

By this thoughtful and prolonged perusal of the products of the master-minds of the literature, the student will preserve and strengthen what is national and idiomatic in his mental structure, while at the same time he will more genially appreciate, and heartily relish, what is national and idiomatic in other literatures. And, what is not less important, he will be storing his mind with the best sense and reason of the nation to which he belongs; he will be planting the seeds and germs of all noble and ennobling truths, thereby preparing himself to be an original and influential thinker and author in his own day and generation. For the words of Chaucer are as true now as ever:

Out of the olde fieldes, as men saithe,  
Cometh all this newe corn fro yere to yere;  
And out of olde bookes, in good faithe,  
Cometh all this newe science, that men lere.<sup>1</sup>

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## ARTICLE V.

### THE HISTORICAL AND LEGAL JUDGMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES AGAINST SLAVERY.

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[Continued from p. 48.]

#### *Statute for the Protection of Oppressed Fugitives.*

THE Mosaic legislation, the more it is examined, is seen to be a system of supernatural, divine wisdom. Amidst a congeries of particulars, sometimes seemingly disconnected, great underlying and controlling principles break out. The principle revealed in the statute against man-stealing, is the same developed in the next statute which we are to consider, in the order of the logical and historical argument from the

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<sup>1</sup> Assembly of Fowles. Stanza IV.

Old Testament Scriptures against slavery. The principle is that of the sacredness of the human personality, which cannot be made an article of traffic, cannot be bought and sold, without a degree of criminality in the action like the criminality of murder. As the sacredness of human life is guarded by the penalty of death for the crime of maliciously *killing* a man, so the sacredness of human liberty, the property of a man's personality, as residing solely in himself, is guarded by the same penalty against the crime of *stealing* a man. The theft is that of himself *from* himself, and from God his Maker. As murder is the destruction of the life, so man-stealing and selling is the destruction of the personality, the degradation of the man into a thing, a chattel, an article of property, transferred, bartered for a price, as if there were no immortal soul nor personal will in existence.

The statute in Deut. 23: 15, 16, is properly to be examined next after that in Exod. 21: 16 and Deut. 24: 7. The whole form of the statute is as follows: "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee. He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him." Of the *interpretation* of this statute, there cannot be the least doubt; as to its *application* only can there remain, in any mind, some little question.

The first thing to be considered is the language: "Thou shalt not deliver up the servant to his master, which is escaped unto thee from his master." *The servant to his master*, עֶבֶד אֶל-אֲדֹנָיו. It is not, *the slave to his owner*, or the *heathen slave to his owner*, which would have been the proper form of expression, if either *slaves* at any rate were under consideration, or *heathen slaves* alone. The word for servant is the ordinary עֶבֶד, and the word for his master is אֲדֹנָיו, which is to be compared and contrasted with the word for owner (בַּיִת), the latter word being used when a beast or an article of property instead of a human being is spoken of. The contrast may be fairly and fully seen, and the usage demonstrated, by comparing Ex. 21: 4, 5, 6, 8, with Ex. 21: 28, 29

32, 34, and 36, and likewise Ex. 22: 11, 12, 14, 15. Here, in the first case, where the subject is a human being (the servant), the *master* (אֲדוֹנָיו) is spoken of, but never the *owner*. The relations and responsibilities are brought to view between master and servant, but never between owner and slave. But in the other cases, where the subject is property, as an ox, ass, sheep, or article of raiment or furniture, the *owner* (בַּעֲלֵי) is spoken of, not the master. The distinction is one of purpose and care, and not accidental; and in no case is any such relation between human beings brought to view as of the one being owner of the other, with sanction of such relation. The history of such relationship is the history of crime, and the selling of human beings is always a criminal transaction. The whole transaction of the selling of Joseph is described as the crime of stealing; and no person in Judea could ever have sold any human being, no matter by what means in his power, without the conviction of doing what was forbidden of God. Man-selling was no more permitted than man-stealing. Accordingly, there are no instances of its being practised.

Now if there had been in Judea, from Abraham downwards, the system of what we call slavery, the system of chattelism, the purchase, ownership, and sale, of human beings as articles of property, there must have been some traces of such purchase, ownership, and sale, in the history of the people. Their domestic life is so fully set before us, that, if this system were a fixture of it, the evidence could not fail to have leaked out; nay, the proof would have been glaring. If this fixture, with all its concomitant transactions and habits, had existed, had been maintained, as a national institute, *against* the divine law, we should as certainly have found it in the history and the books of the prophets, as idolatry itself; we do find it instantly recorded, in the only cases in which it was attempted; and the case in which the crime was completed, occasioned the instant vengeance of God, in the destruction of the Jewish State. But if it had existed by *appointment* of the divine law, under the sanction and favor of God, then much more should we have found some traces of

it, not only in the law itself, but in the manners and customs of the people, and in their historical and commercial records.

But in the whole history, from that of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, down through the whole line of their descendants, not one instance is to be found of the sale of a man, a servant or a slave. The only approximations to such a thing are treated and denounced as criminal; as for example in Amos 2: 6, thus saith the Lord, "For three transgressions of Israel and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof, because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes." When they obtained servants, or purchased them, as the phrase was, they purchased their time and labor from themselves; but if they attempted to sell them, it could not be done without stealing them; it was making articles of property out of them; it was asserting and violently assuming ownership in them; it was man-stealing. But if slavery had been a legal institution appointed of God, a righteous policy and habit of the domestic life, we should have found, somewhere, some traces of the transactions by which always it is attended and maintained. We should have found mention not only of obtaining servants by contracts made *with* them, but of buying *them*, as slaves, from others, and of ownership in them, and of the sale of them; and if they were considered in law as chattels, as articles of property, we should have found legal provisions for reclaiming and securing them when lost, fugitive, or stolen; just as we do in the cases of oxen, asses, sheep, or property of any kind, lost, strayed, or stolen. It would not be possible, for example, to write the history of laws and customs in the United States for a single century, without such traces of slavery and of slave-laws coming out.

When, therefore, we search for such traces in the Mosaic legislation, what do we stumble upon? The first thing in regard to fugitives is this law before us, a law made *for their protection against their masters*, and not in behalf of the masters, or to recover their lost property. The judgment gathered from this law in regard to slavery is in condemna-

tion of the whole system, and remains in full, to whatever class of inhabitants the passage be applied. The question is, whether its operation was intended to comprehend Hebrew servants, or heathen servants only; whether it was a law for Judea at home, or for the nations abroad, or equally for both.

