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## ARTICLE I.

### THE ASTRONOMICAL ARGUMENT AGAINST CHRISTIANITY.

The history of Christianity presents a scene of continual conflict. The ingenuity of man, and the malice of Satan, have been exhausted in assailing it by every form of opposition from without, by every mode of seduction from within. Its Divine Author predicted this when he said—"think not I am come to send peace on the earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword." The various modes of assault may be reduced to three classes—persecution, corruption, and the antagonism of science, falsely so called. Persecution, though reeking with the blood, and encompassed with the dead bodies of the saints, has ever proved to be the most harmless. Its attacks are open, and, therefore, may be more readily guarded against; its instrument is physical violence, and it is, therefore, unfitted to cope with moral courage and the spirit of devotion. Days of persecution have often been the most flourishing times in the Church. It was so during the ten devastations under the Roman Empire. It was so in the days of the Reformation. Corruption is the most dangerous form of attack, because it is the most insidious, and because it begins at once to prey on the

shabby rule of stump oratory and political empiricism. Freedom is beginning to totter in her strongholds, and genius is dying with the public liberty. Who among us are prepared to look at this picture undauntedly, and to nerve our hearts for the great work of reform? There is but one way by which to turn back this current of decline, and that is by a profound study and a constant emulation of the bright models of the early days of our Republic.

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ARTICLE III. \*

THE FULLNESS OF TIME.

The Cross of Christ is the centre of all history. For that, all preceding events prepare the way and to it they all converge; from that all succeeding events diverge—securing thus their character, their impulse, and their direction.

It is our purpose, at this time, to take a position near this, the point of convergence and divergence for all time, and to point out the mighty march of causes by which Jehovah was preparing the world for the advent of his Son;—to point to the often unconscious workmen who were executing this august plan—levelling the hills and elevating the valleys to prepare a highway for our God. To accomplish this task, we must give a bird's-eye view of the chief events in the intellectual, civil and religious progress of man in the old world. The scene may be likened to an all absorbing contest. But in it the powers are empires—the kings wear the diadems of universal dominion—the stake is the subjugation of the world—and the hand which directs the movements is the hand of God.

The night of sin settled down on the very dawn of our race. But the dawn of Redemption was well nigh as early. The promise of a Saviour shone like a star on the brow of that night. It was the morning-star—the day-spring from on high—

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\* The author of this article takes pleasure in acknowledging his indebtedness in the preparation of it to Schaff's *Apostolic History*, and to Coneybear & Howson's *Life of Paul*.

foretelling and ushering in the Sun of Righteousness that, in the fullness of time, was to arise with healing in his beams.

The course of this preparation, as developed in the Bible, need only be hinted at. Those who wish to understand it more thoroughly can consult Edwards' History of Redemption—a magnificent torso—which, though unfinished as it is, shows in every part the hand of a master. The early promise of the seed of the woman—the preservation of a line of true worshippers amid the giant wickednesses of the Antediluvian world—the covenant with Noah—the choice of Abraham—and all the main events of the advancement of the elect people, winding up in the deliverance from the Babylonish captivity by Cyrus, will readily recur to the well informed reader of the Scriptures. Beyond this we enter the domain of profane history—where the light, though dimmer, still reveals the same mighty worker who is preparing the way for the coming of Him who is the “desire of all nations.”

As there are three forms of philosophy, and three forms of religion, so there are three representative nations—elect peoples, who are seen performing essential parts on this vast arena. There were the Greeks—the Romans—and the Jews—to each of whom a work was assigned, and who performed it well.

