

To the Rev. J. P. ...
of the ...
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THE BIBLE AND SLAVERY. *xi*

A BRIEF EXAMINATION

OF THE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

ON

SERVITUDE.

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PREFACE.

THE brief examination of the Bible on the subject of servitude, contained in the following pages, was first suggested to the writer by the perusal of a recent work on the "Life and Epistles of the Apostle Paul," in which the word *servant* in the standard English version had been rejected, and that of *slave* substituted.

Shocked and startled at the effect of this change on many passages, and more especially by the fact that Christ himself would be thereby presented to us as a slave-owner, and those for whom He died be supposed to render in return the involuntary service of slaves; the writer sought in vain from several Christian scholars for a satisfactory reason for refusing to accept it.

The opinion seemed too general that at the beginning of the Christian Era, servitude and slavery were almost synonymous; and that the writers of the New Testament having employed the Greek word for servant in

general use at that time, those who translated it into the word slave were unassailable in so doing. Moreover, that it was no part of the mission of the Apostles to overthrow the slavery which they found firmly established in the world; and with which, as Jews, they had been made familiar in the laws of Moses, and by the practice of their great ancestor Abraham.

The appeal then lay to the "law and to the testimony," and in this case, as in most others, it was soon found that the Bible is its own best interpreter and vindicator. Servitude as alluded to in the lives of the patriarchs, regulated by the laws of Moses, or moulded by the principles and precepts of Christianity, was found to be alike consistent with the justice and goodness of God, and with the well-being and happiness of man. Thus when used as an emblem of the higher service due from the creature to the Creator, and from the Christian to Christ, the argument in favor of the word *servant* instead of *slave* appears to be conclusive. For although the Greek words used by the writers of the New Testament, primarily signify "slave" and "slavery;" it is equally certain that they were often used in a secondary sense, to denote servant and service: nor can we suppose that, as Jews, the sacred penman would use

them in any other sense than would be consistent with their own Scriptural and national ideas of a servant; and, as disciples of Christ, with their own exalted views of the nature of Christian service.

In the prayerful hope that this brief examination of the Bible on the subject of servitude, may prove as interesting and profitable to the readers as it has been to the writer, these few pages are offered for their consideration.

M. W. C.

CLAPHAM COMMON,

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
PATRIARCHAL SERVITUDE	1

CHAPTER II.

SERVITUDE AS REGULATED BY THE LAWS OF THE MOSAIC ECONOMY	10
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CHAPTER III.

SERVITUDE AMONG THE JEWS IN THE TIMES OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES. AND SERVITUDE AS AFFECTED BY THE TEACHINGS AND PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIANITY	22
APPENDIX	30

THE BIBLE AND SLAVERY.

CHAPTER I.

PATRIARCHAL SERVITUDE.

It has been frequently asserted that slavery is sanctioned in the Old Testament Scriptures, and recognised, without being forbidden, in the New Testament.

The investigation of the Old Testament on this subject naturally divides itself into two parts, viz.:—

Servitude, as it is incidentally mentioned in the narratives of patriarchal times; and

Servitude, as regulated by the laws of the Jewish economy.

Let us first examine the former.

Except in the prophecy of Noah, no reference is made to servitude in the book of Genesis till the narrative reaches the history of Abraham. Then, two classes of servants are mentioned, viz., those “born in the house,” or encampment—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob having always lived in tents—Heb. xi. 9; and, those “bought with money of any stranger”—Gen. xvii. 12.

The first class appear to have been bound to their master by similar ties to those which formerly existed between a *chieftain* and his *clan*, and still exist between an Arab *shiekh* and his *tribe*; of which a real or supposed,

common ancestry laid the foundation, and a common interest was the cementing bond.

These servants fought with their master in battle—Gen. xiv. 14 to 16; they studied his interests, and contended for them—Gen. xiii. 7; they had a voice in, and were intrusted with the management of the most important and delicate matters—Gen. xxiv.; and, in default of direct heirs, might inherit their master's property—Gen. xv. 2 and 3. “And Abraham said, Lord God what will thou give me, seeing I go childless:” “And, lo, one born in mine house is mine heir.” A striking and beautiful instance of the faithful service, and devoted attachment of one of these servants, is related in Gen. xxiv.

The second class comprises “Those bought with money of any stranger.”

Abraham is the only patriarch of whom it is recorded that he had servants of this class also. But there is no trace of his ever having *sold* a servant.

