

A TREATISE

ON THE NECESSITY OF

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

BY JONATHAN COGSWELL, D. D.,

Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the Theological Institute of Connecticut.

HARTFORD.

PUBLISHED BY ELIASEE CREE, 261 SEATH ST.

1855.

Case
CG 774 N

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1843,
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JUN 29 1939

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P R E F A C E .

It is the firm belief of the Author of the following *Treatise*, that the tendency of some of the opinions respecting *Capital Punishment*, which within a few years have been expressed, and had influence in some of our Legislatures; and which have also within a few months been published and widely circulated, are destructive of the best interests of society. And it appears to him to be the indispensable duty of Christian ministers, as good citizens, and the proper interpreters of the moral law, of which murder is a flagrant violation, to labor for the correction of those errors, which, if not counteracted, will leave the community without that protection of life, which is one of the most important benefits of the civil state. A proper exposure of the enormity of the crime of murder, and an exhibition of its terrible consequences, may perhaps do as much to prevent the commission of it, as a similar method has done to prevent intemperance. Nothing but a strong sense of duty has impelled the author of this treatise to present to the public his views, and his reasons for their adoption. It is his desire and prayer that laws, whose excellence the experience of more than two hundred years has abundantly proved, may not be repealed.

EAST WINDSOR, February 1st, 1843.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

SCARCELY a week passes, in which we do not receive intelligence, from some part of our country, of the murder of a fellow citizen. The circumstances, attending many of the instances, which have been made known to the public, were such as to give them the character of horrid barbarity. Unoffending and unsuspecting persons, valuable members of society, and some far advanced in life, merely because supposed to have money in their houses, saved by them for their support, when unable to labor, have been butchered upon their beds at midnight. They have not been allowed a moment's time to prepare for death, not even time to awake from their sleep. The first blows of the murderer have deprived them of their senses and their speech, and have hurried them, prepared or unprepared, into the presence of their final Judge. Such is now the state of society in our country that not a few, when retiring to rest, or when on a jour-

ney, and overtaken by the night, feel less secure than formerly. The highway robber, the better to accomplish his purpose, and to escape detection, does not hesitate to put to death the peaceable traveller, and to leave his body without burial to be devoured by wild beasts.

We cannot, therefore, notice but with pain and grief, with anxiety and alarm, the disposition extensively manifested to abolish capital punishments; especially, when the call is so loud and so earnest for a more faithful execution of the law, which requires the death of the murderer. Some are making great efforts to divert the attention of the public from the *guilt* of the murderer, and to fix it on the sufferings he must endure, if executed. The law, by which he is condemned to suffer death, is pronounced barbarous; but very little, if any thing, is said of his great wickedness and barbarity, or of the agonizing death of an innocent person, and the unutterable distress of his family and friends. Those, who plead for the abolition of capital punishments, betray great ignorance, both of the enormity of the crime, and of the principles of good government. If despotic governments have in too many instances punished capitally transgressors of their laws; this may be a good reason, why

we should confine ~~the~~ severest penalties to a few of the greatest crimes, but no good reason why they should be abolished altogether. The same principle, by which some contend for the abolition of capital punishments, would lead to the abolition of all punishments, and change laws into mere counsels. In the administration of government in this free country, the tendency, it must be evident to every careful observer, is to licentiousness, and the natural consequence of licentiousness is ~~crime~~ despotism. The most terrible despotisms have been most firmly established, where the people have been freed from moral restraints, and have known no law but their own corrupt propensities. There seems to be at the present time, in every department of government, in families, in institutions of learning, in the church and in the state, an increasing opposition to such restraints, as are necessary to good order, and the free exercise of the peculiar rights of every individual. We know that mankind naturally love freedom; not true freedom, but freedom from all moral and religious restraints. They are opposed to those laws, limiting the operation of those propensities, which if fully indulged, would involve them in perpetual and bloody quarrels. Children at the earliest

period of life manifest a love of liberty, not that liberty which is consistent with the happiness and wise government of the family to which they belong. Every one naturally desires the liberty of independence, that which would make him regardless of the rights of others. It is by no means an easy task for parents to accustom their children to submit cheerfully to the rules of good government. But, it is a well known fact that children love and respect those parents most decided in their government, who are neither too severe, nor too indulgent. There always has been a class of persons in every community, who, because never properly governed by their parents, have exhibited when of mature age, strong opposition to the checks and restraints of good and wholesome laws. But the freedom they desire for themselves they are unwilling others should enjoy. This is the class of persons, whose friendship is sought by some, for the very reason that they cannot hope for the favor of others. And their influence, which is opposed to all good government, seems to be extending. It must be counteracted, or we shall have no security for our lives, except by our own weapons. Hardly any one will deny that we have a perfect right in self defence to slay a robber, who has broken into our dwelling in the

night, or, who attempts to murder us on the highway. In such cases there can be no trial; the executioner is the judge and the witness. The punishment is so closely connected with the crime as to be universally approved, though no murder is actually committed.

It is an erroneous opinion, but an opinion by which some in offices of importance are governed, that the increased indulgence of those, over whom their authority extends, will increase their influence, and ensure the warm attachment of the people, on whose favor they depend. It is readily admitted that too great severity in the administration of any government is injurious. Too great severity produces discontent, conspiracies, and revolutions; and too great lenity produces disorder and contempt. Tyrants are hated; — weak, timid, and inefficient rulers, are despised, and their authority disregarded.

The more intelligent and virtuous a people, the more they feel the influence of moral motives, the greater degree of freedom they may safely enjoy. The friends of true religion have always been the friends of learning and of true liberty. But to preserve the virtue and freedom of a community, the young must be taught the great principles of morality and religion, and the government must be so

administered as to manifest an abhorrence of those crimes, by which the reputation, the property and lives of good citizens are destroyed. So long as crimes of great enormity continue to be committed, so long severe punishments ought to be inflicted. This is certainly reasonable and must be approved by every good citizen.

