

**THE GOVERNING RACE:
A BOOK FOR THE TIME,
AND FOR ALL TIMES**

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“God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.”—*Genesis, 9: 27.*

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THE GOVERNING RACE.

PART I.

IS SLAVERY SANCTIONED BY THE OLD TESTAMENT ?

The furious controversy concerning Negro Slavery, now raging throughout our land, is no longer a mere political question. Both parties have appealed to the BIBLE.

Those who sustain or vindicate the slavery of the negro race in the United States justify themselves by asserting that "this institution is just, wise, and beneficent;" that "it is ordained by Nature, and is a necessity of both races."—*Speech of Mr. O'Connor.*

They also declare that "this social institution (slavery) is founded entirely on the revealed laws of God; the Bible is the source of all our laws as well social as civil, and hence reverence and worship of its Divine Author are more general among southern slaveholders than almost any other people."—*De Bow's Review, Vol. 3, No. 1, January, 1860, p. 12.*

Furthermore: "That slavery is a great moral, social, and political blessing—a blessing to the master, and a blessing to the slave."—*Speech of Senator Brown, of Mississippi.*

The abolitionists, on the other hand, assert (of slavery) that "God has forbidden it."—*Dr. Cheever's Speech, at the Cooper Institute.*

"Slavery is founded on principles of injustice, extortion and oppression, manslaughter and robbery; slavery is the foster-parent of inhumanity and murder."—*Sermon by Rev. Dr. Mattison.*

"American slavery is the sum of all villainies, and a combination of all cruelties, crimes, and robberies, of murder, piracy, and adultery, and whatever else is impure, unholy, and accursed."—*Resolution of the Anti-Slavery Convention, Buffalo, January 10, 1860.*

From the above expressions of the anti-slavery party—and volumes might be filled with the like bitter invectives against the system—it must be plain to every reflecting mind that this fierce and agitating controversy cannot be settled by compromises. It is a question between right and wrong, morally, not politically considered; it is, therefore, taken out of the reach of expediency altogether.

Even the most upright and patriotic statesmen, were they wise and self-sacrificing as those who won our independence and framed the Constitution, could not settle this now vexed question. Those who deny the right of man to hold another man in the bondage of slavery spurn the authority of the Constitution and the laws of Congress; they appeal to a "higher law."

There must, then, be found somewhere moral power to compel obedience to the Constitution of the United States, or the Union will be dissolved, or resort had to physical force.

The law of God is the rule directing and compelling a rational creature in moral and religious actions. There is no moral law-giver save the Lord God. There is no code of His divine law save that contained in the BIBLE.

Let us, then, people of the United States, take up this momentous question in the true spirit of Christian obedience to God's law; seeking, reverently, to understand what is set forth in the Old and New Testaments concerning slavery, and submitting ourselves to the authority of the Bible as the only unerring standard of truth and righteousness.

The Bible gives us three notable instances of laws in which our Creator imposed certain specified penalties for sin on certain classes of the human race.

The first was God's sentence on Adam for eating the forbidden fruit. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." The ground was cursed for his sake, (or sin,) and all his sons, to the end of time, were subjected to the same hard necessity of labor.

Will any Christian say that this sentence of God was unjust? Will any man of right reason contend that this judgment ever has been set aside without worse evils to the human race than hard labor being the result?

When the penalty for disobedience—death—was for a time remitted to fallen man, was not hard labor the best condition in which he could be placed for his repentance and reformation? If Adam and all his descendants had submitted to the punishment, and had "done well" their work, would they not have been accepted of the Lord? Have not the most dreadful crimes against God and man resulted from the selfish attempts made, by individuals and classes of men, to escape this universal doom

of labor, and to impose their own tasks on others, while those selfish rulers of the people live on the bread earned by the sweat and blood of the laboring classes ?

Do we not feel that God's law, in this penalty of hard labor, is founded in mercy as well as righteousness, and that its failure to reclaim man arises from his own sins against this righteous ordinance ?

So, too, of the second penalty: God's sentence on Eve. She was subjected to increased sorrows in maternity, and to that dependence on her husband which placed her under his personal control; and this doom for her transgression was to be and is imposed on all her daughters, and will be on them to the end of time.

Will any Christian say that the sentence was unjust ? Will any man assert that this law should be abrogated, and the wife cease to "reverence her husband" as "the saviour of the body ?" Would it be well for humanity to have this penalty set aside, and the wife, spurning dependence upon her husband, and leaving the duties of home and the care of their little children, push forward in the conflicts of public life, and engage in the hard labor that wins bread ?