And here it may be well to note the wide distinction between these two acts. To *buy* a fellow-creature may, under some circumstances, be at the same time an act of necessity, and of the highest philanthropy. But that “the friend of God” should ever have *sold* one of those whom the Divine Providence had thus placed under his authority and protection, would indeed have been a strange and sad anomaly.

Who the strangers were of whom these servants were bought, and under what circumstances they claimed a right to dispose of these persons or of their

services, the sacred narrative does not inform us; but recent investigations among the tombs in the neighbourhood of the great pyramid throw some light on this subject, as they prove that, 4,000 years ago, the whole of the labouring classes of Egypt were under the most oppressive bondage to the great landholders, styled "princes;" a bondage which relaxed not its iron grasp for age, sex, or natural infirmity; but exacted from all the utmost amount of toil of which each one was physically capable.

This state of things appears to have continued in that country till the seven years of famine recorded Gen. xlvii. 13 to 26; when, by the policy of Abraham's great grandson, Joseph, the power of these cruel lords was broken for ever.*

It would seem, therefore, that during Abraham's sojourn in Egypt, it would not have been possible for him to procure additional servants to guard his increasing wealth, much less would he have been permitted to take these servants with him on his return to Canaan, unless he had "bought them with a price" from under the yoke of these inexorable tyrants. And we may observe here, that the only bond-servant in Abraham's family with whose nationality we are made acquainted, was an Egyptian. Some of them, however, may have been the members of one or other of the numerous, but closely compacted tribes or families amongst whom the

* "Lecture on Egyptian Life of 4,000 Years Ago," by Professor Piazzi Smyth; delivered before the Members of the Philosophical Institution at Edinburgh, March 1867.—See Appendix.

patriarch sojourned, viz., the sons of Heth, the Jebusites, Hittites, &c., who could not forsake their own country or tribe to be *incorporated* with another race, without the permission of their prince, or the head of their tribe; and to obtain this sanction, and to prevent all claims for service hereafter, Abraham may have "bought with money" all rights of service or allegiance from these persons to himself. While others of these "bought servants," may have been some of the unhappy captives first swept off by Chederlaomer and the predatory hordes who fought under the banners of his confederate kings when they ravaged the south-eastern parts of Canaan and the adjacent countries; and whose sad lot it had ultimately been to fall into the hands of the king of Sodom—Gen. xiv. 21.

But while the previous position of these servants must remain a matter of conjecture, it is obvious that under the circumstances in which they were placed whilst in the patriarch's service, their continuance in it must have been to a great extent, if not entirely, voluntary.

If a young bond-maid in Hagar's condition could on the first harsh treatment "flee from the face of her mistress," and set forth on her return to Egypt; how easy it must have been for the males while wandering with the flocks and herds to desert if they had wished to do so. May it not be inferred of them as of their master—Heb. xi. 15—"Truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned."

But the rule of “the friend of God” was a *paternal* one—his very name, “A father of many nations,” might well suggest alike to the Egyptian, the Canaanitish, or the Chaldean servant, that *from him* they would receive no wrong. Happily we have the highest authority on this matter. “I know him,” saith the heart-searching God, “that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment” —Gen. xviii., 19, and we are sure that he would not have been commended for commanding justice and judgment to his children and household, unless that for which he is commended had been the rule of his conduct towards all under his authority.

But not only were these servants “bought with money,” brought under a paternal human authority; God commanded that all the males among them of more than eight days old should, by the rite of circumcision, be adopted into the outward privileges and blessings of the Abrahamic covenant—Gen. xvii. 12, 13. They had been born “strangers to the covenant of promise;” but, as the servants of Abraham, those that were once afar off were brought nigh; and we may reasonably hope that in many cases they also became the partakers of the faith of their honoured master. How graciously the God of Abraham watched over the only bond-maid, whose history is related to us, may be seen in the life of Hagar—Gen. xvi. 7 to 15, xxi. 12 to 21— thus proving that the maid-servants were alike the objects of the Divine care.

What the pious and dutiful Isaac was as a master, may be gathered from what Abraham had commanded him "to keep after him," viz.: "The way of the Lord to do justice and judgment;" and also to bring his servants into "the covenant of promise by the rite of circumcision." Of the servants themselves, we are only told that they were very numerous, and very zealous in their master's service—Gen. xxvi. 14 to 22—facts which thus combined exclude the idea of either a hard or involuntary servitude.

