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THE

Negro Race not under a Curse.

AN EXAMINATION OF GENESIS IX. 25.

BY

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The Negro Race not under a Curse.*

THE chief object of this paper is to show the falsity of the opinion that the sufferings and the slavery of the Negro race are the consequence of the curse of Noah, as recorded in Genesis ix. 25. That this is a general, almost universal, opinion in the Christian world, is easily proven. During the long controversy upon the slavery question which has agitated Christendom, no argument has been so much relied upon, and none more frequently adduced. It was first employed in vindication of the lawfulness of the slave trade. When the slave trade was abolished, and

* This paper was originally written as a letter, in reply to another from a philanthropic lady in Cheltenham, England. She communicated it to the then Editor of the London "Christian Observer," in which magazine it was published in September, 1852. Subsequent to this, in compliance with the request of many persons, it was rewritten and prepared, in its present form, for publication as a tract. Perhaps the Author may be permitted to say here, that it has had the advantage of being read by the late Rev. G. Stanley Faber, D.D., of Sherburne, the distinguished author of many learned works, who expressed his approbation of it, and presented the writer with his learned and able work, "PROPHETICAL DISSERTATIONS," in which the writer found that Mr. Faber had, several years ago, taken the same view of Gen. ix. 25, as is contained in this article.

"And God blessed Noah and his sons."—GEN. ix. 1.

"And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons *with him*, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you and with your seed after you. * * * * And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations."—GEN. ix. 8, 12.

"And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."
—ACTS iii. 25.

"And there shall be no more curse."—REV. xxii. 3.

philanthropists commenced their warfare against the system of slavery, the chief pro-slavery argument brought forward in support of that system was this text. The friends of the Negro race have had to meet it when asserted by statesmen in the Legislature, and they have had to contend against the earnest affirmation of it by learned divines. And now, although both slavery and the slave trade are condemned by the general sentiment of the Christian world, yet the same interpretation is still given to this text, and the old opinion which was founded on it still gains credit and receives support. Its insidious influence relaxes the missionary zeal of even many pious persons, who can see no hope for Africa, nor discover any end to the slavery of its sons. It is found in books written by learned men; and it is repeated in lectures, speeches, sermons, and common conversation. So strong and tenacious is the hold which it has taken upon the mind of Christendom, that it seems almost impossible to uproot it. Indeed, it is an almost foregone conclusion, that the Negro race is an accursed race, weighed down, even to the present, beneath the burden of an ancestral malediction. The prejudice against this race seems as wide, as absolute, and as decided, as that entertained by the Jews against the Samaritans.

2. THE OPINIONS OF COMMENTATORS AND THEOLOGICAL WRITERS.

A very few references to writers in the past and

at the present will show the prejudiced views of even eminently good men upon this topic. POOLE admits the primary and pointed application of the curse to Canaan; he also acknowledges the subsequent power and greatness of the other three sons of Ham, and the spiritual blessedness which ultimately attended them; yet, with singular inconsistency, in another place, he involves Ham, the father, in the curse, which he declares to have been pointed at his son Canaan. He says: "When Canaan is mentioned, *Ham* is not exempted from the curse, but rather more deeply plunged into it; whilst he is pronounced accursed, not only in his person, (which is manifestly supposed by his commission of that sin for which the curse was inflicted,) but also in his posterity, which doubtless was a great aggravation of his grief."*

The learned and pious MATTHEW HENRY says: "He (that is, Noah) pronounces a curse on Canaan, the son of Ham, in whom Ham himself is cursed; either because this son of his was now more guilty than the rest, or because the posterity of this son were afterwards to be rooted out of their land, to make room for Israel."† Again, in another place, speaking of the division of the families of the earth, he says: "The birthright was now to be divided between Shem and Japheth, *Ham being utterly discarded.*"

BISHOP NEWTON, in the first place, applies this

* Poole on Gen. ix. 25.

