

Capital Punishment.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—It is obvious from an extract which you gave last week that you reckon murder a capital offence. You stand by the old established law, that a man who puts another to death ought to be put to death himself. And in so thinking I am persuaded you think rightly. Indeed if the teachings of the Bible are binding on us, I am unable to see how it is possible to treat murder as less than a capital offence. We find God saying to Noah, "whose sheddeth man a blood, by man shall his blood be shed," Gen. 9, 6. Surely these words are explicit enough; most people will say that they are. And yet on the part of anti-capital punishment men, there are various endeavours made to evade them. Some have said that the phrase "sheddeth man's blood," might not be intended to signify murder, as a doctor by the use of a lancet, or any man by accident, may shed another's blood without destroying life, or even intending it. But every one knows that the usual, if not the universal, meaning of the phrase referred to is the wilful destruction of human life: thus in Gen. 37-21, 22, "and Reuben said, let us not kill him; and Reuben said unto them, shed no blood, but cast him into this pit, &c., again in Ex. 23, 2, 'if a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him,' also Lev. 17, 4; Proverb, 10; Acts, 22, 20, *et passim*. Leaving this, however, it has been said that the words "by man shall his blood be shed," may be taken as a prophecy and not as an enactment, as if God had meant that the man who took away another's life, would generally be deprived of life himself. But unfortunately there is no foundation for this view. Nay the foregoing context, and the ordinary rules of grammar, force the conclusion, that not a prophecy, but an enactment was intended; see verse 3, "lovely moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you," &c., was not that an enactment? And verse 4, "but flesh, with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat; was not that an enactment? And why entertain the idea for a moment, that the words which follow so quickly after these—"by man shall his blood be shed,"—should not be taken as an enactment, but as a prophecy? And then, it is perfectly common to express enactments, or prohibitions, by the use of "shall" or "shall not"; take as specimens, "thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve;" "thou shalt not kill;" "thou shalt not commit adultery;" "thou shalt not steal." Does it not irresistibly follow then that, after the previous consideration, we must take the words now referred to, "by man shall his blood be shed," as expressing an enactment, not a prophecy? It is said however by anti-capital punishment men, that this enactment, though in force for ages, should not be in force now-a-days, as we are under a milder economy than that of Moses, and because a multitude of the old enactments were not intended for all times, nor indeed for all nations, but only for the Jews, and only as long as their economy lasted. Now this reasoning is unfortunately weak, and it is so in more ways than one. If the time be considered, for example, when the enactment was given, it ought to be clear that the enactment was not for the Jews alone; it was not given in the days of Moses; it was not given in the days of Abraham; it was given in the days of Noah; and Noah was as much the father of the Gentiles as he was of the Jews; so that the inference ought to be irresistible, that the enactment was intended for mankind at large, and as to the nation—so often put fourth by anti-capital punishment men, that the taking away the life of a murderer is not in harmony with the Christian economy, which abounds in mercy, it will not do. When Paul addressed Porcius Festus, he said among other things, if I be an offender, or have committed any thing *worthy of death*, I refuse not to die, Acts 25-11; how unlike this is the talk of some, who in substance say that even a murderer is not "worthy of death!" and it ought to be noticed more particularly, that when Paul addressed the Church at Rome, he did not write like an anti-capital punishment man. He certainly said, "dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath;" and again, "be not overcome of evil but overcome evil with good," Romans 12, 10-21. *What did he say immediately afterwards;* "let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God; the powers that are are ordained of God; ch. 14-1; and verse 4, "but if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for He beareth not the sword in vain, for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." The term "sword" should not be overlooked; for it is full of significance; it alludes to more than physical punishment; it teaches that the magistrate *may inflict death*. If he has no right to inflict death, even on a murderer, if under the new and better economy he should not destroy the life of a murderer, how does it come to pass that an inspired writer under that economy represented him as bearing a sword, should he not rather have represented the magistrate as bearing a key, to convey the idea of imprisonment? or as bearing a whip, to convey the idea of scourging? The mere fact of his bearing a "sword" overturns the idea of anti-capital punishment men, that the spirit of the Gospel does not harmonize with the execution of a murderer. From modern humanitarians I appeal to Paul.