Hired service for stipulated wages is first mentioned in connection with the land of Haran, and Jacob's sojourn in the family of Laban.

It would seem as if this kind of service was the only one in common use in that country, as Laban did not think it right that even a near kinsman should render regular service on any other condition, and he said to Jacob soon after his arrival, "Because thou art my *brother*, shouldst thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what shall thy wages be?"—Gen. xxix. 15. And again, at a subsequent period, "Appoint me thy wages and I will give it."—Gen. xxx. 28.

With this clue it is easier to discern the *class* of servants that accompanied Jacob on his return to the land of Canaan, viz.—*Hired* servants. The secrecy and unity of action necessary to secure the carrying off his large family, and numerous flocks and herds, forbid the idea that he was aided by forced or involuntary service. Even if he could have succeeded in deceiving his servants, how easily when the party was overtaken

by Laban on the mount Gilead, might they have returned to Haran with him and his brethren. And it is worthy of remark that while Laban made a sweeping claim on Jacob's wives, children, and cattle, he made none on his servants. That Jacob's servants were not only free agents, but thoroughly trustworthy, intelligent men, appears from their being sent as messengers on that difficult and delicate embassy to his offended brother; and also from their fidelity and obedience standing the severe tests to which they were subjected during the fears and perplexities which followed the announcement of Esau's approach, accompanied by four hundred men. Throughout the whole of this crisis order and discipline appear to have remained unimpaired; while the various arrangements of the patriarch for the safety of his family and substance were carried out in all their multifarious details, with the greatest tact and success.

In one other instance only, can any trace be found of the persons who thus aided Jacob in his journey from Padanaram to Canaan (called sometimes "servants," and sometimes "the people that were with him"), viz., when Jacob said, Gen. xxxv. 2 and 3, "Put away the strange gods that are among you. And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress;" and such was the influence of the patriarch over them, that it is added, "And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their

ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem."

After this solemn and united act of worship, every trace of these people disappears from the patriarch's after history. Henceforth his sons and daughters alone are mentioned; the former as tending the flocks, and transacting all the other matters in which their father needed assistance; the latter as "rising up" to unite in the vain effort to comfort him after the supposed death of his beloved Joseph—Gen. xxxvii. 7, 12, and 35, and xlii. 1 and 2.

There is no mention of any servants accompanying Jacob when, on account of the grievous famine, he, his sons, his sons' wives, and their children, sixty-six souls, went down to sojourn in Egypt—Gen. xlvi. 5 to 7, and 26.

One more glimpse, however, of the light in which the patriarchs regarded their duty to their servants, and their responsibility to God, as masters, is furnished in the book of Job. This patriarch who was probably a contemporary of Abraham, and who is styled by the Supreme Master, "My servant Job," thus speaks: "If I did despise the cause of my man-servant, or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me; what then shall I do when God riseth up? and when He visiteth what shall I answer Him? Did not He that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?" Job xxxi. 13 to 15.

Such were the *patriarchal masters* and *servants*. "The way of the Lord to do justice and judgment,"

was the grand law to which both were commanded to be equally conformable.

Can any resemblance to *slaveowners* and their helpless *slaves*, be found in these brief, but highly suggestive incidental allusions to patriarchal servitude?

Is it not strange that any such have been supposed to be found?

CHAPTER II.

SERVITUDE AS REGULATED BY THE LAWS OF THE MOSAIC ECONOMY.

IN the book of Exodus, following the history of the descendants of Jacob as during their sojourn in Egypt they rapidly multiplied into a nation—we see how terribly God visited upon the Egyptians their crime of enslaving a helpless people. And when at length Jehovah delivered them from the oppressor with “a strong hand, and an outstretched arm,” He gave to the Israelitish nation such laws on the subject of servitude that without a breach of them it became impossible that a single *slave*—in the Greek, Roman, or American sense of that term—could exist in the whole Jewish community.

The Jewish Law recognised four distinct classes of servants, and defined the rights and claims of each.

First.—The hired servant.

Second.—The Hebrew bond-servant.

Third.—Bond-servants purchased from the heathen.

Fourth.—Captives taken in war.

First.—The hired servant, engaged usually for short

periods, but sometimes for one or even three years. Deut. xv. 18—"In serving thee six years he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee." Isaiah xvi. 14,—"Within three years as the years of an hireling." Isaiah xxi. 16—"Within a year, according to the years of an hireling."