1. There is no restriction or limitation expressed; it would have to be supposed, and a construction forced upon the passage, which the terms do not indicate, and will hardly permit. It would be unfortunate to have to treat any passage in this manner, to make out a case, unless the context required it, or the history and some more comprehensive laws enforced it. Compare, for illustration, the command in Isaiah 58: 6, 9, where it is enjoined: "to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke." And again: "If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke." We might assert concerning these passages that they referred only to the heathen, whereas it is notorious that they applied to abuses and oppressions committed, not among the heathen, but in Judea itself, by the Hebrews themselves, and not against strangers only, but against their own countrymen, as in Amos 2: 6, and 8: 6, and Jer. 22: 13-17, and Hab. 1: 14-16, and other places. But when it is said, *that ye break every yoke*, it is not meant that the lawful and appointed contracts with Hebrew servants or others were to be broken up, for those were not yokes, nor regarded as such; and it only needed the application of common sense to know perfectly the application of the passage to unjust and illegal oppressions. But again, if a stranger or a heathen was thus oppressed and subjected to the yoke, it applied to him, as well as to the Hebrew; and the distinction was well known between oppressive and involuntary servitude, which was forbidden of God, and the voluntary service for paid wages or purchase-money, as appointed by the law. The command *to take away the yoke from the midst of thee*, applies to every form of bondage imposed upon any persons whatsoever in the land, contrary to the

divine law, and without agreement on the part of the servant. The fugitive from such oppression was to be relieved and protected, and not delivered back to bondage. The Hebrew is emphatic, אֶת־תְּסִיר מִתּוֹכָהּ מִיָּדְךָ, if thou remove *from the midst of thee* the yoke; the yoke in thine own country, not in a heathen country. And so, in the statute before us, the oppression, the escape, and the protection are neither, nor all, exclusive of Hebrews.

2. But second, it is contended by some, that this is merely a law to prevent heathen slaves that were escaping into the land of Judea, from being sent back to their heathen masters. It certainly comprehends this class of persons, and this would be an inevitable result of its operation, at any rate, whether Hebrew servants were excluded, or not. But no intimation can be found, either in the text, the context, or the whole history, of its application being restricted to the heathen. The word in this statute used for *servant* is עֶבֶד. It is not a statute concerning the *hired servant*, the שֶׂפַח, nor the six years' hired servant, who could not be compelled to remain at service any longer than that period, but was free as soon as his engagement was over. It certainly could not apply to him, for he received his pay from his master beforehand, and the law would have been an incentive to dishonesty and villany, if he could have received his six years' wages, on entering into covenant of service, and the next week could have decamped from his master with the money in his pocket, secure against being retaken. Such a person was not the עֶבֶד contemplated in this law, nor could there have been any danger of its being so perverted. At the same time, the proofs are numerous that in the land of Judea, among the Hebrews themselves, there were, and would be, persons unjustly held as servants beyond their time of service, as contracted for, persons oppressed in such bondage, and for whose protection such a statute as the fugitive law before us, might be more necessary than for persons fleeing from idolatrous masters in heathen lands.

3. In the third place, then, we must remember, that there were servants in Judea, both of the Hebrews and the hea-

then, whose term of service was not limited to six years, but extended, with somewhat more undefined dominion of the master, to the Jubilee. There were servants of all work, indentured servants, bound, by their own contract, for the whole number of years intervening between the time of the contract and the Jubilee. These were mostly of heathen families, though also of Hebrew, and were much more in the power of their masters for ill treatment and oppression, if they were cruelly disposed. Now it is most likely that the statute in question was interposed for the protection of just this class of servants from the cruelty of their masters; servants, the nature and the term of whose service was, to such a degree, undefined and unlimited. There certainly was such a kind of service, and such a class of servants, to which and to whom the expressions *עֲבָדִי*, and *service of an עֲבָדִי* peculiarly applied. See, for example, Lev. 25: 39, 40: the Hebrew servant, contracting till the Jubilee, shall not be compelled to serve with the service of an *עֲבָדִי* (the servant of all work), but as a hired servant and a sojourner. But the *term* of service was unlimited, except by the Jubilee; and so, in some respects, was the power of the master.

The statute before us seems to have been passed for the protection of such servants from the possible cruelty of their masters. Although it was not deemed best entirely to abolish that kind and tenure of servitude, but to lay it mainly upon the idolatrous nations who were to be conquered by the Jews; yet God imposed such protective safeguards in respect to it, as would keep it from being a cruel and unjust treatment, even of them; such safeguards, that the masters should find kindness towards their servants not only commanded by the letter and spirit of the law, but the only safe and profitable policy. Therefore it was enacted that, if any servant chose to flee from a tyrannical and cruel master, and could succeed in getting away, the master should not be able by law to recover him, should not be able to force him back; or, at all events, that none should be obliged to return him to his master; on the contrary, that those to whom he might flee from the oppression of a cruel master, should be bound

to protect him, should not be permitted to deliver him up, but should give him shelter, and suffer him to dwell in safety, wherever he chose, without oppressing him.

This beneficent statute was, in this view, a key-stone for the arch of freedom which the Jewish legislation was appointed to rear in the midst of universal despotism and slavery; it formed a security for the keeping of all the other many provisions in favor of those held to labor or domestic service; it opened a gate of refuge for the oppressed, and operated as a powerful restraint against the cruelty of the tyrannical master. There might be cruelty and tyranny in the land of Judea, but there was a legal escape from it; the servant, the עֶבֶד, if men attempted to treat him as a slave, could quit and choose his master, was not compelled to abide in bondage, was not hunted as a fugitive, nay, by law was protected from being so hunted, and everywhere, on his escape, found friends in every dwelling, and a friend and protector in the law.

