

WHENCE CAME THE NEGRO RACE?

A SERMON,

DELIVERED BY THE

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*On Sunday Evening, November 6th, 1881, in the Bond Street
Congregational Church, Toronto.*

Bond Street Church was again crowded to excess last evening to hear the Doctor on a subject which has been the cause of great discussion. There was not standing room to be had at ten minutes to seven, and hundreds were turned away, unable to gain admittance. It is strangely noticeable the large majority of men—thinking men—who attend to hear these sermons. Something will have to be done about enlarging the church soon, if this thing continues. It is not only a large attendance to hear the evening sermon, but to hear the morning discourse as well. There were twenty-five new members admitted to fellowship at the morning service; and already a large number have sent in their names for next month.

SERMON.

TEXT: Song of Solomon i. 6, "Look not upon me, because I am black; because the sun hath looked upon me; my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept."

Language could not well be more expressive than the words of our text as to the origin of color, and the reason of slavery in the negro race. The blackness of skin you will here see is attributed to the sun, "because the sun hath looked upon me." Then the oneness of the origin of those who were thus blackened by the sun is stated in the words, "my mother's children;" that is, originally, we all had the same mother. Those who were so blackened claimed the same mother as those who were not.

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We also learn that this difference in color gave rise to honor, distinction, alienation, and inferiority and superiority among the children of the same mother. Those upon whom the sun had looked so effectually were despised, and accounted inferior; in fact, blackness became synonymous with inferiority, and inferiority became synonymous with subjection and with servitude; or, as graphically stated in the text, "My mother's children were angry with me; they made me keeper of the vineyards." They were deprived of the right and the reward of their own self-labor, as you see—"My own vineyard," they say, "I have not kept." How concise, how precise, how simple, how scientific the delineation in the text touching the origin of the negro race, and the introduction and reason for slavery. Bible-like, great scientific facts, stated in the few modest words of Bible language. We may say, and only say of it in the world, "Multum in parvo." You cannot say it of anything that any man ever wrote, but you can say it of every sentence uttered in the Bible. You may travel far and read much, to be posted on the negro question, before you can get a better and clearer idea on this subject than is given in the words of the text. The Jews of old were wont to say in questions of dispute, "To the law" and "to the testimony," to test and to try questions of dispute. So we say the Bible is more comprehensive and cosmographic than most people think; uniformity, of course, cannot always be found; it may not always be necessary to be found, when we go to interpret this word. There are, however, some beautiful and noble exceptions to those great truths that make for our peace. It is generally admitted, or supposed to be correct, for persons of wealth and of fortune, that they shall bedeck themselves with jewels and with fine garments; because they are rich they become, as a rule, showy; such we know is often the case. There are, however, some beautiful and noble exceptions of men who are rich and powerful, but at the same time simple and modest. Those men, writing on subjects like the one contained in the text, as a rule are gaudy; they are extravagant; they are exceedingly speculative, tautological. But the sacred writers are simple; they are chaste; they are expressive; and because they are so, many suppose that the truths taught are equally simple and of little value. I believe that theologians are to blame in this matter. They have not been as judicious or as cultured and liberal in these things as they ought to have been; their bigotry and narrowness have interfered very largely to diminish the grandeur and the scope of Scripture subjects. And many persons to-night will think that this subject is beyond the range of theo-

logical discussion from a pulpit ; whereas it has been one of the greatest questions to settle. And it is only half settled ; yet, that has occurred in the life of any one man in this church, and has cost more lives, and has cost more bloodshed, than any question you can possibly think of in the world ; viz., the war in the United States.

