

The father had given way to weakness, for the greatest saint may fall; but it was not the son's place presumptuously to mock. The old man awoke, and no longer the stupid drunkard but an inspired seer, uttered—it may be with a heavy heart—the prophetic imprecation: “Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be.” Was this an arbitrary case—the decreeing of an irrevocable sentence—an unavoidable fate? No, not any more than the curse upon Adam's posterity. In both cases, it is not mere vengeful punishment; it is rather a *necessary result* that is declared. Is not slavery the natural consequence of Ham's irreverent, unfilial spirit? And hence the curse is laid not directly upon the actual offender, but upon Canaan his son; for as Ham had sinned against his father, his own son will naturally follow the example, and so he will be punished, not in his own person, but in his son; yea, in that son who it seems is most decidedly following the example of his father's rebellion and wickedness. Not by an arbitrary decree, but by a moral necessity, is the guilt of the fathers visited upon the children. And whither does this finally tend? How, I ask, will the third generation reverence their fathers, if they never saw any light of love and duty binding them to their forbears? And in the succeeding ages the cup of this iniquity gets full. And when a people has no faith in their ancestors—in the men of the past, will they have faith in one another? And when all righteousness comes to be sneered at, and the common creed is scepticism in all truth and honor, in all faith and social probity, what next? What out the uncontrolled reign of the sensual appetites; then anarchy; then slavery;—for all principles have been unrooted, and all moral cohesion has been lost.

Do we explain away Noah's language? No, but we explain it. Scripture and history and conscience confirm the interpretations. How did Canaan become “a servant of servants” in himself or in his posterity? When, I ask, were the Canaanites enslaved? Not for centuries after Canaan. And why? Because, answers God, “their iniquity is not yet full.” Gen. xv. 16. It did not take many generations, however, to leave them so utterly abominable, that, in the emphatic language of scripture, the land spued them out. Read the eighteenth chapter of Leviticus, and parallel passages, if you wish to obtain a glimpse of the moral and social state of the nations of Canaan four generations after Abraham. Similar are the testimonies of old heathen writers respecting the corruption of the Phœnicians and the Carthaginians; Sodom and Gomorrah indeed ripened sooner; but foul, horribly foul, sensual, devilish, were they all. Earth, hell has swallowed them up.

Take a wider historical sweep. As a matter of fact, are we not compelled to acknowledge that the nations descended from Shem have been the blessings of the world?—that

the Japhetic race have richly shared in their inheritance?—and that the offspring of Ham has ever lagged far behind in the race of intellectual effort and moral advance, drudges to their brethren, serfs, and worthy only of serfdom? And the roots of this are to be traced back to Ham's unfilial character and conduct just as certainly as the roots of our original sin lie in Adam's first transgression, and in the alienation of heart from God, out of which the transgression flowed. And should we and the Shemites, then, attribute solely to our great forefathers, Japheth and Shem, our nobler character and higher position? No; for when the blessing is pronounced, the source is declared to be in God: “Blessed be the Lord God of Shem;” but when the curse is launched forth, the root is declared to be in man's own evil nature and sin: “Cursed be Canaan.” The good is from God; the evil is in man.

Is, then, Noah's curse an excuse to the slaveholder? No more than the original curse entitles the devil to hold humanity in his bondage. Slavery, spiritual or physical, is ever a sad fact to be lessened, abraded, demolished, by all wise means; never to be vindicated, excused, or referred to God. And here and there in scripture and in christian history, bright gleams are thrown athwart the dark cloud that lies upon Canaan, teaching that he is bound not by the remorseless adamant of fate, but by a moral disease for which there is a remedy. The Gibeonites are received into the congregation of the Lord; so David received the remnant of the Jebusites; and Christ sends not empty away the Syro-phenician woman; and at this moment, many a dusky African is singing out of the joy of a ransomed soul, praise to Him who made of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon the face of the earth. G.

Two Views of Human Life

“GODLINESS is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life which now is, and that which is to come.” Binney has written a book, called, *How to make the best of both worlds*, very popular in its day, but which I remember nothing of, except the title. I think, however, that he must have taken as his text, the verses which I have quoted from Paul's first pastoral letter to Timothy. And a noble text it is, though sometimes much misunderstood. The common impression it makes upon men, I think, is that a godly man will generally have more of the good things, even of this life than the ungodly man. And that is a fact which I am not disposed to deny, for godliness naturally brings in its train other virtues, such as industry, patience, temperance, and the possessor of those will as a general rule, attain worldly prosperity. Still, however true this may be, I do not believe