or mother, was to set aside the sixth commandment? As one has very sensibly said what folly to suppose that the Law-giver did not understand his own law, when he declared that the blood of a murderer should be shed, or when he followed the general declaration "thou shalt not kill" by numerous explicit declarations to punish certain crimes with death. It is therefore clear beyond contradiction that the great author of the sixth commandment meant thereby to interdict murder, but not to interdict the execution of a murderer. But another question is frequently put, which is more sensible than the foregoing one, and to which it is needful to give an answer; why was the first murderer spared, and spared by express instruction from God? Gen. 4-15. Now perhaps the absence of a specified reason was intended to exclude inquiry on this point; the sparing of Cain must have rested on good grounds, although there is no specification of these. It is possible however that the tenderness of the world's population was not without its influence at that time. And besides it is hard to fancy on the other hand, that God would require the murderer's own father, or one of his own children (if he had any then) to deprive him of his life; natural feeling would have risen against that. But it cannot be fairly argued from Cain's case that the law on murder which was given afterwards may not be legitimately dispensed with. The first murderer obviously felt that he deserved to die; he knew that others felt so too; and nothing less than a mark of God could make him sure that he would escape the blow that he had dared to provoke.

It is common for anti-capital punishment men to expatiate largely on the beauty of mercy, and to speak in very hard terms of stern justice. But let these men, if they believe the Bible, duly defer to the teaching of the Bible. Has not God said that the murderer should die? He said so at any rate in the days of Noah, and unless the law which was given then can be shown to have had a limited aspect, or unless it can be shown to have been abolished by the great author of the Christian economy, it is surely foreign to advocate mercy and to urge the abolition of capital punishment; is mercy to upset and do away with justice, it was no other than the God of mercy who used the words quoted already, "whose sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." And besides, if mercy be asked for the murderer, it is fair to ask, is no mercy to be shown to society? It is well to look to the benefit of an individual; but why not look to the benefit of a multitude? Now if capital punishment were done away with, if instead of a murderer being executed he were sent to prison for the rest of his days, is it not to be feared that the consequence would be frightful, that the number of murderers would be greatly multiplied and that all classes of society would have less security for their substance and their lives.

The question however is frequently put, is it not a fact that, in spite of all the executions for murder, the crime is still abundantly ripe? Undoubtedly it is; the fact is undeniable. But the inference deduced from it may be more than questioned. In spite of the imprisonment of thieves and burglars, theft and burglary are fearfully common; and yet will any one say that the criminals referred to should not be imprisoned? Or will any one say that because of the continuance of perjury and other great crimes, our bidewells and penitentiaries ought to be abolished? Certainly not. And why entertain the idea, that since murders do not disappear from the world, capital punishment ought to be abolished? No doubt the punishment does not put down the crime. But unless I am very greatly mistaken, unless too the great majority of men are mistaken, to do away with capital punishment would fail to secure again to society; it would only encourage evil-doers, and end in an increase of man-destroyers. I am quite aware in saying this, that those who would abolish capital punishment advocate another punishment in its stead, namely, imprisonment for life. And they tell us that this latter punishment is a terrible evil, so terrible indeed that criminals would fear it more than execution, as in the one case the evil might last for many years, while the other would only occupy a few minutes, perhaps moments. But is it a fact that execution is less feared than imprisonment for life? I cannot believe it, and most people will be slow to believe it. A writer already quoted has said on this point;—"It is vain for any man to argue that death is a punishment less severe than a life-long imprisonment. Men do not plead for death rather than imprisonment; criminals never ask their attorneys to secure for them, if possible, the conviction of murder in the first degree, rather than the second, because the first has the milder punishment of death; or if a man was sentenced to a life imprisonment for some great offence, men would not consider it an act of mercy should some one wrest him from the hands of officers and hang him on the road to the penitentiary. Whatever instances of morbid folly may be adduced to the contrary, it is the common and just sentiment of mankind that death is the severest penalty that human law can inflict." "These are very sensible statements; and our would be law reformers should carefully weigh them.

It would not be difficult to enlarge further on this subject. But I fear you are saying, more than enough already—if in deed you allow me, through you, to speak to your readers at all. I have only to add, that but for the clamour in some quarters, and under the name of what I reckon mistaken mercy, to upset an old, just and salutary law, I would not have written on the subject at all.