Naturally somewhat prejudiced, and anxious to be looked upon as discoverers, scientific men have advanced their theories, agreeable to their pride and agreeable to their fancies, to account for the Bible facts ; and yet if you come to read the Bible, you will find that it stands just over against any new scientific revelation. In the sermon that I gave you on the pre-Adamite man, you have a fine illustration there. Now, science has revealed to us, in the traces and in the different developments of fossils or remains that have been found, that man, independent of the Adamite man, must have existed ; and therefore, because they have never read the Bible correctly, they said the Bible says that only Adamite kind of men have lived ; whereas the Bible taught that man lived long before Adam, of another race and of another kind. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord," it is said in the Scripture, "shall be saved." Appropriately on this point, you may ask what the Bible has to say on this negro question. We see what it says in the text, and we know the remarkable saying of Paul when talking to the Athenians : "Out of one flesh, one blood, hath God made all nations of men to dwell upon the face of the earth ;" that is, all nations of men that were living at Paul's time. Some interpret this passage to mean that the several races of men—red, black, and white—were only identical in blood likeness, and not identical in place of origin. But such an interpretation cuts the passage loose from its moorings, and swings wide from the very aim which Paul has signified. The very idea Paul is endeavoring to instil in the Athenians is that he, as well as they and all other people, had a right to claim the one true God as their God, for out of Him, or from Him, we were all made ; that they were the children of the same Father, of equal preciousness in His sight. The passage, I believe, very methodically teaches the unity of the human race ; the whole tenor of the gospel proceeds upon that principle. When he cries, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord," it is not whosoever of the white race shall seek God ; it is not whosoever of the black race, or whosoever of the red race ; but black or white, bond or free, rich or poor, learned or unlearned. We are taught that God is the Saviour of all men. In the commis-

sion to preach the gospel, the same idea, I think, is embodied: "Go ye unto all the world;" He does not say, "Go anywhere but Africa." And He says, "Preach the gospel unto every creature." He does not say, "Don't preach the gospel to the Indians and the Africans." The commission is to all the world and to every creature. There is no limitation in time or territory, or in race; it is all the world, and every creature, to the end of time. Now, it seems to me that if the negro race had not been human—had not been of like origin and of equal privileges in the sight of God with us—that there would have been some exception made in this great commission. Look, for instance, at the nephilim and the rephelim, which God ordered the Adamite race to destroy and not leave one of them on the face of the earth; and He did destroy all the nephilim at the time of the Flood; and then came into existence the rephelim, and yet God ordered the Adamite race to destroy them and not leave one of them; but nowhere do we find exhortation given or privilege allotted to us to destroy any of the races that are now in existence. I therefore believe that the Scripture teaches the unity of the human race, and history is very faithful to this point. Who are these Christian fathers you read about so frequently, whose doctrines you are so glad to read? One of them is a negro! And who are you that pride yourself on apostolic descent? Do you know that Niger, one of the Bishops of Antioch, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, was the man who put his black hands on the top of Paul's head and ordained him? And ministers who are so proud of their apostolic succession get their order of apostolic descent down from the negro race. Is there any ground for disputing this? I say that every man who is ordained through Paul is ordained through a negro, for Niger was a negro. Then if you come to the fathers of learning, you have Euclid; he was a colored person, and yet you love to study his problems. If you come into history, you have the great Carthaginian general, Hannibal; he was a colored person; so that there is nothing in history to deny their equality in any sense. You know how the negro became black. In trying to account for the diversity of man, men, as usual, have gone to extremes. On the theological line the idea is that blackness was the curse of Cain for the sin of murdering his brother, Abel; for this sin he was marked in this manner; and from this many trace the beginning of the colored race. I suppose one half of the ancient fathers themselves attributed the color of the negro race to the curse of Cain. It is curious to read some of their

speculations with relation to this point. Some thought it was a sad countenance, the mark that was set upon Cain ; some thought that it was blood spots which he could not wipe out ; some thought that it was a large horn growing out of his forehead ; some thought it was Abel's dog following him wherever he went ; some thought it was the circle of the rising sun on his head ; some thought it was the letter " Tau " on the forehead, which is the first letter beginning the Greek word which means repentance ; some thought that it meant that he was indestructible, so that sword could not pierce him, nor fire burn him, nor water drown him.