It would be a great and radical mistake to suppose, that heathenism had nothing to do in this preparation for Christ. Man, in his great degradation, has felt his estrangement from God, and has blindly striven for re-union with the source of life and light. Hence all men have a religion—a *relegatio*—a re-binding to God. It is the scene of a blind man groping in darkness—feeling after support and crying for light. Hence we find in heathen mythologies, strange and startling principles—human guesses at Divine and saving truths. There are some of them—the various hints at the Fall, Incarnation and Atonement—seen in the fable of the sin and punishment of Prometheus, and his deliverance by Hercules, the son of a divine father and a human mother; also, in the rites of Bacchus, and in the Hindoo Avatars. So great is the natural sense of God, that Plutarch, in his reply to The Epicurean,

could say—"There has never been a State of atheists. If you wander over the earth, you may find cities without walls, without king, without mint, without theatre or gymnasium, but you will never find a city without God, without prayer, without oracle, without sacrifice. Sooner may a city stand without foundations, than a State without belief in the Gods. This is the bond of all society and the pillar of all legislation." The train of thought, by which those who had no revelation but the law written on their hearts, and no interpreter but conscience, reached such conclusions, is beautifully set forth in a passage which Cicero has preserved to us from a lost work of Aristotle. "If there were beings who had always lived in the depths of the earth, in dwellings decorated with statues and pictures, and with every thing which those who are deemed happy possess in the greatest abundance; if, then, these beings should be told of the government and power of the Gods, and should come up through opened fissures from their secret abodes to the places which we inhabit; if they should suddenly behold the earth and the sea and the vault of heaven; perceive the extent of the clouds, and the power of the wind; admire the sun in its greatness, its beauty, and its effulgence; if, finally, as approaching night veiled the earth in darkness, they should behold the starry heavens, the changing moon, the rising and setting of the stars, and their eternally ordained and unchangable courses; they would exclaim with truth—there are Gods, and such great things are their works." Thus it was that blind heathenism was feeling after God, if haply it might find him. And yet the effort, though correct and protracted, was unsuccessful—for even refined, philosophical Athens, when visited by Paul, had its altar for "the unknown God." But the attitude of heathenism is strikingly unlike that of Judaism. The former is a reaching up toward God—in the latter, God is seen handing down a revelation to man. But they were both alike fore-runners of Christ, though with different degrees of nearness to him.

An eloquent writer says—"we may compare Heathenism to the starry night, full of darkness and fear, but also of mysterious forebodings and unsatisfied longings for the light of

day—Judaism, to the dawn, full of cheerful hope and certain promise of the rising sun—Christianity, to the perfect day, in which stars lose their light, and the dawn its splendor.”

These remarks will prepare the way for a specific examination of the three classes of men of whom we have spoke.

1. The Greeks. They belong indisputably to the highest style of the heathen man. The central ideas of Greek civilization were intellect and imagination. Greece was young, immortally young. Her civilization was gay and glad as the opening dawn, full of high hopes and brilliant fancies and grand imaginations—while that of Rome befitted manhood, stern, cold, practical; and, we may add, selfish—and that of the Hebrews was grandly religious, every where pregnant with awful conceptions of the infinite majesty of Jehovah.

The Greek mind claimed the field of beauty and refinement as all its own, and ran riot in poetry, eloquence, art and philosophy; thus giving birth to a language at once copious, flexible and expressive—well calculated to embody religious truth in its profoundest mysteries; while putting theology into Latin, is like dressing a giant in a straight jacket.

But the Greeks were not only intellectually active, but physically restless. Hence commerce and colonization characterized their progress. They scattered their achievements over the isles of the beautiful *Ægean*, and were soon found encroaching on the borders of the mighty and mysterious East—the cradle of our race and the birth-place of speculation. Just at this point the finger of God is manifestly seen. When its arts and literature were at the highest—when its achievements had been won, and yet it had not grown grey with age, or been weakened by indulgence,—and when, consequently, the experiment of human perfectibility had all its elements in fullest exercise, and in the best proportions,—God called from Macedonia the man who was to make the Greek language, as well as arts and refinements, universal. Alexander's task was to take “up the meshes of the net of the Greek civilization, which were lying in disorder on the edges of the Asiatic shore, and spread them over all the countries which he traversed in his wonderful campaigns.” And well did he accomplish it. Yet what was