It is impossible that such a provision as this should be made only in regard to the heathen slaves of the Canaanites, or of the nations around Judea, since the Jews were forbidden to enter into any treaties with the Canaanites, and were commanded to bring under tribute of service as many of them as were spared. Their whole legislation, in regard to all the heathen, was by no means that of amity with masters or kings, but of opposition and of jealousy against them. They were forbidden to enter into covenant with them. Nor was there any more need of a statute for not restoring heathen slaves that had fled into the country of the Hebrews, than there would be of a law in Great Britain for not restoring the slaves of Egypt, or of the South-Sea Islanders, or of the cannibals or savages in New Zealand, that had got away from their masters. But there might be need of such a law among the Hebrews, to mitigate the evils of servitude, to preserve the עֶבֶד, the indentured servant of all work, from cruelty and oppression, to prevent his service from passing into slavery, and to render it for the master's interest to treat him well and kindly, as knowing that, if he did not, the in-

jured servant could escape from him, and seek another master, with impunity. So, if he would not lose him altogether, he was compelled to treat him kindly.

There was no such law as this, no such humane statute, among the heathen ; and hence the heathen masters were ferocious despots, and were accustomed to restore fugitive slaves, even for the support of the system of slavery, that there might be neither relief nor release from their own authority, nor restraint nor check upon their own cruelty. Accordingly we see the terror of the Egyptian slave whom David encountered after the foray upon Ziklag, lest he should be sent back to his master (1 Sam. 30: 15). The slave called himself a *young man of Egypt* (נַיִר מִצְרַיִם), *the servant* (עָבָד) to an Amalekite (1 Sam. 30: 11), and his master had left him to die, because he fell sick. He made David swear that he would not send him back into that slavery. There was no such system of slavery among the Hebrews, and, with this humane law, there could be none. The operation of this law, in connection with other statutes, was certain, at length, to destroy all remains of slavery among the people, and to make all within the limits of the Hebrew nation wholly free. To bring about this desirable end, God so surrounded the system of servitude with wholesome checks, and entangled and crippled it with such meshes of benevolent legislation, such careful protection of the servants, such guardianship of their rights, such admission of them to all the privileges of the covenant, such instruction of them, and such adoption of them at length as Hebrews, even when they were foreigners at first, that, in that land, among that people, there could be no such thing as that system of injustice, cruelty, and robbery, which we call slavery. It did not, and it could not, exist.

*Force of the demonstration from this Statute against the possibility of Property in Man.*

This law, like the grand statute against man-stealing, strikes at the principle of property in man. It shows that

God would not permit human beings to be regarded as property, as slaves in our day are considered property. Even if they had been *called* slaves, it is clear that their masters were not considered to be their *owners*, for they could take themselves off at pleasure, if oppressed, and nevertheless no wrong was charged upon them for thus escaping from bondage. They did not belong to the master in such manner that wherever found he had a claim upon them, and they must be given back. When they fled away, they were not considered as having stolen themselves; and the man who found them neither acquired any claim over them himself, nor was under any obligation to the master to return them or to inform against them. The master, in such a case, was not the owner.

This statute must be compared, under this view, with the laws concerning the restoration of articles of property, whether found or stolen, and it will at once be seen what a difference is made between the ownership of a man over his servants, and over his cattle, his lands, his houses, and all riches. Ex. 23: 4: "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again." So in Deuteronomy: "Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them; thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again. In like manner shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do with his raiment; and with all lost things of thy brother's, which he has lost and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise; thou mayest not hide thyself" (Deut. 22: 1—3).

Now as to the force of this demonstration that men cannot be property, that men-servants and maid-servants were not and could not be the property of their masters, it makes no difference whether this statute be restricted to the heathen or not. It was incumbent on the Jew, if he saw the ox or the ass, even of his enemy, even of a heathen, or a stranger,

going astray, to inform him of it, or bring the animal back; it *belonged* to the man who had lost it, from whose power it had escaped. But if the servant of the same man, worth to him fourfold, escaped from him, and the Jew knew it, there was not only no obligation to let the master know, or to help return the fugitive, but a direct command from God *not* to do this, but on the contrary to aid and protect the fugitive. It is impossible to deny or condemn more forcibly the assumption of property in man. Yet that is the assumption on which slavery is grounded, and if God condemns the one, he does the other.

We may add that, if the servant in any class, either the עֶבֶד or the עֲבָדָי, had been regarded as property, and if the law against the recapture or restoration of fugitive servants was intended only with reference to foreigners, and did not apply to the Hebrews, then must the exception necessarily have been made clear in such a statute as Deut. 22: 1-3. "All lost things" of his brother's, a Hebrew was bound to restore; and if slaves were property, and the Hebrews had held slaves, then inevitably must lost or escaped slaves have been enumerated as among the things to be restored. Compare Ex. 22: 9, "For all manner of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, which another challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges, and whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbor." If men had not been forbidden thus to challenge the fugitive עֶבֶד, the escaping *servant*, as their property, a like provision must inevitably have been made for trying *this* claim also before the judges. But in the whole history of the Hebrews, there are no instances on record of the reclamation of fugitive slaves in their country, under their laws. There are cases mentioned of servants escaping; and the statute itself was the supposition that they *would* escape, and formed a protection and a safeguard for them; but there is never a case named, nor any intimation of any such event, of a master hunting for slaves, going in search of, or reclaiming, his runaway property, in the country of

the Hebrews. There are instances of men going from Dan to Beersheba to hunt up and reclaim an ox or an ass, but never a hint of any such thing as a man hunting, or reclaiming, or recapturing, a fugitive servant.

And yet, from incidental testimony, the more striking because it falls out naturally in the course of the history of David, we said that it was no uncommon thing for servants to escape, and to be going at large, unmolested. Nabal's complaint to the messengers of David proves this; "there be many servants (עֲבָדִים) nowadays, that break away every man from his master (1 Sam. 25: 10);" and the manner of the complaint argues the anger of Nabal because such a thing could be, and the servants get off with impunity. But no instance can be found of any man undertaking, with marshals, or otherwise, to recapture them. There is no hint of any *posse comitatus* at the disposal of the master for this purpose. Had there been such a thing as a Fugitive Slave Law *against* the slave, instead of one for his protection, Nabal's language would rather have been that of threatening, than complaint. "You rogues, if you do not take yourselves off, I will have you arrested as fugitive slaves, such as you doubtless are, you vagrant rascals. I will have you lodged in the county jail, and, if your master does not appear, you shall be sold to pay the jail fees." But Nabal's language is that of "a son of Belial," who is furious because there is no help for such insubordination against tyranny.