† See Henry's Commentary on Gen. ix. 25.

prophecy to Canaan and his descendants; but he afterward gives a fanciful correction of the text, on the authority of the Septuagint and the Arabic version; and then asks: "May we not suppose that the copyist, by mistake, wrote only *Canaan*, instead of *Ham*, the father of *Canaan*, and that the whole passage was originally thus: And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, &c., &c. And he said, Cursed be Ham, the father of Canaan, &c.?" He then goes on to remark: "By this reading all the three sons of Noah are included in the prophecy, whereas otherwise Ham, who was the offender, is excluded, or is only punished in one of his children. The whole continent of Africa was peopled principally by the children of Ham; and for how many ages have the better parts of that country lain, under the dominion of the Romans, and then of the Saracens, and now of the Turks! In what wickedness, ignorance, barbarity, slavery, misery, live most of the inhabitants! And of the poor Negroes, how many hundreds every year are sold and bought like beasts in the market, and are conveyed from one quarter of the world to do the work of beasts in another! Nothing can be more complete than the execution of the sentence upon *Ham*, as well as upon *Canaan*."*

The excellent Rev. THOMAS SCOTT says: "The frequent mention of Ham as the father of Canaan, suggests the thought that the latter was also criminal.

* See Newton on Prophecies, Dissertation I.

. Ham must have felt a very mortifying rebuke, when his own father was inspired, on this occasion, to predict the durable oppression and slavery of his posterity; Canaan was also rebuked by learning that the curse would especially rest on that branch of the family which would descend from him; for his posterity were no doubt *principally*, though not *exclusively*, intended. True religion has hitherto flourished very little among Ham's descendants; they remain to this day almost entire strangers to Christianity, and their condition, in every age, has remarkably coincided with this prediction."*

Similar views are expressed by KEITH, who remarks: "The unnatural conduct of Ham, and the dutiful and respectful behaviour of Shem and Japheth toward their aged father, gave rise to the prediction of the future fate of their posterity, without being at all assigned as the cause of that fate. Though long banished from almost all Europe, slavery still lingers in Africa. That country is distinguished, above every other, as the land of slavery. Slaves at home, and transported for slavery, the poor Africans, the descendants of Ham, are servants of servants, or slaves to others."†

In a popular work much used by the schools and the universities of England, this comment upon the curse of Noah is found: "These prophecies (Gen. ix. 25—27) have since been wonderfully fulfilled; the Egyptians

* Scott on Gen. ix. 24, 25.

† See Keith on the Prophecies.

were afflicted with various plagues; the land of *Canaan*, eight hundred years afterward, was delivered by God into the hands of the Israelites under Joshua, who destroyed great numbers, and obliged the rest to fly, some into Africa, and others into various countries; what their condition is in Africa, we know at this day.*

The Rev. Dr. CUMMING, of London, thus discourses upon this subject:

"Read the predictions respecting *Ham*, that his descendants, the children of Africa, should be bondsmen of bondsmen. England nobly sacrificed twenty millions, in order to wash her hands of the heinous crime and horrible abominations of slavery, and sent her cruisers to sweep the seas of every craft that ventured to encourage the inhuman traffic. But while God is not the author of sin, nor man irresponsible for his crimes, slavery has grown under all the attempts to extinguish it, and shot up in spite of the power of Britain and the piercing protests of outraged humanity, the hour of its extinction not having yet come; thereby showing that heaven and earth may pass away, but that one jot or one tittle of God's word cannot pass away."†

* Analysis of Scripture History, by Rev. W. H. Pinnock, B.C.L. "What their condition is in Africa, we know at this day."—Whose condition? Some would suppose that Africa was peopled in the mass by Canaanites. Surely this is loose writing, and inaccurate history.

† Exeter Hall Lecture.

3. THE REAL STATE OF THE CASE.

The writer of this paper differs from the distinguished persons here referred to. He regards the prevalent opinions upon this subject as a sad perversion of Biblical history on the part of the intelligent minds that have stereotyped them, during the last century and a half, in the literature and theology of the English language.

In considering this subject, there is one material point which should be carefully noticed—a point upon which nearly all writers upon the subject have greatly erred: THE CURSE WAS PRONOUNCED UPON CANAAN, NOT UPON HAM. "And he said, Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." Gen. ix. 25. This is the utterance of the Divine word, clear, plain, distinct. There may be differences of opinion as to the cause, the nature, the extent, the justice, and the influence of this judgment; but as it respects the person who is cursed, the word of God is specific and pointed: "CURSED BE CANAAN;" and in this we have the curse, direct.

No one, indeed, can deny that learned and distinguished divines have thought that *Ham* fell under the dire influence of this strong malediction. The suppositions of such most eminent divines as Poole, and Henry, and Newton, have already been presented. But what are they when contrasted with the distinct and emphatic word of God? They suppose that *Ham*

was cursed; the word of God says, "CURSED BE CANAAN."