It is too evident to be questioned that public men in this country are far less respected, and their influence is much less felt than formerly. They are not as they once were a terror to evil doers. This is to be attributed to the influence of those opinions, the tendency of which is to destroy all good government. In the choice of men to fill the most important offices, the most popular candidates are not always those, who have such a high sense of moral virtue, as to encourage the hope that they will execute the laws with firmness and a sacred regard to the public good. The voice of those, who are most regardless of the restraints of good laws, too frequently prevails. They sometimes determine the choice of rulers, and the latter of course endeavor to please those, to whom they are indebted for their promotion, and by whose labors they expect to retain their places. After all, those who appear to be most opposed to good govern-

ment, and most clamorous for more liberty, are the very first to treat with disrespect and even to ridicule the men, who are most ready to gratify them. The people will not respect a ruler whom they can govern. Why was the hero of New Orleans so popular in this country, as to be twice elected to fill the first office in the gift of the nation? Was it because he was opposed to all capital punishments? Why was Washington applauded for his unyielding firmness in executing Major Andre, apprehended in the faithful discharge of the duty, he owed to his own country? Why was Napoleon so much admired and adored by the French nation? His army, which was subject to the most rigid discipline, was ready to sacrifice their lives for him? How would these heroes have been regarded, had they neglected to maintain strict discipline in their armies, and had they exhibited that indulgence for which many contend? The highest honors, men could bestow upon them, they received for their decision and energy in the execution of those laws, which required them to punish with death great offenders. These cases, familiar to all, make known to us more satisfactorily than a thousand arguments, not derived from facts, the best feelings of the great mass of the community. Under rulers,

who have sufficient firmness and resolution, to enable them to punish great transgressors according to the magnitude of their crimes, good citizens expect protection and feel secure. But under weak and timid rulers, who are governed not by sound principles of justice, but by popular opinion, they cannot feel secure.

In New England, till of late, the propriety of punishing capitally those clearly proved to be guilty of murder, has hardly been called in question. The consequence has been that few have been capitally punished, and in no part of the world has life as well as property, been so perfectly protected. Some few, it is true, but mostly females of very tender feelings, and men of a similar spirit, contemplating only the sufferings of the person condemned to die, have expressed a desire that he might not suffer death. It is not difficult to account for the feelings of such persons. Much time often passes between the commission of the crime of murder and its punishment. During this interval the excitement produced by the murder and its circumstances subside. But the trial of the murderer, and the preparation for his execution so occupy the mind as to cause almost a forgetfulness of the dreadful deed, for which he is about to suffer.

His punishment, rather than his crime, is the chief subject of thought and conversation. Feelings, however, are not the rule of duty. Nothing is more painful to parents than to be obliged to punish their children. If faithful, their feelings will not prevent them from discharging their duty. And nothing is more painful to good rulers than to be obliged to punish transgressors of their laws. The long continued peace enjoyed in this country, and the great degree of freedom experienced, have occasioned a remissness in the execution of those laws, which require severe punishments. But the multiplication of crimes of the greatest enormity, of late years, calls loudly upon civil rulers to arise and to protect the property and lives of those, by whom they have been elected for this very purpose.

The questions I now propose to discuss are the following: *Is it right, and is it expedient to punish with death those clearly proved to be guilty of murder?*

1. *Is it right to punish with death the man, clearly proved to be guilty of murder?*

In support of the affirmative of this question the scriptures are as explicit as possible. Any person, who is able to read, may understand the following passage. "And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I

require it, and at the hand of man ; and at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood *by man* shall his blood be shed : for in the image of God made he man.* Though the language of this passage is so plain that persons of the feeblest capacity may understand it ; yet as a prominent advocate of the abolition of capital punishments, by the most puerile and absurd criticism, endeavored to make it support his views, and also to make the impression on the public mind that the learned Michaelis agreed with him ; it may be interesting to the reader to know, how it was interpreted by this learned writer. In the second verse, Michaelis substitutes *whatsoever* for *whosoever*, and thus renders it : “ Whatsoever creature sheddeth human blood, be it man or beast, by man shall its blood in like manner be shed.” He gives the following reason for the substitution of *whatsoever* for *whosoever* : “ According to the tenor of the preceding verse, where beasts as well as men are mentioned, and where God had said, that from men as well as from beasts, he would require the blood of man, as he expressly declares by the instrumentality of men, to whom he assigns the duty of avenging it, the sixth verse is to be rendered not

* Genesis ix. 5, 6.

whosoever but whatsoever sheddeth human blood, so as to include beasts as well as men. In order to render human blood still more sacred," observes this learned writer, "and to represent murder to the view of the common people, who must ever be governed by sensible impressions, as a crime peculiarly abominable and unpardonable, it was ordered that even an ox, if he had gored a man to death should be stoned."*

In order to have a proper view of the crime of murder, we must contemplate the dignity of man — his relation to his Creator, his obligations founded on it, his capacities, and his destination. He is an intelligent moral being, created originally in the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness. Though a fallen being he is yet the subject of a great King, and vast provisions have been made for his redemption. To murder one of the subjects of the greatest potentate in the universe — one originally made in his own image, and one, whom he is using means at vast expense to restore to his friendship, is a crime of greater magnitude than we can comprehend. That man, who is guilty of such an act, is not fit to live, and most manifestly deserves to die. If justice is the opposite of injustice, then

* Laws of Moses, Vol. iv. Article 274.

justice demands the death of the murderer. This, however, by no means makes good the loss sustained. But this is all the law can exact. How unreasonable then, to pronounce the penalty unjust, or even severe, which requires the death of the murderer, when this falls so far short of repairing the injury done! God himself, the Creator of all men, the most benevolent and compassionate being in the universe, demands it, that men may know how the crime of murder appears in his sight, and how it ought to appear in their sight. The circumstances in which the deed is usually perpetrated, add much to the guilt of the murderer. His success depends on making his attack without being suspected. And his escape from detection depends on the dispatch, with which he accomplishes his wicked purpose. He gives his victim no time to offer a prayer to God. But, if condemned to be executed, he has days and weeks during which he may repent and seek the forgiveness of his sins. As a general fact, the persons murdered are valuable citizens, who by their industry and frugality have laid up something for their families, and for themselves, when old. On the other hand, those who commit murder are the worst members of society, whose influence, should they be spared,

must be destructive, and whose death must be a real benefit to society.