After the murder of Abel we find Cain expressing his fears to God. He was afraid to go away ; and why ? He says, " for every one that findeth me will slay me." Now, you have got nobody to slay him in your theory, but the moment you take in the Scripture nephilim, however, you know that he naturally would be afraid of them, and he went away to the land of Nod ; but prior to his leaving what is called the presence of God, God gave him the assurance that he would not be harmed, and He gave him the sign of protection ; " and the Lord set a mark upon him." It is not *set a mark upon him* ; it is " and the Lord gave a sign to Cain that no one should kill him ;" that is the proper rendering ; and so since the Lord assured Cain that no one should kill him, off he started, and nobody did kill him. Then you have the sign in the rainbow. The Lord made the rainbow a sign ; not that he set it upon Noah, but he established it, that it should be a sign that no more should the world be drowned by water. So He gave a sign unto Cain that no one should destroy him ; it does not say that He made him black or white. But what reply does science give to a question like this ? I say that scientific answers are very generally that the negro race is a distinct people, or autochthonal ; that is, coming out of the soil ; just as some would argue that the Indians are autochthonal, not aboriginal ; that means, as you know, people you find there. The only word you can use to give the meaning is autochthonal. The Indians are the people you find in the place when you come there, and you call them aborigines, or first inhabitants. Reduced to scientific language, as science intends it should be, and to have a common-sense meaning, they generally believe that the negro race is a link in the chain of development lower down, preceding the Malayan, the copper-colored race, just as the Indian precedes the white man. First, the Malayan, then the negro, then the gorilla, then the orang-outang, and then comes somebody else till you come to the end. This kind of an answer is on the same plan as the following. Supposing

a black (?) man should visit me and want to know something about the seas ; I take him down to New York ; he sees one of the large steamers as it is just going out into the bay or into the ocean, and he says to me, " What is that, sir ? " I say, " That is a steamer. " " Where did it come from ? " " It came out of a clipper, sir. " " How did the clipper come ? " " Out of sailing vessels. " " Where did the sailing vessels come from ? " " From schooners. " " Where did the schooners come from ? " " From a barge. " " Where did the barge come from ? " " From a lighter. " " Where did the lighter come from ? " " From a canoe. " " Where did the canoe come from ? " " From a punt. " " Where did the punt come from ? " " From a log. " " Where did the log come from ? " " Out of the ground or forest. " Now, that is what science calls the order of development. My poor visitor, if he agreed with all that I had told him, would be very simple-minded. These numerous answers are not really scientific ; they are evasive and deceptive, and I challenge any man in Toronto on that development question. They are evasive at the very point ; they should be decisive. There is order of development ; there is plan of development, coming from the simple to the higher ; but will any man say that the log made the first punt ? Will any man say that the punt made the canoe, following this gradual advancement ? or that the canoe made the lighter, or the lighter the barge, or the schooner the sailing vessel, or the sailing vessel the clipper, or the clipper made the steamer ? and yet you see there is a gradual advancement up : there is plan ; there is order ; but it implies there is a difference between them, and they are not coming one from the other. There is a bird ; there is a cow ; there is a horse ; there is a monkey ; there is a colored person ; there is a Malayan ; there is a white man ; but I say it implies the design of their existence by God, and hey never came out of one another, no more than the steamer came out of the punt ; and any man who can believe a science like that, can believe more than I can. It is because they find order of development they say, you see, they must have come out of one another. Yes, it was suggested in the mind, and so God has His order of development just the same ; He has made them all ; they are His developments. Plan based on principle pervades all ; but the planner should not be lost sight of, because the punt will not throw off the scow without the planner, and we should not forget that there is uniformity and unity of principle ; yet they are different in time and place, independent creations. There is uniformity in all things, and principle, and much that is analogous ; still that does not do away

with the designer. The best answer will be that which is at once agreeable with science, and Christianity, and common sense. Such an answer, I believe, is possible; but then we must begin right, and in order to do so, let me ask you what color was the first person? Was he black? No, sir. Was he white? No, sir. Begging your pardon, what color was he? What color was the first chariot? Red, sir. You will keep in mind—I speak unto the wise—in the Adamite race they were void of dress; and as a healthy person to-day would be red, beautifully red, as the face exposed to all the season, so the whole body would have been beautifully red. White and black are the extremes of red, and the accidents of climate; white is the absence of the sun; black is the intensity of it; “because the sun hath looked upon me.”

And now I say a scientific man begins wrong, because he does not begin with the central color; it is red. And suppose you go further than that. What was our first parent called? Adam. What is the meaning of the word? I vow, and no man will dispute it, red. Well now, what are you going to do? You want to make out that the Lord called a white man red. You had better just take it as it is, my friend, and get over the difficulty after. Names originally were significant and expressive, and if the Lord called him red, he was red, and you must find out how he got bleached afterwards; that is the idea of it. Any man can see that the accidents on a central color like red would be black and white. Red is the strong color; it is the color indicative of honor. The sacred writer Paul says in his writings that we were made from one man, out of one man; we were all of one blood or color once; that is the meaning of it. However different in color the different nations of men may now be, we were originally of one color. Black and white I believe, therefore, to be climatic sequences. And how am I to get it? I can get it to-day if I want it. If you will please to move south to some of the hotter climates, and live there for five hundred years, you will not be as white and delicate as you now are.

