

prosperity. Let him lose all his goods so that no one will be tempted towards a life of unrighteousness in order to have worldly goods."

But the hardest part of the imprecatory notes comes in vss. 12-

15. The posterity is the subject of the warring prayer of the writer.

He wishes the ill of the father to be visited to the children.

This seems especially severe and unworthy of the intent of a good man. It is apparently not only a prayer for ill to fall on the posterity but for the whole family line to be cut off and forgotten

- 12. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children.
- 13. Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out.
- 14. Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.
- 15. Let them be before the Lord continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth.

before the Lord. But this problem with the progeny is less baffling when examined in the light of Exodus 20:5. The sins of the father are visited on those in the third and fourth generation who hate Jehovah. There is a strictly human sense in which wicked parents pass a legacy of sin to their children but this is not what the writer has in mind. We may paraphrase him and say: "Lord, here is what You said in Your law, now let it be done to this unbeliever and to all of his children who like him hate you." Should there be favour found towards any of his line it is only reasonable to feel they would be excluded. The thrust of the imprecation is a general one therefore aimed at honoring the law.

In the closing verses of this section (16-20), the Psalmist calls for God to "make the punishment fit the crime." Since the subject of his wrath is one who despised God's goodness, he thinks it appropriate that God's goodness

- 16. Because that he remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart.
- 17. As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him.
- 18. As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.