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"SPEAK UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, THAT THEY GO FORWARD."—Exodus xiv, 15.

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Religious Intelligence.

THE LAND OF HAM, OR, AFRICA—HER CURSE AND HER CURE.

The descendants of Ham occupied the most beautiful and fertile portions of the globe. The Assyrians, Babylonians, Phœnicians, the Arabians, the aborigines of India, as also the Ethiopians, Nubians, Egyptians and Carthaginians, were all of the race of Ham. The Phœnicians were the ancient Cannanites. Though Africa seems from a very early period to have been peculiarly the portion of this son of Noah, yet they spread themselves abroad, eastward and westward, from their original centre on the plains of Shinar, built the first cities, made the earliest advances in the arts and sciences, in government, learning, navigation and commerce. They gave to the world the alphabet, and numerical figures. They enjoyed great temporal prosperity, but they were without God, and therefore could not endure. In Africa—Ham's own land—the Carthaginians, a branch of the Canaanitic family, for a time flourished, but they were not seasoned with the "alt of the true religion, and therefore they were destined to yield to an early decay. The race of Ham, like that of Ishmael, enjoyed great temporal prosperity and political dominion. But in respect to spiritual blessings, Ham has never, like Shem and Japheth, basked beneath the benignant smiles of Heaven. We have seen the sceptre of righteousness pass from Shem to Japheth, but shall Ham be ever forgotten? Shall not the sceptre in turn pass to him? Shall not the curse be removed from Canaan, and he yet be allowed to drink of the cup of salvation, and drink, too, as freely of the cup of blessing as he has of the cup of woe?

Such inquiries now demand our attention. We hope we may make it appear quite probable that this at present despised race are held in reserve for the next great moral development in our world. Like their own great deserts, this singular race, so barren in all common interest, so fruitless in all that goes to aggrandize a people, seems to be kept back for some great future purpose.

Late ethnological researches have brought out results, as touching African races, little expected, yet much to our present purpose. Priehard, Smith, and others, have shown satisfactorily, as far as the nature of the case admits, that the negro race is a primitive race; the earliest civilized, and the first civilizers of man; that "there was a time when the black race of man were pioneers, or at least the equals of other races in all the arts and acquisitions of man's primitive civilization;" a time when learning, commerce, the arts, manufactures, and all that characterizes a state of civilization, were associated with the black race—a race now associated only with degradation and barbarous ignorance. As evidence of this, we can point to the magnificent kingdoms of Merop, Nubia, and Abyss-

nia, and to the no less magnificent monuments of art, as they stand this day, the imperishable monuments of time, scattered along, from the pyramids of Egypt, through all southern Asia, to Japan; temples, statues, images, cavern palaces, far surpassing any modern work of art. These are monuments of the skill and workmanship of a crisp-haired and thick-lipped race. Writers of great learning and research hesitate not to say that the aborigines of Hindostan were a race of negroes—at least a people in hair and features resembling negroes. Such a race is said to have been on an island in the Bay of Bengal, on the mountains of India, and in the interior of the Malay Peninsula—indeed in just such positions as we should expect to find them, on the supposition that they were the aborigines of those countries, driven out and compelled to flee before victorious invaders, who afterwards became themselves permanent occupants of the soil. It is a singular fact that the idol and hero-gods of those countries—we mean the ancient ones, as those of the Buddhists and Jains—have woolly hair and thick lips. Now we can have no suspicion that the present dominant races of those countries, or that any white race, would be ambitious to give to their deities the negro features. Dr. Prichard, therefore, regards it as "an established fact, that a black and woolly-haired race is among the original inhabitants of Asia," especially in India and the regions round about that country. And the same writers agree that the ancient Egyptians were of the same race; "that the national configuration prevailing in the most ancient times was nearly the negro form, with woolly hair." In the most easterly countries are found indubitable traces of an ancient negro race. In Japan there are stupendous and magnificent temples of very remote antiquity, in which the idols are represented as negroes with woolly hair.

And another fact, attested by the same class of writers, and confirmed by Glyperton and other travellers among the negro tribes of the interior of Africa, is, that the pure-blood negroes are superior to the mixed races. Among the pure races they found "large and populous kingdoms, with numerous towns, well-cultivated fields, and various manufactures, such as weaving, dyeing, tanning, working in iron and other metals, and pottery." And what is more, the same authors assure us that the negro races are morally superior to the mixed tribes, that they all believe in the first principles of natural religion, in one universally powerful being; in prayer and worship; in rites and sacrifices, in priests and ministers, in the immortality of the soul; in a future state of rewards and punishments; in the division of time into weeks; and they have given as really a reception as any other people to religions both false and true—to idolatry, Mohammedanism, and Christianity.

Such facts abundantly indicate the capabilities of the race for a higher grade of civilization. No other race ever advanced so far under so unfavorable circumstances. They stood for a long time far in advance of any other race. Without the stronger element of Christianity, no other race ever made a greater progress. Not are we without an example of what the negro races are capable of under the more potent elements of Christianity. During the latter days of Carthage and of Egypt, the religion of the cross largely mingled with the other instrumentalities of their aggrandizement. Is not the past history of the negro races in favor of our assumption that they shall yet exhibit a higher civilization and a better type of Christianity than the world has yet known? And we have shown that there is nothing in their present condition which preclude such a supposition. Their present degradation is obviously but a result of unpropitious circumstances.

But there are other considerations which seem to throw something into the scale of the same probability. One is, that God is not accustomed to use any one people as his instruments for carrying out the purposes of his benevolence towards man, for any very long period of time. The best portion of any race which he has designed to use, could not long bear the honor conferred upon them, undervalue their privileges, abuse the Divine forbearance, and finally provoke God to humble them. They have rendered themselves unworthy of God's distinguished favor, and he will no longer work by them. He rejects them, at least for a time, brings them down, and leaves them to rot and waste and desolation.

During a long period of time, as already intimated, truth and righteous-ness, and the Church of the living God, were confided to the posterity of Shem. The patriarchs, prophets, and ministers, the agencies, means, and appliances for the preservation and spread of truth in the world, were