When God made known his will to Noah, there was but one family on the earth, and he intended his commands for all the posterity of this patriarch. In the 6th verse of the 9th chapter of Genesis there is probably an allusion to the case of Cain, whose punishment God for wise reasons chose to inflict himself. When Cain slew his brother, his conscience immediately convinced him that he ought to die, and he felt assured that every one, who might become acquainted with the fact, would have the same view of his demerit. The mark which God put upon him, was an acknowledgment that he would be exposed to death. In this case for wise reasons, perhaps, because there were no witnesses to testify against Cain, and it was not proper that any one should be condemned without sufficient proof of his guilt, or, because he was the only surviving son of his parents, for such or other reasons, God was pleased for a time to defer the punishment of the first murderer. The voice of thy brother's blood, God said to Cain, cries to me from the ground. The meaning seems to be, cries to me for vengeance. How many murders at the present time, known only to God, remain unpunished for a

time. Whatever might be the reason for deferring the punishment of *Cain* for a time ; we have no evidence that the experiment, if we may view it in this light, proved to be the means of preventing the commission of murder. Before the deluge, we are informed, the earth was filled with violence, by which we must understand that human life was insecure and that murders as well as robberies were frequent. As there was probably no regular government, men doubtless enjoyed that freedom, which many now desire. It was on account of the wickedness that prevailed that the inhabitants of the old world, with the exception of one family, were destroyed. If crimes which are *mala in se*, or which are transgressions of the moral law, are not punished according to their magnitude ; God will visit guilty communities with desolating calamities. He will not suffer the subjects of his kingdom, made in his image, and made capable of holding communion with him, to be murdered, without requiring the blood of the murderer.

Before God said to Noah, “ whoso sheddeth man’s blood, *by man* s’hall his blood be shed,” there might be some hesitation in punishing a murderer on account of the case of Cain, whose punishment was not immediately inflicted. To Noah and his

family God expressly said *by man* shall his blood, (i. e. the blood of the murderer) be shed. It is, therefore, the indispensable duty of man to punish the murder with death. And lest there should be any doubt respecting the proper person, whose duty it would be to execute the sentence of the law, the following direction was given. "At the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man." The responsibility, therefore, of avenging the death of one murdered devolved on a near relative. This was a wise direction before the establishment of any regular society. The relatives of an individual murdered would be the persons, who would feel injured, and who would be most disposed to slay him, who should perpetrate the wicked deed. No other person would be willing to expose his life to avenge the death of one not related to him. The avenger of blood was a near relative of the person murdered. "By this name," observes the learned Michaelis, "we must understand the nearest relation of a person murdered, whose right and duty it was to seek after and kill the murderer with his own hand; so much so indeed, that the neglect thereof drew after it the greatest possible infamy, and subjected the man, who avenged not the death of his relation to unceasing reproaches of cowardice and

avarice.* How this law was understood by the posterity of Noah, from the time of the deluge to the establishment of the Hebrew Theocracy, a period of 857 years, is abundantly evident from history. Not a doubt was entertained by any one that the murderer deserved death. Here we can not but notice great imperfection in the *mode* of executing justice. There was no trial of the man, who had killed another. The avenger of blood slew the supposed murderer wherever he could find him. This too he did at the hazard of his own life. The avenger of blood was liable to be deceived, and did no doubt slay him, who was guilty of manslaughter, or who had unintentionally slain a fellow creature. The distinction between murder and justifiable homicide was not observed, and, as there was no trial, could not always be known. In Arabia, and in some other countries, where there is no regular government, we still find the avenger of blood. Mahomet endeavored to modify the law by which the avenger of blood was governed. "He recommended as an act of mercy pleasing in the sight of God, the acceptance of a pecuniary compensation from the actual murderer, in lieu of revenge." This, however, could satisfy only the most avari-

*Laws of Moses, Vol. II. Article 131.

cious. It allowed the rich to commit murder by paying a sum of money, but exposed the poor to suffer death. All attempts to modify the laws of God have proved to be failures. For more than 850 years, the long period from the time of the deluge, to the giving of the law at Sinai, the avenger of blood was the executioner of the murderer. But, because some, who had unintentionally slain their fellow creatures, were put to death by the avenger of blood, and to remedy an evil, which, according to the custom of that early period, was unavoidable, God commanded the Hebrews, when they entered the land of promise, to appoint six cities of refuge, three cities on each side of the river Jordan. To these cities, those who had unintentionally slain their fellow creatures, might make their escape, be protected and have a fair trial. If found innocent they were acquitted, and were set at liberty at the death of the high priest, when it was supposed the excitement of the avenger of blood would have subsided. The Hebrews were required to keep good roads from different parts of their country to the cities of refuge, which were not designed to afford any protection to murderers. When found guilty they were certainly put to death. "These laws of Moses," says the great Montesquieu, "were

perfectly wise. The man, who had involuntarily killed another was innocent, but he was obliged to be taken away from before the eyes of the relations of the deceased; Moses, therefore, appointed an asylum for such unfortunate persons. Great criminals deserved not a place of safety, and they had none. If persons who had committed manslaughter had been driven out of the country, as was customary among the Greeks, they had reason to fear they would worship strange gods." The appointment of six cities of refuge, so conveniently situated, as to afford an opportunity for any one who might be so unfortunate as unintentionally to slay a fellow creature, to escape to one of them, where he could be protected, was a great benefit. It produced a happy change in the condition of the Hebrews. History does not inform us that there was any such establishment in any other country. The appointment of six cities of refuge for the innocent makes it evident that murderers were allowed no protection and were judged worthy of death. After the Hebrews became an independent nation, had a perfect code of laws, and an organized government, the administration of justice belonged to properly qualified magistrates. The responsibility and duty of the avenger of blood devolved on the whole nation.

As the law given to Noah was the law of nature, founded on the plain principles of justice and reason; so it was recognized in the decalogue, which was only a republication of the law of nature. But some of late have endeavored to prove that the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," forbids capital punishments. It can hardly be supposed that any man of intelligence in his right mind can admit such an interpretation, unless he adopts the opinion of the Siamese, who dare not kill a fly, a serpent, or even any animal for food. If the sixth commandment be a law it must have a sanction. It cannot threaten to punish those, who do only what God permits and commands them to do. Its sanction must, therefore, have reference to murder. There need be no dispute respecting the meaning of the sixth commandment. God has given us the interpretation of his own law, in language too plain to be misunderstood. "Whoso killeth any person the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses; but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die. Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death."* Some whose knowledge of the Scriptures

*Numb. xxxv. 30, 31.

is very limited, suppose that the command given to Noah is a part of the Mosaic law, designed for the Hebrew nation, though given more than 850 years before they came to Mount Sinai ; and, because the typical and ritual parts of the ancient code, which were only a shadow of good things to come, were repealed when the Christian dispensation commenced, that therefore the whole Mosaic code ceased to be obligatory. Such persons ought to be better acquainted with the Scriptures before they draw arguments from them. Their ignorance of the law of their Creator and rightful sovereign is inexcusable. The manner in which they treat the revelations God has kindly given us must be highly displeasing to him. They betray great ignorance of the foundation of all laws.