The case of Shimei must be considered in illustration, because, at first thought, it might seem to be an exception, and might appear as an instance of reclamation. 1 Kings 2: 39, 40. Two of the servants (עֲבָדִים) of Shimei ran away to Achish, king of Gath, son of Maachah, and from thence information came to Shimei; and in his blind haste to recapture these runaways, forgetting or despising his oath to Solomon, he saddled his ass and went to Gath, and found his servants, and brought them back to Jerusalem. It is no wonder, from the description given of Shimei's cursed manners and disposition, that his servants, even purchased, as they may have been, from the heathen, could

not endure his service, but preferred to run away even into a heathen country; and it is not a little singular that the first and only instance of a slave-hunter figuring in sacred history is that of this condemned liar, hypocrite, and blasphemer. But he captures his servants in the country of the Philistines, and not in a land under Hebrew law. Doubtless, they were foreigners and heathen, not Hebrews, or they would not have fled away to Achish king of Gath; they would have been secure against Shimei's claim in their own country, but there was no law for the protection of slaves in the land of the Philistines; and, although they imagined themselves more secure from pursuit there, especially as they must have known that their master himself was a prisoner of State within certain limits in Jerusalem, yet the rage of Shimei defeated their calculations, and they were brought back. It may have been by some friendship of Achish with Shimei, and a spite against king Solomon, that this was accomplished, which made king Solomon the more ready to inflict upon Shimei, without any farther reprieve, the sentence he had brought upon himself.

The history in 2 Chron. 28: 8-15, has an important bearing in illustration of this and other statutes, especially those for the protection of the Hebrews from becoming slaves. The kingdoms of Judah and Israel were at war, and the latter had taken captive of the former two hundred thousand, whom they proposed to keep for bond-men and bond-women, the ordinary fate of those taken captive in war. But the fierce wrath of God was instantly threatened, if they carried this intended crime into execution; and some able and patriotic leaders of the tribe of Ephraim resisted the proposition with such effectual energy, that the men of the army left the captives to their disposal; whereupon they generously clothed and fed them and carried them back free to their own country. The intention had been, contrary to the divine law, to bring them into bondage in a manner expressly forbidden. It is to be feared that in some instances the legal prohibitions against such slavery had already been set at defiance both by rulers and people in the two king-

doms; but never yet had the attempt been made in so bold and public a manner, and on so huge a scale, to over-ride the laws.

There are very decisive intimations, however, that look as if this iniquity of a forced and continued bondage, by which the Jewish masters retained their servants contrary to law, had become, at a later period, one of the great outstanding crimes of the nation. After the division of the kingdom into two, those persons unjustly held in bondage would be likely to take refuge from cruel taskmasters in one kingdom by fleeing into the other; and the law in Deuteronomy was unquestionable and explicit: "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee. He shall dwell with thee, where it liketh him best. Thou shalt not oppress him." Contrary to this great statute of Jehovah, there may have been compacts or compromises, between the two kingdoms, for the delivering up of such fugitives; or if not between the kingdoms, at least between confederacies of masters. But, whatever fugitive slave laws might be passed, or compacts entered into, they were all as so many condemned statutes, judged and condemned beforehand by the law of God, and to be held null and void by those who would keep his commandments. Nevertheless, with the example once set, first in one kingdom, then in the other, of such unrighteous statutes, it might become comparatively easy, through powerful local interests, by the combination of large holders, or of those who could profitably become slave-masters by trading with the heathen, not only to evade the divine law, but at length to get statutes passed, though manifestly and directly contrary to it, for the protection of slave-property, or to assist in retaining or recovering such property. There might be enactments for the interest of the masters, setting at nought all the provisions of the divine law for the limitation of servitude, the preventing of slavery, and the protection and emancipation of indentured servants.

That some such form of oppression began to be prevalent soon after the separation of the kingdoms of Judah and Is-

rael, the tenor of the Prophets and the Psalms, from Joel to Malachi, leads us to suppose. It is probable that this legislation for the masters, this care for their interests and their favor, this oppression of those whom they held in bondage, and this disregard of the divine law in their behalf, are referred to by the prophet Amos, especially in the fourth chapter of his prophecy, where God rebukes the princes, the rulers, and the wealthy and great men, for oppressing the poor and crushing the needy, but saying to their *masters*: Bring business and wealth, and let us trade and drink together (Amos 4: 1. Compare also Amos 2: 6.): "They sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes." Scott's note on the first of these passages presents the case in a manner not improbable: "They crushed and trampled on their unresisting brethren, and sold them for slaves. Having made the iniquitous bargain, perhaps on low terms, they required from the purchaser, in this *slave-trade*, to be treated with wine." It may have been partly in reference to such sins as these, that the rebuke of God by the prophet Micah was directed, that "the statutes of Omri were kept, and all the counsels of the house of Ahab" (Micah 6: 16). For, immediately after that indictment, it is asserted that 'men are hunting every man his brother with a net, and the prince asketh, and the judge asketh, for a reward, and the great man uttereth his mischievous desire, and so they wrap it up, the best of them being as a brier, and the most upright sharper than a thorn-hedge' (Micah 7: 2, 3, 4).

It was in reference to such iniquity, this great and glaring guilt of oppression especially, that many passages in the Prophets and the Psalms were written. "Wo unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed, to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people" (Isa. 10: 1). "He looked for judgment, but behold oppression" (Isa. 5: 7). "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. Your hands are full of blood. When ye make many prayers, I will not hear. Put away the evil of

your doings. Seek judgment; relieve the oppressed" (Isa. 1: 10, 17). "Wo unto them which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him. Therefore, as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust, because they have cast away the law of the Lord of Hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. 5: 23, 24. Comp. Jer. 6: 6 and 7: 5, 6 and 22: 17).