the result? What are the great fruits of this gigantic effort to work out the problem of life? All history replies—a failure—a disgraceful and confessed failure. For what was their religion but a deification of corrupt humanity, instead of a purification of it. Olympus, the lofty seat of the Grecian god, was no more than a council chamber for men and women. Heraclitus says, indeed, that the Gods are immortal men. (Lucian, v. 1, p. 226.) The wrath of Jupiter—the jealousy of Juno—and the lust of Venus—tell us that they are of the “earth, earthy.” Greek refinement, only beautified and systematized sin. Antioch, Paphos, Corinth, as well as Athens, became the centres of a religion full of poetry and illustrious for its art; but, after all, neither more nor less than a “deification of lust”—in which the vilest passions and the most degrading customs had at once the example and the sanction of the divinities. To do as they did at Corinth was, proverbially, to be guilty of all manner of debauchery and prostitution. Woman is an index of the condition of society. And Greek women could be divided into but two classes. The one obscure, ignorant, simple and forcibly virtuous—the other highly cultivated and openly profligate. Their religion had no moral power. In fact, it was not moral itself, and how could the people be so. Hence the best thinkers lost all respect for their mythology—some denied the existence of the Gods—and others their interference with human affairs. The immortality of the soul was doubted—the very possibility of knowing the truth was denied, and the popular religious belief, turned into ridicule, was handed over to women and children, as fit only for such as they.

The system of Plato was, undeniably, the highest form of Grecian wisdom. He it was who reasoned his way through errors and doubts till he stood in the august temple of truth, but could not lift the veil that concealed the holy of holies within. Yet even he confessed the impotency of his doctrine. He taught that there was above all the mob of deities that crowded the Pantheon, a “father and creator of the universe, whom it is *hard* to discover, and whom, being found, it is IMPOSSIBLE to make known to all.” Now, as *all* men need a

deliverance, this was a confession that the true religion had not been found.

We need not pause here to show the worthlessness of Stoicism, that taught that the world is governed by a pitiless fate, that crushed alike the innocent and the guilty, and under which prayer was as vain as resistance: or of Epicureanism, which held that pleasure was the only good, and that the highest happiness and wisdom was in eating and drinking, for to-morrow we die—or, still less of Cynicism, which, true to its name, was essentially doggish, and which consisted in snapping and snarling at all the world from out of a mean and sordid kennel.

That once noble people, under such influences, became frivolous and trifling. Paul found the Athenians degenerated into a mere herd of lounging, lazy news-mongers—"spending their time in nothing else but in hearing and telling some new thing," and who, when he told them of that unknown God whom they had ignorantly worshipped, could find no better name for him than "this babbler," who seemed to them "to be a setter forth of strange Gods."

Byron's indignant address to those of his day might have been addressed to the nation of old:

" You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet,  
Where has the Pyrrhic phalanx gone—  
Of two such lessons why forget  
The nobler and the manlier one."

Yes, Greek civilization was a failure. Bright and beautiful and exquisitely proportioned as it was, it did not attain to that for which it sought, and confessed its failure in language at once eloquent and mournful—a sort of philosophic Jeremiad, pronounced amid the wreck of exploded theories and perished hopes.

At other times it gave a still sadder expression of this conscious discomfiture in words of mockery and scorn—which sound like the derisive laugh of malignant fiends. Of this spirit the case of Lucian is an excellent example. In order to show his utter contempt of the whole tribe of Philosophers, he represents Jupiter as setting them up at auction as a lot of

trumpery, fit only to be disposed of in that way. Pythagoras is knocked down at £32 5s. 10d. Diogenes sells at two pence. Aristippus will not go off at any price. Democritus and Heraclitus—the laughing and crying philosophers—though offered together, meet with no better fate. Socrates goes off readily at two talents. Epicurus commands £6 9s. 2d. Chrysippus, of whom his admirers used to say, “were there no Chrysippus there would be no Stoa,” is purchased at £38 15s. The great Aristotle is happier, reaching as high a figure as £64 11s. 8d. And Pyrrho, the doubter, closes this mock auction by going off at £3 4s. 7d.

