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ART. I.—THE TYPOLOGY OF SCRIPTURE; or the Doctrine of Types, investigated in its principles, and applied to the Explanation of the earlier Revelations of God considered as preparatory exhibitions of the leading truths of the Gospel. With an appendix on the Restoration of the Jews. By Rev. Patrick Fairbairn, Salton. Two volumes. Edinburgh: Thomas Clark. 1845, 1847.

THE writers we have heretofore noticed, who spiritualize the prophecies and histories of the Scriptures, professedly proceed in their constructions, on the assumption, that the language in which they are expressed is figurative. They, in fact, however, as we have shown, treat them as though, instead of their words, the persons and events of which they speak were the medium of the information they convey, and were representatives, therefore, of persons, acts, and events of a different kind, on much the same principle as prophetic symbols. Thus, Zion and Jerusalem, they aver, are representatives of the Christian church, Israelites of Christian believers, and Gentiles of apostates. By what figure it is that the subjects of prediction are invested with so extraordinary an office, and become the media of such a meaning, they do not inform us, and seem never to have inquired. The simple assertion

ART. V.—THE FULNESS OF TIME. By the Rev. W. M. Hetherington, D.D. Hamilton, Adams & Co., London.

BY JOHN FORSYTH, JUN., D.D.

DR. HETHERINGTON'S name has become widely known on both sides of the Atlantic, by his histories of the Westminster Assembly, and of the Church of Scotland. The work, whose title is given above, if we mistake not, was his first publication, and we have often wondered that this earliest product of his able pen has not been given to the American public. It is written in a glowing, or what some, perhaps, would call a too ambitious style,—a feature, however, which would render it all the more attractive to the mass of readers. And besides the intrinsic importance of the subject of which it treats, the discussion of it involves a survey of the history of the great nations of antiquity, in the most interesting aspects in which they can be viewed. The author proposes an ingenious, and, as we are inclined to think, a well grounded theory in regard to the history of our race, from the creation of man to the advent of Christ; and in its exposition and defence he shows himself to be a writer endowed with unusual powers both of rhetoric and reasoning.

The title of the volume, suggested by those words of Paul—“When the fulness of the times was come God sent forth his Son”—indicates the nature of the question which the author undertakes to discuss. It is this: Why was the coming of the promised Saviour so long delayed? Was there any peculiar suitability in the period of the advent to render it, in the language of the apostle, “the fulness of time;” or was it fixed by a mere arbitrary appointment? The full answer to this inquiry, such as our author attempts to give, involves, as we have already hinted, the consideration of topics belonging to the domain of political and historical philosophy, as well as to that of theology. We have no doubt that all intelligent men will agree with us in saying that the long delay of the incarnation did not result simply from the sovereign will of God; and that the precise epoch when that great event

occurred was chosen for wise reasons. This negative conclusion may be readily reached on general grounds; the opposite supposition would place the most stupendous fact in human history out of all analogy with the method of the divine government in nature, providence, and grace. So far as our observation extends of the works and the ways of God, we can find nothing that stands alone; and were it possible for us to scan the whole universe, we should, doubtless, discover that the law of inter-connexion—we may so express ourselves—extends to all creations and all events. What at one moment is an effect becomes a cause in the next. In a word, all things are connected with all things. On this ground, we fancy that every person of reflection will admit that there must be some reason why the advent of the promised Redeemer was delayed for so many ages, and why he came into our world neither sooner nor later than the exact time which we know was fixed for his appearance in human flesh. But when the question comes to be, what were those reasons? some may be disposed to say that they belong to the sphere of that “knowledge which is too high for us,” and that any attempt to “attain unto it” must be set down as an irreverent search into the “secret things which belong to the Lord our God.” All our studies in divine things should be conducted under the influence of a holy reverence for him whose word we are investigating; and there can be no doubt that every endeavor to pry into things which God has been pleased not to reveal to us, is an impious intrusion as useless as it is wicked. But on the other hand, there are portions of the divine procedure from which the veil of mystery is sufficiently removed to enable us to discover some of the reasons of the divine plan, and we are invited to the study of it, in order that we may get a clearer view and may feel deeper conviction of the truth that our God is “wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.”

We cannot tell why God created our world in the way and manner described in the Book of Genesis, nor why he established the existing constitution of things. He could as easily have peopled the earth at once with myriads of animated beings, as he could create a single pair. In his infinite wisdom he determined that the human race should spring from a single pair, that its increase should be governed by certain laws, and that

it should gradually overspread the earth. Now, though the reasons why the present system of things was chosen rather than any other, are not revealed, yet the relations of the particular parts of the system that exists, the bearing of one thing and of one event upon another, we may, within certain limits, lawfully study and may hope to understand. And in regard to the particular subject before us, the very language of Scripture, with reference to the period of the Redeemer's advent as "the fulness of time," seems distinctly to intimate that there are reasons which we may discover if we will search for them, why that point in the history of the world was fixed upon for the occurrence of that grand event.