But, as though the Holy Spirit intended that there should be no error or mistake in the matter, we find the curse upon Canaan repeated, that is, by implication, again and again, in this same chapter, (chap. ix.,) both in the context and sub-text. In the 18th verse of this (ix.) chapter it is written: "And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth; and *Ham is the father of Canaan.*" Why are Shem and Japheth spoken of *individually*, while Ham is mentioned *in relation to his son Canaan*?* Why, there can be no doubt that this form of expression was *designed* to point out *Canaan* as a marked individual.

In verses 26 and 27 we find the same form of expression *twice*, "and Canaan shall be his servant." We now have the curse *indirect*. In both cases, however, it is manifest that Canaan was the person subjected to this curse. Neither directly nor indirectly is Ham, the father, denounced by Noah; and therefore we have the authority of the word of God, for the affirmation that the curse was *not* pronounced upon Ham.†

* Mr. Faber asks, "Why Ham should be specially distinguished as the father of Canaan, while in the very same prophecy, his two brothers are simply mentioned as Shem and Japheth, without any parallel genealogical adjunct to their names." See "Prophetical Dissertations:" Dis. ii. p. 102, note.

† In an old work entitled "The General History of the World," I find the following sentence: "Some have believed that Noah cursed

Now, in order to involve the Negro race in this malediction, one of two things must be proven: either,

1st. That Noah, in mentioning Canaan, intended to include *all* the children of Ham; or,

2d. That the Negro race, in Africa, are the descendants of Canaan.

4. THE WHOLE FAMILY OF HAM NOT ACCURSED.

It cannot be proven that *all* the sons of Ham were included in the curse pronounced upon Canaan. Ham had four sons: "And the sons of Ham, Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan." Gen. x. 6. Canaan, it is evident, was the *youngest* of these sons, and Cush the *eldest*.

Now, the common rule among men is that "THE GREATER INCLUDES THE LESS." If, therefore, Cush, the *eldest* of the sons of Ham, had been the person cursed, then there would have been some strength and plausibility in the plea, that, according to this principle, a curse upon him, that is, Cush, as the head and representative of the family, involved a curse upon his three younger brothers. But the curse was upon the youngest, *Canaan*. And there is no received rule among men, the reverse of that here quoted, that is, that "the less includes the greater."

Canaan because he could not well have cursed Ham himself, whom God had not long before blessed." And he refers to Sermon 29, Chrysostom, in Genesis.

So, also, if Ham himself had been the person designated by Noah, then all disputation upon this matter would be, at once, at an end; for then the inference would be natural, legitimate, and indisputable, that *all* his posterity were implicated in the curse which fell upon himself. But this fact is nowhere stated in Scripture. IT DOES, INDEED, RECORD GOD'S BLESSING UPON HAM AND HIS POSTERITY;* although this is universally passed over and ignored; but that he was cursed by Noah is only one of the conjectures of men. In the sacred record we find Canaan's name, and his only, mentioned as the person cursed.

It is mentioned, moreover, in such a way as though the Divine mind intended there should be a marked significance connected with it. For why, when the Scripture narrative is so careful to give the names of Ham's four sons, according to seniority, why is *Canaan's name*—the name of the youngest—selected, singled out, and repeated, no less than *five* different times, in the

* It is objected to the view taken, in this paper, of Gen. ix. 25, that Ham is left neither blessed nor cursed; and hence divines include him in the curse of Canaan. But it is a singular fact, that all the commentators neglect to notice the fact that Ham had just received a blessing from God.

In Genesis ix. 1, we read: "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful," &c., &c. And in verses 8 and 12 it reads: "And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons *with him*, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you. . . . And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations."

The question here arises, "Does Noah's curse (*incidental to Ham's youngest son*) override the blessing of God, for perpetual generations, to

brief narrative which records this remarkable event? * Surely for no other reason than to mark HIM distinctly as *the* individual referred to, and to separate his three elder brothers from the curse.

The argument of an American writer upon this point is of great force, and deserves notice. He adduces "two rules of law and logic, viz.: enumeration weakens, in cases not enumerated; exceptions strengthen, in cases not excepted. In the curse Canaan is enumerated, and therefore the probability of its application to his brothers is *weakened* by this enumeration, and in the blessings bestowed upon Shem and Japheth, in the next two verses, Canaan, and not Ham and his posterity, is excepted; and therefore the probability of the exclusive application of the curse to Canaan is strengthened by this exception." †

The testimony of Josephus accords with this theory. He says: "Noah spared Ham by reasons of his nearness of blood, but cursed his posterity; and when the rest of them (*i. e.*, of the children of Ham) escaped that curse, God inflicted it on the children of Canaan. ‡

This argument is strengthened and confirmed by a reference to the counterpart of this curse, which is seen

Ham and his seed, in the general and particular blessings of Gen. ix. 9 and 12? Does the curse of *man* supersede and set aside the *covenanted* blessings of God?