It is in such biting jests as these we see the estimate which the reflective had formed of all those high speculations which were to reveal to us the true good.

But lame and impotent as is this conclusion, the devout student of history will not fail to perceive that the Greeks had acted a most important part in this great drama—the successive scenes of which we are now reviewing. Grecian art and arms had provided for the world a common language, noble and copious enough to be a fit vehicle for the truths of religion, and well enough known to convey the wonderful things of God, as spoken by Christ and his Apostles, to the cultivated of all lands.

It enabled Paul to speak alike in Antioch, Ephesus, Athens, Corinth, and even Rome herself, in a tongue intelligible to the leading minds of the world. And thus, though they meant it not, neither did their hearts think so—under the wise and powerful Providence of God—Homer wrote, Demosthenes spoke, Apelles sculptured, Plato philosophised and Alexander fought, for the furtherance of the Gospel.

But again, it was needful that this grand Greek language should be baptised by the spirit of revelation—that its forms of speech should be vitalized by the living truth of God—and so, about fifty years after Alexander’s conquests and two hundred and seventy before Christ, God moved Ptolemy Philadelphus, to have the Old Testament Scriptures, which had been to this time locked up in the Hebrew and confined to the Jews, translated into the Greek. Thus it came to pass that what Moses



in the Law and the Prophets did write concerning Christ and his salvation, might be known and read of all men. Thus prophecy and fulfilment stood side by side in the view of the world; and the Apostles' appeal to the law and the testimony could be appreciated by Gentile as well as Jew.

But Greece has now done her part and passes off the stage with her bright-eyed children, to give place to other and very different actors. Their coming is announced by the soldier's measured tread, and the clank of arms, and the Roman legionary, clad in impenetrable armour, appears before us.

The Greek empire, as prophecy foretold, did not hold together. It had no element of permanency. No sooner was Alexander dead than his vast empire broke into four pieces. There was need, therefore, of a more permanent rule to prepare for that universal peace and supremacy, or rather omnipresence, of the law, which was necessary for the protection of the Ambassadors of Christ in whatever land they might proclaim the Word of Life.

Hence God sent his secret mandate to the hardy Romans, who had been growing into strength and consolidating their power for seven centuries, on the banks of the Tiber, and had at length become what Daniel said they should be, "strong as iron." It was God who sent the Roman Eagle on his flight of victory, in order that when Christ came, there might be one sceptre recognised by every nation—that there might be free intercourse between nations, and that the Christian preacher might, as Paul did, plead his Roman citizenship alike in Jerusalem and in Thessalonica, and thus find a shield from the wrath of his enemies.

For this important work the Roman was precisely adapted. His central idea was the supremacy of law—coupled with a thirst for universal conquest and permanent possession—things of which the versatile Greek never dreamed. The latter might be likened to the changeable winds of the equinoxes—the former were regular as the trade winds. Hence the Greek advance was the sortie of an undisciplined mob—that of the Romans was the march of the marshalled legion. They carried Rome with them. Roman citizenship asserted its prerogative

everywhere, and its assertion from the pale lips of one bleeding from the cruel scourge, made the proudest tyrant tremble. Their very name was significant. Rome—strength—stability. And they were pre-eminently successful. Their power extended from the Euphrates to the Atlantic, and from the Lybian desert to the banks of the Rhine. The dismembered and undisciplined masses or fragments of the Greek empire fell before them, and twenty-four years before the birth of Christ, Augustus Cæsar, the first Roman Emperor, closed the gates of the Temple of Janus, in token that the world was prostrate at his feet and peace reigned. It was the peace of universal despotism—the quiet of paralysis, the stillness of death. Yet, thus was the will of God fulfilled, and the wings of the Roman eagle sheltered infant Christianity. It was not till that infant became a full grown man that the Roman power was arrayed against it. And then it was able to grapple with and overcome this persecuting power, and soon the disciples of Jesus are found sitting on thrones, and clad in the purple of the Cæsars.

