not this too, have been an immutable principle in the creation of any world of moral intelligences that God's will should be their supreme law of action ? Is it right that the creature's will should be ruled by the Creator's because God has willed it ; or has God willed it because it is right—eternally and immutably right ?

But we need not thus go back to "the beginning of eternity." God *has created us a race of moral intelligences, endowed us with a certain nature, and placed us in certain relations and circumstances. MUST he not now govern us in harmony with this nature and these circumstances ? Will any one pretend that it is in itself indifferent what course of conduct he prescribes to us, on the ground that it is his prerogative to make and unmake right ? Does God, for example, make gluttony and drunkenness, pride and envy, wrong simply by forbidding them, or does he forbid them because they are at war with the nature he has given us, and our relations to him and to each other ? Plainly the latter. But here there is a threefold distinction which it is important to observe : First, There may be purely positive ordinances forbidding things not in themselves wrong, or, as far as human reason can see, injurious. This is entirely in accordance with man's nature and relations. He is made for unlimited faith, love, and obedience towards God ; and God may choose to test him in these respects, as he did our first parents, and afterwards Abraham, by a command without an annexed reason. Such cases, however, are exceptional, and do not constitute the general rule. Secondly, There may be things so immediately and obviously opposed to man's nature and relations that they must be always forbidden. Such are idolatry, which strikes directly at God's authority ; and adultery, which strikes directly at one of the most sacred of human rights. These things are properly the *mala per se*. Thirdly, There may be practices not in harmony with man's nature and relations, and therefore in their proper tendency productive of evil and misery, yet not so directly and visibly wrong but that good men may, in some circumstances, be involved in them, especially when they have been educated under them. Such were, under the Mosaic economy, polygamy and the power of divorce on the part of the husband. God's tolerance of them made them outwardly and formally right, that is, not contrary to his command. But they did not for this reason cease to be great moral and social evils. While, now, we hold God's will, expressed in his word, to be a supreme rule of right, we hold also—what we understand Dr. Ross too to hold—that he has given us reason that we may exercise it in learning his will as expressed in the nature he has given us, and the relations and circumstances in which he has placed us.*

through the community the seeds of vice and misery. As examples of such evil arrangements we specify *polygamy*, and the *power of divorce* on the part of the husband. It is undeniable that these are both abuses, though both were *tolerated* under the Mosaic economy, and their evils mitigated, to some extent, by divine legislation. "Moses," says the Saviour, "because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so."¹ "For the hardness of your heart, he wrote you this precept; but from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What, therefore, God has joined together, let not man put asunder."² "From the beginning it was not so." God himself appointed the ordinance of marriage at the beginning as a permanent union between the man and the woman. So the Saviour argues at some length. He did not then nullify the intention of the ordinance by giving to either party the right of divorce at will. But in the days of Moses, men had departed from the primitive idea of marriage. Moses found the custom of divorce sanctioned by long usage; and he suffered it for the time being, because of the hardness of men's hearts. They had not yet arrived at such a stage of moral culture and illumination as made it expedient absolutely to forbid the practice, as it was afterwards forbidden by Christ himself upon the introduction of the gospel. The above-quoted passages are of great importance, as showing that the fact of God's leaving a system already in existence without abrogating it, does not prove either that it is not an evil, or that it is always to be tolerated. The practice of divorce was an abuse having its origin in no divine appointment, — God never appoints abuses, — but suffered by Moses under his direction, because of the hardness of men's hearts, till in the fulness of time Christ should do it away.

¹ Matt. xix. 8.² Mark x. 5-9.

With regard to polygamy it is a noticeable fact that, though it was tolerated under the Mosaic dispensation, and made the subject of various regulations, it is nowhere forbidden in the New Testament, and is condemned only in an indirect way.¹ The ground of this silence probably is, that the practice had been already rejected by religious persons, so that there was no need of any express precept on the subject. But, however this may be, the fact is very significant, and we shall have occasion to refer to it again in the course of the present discussion.

We come now to the question : " Is American slavery a *normal institution*, or an *abuse* ? — a question which the men of a former generation, both North and South, regarded as so thoroughly settled that he who should have seriously attempted to reopen, it would have been remanded to the physician for a draught of hellebore. But inasmuch as it has been reopened by the modern abettors of slavery, and advocated from the sacred desk, it becomes necessary to consider it anew. Here let it be remembered, once more, that we have to do with American slavery as it is defined by the slave-codes. In the light of revelation we are to examine the legal character which these codes give to slaves, and the legal powers which they confer on slaveholders. In some respects it would be most convenient, as well as the most natural order of investigation, to consider first the intrinsic character of American slavery as compared with the principles of God's word, and then the attitude of the Bible in regard to it. But since the divine sanction of slavery is alleged as a bar to all human reasonings on the subject, we prefer to invert the order of inquiry. If we can first show that the divine sanction claimed for slavery is only the sufferance of the system, as of other usages which are

¹ As in our Saviour's argument : " They twain shall be one flesh," etc. ; and that of Paul, Eph. v. 25 - 33, where he compares the union of Christ with his one church to that of the husband with his one wife. Still more explicit are his words, 1 Cor. vii. 2 : " Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband," where monogamy is assumed as equally the law for both parties. The passages 1 Tim. iii. 2, 12 ; Titus i. 6, are of doubtful meaning. Compare 1 Tim. v. 9.

acknowledged to have been abuses, then the way will be prepared to try the institution in its principles by the standard of revelation. If it cannot endure this test, it must be classed with abuses, not with normal institutions. We will consider, then, —

I. *The Attitude of the Bible in regard to Servitude.*

Here it would be pertinent to remark that, if the American slaveholder will appeal to Hebrew servitude, he must, in accordance with the principles of the gospel, take for his rule the laws prescribed for the treatment of Hebrew servants. The Mosaic economy made a sharp distinction between the covenant people of God and those of every other nation, conferring upon the former, in many ways, prerogatives over the latter. In accordance with this principle, the rights of Hebrew servants were carefully guarded, and they could not be reduced, at least without their own consent, to perpetual servitude.¹ But the gospel is the full realization of the idea that God “hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.”² It teaches us to regard the whole human family as one brotherhood, for whom the one atonement of the gospel has been provided, and who are entitled to be dealt with according to the one law of Christian love. The whole spirit of Christianity is beautifully embodied in our Lord’s parable of the good Samaritan, in answer to the question: “Who is my neighbor?” Certainly the treatment which servants are entitled to receive under the Christian dispensation, from masters calling themselves Christians, ought not to be more severe than that prescribed for Hebrew servants from their Hebrew masters.³ But on this point we will not insist. With respect to the scriptural treatment of servitude, we shall maintain the following positions:

1. *Hebrew servitude did not have its origin in any divine*

¹ See this whole subject discussed in the January number of the *Bibliotheca* for the present year, under the head of Saalschütz on Hebrew Servitude.

² Acts xvii. 26.

³ See our remarks on this point in the Article above referred to, pp. 71, 72

ordinance, and it is not sanctioned, in the Old Testament, in any other sense than that of being tolerated and regulated, as are polygamy and the power of divorce. The first part of this proposition needs no lengthened discussion. It will not be pretended by any well-informed man that servitude originated with Moses or with Abraham. When Abraham bought servants with money, he acted in accordance with a usage which he found already in existence. The origin of slavery is lost in the mists of antiquity. To say that it had its beginning in a divine ordinance, as did the normal institutions of marriage and the sabbath, is to affirm what cannot be maintained by a particle of evidence. No. Slavery, like polygamy, had its origin in human selfishness. Very likely it originated in the land of Nod, in the family of Cain, where we first hear of a man that had two wives.¹

But no matter, say the abettors of slavery, it is sanctioned in the Old Testament, and that is enough. We are not disposed to quibble about a word. We should prefer to restrict the term *sanction* to institutions positively ordained and commanded by God. But if men will apply it to Hebrew servitude, — a widely different thing from American slavery, as we shall show in the proper place, — then we go behind the sound of the word, and inquire what it must mean in the present case. It can mean only that he *suffered* it and *regulated* it by specific enactments. No man in his senses will seriously pretend that he *commanded* or even *encouraged* it.² If a practice, whether in its nature salutary

¹ Gen. iv. 19.