To defraud in any way, or even to delay the payment of wages to this class of servants, whether natives or foreigners, was forbidden by the law. Lev. xix. 13—"The wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning." Deut. xxiv. 14, 15—"Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates; at *his day* shalt thou give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it; lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee."

The second class consisted of the Hebrew bond-servants.

Their services might not be purchased for more than six years, as in the Sabbatical year every Hebrew servant became free.* Deut. xv. 12—"If thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee."

They either voluntarily sold their services for this

* If, however, an Hebrew sold himself to a stranger, he lost this privilege; and, like the bond-servant of Gentile race (unless redeemed), could only claim his freedom at the year of Jubilee—Lev. xxv. 47-54.

limited time, or were sold by creditors to pay their own or their father's debts. Or a thief who was too poor to make legal restitution might be sold, till by his labor he had been able to do so. Ex. xxii. 3, 4—"He shall make full restitution"—"he shall restore double"—"If he have nothing, he shall be sold for his theft." 2 Kings iv. 1—"Thy servant my husband is dead, and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen." Neh. v. 5—"We bring into bondage our sons and our daughters, neither is it in our power to redeem them." If husbands and fathers, they might not be separated from their families—as a family they came under the master's roof, and as a family they departed thence. Ex. xxi. 2, 3—"If thou buy an Hebrew servant, in the seventh year he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. Lev. xxv. 41—"Then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him."

Moreover, the master was commanded not to send them out empty, but to furnish them liberally out of his basket and out of his store. Deut. xv. 13-15—"And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine-press: of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing."

Thus was an opportunity given them of commencing afresh a life of freedom. If from attachment to his master or from any peculiar circumstances connected with his own family relations, he wished to extend the term of his service beyond this period, he could demand the privilege of doing so; but in this case he could not again claim his freedom till the year of Jubilee, when every inhabitant of the land became absolutely free. Ex. xxi. 4 to 6—"If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself." And if the servant shall plainly say, "I love my master, my wife, and my children, I will not go out free, then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him unto the doorpost, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever." Deut. xv. 16—"If he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thy house, because he is well with thee, then thou shalt take an awl," &c.

The third class consisted of bond-servants purchased from the heathen. And here the law which regulated such contracts, required that the *seller's* rights to the person offered for sale should be *bonâ fide* ones. The following appear to have been recognised as valid, viz. :—

A captive taken in war.—Deut. xx. 10 to 15, Num. xxxi. 25 to 46.

A debtor sold by his creditor.—2 Kings iv. 1. And—

A child sold by a parent, either from a heathen

want of natural affection, or from a desire to save the child from some present evil.*

Should there, however, have been proof that the person offering a servant for sale had stolen him for that purpose, the *man-stealer* was to be punished with death: and any person in whose hand the stolen man was found was liable to a like penalty. Ex. xxi. 16—"He that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death."

But this preliminary inquiry as to the rights of the seller being satisfactorily answered, and the purchase of service arranged, the merciful provisions of the Mosaic law effectually preserved the heathen bond-servant from ever becoming a slave. The transfer of such persons from lands of darkness and cruelty to one of light and mercy, could scarcely fail to be a blessing, both to body and soul. Still, they were not left to even an Israelitish master's sense of justice or mercy—the sanctions of the Divine law were thrown around them. If a servant committed a fault worthy of corporal punishment, the law pointed out to the master that it was at his own peril that he tampered with the life of his dependant. Ex. xxi, 20—"If a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall

* In the dreadful famines of India, heathen parents have been known to entreat European residents to buy their children, in order to save them from starvation. Such calamities are frequently mentioned in the Old Testament as occurring in Palestine and the neighbouring countries.—Gen. xii. 10, xxvi. 1, 8, xli. 57; see also Gen. xlvii, 19, and Neh. v. 5.

surely be avenged.”* Even if the loss of an eye or a tooth should be caused by a blow, the servant was thereby made free. Ex. xxi. 26, “If a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid that it perish, he shall let him go free for his eye’s sake,” (verse 27)—“And if he smite out his man-servant’s tooth, or his maid-servant’s tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth’s sake.”

Regular seasons of rest were appointed for them:—

First—The seventh day. Ex. xx. 10—“The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.”