It was a strange spectacle upon which the eyes of Jesus opened. The old barriers against intercommunication had been broken down—national antipathies were held in check, and they had built those wonderful roads, the Appian and Flaminian way, moved only by thoughts of conquest and commerce, and little thinking that along those very roads, the fragments of which remain to this day to excite the wonder and envy of modern engineers, the Apostles Paul and Peter would pass in establishing an empire broader and more permanent than their own—even a dominion that should be acknowledged by all kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, and nations, and, surviving the wreck of time, live throughout eternity.

But having thus opened a highway from nation to nation for the unobstructed progress of the Gospel, which we conceive to have been the great object for which it was to labor, Roman civilization added another tribute to the truth, by demonstrating its own utter worthlessness so far as the highest interests of humanity are concerned. The moral and social, and, indeed, the civil condition of the people, was worse than in the worst

days of Greek licentiousness. Niebuhr thus describes her state: "As regards the manners and mode of life of the Romans, their great object at this time was the acquisition and possession of money. Their moral conduct, which had been corrupt enough before the social war, became still more so by their systematic plunder and rapine. Immense riches were accumulated and squandered upon brutal pleasures. The simplicity of the old manners and mode of living had been abandoned for Greek luxuries and frivolities, and the whole household arrangements had become altered. The Roman houses had formerly been quite simple, and had been built of brick or peperino, but in most cases of the former material; now, on the other hand, every one would live in a splendid house and be surrounded by luxuries. The condition of Italy after the civil and social wars, was indescribably wretched.—*Lectures on the History of Rome, vol. 1, 421–422.*

The exquisite grace and refinement of vice were gone—the grossness of sensuality remained. At the period of the very highest power and wealth, Rome had lost her once boasted virtue. There was rottenness in that great heart of the world whose passionate and lustful throbbings were felt to the ends of the earth, and those mighty arms which were stretched out over society were strong only for rapine and wrong. Their religious condition was no more hopeful than their civil. Cicero, who had written so much about virtue and the worship of the Gods, said that in his day one haruspice could not look another in the face without laughing. The history of Tacitus is something between a tragedy and a dirge. He begins it by saying: "I enter upon a work full of misfortunes, atrocious wars, discords, seditions; nay, hideous even in peace." Again (3rd chap.), "Besides the manifold accidents of human things, there were prodigies in heaven and earth, threatening flashes of lightning, and forebodings of the future, joyful and gloomy, doubtful and plain. Never by more grievous miseries of the Roman people, or more just tokens of the divine displeasure, was it proved, that the Gods wished not our welfare, but revenge." When Brutus had lost the battle of Philippi, and in the silence of the dark night was about to fall on his sword and

die, he cried "O! virtue, I *did* think thou wert something, but now I see thou art a phantom!" But why need we spend time on such a theme, when it is known that such monsters as Caligula, Claudius, Nero and Heliogabalus, not only occupied the imperial throne, but passed from them to a place among the Gods! Paul has given us a picture of the time in the first Chapter of Romans.

Philosophers were in no more hopeful condition. The speculative world was divided between Stoicism and Epicureanism. The existence of truth was doubted or denied, virtue was considered a sham—and even Seneca, whom an enthusiastic admirer, John Arndt, (1556–1621) claims as having written by special inspiration of God, gives up the hope of immortality, the very sheet anchor of the soul. "Once trusting to the word of others, I flattered myself with the prospect of a life beyond the grave and I *longed* for death; when I suddenly awoke and lost the beautiful dream." And Pliny, in his Natural History, argues that it is beyond the power of God to confer immortality on man. Hence, he thought, that the best thing a man could do was to die. Suicide was gravely defended as a right. And the pithy proverb, "If the house smokes, leave it," was in the mouths of men called the wisest and best. This, then, is the sad, cheerless result of the grand Roman experiment. Her imperial pride does not prevent the humiliating confession: "Salvation is not in me. There is no hope."