² We say "seriously pretend," for Dr. Ross, in the record he has given us of his speech on the subject of slavery before the General Assembly at New York, after a solemn protest "against having a Doctor-of-Divinity *priest*, Hebrew or Greek, to tell the people what God has spoken on the subject of slavery or any other subject" (pp. 59, 60), has made out a sham argument, apparently for the benefit of the people "up there in the gallery," whom he addresses on p. 58. It turns on the use of the English auxiliary, *shall*, in Lev. xxv. 44-46:—"Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids," etc.; on which he comments thus: "Sir, I do not see how God could tell us more plainly that he did command his people to buy slaves of the heathen round about them," etc. (p. 63). No wonder that the Doctor has a horror of

or hurtful, was to be allowed under the old economy, of course it must be regulated. This is precisely what is done in regard to *divorce* and *polygamy*. In Deut. xxiv. 1—4 we read: "When a man hath taken a wife and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her, then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it into her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; her former husband which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled," etc. That the words rendered "some uncleanness," or, as they are more literally given in the margin, "matter of nakedness,"¹ do not refer to fornication or adultery, but (as in Deut. xxiii. 14, where the same words occur in the original), to something about her person offensive to her husband, in respect to which he was to be the sole judge, is manifest from the fact that the Mosaic law punished with death adultery or concealed defilement before the consummation of the marriage relation;² but especially from the fact that,

Hebrew, when any person, north or south of Mason and Dixon's line, who was moderately versed in the language, could tell him that, so far as the grammatical form is concerned, the word rendered "shall ye buy" might be equally well rendered *may ye buy*, and that *always* in the Hebrew the choice between the two modes of rendering is to be determined by the context. But since the author cries out: "Don't run into the Hebrew" (p. 61), we will test his argument by "King James's English Bible," though we have always understood that this too was the work of "Doctor-of-Divinity priests in Hebrew and Greek." In Deut. xxi. 10—14, we read: "When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the Lord thy God hath delivered them into thy hands, and thou hast taken them captive, and seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her that thou wouldest have her to thy wife; then thou shalt bring her home to thine house, and she shall shave her head," etc., "and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife," etc. Dr. Ross knows, because he is not destitute of common sense, that this is simply permission; and so it is in the other case.

¹ Heb. Here and in Deut. xxiii. 15 (Eng. version, xxiii. 14), גְּרִיזוֹת נְדָבָר, *nakedness of a matter*.

² Deut. xxii. 13—21.

while our Lord allows fornication as a valid ground of divorce, he disallows the Mosaic precept as not in harmony with the true idea of marriage, but given because of the hardness of men's hearts.¹ Here, then, we have very specific regulations in respect to a custom which, our Lord himself being judge, was an *abuse* fraught with evil to society. One may say, if he will insist on the term, that the Mosaic law *sanctioned* the right of divorce, — that is, divorce according to the arbitrary judgment of the husband, — but when we go behind the sound of the word to its sense, we find it to mean that God *suffered it by reason of the hardness of men's hearts.*

Equally explicit is the regulation concerning *polygamy* or rather *bigamy*. "If a man have two wives, one beloved and another hated, and they have borne him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the first-born son be hers that was hated; then it shall be when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved first-born, before the son of the hated which is indeed the first-born. But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated, for the first-born, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath; for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the first-born is his."² See how exactly the form of the precept agrees with those concerning servitude: "If a man have two wives;" "If thou buy an Hebrew servant;"³ "If thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee."⁴ There is another precept, equally explicit, given in the same hypothetical form: "If he take him another wife," in addition to the maid-servant

¹ Between the rabbinical schools of Hillel and Shammai, was a dispute concerning the right of divorce; the former maintaining, from Deut. xxiv. 1, that it might take place according to the arbitrary decision of the husband, the latter restricting it to the case of adultery. In his answer, our Lord virtually concedes the true interpretation of the Mosaic precept, for substance at least, to the school of Hillel, but gives the right of the question to the school of Shammai, on the ground that they held the true view of the marriage relation, as originally ordained of God. "He answered them that this was done by Moses on account of their hardness and sinfulness, as a lesser of evils, and belonged to that dispensation which *παρεσιγήλαθεν*." — Alford on Matt. xix. 5.

² Deut. xxi. 15-17.

³ Ex. xxi. 2.

⁴ Lev. xxv. 13.

whom he has betrothed, "her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage shall he not diminish."¹ "Her duty of marriage" (Heb. נְדָוָה) is her right to conjugal cohabitation with him. "There, sir," exclaims Dr. Ross, after quoting the above passage with its context, "God sanctioned the Israelite father in selling his daughter, and the Israelite man to buy her, into slavery and into polygamy. And it was then right because God made it right."² Undoubtedly it was right in the sense that God allowed it. But he allowed it as an abuse of the primitive institution of marriage; and the ground of his allowance was the hardness of men's hearts. This is all the sanction that can be claimed for it. Dr. Ross says: "I never yet produced this Bible in its plain, unanswerable authority for the relation of master and slave, but the anti-slavery man ran away into the fog of *his* Hebrew or Greek, or he jabbered the nonsense that God permitted the *sin* of slave-holding among the Jews, but that he don't do it now! Sir, God sanctioned slavery then, and sanctions it now. He made it right, they know, then and now."³ The jabbering of nonsense, which he imputes to anti-slavery men, is something of his own manufacture. There may be, in the world, for anything that we can tell, men foolish and illogical enough to affirm that God "permitted *sin*," among the Jews. But this is not the position of anti-slavery men. They affirm that God suffered, for the hardness of men's hearts, practices which were, in their nature, *abuses* fraught with evil; and that he did so, Dr. Ross must admit, or deny the Saviour's authority, and hold, moreover, not only slavery but polygamy and the arbitrary power of divorce, to be customs in themselves good, and in harmony with man's nature and relations. So far as the Old Testament is concerned, God sanctioned polygamy as fully as he did slavery; and if the former is admitted to have been a great abuse, why not the latter? By Dr. Ross's concession, the Jewish law of polygamy was never repealed, and "Christ and his apostles do not declare polygamy to be a sin."⁴ True, he introduces from the New

¹ Ex. xxi. 10.² Ross on Slavery, p. 62.³ *Ib.* p. 60.⁴ *Ib.* p. 45.

Testament an *inferential* argument against polygamy, which, however, is, on exegetical grounds, very doubtful. This we will consider in the proper place. But we prefer to consider one thing at a time. We have now to do with the argument from the Mosaic institutions. We say, then, that the fact that a usage was allowed — or, if one choose, “sanctioned” — under these institutions, and was never afterwards prohibited by any divine declaration, cannot be in itself any warrant for our following it. The permission given, Deut. xxi. 10–14, to the victorious Hebrew to take, by his own arbitrary will, a beautiful woman from among the female captives to be his wife, was never repealed. So far, therefore, as the argument from *express precept* is concerned, “God sanctioned it *then*, and he sanctions it *now*.” It follows, that it remains the rule for modern warfare! Here is plainly a case where “the letter killeth.” We must rise above this, to the spirit and principles of God’s word. Then we shall have no trouble in showing the anti-scriptural nature of the usage. Just so must we do, also, if we would have a correct apprehension of American slavery.