The moral law, which is the law of the ten commandments, is founded on the relations we sustain to God and to our fellow creatures. This law is the law of nature. It was the law imposed on our first parents and their posterity, republished at Mount Sinai, and written on tables of stone, that it might never be forgotten. This law has ever been the same, has never been repealed or modified ; nor can it be so long as mankind sustain the same relations they always have done to God and to their

fellow creatures. The moral law is entirely different and distinct from those portions of the Mosaic code intended exclusively for the Hebrews, and which ceased to be obligatory after the commencement of the Christian dispensation. "Think not," said Christ, "that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled."* Christ came not to repeal or to modify the law, but to magnify it and make it honorable. His death was a most glorious proof of this. It was designed to give us an affecting view of the immutable character of the moral law, and to increase our obligations to keep it. If the moral law has been abrogated; then we cannot do any thing morally wrong. For where there is no law, there can be no transgression. If the moral law has been repealed, we have no need of a Saviour, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. If the moral law has been repealed, of what law is sin a transgression? If the moral law has been repealed, we have no law of God; and we know not how to do his will, or when we displease him. This must be

Matthew v. 17, 18.

atheistic ground. But the precepts of the moral law are recognized by the inspired apostles, as still obligatory. Indeed the increase of light under this dispensation and the great things done for our salvation, have greatly increased our obligations. "Do we then make void the law through faith"? said the apostle, "God forbid, yea we establish the law.* For I delight," he said, "in the law of God, after the inward man."† Does not every minister of the gospel of every denomination, and every missionary to the heathen, preach the law as preparatory to the reception of the good news of salvation by grace? What law is it they endeavor to explain and enforce? It can be none but the moral law, republished at Mount Sinai. This must be applied to the consciences of all, who listen to the sound of the gospel, or they will never repent of their sins and accept the offers of forgiving mercy. The gospel contains the law, and gives lustre to its precepts. It makes it appear glorious. The murderer appears more base, wicked and deserving of death, when seen by the light of the gospel, than when seen in the light of the law merely. The death of Christ gives us the most solemn and affecting view of God's abhorrence of sin, and of course of the sin of murder, the greatest of all crimes. No one who reads

*Romans, iii. 31.

†Romans, vii. 22.

the New Testament and meditates on the sufferings and death of Christ, can believe that sin appears in the sight of God to be a less evil than it did under the former dispensation, or that he appears to be less disposed and less determined to punish it. Christianity does not look upon sin with less abhorrence than the moral law.

Some of the opinions which appear now to be gaining influence in this country are atheistical in their character. The following are from Marquis Beccaria, an Italian, and a corrupt magistrate, who was desirous of abolishing the punishment, to which he might perhaps be exposed. When and where he lived there were many crimes besides murder, which were capitally punished. These opinions, though not originally his, have of late been published in several of our newspapers, and have been very extensively circulated. Though at first view and without examination, they may appear plausible, they are in reality sophistical, absurd and atheistical. "All the rights," ~~he maintained~~, "possessed by government are such as have been surrendered by the individuals, who compose the body politic, for the common benefit of the whole. It will not be pretended by the strongest advocates for capital punishments, that a man has a right to take his own life, and if

he does not possess this right, he cannot delegate to government what he does not possess." The absurdity of this reasoning may very easily be made to appear. It is admitted in his argument that suicide is an unlawful act, and is murder. He then begs the question by denying that capital punishments are lawful, the very thing to be proved. Because a man has no right to murder himself, therefore government has no right to punish a murderer with death. Or, because a man has no right to murder himself, therefore, government has no right to punish a murderer according to a just law. The two things are totally different. We might as well reason in the following manner: because a man has no right to steal, therefore, a creditor has no right to demand the payment of a just debt. Have parents no right to punish their children except that which the former have received from the latter? Have the heads of our schools, academies and colleges, no rights except such as have been given to them by their pupils? Suppose a number of persons should form a conspiracy and should rise up in rebellion against their lawful government. Suppose they should commence burning buildings, and destroying the lives of their fellow citizens; would not the government have a right to order an armed force to

subdue them, and, if not able to effect their object otherwise, would it not be right to slay those who opposed them? In such a case, what would be thought of Beccaria's weak, sophistical argument — that because these rebels have no right to murder themselves, therefore government has no right to punish them with death for murdering their fellow citizens? Such arguments may blind and mislead those, who do not take time to examine them; but when understood they cannot be approved by any good member of society. Another view of Beccaria's argument will expose its sophistry and absurdity. He admits that no man has a right to take his own life and therefore cannot delegate the right he does not possess to others. This is overlooking entirely the rights and claims of God. He, however, commits himself, and concedes what he does not mean to concede. Of what law, it may be asked, is suicide a transgression. If no man has a right to take his own life, suicide must be the transgression of some law. And that law can be none other than the moral law of God, whose right to take away the lives of guilty men when he pleases, is exercised every day and cannot be disputed. He is certainly the best interpreter of his own law. "Ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a mur-

derer, which is guilty of death ; but he shall surely be put to death.* *By man shall his blood be shed.*† Has the man attacked on the highway by a robber, who directs a loaded pistol at his breast, no right except what the robber has given him, to seize it, and turn it against him, and discharge it ? The argument of Beccaria is atheistical. It does not recognize the relation parents and rulers sustain to God, and their obligations thence arising to him, on whom they constantly depend for life and all things. God gives parents the right and makes it their duty to command their children. He has given laws to parents, and also to children, by which they must be governed. This is a proof of his wisdom and benevolence ; for all his laws are reasonable, and obedience to them is connected with our highest happiness. So on account of the relation rulers sustain to God, and to the people over whom their authority extends, he has given them the right and made it their duty to do justly, and to act in view of the public good and of their accountability to him. He has given laws, both for their government, and that of the people, who look to them for protection. Have not the actions of rulers a moral character ? Is there no true standard, by which we may judge whether their laws are just or unjust—

*Numb, xxxv. 31.

