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out of heaven. Good resolutions made in your own strength are mere pipe-clay. You have never *striven* to enter the open gateway to the new and the eternal life. You have had the divided mind that accomplishes nothing. It has been only half-and-half work, spending itself on a few serious thoughts soon dissipated, or on a few formal prayers. 'No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit' (that is well put) 'for the kingdom of God.' If you take hold of the plow spiritually, you must, with the help of the Holy Spirit, push it through. Thrust it down deep, into the sub-soil of your affections and your hitherto stubborn will. If that plough tears up some beds that have only borne flowering weeds, all the better. You are not a Christian until you have given your heart to Jesus Christ. You must begin to keep his commandments, to resist sin because he hates it, and to do right because he loves it. 'Quench not the Spirit!' just begin to serve Christ by doing the first duty that comes to your hand. Refuse to do the first wrong thing to which you are tempted, and do this with fervent prayer for divine help. 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many will seek to enter in and shall not be able when once the master of the house is risen up and hath shut to the door!' That gateway of life may soon be shut!"

During a revival of religion in one of our great universities, two students were awakened who were intimate friends. One evening they agreed to go and call upon one of the professors and ask for his advice. They came to his door, when one of the two stopped and said, "I believe I won't go in." His companion replied, "You can do as you please, but I need all the help that a man of experience can give; I am resolved to go in." There they parted, and for eternity! The one went in, opened his difficulties to the professor, received good counsel, and decided for Christ. He became an eminently useful minister of Christ. The other threw off all serious thought, drifted into "fast" associations, and ended his career as a sot. The one co-operated with the loving Spirit; the other quenched the Spirit, and shut the gateway of life against himself. My friend, your Bible is full of glorious encouragement to you. A pure life, a useful life, a happy life, and an eternal life in the Father's house is now within your reach. The only time you are sure of is the present. There are two gates, and the two opposite roads into eternity. You must take one or the other! Beside that strait gate stands the infinite love, saying to you, "I set before you death and life. Choose life!"—The Independent.

The Fulness of the Times.

PROP. S. C. MITCHELL, RICHMOND COLLEGE.

The long delay in the advent of Christ at Bethlehem may cause some people trouble. Why should the world have been left all those centuries that stretch from Eden to Calvary without Him who is "the way, the truth, and the life," without Him in whom "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily?" Why did not the flaming sword that barred the entrance to paradise give place at once to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world?

If questions like these have occasioned difficulty to any mind, it may not be amiss to suggest that upon examination it will be found that the fitness of the hour of Christ's advent lends confirmation to the divinity of his character and mission. This delay may thus assure our faith in Christ and especially in the providence of God, as we perceive the long, varied, and mighty forces divinely converged "unto a dispensation of the fulness of times, to sum up all things in Christ."

In this way it will also be seen that the cross of Christ is not an afterthought in the history of the human race, not a patch upon the garment of creation, not a device hit upon by Deity to meet an emergency unexpected; but we shall realize that the cross is expressive of what is deepest in nature and in life, that the principle of sacrifice which it embodies is a universal law; that "the death of Christ is representative of the life of God, the manifestation once in time of that which is the eternal law of his being."

The preparation of the world for the coming of Christ may be regarded as threefold—spiritual, cultural, political.

I. The Spiritual Preparation in the Hebrews.

The spiritual preparation consisted in begetting what may be termed a divine consciousness in humanity, an intense feeling of man's relation to Deity. This consciousness of God was wrought out by setting aside one people, the Hebrews, endowed with marked and abiding characteristics, dwelling in a land hedged in by desert and sea, yet forming the ganglion-like meeting-ground of the armies and commerce of Egypt and Assyria. The people thus endowed and thus isolated were subjected to moral discipline for centuries. Their government was a theocracy, and religion was the platform of all parties. The center of the national life was the Temple. A line of prophets from Moses to John the Baptist was raised up to declare in impressive tones the unfolding will of God. Their literature was the Bible. Conduct expressed the genius of this race; and conduct, as Matthew Arnold reminds us, is three-fourths of life.