That God should, for many successive centuries, have suffered usages which we now see to have been manifest abuses, may appear to some strange and inexplicable. But let them remember that his administration of the government of this world, ever since the apostasy of Adam, has been a *redemptive* and *remedial* system. Every such system must be progressively developed — “first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.” God took men as they were, gone astray from himself and enveloped in a night of ignorance, moral blindness, and error. In recovering them to holiness, he began, not by attempting to lift them up, at once, to that exalted grade of religious and civil culture which will, as we believe, be the glory of the coming millennial age. The fundamental principles of his government struck, from the beginning, at the root of every form of social as well as personal wrong. But he did not, at the outset, lay a prohibition upon every organic evil that human selfishness had introduced into society. He began

with the ten thunders of Sinai; but some abuses he suffered for the time being, not because his holy soul had any delight in them, but because this was the wisest and best course for their ultimate removal. Nor did this principle of progress cease with the introduction of Christianity. The gospel is, itself, perfect; but in its applications to human society, it must necessarily be progressive, as we shall have occasion to show more at length hereafter.

Thus far we have considered Jewish servitude; but for American slavery this is not the true standard of comparison. This brings us to our next position:

2. *The only system that can be properly compared with American slavery, is Greek and Roman slavery; and this the New Testament does not sanction in any proper sense of the word.* The proposition consists of two parts which we will consider in order.

We affirm, then, in the first place, that the true affinities of American slavery are with that of Greece and Rome, not with the ancient Hebrew servitude. Here let it be distinctly understood that we have to do primarily with the systems themselves, not with the character of individual masters under them. The proper tendency of every normal institution is to foster and strengthen all that is good in human nature. Yet in the hands of bad men it may be so perverted as to become the occasion of much wickedness and misery. Brutal husbands and fathers will treat their wives and children in a brutal manner, because they brought into the conjugal and parental relations a brutal spirit; not because these relations are adapted to engender or foster it. So, on the other hand, the evils of a vicious relation, like that of polygamy, may be, in individual cases, greatly mitigated by the good character of the parties entering into it. Yet it is in itself inherently evil; and wherever it prevails, its evils will manifest themselves on a broad scale. Its proper tendency is to degrade and abase the female sex, to destroy the comfort and peace of the domestic relation, to prevent the proper education of children, and to work mischief in many other ways. When it produces these pernicious results,

it does so by its own proper tendency ; nor does it confer upon society any benefits that can counterbalance the enormous evils to which it gives rise. How strange, now, would it seem, if some denizen of Utah, in order to prove the excellence of polygamy, should adduce, on the one side, certain alleged cases of happy families under the rule of polygamy, and then should expatiate in glowing terms on the quarrels and miseries that abound under the system of monogamy! Yet this is what the abettors of American slavery are constantly doing. If they can name cases of happy and contented slaves, and of miserable and discontented free blacks,—although, for anything that they are able to show, it is the system of slavery itself that keeps down the colored man,—they think their cause made out. Now this is confounding all distinctions. It is virtually taking the ground that one arrangement of society is as good as another, or, rather, that all arrangements are in themselves indifferent. We can never arrive at the truth in this way. If we would form a correct judgment of any institution, we must look at it on the broad scale, carefully distinguishing between the good or evil that *exists in spite of it*, being due to counteracting influences, and that which is its proper result. Now we do not affirm that there are not in the Southern States many good masters who would compare well with the old Hebrew masters. Much less would we deny to them, as a body, the possession of kindness and humanity superior to that of heathen masters in Greece and Rome. If it were not so, it would be a poor compliment to the Christian religion, which many of them profess, and which has exerted, in some measure, a leavening influence upon society there, as elsewhere in Christendom. But it is with the different systems themselves that we have to do, in their intrinsic nature and proper results.

We say, then, that the true affinities of American slavery, as a system, are not with Hebrew servitude, but with the slavery of Greece and Rome. The condition of a Hebrew servant had little in common with that of a Southern slave.

True, he was bought with money, but here we must go behind the act of buying, and consider the relation into which he was bought. According to ancient usage wives were bought; that is, a consideration in the shape of property was given by the bridegroom to the father or brothers of his bride. But this did not convert her into an article of merchandise. It was not property given for property; but a consideration for the privilege of receiving her as his lawful wife, with all the rights and privileges of a wife. The poor Hebrew who was sold to a Hebrew or a resident foreigner, is never once called a servant. On the contrary, the purchaser is forbidden compelling him to serve as a bond-servant. His patrimony, though temporarily alienated, returns to him at the year of jubilee, and he resumes the use of it as a freeman.¹ When one buys a Hebrew servant, he remains with his master six years, and in the seventh goes out free for nothing, unless it be his choice to remain.² So when a man sells his daughter to be a maid-servant, it is with the understanding that her master shall betroth her to himself as a wife, or otherwise provide for her settlement in marriage. If he fail to do this, she is to go out free without money.³ In all the above regulations, the rights and interests of the servant are carefully provided for. To compare the relation of a master to his Hebrew man-servant or maid-servant under the Mosaic law with that of an American slaveholder to his slaves, is simply absurd.

With regard to servants of foreign origin, the enactments of the Mosaic law are fewer and less definite. The relation between them and their masters seems to have been left more to the usage of the age. For a full discussion of this subject the reader is referred to Saalschütz on Hebrew servitude.⁴ We will only here add that, in the Mosaic code, the rights of these foreign servants—their rights both corporeal and spiritual—are recognized and protected. If a man smote out the eye or the tooth of his servant or maid, he was compelled to let him go free for

¹ Lev. xxv. 39–43, 50–52.

² Ex. xxi. 2–6; Deut. xv. 12–18.

³ Ex. xxi. 7–11.

⁴ In the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for January last.

this mutilation.¹ Here the servant's rights as a human being are assumed. He does not live wholly for his master; he lives for himself also. Though in bondage, and compelled to do service at his master's discretion, he is yet a man, and his rights as a man are to be respected. It is for the *servant's* sake that he is set free, not for the master's sake. He has a right to the undamaged possession of all his members, and for the destruction of one of these, though it be but a tooth, his master must compensate him, as far as lies in his power, by giving him his liberty. In its spirit this precept covers all acts of cruelty by which the body is maimed or deformed, such as cropping, branding, and the like.

There is another regulation to which we will direct our attention. "If a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall surely be punished. Notwithstanding if he continue a day or two he shall not be punished; for he is his money."² This regulation plainly had reference to blows inflicted with a *rod* in the act of chastising a servant. The kind of instrument used afforded presumptive evidence that there was no intention of taking life. There is no ground for supposing that the murder of a slave with a deadly weapon, or the destruction of his life in any other way in such circumstances as afforded proof of an intention to kill was not punished with death. If the servant survived a day or two the master was not to be punished. The reason added is: "for he is his money." The meaning of these words is not that the master is to escape punishment because the servant, whose death he has caused, was an article of property, for the destruction of which punishment was not required (which would be in direct contradiction of the context); but rather that, being worth money to his master, it is to be presumed, in the absence of express evidence to the contrary, that there was no intention of killing him, while he suffers a penalty to a certain extent in the loss of the servant.

¹ Ex. xxi. 26, 27.

² Ex. xxi. 20, 21.