So it is easily to be discerned that climate must come in as having an influence. But climate will not make a white man into a black man—no climate will do that; but if you can get the red man, and you send the red man south, the increased heat will intensify the red; for black is nothing but intensified red through heat. The sun hath looked upon him, and he becomes black. If you send that same red man north, it will bleach him to a whiteness. If you take a yard of unbleached calico, and throw

one-half of it away up in the north of Greenland, and the other half of it in Louisiana, the calico thrown in Louisiana will become a dark yellow, and that in the north will turn as white as snow. And what it will do on calico it will do in flesh. If you want to see it in nature, travel. Take, for instance, the buttercup; 700 miles north it is white, and when you get towards the equator it is dark, almost black, so that you would not know it. If you want to go to the animal, take the bear; he is white in the north; he is black in the south. Here is climatic influence. And yet men will say, "Can climate have any impression upon the animal?" We think it certainly has.

And so the children of Adam were dispersed. You find the simple fact that Cain went southward; you find the simple fact that Abel went northward and westward; you find the simple fact that Seth remained in the central regions; so that the dispersion is actually agreeable to what the climatic influence that we desire to account for color is. Black, red, and white are the three imprints of nature. All other colors are the moderation of these colors. Our Heavenly Father, in stocking the earth with a seed for a new world, would take the seed adapted to the parts of the earth. You might as well say that He had only put in the ark one kind of seed that would be natural to one clime. There are floral circles, and circles where certain seeds and flowers will grow; if you take them outside of that you cannot grow them. There are circles for animals, where you have certain kinds of animals living in a certain circle; if you transport them over that, they die. He has fixed the bounds of the habitation of man. Three times in the Scripture He distinctly declares that He has fixed the bounds before appointed, the bounds of their habitation; hence there was a place before the Flood where the black and white man could live the best; and they are placed in this world to-day where each and all of them would flourish best and do best, because you have these simple circles. Taken as seed for the human family, you have Japheth, Shem, and Ham, and Noah called the father, though not really the father of all of them. Shem is his only true son, and is the heir of Noah. How is it the eldest son is despised? he would naturally have a right to be an heir; why would he not. Christ comes on a true line; not on an illegitimate line; he takes the best stock seed, and he comes down through Abraham. When you hear "em," it means red; Edom, red. It always means red, whether at the beginning, middle, or end of a word. So you see where Christ comes. Now, why did not he come from the eldest son, Japheth? because he was not the

direct son, the pure blood of that line, and therefore he is despised, or set aside. What is the meaning of Japheth? white. What is the meaning of Shem? red. What is the meaning of Ham? black. What is the use of calling these three persons these three colored names, when you say they are all white. You have got queer ideas, as well as I have. Will any man in his senses say that these three people were thus named indicative of color, and yet they were of one color. They did not give names then falsely as they do to-day. Names just meant what they meant; nothing more. The Lord could have named Adam something else; but he wanted everybody to know that he was red, if they learned to know his name; and so you have the red, black, and white in the human race; and if you ask me why they are there, I attribute it to climatic influence before the Flood, when it was more impressive than now; so that the climate would be able to make a man the color it wanted for that part of the country.

If you will give me a rich good New Englander of about 200 years, I will tell you he is not white; he will be as yellow as the candles they used to use, and the skin will be as tight on him as the skin on a drum's head. Yes it will, and he will be sallow; we lose that matter between the two skins; and it is a great question between scientific men that, when emigration blood will cease to flow in here, we will have the type of the New Englander, because he is the type of this country. It runs in the Indian; that is the color of this continent; and if you will find me a pure New England family, or any family who have lived here without mixture of blood, I will tell you what they look like.