It is in the light of such historic references, showing to what a degree the Jews had corrupted justice, and set up oppression, in a system of precedent and law, in contempt of the divine law, that we come to the consideration of the great illustrative record in Jer. xxxiv. The progress of the iniquity and the ruin therein recorded had been gradual, from father to son, from generation to generation (Jer. 34: 14); but at length it arose to the crisis of an open, combined, and positive rebellion against God, in entirely trampling under foot the great ordinance against Hebrew slavery, contained in Ex. 21: 2, and confirmed and guarded by other statutes. The crime of injustice and rebellion was the more marked and daring, because it had been preceded by a fitful penitence and acknowledgment of the oppression, and acceptance of the law as righteous, and a return to its observance, with a new covenant to that effect. So the whole people, princes and people, loosed their grasp upon the servants they had been unjustly retaining in bondage, and for a season, at the word of the Lord, let them go. But on reflection, they felt that it was too great a sacrifice of power, and a relinquishment of property, to which they would not submit. "So they turned, and caused the servants and the handmaids, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into subjection for servants and for handmaids" (Jer. 34: 11). Then came the word of the Lord, and its execution followed, as the lightning doth the thunder: "Because ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbor, behold I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to

the pestilence, and to the famine, and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth" (Jer. 34: 17).

It throws a solemn light of additional warning upon this transaction, to compare with this chapter of Jeremiah, the contemporary prophecy of Ezekiel, in the twenty-second chapter of that prophet. As men gather silver, brass, iron, lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it, so God informed Ezekiel that he was now gathering the whole house of Israel, that had become dross, priests, princes, prophets, and people, in the midst of Jerusalem, to pour out his fury upon them, and melt them as refuse metals in the midst of the fire. The indictment of their wickedness in this chapter, issued just three years before the prediction of Jeremiah, in the thirty-fourth of his prophecy, closes with these words: "*The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy; yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.* And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath; their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God."

Almost at the same moment, and in view of the same predicted event, though residing at so wide a distance from each other, these two prophets were charged with God's denunciation against the same sin of oppression, as the one climacteric occasion and cause of the destruction of the nation. God refers the people back to the first covenant of freedom (in Ex. xxii), abolishing and forbidding slavery forever; and the violation of that covenant, in the attempt to establish the forbidden sin, is distinctly and with sublime and awful emphasis, marked by Jehovah in his one, final, conclusive reason for giving over the nation into the hand of their enemies, and sweeping the whole community into bondage. It would not be possible to transmit, in historic form, a more tremendous reprobation of the sin of slavery,

and of slavery as a sin. From Ezek. xxii. and Jer. xxxiv., this lesson stands out as the one grand lesson of God's vengeance in the captivity.

We have now to consider the institution and law of the Jubilee, as the completion of the system of social benevolence and freedom embodied in the Mosaic statutes.

Meantime we have before us, even if we stopped short of that, a body of laws embracing, as thus far traced, beyond all comparison, the most benign, protective, and generous system of domestic servitude, the kindest to the servants, and the fairest for the masters, ever framed in any country or in any age. The rights of the servants are defined and guaranteed as strictly and with as much care, as those of the employers or masters. Human beings could not be degraded into slaves or chattels, or bound for involuntary service, or seized and worked for profit, and no wages paid. The defences against these outrages, the denouncement and prohibition of them, are among the clearest legal and historical judgments of God against slavery. The system of slavery in our own country, even in the light only of these provisions, holds its power by laws most manifestly conflicting with the divine law, and stands indisputably under the divine reprobation.

Four forms of statute-law combined, in this divinely-ordered social arrangement, to render slavery forever impossible among a people regardful of justice and obedient to God. First. The law of religious equality and dignity, gathering all classes as brethren and children of one family before God. Instruction, recreation, and rest, were secured in the institution of the Sabbath, and its cognate sacred seasons, following the same law; and freedom, not slavery, was inevitable.

Second. By the same system, the original act of oppression and violence, which has been the grand and almost only source of all the slavery in our own country, was branded and placed in the catalogue of crime, on a level with that of murder, to be punished by death. It requires no particular acuteness of vision to perceive that what was an injustice to the parents, worthy of death, cannot be transformed, in the

next generation, or the next after, to a righteous institution, sacred by the grace of God. By covenant, the curse of the Almighty is upon it.

Third. The right of possession to himself, is recognized as resting, by the nature of humanity and the authority of God's law, in each individual ; and the sacredness of the human personality is demonstrated by the same law to be such, that a human being cannot, but by the highest violence and crime, be degraded into an article of property and merchandise. From the Mosaic statutes, it is indisputable that such is the judgment of God ; and the successive history, which takes its course and coloring from them, or from their violation, confirms the demonstration. From the statutes and the history together, it is as clear that slavery is a moral abomination in the sight of God, as it is from the history in Genesis that the iniquity of Sodom and Gomorrah was a sin. The destruction of Judah and Jerusalem for the iniquity of oppression, *in this particular form, of a forced involuntary bondage*, was a more stupendous and enlightening judgment by far, all things considered, than the overwhelming of the cities of the plain with fire. How can it be possible for any unprejudiced reader of the word of God to avoid acknowledging our own condemnation in this light ?

Fourth. The protection, by statute, of the servant escaping from his master, instead of any provision for the master's regaining possession of the servant, was another interposition in behalf of the weaker party, in the same design of rendering slavery impossible, and is another plain indication of the judgment of God as to the iniquity of American slavery, and of the laws for the support of it. The Hebrew system was so absolute and effective a safeguard against oppression, and rendered any form of slavery so impracticable, and in its legitimate working would have so inevitably subdued the slavery of all surrounding nations to its own freedom, that it stands out as a superhuman production, the gift of God. The wisdom and benevolence of the Almighty appear in it to such a degree, in comparison and contrast with the habits and morals of the world, that the claim of the Pentateuch to a divine

inspiration might, in no small measure, be permitted to rest upon it.

*The Law of Jubilee.—Universality of its Application  
Demonstrated.*

We come now to the consideration of the Law of the Jubilee, in Lev. 25: 10, 35–55. This great statute of personal freedom was as follows: “Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a Jubilee unto you, and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.” LIBERTY THROUGHOUT THE LAND UNTO ALL THE INHABITANTS THEREOF. The expression is chosen on purpose for its comprehensiveness. It is not said to all the inhabitants of the land, *being Hebrews*, or such as are Hebrews, which restriction would have been made, had it been intended; as is manifest from the case in Jeremiah xxxiv, where the restriction is carefully and repeatedly announced. But the phrase *all the inhabitants of the land*, seems to have an intensity of meaning, comprehending, purposely, all, whether Hebrews or not; it being well known that many of the inhabitants of the land were *not* Hebrews. This phrase, the inhabitants of the land, had been frequently used to describe its old heathen possessors, the Canaanites, and others, as Ex. 23: 31; 34: 12, and Num. 32: 17; 33: 52. It is used, Josh. 2: 9; 7: 9; 9: 24, in the same way. It is never used restrictively for Hebrews alone; not an instance can be found of such usage in the Mosaic books. It is used in Jer. 1: 14, *an evil on all the inhabitants of the land*, and in Joel 1: 2, and 2: 1, *let all the inhabitants of the land tremble*. In this statute in Leviticus, it is the whole number of inhabitants of the land, *held in servitude*, that are included. Ye people of Israel shall do this, shall proclaim liberty to all the inhabitants of the land.