There was another case in which a distinction was made between the life of a servant and a free Israelite. If an ox that had been wont to push, gored the latter so that he died, his owner might be punished with death, or required to ransom his life by a sum of money. But if it was a man-servant or maid-servant that had been gored, a fine only was allowed.¹ But if the protection which the Mosaic code gave to the life of a servant was less in some respects than that given to a freeman, the punishment of a servant was less also, at least in one remarkable case. Whoever defiled a free woman betrothed to a husband, was with her to be put to death. But if she was a maid-servant, she and her corruptor were both to be scourged.²

If, now, we look to the religious privileges secured to servants by the Mosaic law, we shall find that they comprehended *all that were enjoyed by freemen*. This law did not simply *allow*, it *commanded*, that servants should have the full benefit of every religious ordinance under the theocracy. They were entitled to the rite of circumcision,³ and this not only brought to them the privilege of attending the great national festivals, but made it incumbent upon them to do so, as also to partake of the passover.⁴ Although the attendance of females was not made imperative, yet it was customary; and in the regulations concerning the feast of tabernacles both men-servants and maid-servants are mentioned. "And thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are among you, in the place which the Lord thy God hath chosen to put his name there."⁵ The rest of the sabbath was also secured to men-servants and maid-servants equally with their masters; and with this came in later ages the synagogue-worship, to the full

¹ Ex. xxi. 28-32.

² Lev. xix. 20-22.

³ See our remarks upon this point in the January number of the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for the present year, pp. 62-64.

⁴ Ex. xii. 44.

⁵ Deut. xxxi. 10-12.

privileges of which they were admitted. At the end of every seven years, "in the solemnity of the year of release," all the people were to be gathered together, "men, women, and children," with "the stranger," that the law of Moses might be read in their hearing. This, in an age when the art of printing was unknown, and when it was impossible that any but the most wealthy should possess copies of the law, was an inestimable privilege. In a word, there was no religious privilege enjoyed by a free-born Israelite which was not, by God's express appointment, secured also to the lowest of his servants.

Now contrast with all this the spirit and enactments of modern slave-codes. By these, at least in the majority of the slave states, to teach a slave to read or write is forbidden under heavy penalties; and thus the bible is made to him a sealed book, except so far as his master may see good to communicate to him its contents. How opposite is this to the spirit of the Mosaic law! Who but a slaveholder can doubt that, if the art of printing had been understood in Moses's day, and copies of the law accessible to all for a mere trifle, he would have required all, servants and handmaids included, to study it diligently? Who but a slaveholder, blinded by self-interest, will venture to defend those enactments which seal up to the colored man the written page of inspiration, on the ground that the ability to read, were it generally possessed by the slaves, would make them less valuable and less safe to their masters as personal chattels?

If, now, we compare American slavery with Greek and Roman servitude, we shall find, with some differences, a substantial agreement between the two systems. Greek and Roman slavery did not, like that of our Southern States, rest on the odious distinction of *race*. They neither knew nor cared anything about the modern doctrine, that the normal condition of the African is servitude to the white man. They had no scruples about making slaves of all classes, white or black, who had come into their power by the right of conquest, or in any other way conformable to

the usages of their times. Nor did they find it necessary to divest the slave, by formal enactments, of all the rights of manhood, and declare him to be a personal chattel in the hands of his master, "to all intents and purposes whatsoever." While the old Roman law jealously guarded men's rights as Roman citizens, it did not trouble itself about men's rights as men. *I am a Roman citizen* — these words were an effectual safeguard against scourging and examination by torture; but the plea: *I am a man*, would have been met in a Roman court only by laughter. It is the light shed by Christianity upon the dignity of human nature and man's inalienable rights as man, which has compelled the slave-codes to fence around the master's prerogatives by formal definitions declaring the slave to be a chattel personal, and as such formally divesting him of all rights. Still there is a substantial agreement between the two systems. The slaves of heathen Rome were, as a matter of course, regarded as the property of their masters, to be bought and sold like horses and mules; and there were large slave-marts in connection with this traffic in human flesh. In point of law, whatever a slave acquired belonged to his master, since he could hold no property, except by his master's consent. Nor could he be a legal witness to a testament, on the ground that he could not inherit by testament. Nor could any proper matrimony be contracted between slaves; but only that connection called *contubernium*, the continuance of which depended on the arbitrary will of the master, who could sell one party away from the other. In point of practice, the servile classes received almost no education in the proper sense of the word, though to this general rule there were remarkable exceptions. The masters enforced obedience, and punished disobedience by blows, scourgings, chains, and torture. Originally, the masters had the power of life and death, though this was afterwards abolished. "On the whole, we may regard the condition of the slaves in the later days of the Republic, and during the Empire previously to the reign of Constantine, as one of great hardship. Their lot

was dependent on the disposition of particular masters, not on the laws, nor on a humane and enlightened public opinion."¹

Assuming, now, the substantial agreement of American with Roman slavery, we proceed to show, in the next place, that the latter is not sanctioned in the New Testament in any proper sense of the word. The constitution of the Israelitish commonwealth being a theocracy, its different arrangements were matters of *direct divine legislation*. We have seen that God thus legislated on the subjects of divorce, polygamy, and female captives taken in war, as well as servitude, not forbidding the existing customs, but prescribing regulations concerning them; and that to infer from such legislation that he meant to sanction them as institutions in themselves in harmony with human nature and good in their proper tendency, would be unwarrantable, since it is conceded that the three former of these usages, at least, were *abuses* only suffered for the time being by reason of the hardness of men's hearts. But in the New Testament we find *not a word designed to regulate Roman slavery as an institution*. Roman slavery was not of divine, but of heathen origin. It breathed a heathen spirit, and was regulated upon heathen principles. As an institution, the writers of the New Testament said nothing about it, any more than about the despotism of imperial Rome. They simply recognized its existence, and laid down general precepts for the conduct of all who stood to each other in the relation of master and servant.² What, now, do these precepts prove? So far as they are addressed to the *servants*, they prove much for Christian instruction; but, as

¹ Writings of Prof. B. B. Edwards, with a Memoir, Vol. II. p. 97. To his three Articles on Slavery in Ancient Greece, Roman Slavery, and Slavery in the Middle Ages, the reader is referred for fuller information on the subject of ancient servitude.

² The term *δούλος*, *servant*, Eph. vi. 5; Col. iii. 22; iv. 1; Titus ii. 9, etc., though in itself generic (compare Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δούλος), is in common usage applied to Greek and Roman slaves, and is indeed the proper legal term for designating them. Its opposite is *ἐλεύθερος*, *free*. Compare 1 Cor. xii. 13 (εἶτε δούλοι, εἶτε ἐλεύθεροι); Rev. vi. 15; xiii. 16. The other term, *οἰκέτης*,

it regards the character of the system, they prove nothing at all. Many of the Christian slaves were subject to heathen masters. They were held to service by law and immemorial usage. Irrespectively of the character of the system, they were held to cheerful obedience by the higher law of Christ. A refractory and unfaithful spirit in them could not but have redounded to the dishonor of the gospel, and to their own spiritual ruin. They must be subject to their masters with all fear; "not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward."² They must count their own masters "worthy of all honor," that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And if any have believing masters, they must "not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit."² In dealing with servants, as with all persons in circumstances of outward depression and affliction, the apostle brings in that great fundamental principle of Christianity, that true peace and blessedness lie not so much in the external condition as in the internal state of mind. He acknowledges that freedom is a better condition than servitude; but would not have servants feel that they cannot have inward freedom and happiness in a condition of bondage, if such be the appointment of their heavenly master. "Art thou called, being a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest be free use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman; likewise also he that is

1 Pet. ii. 18, which properly means *one belonging to the house*, is (except in Herodotus, where the word is also used for *one's family, women and children*) applied to *house-slaves*. The designation of a *hired servant* is *μισθιος, μισθωτός*, never *δούλος*. The expression *ὑπὸ ζυγὸν δούλοι*, 1 Tim. vi. 1, cannot be understood of other than bond-servants. The correlative terms in the above-named passages are *κύριος, lord*, Ephes. vi. 5; Col. iii. 22; iv. 1; and *δεσπότης, master*, 1 Tim. vi. 1; Titus ii. 9; 1 Pet. ii. 18. Of these the latter (though sometimes used loosely in a more general sense) is the appropriate legal term for the master of slaves, and that by which his slaves address him. In classical Greek the word *κύριος* is not much used in the sense of *δεσπότης*. But in the Septuagint (where it represents the Hebrew *רַב־דָּבָר*, Latin *dominus*, equivalent to both *lord* and *master*), and consequently in the New Testament also, this use of the word is common.