Second—The “Sabbatical year;” in which labour generally was to cease throughout the land. Lev. xxv. 4 to 6—“In the seventh year shall be a Sabbath of rest unto the land, a Sabbath for the Lord: thou shall neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed;

* In this case it is presumed that the master did not intend to inflict a fatal injury on his servant. The rod was a legal instrument of punishment, and the utmost number of stripes legally permitted was forty save one. The degree of avengement is, therefore, in some measure left an open question, as in Ex. xxi. 29 to 32. But if the master had smitten his servant with a weapon of iron, or of wood, or even a stone, and he had died, the guilt of murder would have rested on him, and the murderer of “*any person*” (bond or free) had to suffer the extreme penalty of the law without the *possibility* of remission.—Num. xxxv. 15 to 18 and 31; also xv. 16.

for it is a year of rest unto the land. And the Sabbath of the land shall be meat for you, for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy *stranger* that sojourneth with thee."

Again—They were to be instructed in the law, and to share in its services on equal terms with their masters. Deut. xxxi. 12 and 13—"Gather the people together, men and women, and children, and thy *stranger* that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law; and that their children which have not known may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God." Joshua viii. 35—"There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, that Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the *strangers* that were conversant among them." Num. xv. 15 and 16—"If a *stranger* sojourn with you, or whosoever be among you in your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord, as ye do, so shall he do. *One ordinance shall be for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger.*" "As ye are so shall be the stranger before the Lord. *One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you.*" Lev. xxii. 10 and 11—"A sojourner of the priest, or an hired servant, shall not eat of the holy things. But if the priest buy any soul with his money, he shall eat of it, and he that is born in his house: they shall eat of his meat."

Moreover the Israelites were adjured by all the

sorrowful memories of the sufferings of their fathers when bond-men in Egypt; and warned by the judgments that overtook their oppressors, to show peculiar kindness to the *strangers* who in like manner sojourned among them. Ex. xxiii. 9.—“Thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.” Deut. x. 18, 19.—“The Lord loveth the stranger. Love ye therefore the stranger, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.” Ex. xxii. 21.—“Thou shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.” Lev. xix. 34.—“The stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.”

But the law which, above every other, secured the bond-servant from oppression was that recorded, Deut. xxiii 15, 16.—“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.”

Could slavery exist side by side with such an enactment? Does it not rather seem that this law made all compulsory service impossible?

The service of the heathen bond-servant did not terminate at the death of his master, nor, like the Hebrew, at the Sabbatical year: it descended as an inheritance to children, or even children's children, if the Jubilee year were sufficiently distant. But when that year of

universal emancipation arrived it brought with it freedom to him, in common with all the inhabitants of the land. Lev. xxv. 44-46.—Both thy bond-men and thy bond-maids, which thou shalt have of the heathen that are round about you, ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession.” Lev. xxv. 10.—“Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto *all* the inhabitants thereof.”

The fourth class consisted of captives taken in war.

At the end of a campaign these persons were divided among the combatants and non-combatants, according to law. Num. xxxi. 25-47.—“Among the Israelites they consisted entirely of women and female children.” Deut. xx. 10-14.—“When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it, and if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. But if it will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it: and when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thy hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword: but the women and the little ones and all that is in the city shalt thou take unto thyself.”

These captives were most carefully distributed by law among the various tribes and families of the land: and as strangers, widows,* and orphans, were specially

* It was only in the war with the Midianites that none but the “women children” were to be saved alive. The Divine prescience foretelling that the preservation of the Midianitish women would

placed under the divine protection. Deut. x. 17, 18.—“The Lord your God He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, love ye therefore the stranger.” Ex. xxii. 22-24—“Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.”

After the first bitter sorrows of their lot had been softened by time, they must often have had reason to rejoice in their change of position. They seem to have been gradually amalgamated with the families to which they had been assigned: sometimes becoming the wives and sometimes the daughters-in-law of their masters: and sometimes being given in marriage to the male servants of the family. Deut. xxi. 10-13—“When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies and the Lord thy God hath delivered them into thine hands: And seest among the captives a beautiful woman and wouldst have her to be thy wife,” &c. Ex. xxi. 4—“If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons and daughters,” &c. If raised to the higher stations, they shared in all the privileges belonging to them. If they remained as bond-servants, at the year of Jubilee they became

be fatal to their preservers—Num. xxxi. 15, 16. In other cases the women as well as the female children were to be saved—Deut. xv. 14.

the sharers in the emancipation, which it brought *to all*.