*And proclaim liberty throughout the land to all the inhabitants thereof.* The Hebrew is as follows: וְקָרְאתֶם דְּיוֹר תְּאַרְצְי לְכָל-יֹשְׁבֵי-הָאָרֶץ, *and preach freedom in the land to all the dwellers*

*thereof.* The expression is emphatic; the proclamation to be made throughout the length and breadth of the land, not to those only who inhabited it as Hebrews by descent, but to all that dwelt in it. Had it been intended to restrict the application of this statute, the class excluded from its application would have been named; another form of expression would have been used. Had it been intended to make a law broad, universal, unexceptional in its application, no other phraseology could be used than that which is used. If it had been a form of *class-legislation*, it must necessarily have been so worded as to admit of no mistake. But the expression employed is found, without exception, in all cases, with an unlimited, universal meaning. It is *never* used where a particular class alone are intended. The proof of its usage, and the demonstration from its usage may be seen by examination of the following passages.

Is. 18: 3, *All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth.* מְגֹרְשֵׁי הָאָרֶץ וְשׁוֹכְנֵי הָאָרֶץ. Here are two words used as synonymous. The first is the word employed in the law under consideration, from the verb יָשַׁב, with the meaning to *continue*, to  *dwell*, to  *inhabit*; and this is the word ordinarily employed to designate the whole people inhabiting a country. The second is from the verb שָׁבַן, to  *encamp*, to  *rest*, to  *dwell*, employed much less frequently, as in Job 26: 5, the waters and the inhabitants thereof, מַיִם וְשׁוֹכְנֵיהֶם. Also, Prov. 1: 33; 8: 12; 10: 30. Ps. 37: 29; 102: 28. In Is. 32: 16; 33: 24, and in Joel 3: 20, and some other places, as in Ps. 69: 35, both these verbs are used interchangeably. But the verb שָׁבַן is used exclusively in a number of passages which speak of God as dwelling among his people, or in his temple. And hence the use of the word Shechinah, שְׁכִינָה, the tabernacle of God's presence. In Is. 33: 24, we have the noun שָׁכֵן for *inhabitant*, and the verb יָשַׁב for the *people that dwell*. But the noun שָׁכֵן is very seldom used, while the participle from יָשַׁב is employed in more than seventy passages to signify the inhabitants of the land, or of the world without any restriction. For example:

Lev. 18: 25, the land vomiteth out *her inhabitants*, וְשׁוֹכְנֵיהָ.

Judges 2: 2, make no league with *the inhabitants of the land*, לְיִשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ.

Ps. 33: 8, all the inhabitants of the world, כָּל-יִשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל.

Ps. 33: 14, all the inhabitants of the earth, כָּל-יִשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ.

Is. 24: 1, 5, 6, 17, inhabitants of the earth. Also, 26: 9, inhabitants of the world, יִשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל.

Jer. 25: 29, 30, *inhabitants of the earth*, and Lam. 4: 12, *of the world*.

Joel 2: 1, let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, כָּל-יִשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ.

And so in multiplied instances. There is no case to be found in which this expression signifies only a portion of the inhabitants, or a particular class. Of the two words to which we have referred, the form שָׂמַן would most probably have been employed, if only a portion of the inhabitants, and not all classes, had been intended. There would be just as good reason to restrict the denunciation in Joel 2: 1, or 1: 2, *give ear all the inhabitants of the land*, to a particular and limited class, as to restrict the expression in which the law of Jubilee is framed.

Indeed, according to the universal reason of language, and especially according to the necessity of precise and accurate phraseology in the framing of laws, had the blessings and privileges of the Jubilee been intended only for native-born Hebrews, or guaranteed only to such, the expression universally employed on other occasions when that particular portion of the inhabitants alone are concerned, would have been employed on this. There being such a well-known phrase, capable of no misunderstanding, the law would have been conveyed by it. The phrase must have been the common one, of which one of the earliest examples is in Ex. 12: 19, עֲרֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאוֹרְהוּ, *the congregation of Israel born in the land*. In Ex. 12: 48, the same distinctive expression, to particularize the native Hebrew, is used along with אֲרָץ, thus, אֲזַרְחָה הָאָרֶץ, *the born in the land*, the native of the land, of Hebrew birth or origin.

Whenever there was danger of misinterpretation, misapplication, or confusion, as to the class intended by a law, this

phrase was employed, and the distinction, whatever it was, which the law intended, was made plain; or, if there was danger of making a distinction where none ought to be made, *that* was equally plain. For example (Lev. 16: 29), the fast and Sabbath of the day of atonement being appointed, its observance is made obligatory on the stranger as well as the native Hebrew, by the following words: *הָאֲזֹרָה וְהַיָּגֵר וְרֵץ בְּחֻקֵּיכֶם*, both the native born and the stranger that sojourneth among you. So in Lev. 18: 26: "Ye shall not commit any of these abominations, *neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger*, הָאֲזֹרָה וְהַיָּגֵר. Again (Lev. 19: 34): *As one born among you, shall the stranger be that dwelleth with you*, הָאֲזֹרָה חֶסֶם יִהְיֶה לְכֶם חַיִּי; and it is added: *Thou shalt love him as thyself*, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Again (Lev. 24: 16): He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, *as well the stranger as he that is born in the land*, בְּיַד כָּאֲזֹרָה. And, Lev. 24: 22, Ye shall have one manner of law, *as well for the stranger as for one of your own country*, בְּיַד כָּאֲזֹרָה.