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 18.

² 1 Tim. vi. 2.

called, being free, is Christ's servant."¹ But who does not see that this has nothing to do with the equity of slavery as a system?

But there are precepts for believing masters, also, which demand our careful consideration. In Eph. vi. 9 the apostle, after exhorting servants (vs. 5-8) to obey them that are their masters according to the flesh, "with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ, not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free," adds: "and ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening, knowing that your master also [or, as some manuscripts read, "the master of both you and them"] is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him." The words: "do the same things unto them," must refer to the *spirit* in which the servant is commanded to act, with good will and hearty sincerity, as one that serves Christ, and not men. This spirit is to be reciprocated by the master. In Col. iv. 1, after similar injunctions to servants, the apostle adds: "masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a master in heaven." These precepts undoubtedly recognize the relation of master and slave as an existing fact; and, so far as its outward legal form is concerned, they leave it untouched. To construe them as directions to manumit the servants, is simply impossible. The words: "forbearing threatening," imply, of course, that the servant is to remain under the authority of his master. To one who was sending out his servants free, there could be no occasion for such an admonition. In its outward legal form the apostles left the relation as they found it. The ground of this attitude, which the apostles took towards Grecian and Roman servitude, will be considered further on. At present we remark: first, that these precepts

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 21, 22.

no more prove that the institution of Roman slavery was not an abuse and a great evil, than do the precepts concerning polygamy that that was not an abuse. If one organic evil might be suffered by reason of the hardness of men's hearts, so might another. Secondly, that by the very terms of the precepts, the masters are restrained from the exercise of that absolute power which belongs to the very essence of slavery. In Greek and Roman, as in modern American slavery, the fundamental principle is *property in man* — property in the literal sense of the word. Slaves are considered as chattels in the hands of their masters, to be bought, sold, and used for their interest. They can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire anything but which must belong to their masters. From this it follows immediately that, if the institution itself is good and scriptural, the trade in slaves is good and scriptural also. Slave-markets belong as necessarily and as legitimately to slavery, as cattle-markets to the traffic in cattle. We are not speaking, let it be remembered, of any abuse, as kidnapping, which can be conceived of as extrinsic to the system itself, but of what belongs to its essence. We say, then, that if the precepts now under consideration, sanction Greek and Roman slavery as a system, — and, inferentially, American slavery also, — they sanction the traffic in human flesh and the means by which this traffic is facilitated. A believing master might then address the slaves in his pen — believers and unbelievers — thus: "The holy apostle has commanded masters to render to their servants that which is just and equal, behaving towards them with good will,¹ as the servants of Christ, who have also a master in heaven. In pursuance of these precepts, by which the institution of slavery is fully sanctioned, I now put you up on the block for sale to the highest bidder; for remember that, by the code of the system, you are chattels personal in my hands, to all intents and purposes whatsoever." The professional slave-trader might see, in this, nothing incongruous; but we are sure that the ma-

¹ Greek, μετ' εὐνοίας, with benevolence. The servants are to show this towards their masters, and the masters to "do the same to them."

majority of southern masters would reject it with horror as blasphemous; and we know that the apostle would have done the same. Neither from him, nor from any other writer of the New Testament, is there a word authorizing the buying and selling of servants as articles of merchandise, which is an essential part of the system of ancient Roman and modern American slavery.

Another principle of the system, growing indeed directly out of that which has been just considered, is the subordination of the domestic relations of husband and wife, parent and child, to the will of the master. Slaves are, in law, the property of their masters, and, as such, must not be subject to encumbrances beyond the control of the latter. If the interests of the owner require the sale of a father or a daughter, the fact that he is a husband, or she a child, must not be allowed to stand in the way of the transaction. Such is the institution, and such also is the usage of all who choose to carry it out according to its proper provisions.¹ But we know that the apostle would never have tolerated the disturbance of these divinely constituted relations. His precepts were not designed to sanction the system of Roman slavery, with all the despotic power which it confers upon the masters. Rather did he seek to bring into the outward legal relation the new law of Christian love. This would empty it, in a great measure, of its heathen contents, and finally destroy the system itself, as we know historically to have been the case in respect to the old institution of Grecian and Roman servitude. How vain, then, to adduce these precepts of Paul as a sanction for the heathen system of slavery as an institution in itself good and proper! With much more reason might one adduce the directions of Moses, that a man who had two wives should deal justly by each, as a proof that polygamy was, in itself, a good institution, walled around by the divine sanction, and not to be spoken against.

¹ In particular cases the slave-codes may limit the master's power over the domestic relations of his slaves; as, for example, by forbidding the separation of a child from its mother before a given age. But such special enactments always assume the general supremacy of the master over these relations, and leave it in the main untouched.

But it may be said: Christ and his apostles abolished polygamy, but not slavery. Were we disposed to argue the question on this ground, we should say that the proof of their having forbidden polygamy is very doubtful. That they never declared polygamy to be a sin, is admitted by all. It is, however, contended by many that it is indirectly prohibited in the directions of Paul, that bishops and deacons should be husbands of one wife.¹ But in what sense husbands of one wife, is a question that has been much discussed. In the same epistle he gives, among other qualifications for the widow who is to be put on the list of those entitled to public maintenance, that she shall have been "the wife of one man." This is most naturally interpreted to mean: who had been married to but one husband, and who, after his death, had remained single. If so, the precept concerning bishops and deacons ought to be interpreted in an analogous way.² The most natural explanation of the fact that there are no commands in the New Testament against polygamy is that they were not needed. It was not a Grecian or Roman custom; and seems to have been gradually abolished among the Jews, before our Lord's time, by the progress of religious light and knowledge. They justly viewed the precepts of Moses respecting polygamy as suffering, for the time being, an evil which it was their privilege to do away, even as it was afterwards the privilege of the Christian church to do away the old Roman institution of slavery, the renewal of which, in modern Christendom, is its shame and curse.

But we prefer to discuss the question on the foundation of general principles. Suppose, then, that Christ and his apostles did not forbid slavery in its outward legal form, what then? By the new law of Christian love, which they introduced, they inflicted a deadly wound on its spirit, under

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 2, 12.

² A thorough investigation of this question would require an extended research into the opinions and usages of the ancients concerning second marriages. Some have held the opinion that the Apostle has in mind persons who have been connected after divorce with a second husband or wife.

the influence of which it must languish and die.¹ What if they did not forbid slavery as a civil institution under the control of pagan Rome; does that prove that they meant to hedge it in with the wall of their authority, as a system sacred for all time? The advent of Christ found the world full of abuses, the product of human selfishness, handed down from remote antiquity, venerable and moss-grown from very age. There was the despotism of imperial Rome. There were the cruel usages of war, with the sale of captives, at auction, as slaves. "When Pindemissus was taken by Cicero, the inhabitants were sold for more than \$100,000. Augustus, having overcome the Salassi, sold as slaves 36,000, of whom 8,000 were capable of bearing arms. Caesar, in his Gallic wars, according to the moderate estimate of Vallerius Paterculus, took more than 400,000 prisoners."² Then there were the gladiatorial shows, where men were set up to butcher each other for the amusement of the spectators. Of these and other heathen usages then prevalent, the New Testament says nothing. Are we, then, to understand that a religious silence concerning them is imposed on our lips, to the end of time? Did the gospel indeed come to petrify the progress of society, and thus perpetuate all existing abuses clear through the millennial age which it promises? We are told by our Lord that "the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."³ It works inwardly upon the spirit of society, and thus it produces changes in its outward form. It works from within outwardly, and the outward manifestation is at once the result and the proof of the inward power. That would be poor leaven which did not *raise* the mass of

¹ That is, when the gospel is preached in its true spirit, and faithfully applied to human relations; not when those who are appointed to be its preachers set themselves to the base work of defending and magnifying the institution of slavery from scripture.