C. P.

April 16th, 1874.

(The above has been mislaid for several weeks. Our esteemed correspondent has been very patient.—Ed. D. A. P.)

A large and handsomely inscribed bell, the gift of Henry Mason, of the celebrated Mason & Hamlin organ manufacturing company, has just been sent to the Harvard Congregational Church, of Boston, from the foundry of Meneely & Kimberly, of Troy N. Y.

Mr. Moody's Farewell Meetings in Aberdeen.

At the pressing request of a large number of those who had taken part in the evangelistic work set afoot in Aberdeen some months ago through the labours of Messrs. Moody and Sankey, Mr. Moody paid a farewell visit to Aberdeen on Monday, and addressed several meetings, at the same time taking occasion to urge on to greater zeal those who were engaged in the good work. Mr. Sankey has been obliged to go south to a more genial temperature to recruit his health, but Mr. Moody has wrought on since he left Aberdeen, in different districts in the north, almost without ceasing; the sum of remarkable results always attending his labours. He met with a number of gentlemen interested in the Young Men's Christian Association, and talked over with them the proposal to erect a building suited for the carrying on the work of the Association. When Mr. Moody was last in Aberdeen, he took a lively interest in the work of this Association, and on many occasions he has pointed out how important it was to have the young men energetically at work. It has already been mentioned that there is a proposal to erect a Young Men's Christian Association building, and we understand that subscriptions to the amount of £3000 can be calculated on at the present moment. Now that this proposal has got a favourable start, there can be little doubt but that its importance will so commend itself to the Christian public as that ere long a suitable building will be erected.

At seven o'clock Mr. Moody met with a large body of young converts in the Free South Church, and addressed to them a few parting words. He spoke on his favourite topic of "Confessing Christ," pleading hard with those who had lately come to Christ to come boldly forward and confess Him. He had met with some remarkable instances in Scotland of the effects of standing up for Christ. In a country place, last week, a shopkeeper rose up to pray in one of the meetings, and by next day it was the talk of the village. This one and the next one dropped into his shop to make a trifling purchase, just to have an opportunity of tormenting him, till at last the shopkeeper was so seized with fear that darkness came into his soul. Mr. Moody read several passages of Scripture bearing on this subject, and pointed out how much the Saviour liked to hear His children confess Him. Many were inclined to wait until they had got a little theology before they would stand up for Christ; but never, he said, mind theology; so long as they had got the right kind of Christ, there was little fear of the theology. After a farewell exhortation the meeting was closed with prayer and the benediction.

The Music Hall was crowded to excess long before eight o'clock, the hour at which Mr. Moody was announced to give an address, the passages, orchestra, and galleries being quite packed. A large number of ministers belonging to the town and from different parts of the country were on the platform, and seated throughout the audience. The service was opened by the choir (with Miss Brown presiding at the harmonium) leading the hymn, "Oh, sing of His mighty love," in which the whole audience joined. "Except a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven" was the text on which Mr. Moody based his discourse. Christ did not say these words to a drunkard, to a thief or to a harlot, but to a man who in our days would be made a D.D. or an LL.D. People often thought they would be saved because of their much churchgoing, but none of them attended the church more regularly than the devil. He was even present at this meeting, calling some one's attention to this lady's new bonnet or that old man's gray hairs, so that their thoughts might be taken from the sermon. Speaking of an unregenerate being put into heaven, he believed it would be a hell to that man; a man who would not spend one day in God's service on this earth, how could he spend eternity with Him in heaven? Some new theologians didn't like the old way to heaven, and were making a broad way that would take all men in, whether converted or not; but, taking these men with their broad gauge, they could not make the way more simple than Christ had made it. After referring to the often-doubted possibility of sudden conversions by those who could not understand it, even although there were living evidences of it before them, he bade the meeting farewell, with the hope that they would all meet on the shores of eternity.