So in regard to the passover (Num. 9: 14): Ye shall have one ordinance, *both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land*, וּלְיָגֵר וּלְאֲזֹרָה הָאֶרֶץ. The same in regard to atonement for sins of ignorance, and punishment for sins of presumption (Num. 15: 29, 30), two instances of the same expression, employed where there was any danger of a misapplication or insufficient application of the law. In the first instance, the expression, *him that is born among the children of Israel*, הָאֲזֹרָה בְּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, is set over against the *stranger that sojourneth among them*. In the second instance, the comparison is more concise: *whether the born in the land, or the stranger*, הֲיָגֵר הָאֲזֹרָה וְהַיָּגֵר. Josh. 8: 33 affords a striking example where, to prevent the expression *all Israel* from being restricted so as to exclude the stranger, it is added: *as well the stranger as he that was born among them*, בְּיַד כָּאֲזֹרָה. The expression *all Israel* not being necessarily so universal as the expression *all the inhabitants of the land*, its enlarged meaning is defined; and just so, if the expression *all the inhabitants of the land* had been used in any case where *not* all the

inhabitants of the land, but only all the native Israelites were meant, the *restrictive* meaning must have been defined; otherwise, it would inevitably include both the native and the stranger, both the *אֲזֻקָּה* and the *אֲרָם*.

This word *אֲזֻקָּה*, used to designate the native Hebrew in distinction from the stranger or any foreigner, is a very striking one, from the verb *אָזַק*, to rise, to grow or sprout forth, as a tree growing out of its own soil. It is used in Psalm 37: 35, to signify a tree in full verdure and freshness; in the common version, a *green bay-tree*, *אֲזֻקָּה יָבֵן*. It is thus a very idiomatic and beautiful word for particularizing the Israelite of home descent, the child of Abraham. There cannot be a doubt that this expression must have been used in framing the law of Jubilee, had it been intended to restrict its privileges as belonging *not* to the stranger, but to the home-born.

Moreover, it is obvious that, if this comprehensive and admirable law meant that only Hebrew servants were to be set free, but that others might be retained in servitude at the pleasure of the masters, or in other words might be made slaves, the law would have acted as a direct premium upon slavery, offering a very strong inducement to have none but such servants as could be kept as long as any one chose, such as were absolutely and forever in the power of the master. So far from being a benevolent law, it would thus become a very cruel and oppressive law, the source of infinite mischief and misery. If the choice had been offered to the Hebrews, by law, between servants whom they could compel to remain with them as slaves, and servants whom they would have to dismiss, at whatever inconvenience, every sixth year, and also at the Jubilee, it would have been neither in Jewish, nor in human, nature, to have refused the bribe that would thus have been held out, in the law itself, for the establishment of slavery. Even in regard to Hebrew apprentices, it was so much more profitable to contract with them for the legal six years' service, than to hire by the day, or month, or year, that we are informed (Deut. 15: 18), that the *אֲזֻקָּה*, the servant of six years' apprenticeship, was worth double the price of the *אֲזֻקָּה*, the hired servant. This difference at length

came to be felt so strongly, and operated with such intensity upon the growing greed of power and gain, that the Jewish masters attempted a radical revolution in the law. And what they would have done, had the law allowed, is proved by what they did attempt to do *against* the law, when they forced even Hebrew servants to remain with them as slaves; and because of this glaring iniquity and oppression, in defiance of the statute ordaining freedom forever, they were given over of God to the sword, the famine, and the pestilence. The intention and attempt to establish slavery in the land, constituted the crime for which, and the occasion on which, God's wrath became inexorable. There is no possibility of a mistake here. God's indictment was absolute, and we have already examined and compared the passages.

The motive for this crime was profit and power; and now it is clearly demonstrable that, if the people of Judea had had a race of human beings at their disposal, whom, by their own law, they could possess and use as slaves, chattels, property; and if the law had marked off such a race for that purpose, and established such an element of superiority and of despotism in the native Hebrew nation, over such a race, consecrated for their profit to such slavery,—it is demonstrable that the Hebrews would not have degraded any of their own to such a state. It would have been quite a needless wickedness to set up slavery as a crime, if they had it already legalized as a necessary virtue. Their attempt to make slaves of the Hebrews, is a demonstration that they were not permitted, by law, to make slaves of the heathen.

The analogy of other statutes is in favor of this interpretation, nay, requires it. This statute is a statute of liberty going seven-fold beyond any other; intended to be as extraordinary in its jubilee of privileges, as a half century is extraordinary above a period of seven years. But already, by the force of other statutes, a septennial jubilee was assured to the Hebrews; the law would never permit a Hebrew to be held as an apprenticed servant more than six years; in the seventh he should go free. Every seventh year was already a year of release to most of the inhabitants of the land, so

that the fiftieth year, if that jubilee was restricted to the Hebrews, would have been little more to them than the ordinary recurrence of the septennial jubilee. What need or reason for signaling it, if it brought no greater joy, no greater gift of freedom, than every seventh year of release must necessarily bring? But it was a jubilee of seven-fold greater comprehensiveness and blessing than all the rest; and whereas the others were *not* designated nor bestowed for all the inhabitants of the land, this *was*; and in this circumstance lay its emphasis and largeness of importance and of joy. This constituted its especial fitness as a prefiguration of the comprehensiveness and unconditional fulness of our deliverance and redemption by the gift of God's grace in Christ Jesus. It was a jubilee, not for those favored classes only, who already had seven such jubilees secured to them by law during every fifty years, but for those also, who, otherwise, had no such gift bestowed upon them, and could look forward to no such termination of their servitude. It was a jubilee of personal deliverance to all the inhabitants of the land, Hebrews or strangers, whatever might have been the tenure of their service. The servants, apprenticed or hired, were all free to seek new masters, or to make new engagements, or none at all, according to their pleasure. The Hebrew land-owners were to return to the possessions of their fathers, "every man unto his possession, every man unto his family" (Lev. 25: 10). But no man could carry his apprenticed servants, his עֲבָדָיו, with him, or his hired servants, except on a new voluntary contract; for all the inhabitants of the land were free.