That the year of Jubilee must have given freedom to every class of bond-servants, is proved by the fact, that no nation of bond-men and bond-women ever "grew and multiplied" among the Jews as among the Greeks and Romans, and in the Slave States of America. The "*For ever*," therefore, of Ex. xxi. 6, must be understood by the aid of other texts bearing on the same subject; and will then be read thus—*To the utmost limit permitted by the law*—which limit being reached only once in fifty years, he who voluntarily deferred taking his freedom till then, in all probability, parted with it for ever, as his life might never be extended to that period.

Such are the laws and regulations of the Mosaic Economy as to servitude. Taken as a whole, they form a Divine Magna Charta to which both the Hebrew and stranger, whether a hired or bond-servant, might gladly appeal.

Nor were these laws ever broken with impunity, or suffered to become obsolete through neglect.—See Lev. xxvi. 14–39.

An illustration of this is found in the breach of the law respecting the Sabbatical year, which law gave liberty to the Hebrew bond-servant; and a long season of rest and refreshment to the bond-servants of heathen and Gentile race.—See Lev. xxvi. 33–35.

Concerning the breach of its first gracious provision, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Jeremiah,

xxxiv. chap. 13-17, " Thus saith the Lord the God of Israel; I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bond-men, saying, at the end of seven years, let ye go every man his brother, an Hebrew, which hath been sold unto thee; and when he hath served thee six years, thou shalt let him go free from thee."—ver. 17. " Therefore thus saith the Lord, ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour; 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."

Concerning the neglect of the second gracious provision which more especially affected the Gentile bond-servants, we read, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21, " To fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years."

Quotations from the prophetic books on this subject might be multiplied, but it seems only needful to refer to the one at the end of the Old Testament Scriptures, Mal. iii. 5, " And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of Hosts."

CHAPTER III.

SERVITUDE AMONG THE JEWS IN THE TIMES OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES, AND SERVITUDE AS AFFECTED BY THE TEACHINGS AND PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIANITY.

PROCEEDING to the examination of the New Testament, it will be at once observed that in the times of our Lord and his Apostles *hired servants* are the only class mentioned as existing among the Jews.

The sons of Zebedee left their father in the ship with the "hired servants"—Mark i. 20. The owner of the vineyard went out early in the morning "to hire" labourers into his vineyard—Matt. xx. 1. The Shepherds had "hireling" assistants—John x. 12 and 13; and the prodigal son thought of the abundance enjoyed under his father's roof by the "hired" domestic servants—Luke xv. 17; while the Apostle James speaks of the harvest being reaped by "hired" labourers.

To defraud these servants, in any way, is as severely denounced in the New Testament as in the Old. James v. 4—"Behold, the 'hire' of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth."

But the commands and precepts of the religion of Christ were intended alike for Jew and Gentile, and among Gentile converts Christianity soon came into immediate, though involuntary, contact with slavery. The prophet Isaiah, in the person of the predicted Messiah, thus speaks:—"He hath sent me to give liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound;" and the religion of Christ was sent forth to accomplish this, as well as the other parts of its mission of mercy. But upon its banners were inscribed the motto of its Divine Author, "Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." It did not, therefore, attempt to sweep away slavery with a flood of denunciations, which would have called forth the bitter and cruel enmity of the heathen masters, and might thus have led to all the miseries and horrors of a servile war; but it rather sought to penetrate it, and slowly, though surely, wear it away, by the continual droppings of its own just, and merciful, and loving principles.

The teachings of the New Testament may be briefly summed up under three heads:—

First—Its *direct injunctions* to masters and servants.

Secondly—Its *general principles*, as they necessarily bear upon this subject, and—

Thirdly—Its *metaphorical teachings*, as they illustrate the strength and closeness of the ties by which all Christians are bound to Christ and to each other.

And first in its direct injunctions. To the bonds-man it said—"Art thou called being a servant, care not for

it." A Christian is Christ's free man—1 Cor. vii. 21 and 22.

"Christ took upon himself the form of a servant," and as such obeyed and suffered even unto death—Phil. ii. 7 and 8.

"Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed"—1 Tim. vi. 1.

"Be obedient to your own masters, and please them well in all things, not answering again; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things"—Titus ii. 9, 10.