The nation was scourged by pestilence and humbled by captivity, that it might heed the command: "Thou shalt have none other Gods before me." They were kept more than a millenium upon this one lesson. There was developed in this God-guided people a conscience

that was sensitive to the finger of Deity, a heart that was mellowed by affliction, and a consciousness of the presence and law of Jehovah that no sins on their part could eradicate and no disasters from without eclipse. Every common bush was afire with God. Shylock admirably seized upon the inner meaning of Hebrew history when he said: "Sufferance is the badge of all our race." It is not surprising that a race with such experiences should have given the world what the modern pagan, Goethe, has called the Divine worship of Sorrow.

These mighty, disciplinary, prophetic and moral forces headed up in Jesus Christ. "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, . . . the effulgence of his glory and the very image of his substance."

By what was known as "the dispersion," the idea of the unity of God was carried to every continent and planted in almost every city. Thus gradually the minds of the heathen were accustomed to the great initial fact of the true religion: and the door was opened for the easy entrance of the gospel into pagan centers. Wherever Paul went he found a synagogue, which stood for the unity of God, and which offered a platform for the first utterance of the gospel of Christ.

II. The Cultural Preparation in the Greeks.

The cultural preparation, linguistic and intellectual, was going on simultaneously.

On a certain day in 401 B. C., a student of Socrates approached him in the streets of Athens and asked his advice as to accepting an invitation which had come in a letter from a friend, Proxenus, to go with him as a tent-companion in an expedition which Cyrus was then organizing in Asia Minor. Socrates gave the young Athenian but little encouragement, as Cyrus had freely handed over gold to the Lacedaemonians in the recent almost fatal duel between Athens and Sparta. He advised the young man to put the question of his going to the god at Delphi. Xenophon, however, asked Apollo not whether he must go on the expedition, but to what gods he must sacrifice, if he was to prosper on the journey. The oracle named the deities to which he must sacrifice. Upon his return from Delphi, Xenophon repeated to Socrates the response of Apollo. Whereupon the conscientious teacher detected that Xenophon had duped the god and upbraided him for not first asking whether he ought to go. It was necessary, however, said Socrates, in view of the oracle, for Xenophon to go. What had that conversation in Athens between master and student to do with the coming of Christ four centuries later? It led directly to the universalizing of the Greek language and culture throughout the East, from the Hellespont to the Indies.

That mighty result came about in this way. Prior to the date of the Anabasis of Cyrus, the Persian Empire, with which the Greeks had waged a century of war, had been to the Hellenic mind the synonym of strength, compactness and exhaustless resources. But the ten thousand Greeks with Cyrus made their way almost to Babylon, and swept victoriously the barbarians before them at Cunaxa. Then having lost their generals by the base treachery of Tissaphernes, they were left without provisions or guides in the heart of this widely extended empire; nevertheless, they cut their way through obstacles, tramped around at will, and finally emerged with few losses on the Euxine. This they greeted with a glad shout: "O thalassa, O thalassa!" whose tones ring in the ears of him who has followed with breathless interest the narrative of their heroism and unprecedented experiences, recorded with so much grace and skill by that none too scrupulous young man who was thus casually led to join the expedition.

This account of their march through the Persian Empire dissipated forever that idea of solidity which had held the Hellenic world as under a spell for so many generations. The result was that Alexander, in 334 B. C., crossed the Hellespont with 35,000 men bent on the conquest of the Persian Empire and the diffusion of the Greek spirit throughout the East. The accommodation of Greek culture to the needs of all peoples, that was the great practical conception of Alexander, a conception far in advance of his philosophic teacher Aristotle. He broke down the wall of partition and amalgamated the world in Greek thought and speech. Droysen thus summarizes the condition that followed Alexander's conquests: "As far as the colonies on the Indus and Jaxartes, the Greek has kinsmen . . . Science orders into system the marvelous traditions of the Babylonians, Egyptians and Hindoos, and strives, from a comparison of them, to gain new results. All these streams of civilization . . . are now united in the cauldron of Hellenistic culture."

When Greece was in her prime, the city-state was the element in which the Greek lived and moved and had his being. Patriotism, which meant devotion to one's native city, was the noblest of virtues. The civil life was the sole life. The circuit of the city's walls marked the limits of the Greek's horizon. The distinction between Jew and Gentile was no more marked than that between Greek and barbarian. No matter how small these states might be—there were four cities on the tiny island of Ceos, yet each state was sovereign and independent, and

treating with its neighbors on the same footing of independence and natural pride that characterize England's dealings with Russia today—they satisfied the activities and aspirations of the Greek soul, as the water satisfies the fish, or the air, the bird.