Mr. Moody stayed in the hall conversing with anxious inquirers until about ten o'clock, when he drove to the men's meeting in Trinity Free Church, which had gathered at nine o'clock in the expectation that Mr. Moody would give them a farewell address. In the course of a few sentences he spoke to them, Mr. Moody said they could have no idea of the influence the Aberdeen men's meetings had had in other places he had visited. In all of the towns the example of Aberdeen has been followed, and large bands of young men were enlisted in evangelistic work. It was cheering to hear that the Aberdeen Association were to get up a building for themselves, and that already they had been promised about £3000. He earnestly hoped that in a short time they would have their building, and that when they got it they would keep working together energetically and harmoniously. He advised them to get, and pay well, a young man of good ability who would be able to grace any pulpit in the city, for the purpose of organizing them, and specially devoting his time and attention to young men's work. When Mr. Moody mentioned Mr. G. C. Fraser as one admirable suited for this work, the meeting enthusiastically applauded, which was again renewed as he told them to take him from the work of the law and put him to the work of grace. If they did so, don't he said, put him under a committee. I Noah had been under a committee when he was to build the ark: the flood would have come and gone ere he had had two sticks together. Mr. Moody concluded with expressing the hope that before long he would here of the erection of the building, and that Mr. Fraser was at the head of an association of young men that would do honour to Scotland as well as to Aberdeen. A number of the young men then retired with Mr. Moody into an ante-room to hold private conversation with him, and he continued to converse with them until it was time for him to go and prepare for his journey to Wick by steamer. After a brief stay there he will go across to Ireland. After remaining there some time he will pay a visit to several English towns, and then return to America accompanied by Mr. Sankey.

Biblio Colportage in Spain.

"The first time that I visited Parada I had a tolerably good sale, but last month I only disposed of a few Gospels. On the present occasion I had sold, perhaps, six Gospels, when two priests came up, one of them belonging to the town, and the other from Canizal, as I was told. Each of them took up a book, but he of Canizal at once threw it down, saying, 'It is a Protestant book.' The other, without reading the book, asked me, 'How much do you get for selling these books?' 'Such a question,' said I, 'I am not obliged to answer.' 'There you are right,' said the other priest. 'How much does the book cost?' said the former. 'One real (2d.), I replied. It was a Gospel, and as I guessed what he meant to do, I asked this price, perfectly confident that he would not buy, for he had seen that I had offered copies of the same for two quarters (less than a penny). 'What do you want for the whole lot?' he asked again. 'I do not sell my books altogether. I want all to read them, and not one person only,' I replied. Thereupon he took a real from his pocket, gave it to me, and drawing back a few steps he struck a match and set fire to the book. This drew the attention of all who were in the market-place, and in a twinkling we were surrounded by a crowd. All eyes were turned to the cure, who held the book in his hand, and to us who were offering to sell. All kept silence, till at last the priest said, 'You see now what these books are good for—just to be burnt. Why do you allow them to be sold?' 'You come here to get money and to deceive the people, said some one, going up to the priest. Then I took up one of the Gospels, and holding it aloft, said with a loud voice, 'Gentlemen, don't believe that the book which the priest has burnt is a hellish or poisonous book. No, it is the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, translated into Spanish that everyone who can read may understand it. If the priest is able to prove the contrary, I am ready to make a heap of the same without receiving anything for them. A minute ago, the priest was offering me money for them all; doubtless for the purpose of doing with all what he has done with that one. Let it be shown that this is not the Gospel, and I will myself burn them all.' 'The whole is falsified,' said the priest. 'If it is so, prove it,' said I, 'that the people may be convinced.' And at the same time I approached him, with the open volume in my hand. 'I must not read it—I am forbidden to do so,' he replied. 'If you are forbidden to read it, and have therefore not read it, how can you know whether it is falsified or not? You speak without knowing what you say. Gentlemen, hear what the book says, which the priest has been burning. 'You are forbidden to hear it—don't listen.' 'The books are good,' said four or five people in the crowd. I asked for silence, and then read several passages, asking repeatedly whether the statements were bad. 'It is good—it is good,' said a number of voices. 'Better than the priest.' I was reading on, when a company of six or seven men made their way through the crowd, and, approaching me, one of them, an old gray-headed man of sixty years of age, said, 'I am Andrew Dunn. Have you not got him here?' 'How can I have him, if you are he?' said I, laughing. 'I had him, but he has been taken away from the house. I come to you to buy one. This is the true book; this is the Christian book—not the lies and threatenings which have been taught us hitherto. I believe neither in the priests nor in the monks. I believe in no one else but Andrew Dunn.' This he said so loudly that all could hear, including the priest who was standing close by. (The old man, of course, meant he had once possessed the tract called 'Andrew Dunn' and that like Andrew Dunn he had had his eyes opened to see the errors of Rome, and having lost the tract he wanted to have another copy.

