

It thus became literally true that Shem has dwelled in the tents of Japhet; the spiritual inheritance of Shem has passed into the possession of Japhet. The history of Abyssinia is almost entirely of a religious character. Of the times prior to the introduction of Christianity in the days of Athanasius but little is known. Only in recent times has a German traveller, Glaser, found in Southern Arabia a number of inscriptions showing that in early times the Abyssinians were settled in that country. This perfectly agrees with the fact that the Abyssinian language is more closely allied to the Arabic than to any other branch of the Semitic tongues, and also with the tradition of the Abyssinians, who prefer to call themselves "Geez"—i.e., which means both "immigrants" and "free." In this way it can be seen that in reality the Abyssinians are not "Ethiopians" at all—e.g., they are not black. Calling the blacks of Africa "Ethiopians" is only another specimen of *lucus a non lucendo*. The Ethiopians being, with the exception of the Egyptians, the only African people known to the classical writers, the name was gradually applied to all the peoples of the African continent. In reality the Abyssinians are an Aryan people, as much so as the Greeks or Romans or the modern Europeans and Americans. They are coffee-colored, but in appearance and characteristic traits everywhere betray the Aryan.

The making of the Abyssinian nation is entirely the work of Christianity, and that, too, of Greek Christianity. It was not Greek culture or philosophy or civilization in themselves that in the fourth century brought the Ethiopians of antiquity on the stage of history. It was Greek Christianity that did this. Although geographically nearest to Egypt, that classic country has seldom had any influence for good on its southern neighbor. Of the venerable civilization of the land of Pharaoh, with its pyramids, temples, and cities, there is no sign to be found in the whole country of Abyssinia. The Christianization of this country almost at as early a date as it became the established religion of the Roman Empire has determined the whole history and national development of this people. Abyssinian history is really in sense and substance a chapter in Oriental church history, and a very interesting chapter at that. The religious element that began the process in the establishment of Ethiopia as a nation has been the controlling factor all along, and has been the decisive element in the national character. Divorced from religion, Abyssinia has never known any civilization or literature. Certain national peculiarities, such as the observance of the seventh as well as the first day of the week; the practice of circumcision as well as of baptism; long seasons of fasts; adherence to the laws of meats as found in the Old Testament law, as also the existence of a peculiar class of black Jews (the Falashas)—of whom there are about two hundred thousand in Abyssinia, but who at one time in the history of the people had managed to secure the throne, and who by descent actually belong to the Ethiopic race—all these things would point to a Jewish period before the Christian, in Abyssinia. But aside from the