² Writings of Prof. B. B. Edwards, with a Memoir, Vol. II. p. 84. This was the rule for foreign wars. There was a rule forbidding prisoners taken in civil wars to be dealt with as slaves, though it was sometimes disregarded. — *Ib.*

³ Matt. xiii. 33

dough, but only *preserved* it in its original heavy condition. Christ and his apostles cast into society the leaven of the gospel, not that it might lie there inoperative, but that it might work within, and thus without. By its quickening, illuminating, purifying, and elevating power, it reveals to the Christian understanding and feeling old abuses in their true deformity. Then is the time to attack them with the principles of Christianity and in its spirit, and thus to remove them.

There remains the case of Onesimus, of which we wish to say a few words. It is manifest then, in the first place, that in this matter Paul acted as a Christian minister, not as a public functionary; and that his action is no rule for civil legislation. As well might one adduce his advice to the Corinthian church concerning marriage¹ as a foundation for civil legislation on the subject. Although the state ought always to be administered in the spirit of Christianity, it is nevertheless true that it has its own sphere of action. Its legislation must be controlled by general considerations of public justice and expediency, and cannot always coincide with what may be the right or the duty of individuals acting freely in view of specific circumstances.

Secondly, They who press the example of Paul in sending back Onesimus to Philemon, are bound in consistency to press the manner and circumstances of the act. Onesimus seems to have been willing, and even desirous, to return, and only to have asked from his spiritual father a conciliatory letter to Philemon. One thing, at least, is manifest, that no compulsion was used. In the character of Onesimus, moreover, Paul had the highest guarantee that he would not be treated as a slave, or sold into servitude to another man, but received, "not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved." Small indeed is the capital which the abettors of American slavery can make out of this transaction. The pith of the whole matter is fairly given by Dr. Justin Edwards, in the following "Instruction" to ver. 12 of the "Family Bible with Notes."

¹ 1 Cor. vii.

“ If a servant who has left a Christian master and gone to a distant place, has himself become a Christian, and wishes to return, it is right for other Christians to assist him by requesting his former master to receive him in a Christian manner, as he would one of them, especially when they know (vs. 17, 21) that he will do what they ask of him.”¹

¹ Concerning the forcible rendition of servants by public authority, we find in the scriptures but one solitary precept : “ Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee : he shall dwell with thee, even among you in that place which he shall choose, in one of thy gates where it liketh him best ; thou shalt not oppress him ” (Deut. xxiii. 15, 16). The Jews understood this as addressed to Israel as a people, — “ Thou shalt not deliver him ” ; that is, thou, the Israelitish people : and this interpretation is favored by the words “ in one of thy gates.” Accordingly they understood the prohibition as referring to servants escaped to them from the surrounding heathen nations. This view (which is the least favorable to the servant’s freedom of any that can be proposed) would leave the matter of fugitives from Israelites to Israelites without legislation. Of course it would furnish no *warrant* for fugitive slave laws, since, whatever be its extent, it is wholly *prohibitory*. But let us examine the matter more nearly, from a simply biblical point of view. The precept of the Mosaic law, then, if it have any authority for us, forbids the rendition of servants to masters of another country. It does not appear that a simple league or confederacy between sovereign and independent states (as, for example, that between David and Hiram king of Tyre) could alter the matter. But the constitution of the United States is peculiar. It makes us one nation without destroying the individuality of the different states. In respect to the many and important prerogatives of sovereignty which the separate states have resigned to the nation as a whole, they are to be regarded simply as part of that whole. But in respect to the prerogatives which they have retained, our laws regard and treat them as distinct states, as much as they do England and Spain. The Southern States, for example, legislate on the subject of slavery in an independent and sovereign way, just as Spain does, and the Constitution acknowledges their right to do so. Can any one show, then, why the Mosaic prohibition under consideration, if it have any binding force for us, should not in equity apply to them in the matter of slavery, as well as to Spain ? It may, perhaps, be argued that the nations to whom the Israelites were forbidden to restore fugitive servants were heathen, having barbarous slave-codes, and treating their servants in a barbarous manner. But for the advocates of slavery this would be giving the argument an unfortunate turn, since it would authorize us, before deciding the question of duty, to inquire how far the southern slave-codes are heathenish in their character.

The truth is, that we are bound to return persons fleeing from service only by an express provision of the constitution, which is, we do not say anti-scriptural, but extra-scriptural. It is a compromise contrary to the spirit of the Constitution ; and for this reason it has been, and will continue to be, an apple of discord. It subjects us to the power of the slave-holding states in a sphere where we are forbidden to have any voice. They may make their slave-codes as barbarous as

We have dwelt at length on the argument from the Bible, because it is here that the modern abettors of slavery take their stand, endeavoring to build up around the system a hedge of scriptural authority. When any one begins the work of examining and trying the institution by its principles and fruits, they cry out:

“Procul, O, procul este, profani
—— totoque abssistite luco;”

“Far off, far off, ye profane; this is a sacred enclosure; do not intrude upon it.” We have shown that the alleged divine sanction for the institution of slavery is a nullity; that it consisted in simply suffering the system, like other organic abuses, for the hardness of men’s hearts. The way is, then, opened for the remaining source of argument.

II. *The intrinsic Character of American Slavery and its legitimate Results, as compared with the Principles of God’s Word.*

On this we do not propose to dwell at length. It will be sufficient to indicate the general heads of argument, for they are self-luminous.

In the first place, then, the foundation on which they place the system of American slavery is anti-scriptural. This is no other than *the distinction of race*. While the Bible declares that God has made of one blood all nations of the earth, that he is the common Father of them all, and that they are all brethren bound to accord to each other the rights of manhood, and to deal with each other according to the Christian law of love; while this is the doctrine of God’s word, the doctrine of American slavery is that the normal position of the African race is that of slavery to the

they choose, and we, who have no voice in the making of them, may be compelled, at the point of the bayonet, to assist in keeping the slaves subject to them. Nevertheless, it is a part of the Constitution, and, until it shall be constitutionally repealed, we must acquiesce in it; for the only alternatives — we have reference to the ordinary course of law in a time of peace, not to any military exigencies which the existence of civil war may impose on our government — are the *Constitution* or *revolution*. But let no one pretend to justify it from the holy scriptures.

white races ; not merely the dependence which naturally belongs to the weaker in their relation to the stronger, but *slavery* ; that they are in their appropriate condition when they are reduced to chattels, divested of all their rights as men, and bought and sold like horses and cattle. And they have made up an argument from the prophetic curse of Noah, which, if it were valid, would only prove that God uses them, as he did Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar, Herod and Pontius Pilate, as ministers of his "determinate counsel and foreknowledge." But the argument is not valid ; for the curse of Noah fell not on them, but on Canaan, none of whose posterity settled in Africa.¹ One knows not which to admire most, the audacity or the wickedness of this position. We white men of the Saxon race, who are rich and strong, take it upon ourselves to decide that God intended the Africans to be our slaves, and then enforce the decision by handcuffs and manacles. The position involves, of course, the moral rectitude of the foreign as well as the domestic slave-trade. For if slavery is appointed by God to be the normal condition of the African race, the condition in which they are in fact most happy and useful, then it is altogether right and proper that they who have ships to send to Africa and money to buy slaves there, should help to place them in their right relation to the white race. Such is the logical result of the doctrine ; and we find accordingly that the abettors of slavery are rapidly drifting in this direction. They cannot do otherwise ; for whoever mounts a lie will soon find himself at the stable of the father of lies, whence the black horse came.