Be obedient to them who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free"—Eph. vi. 5-8. "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons"—Col. iii. 23-25. "And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit"—1 Tim. vi. 2.

But notwithstanding all the ennobling motives of action, and precious consolations with which Christianity can alleviate bondage—"If thou mayest be made free choose it rather"—1 Cor. vii. 21.

To the masters it speaks with the voice of authority—"And ye, masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him."—Eph. vi. 9.

"Give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven."—Col. iv. 1.

In Christ Jesus "there is neither Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all."—Col. iii. 11.

To a Christian master whose slave had been converted while absent from him, that which otherwise might have been given as a command was changed into an entreaty, coming, as it did, through "Paul the aged"—"Receive him," said the inspired Apostle, "not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved."—Phil. xv. 16.

Such are the *direct* teachings of the New Testament on the subject of servitude. They touch not on the abstract rights of the servants or of their masters; but simply define the duties of each while such a relationship existed between them. They sever not the bond, but they substitute for the iron that eats into the soul the golden links of a loving obedience to a common Lord and Saviour.

But in turning to the *general principles* of the New Testament, for what they indirectly teach us on this important matter, it would seem that where they are considered as of binding authority, slavery must be a doomed thing.

Throughout the New Testament, *love is exhibited as the vital principle of the religion of Christ*—a love which indissolubly combines that of God to man, and of man to God, with that of man to his fellow man.

It asks, “If a man love not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” And it commands that “He who loveth God love his brother also.”—1 John iv. 20 and 21.

This love, declared to be so indispensable to every Christian [1 Cor. xiii.], is shown to be eminently practical; and thus would manifest itself both negatively and positively. “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour.”—Rom. xiii. 10. Is it an *ill* for a man to have no property in his own person, or in that of his wife and children? If so, Christian love would instinctively shrink from aiding to work it!

As the guide of its positive actings, it takes that grand fundamental rule, which in its Divine simplicity and comprehensiveness can be applied by every man's own conscience.

“Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.”—Matt. vii. 12.

If it was scarcely within the range of possibility that a wish could arise in any sane man's heart that others

should bring him into bondage ; under the antagonistic influence of a practical conformity to *this rule*, how soon must slavery have withered away ?

Every one who is acquainted with the New Testament is aware that the texts enforcing the duty of Christian love are so numerous, that in a brief sketch a selection only can be made. It must therefore suffice to quote the summing up of them as given in Rom. xiii. 9—“ If there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

But from one other source may the teachings of the New Testament on this subject be gathered, and in conclusion this must be glanced at.

Addressed in the first instance, principally to Eastern peoples, delighting to be taught by allegory, rather than by dogma ; and quick to work out for themselves the instruction thus conveyed ; in the New Testament (as might be expected) the nature and effects of Christian fellowship are largely illustrated by metaphor. The three principal ones used for this purpose will be sufficient for the present inquiry, viz. :—

A perfectly organised Human Body.

An obedient, loving, and united Family.

A well regulated and dutiful Household.

First—The human body. Christ is the head—Col. i. 18. His followers, all members one of another—1 Cor. xii. 12–27, Rom. xii. 5—varying in office, but knit closely together by “ that which every joint supplieth,”

and by an invisible, but ever *felt* nerve of sympathy, so that if “one member suffer, all the members suffer with it”—1 Cor. xii. 26. Would any of the members of such a body voluntarily help to rivet galling fetters on the other members?

Secondly—A closely united family of brethren. Each one an adopted child of God through Jesus Christ—Eph. i. 5—and bound to yield a loving obedience to the same commands—1 Pet. 1-16—all companions in patience and tribulation—Rev. i. 9—and heirs of the same glorious promises—Rom. viii. 17—and taught that, *as brethren*, they ought to be willing to lay down their lives for each other—1 John iii. 16.

Could any one, who believed himself to be a *brother* in this *family*, reasonably draw the conclusion that he was permitted to hold a weaker brother in bondage, or to sell him for his own gain?

Thirdly—A Household. Christ the master; the servants, those whom he had redeemed from the bondage of sin and its wages of eternal death—Rom. vi. 16-21—commanded to prove their gratitude to *Him* by their love and helpfulness to each other—John xiii. 13-17—and taught by His example that, to minister to any of their fellow-servants, was an honour of which the greatest among them might be ambitious—Matt. xx. 26-28—assured that He would consider the smallest service done to one of the least of them, as done to Him, and any neglect of them as a disrespect to Himself—Matt. xxv. 34-45—and that, though no servant was to avenge himself on another servant, yet He, their

master, would judge the cause of each, and avenge the wrong done to any—Rom. xii. 17–19.