The mayor now came up, stick in hand—whether the priest had sent for him I cannot say—and ordered the crowd to disperse; but they remained unmoved, curious to hear and to know how the matter would end. 'Show me your papers,' said the mayor, when he came up to me. When the people heard this there was a general murmur, for they thought that the sale of the books would be forbidden. 'Gentlemen,' I said, 'be patient.' If the mayor, or any one else, has the power to forbid the sale of the books, he will forbid it; but if not, then he will not. He has asked me to show him my papers, and I now offer them to him.' 'The books are forbidden' exclaimed the priest. The mayor bade him be silent while he read the papers. But before he had got through them, he folded them up, and gave them back to me. 'Are they all right?' asked the priest. 'Yes, sir,' and then turning to those who were present, the mayor said, 'He who wishes to purchase books, let him purchase, and those who do not, let them withdraw. Having said this, he went away. 'Give me a book.' 'To me also!' 'To me also!' 'What is the price of the Bible?' 'We have no honour amongst us, to suffer such a man (meaning the priest) to remain amongst us; we ought to have him thrown into the river,' said others. 'It is fortunate for him that it is market day and we do not wish to raise a tumult and so prevent the poor people from selling their wares!' Another said, 'If I were a *deade*, as I was once, I would shut up the priest in the tower'; &c., &c. I could not sell books enough. After this, you can understand that I had a very happy day. The Lord be praised, who grants His servants such days! May God bless the new Spanish Andrew Dunn! I promised to send him a copy of the book. When the priest saw how matters were turning, he went away and was seen no more in the market-place.—*The English Independent*.

The collection for the Pope in Dublin for this year amounts to £2,000.

Minister or Preacher.

The Wesleyan Conference, towards the close of an eminently peaceable session at Canbourn, has been distressed by an unfortunate exhibition of Church intolerance which cannot fail to accelerate the acceptance by this important body of Nonconformists of the political creed of the Liberatorists. The Rev. H. Keet, the Wesleyan minister of Owston Ferry, near Bawtry, proposed to place upon a tombstone in the parish churchyard, the following inscription—"In loving memory of Annie Augusta Keet, the younger daughter of the Rev. H. Keet, Wesleyan minister, who died at Owston Ferry, May 11, 1874, 'Safe sheltered from the storms of life.' The vicar however objecting to the words "Rev." and "Wesleyan minister," refused to admit the stone into the yard, thereupon Mr. Keet wrote the Archbishop of Canterbury asking whether the Vicar had a right to "object to a stone bearing a title which is acknowledged by the Government of the kingdom, and is in accordance with general usage." The Archbishop, in his reply, while declining to give any opinion as to the law of the question, expressed regret that the Vicar had objected to the inscription, and counselled an appeal to the Bishop of the diocese, the Rev. Dr. Wordsworth. This advice was followed with the result that Dr. Wordsworth supported the view of the Vicar—telling his Nonconformist correspondent that he could not acknowledge a Wesleyan preacher as "duly qualified to administer the word of God and sacraments in a church," hinting that he would be happy to concede the title if, after due training and trial, he should seek and obtain admission to holy orders in the Church of England; and reminded him that John Wesley regarded his preachers as laymen, and forbade them to assume the title of reverend. "Any one who gives them that title (the Bishop added) contravenes the injunctions of John Wesley, for whose memory I entertain sincere respect, and to whose authority I desire to defer in my relations with the members of that important religious community which derives its name from him;" and to show that he meant what he said, he addressed his letter to "Mr. Henry Keet, Wesleyan Preacher." All this correspondence was read at the Conference on Monday. The clerical members did not conceal that they considered themselves insulted; the "intolerance" of the Vicar and the Bishop was hotly denounced; and the Committee of Privileges were instructed to inquire into the law of the case.

