

ness of the previous and the comparative goodness of the present state. Paul's picture in the closing verses of the First Chapter of Romans, gives us glimpses into that deep, dark pit which contemporaneous Profane History fully confirms. True, there were lights shining in the dark places, making the darkness but the more visible.

"There was no power known to Heathenism of lovely Art, historic recollection, sonorous eloquence, stinging satire, which could avail at this momentous and awful crisis." The empirical schemes of the most refined taste and subtle Philosophy and false religiousness proved utterly abortive. Were society as pure before Christianity as after, why does the Rationalist historian, Lecky, speak of the pages of *Suetonius* as remaining "an eternal witness of the abysses of depravity, the hideous and intolerable cruelty, the hitherto unimaginable extravagances of nameless lust that were then manifested on the Palatine." Why should the sceptical *Renan* testify "that in Rome every vice flaunted itself with revolting cynicism," and the Roman historian, Tacitus, says: "Virtue was a sentence of death." Why should that sarcastic satirist, *Juvenal*, say without any testimony of disapprobation, "There will be nothing further which posterity may add to our evil manners. Those coming after, can only reproduce our desires and deeds, every vice stands already at its topmost summit," and why would Matthew Arnold, whose sentiments and sympathies are closely affiliated with Agnosticism, who may be almost looked upon as its poet Laureate, give this finishing touch to the dark picture :

"On that hard Pagan world, disgust
And secret loathing fell
Deep weariness, and sated lust
Made human life a hell."

In this corrupt mass was hid the heaven of Truth—"The Truth as it is in Jesus." "He descended into Hell,"—that hell of the Poet's portraiture, and in his train came love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, patience, temperance."

Christianity infused "new blood" into the Body of society, which had become, as Troplong puts it, "profoundly gangrened." When we think of the source whence that blood flowed—of the sweep it took—and the sanitary influence it exerted, we may well say, "this is the finger of God!" A religion that could heal all our diseases and redeem our life from destruction, springing up at such an era, could have no other than a supernatural origin. The very conception of the fundamental principles of the Christian Faith was superhuman; nor less so, the forming and framing of a character so perfect, by illiterate Jews, born and brought up within the contracted circle of a system essentially