Gen. ix. 6.

and whether their actions are right or wrong? Are human enactments the only rule, by which the character of their conduct is to be determined? What is this but atheism? Is it not the providence of God, by which men are raised to important offices? "Lift not up your heads," saith Jehovah, "speak not with a stiff neck. For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is Judge. He putteth down one and setteth up another."* "By me kings reign and princes decree justice."† Do not the scriptures abound with messages God sent to kings and men in authority? Has he not the same right now as formerly to command civil rulers? Are they not his servants, and accountable to him for their conduct? In the New Testament we are as clearly taught as in the Old, that God putteth down one and setteth up another at his pleasure. "For there is no power," said the inspired apostle in his epistle to the Romans, "but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt not thou then be afraid of the power? Do that which is good and thou shalt receive praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But, if thou do

* Psalm lxxv. 7.

† Prov. viii. 15.

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.”* Now as the moral law which is the law of nature has never been repealed or modified, and as one mode of punishing murderers under the former dispensation was by the sword, it is manifest that the inspired apostle in the passage quoted, took it for granted that capital punishments for murder would continue and ought to continue to be inflicted. In the parable of the king’s son spoken by our Saviour, and having reference to future events, we find the following passage. “And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them ; and he sent forth his armies and destroyed the murderers and burned up their city.”† Here evidently our Saviour speaks with approbation of capital punishments for murderers. They were to be inflicted not by the immediate hand of God ; but by human instrumentality. Nothing can be plainer than this, that under the present dispensation, capital punishments for murder are just, approved by Christ himself, and the only punishment we are authorized to inflict. No substitute is mentioned.

Christ did not come to destroy or alter the law

* Romans xiii. 1 — 4.

† Math. xxii. 7.

of God. It does not appear, therefore, that the spirit of Christianity is opposed to the infliction of capital punishment for murder. It gives us the clearest view of the enormity of crimes, that the guilty may not delay by repentance to seek for pardon. Let those who dwell with so much satisfaction on the mildness of Christianity, as an apology for transgressors, or as a reason for the mitigation of their punishment, meditate on the following passage. "But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and *murderers*, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*" This is the view which Christianity gives us of the crimes enumerated. Do transgressions of the moral law appear to be crimes of less magnitude under the present than under the former dispensation?

Christianity has greatly ameliorated the condition of those, who feel its influence. Capital punishments are few in number, compared with the number in pagan countries. They are inflicted with as little additional suffering as possible. No tortures or protracted pains are allowed. Crimes, which had respect to property merely, were not by the Mosaic law punished with death. Few are the

*Rev. xxi. 8.

crimes, which by our laws are punished capitally. But Christianity was never designed to diminish the guilt of transgressors. The more it has elevated man, by presenting to his view for contemplation and pursuit, noble and magnificent objects, the more he values his life, and the greater is the guilt of him who destroys it. Those who plead for the abolition of capital punishments, should first show that murder under the increased light of this dispensation is a crime of less magnitude than under the former dispensation. So long as murders continue to be committed, so long capital punishments ought to be inflicted.

There are some, perhaps many, who view civil governments as independent of God, and who are unwilling to acknowledge that civil rulers are accountable to him for their conduct. They never refer to the scriptures for direction and authority, much less to Christ, unless to lower the standard of justice by a perversion of the precepts of the gospel, "The proper end of punishment," they say, "is not the satisfaction of justice, but the prevention of crime." Some good men, without consideration, have adopted this opinion.

This is overlooking the claims of God, excluding him from civil society, and is an atheistical view of

the subject. If the good of society be the proper end of law and of punishment; the end must justify the means, and any laws may be enacted, modified, or repealed, according to the pleasure of the rulers of the state or nation, or according to their view of the best interests of the people under their authority. This was the doctrine of Machiavel, though some have thought he did not himself approve of it, but only meant to show what were the opinions by which many statesmen are governed. Is there no such thing as right and wrong, aside from the consequences of our actions or measures? Is a man under no obligation to tell the truth except from a regard to his interest? May he lie whenever he believes it will be for his interest? May a man cheat, steal, and refuse to pay his debts, if for his interest to do so? If governments may be influenced by such principles; why may not individuals adopt the same? May a powerful nation, without any sufficient provocation plunder and destroy a nation less powerful, merely to obtain additional territory? This has been done many times. It was done by the Greeks under Alexander — by the Romans under Julius Cæsar — and by the northern nations of Europe, which subverted the western Roman Empire. It was done by the Spaniards on this conti-

ment — under Cortes in North America, and under Pizarro in South America. Very many other instances might be mentioned.

God has indeed connected our highest happiness with obedience to his law. But though we may have respect to the recompense of reward, this should be by no means our chief end. Do we not respect the man, who is influenced by high and honorable principles of justice, and who performs noble actions, while uncertain whether they will benefit him or not? And do we not despise the man, who measures his labors by his view of the reward he expects to receive, regardless of the interest of his employer? His own interest is the end, the great defaulter has in view. How do those whom he has robbed, view his conduct? Are not states and nations as dependent on God and as accountable to him as individuals? Can human governments give fruitful seasons, health and prosperity? Banish from a state all sense of right and wrong, independent of a regard to its interest, and all sense of accountability to God, and its character is atheistic. The proper end of punishments is not merely the reformation of transgressors, nor the prevention of crimes. It is not denied that parents and civil rulers ought to have respect to these considerations. As our obligation to tell the truth and to discharge a just

debt is independent of the consequences ; so the obligation of rulers to protect good citizens and to punish those who injure them, is independent of the consequences. Duty is ours, events are the Lord's. As we cannot always know the consequences of an action, they cannot be the foundation of obligation. To do right should be our chief aim. And to do right is to do just what God has required of us. He has the highest claim to our obedience. His interest is of more importance than that of an individual, or a community. Rulers, in doing that which God requires of them, do that, which produces the most desirable results.

Is it expedient to abolish capital punishments ?

