

was ever seen by Israel in her palmiest days, "exact usury, every one of his brother?" Shall we, in full view of that last great commission of our Saviour, received by the eleven on the solitary mountain of Galilee, which broke down for ever all national distinctions and barriers, practice that vice, which, wherever and whenever it is exercised, falls with crushing weight upon our poor brethren? Shall we, in hardness of heart, and in utter disregard of divine law, seize those weapons which God saw fit to permit the Jews to employ against the heathen and turn them against our own kindred? Shall we recede from the virtue and practice the vice? Israel was permitted to buy bondmen and bondmaids of the heathen—shall we therefore reduce our brethren to slavery? Strange, indeed, if what was pronounced robbery, extortion and oppression between Jew and Jew should be worthy of different terms between Christian and Christian. Usury was the means by which the native covetousness of the Jewish heart found its outlet. The degree of guilt, as between Jew and heathen, might be lessened—the nature of the vice remained the same. If oppressive to the heathen, it cannot but be oppressive to the christian. Seeing that the principles of our social economy are the same in every place and in every age, we cannot but conclude that what was good for the Jew is good for the Christian, and that the spirit of the injunction against the practice of usury has, if anything, been strengthened and confirmed by the spirit of the Gospel.

It cannot be denied that usury or lending on increase is held forth in Scripture as a vice. On this point there can be no dispute. It may be truly said that the extent to which usury prevails indicates unmistakably the extent of that mammon bondage in which the world is held. Now, by what subtlety can that which was a vice in the days of Israel become a virtue in the reign of Queen Victoria or the presidency of James Buchanan? If lending on interest be as lawful as buying and selling, then it is lawful to take usury from the poor. If it be not lawful to take interest from the poor, then it is not lawful to take interest from the rich, for the "bite" thus taken from the rich comes at last, through the aid of *price* and *paper money*, out of the pockets of the poor. Let no one suppose that these grinding taxes are contributed by the rich. Originating mainly, now-a-days, with commerce, the lash comes down eventually with increasing force upon the back of the laborer, reducing either the rate of his wages or adding to the price of the articles of his daily sustenance. For it is a fact as capable of demonstration as that two and two make four, that the real prosperity of the country is ever in an inverse ratio to the prosperity of her banking institutions. It is usury, indeed, which has mainly contributed to the "artificial and complicated affairs of modern times" by the facilities which it affords of playing into the hands of the rich, and thus correspondingly reducing the condition of the poor.

It would seem as if the apologists of the usury or credit system consider that the Jews were only enjoined not to lend on interest to the absolutely poor. I do not think that the ability of a Jew to calculate the nature of the security offered for his money has been at all overrated. Perhaps the Jew and