At the Conference yesterday, the statistics of members were read, showing the total number in the Society to be 351,643, being a net increase in the year of 3005.—*Glasgow Herald* 12th August.

The new brick Church in course of erection, by Knox Church Congregation, Dundas is now being roofed in. When finished, it will be an ornament to the town, and a credit to those who have undertaken its erection.

Official Announcements.

- SIMCOE.—At Bond Head, on Wednesday, Sept. 2, at 11 a.m.
- TORONTO.—This Presbytery will meet in the lecture room of Knox Church, Toronto, on Tuesday, the 15th of September, at 11 a.m.
- HAMILTON.—This Presbytery is appointed to meet in Macnab Street Church, Hamilton, on the 2nd Tuesday of next October, at 11 a.m.
- KINGSTON.—Presbytery of Kingston, will meet at Chalmers' Church, on the second Tuesday of October at three o'clock, p.m.
- PARIS.—This Presbytery meets in Zion Church, Brantford, on Tuesday, the 29th September, at two p.m.
- The Presbytery of Montreal, will meet at Montreal, in Presbyterian College, on the seventh day of October next.
- CHATHAM.—In Adelaide Street Church, Chatham, on Tuesday, 29th September, at 11 a.m. Returns to the Minutes of Assembly from Sessions and Congregations will be called for at this meeting.
- LONDON.—At London, in 1st Presbyterian Church on last Tuesday of September, at 11 a.m.
- BROCKVILLE.—At Prescott, on 3rd Tuesday of September, at 2.30 p.m. Congregations and sessions to report on Remit on Union.
- OTTAWA.—At Ottawa, in Bank St Church, on 3rd Tuesday of Nov. An adjourned meeting will be held at Metcalfe, on 29th September at 6 p.m.
- H. RON.—At Seaford, on 2nd Tuesday of October, at 11 a.m.
- GUELPH.—At Elora, in Knox Church, on 2nd Tuesday of October, at 9 a.m.
- STRATFORD.—At Stratford, on 1st Tuesday of September, at 11 a.m.
- OWEN SOUND.—At Owen Sound, on 3rd Tuesday of September, at 10 a.m.
- DURHAM.—At Durham, on 3rd Tuesday of September, at 10 a.m.
- ONTARIO.—At Port Perry, on 8th September, at 11 a.m.
- CORONA.—At Millbrook, on last Tuesday of September, at 11 a.m.
- BRUCE.—At Paisley, on last Tuesday of September, at 2 p.m.

ADDRESSES OF TREASURERS OF CHURCH FUNDS.

- Temporaries Board and Sustentation Fund—James Croft, Montreal.
- Ministers', Widows' and Orphans' Fund—Archibald Ferguson, Montreal.
- French Mission—James Croft, Montreal.
- Juvenile Mission—Miss Macfar, Kingston Ont.
- Manitoba Mission—George H. Wilson, Toronto.
- Scholarship and Bursary Fund—Prof. F. on Kingston.

BIRTH.

- On the 21st ult., at No. 19 Avenue St., the wife of Mr. Wm. Adamson, merchant, of a daughter.
- At 14 Duquesne Street, on the 31st ult., the wife of Mr. John Winchester, of a son.
- At Orillia, on Monday 31st August, the wife of Mr. J. Murray, of *The Expositor*, of a son.

MARRIED.

- At the residence of the bride's father, Clinton, on the 1st inst., by the Rev. Mr. MacQuarrie, Mr. Robert Neal, merchant, Plattsburgh, (formerly of Stratford) to Miss Cassie Gilchrist.
- At the residence of Robert Aggr, Esq., Carroll St., Ingersoll brother-in-law of the bride, 30th ult., by the Rev. B. N. Grant, William Harrison Wright, Esq., of Detroit, to Miss Agnes Ballard, of this town.
- In Embro, 23d ult., at the residence of Mr. George Forrest, by the Rev. G. Munro, Mr. George Hall, to Miss Margaret Robinson, of St. Fergus, Aberdeenshire, Scotland.
- On the 10th August at the residence of the bride's father, by the Rev. F. Bentley, William Borthwick, Esq., to Katie McEldin, third daughter of George Munro, Esq., both of Galt.