But the great central principle of American slavery, that which constitutes its distinctive character, and sharply separates it from all other kinds of servitude, is *property in man*. This the slave-codes not merely assume, but affirm, with the most shameless perspicuity. They take pains to tell us that slaves are "chattels personal in the hands of their mas-

¹ See on this subject our remarks in the January number of the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, pp. 72, 73. See also in the April number of the *New Englander* for the present year the Article entitled "Noah's Prophecy."

ters and possessors, to all intents and purposes whatsoever; and they deliberately proceed to divest them of their rights as men; declaring that their masters may sell them, dispose of their persons and labor, and that they "can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire anything but which must belong to their masters." It follows, by natural consequence, that the master claims as his lawful property the children of his female slaves, whoever may be their father, on the same ground that the farmer does the increase of his flocks and herds, viz. that they are his personal chattels. The very spirit of the system, as defined by the laws, is that the slave, like any other article of merchandise, is to be held and used for his owner's interests, not for his own. We need not spend time in showing that this is contrary to the spirit of the gospel. The great law of Christianity is: "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*" In direct opposition to this the slave-codes authorize the master to love himself supremely, and to buy, sell, and use his neighbors and their offspring, as chattels personal, for his own, private advantage. We are far from denying that many masters endeavor to deal with their slaves according to the law of Christian love. But this they do, not in accordance with the spirit of the system, but in spite of it; not by carrying out in practice its provisions, but by abstaining from doing so.

It is very difficult to hold the abettors of slavery to this point. The idea of converting men and women into articles of merchandise is so manifestly abhorrent to the spirit of Christianity, that it needs only to be looked at to be condemned. This the defenders of slavery well understand. They talk of the power which the father has over his children; as if such power, limited in duration, and having for its end the good of the child, were the same thing as converting men and women, with their offspring forever, into chattels personal, to be bought and sold, not for their good, but for the profit of their owners. They talk of the power of husbands over their wives, and how dreadfully it is abused. Now, so far as wives in barbarous countries are by common law and usage converted into

drudges, we will only say that their husbands rule over them in the true spirit of American slavery. Yet even they are not made articles of merchandise, to be transferred from hand to hand. But the normal institution of marriage has, as these sophists well know, nothing in common with slavery. Though the woman is by divine authority subordinated to the man, her welfare is as much consulted as his in the union between the two. So long as men remain wicked and selfish, the conjugal relation will be alloyed with many evils; but these do not, as in the case of slavery, grow out of the proper nature and tendency of the institution. They talk once more—these defenders of slavery—of the sale of fair women in high life for money; meaning, of course, matches made up from considerations of property. Yes, but this is a matter of private and individual folly. There is no *institution empowering* men to buy and sell women for money, using them in the meanwhile as they see good. This is what slavery does; for it makes women “chattels personal in the hands of their masters and possessors, to all intents and purposes whatsoever.” No wonder that the champions of slavery are ashamed of its fundamental principle—property in man; for it is as opposite to Christianity as light is to darkness. But there it is, embedded in the very centre of the institution; and to eradicate it would be to pluck up the system itself.

Another anti-Christian feature of American slavery, growing immediately out of the principle of property in man, is *the supremacy of the master over the domestic relations of his slaves*. It is true that conscientious masters respect these divinely appointed relations. But the slave-laws are not made for the especial benefit of conscientious men. They always have regard, in their provisions, to the interests of the great body of slaveholders. If one of these personal chattels is to be sold, it would not be convenient to hamper him with the encumbrance of a wife and children. The buyer may want him, and not his family. Then, the laws allow him to take him away from his family and carry him off to a distant state. What if God has joined together the hus-

band and wife, and commanded that man shall not put them asunder; is his law to interfere with the pecuniary interests of the buyer? By no means. He is a good field-hand, and will fetch a large sum in the cotton-states. Away with him.¹ So, too (with the exception of special restrictions as to age, in some of the states), the child may be taken from its mother and sold into a distant region. There are negro-growers, whose business is to raise slaves for the market, and who, as soon as the children have arrived at a profitable age, sell them away from their mothers, with no more care for their feelings than if they were beasts of burden. All this the institution of slavery sanctions; and therein it stands self-condemned as the antagonist of the divine law.

Another feature of American slavery is *the systematic mental degradation of the slaves*. We say systematic, because it belongs essentially to the system, and is carried out sys-

¹ From the New American Cyclopaedia, article "Slavery," we copy the following legal view: "Of the marriage of slaves it is difficult to speak with positive certainty. The prevailing, if not universal, rule would seem to be, that the incapacity of a slave to make a valid contract extends to the contract of marriage. It has, indeed, been distinctly held that the marriage usual in these states, which is only cohabitation with consent of the master, is not legal marriage. Chancellor Kent, quoting from this case, appears to refer the invalidity of the marriage to the want of legal formalities; but in the same case it is put on the ground of their entire inability to contract. There are statutes which speak of their marriage, but not in such a way as to declare their marriages legal, and attended with the legal incidents of marriage. Even in Louisiana such a marriage is held to be a moral marriage, but to produce no civil effect whatever, because slaves are deprived of all civil rights. So far as the law or the usage on this subject can be ascertained, a slave cannot as a married person commit adultery or polygamy, nor be held liable on a wife's contracts, or for necessities supplied to her, nor be made incompetent as a witness on the ground of the relation of marriage. Nor does it appear that any consent of the master can make the marriage legal, if it do not have the force of emancipation. And as what is called the marriage of the slave rests wholly on the master's consent, there is no hing in the law to prevent him from revoking his consent, annulling the marriage, and separating the parties." Let the reader remember that this systematic degradation of marriage, and with it the whole family relation,—this putting the master in the place of God, with power to separate husband and wife at will,—is not simply an incident of the system, but one of its legitimate results. The fountain is bitter, and this is one of the bitter streams which it sends forth.

tematically by the laws. According to the theory of slavery, the whole person of the slave, soul and body, is a chattel, to be held and used for the master's interest. The slave has no more right to use his intellectual than his corporeal powers, for his own personal advantage. Now, the masters judge that the acquisition of knowledge will diminish the value and security of their property in slaves. Accordingly it is made, in most of the slaveholding states, a high crime and misdemeanor to teach a slave (and, in some of them, a free negro) to read and write, or to give them any book or pamphlet, though it might happen to be the word of God. All this follows, very logically, from the nature of the system. When men are to be governed as men, by equitable and wholesome laws, the more intelligence they possess the better. But when they are to be despoiled of their rights as men, and converted into articles of merchandise, the more profound the ignorance in which they are immersed, the more secure the tenure by which their masters hold them. So early as 1740 South Carolina, while yet a province of Great Britain, enacted a law forbidding, under penalty of a heavy fine, the teaching or causing any slaves to be taught to write, or the employing of any such slaves as scribes in any writing whatsoever. The preamble to this law reveals the whole secret. It is in the following words: "Whereas the having of slaves taught to write, or suffering them to be employed in writing, may be attended with great inconveniences." "With great inconveniences" — to the masters, namely; and it is their interests which the slave-laws always consult, at whatever costs to the slaves themselves. So it is in regard to reading also. To be able to read the word of God would be to the slave a privilege how inestimable! But then his ability to read this, includes his ability to read other things also. He might read the newspapers, the debates in Congress, the writings of Clarkson and Wilberforce, and even the opinions of Washington and Jefferson, condemnatory of slavery. All this would doubtless be "attended with great inconveniences" to the master. So the slaves must be kept by legal enactments in ignorance,

that they may be safer and better property. Such is the spirit of American slavery, and it is as opposite to that of the gospel as midnight is to noon.

We might proceed further in unfolding the unjust and anti-scriptural character of the institution. But here we rest the matter. Four murders, well proven, are enough to hang a man. The four iniquitous principles of American slavery that have now been set forth, all of them essential parts of the system, are enough to condemn it, as alike opposed to the Bible and unperverted human reason.