The third instance of these special judgments for particular sins was that given against the posterity of Ham. The earth was recovering from the curse of the flood, which the "corruption of all flesh" had rendered inevitable. Noah and his three sons, and the children born to them after the flood, were beginning to enjoy the fruits of their labor when the awful scene occurred.

A class of persons, descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham, was doomed to a state of servitude, of menial labor and dependence for their improvement on their brethren, the descendants of Shem and Japheth.

We will give the text, because it is not always convenient for the reader to seek out references, and this text is very important :

"And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard.

"And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent.

"And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.

"And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father: and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.

"And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.

"And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

"And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

(See Genesis, 9th chapter, verses 20 to 28, inclusive.)

Such is the brief record of holy writ. The import cannot be mistaken, nor the penalty of the transgressor misunderstood. A class of persons, descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham, were sentenced to perpetual servitude or inferiority, and the descendants of Shem and Japheth—the latter more especially designated as superior—should be masters.

Let us pause here and examine the nature of the sin which could justify Noah in passing such a sentence of degradation on his "younger son."

Obedience to the law of God is the first duty of man. This divine law settles the destiny of the human race.

It was this law which governed Adam in Eden, and "disobedience" was the sin that "brought death into the world, and all our woe." Next to obedience of man to God, our heavenly Father, comes the duty of obedience of children to their human parents.

This is proven, because such obedience is made the first commandment of the second table, thus showing it to be the root and foundation of moral requirements in the laws that govern society. Obedience to parents establishes in their children the habit of obedience to law, and also sanctifies the religious principle in human nature, by giving honor to that condition of life which represents the relation of man to his God.

So important for human improvement is this obedience of children to their parents, that the merciful God, condescending to the weakness of our fallen nature, offered a *reward*, the promise of *long life*, to those who honored their parents. No other commandment in the decalogue has a promise annexed.

But were the laws of the decalogue in force when Ham sinned?

Assuredly; because these moral laws are righteous, and righteousness is eternal.

Disobedience to parents was not and is not sin because forbidden in the fifth commandment, but because it was and is a sin of itself; therefore it was and is forbidden.

Noah, the "the preacher of righteousness," understood the requirements of God's moral law. He knew, as well as we do, that murder was sin. Had not Cain been condemned by this law?

He knew that adultery was sin; and all the myriad corruptions that flow from disobedience to the moral law. Had not those sins been punished by the awful judgment of the FLOOD?

John's Text
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Sin is, in its own nature, a disturber and disorganizer. It debases before it destroys. It is disobedience to God, and adherence to the devil:—as manifested by our first parents.

The sin of Ham, that of dishonoring his father, was aggravated in the highest degree by the relation which Noah held to the future of our fallen race. He was the head of humanity on earth. He was prophet, priest, and king. He represented the judgment and the mercy of God and man. He embodied, in his experience and wisdom, the laws, precepts, and knowledge which were to guide his posterity in the better way.

It is no excuse for Ham to say that his father had done wrong; that he had debased himself by drunkenness.

We do not seek to palliate the transgression of Noah. In yielding the reins to appetite, and thus dethroning reason, he had committed a grievous sin against the natural laws of God. Was he not most grievously punished for his fault when "he awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him?"

Think of the old man, the loving father, who had seen the world of transgressors swept from off the earth because of their wicked lusts and corrupt imaginations: and then to find the poison of the same polluting depravity in his own family—the little group spared from the general destruction.

What was the anguish of the Roman Brutus, passing sentence of death on his own sons for treason against the State, compared with the sorrow of Noah, dooming his "younger son," for treason against nature and rebellion against God, to that condition of perpetual inferiority which, like a brand of shame, would mark a portion of his (Noah's) descendants forever!

As in the case of Adam and Eve, it was *sin* that brought the curse and the punishment. The sentence is proof of the guilt of the sinner. The doom was not from Noah, but from the justice of a righteous God.

Ham had shown, by his conduct, that he loved iniquity. His sin was more wicked in its inception, more polluting in its nature than the fratricide of Cain. The brother struck at the natural life of his brother; the son claimed to overthrow and destroy the moral life of mankind by the dishonor of his father. Had Ham's sin gone unpunished, all fear and love of God, all reverence and obedience for His laws, must have perished, because only through and by the parental relation was religious duty then taught and exemplified.

He who commits sin is the servant of sin. Ham had, by his own wicked carnality, sold himself to the power of evil; he was in the bonds of corruption. The penalty of his awful crime was