* See Genesis ix. 18, 22, 25, 26, 27.

† I cannot give the name of the writer of the above. I found the extract in the fragment of a newspaper.

‡ Josephus, "Antiquities of the Jews," B. i. Ch. vi.

in God's dealings with the Canaanites. It is seen in those severe commands to the Hebrews on their entrance into the promised land, to expel and destroy the devoted Canaanites. The indictment against this wicked and profane people is written, in fearfully descriptive terms, in the 18th chapter of Leviticus, which enumerates the aggravated crimes on account of which the Almighty was about calling them to judgment.* The events which followed, in consequence of the commands of Jehovah to the Hebrews, have always been taken as the fulfilment of this prediction of Noah. By Jew and Christian Gentile, in the early periods of the Church, and in more recent times by writers upon prophecy, and by commentators upon the Bible, the havoc and destruction visited upon the Canaanites have been regarded, not only as a punishment for their wickedness, but also as the counterpart to the prediction of Noah, and as a complete fulfilment of his prophetic curse upon Canaan.

To sum up, then, we have, for the application and limitation of this curse to Canaan and his posterity alone, the following facts and arguments:

1. The text of Genesis.
2. Two fundamental rules of law and logic.
3. The testimony of Josephus.
4. The Scriptural account of the fate of the Canaanites.

* See Lev. xviii, 24—28.

5. THE NEGRO RACE NOT THE DESCENDANTS OF CANAAN.

But, in reply to the above arguments, it may be said that, granting that the three elder sons of Ham were not under the curse, nevertheless the Negro race may be the descendants of Canaan, and hence under the infliction of this prophetic judgment.

The facts of the case warrant the most positive denial of the assertion that the Negro race are the descendants of Canaan. In fact, of all the sons of Ham, *Canaan was the only one who never entered Africa*. Of this there is abundant evidence, sacred and profane.

The evidence, so far as *Scripture* is concerned, is given us in Gen. ix. 19: "And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza: as thou goest unto Sodom and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha." The locality here designated is evidently the land of Palestine, and in Asia; and in the Pentateuch, this region is frequently called the land of Canaan.

A reference to the names of the descendants of Canaan will tend to place this still more distinctly before us. In Gen. x. 15-18, we find the following statement: "And Canaan begat Sidon, his first-born, and Heth, and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgasite, and the Hivite, and the Arkite," &c., &c. These names, most surely, are not African, nor do they indicate African localities. We recognize in Sidon the name of that city, celebrated in history for its commerce

and luxury, which stood on the Mediterranean, at the north of Palestine. The Hittites were the descendants of Heth, and lived in nearly the same quarter. The Jebusites were the descendants of JEBUS, and their locality was the spot on which Jerusalem was built. And the Amorites, Girgasites, &c., are frequently mentioned in the Old Testament as inhabitants of the land of Canaan.

The *profane* historical evidence is brief, but clear, weighty, and decisive: it is the evidence of Josephus, who says: "Canaan, the fourth son of Ham, inhabited the country now called Judea, and called it, from his own name, Canaan."*

It appears, then, from the evidence adduced, that this curse, in its *significance* and LOCALITY, is altogether Asiatic, and not African. Asia was the field on which the Canaanites moved, and whence their history is derived. The Canaanites of old were Asiatics, that is, so far as residence is concerned; and the mass of their descendants, if existing anywhere, are the modern Syrians.

Again, the above facts and arguments may be opposed by some, by the fact that *some* of the Canaanites established themselves on the north coast of Africa, in a colony. But it is quite evident that the Negro race, which mostly peoples that vast continent, could not have proceeded from them:

1. Because the establishment of Carthage, the great

* Josephus, "Antiquities of the Jews," B. i. Ch. vi.

Phœnician (Canaanitish) colony, was at a late period in the history of the world; * but the permanent division of races had been formed centuries anterior to this event; and the Negro race, as a race, had long before sprung into existence.