It may be, and often has been, said by slaveholders, that though this may be slavery in theory, yet in their practice it is something very different. If there are men unwillingly entangled in the system, and ready to do what lies in their power to disenthral themselves, we have no word of censure for them. But if they set themselves to defend slavery as an institution, then we reply: True, you may conscientiously refrain from selling a slave, but your neighbor across the street is a slave-trader, whose business is to traffic in human flesh; and the institution which you abet sanctions his nefarious employment, and protects him in it with all the power of the state. In the case of your own slaves you may sacredly regard the conjugal and filial relations; but your neighbor over the way, who keeps the slave-pen, is every day trampling these relations under foot, without pity or remorse, and in this wickedness he has, of course, many co-adjutors. Yet the system which you uphold authorizes him to separate husband and wife, parent and child, and protects him in the monstrous iniquity. To the full extent of the slave-laws, and perhaps beyond them, you may instruct your slaves in the religion of the gospel; but the system which you defend sets itself, in the most determined spirit, against the work of educating and enlightening the slaves, and makes it a penal offence to teach them to read any book, God's holy word not excepted. In upholding the institution, then, you uphold all the abominations which it authorizes.

Respecting the *results* of slavery a volume might be written; but we do not propose, now, to go into any details.

The consideration of the manifold evils which grow out of the system naturally and necessarily, will come up more appropriately under the head of the relations of slavery to the state. At present we simply remark that this institution, like every other, must be judged of by its results — its results not in certain select cases and in limited periods of time, but its results as they manifest themselves on the broad scale. A bad institution, founded on bad principles, will produce bad results, and the results will be the proof that the system itself is vicious. This is the scriptural way of reasoning. The tree is known by its fruits, the fountain by its stream; an olive-tree bears olive-berries, and a bramble-bush thorns; a salt fountain sends forth salt water. If we know the tree or the fountain, we know the fruit or the stream; and, conversely, if we know the fruit or the stream, we know the tree or the fountain. All we ask is that slavery should be judged, like every other institution, by this equitable scriptural rule. But its modern abettors pursue a very different course. With timber taken, as they affirm, from the Bible, they build a fence around a field of brambles, and then tell us that it must be an olive-yard, because it is walled in by scriptural authority. We answer: Since your field yields only a harvest of thorns, year after year, it must be a plantation of brambles, not of olive-trees; and as to its alleged scriptural hedge, that is made by human hands, out of texts of scripture diverted from their true meaning. In exactly the same way have hedges been built around the alleged divine right of kings, and the divine right of the Romish hierarchy. But God, both by his word and providence, repudiates all such defences, and so must we. We must and shall try the institution of slavery, as we try other systems, by its principles and its fruits. And if we find it to be “a root that beareth gall and wormwood,” we shall not be guilty of the folly and blasphemy of calling it a tree of God’s planting.

In bringing this Article to a close, we add a few remarks concerning the attitude of the New Testament towards Roman slavery. To some it has seemed inexplicable that,

since slavery is a relation of law, the apostles did not enjoin on masters the duty of manumitting their servants in legal form. We suppose the reason to have been that God's views are comprehensive; that he looks at human nature on all its sides, and at the interests of society in all its relations, and will not interpose, by direct legislation, for the removal of even great abuses before the way is properly prepared to do so. But here we must restrict his forbearance to abuses of such a nature that good men who are involved in them can fulfil, towards him and their fellow men, the great law of love. This limitation is of vital importance. That an evil is organic and interwoven with the whole structure of society, is no reason why God should tolerate it, provided it strike at his law and the welfare of others in such a way that any connection with it implies of necessity the rejection of his authority or maltreatment of men. In the days of primitive Christianity, idolatry was a state-system, so interwoven with the institutions of the Roman empire that Christians found it exceedingly difficult to avoid participation in it without subjecting themselves to the charge of contumacy. Yet the apostles and their successors never yielded any tolerance to Roman idolatry, because it struck openly and directly at Christ's authority. But in the matter of Roman slavery the case was different. Though the institution was cruel and selfish, it did not compel the master to use all the despotic power which it conferred upon him. He could treat his servant, not as an article of merchandise, but as a Christian brother; and this the law of Christ enjoined upon him. Meanwhile there were weighty reasons why the apostles should not interfere with the legal relations of master and slave. At the time when Christianity was introduced, slavery was an old and inveterate institution in the Roman empire. The number of slaves was immense, and the influence of the system permeated the whole structure of society. Any plan for transferring this mass of bondmen from a state of servitude to one of freedom, in such a way as to benefit both parties, and thus society at large, must have had the intelligent co-operation

of the freemen of Rome. It is indeed true that, when men obstinately cherish old abuses, and will not let them be removed in a regular and constitutional way, the providence of God will at last interpose for their violent overthrow by war and revolution. But if they are to be abolished by peaceful legislation, there must be a movement from within the community. Except in the case of provinces which are mere dependencies of large empires, no mere outward force of law will do the work. But such an inward movement implies a much greater degree of illumination and moral elevation than belonged to imperial Rome in the days of the apostles. Great as the Romans were in war and statesmanship, they had no clear idea — we might better say, no idea whatever — of men's rights as men. During the long and bloody conflict of Christianity with pagan Rome, the most enlightened of her emperors failed to recognize the rights of conscience in religious matters. In the words of Neander, the Roman statesman "requires, inasmuch as he looks upon it as a matter of the state, unconditional obedience to the laws of the empire. With the character of the religion he has nothing to do. Whatever that might be, defiance of the imperial laws must be severely punished."¹ To such men a movement on the part of the Christians for the emancipation, in legal form, of the slaves, on the ground of their inalienable rights as men, must have been regarded as inflexible obstinacy and sedition. It would have constituted a new element of opposition to Christianity without any counterbalancing advantage. It was necessary that the gospel should first create a more enlightened and elevated public sentiment before it could be turned (as it was afterwards, with entire success) against slavery as an institution.

Meantime the apostles, while they abstained from any interference with slavery, in its outward legal form, introduced into the relation, on both sides, the new law of

¹ History of the Christian Religion and Church; Torrey's translation, Vol. I. pp. 98, 99. where see the words of Pliny: *Neque enim dubitabam, qualescunque esset quod faterentur, pervicaciam certe et inflexibilem obstinationem debere puniri.*

brotherly love, which, so far as it actually prevailed, emptied this old and selfish system of the main part of its contents, and gradually prepared the way for its outward and formal removal. The proofs that Christianity did thus gradually extinguish slavery as an institution, the reader may find succinctly but very clearly stated in the last of the three Articles of Prof. B. B. Edwards, to which reference has already been made.¹

And now in these latter days, when, under the guiding hand of Christianity, the principles of civil and religious freedom are slowly but steadily wending their way among the nations of the earth; and in this fair republic too, whose foundations were cemented with the richest blood of freemen, and where the principles of freedom, social, ecclesiastical, and personal, have been more discussed, and ought to be better understood, than in any other nation under heaven, — here, in these latter days, this demon of discord, that had been once forced down to the pit by the power of the gospel, rises again, bearing in one hand the torch of civil war, and in the other a halter for free speech; steals from the sanctuary, through the ministry of its unfaithful servants, the sacerdotal frontlet of pure gold, inscribed HOLINESS TO THE LORD; binds it with a ribbon of perverted scriptural texts to his own snaky forehead; and then cries out: “*I am sacred; let no man touch me!*” But the conspiracy will not succeed; for God is on the throne, and he will thrust the demon down again to his own place, though it may not be in any way of our devising

¹ Writings of Prof. B. B. Edwards, with a Memoir, Vol. II. pp. 127–130. See also the second Article, pp. 107–112.