But when at the battle of Chaeronea, in 338 B. C., the sovereign city-states of Greece went down before the Macedonian phalanx wielded by Philip II., assisted by his seventeen year old son, what became of the Greek's love for his city? His city was merged into the semi-barbarous empire of the North. The Greek was forced to grasp a larger truth, the unity of mankind. Hence, in the chaos of political disintegration, Stoicism, which was the embodiment of this doctrine, became the regnant philosophy. The Greek lost his city and found man's soul. Nations perish in their fruition. It was so with Israel, with Rome, with Greece. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit," is a law which applies to states as well as seeds. The independence and self-sufficiency of the city vanished, but the brotherhood of mankind remained.

Thus by making of one tongue the peoples of the East and by fostering the idea of the unity and brotherhood of mankind, the Greeks in their turn prepared the world for the reception of the message of those who were "debtors" both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish." The counter part of this linguistic preparation is the Greek Scriptures, especially the New Testament, together with the early development of Christian doctrine by Athanasius and his conferees.

III. The Political Preparation by the Romans.

Though God had mirrored himself in Hebrew consciousness, and though he had evolved out of the pettiness and selfish exclusiveness of Greek life the splendid idea of the essential oneness of the human race, there was yet needed politically a stable, well-ordered, tolerant, unified world, wherein the Gospel might have free course and be glorified. (Some may object to the word "tolerant" as applied to Rome; but, in spite of the persecutions of the early Christians, we must, speaking generally, pronounce Rome eminently tolerant. The real religion, it is true, of the Romans was Rome, and it was when this religion embodied in the person of the emperor and his cult, was thought to be denied or despised by Christians that heresy was regarded as treason. They freely admitted rivals of Jupiter and Mars from Asia and Egypt, but Romulus was a jealous God.)

As Greek ideas developed the feeling of oneness, so Roman armies wrought out the practical unification politically of the peoples of the civilized world. Athens coined the language in which the gospel was to find utterance, and Rome built the highway along which the messenger ran, a fact which a map of Paul's journeys will easily make plain. By Greeks came unity of sentiment, by Rome, unity of organization. "We have no king but Caesar," was the enforced confession of all peoples.

As the divine consciousness begotten in the Hebrews reached its fulfillment in the incarnation of Christ, as the cultural work of the Greeks furnished the rich language in which the Scriptures were written and Christian teachings expounded, so the political genius and achievements of the Romans had to do with the organization which the church assumed from the fourth to the sixteenth centuries. The church slipped into the moulds of the Empire. Though it remained democratic in spirit, it became imperial in form. While we could not approve such an organization today, as it finds no warrant in the New Testament, perhaps it was not ill-adapted to the violence of those times and to subdue to civilization and Christianity the rude peoples that poured pell-mell into the Empire across the Rhine and the Danube. The Roman church was, at any rate, the only institution in western Europe which did not lose its center of gravity in the general turbulence of those dark ages. History writes the record thus: Christianity was the gift of the Roman Empire to the world.

Thus we find that God is in his world wisely directing all things to that

"one far off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."

—Christian Index.

Anglo-American Unity.

BY ALFRED AUSTIN.

What is the voice I hear
On the wind of the western sea?
Sentinel, listen from out Cape Clear,
And say what the voice may be.
'Tis a proud, free people calling loud to a people
proud and free.

And it says to them, "Kinsmen, hail!
We severed have been too long;
Now let us have done with a worn-out tale,
The tale of an ancient wrong,
And our friendship last long as love doth last, and be
stronger than death is strong."

Answer them, sons of the self-same race,
And blood of the self-same clan,
Let us speak with each other face to face,
And answer as man to man,
And loyally love and trust each other as none but
freemen can.

Now fling them out to the breeze,
Shamrock, thistle and rose,
And the Star Spangled Banner unfurl with these,
A message to friends and foes,
Wherever the sails of peace are seen and wherever
the war wind blows.

A message to bond and thrall to wake,
For wherever we come, we twain,
The throne of the tyrant shall rock and quake,
And his menace be void and vain,
For you are lords of a strong young land, and we are
lords of the main.

Yes, this is the voice of the bluff March gale;
We severed have been too long;
But now we have done with a worn-out tale,
The tale of an ancient wrong,
And our friendship last long as love doth last and be
stronger than death is strong."