

**TWO LECTURES ON THE CONNECTION
BETWEEN THE BIBLICAL AND PHYSICAL
HISTORY OF MAN: DELIVERED BY
INVITATION, FROM THE CHAIR OF POLITICAL
ECONOMY, ETC., OF THE LOUISIANA
UNIVERSITY, IN DECEMBER, 1848**

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Two Lectures on the Connection Between the Biblical and Physical History of Man: Delivered by Invitation, from the Chair of Political Economy, Etc., of the Louisiana University, in December, 1848 by Josiah C. Nott

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JOSIAH C. NOTT

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BY

JOSIAH C. NOTT, M.D.,
OF MOBILE, ALABAMA.

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PREFATORY LETTER.

TO J. D. B. DE BOW, ESQ.,

PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL ECONOMY, COMMERCE, AND STATISTICS
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA.

DEAR SIR:—Born in a slave State, and having passed our childhood and manhood in daily intercourse with the white and black races, it is but natural that you and I should have become deeply impressed not only by the physical but also by the moral and intellectual differences which exist between them: nor is it less natural that a doubt as to their common origin should suggest itself to our minds.

Twenty-five years of unceasing professional intercourse with these races, and study of their diseases, anatomy and physiology, a careful perusal of all the leading works published in the French and English languages on the Natural History of Man, from Camper and Blumenbach down to the present day, and an examination of the earliest known records of nations, both written and monumental, have not only served to strengthen this doubt in my mind, but have ripened it into a firm conviction that the Almighty in his wisdom has peopled our vast planet from many distant centres, instead of one, and with races or species originally and radically distinct.

was plural

Although you have never expressed to me an opinion on the mooted question of *unity* of species, yet, viewing the various types of mankind as we now find them scattered over the globe, and calling to mind the wonderful historical and scientific developments of the last few years, you have not hesitated to concur with me in the opinion that the white, black, and other races, *now* present peculiar moral and physical characters, which should not be overlooked by the statesman, whose legitimate aim can only be the prosperity and happiness of all nations and all races.

Under this conviction you invited me in December last to visit New Orleans, and deliver a lecture or two from your chair before the members of the Louisiana Legislature and your fellow-citizens, on such ethnological points as I might deem proper to select. In accordance with this invitation, I delivered two lectures, and having received numerous solicitations from yourself and others to publish them, I now present to the public this little volume, of which they form the groundwork.

The natural history of man has been so fully and so ably treated by late writers, and more particularly by our distinguished countrymen, Morton, Pickering, Bartlett, &c., that I have thought it a work of supererogation, particularly in a fragmentary sketch like this, to do more than touch a few of its points, on which I had views peculiar to myself; and I have therefore confined my remarks almost exclusively to the elucidation of the connection between the biblical and physical history of man—a point which has been strangely neglected.

If there be a future existence in store for us, certainly the subject of all others which should engage our serious attention, is that of Religion; and yet while thousands are spending days, and nights, and years in toiling after gold and worldly honors, how very few inquire when, where, or by whom, the books of the Bible were written; what parts are genuine and what spurious, or ever think of seriously investigating the grounds on which their hope of salvation rests. They unfortunately start with that kind of *false faith*, which is always ready to receive whatever religious opinions *chance* may throw in its way. A neces-

sary consequence of such a procedure is unceasing change in religious doctrines—what are regarded in one age as essential parts of our Bible, in another are repudiated as spurious, and one reading after another recedes as science advances.

Astronomy and geology, so long kept down by bigotry and ignorance, have triumphed, and the day is at hand when the natural history of man will burst the trammels which have so long held it captive. The unity of the races can only be deduced from forced constructions of the Old and New Testaments, and a persistence in this error is calculated to subvert and not to uphold our religion. My main object, therefore, in this volume, is to cut loose the natural history of mankind from the Bible, and to place each upon its own foundation, where it may remain without collision or molestation.

No one can have more positive distaste than myself for religious or any other controversy, and though on a former occasion, when discussing the natural history of the Caucasian and Negro races, I used my best efforts to avoid unpleasant collisions, I was so unfortunate as to encounter labored, ungenerous, and bitter criticism. These attacks were painful to me at the time, but I have now the gratification of believing that it was all for the best. Attention has been attracted to the discussion—new laborers have been called into the field, and opinions which were then regarded as novel, untenable, and even monstrous, are now not only tolerated, but widely received. They have, moreover, caused me to review carefully the positions advanced, and to examine more fully both the biblical and physical history of man in their various bearings, and the result has been a still deeper conviction of the general correctness of my former opinions. I am much consoled, too, by the fact, that not only almost all the recent systematic works on ethnology coincide with me as to the *diversity of species*, but that even the public press in Great Britain has assumed a new and more liberal tone. The London Ethnological Journal, edited by Mr. Burke, which has greatly extended similar opinions, and which has now reached its tenth