

Now it is weak and a little strength will suffice for a death-blow. Soon all your power will not master it.

That covetous thought; had Ahab stopped it; or Gehazi, or Judas, what a change might have been wrought in character and destiny. In your bosom it aims at power. It will have it. Nothing can prevent it but its expulsion. And the power which, indulged, it cannot but gain, what fetters it will bind the soul and what stripes it will lay upon it.

That thought, that wicked thought, say not, think not it is a trifle. No being in the universe can think so, but a sinner in his dreadful blindness. What relations are born by that wicked thought! to the divine law and to the moral government of God—no temporal welfare—no eternal destiny!—With all solemnity and earnestness is the admonition now given, STOP THAT WICKED THOUGHT!

SLAVERY.

[We give the following extract from an able editorial article of the last *Ecclesiastical and Missionary Record*. We should like to see some upholding for Slavery attempt, by fair principles of reasoning, to refute it.]

"The published views of Dr. Spring (see his work, entitled 'The obligations of the world to the Bible') we presume, may be fairly taken as a specimen of the Theology prevalent in the churches of the United States, as touching this question. We must regard them as exceedingly defective, though plausible. The ground he takes is this: that the New Testament recognizes the relation of slaveholder and slave; and that without interfering with this relation, it seeks by the spirit it diffuses—the spirit of humanity and equity—to mitigate all its evils, and to put an end to its abuses. By denying the system in itself to be unscriptural, we give to the friends of slavery all they want. They—many of them—will not seek to vindicate its abuses. Many a slaveholder we perfectly believe, will neither justify his own inhumanity, nor his neighbour slaveholder's, whether that inhumanity be exercised towards his servant, or his horse, or his ass! It is enough for him to be permitted to retain property in the one as in the other; and if Slavery be consider'd as not sinful in itself, it is in vain to allege that the treatment due to the slave is still that which shall proceed on a recognition of the rights of a rational being and a Christian. Property in man being allowed, as in chattels and things—for that is the law of Slavery—all such lessons and cautions will be 'as sounding brass.' We may talk of the general principles of Christianity as we may; but we talk of them to no purpose, if we do not interpret them as requiring, not the cure of the abuses of such a system, but its extirpation. Why, what is the consequence of treating man as a chattel? He passes, like other property, from hand to hand, under a law of permanent degradation, which, if even individual humanity may mitigate it, is dependent upon such mitigation on the life, or the character, or fortune of the owner for the time being. On a reverse of fortune, or a change of mastership, the poor slave must abide, equally as any other vendible article, the consequences of a transfer or the fate of the market. He is doomed, by the law of Slavery, to have no voice in the allocation of his person or his family. Neither his reason, nor conscience, nor affections are to be consulted. He holds and can hold, no property; he can enter into no contract—not even into that of marriage—but at the will of his master, and it lasts only during the master's pleasure. He is doomed as the natural consequence of this state of things, to ignorance. Knowledge even of the scriptures, is forbidden him by law. Vice—licentiousness—these he is taught to consider as innocent; or they follow, by an almost necessary consequence, from the condition to which he is doomed.

To allege Scripture in justification or palliation of such a system, is to write a libel on the Word of God. Slavery is opposed by its letter and its spirit. The very law of Moses, which has sometimes been appealed to by the advocates of Slavery, because of a species of bondage which it permitted on peculiar grounds, doomed the man-stealer to death (Exod. xxi. 16). The New Testament associates the man-stealer with the murderer. (1 Tim. 1, 10.) There is scarcely a crime reckoned with in more stringent terms, whether in the Old Testament or the New, than oppression, the refusal of the just wages of the labourer, or the building of a house by iniquity and extortion.

That the New Testament, in addressing its directions to servants, does not expressly except slaves from the obligation of obedience, is no more an allowance of the slavery existing in those days, than the general direction to subjects to obey rulers and magistrates, implies a recognition of the despotism of a Nero or a Caligula.

That servants are bidden to be subject even to forward masters (1 Pet. 2.) is no more a justification of the oppressor's right, than the precept to turn the cheek to him that smiteth, is a sanction for wanton injury, and an order for passive submission to every insult, or for the permission of such insult by law.

That servants are bidden not to be careful as to their state, whether bond or free (though if they may be made free to use it rather), is but one of many instances in which quiet submission to our Providential lot is inculcated, on an enlarged view of the relative magnitude of temporal and eternal interests. But such passages are perverted and abused when they are brought to justify iniquitous laws, which adjudge human beings to suffering and debasement without cause; for on a like principle of interpretation, we might hold every man forbidden to better his worldly estate, or to aspire to any condition beyond that in which at any one time he finds himself.