2. If this were not the case, the probability is that the great desert would have prevented their being mingled with the mass of the aborigines who live south of the desert; and it is almost certain that the interior of Africa was first reached by the way of Egypt.

3. History informs us that Carthage, a colony, grew up, *by itself*, in one locality; flourished for a space, and then sank to decay; while it does *not* inform us that Carthage was the mother of nations, the founder of a race.

Moreover, the fact should not be forgotten that the blood of the Canaanites was more mingled with that of Europeans than with Africans; for they formed *more* colonies in Europe than in Africa, and their influence was stronger in Europe than in Africa; and they have left behind more numerous marks and monuments of their power in Europe than in Africa. Indeed, almost every vestige of their former might, in Africa, has been obliterated.

When the Israelites entered the promised land, they broke up the political establishment of the Canaanites,

* The foundation of Carthage, Utica, Septis, &c., took place, according to Heeren, between 1000—500 b. c. See "Heeren's Historical Researches," Vol. i. Ch. ii.

destroyed large numbers of them, and drove many of them out of the land. These latter went northward, and at first settled in the country called Phœnicia; and from this they received the name Phœnicians. And here it was that the Canaanites gave evidence of being a wonderfully active, enterprising, ingenious, and intellectual people—as much, if not more so, than any people of ancient times. They were a maritime nation, and their adventurous spirit led them to the far regions of the North, and southward around the Cape of Good Hope, which they doubled, traversing thence the countries bordering on the Indian Ocean.* They had commercial intercourse all through the Mediterranean Sea. Their ships and trade reached all along the coast of Europe, even beyond the pillars of Hercules, to Britain and Ireland. In many of these places they planted colonies, on both sides of the Mediterranean; carrying with them arts, letters, commerce, and civilization, to people yet rude and uncultivated. It appears to be an established fact that their colonies were planted on the coasts of both Spain and Ireland; and thus some of the Celts of the present day may now have some of the blood of the Canaanites flowing through their veins.†

“The establishment of a Canaanitish colony on the coast of Africa is no more evidence that the African

* See “Heeren’s Historical Researches,” Vol. i. Ch. iii.

† See “Heeren’s Historical Researches,” Vol. i. Ch. ii. Also, Ezekiel xxvii.

race proceeded from Canaan, than the similar fact in Ireland and Spain is evidence that Europeans had such an origin.

6. WHENCE IS THE ORIGIN OF THE NEGRO RACE?

Here it may be well to give a passing notice to the question, Who were the progenitors of the Negro race?

The writer of this paper does not pretend to speak with certainty upon this question. The following, he thinks, is a true statement of the matter.

Africa was originally settled by the descendants of Ham, *excepting his son Canaan*. Ham himself is supposed to have emigrated to Egypt; and Egypt, in Scripture, is called the “land of Ham.”* There he attained to state and eminence; and after his death, it is said, was deified by his descendants. The supreme deity AM of the Egyptians, it is stated, signifies his name: *e. g.*, (H)AM; and the Jupiter AMMON, in honor of whom a temple was erected, is supposed to indicate HAM.

Africa was peopled by Ham in the line of his *three* sons, CUSH, MIZRAIM, and PHUT.

I. Cush, the eldest, and undoubtedly the most distinguished of all the sons of Ham, appears to have been the great progenitor of the Negro race. His name is also associated, with distinction, with Asia. The records of these early periods of the world’s history are by no

* Ps. cvi. 22.

means clear and distinct; but Cush appears to have gone, at first, into Arabia, between the Euphrates and the Tigris, the country sometimes called Chaldea, and in Scripture, Shiraz. Thence his descendants spread themselves abroad through the beautiful and luxuriant region of "Araby the blest," and eastward, by the Persian Gulf, to the Orient. Here, in the first place, Cush and his children distinguished themselves. Here Nimrod, his son, became the first of kings, and reared up the mighty city of Babylon, and founded Nineveh. In the course of time some of the descendants of Cush crossed the Straits of Babelmandel, turned their steps southward toward the sources of the Nile, and settled in the land south of the Mountains of the Moon; and from them the Negro race has sprung, although the Cushites were, undoubtedly, greatly mingled in blood with the children of Mizraim and Phut.

2. Mizraim was the father of the Egyptians. Wherever, in our version, we find the name of Egypt, in the original it is Mizraim.

3. Of Phut, the *third* son of Ham, we have but little more than conjecture. It is the generally received opinion that his descendants settled on the northern Atlantic coast of Africa—Libya, and the adjacent parts, the country of the Moors.

