

F1028
1889 R

PREFACE.

The subject of the following paper is one that, however carefully and concisely treated, could not possibly be brought fully under view in a single lecture, consequently it is with some reluctance that the writer consents to have it printed, more especially as the lecture was prepared hurriedly, during the pressure of other business.

The question involved is pre-eminently a moral one, relating to the natural rights of man. It deals with a principle at the basis of the social compact which is essentially unjust. The difficulty in dealing with it lies, not so much in the nature of the subject itself, as in directing men's attention to it, and in getting them to think on its character and bearing. It is not easy to look at social matters of this kind with an open mind, free from the bias of long established custom and usage. One brought up in society where slavery prevails unquestioned, would find it difficult to think of it in any other light than as right and proper and even necessary. If it were regarded as right throughout the world it would be still more difficult for the mind to admit of its justice being called in question. Anyone challenging its rightness or attempting to expose its evil with a view to abolish it, would meet with the most determined opposition, and all sorts of plausible arguments would be advanced in its defence, such as those connected with vested rights, the prosperity of the State, the well being of the slaves, &c., and Scripture authority would be copiously adduced to back these. Such we know to have been the case where slavery has existed in modern times. We have a parallel case in what is now before us.