Would it not be preposterous for the servants in such a household to conclude that their master, notwithstanding these plain injunctions, permitted the upper servants to regard the others as mere goods and chattels, of which they might make merchandize at their own convenience?

Our Lord's parable, Luke xii. 45 and 46, seems to shadow forth the fearful consequences of such an inexcusable course of conduct, "But and if that servant say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men servants and maidens . . . The Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers."

And now at the close of this brief examination of the Bible, if the question should again arise which it aims to solve, namely—Do the Scriptures of the Old or New Testament give any sanction to Slavery as it existed in ancient times; or, alas! as it has come down to our own? If permitted to speak for themselves, do they not with one voice answer—No?

APPENDIX.

EGYPTIAN LIFE OF 4,000 YEARS AGO.

LECTURE BY PROFESSOR PIAZZI SMYTH.

The following will be found an interesting quotation from the report of the second lecture:—

“The tombs of innumerable private individuals have been discovered, deep buried in the bowels of rocky hills, and have rendered up in their inscriptions the opposite side to the Government story [inscribed on temples and palaces]. Now, therefore, at last, there is a prospect of getting at the real history of Egypt, because we have at length both sides of the question. At once, then, we enter some of these tombs, so abundant on and about the hill of the Great Pyramid; and find them some of the oldest tombs in all Egypt, yet not older than the Great Pyramid; indeed, seldom quite so old. An austere set of chocolate-brown men were the builders of these tombs; for their pictures of themselves are numerous, and have kept admirably, showing their features something between European and Asiatic, their clothing not very abundant. But these men, though so very simply attired, are not mere innocent and primitive children of nature for all that. On the contrary, everywhere throughout the picture-scenes on

the walls of these ancient tombs, order, method, and administration are the rules of the day. Whether engaged in agriculture, pastoral cares, hunting, fishing, building, manufacturing furniture or anything else, system is evident. Everything is done on a great scale, and done by the mass and multitude of subservient people for the benefit of the Prince, who rules them all with a rod of iron. No labour-saving machines are allowed, not even a handle to a hammer or a rubber to a polisher of stone or wood; extra exertion of his own muscles, and wear of his vital tissues by the workman must make up for all his master's deficiencies of stores. And whatever the employment, or whatever the produce being brought to be laid at the Prince's feet, there are always scribes in attendance to take down the exact amount in writing on the property rolls; and always are there other men, too, ready at hand to throw down on the ground that unlucky or unprofitable servant who has least to show, and is thereupon beaten with sticks from one end of his body to the other. No idleness was there in old Egypt, no escape even for the weak, the maimed, and the halt; some sort of appropriate work was found for even the most miserable wretch; and over some such poor cripple's head, bent double at his hard labour, may often be read the hopeless, heart-breaking inscription, 'Slave, born in the house, registered in the books of the house for ever.' Throughout hundreds and hundreds of these pictures you may look, and not a single case will ever be met with of a poor man enjoying himself under his own vine and his own fig-tree. The many are always being sacrificed for the few; and these few a gaunt, saturnine set. A land of agricultural plenty—it ought to have been known as 'merry Egypt,'

but it became instead, under these rulers, a land of bondage for all the human race. By visiting tombs further up the Valley of Egypt than the pyramid region, such as the tombs in succession of Beni-hassen, Abydos, Tel-el-Amarna, and more especially of Thebes, Luxor, and Karnak, you come on the memorials of later and later dynasties. Let us, then, at once enter these of Thebes, which record scenes of the eighteenth and nineteenth dynasties. The same genus of men are here, evidently by their looks, as those who lived 1,000 years earlier near the Memphis capital; but an immense change has taken place in some of their social circumstances. At Memphis and the pyramids you seldom heard, principally, of the king, but everywhere of sturdy land-holders denominated princes. But in the nineteenth dynasty these have entirely gone, and the king is all in all; the whole population seems only to live in order to serve and adore him. How did such a change come to pass with so steady and conservative a people as the Egyptians usually were? It was the effect of the policy of Joseph which has taken place in the interval. For precisely as described in the Bible, he bought the people their lands, their cattle, and themselves, too, and gave them into the hands of Pharaoh."