The opinions, which some of late have expressed, were long ago expressed by Voltaire, one of the most unprincipled men that ever lived. "A man after he is hanged," he observed, "is good for nothing, and punishments invented for the good of society ought to be useful to society. It is evident that a score of stout robbers, condemned for life to some public work, would serve the state in their punishment, and that hanging them is a benefit to nobody but the executioner." According to his doctrine, the more murders are committed the more the state is enriched, and the commission of murder ought to

be encouraged rather than discouraged. The substitute proposed for capital punishments is just what Voltaire recommended. No wonder he highly approved the opinions of Marquis Beccaria. Should imprisonment for life be substituted for the capital punishment of the murderer ; how long would it be before the payment of a sum of money, would be substituted for imprisonment for life ? The Scriptures expressly forbid the adoption of any substitute for the capital punishment of the murderer. "Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death ; but he shall be surely put to death."* We have no right to alter the law of God. Are human legislators more wise and merciful than that being, who has given the greatest possible proofs of his love of mankind ? Imprisonment for life is not the exact measure of the crime of murder. If a greater evil than the death of the murderer, it is unjust ; and if less, it is not sufficient. The imprisonment of the murderer for life, who may possibly make his escape, can never satisfy the afflicted widow and children, whose husband and father, without any provocation has been cruelly butchered.— They look to the government under which they

*Numb. xxxv. 31.

live for protection and sympathy. They cannot feel that justice is done them, and that those, to whom they look for redress, have done their duty, unless they punish with death the murderer. His execution is essential to the protection of the community, and to proper sympathy and regard for the distressed family of the person murdered. It is the feeling and judgment of every one that hears of the murder of a fellow creature that the murderer ought to suffer death. Besides it is hardly possible to prevent a man, imprisoned for life, if artful, and connected with wealthy friends, from obtaining his liberty. A strong motive is presented to his mind to slay his keepers, for his punishment cannot according to law be increased. Sooner or later he may obtain weapons of some kind for the accomplishment of his purpose. The most dangerous persons have the strongest hopes of being able in some way to make their escape. Imprisonment for life is, in their view, not much more to be dreaded than imprisonment for a few years; because they do not believe it will be for life. It is curious to notice the reasoning of some who are opposed to capital punishments. At one time they condemn them as barbarous, too horrible to be continued under the Christian dispensation; but at

another time, to effect their object, they contend that imprisonment for life is still more dreadful. It cannot be denied that death is the greatest of all evils, "all that a man hath will he give for his life."* The shame connected with the execution of the murderer is by some more dreaded than the pains of death. The capital punishment of a murderer, as it is inflicted by authority, and with the approbation of the whole community, exhibits their just abhorrence of the crime of murder, and expresses their tender regard for the friends of him who has been unjustly put to death. The impression is deepest and most salutary, when it is understood that the government acts by authority from the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The execution of a murderer teaches parents and instructors with greater force than a thousand arguments the importance of checking those passions they discover in the young under their care, which, if indulged, in an hour of strong temptation, may lead them to the commission of the greatest crimes.

One objection to capital punishment which some feel, is, that it cuts short the probationary state of him who is condemned to die. They seem to forget that the person murdered has not a moment allowed him for repentance. The first blow he

*Job, ii. 4.

receives, if it do not deprive him of his senses, renders it impossible for him to collect his thoughts and to fix them on God. Imprisonment for life does not favor immediate repentance so much as the near view of death. The man imprisoned for life, aside from his hope of escape, is as much disposed as any other person to defer repentance. Why do so many defer repentance till the approach of death, believing that then it will be easy to repent and to make sure of heaven? The man, who is condemned to die for murder, always has time enough allowed him for repentance. God can, unless otherwise determined, save him the last hour of his life. The most powerful motives are made to bear on his mind — the whole community against him, no friend in the world to help him — to God alone can he look for mercy. In him alone he is forced by the sentence of the law to seek refuge. He is cut off from every other source of peace and happiness. It is mercy to the murderer to force him to fall at the feet of him, who alone can pardon him. It is mercy to him to make it necessary for him to act without delay. The sinner when under the deepest conviction, views time as short, and death as near. He feels that he must submit immediately, or be lost forever. The objection

therefore under consideration has no weight. The real objection, so far as it respects the repentance and salvation of the murderer, is to imprisonment for life. It may be added, prayer is offered for the murderer as long as he lives by those who feel that the sentence of the law must be executed; and they cannot hope to be heard except by obedience to the command of God, and the murderer cannot expect forgiveness unless he feels that he is justly condemned. Another objection to capital punishment is, that it is *irremediable*. And is not murder irremediable? There is no possibility of restoring a murdered person to life. The murderer has no right to bring this objection. So perfect is the administration of justice in this country, that it is hardly possible for any person to be condemned to suffer death for murder unless guilty.—A sermon has lately been delivered in New York in favor of the abolition of capital punishments, and has been extensively circulated. It contains a very incorrect account of a case in Vermont, and of the condemnation of two innocent persons. Such a case probably never before occurred, and probably never will again. The preacher stated that the abolition of capital punishments in Vermont was occasioned by the peculiarities of that case. If the legislature of

that State had no better reason for the abolition of capital punishments, they acted without any valid reason. Two men it seems, by the name of Boorn in Manchester Vermont, in 1819 were suspected of being guilty of murder. They were tried, confessed their guilt, and were condemned to die. The punishment of one was commuted for imprisonment for life. The day appointed for the execution of the other was on the 28th of January of the following year. On the 22d of Dec. preceding, the man supposed to be murdered made his appearance. The preacher, whose sermon has been extensively circulated, gives a false account. "The day of execution," he asserts, "at length arrived, hundreds of people from the hills and vales were gathered around the gallows, to witness the dying struggles of a poor unfortunate fellow sinner. The hour had arrived, and the elder Bourné, still avowing his innocence, wan and weak, was led forth into the ring and stood beneath the horrid engine of death. The Sheriff was about to adjust the halter, and draw down the dismal cap, when a cry was heard from behind the ring, stop! stop! for God's sake stop. All eyes were directed that way; when to the astonishment of all, the murdered Colvin was led into the ring, presented to the Sheriff, recognized