So you see the effect of climate would be more impressive than it could be now. Now, when they came out of the ark, they intended to live together, and the Lord told them to multiply and scatter over the earth. They said: "Go to, let us build a city that shall reach unto the heavens, in which we can dwell, lest we be scattered abroad." The first thing they say is, "Let us keep together." That is the sin of Babel; and in order to make them separate He confused their language; and when they could not understand each other, they might as well live alone; so they started off. He confused their tongue, and scattered them abroad upon the face of the earth. They were not to live together. There were climates that were suitable to each of them. They might as well take the flower seeds here, and say, "We will grow them all here." You could not grow them all here to advantage; this is not the circle. There is a place for this red brother; there is a place for this white brother; and they

will flourish and do better there. All the world was made to be inhabited ; and so that was their sin. Why did the Lord act thus when the world was drowned ? Because they would have died off if he had not, and the same process would have taken place at Babel. If you take black and white, you cannot have children to the fourth generation ; He has put a bar there which no man can get over. If you went down south, some time ago, you would see in the market a very beautiful creature which you could have bought at a nominal sum ; and why ? Because they are at the end ; there can be no more development there. And when the children of Israel were on the border of these colored people, they inter-married, did some of them ; and God says, " I will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children's children to the third and *fourth* generation." In South Carolina there never appeared a man of that degræe to ask a vote.

You talk of science ; you want to see the evidence of a God ; there is one. These people would have died off if allowed to remain at Babel, so God sent them abroad to fill the earth.

Scientists have found some monuments in Egypt, and they say they are 3,500 years old. They say on these monuments they have the white and the black. Strange to say, the blacks are the master, and the whites are in chains. Some have said that this upsets the Bible theory ; at any rate, that changed Professor Agassiz' theory on this question. For my part, I believe it thoroughly confirms the Bible theory ; the Jews of Nubia are black, as well as those of China.

Give me me a family that moved to Michigan 100 years ago ; no matter what they were when they went there, now they are thin, lean, and knuckle-jointed. The ague would shake any man out of symmetry. When you go into a new country, does it make any difference with your hands or feet ?

These negroes who were brought from Africa were brought from marshy lands, where you could not get well-formed people, and the people had been distorted by the very methods they had lived by ; and you and I would have been no better if we had lived there for hundreds of years as they did. The climate there was not salubrious. Of course, those from the highlands are well-formed and beautiful. Dr. Livingstone says they are equal to his own native Highlanders. It is the effect of climate and usage. These negroes naturally were despised by their brethren. And what a strange idea this idea of color is—that it should enter so strangely into science, religion and politics. And I am under the impression, my friends, that it has been

a providential thing for the colored race to be brought to this continent. Africa is a vast continent opening up for England's trade ; and in our avarice we brought the colored people to this continent. They have been better here upon the whole than if left in their own country ; but that is not to our credit. Africa awaits their return ; that is their home ; and the business of England and the United States is to facilitate their removal. That vast continent is to set the mills going in the United States, England and elsewhere, and it will keep them going for one hundred and fifty years, and you and I can change the National Policy by that time. Every person that has gone from Africa to the United States has cost them two thousand dollars, and they have got to pay interest on that. This country has been more generous with the Indians than they. They have spent four hundred and eighty millions on the Indian the past forty years, and they have mutilated and badly used him after all. The United States will have to pay for everything they have stolen from the poor Indian, and we too. And serve us right. God does not forget ; He keeps a strict account ; and you cannot run away from Him, if you can from Montreal. We see how these things naturally go.

I believe God intended Africa for the colored race, and he will turn to good account their past slavery, and bring good even to our colored friends out of it. Emancipation was a grand thing, and just a forerunner of that grand emancipation which is to come. Benjamin D'Israeli, in "Tancred," makes Consul Pasquilago to say, "The English must have markets ; there will be a great opening here." Forty years ago D'Israeli wrote that ; he foresaw that that would be the next opening. Africa is the country, and God's reserve ; and He will bring the people that have been oppressed, and he will repay the poor working-men of England every cent they have paid for freeing them, for the working-men had to work and pay taxes for freeing these people. God will give them every cent back when that country is opened up.

Now, my friends, I believe that the colored race, as the text states, is the effect of climatic influence on the human race ; and I believe that, just as the Indian is the effect of climatic influence, and the colored person is the effect of intense heat on a red person, white persons are those who go into northern regions and get the bleaching climates.

This is how we come from one father and one mother. May we treat one another as brothers, knowing that we have a common destiny and the same great Saviour. God bless us all. Amen.