The clause preceding this statute is an enactment concerning every seventh year, to be observed as a Sabbath of rest for the land, but not necessarily of release for the servants; consequently, provision is made in the promise of sustenance through that year, "for thee, and for thy servant, וְלַעֲבָדְךָ, and for thy maid, וְלַאִמְתֶּךָ, and for thy hired servant, וְלַשֹּׂכֵרְךָ," all of each class, being supposed still with the family. But when the enactment of the fiftieth year as a year of rest is announced, it being announced as a year of

liberty for all the inhabitants of the land, nothing is again said of the servants of the family; neither in regulations as to buying and selling, with reference to the proximity of the Jubilee, is there any exception made in regard to servants, as though they were not included in the freedom of the Jubilee. But in regard to some things there *are* such exceptions stated, as in Lev. 15: 30, of a house in a walled city, and verse 34, of the field of the Levites; showing that, if any exception had been intended in regard to servants, it must have been named.

We come, next, to consider the phrase *וְקָרָאתֶם דְּרוֹר*, *proclaim liberty*, announce deliverance. The strongest corresponding passage is Isa. 61: 1, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. In this passage, it is called *שְׁנַת־רֵצוֹן*, *the year of acceptance*, or of benefits, or, as it might be rendered, *of discharge*. In Ezek. 46: 17, it is called by the word with which the law is framed in Leviticus, *שְׁנַת דְּרוֹר*, *the year of liberty*. And the passage in Ezekiel is emphatic in more respects than one. (1) It is a recognition of the year of Jubilee at a late period in the history of the Hebrews; it is also a notice of a prince giving an inheritance *to one of his servants*, *לְאֶחָד מֵעֲבָדָיו*, who *might* be, not a Hebrew; but in the year of liberty, the servants were free, and the inheritance returned to the original owner, or to one of his sons. (2) It is an incidental argument against the existence of slavery, when we find the servants made co-heirs with the sons. It cannot be slaves who would be so treated. (3) Ezekiel's designation of the year of liberty corresponds with that of Isaiah, at a period more than a hundred years earlier. The allusion, in both prophets, to the Jubilee, is unquestionable; and, in both, the grand designation of the year is that of a period of universal freedom. In Isaiah it is *deliverance to captives and prisoners*, *לְשִׁבְיָם דְּרוֹר וְלְאֲסוּרִים*. *Those that are bound*, includes those under any servile apprenticeship; but if any one should contend that it means slaves, then it is very clear that the Jubilee was a year of deliverance to such, and therefore certainly

applied to the heathen, inasmuch as among the Hebrews there were no slaves, and by law could be none. But if it was a year of freedom for heathen slaves, admitting they could be called such, then it was the complete extinction of slavery; it was such a periodical emancipation as abolished slavery utterly and entirely, and rendered its establishment in the land impossible.

Here we see the inconsistency of lexicographers and commentators between their own conclusions, when they assume that the Jubilee was a year of deliverance to *slaves*, and at the same time restrict its emancipating operation to the Hebrews. For example, under the word *הַיְרֹר*, we read in Gesenius the definition of *the year of liberty*, *שָׁנַת הַיְרֹר* as "*the year of deliverance to slaves, namely, the year of jubilee*. This is either assuming the Hebrews to be slaves, contrary to the well-known law which made this impossible, or, of necessity, it assumes and asserts the application of the law of Jubilee to other classes, namely, of strangers and of the heathen; and interprets that law (as, beyond all question, its phraseology demands) as applying to all the inhabitants of the land. The Septuagint version of the proclamation is, *ἀφέσω ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς πᾶσι τοῖς κατοικοῦσι αὐτήν, deliverance to all the inhabitants*; and the Sept. version of Ezek. 46: 17 is, *ἔτος τῆς ἀφέσεως, the year of discharge or deliverance*; and the Hebrew for *the year of jubilee*, *שָׁנַת הַיְיֹבֵל*, is translated, in the same version, by *ἔτος τῆς ἀφέσεως* and *ἐνιαυτὸς ἀφέσεως, the year of freeing, of discharging, of letting go*.

It is of little consequence whether the Hebrew appellation was adopted from the *instrument*, the species of trumpet, used in making the proclamation of the jubilee, or from the meaning of the root-word, from which the name of that instrument itself was derived. The Jubel-horn may have been a ram's horn, or a metallic trumpet. But the name *יֹבֵל*, to designate, repeatedly, *a jubilee*, and *הַיְיֹבֵל*, *the jubilee*, and *בַּיְיֹבֵל*, *in jubilee*, and *שָׁנַת הַיְיֹבֵל*, *the year of jubilee*, besides the expression *שָׁנַת הַיְיֹבֵל הַזֶּה*, *the year of this jubilee*, would lead us more naturally to the verb *יָבַל*, *to go, to flow, to run*, as the origin of the appellation, by its peculiar meaning of *deliver-*

ance, freedom, remission, a flowing forth as a river. This is the more probable, because the appellation יובל, *jubilee*, is not first given in connection with the blowing of the trumpet, but with the proclamation of liberty. When the forty-nine years are passed, "then shalt thou cause the trumpet of rejoicing to sound—in the day of atonement ye shall make the trumpet to sound" (Lev. 25: 9). The Hebrew, here, is not the trumpet יובל, *of jubilee*, as might be supposed from our version, but שופר השׂמחה, *the trumpet of rejoicing* or of *shouting for joy*. After this trumpet-sounding, comes the proclamation of liberty; and then, first, we have the name *jubilee*. The Hebrew, in its connection, is full of meaning: וְקָרְאתֶם דְּרוֹר בְּאַרְץ לְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל יוֹבֵל וְהָיָה לְכָל־אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהָיָה לְכָל־אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהָיָה לְכָל־אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל, *and proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: a jubilee it shall be unto you*.

The leading idea in the law is that of freedom from servitude, and the *proclaiming clause* is the proclamation of liberty; and *from that proclamation*, and not from the *enacting clauses* immediately following, in regard to restitution of property and the return to patrimonial possessions, is the name of the jubilee taken. The trumpet of rejoicing shall sound, and ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and shall proclaim liberty to all the inhabitants of the land, AND THIS SHALL BE YOUR JUBILEE. And in the year of this jubilee, ye shall return, every man, unto his possession. And so on, with the detailed enactments of the law. It is manifest that this great year is called the jubilee, *from its ruling transaction of liberty*: that joyful announcement, in the proclamation, gives it its reigning character; it would have been worth little or nothing without that. It was the breaking of every yoke, and the letting of every man go free.

[To be concluded.]