by the assembled neighbors, and greeted by the convicted Bourne, with feelings better imagined than described, and the people doomed to return home disappointed, as some remarked, without seeing the *fun* they anticipated." Now, Rev. Lemuel Haynes, a man of piety, intelligence, and veracity, who resided in Manchester at the time, expressly states that Colvin, the man supposed to be murdered, arrived in Manchester Dec. 22d, which was 37 days before the day appointed for the execution. The whole description therefore of the scenes said to be witnessed on the day appointed for the execution, is a mere fabrication—suited to produce a false impression on the minds of those ignorant of the facts, and more especially as the preacher stated that Manchester was near his native town. He gives the name Bourne for the true name Boorn. The whole account may be seen in the memoir of Rev. L. Haynes. It is difficult to see that this case has any thing to do with the objection. The Boorns, who confessed that they were guilty, could blame none but themselves for being condemned. Indeed the case does not favor the objection. It rather leads us to conclude that when any being innocent, are condemned to die, God will by his providence interpose for their deliv-

erance. Though it is hardly possible that any man, being innocent, can be condemned to suffer death as a murderer; yet in this imperfect state some do suffer death by their own mistakes, the mistakes of physicians and other persons. In punishing capitally the man clearly proved to be guilty of murder, there can be no fear of doing wrong, for God has commanded it. It is a curious fact that those who deny the doctrine of future punishment, should be most earnest for the substitution of imprisonment for life for capital punishment, when if their doctrine be true, the gallows is only the ladder, by which murderers climb up to heaven and to immediate happiness. Their zeal for the proposed substitute is pretty strong evidence that they secretly disbelieve what they profess to believe. They have doubtless an object to be answered. They say very little of the enormity of the crime of murder; but direct the attention of their hearers or readers to the sufferings to be endured by the perpetrator of the deed. In this way they hope to obtain their object. Much is said to show the expediency of abolishing capital punishment, and instead thereof, substituting imprisonment for life from a consideration of the *certainly* of punishment. It is difficult to see the force of this argument. The

question to be decided by a Jury, sworn to render a true verdict, is simply this, *is the prisoner guilty, or not guilty?* They have nothing to do with the penalty of the law. Can we suppose that a body of Jurors under solemn oath to render a true verdict will deliberately perjure themselves? Have such men no conscience, and no fear of God before their eyes? Why administer the customary oath to them? If they give a true verdict; then, they will as certainly render the verdict *guilty*, when a man is clearly proved to have committed murder, if his punishment is death, as if it is imprisonment for life. The argument, therefore, under consideration has no force, when fairly examined. Beside, the certainty of imprisonment for life is not any great terror to the most dangerous villain; for he hopes in some way to make his escape. Such cases occur often enough to encourage such a hope.

Some in advocating the expediency of abolishing capital punishment have with great confidence appealed to its happy effects in the Russian empire. It is said that the empress Elizabeth, daughter of Peter the great, made a vow that she would never inflict capital punishment, and that her government

was administered with great mildness and with the most happy results. Voltaire, a man, whose word in such a case is not to be regarded, did indeed represent her "as a pattern of legislative clemency." If she did make a vow that she would never inflict capital punishment, she excepted treason, for which multitudes suffered; as she was one of the most suspicious sovereigns that ever lived. She established a political court of inquisition, whose influence extended over her empire. "The lowest and most profligate persons were employed as spies and informers; who were paid for their denunciations and calumnies, and for aspersing the most virtuous characters."* She seemed to hate such characters. This is not strange, for though she was never married, she was the mother of several children. It is reported of her that toward the close of her life, she gave herself up to unbounded licentiousness and sensuality. "The state prisons," history informs us "were filled with wretched sufferers, many of whom unheard and unknown, perished in damp and unwholesome dungeons; many upon the slightest surmises were tortured in

*Mayor.

secret, many underwent the knout, and expired under this torture. Two ladies of rank underwent this cruel punishment, had their tongues cut out and were banished to Siberia.”* “If tearing out the tongues of her subjects by the roots, tearing away the nostrils with red hot pincers, the dislocation of the arms, whipping many to death with that terrible instrument the knout, with the addition of imprisonment in the most horrible dungeons,” were proofs of great clemency ; then she was distinguished for this virtue. *Ivan*, who had been declared emperor by her predecessor, she caused to be set aside, shut him up in the most miserable dungeon, kept him closely confined, in so dark a place that he knew not the day from the night, and allowed no means of education. Now those, who have spoken so highly in her praise and of her happy reign, must have been ignorant of well attested facts. They have been deceived and imposed on by such men as Voltaire, who could any time give a false representation to favor his opinions.

Catharine II., the successor of Elizabeth has been

*Rees and Mavor.

highly praised for the mildness of her disposition and the gentleness of her reign. Though not a native of Russia, by her marriage with Peter III. she became empress. Her reign was in fact one of the most bloody on record. Being a woman of unbounded ambition, she was almost constantly engaged in wars, by which thousands, tens, and hundreds of thousands lost their lives. Multitudes of widows and orphans were made by her conquests. In one of the wars, waged by this empress, with a distant people to extend the limits of her empire, 660,000 were slain, 200,000 of whom were her own subjects. She was a woman of as unbounded licentiousness as ambition. Not very long after she became empress, she formed a conspiracy for the purpose of murdering her husband, that she might reign alone. When she received the news of his cruel murder though she pretended to be afflicted, without the least delay she caused herself to be acknowledged the rightful sovereign of the Russian empire. At a time when she had some fear of a revolution in favor of Ivan, whom Elizabeth had shut up in a miserable dungeon, she gave orders to have him put to

death, which cruel deed was perpetrated. She was a bloody empress, a cruel murderer, and a vile woman. Many millions of the public money were given to her favorites, with whom her intimacy was shameful and wicked. She gave to the family of Orlof, who murdered her husband, lands, palaces, jewels, plate and money, valued at sevneteen millions of rubles. Thus the learned Malte Brun, whose authority few will dispute, describes the state of Russia during the reigns of Anne, Elizabeth, and Catharine II. "The 20,000 exiles during the administration of Brien, under the reign of Anne, the assassination of Sinclair, a Swedish courier, in 1739, the many victims mutilated or maimed (during the reign of Elizabeth) and the violent death of Peter the third in 1763, and of Prince Ivan in 1764 (during the reign of Catharine II.) exhibit a picture of anarchy to which no parallel can be found in the 18th century. Politicians jealous of Russia, then observed signs of "its approaching dissolution."* A correct knowledge of history affords abundant proof that the reigns of Elizabeth and Catharine, were just the reverse of what they have been rep-

*Vol. iv. page 335.

resented to be by some leading politicians. "They exhibit a picture of anarchy," says Malte Brun, "to which no parallel can be found in the 18th century." If therefore, we are to regard the historical argument, derived from the reigns of Elizabeth and Catharine II., it will be directly against the abolition of capital punishments. But why go to two corrupt women, and Marquis Beccaria, a corrupt Italian magistrate for instruction? Why not rather ascertain the opinions of upright and able statesmen? What intelligent, and virtuous sovereign ever thought of abolishing capital punishments in all cases? Murder has always been punished with death in every well administered government. In all nations, in all ages, and among savage tribes the murderer has been condemned to die. The Papists and Mahometans ought to be excepted; who allow the punishment to be commuted for money. But what multitudes pronounced heretics, have by the papists been burnt at the stake! Marquis Beccaria too, let it be remembered, was a papist.