The New Testament deals in general exhortations. It lays down the law of love. It brings the appropriate motives to all justice and charity to bear on our conscience and feelings; it does not decree in so many words the form which a social policy or a domestic, modelled on its principles, must assume. It presupposes the law of nature, however; and every human relationship, not being congruous with that law, it must be understood to forbid; and so it not only requires that its principles be applied to remove the abuses of relationships that are sinful, but even to re-adjust those relationships themselves.

On this ground it is not enough that public sentiment gradually conform to the Bible, to the extent of discouraging the abuses of Slavery. The New Testament, though not naming every system of injustice and oppression, requires by its precepts and spirit, immediate reformation, whether of personal or social wrongs. Who will say that because it does not name the shows of the gladiators, its demands would be satisfied by general sentiment gradually accommodating to a purer standard? It will be allowed that such wholesale murders should at once be interdicted, and that their proscription forthwith was required by the Gospel. Not less peremptory nor less immediate was the duty of proscribing Slavery, if the law requiring 'justice and equality' in the treatment of servants was to be followed out. This is the law for the domestic state, and it implies contract—in fact the very precepts enjoining servants to obey cheerfully their masters, imply it. For the previous question—who is their lawful master? is open to every person whose labour is demanded or extorted—or is undefined or unrequited. It is nothing to the purpose to allege that many of the servants to whom the apostles wrote were slaves. It is only in so far as they acknowledged them as their masters, and while the relationship, by necessity, if not by consent, continued, that they can be considered as charged to render contented submission. The advocates of any other interpreta-

tion may be easily reduced to a dilemma. If, without inquiring into the ground of alleged propriety in the servant, the master is to be acknowledged as having a claim to the servant's obedience; then, supposing the servant, by the like law of force, to be able to subjugate the master to his authority, from that moment these precepts would equally bind the master to obey the servant, who is now his superior in turn. For, if contract be out of the question, the mere fact of present dominion will avail as well for the master of to-day as for the master of yesterday. Thus the pretended plea of the slaveholder is convertible into a warrant for the aggression of the slave:—the law of might being put to the law of right, the inferior has as good a claim to it as his superior. And the darling argument of the tyrant, whether pleaded in defence of public or domestic despotism, becomes as available for the justification of the revolutionist, and much more of the quiet fugitive. Seeing then in the body politic, the precepts inculcating subjection to rulers, do not forbid subjects to insist on a constitutional limitation of political authority; no more do precepts inculcating domestic subjection, preclude the right to insist on a definition of the reciprocal duties of master and servant, by equitable contract.

POPEERY AND PROTESTANTISM.

An able writer in the *British Quarterly* says: "Tell me where the Bible is, and where it is not, and I will write a moral geography of the world. One glance of your eye will inform you where the Bible is, and where it is not. Go to Italy—decay, degradation, suffering, meet you on every side. Commerce droops, agriculture sickens, the useful arts languish. There is a heaviness in the air; you feel cramped by some invisible power; the people dare not speak aloud; they walk slowly; an armed soldiery is around their dwellings; the armed police take away from the stranger his Bible, before he enters the territory. Ask for the Bible in the book stores; it is not there, or in a form so large and extensive as to be beyond the reach of the common people. The preacher takes no text from the Bible. Enter the Vatican and enquire for a Bible, and you will be pointed to some case where it reposes among the prohibited books, side by side with the works of Diderot, Rousseau, and Voltaire. But pass over the Alps into Switzerland, and down the Rhine into Holland, and over the Channel into England and Scotland, and what an amazing contrast meets the eye! Men look with an air of independence; there are industry, neatness, instruction of children. Why this difference? There is no brighter sky—there are no fairer scenes of nature—but they have the Bible, and happy are the people who are in such a case, for it is righteousness that exalteth a nation."

The grand and distinguishing characteristic of Protestantism as compared with Popery, is the right which it asserts for every man not only to have a Bible, but to interpret it according to the dictates of his own judgment. Thus it was which constituted the glory of the reformation, and has led to England's becoming the most powerful nation in the world. Wherever men are taught to believe that the priest stands between them and heaven, and that a hierarchy is the only means through which heaven's blessings can be communicated, there priestcraft reigns, and the moral and mental energies of the human mind are crushed. Neither the Bible, nor the right of free inquiry, will be tolerated in any country where this dogma rules; and hence the degradation of Italy, and the deplorable condition of all the states of the Church. Hence, also, the physical and social degradation of Ireland; for, whatever other causes may have operated to hinder her advancement in the progress of nations, Popery has been the great incubus by which Ireland has been oppressed. In the south of Ireland, men take their religion from the priest—in the north they take it from the Bible. In the south, famine and wretchedness, ignorance and crime, every where abound;—in the north,