The last great laborer in this field was the nation of the Jews. Their central idea was not intellect, as the Greek—nor law, as the Roman—but religion, open to all—binding on all—having no esoteric doctrines—and maintaining, in all its history, the idea of one spiritual God, as a continual protest against Polytheism and idolatry. Their position was anticipative and expectant. Prophecy was their polar star. Their whole history is an acted prophecy. Their religion was one of hope of good things to come. Unlike the Greeks and Romans, their golden age was in the future. Their mission was to let the true light shine in darkness—though often the darkness comprehended it not. Their geographical position was eminently suited to their appointed work. They had Egypt on the one

side, and Syria and the East on the other, and they were carried captive into both, diffusing as they went, the knowledge of the wondrous revelation that God had vouchsafed to them. They were just in the line of Alexander's march of conquest, and in the centre of the four fragments into which his empire broke. And on the west the Mediterranean (middle of the earth) opened to them Europe and Africa.

And their dispersion, whether produced by the national passion for trade, or by the will of some conqueror, was for the furtherance of the Gospel. For they carried their faith with them, and maintained it alike in the busy marts of Corinth and by the waters of Babylon, where they hung their harps in silent and tearful remembrance of Zion. Thus it came to pass that both the cupidity and the wrath of man worked out the plans of God. A witness for him was found in every land. So that in the days of Paul it could be said, "For Moses, of old time, hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day."—Acts 15: 21. Thus prophecy and fulfilment could stand side by side, when the Apostle argued the claims of Christ. Again, a fringe of proselytes surrounded every synagogue—men of inquiring minds and earnest spirits, who having Jewish knowledge without Jewish prejudice, were at once fitted to receive the truth and to communicate it to the heathen.

But, lest it should be thought that Judaism was the full and final faith adequate to the wants of a diseased humanity, it had lost its power—was waxing old and was ready to vanish away. Malachi had closed the canon of Old Testament Scripture—the light of prophecy went out, and there was silence in heaven for four hundred years—till the expectant world was startled by the voice of one crying in the wilderness—Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

To determine, then, the success of the Jewish experiment, let us look in on them during that interval when they were left to themselves. And the scene presented is sadder than the others, because of their great but abused privileges. Their condition manifested the old trine division of the human intellect; and, as applied to religion, produced the Pharisees, the Sadducees and

the Essenes—the Stoics, the Epicureans and the Cynics of the Jewish growth. Their civil condition can be given in one sentence of Josephus. After describing their wars, internal and external, despite all his prejudices in favor of his beloved nation, he is compelled to say: “I believe that had the Romans not come upon this wicked race when they did, an earthquake would have swallowed them up, or a flood would have drowned them, or the lightnings of Sodom would have struck them. For this generation was more ungodly than all that had ever suffered such punishments.” To this sad statement all history agrees. This also was a failure, signal and complete. It was, indeed, the hour of the world’s extremity. Diseased humanity had been allowed four thousand years in which to heal itself, and the disease had only become more virulent and deadly. The principalities and powers of hell had broke loose on society; the possession of devils was no rare occurrence; the wild scream of the demoniac, mingled with the revelry of Saturnalian orgies; and the snarl of the Cynic, and the thoughtless laugh of the Epicurean, and the proud self-sufficiency of the Stoic, filled up the scene of chaotic confusion into which society had fallen. The solution of a problem thus complicated, called for the intervention of a God. The promised deliverer must come now or never, unless he would come to a hell on earth—a mighty and universal pandemonium, where the base passions of all nations were seething, and all jealousies and hatred were clashing. And now the sceptre is departing from Judah and the lawgiver from between his knees—the predicted hour for Shiloh to come. And God was true to his word. The very edict that humbled Herod in the dust at the feet of his Roman master, and destroyed the last vestige of kingly power—the registration of the tribes of Israel for a Roman taxation, called Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem the city of David; and *then* and *there*, in the fullness of time, surrounded by the concentrated light of history and prophecy—heralded by rejoicing angels, and adored by the shepherds and the wise men—the representatives of the Jewish and Gentile world—Christ, “the desire of all nations,”—the Saviour of men, was born.

