

years ; the State of Rhode Island since 1852 ; Wisconsin and Maine since 1835 ; Holland, since 1870 ; Saxony, since 1868 ; Belgium, since 1831, and several other States, prove by their experience, that life and property are safer with no death penalty, threatened or inflicted, than in neighboring countries which still use the death penalty." The Empress Elizabeth, of Russia, upon ascending the throne, pledged herself never to inflict the punishment of death, and, during her whole reign, she nobly kept her purpose. Her successor, Catharine, followed her example for the most part, convinced : "That experience proves that the frequent repetitions of capital punishment has never made men better."

Standing at the foot of the scaffold and witnessing the awful ceremony performed on Thomas Jones seventeen years ago did not stay the hand of Simmons from the murder of his wife. Cruelty begets cruelty and not love. The law itself I am glad to see, is beginning to doubt of the wholesome effects of executions on the morals of the populace. Hence the deed is commonly now performed in private. But if the death penalty, as an example, a warning, does prevent crime, the more openly it is done, and the more bunglingly it is done, certainly the more crime it ought to prevent. To show how futile it is in gaining this object, let me relate an historical instance : "During the last execution that took place in New York for theft, which was then a capital crime, one of the spectators was detected in the act of picking the pockets of another. He also would have suffered death, but public sentiment, having become enlightened by such decisive evidence of the inability of capital punishment to prevent the perpetration of crime, an amelioration of the criminal code was effected, and the infliction of the death penalty for such offences was superseded by milder punishment"

Let us examine now the Biblical foundation on which men have made

the death penalty to rest. We do not approach that sanctuary—the Bible—we trust, with any sacrilegious motive. Far be it from our intention here to utter anything against the inspiration of the Bible or against the absolute truth of Bible teaching, yet nothing but blind cupidity will deny us the right to challenge, if we choose, the faithfulness of our English translation. The need of the recent revision has taught us that translations may be in error. They are wrought out vastly more by scholarship than by inspiration. Have we not a right then to appeal to a higher tribunal than our English translation? The noted passage that capital punishment selects by which to shield itself is the 6th verse of the 9th chapter of the book of Genesis. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," is the English translation of a Hebrew text that, according to some of the most erudite minds in Hebrew lore, does not wholly mean that. Wendell Phillips says : "It cannot be denied that New England and the States planted by her sons punish murder with death, chiefly because men believe they are ordered so to do by the Old Testament, in that verse of the so-called covenant with Noah usually translated, 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man *shall* his blood be shed.' Now this verse, upon which such momentous powers are rested, may, all scholars allow, be equally well translated, 'by man *will* his blood be shed,' making it a prophecy, as 'by man *shall* his blood be shed,' making it a command."

Again, our translation says, "by man shall his blood be shed." But no version of the Bible prior to the fifth century contains the words, "by man," and Scripture itself has been interpolated to suit the purposes of the state. The Septuagint and Samaritan versions omit these words, Wycliffe also, and the Vulgate ; Spanish, Italian and French versions omit them. Pascal and Swedenborg indorse the omission,