

of the innumerable class of good things which the world contains, even in this case he had been under the highest moral obligation to confine himself within the defined limits,—much more when the earth and its productions are given for his use and enjoyment.

B. And truly, if you produce a charter defining man's right to the things of this world, —I shall consider the subject in dispute capable of an easy settlement,—but though I have often read through the bible, I never remember to have met with such a document.

A. And yet with all deference to the discernment of my friend, I apprehend the essentials of a bequest may be found in the narrative as given by Moses,—and in which the right of possessing a property in man having no place, it must needs be a usurped right, and therefore of no force or efficacy at all.

B. Let my friend make good his assertion, that there are the essentials of a charter declaring the extent of man's right to external things, in the writings of Moses; for this must be the criterion of the validity of the title to a property in man, and not the abuses of subsequent generations.

A. Be pleased then to peruse with care the grant made to Adam of all the trees of the garden, with one exception, for his use, together with the earth itself. And of the renewal of the grant to Noah, after the flood, of fish, fowl and cattle, in which, as is manifest from other passages of scripture, minerals and other substances are included. And though man is here mentioned, it is not in such a way as to sanction the argument of the slave-holders, that he too may be converted into an article of property.—

On the contrary, the very thought of such a mode of dealing with a brother-man, is to fly in the face of Holy Writ. "And God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them; and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over every thing that moveth upon the earth." Silence concerning the right of property claimed by the slave-holder, I think, is here equal to a positive disapproval.

B. I confess I never thought of man's right to the use of earthly things being limited by the grant of the Creator. And yet I think your views might be confirmed by the moral precepts of other parts of Scripture, wherein the equity and tenderness which should charac-

terise all the transactions between man and man, are largely insisted on. And though it is true, Noah is soon after represented as denouncing a curse upon Ham, this is rather as speaking prophetically of what should come to pass in after times, than as justifying the persons who should be guilty of introducing or of supporting slavery in the world. And there is a striking proof to this effect, in the fact that God punished Edom, Assyria, and other nations for the evils they had brought upon Israel, though they were only fulfilling prophecy in what they did.

A. My friend has fully anticipated my views. It is a proof of the weakness of the arguments that are used in defence of slavery, when one hears the prophecy of Noah adduced for this end. In reference to the sin of Ham, which brought on him the prophetic denunciation of his father Noah, the punishment of this belongs to God, and not man. And without doubt, the words which the prophet addressed to the cruel adversaries of Israel, may be applied to those men who enslave the posterity of Ham. "I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease, for I was but a little displeased and they helped forward the affliction."—Zech. 1, 15.

B. But can my friend give no farther illustrations of the views of Scripture on this important matter, affecting the interests of so large a portion of our brethren of mankind. I confess I feel a deeper interest in the discussion, from the views my friend has unfolded. And this leads me to desire some farther elucidation of what may be gathered from Scripture, condemnatory of the long oppressions that have been practised upon our sable brethren, the Africans.

A. Has B reflected on some of the qualities of slavery. I forbear to speak of the power which in such a state of society is given to individual men over the persons of helpless women and children,—a power which is the fruitful source of confusion and wickedness. I would direct my friend's attention for the present, to the power vested in the owner, of disposing of the slave by sale,—and yet this power is an element implied in the thing called slavery. It is not enough to say, that all slave-holders do not dispose of their persons for money. It is enough that they uphold the right to do so, by alleging a right of property in the person of a fellow-creature. And can such a thing as slavery, which in its essential character supposes the right of selling men, women