The abolition of capital punishment by a state is a public and flagrant act of rebellion against that God, on whom we depend for life and for every

blessing we enjoy. If states are independent of God, why do they proclaim days of fasting, humiliation, and prayer with a view to obtain his blessing; and why proclaim days of Thanksgiving to recount the mercies of the year? And why do they observe one day in seven for the worship of God, and to acknowledge their obligations to him? Should capital punishments be abolished by a legislative act; the government ought to sell all their ships of war to merchants—to take from their army all instruments of death—and to suffer their cities to be destroyed without opposition. This would be consistent. But a poor laboring man is murdered and his wife and children left destitute—government has no sympathy for them, but makes the murder profitable to themselves. Is this a proof of love of the people, which some profess to have!

It is the feeling of every one that the murderer ought to die, but no one wishes to be his executioner. Should he be cut off by some striking providence, every one would acknowledge the justice of God. But God has said *by man* shall his blood be shed. It is, therefore, impossible to abolish capital punishments without disobeying a plain command of God.

And it cannot be done without exposing a whole community to some desolating calamity. But those who do not and will not understand their duty; if corrected, will not understand the reason, and will not reform their conduct.

Great is the responsibility of rulers. They are the ministers of God, raised to their high and honorable offices by his providence. They stand between him, and the people over whom their authority extends. Though their fellow citizens are instrumental of their promotion; yet they derive from God their right to punish transgressors of the moral law. "The right of punishing crimes against the law of nature, as murder and the like," observes a distinguished writer,* "is, in a state of nature vested in every individual. In a state of society this right is transferred from individuals to the sovereign power, and thus men are prevented from being judges in their own causes, which is one of the evils, which the civil government was intended to remedy. The sword of justice is now vested by the consent of the whole community in the magistrate alone." Blackstone maintains that the right to punish the

*Rees.

murderer with death "is derived from the command or permission of God; either revealed or collected from the laws of nature or society." "Where offences grow enormous, frequent, and dangerous to a kingdom or state, destructive and highly pernicious to civil societies, and to the great insecurity and danger of the kingdom or its inhabitants," observes Sir Mathew Hale, "severe punishment and even death itself is necessary to be annexed to laws in many cases by the prudence of lawgivers."

The acts of rulers are viewed as the acts of the community they represent. We know that when war is declared by any government, it is considered as the act of the whole people. Every ship belonging to a private individual, is liable to be taken, and, when taken is judged to be a lawful prize. The abolition of capital punishment in this, or in any other State, must be considered the act of every citizen. It is not sufficient to plead as a justifying reason, the murderer is not unpunished. God has in the plainest language required the death of the murderer. "Ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death; but he shall surely be put to death. So ye shall not pol-

lute the land wherein ye are; for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it. Defile not, therefore, the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell, for I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel.”* Any change by man in the punishment God himself has appointed for murder, must be an impeachment of his wisdom and benevolence, and must expose the State by which the change is made to the frowns of his providence. “It appears to me very strange,” remarks the learned Michaelis,† “that a sovereign should, from a principle of clemency, give up the infliction of capital punishments, and yet carry on without the least remorse, a war of vengeance, in which men shall lose their lives by thousands and hundreds of thousands. It were therefore, a very singular contrast, that the very same sovereign should in the one case lavish the lives of his best subjects by thousands, and yet think himself bound to be sparing of a single *villain*, who had disturbed the peace of the community, and whose death might be a salutary example to others, as if it were something sacred.

* Numbers xxxv. 31 — 34.

† Vol. iv. p. 478.

Would such a man be a clement and gracious sovereign?" Rulers may learn their duty from the case of Ahab, king of Israel. Because he disobeyed a plain command of God, a prophet was sent to him, who thus addressed him. "Thus saith the Lord, because thou has let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction; therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people." It is an alarming fact that the reasoning of some of our politicians is atheistical. It may, perhaps, be doubted, whether they are more to be blamed than many of our divines, who have not in their discourses from time to time discussed those great moral subjects which rulers ought to understand. Such is the character of our free institutions, that very many of our legislators, who are, indeed, worthy men, and wish to do right, have not had the advantages of education, and cannot detect the sophistry of such men as Marquis Beccaria, or contradict the bold statements made respecting the results of the reigns of Elizabeth and Catharine II. of Russia. The pulpit in this country includes within the circle of its influence a greater portion of the people than the press. Its influence would be increased, should the

topics discussed not be quite so exclusively theological. Much is said by modern reformers as well as politicians of the law of expediency, which is thought to be as much preferable to the law of God, as the Jews thought their traditions superior to the written law. But the only safe law of expediency is the law of God. Let the community go on much longer, lowering the standard of morality, without any check, and there will be no barrier against the inroads of vice — and no protection for life and property. Those who most earnestly contend for more freedom, that they may do as they please, are most overbearing and despotic in their spirit, and least disposed to allow others to do as they please, unless they choose to please them. Such are the men who will soon occupy the most important offices, who will impose heavy burdens on the people, and enforce their laws by the sword; unless the friends of moral virtue and true freedom cry aloud and oppose error with the truth. The little child, that is allowed to do as he pleases and to be gratified in every thing, will be despotic in his spirit. Let not rulers pretend that they are friends of the people — the poor laborers, when they turn a deaf

ear to the cries of the distressed and suffering family of him, who has been murdered, and think to make themselves popular by showing how much the murderer in prison has earned by his labor for the State.

E. K. O.
1-12-89