7. SLAVERY NOT PECULIAR TO THE NEGRO RACE.

But there may be persons who will still object that the severities of the African slave trade, and the horrors

of Negro slavery, are peculiar and significant, indicate something special in their inflictions, outweigh all theory and argument, and give strength and authority to the opinion that the curse was pronounced upon Ham, and that the children of Africa have participated in its consequences. The reply to this is:

1st. That the severities of the African slave trade, and the horrors of Negro slavery, as exhibited in European colonies and possessions, are entirely *modern*—confined to a short period in the history of the world, and therefore not a true exemplification of the *general* condition of the Negro race.

2dly. That while it is true that servitude and slavery have existed in some form throughout Africa, in every stage of its history, it is also true that *servitude and slavery have been the general condition of society, in all nations, in all countries, at all periods of time*, and are not in any manner peculiar to the black man, or the Negro race.

In connection with this fact:

3dly. That if the general existence of slavery in a race, or among a people, is to be taken as an indication that a curse has descended upon them, then the mass of the Turks, Poles, Russians, Circassians, are lineal descendants of Canaan, and therefore "doomed races." And in the same category the larger portion of even Anglo-Saxons must be placed; for, but a short time since, a multitude of Britons were absolutely "goods and chattels," under the name of "villeins."

8. THE UNIVERSAL PREVALENCE OF SLAVERY.

Those persons, surely, display great ignorance, who associate the system of slavery, specially and alone, with the Negro race, and who are not aware of its existence in other races, and in all periods of history. There are no people, whether ancient or modern, with whom slavery has not been, at one period or other, a national institution. Indeed, how very little freedom has ever been enjoyed in this sin-ridden world of ours! Among the various evils to which society has been subjected, none have been more general or more deadly than slavery. No portion of the globe has been exempt from this curse. Slavery existed among all the nations of antiquity of whom we have any knowledge. It was maintained among the Assyrians and Babylonians. That slavery existed among the Egyptians is evidenced by the testimony of the Bible. Joseph was sold by his brethren; and sold again to an officer of Pharaoh's household. The Canaanites, after they were driven from the land of Canaan, and set up empire in Tyre and Sidon, trafficked in the bodies of men. The Greeks and Romans held vast numbers of slaves; they were great traders in human flesh, and distinguished themselves beyond all other people as cruel slave-holders; they kept their slaves in the deepest subjection, and visited upon them the most horrible cruelties, as is instanced in the condition of the Helots.

In more recent times, we see the same prevalence of

slavery among the nations. The whole western part of Europe, not long since, was in a state of abject vassalage. In Russia, twenty millions of serfs, even *now*, in wretchedness and poverty, suffer the infliction of the knout, and are subject to irresponsible power and unrestrained tyranny. And if all the truth were known, it would, no doubt, be seen, that some of the convulsions which have recently occurred on the continent, were, in fact, insurrections of slaves battling for personal freedom.

The same state of things has existed even in England. A few centuries since, Saxons were bought and sold in Ireland and Rome. At one time slaves and cattle were a kind of currency in the land; and down to the period of the Reformation, human beings were "marketable commodities."

In the light of these facts, how ignorant and idle is it to regard the children of Africa as the subjects of a peculiar curse, because, in the mysterious providence of God, they have participated in the miseries and the sufferings of a cruel system, which has existed from the dawn of history, *in every quarter of the globe*, among every people under the sun.*

9. THE CAUSE OF THE SLAVE TRADE, AND OF NEGRO SLAVERY IN CHRISTIAN COUNTRIES.

It was the discovery of America, and the development of the treasures of the New World, which led to

* With reference to the general prevalence of the system of slavery, see

all the accumulated horrors of the slave-trade, and the dreadful barbarities of Negro slavery, in Christian lands. The system took its rise in the sixteenth century. Since then the shameful fact has been witnessed, by earth and by heaven, of men, civilized men, men born and reared in Christian lands and under Christian influences, tearing their fellow-creatures from home, and friends, and country; carrying them across the wide ocean; trading in the flesh and blood of human beings! The system of slavery, *as thus marked and distinguished*, is a MODERN affair—was unknown anterior to the discovery of America; and therefore, as such, not a fact of history—not a general, universal state of the Negro race.