And these things were not done in a corner, where imposture

might play its tricks of deception. All eyes were turned in anxious expectation to Judea at the time. Expectations of a coming Messiah, in various forms and degrees of clearness, were at that time by the political, intellectual and religious contact and collision of the nations, spread over the whole world, and like the first red streaks on the horizon, announced the approach of day. The Persians were looking for their Sosiach, who should conquer Ahriman and his kingdom of darkness. The Chinese sage, Confucius, pointed his disciples to a holy one who should appear in the West. The wise Astrologers who came to Jerusalem to worship the new born King of the Jews, we must look upon as the noblest representatives of the Messianic hopes of the Oriental heathens. The western nations on the contrary looked towards the East, the land of the rising sun and of all wisdom. Suetonius and Tacitus speak of a current saying in the Roman empire, that in the East, and more particularly in Judea, a new universal empire would soon be founded.

The Jews also were on the tiptoe of expectation; and, it is a singular fact, that at the very time that Christ—the eternal word of God—was born, Philo, the greatest of Jewish philosophers, was speculating about the advent and work of a deliverer whom he called the Word of God. Attention then was awake. The philosophical habits of the people fitted them for scrutiny, and Greek, Roman and Jew, had each his own reason for scrutinising the claims of Jesus more closely.

Christ came in the Augustan age—the golden period of Roman literature. Horace, Tacitus, Juvenal, Seneca and Cicero, were still blazing in their hemisphere as stars of the first magnitude. And the greater lights of Grecian learning, Socrates, Aristotle, Homer and Demosthenes, were shining upon the world with scarcely diminished lustre.

That religion that could stand the test of such scrutiny and pervade the world in one generation, must be divine.

Thus it was that “the city of God was built at the confluence of three civilizations” most strangely blended. Herod, as if to symbolize this wonderful conjunction, had rebuilt the temple—thus presenting the Jewish element; within its walls had reared a theatre—representative of Greek culture; and in a

neighboring plain had built an amphitheatre, for the exhibition of Roman games.—*Jos. Ant.*, Lib. xv, Cap. 8, § 1, *B. J.*, Lib. i, Cap. 21, § 8.

Greeks, Romans and Jews were, we have said, representative people, commissioned to prepare the way for the coming of Christ. So his Cross, which was the hope of all, was surrounded by all three. And over it was written, so that each could read it in his own tongue, in Hebrew and Greek and Latin: "This is the King of the Jews." There they found or might find, what they severally needed so much, and had sought so long in vain—the true philosophy, the true liberty and the true religion. Thus Greek and Roman and Jew found, or might find, Christ to be "all in all."

Our task is now done. We have sketched the preparation of the world for the coming of Christ, and must now be silent. But there is another coming of the same deliverer of which this advent reminds us, and for which it is a pledge. The veil that covers it, it is not our province to lift. But God has said it and will hasten it in its time. Christ shall come a second time without sin unto salvation. We may not see that period of millennial glory, and yet we may. But if another night of error and apostacy should settle down on this earth, we may lie down to sleep in Jesus as well assured of that glorious dawn as if we saw its first rays gilding the horizon, or heard the glad shout, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ." How glad the jubilee of humanity!

"One song employs all nations: and all cry  
Worthy the lamb for he was slain for us!  
The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks  
Shout to each other, and the mountain tops  
From distant mountains catch the flying joy,  
Till nation after nation taught the strain,  
Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round."