10. THE SLAVE TRADE DOUBLY DISASTROUS.

But it should be remembered that this event did not bring distress and slavery upon the Negro race alone; it struck at once, with deadly, blasting influence, upon two races of men,—the Indian as well as the Negro; and if, because of its destructive and enslaving influence, we are to infer a people's descent from Canaan, then the American Indian is of his seed, as well as the Negro. So soon as the European planted his foot upon the western continent, he seized upon the aborigine as his instrument and property. Before there was any thought of stealing the African and

a very able article in the "Life and Remains of Rev. B. B. Edwards, D.D." late of Andover Theological Seminary.

making him a slave, the Indian was enslaved and overworked; until, at last, he sank down, spent and overwearied, into the grave. And then, when the Indian was exterminated, the Negro was torn from his native land, brought across the water, and made to supply the red man's place. It is difficult to tell which has suffered the more from this discovery, and the slavery which has grown out of it—the Indian or the African. "In the West Indies," to use the words of another, "the whole native population became speedily extinct; the ten millions of that almost unearthly race, the gentle Caribs, vanished like a morning mist before their oppressors. They bled in war; they wasted away in the mines; they toiled to death in the sugar mills."* And then, when their spirits had fled from earthly thralldom, the "conquerors of the New World" turned toward the vast African continent for new victims to fill up the places they had made vacant by their murderous treatment of the natives.

11. WHENCE THIS PERVERSION OF SCRIPTURE?

A consideration of this subject would be altogether incomplete, without an attempt to account for the origin of this perversion of the word of God, that is, that the

* Rev. J. S. Stone, D.D.

"Las Casas and Veyra might be quoted to show the cruelties which stimulated them in their unwearied efforts to save the original inhabitants from servitude. The Indians vanished from the scene, giving way to a more enduring race, who were thenceforward to monopolize the miseries of slavery."—"Friends in Council," p. 121.

Negro race is under a curse, and devoted to slavery. The writer of this article is fully aware of the responsibility he assumes in making the assertions which follow; but it is his deliberate conviction that this perversion of Scripture originated,

1st. In the unscriptural dogma, still maintained by Christian men, and even ministers, that slavery is consistent with, nay, authorised by, the word and will of God, and that it existed among the Jews under the divine sanction.*

2d. In the natural disposition of our corrupt nature to justify a committed wrong, and, if possible, to claim the authority of God's word for it; and this is the peculiarity which characterizes this great and deep-seated error. It had its origin in the rise and influence of the system of slavery; and this system has appropriated for itself no stronger support than this, and those other staple arguments, wrenched from the Scripture to vindicate and sustain the whole fabric of Negro slavery.

Christianity, in the abstract, is a pure and perfect gift from God to man. But Christianity is a deposit from heaven, in the hands of sinful men; and conse-

* The mind of God upon this subject, so far as the *Old Testament* is concerned, is thus expressed in Exodus 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." Can any thing be more explicit?

So far as the *New Testament* is concerned, one distinct, unambiguous, and positive utterance would seem to be sufficient. St. Paul furnishes us with such an one in 1 Timothy i. 9, 10: "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for MENSTEALERS"—*ἰσχυροταύταις*; See "Conybeare and Howson" upon this verse.

quently, in all its ages, Christianity has suffered the loss which is the natural result of being entrusted to this agency, and of being transmitted through this medium. History proves this; for no one need be told that Christianity, in every age, has partaken of the prevailing spirit of that age, whatever it might be. In a philosophical age, it has been influenced by the philosophical spirit and dogmas of that age. In the middle ages, Christianity was influenced by scholasticism. In the age of wars and crusades, she produced Peter the Hermit, and her prelates led forth mighty armies to battle. In an age of luxury, its rigid tone has been relaxed by the enervating influence of wealth, and ease, and refinement. That Christianity has suffered in a like manner, in a slave-trading and a slave-holding age, no one need wonder who looks at the wide and withering influence which the slave trade and slavery have exerted, in all the countries of Christendom, during the last three hundred years. During this period, nearly all the literature of the chief European nations was a Negro-hating and a pro-slavery literature. The institution of slavery, wielding a most potent and commanding authority, brought every thing, in politics, science, philosophy, and letters, to bear in support of the slave trade, in maintenance of the institution of slavery, and to uphold the dogma that the Negro was but an inferior animal. The aid of science was invoked; philosophy trimmed her lamps; literature poured forth whatever treasures she could possibly command. The period has

but recently passed since distinguished men in England and France exercised the keenest wit and the subtlest genius to prove that the Negro differed physically from the rest of the human species, and had a *distinct* organization. The puzzling questions concerning the cuticle, the coloring membrane, the "woolly" hair, the facial angle, the pelvis, and all the other supposed characteristic differences of the Negro race, have only recently been settled in a sensible, reasonable manner. In such a state of public sentiment in the Christian world, what wonder that the Church herself should have become tainted and infected by the deadly touch of slavery? And she did not escape; she, too, fell into the common sentiment of the age; she has not yet entirely unschooled herself from it;* and hence it was that, to a very considerable extent, for nigh three centuries, the black man has had a pro-slavery theology pressing him to the earth, as well as the all-grasping cupidity of man:

"Trade, wealth, and fashion asked him still to bleed,
And holy men gave Scripture for the deed."

To this prevailing sentiment we owe the fact that nearly all interpretations of Scripture, commentaries, works on prophecy, dissertations on Jewish servitude, sermons and theological treatises elicited by the anti-slavery struggle in England and America, nearly all are pervaded by a pro-slavery tone.

* See, as a most lamentable instance, a recent scriptural defence of Negro slavery, by the venerable Rt. Rev. Bishop Hopkins, of Vermont.

In legal matters it is an assumed principle "that in doubtful cases the advantage of the law shall be in favor of the prisoner;" but Christian men have reversed this principle, and in their treatises have assumed, as a fore-gone conclusion, that the spirit of the Bible was in favor of slavery, and *not* for freedom, and hence ingenuity has been exhausted in order to show the exact similitude between Jewish servitude and Negro slavery; and to prove that when Noah cursed Canaan he was looking right down the track of time upon some fine specimens of "Ebony," in the barracoons of the Gallinas, or some "fat and sleek" Negroes in the slave-shambles of Virginia!

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, the author submits that the preceding examination authorizes the following conclusions:

1. That the curse of Noah was *pronounced* upon Canaan, *not* upon Ham.
2. That it *fell* upon Canaan, and was designed to fall upon him alone.
3. That neither Ham, nor either of his three sons, was involved in this curse.
4. That the Negro race have not descended from Canaan; were never involved in the curse pronounced upon him; and their peculiar sufferings, during the last three centuries, are not the results or evidences of *any* specific curse upon them.
5. That the fact of slavery in the Negro race is not

peculiar to them as a people; but a *general* evil existing in the whole human family; in which, in God's providence, the Negro family have latterly been called to suffer greatly, and doubtless for some high and important ends.

6. That the geographical designations of Scripture are to be taken in good faith; and that when the "*land of Canaan*" is mentioned in the Bible, it was not intended to include the Gold Coast, the Gaboon, Goree, or Congo.

This examination furnishes us with suggestions upon a few *collateral* subjects which have been more or less associated with, or deduced from, the false interpretation thus noticed:

1. We see that *whatever* may be the significance of Gen. ix. 25, it does not imply mental degradation and intellectual inaptitude. The curse of Noah did not rob Canaan and his descendants of their brains. The history of the Phœnicians gives evidence of as great creative faculty, and of as much mental force and energy, as that of any other people in the world. It would seem that they, of all the ancient world, were only *second* to the Romans in that commanding national influence which begets life in distant quarters, starts enterprise in new regions, and reproduces its own force and energy among other peoples. Of course, it follows legitimately from the above, that the *whole* Hamitic family are under no Divine doom to perpetual ignorance or endless moral benightedness.

2. The history of the Canaanites serves to show that the "*principle of chattelism*" is not the correlative of the curse of Canaan; this was neither their doom nor their destiny. Neither in sacred or profane history do we find them bought and sold like cattle. Driven out of Canaan, they themselves traded in "the bodies and souls" of men, but *not* so others with them.* The nearest approach to any thing of this character is the condition of the Gibeonites, who deceived Joshua; but their condition was that of *servants*.† Although subjugated and humbled, yet their personal and family rights were preserved intact, and none of the aggravations of slavery were permitted to reach themselves or their children. When set upon, at times, by lawless and ruthless men, both Divine and human power interposed for their protection and preservation.

3. This examination nullifies the foolish notion that the curse of Canaan carried with it the sable dye which marks the Negro races of the world. The descendants of Canaan in Palestine, Phœnicia, Carthage, and in their various colonies, were not *black*. They were not Negroes, either in lineage or color.

* See Ezekiel xxvii.

† See Joshua ix. 21. 2 Samuel xxi. 3, 4, 5, 6.