Why, then, was the coming of the Saviour so long delayed? The answer to this question suggested by our author, in its most general form, may be thus stated—it was designed to show, on the one hand, that "sin is exceedingly sinful," on the other, that fallen human nature has no such recuperative energy as needs only to be properly developed to raise it again to its primal state of perfection and happiness; and thus to prove the absolute necessity of such a divine intervention on man's behalf, as the gospel reveals. Now, as to the first of these objects, it seems clear that the extreme malignancy of moral evil could not have been known to man unless it had been allowed to take its course, and display its nature in its effects, through every successive development of the human capacity, and in all the relations which men's social tendencies lead them to form. For the complete carrying out of such a probative process considerable time would be needed. Without such a process evincing the fearful tendencies of sin, and proving by the experience of ages the utter insufficiency of man's resources even to retard the fatal progress of degeneracy and ruin, it is possible that we could never have been adequately sensible either of the necessity, the wisdom, or the mercy of the scheme of redemption.

In thus trying fallen man to ascertain what his nature is capable of, it was not necessary that the entire race should be placed in each of the various conditions which such a trial involves; for, as human nature is essentially the same, an experiment, such as we have in view, of a nation, is, in effect, an experiment with the race. But it so happens, that in the

first stage of the process the entire race was tried. We refer to the antediluvian period of human history. Our knowledge of that era is indeed scanty; but it is in the highest degree reliable, since it is derived from sacred writ. Brief, however, as is the record of the period from the Fall to the Deluge, it is full enough to prove that the race had made very considerable advances, not *towards*, but *in* "civilization."* Geologists to the contrary, Earth was then in the freshness of her youth; and the life of man was measured not by years but by centuries. In a word, the condition of the world must then have been in many respects widely different from what it afterwards became. Man could scarcely be in a more favorable position for the development and exercise of his recuperative energies, if he has any; and yet, what was the result? Why, a term of life so long as to be deemed by the wise men of modern days quite fabulous, and the luxuriant abundance of the earth's richest gifts only filled his heart with presumption, crime, and guilt, till a deluge was sent to sweep the lawless race from a world which they polluted and abused; and thus to make way for a new order of things less immediately fatal.

From the world's wreck a single family is saved, whose members could hardly fail to preserve the memory, inasmuch as they were surrounded by the living monuments of that dread event. We have not time to dwell upon the physical effects of the deluge. Suffice it to say, that they seem to have been of a nature to render the condition of the earth less favorable for human life, and to demand a greater amount of labor for its support. Under these circumstances, a new series of trials is begun, in which the full powers of the human being were to be cultivated and explored, before the coming of the promised Seed of the woman, who was to bruise the serpent's head.

We have already hinted that we wholly reject the theory of those, who, holding that the primeval state of man was one of barbarism, have attempted to show the successive steps by which civilized society must have been evolved. History,

* We use the word very much in the sense of those with whom it is a sort of cant term, denoting material prosperity, including progress in Art and Science.

philosophy, and Scripture unite in pronouncing this theory to be utterly false and absurd. Not an instance can be adduced of savages originating their own improvement. Barbarism is ever the result of degeneracy from a pre-existing and higher condition: and when a tribe has sunk down into this state, the power that raises them out of it is never self-originated, but external. The second infancy of the race, like the first, began, if we may so speak, in civilization; since Noah and his sons must have inherited the sum of art and science possessed by the antediluvian world. After quitting the ark, the patriarch and his children would naturally reside together, and near the spot where they first disembarked. Noah, during the three hundred years and more of his subsequent life, would be not only the father of his immediate household, but also the father of the whole human race. So, too, his sons would become each the paternal lord and head of his own family, and of its ever-widening branches.

As this is the natural, we may conclude that it was the actual origin of the earliest form of government—the patriarchal—in which the leaders of tribes exercised supreme authority on the ground of real or assumed paternity. Under such a rule, and while society was confined within narrow limits, the progress of degeneracy could hardly be very rapid; but as the distance from the central homestead increased, these remoter branches would decline in knowledge, in the purity of religious worship and of political institutions. Such results, we know from sacred history, began early to show themselves.

The patriarchal form of government was admirably fitted to meet the wants of the race at the period when it existed. It facilitated emigration by accustoming men to move in bodies with their families and means of subsistence into new regions. It taught them subordination by the tenderest of all methods, through the influence of paternal authority. But, at the same time, it contained the seeds of its own dissolution: it rendered the sudden formation of great monarchies comparatively easy; it opened the way for irresponsible despotism. Why? Because there was in human nature an ever active principle of evil, so deeply seated that such a form of political institutions could not reach it—a principle poisoning

them in their very source. Wherever we find the same, or a similar structure of society, we still find it productive of the same pernicious results. It might be said, however, that one experiment was not enough to decide the question; society might assume other forms, based on other principles of government; and, under some one of these, greater success might be attained. Accordingly, we find in the subsequent history of the race, a succession of trials under such diverse forms of government and conditions of society, as to show most conclusively that human nature is radically diseased, and must be "created anew unto good works." Let us glance at each of these trials.

The first is to be found in the history of Egypt. From the scanty notices of Nimrod and Asher, we may infer that the first great monarchy which arose had its seat in Asia, in the splendid regions watered by the Euphrates and the Tigris. But from some cause which the sacred writer has not thought proper to record, it appears to have been suddenly smitten back into comparative barbarism. Such, at least, is the view to which our author inclines. However this may be, there can be no doubt that the Egyptian was one of the earliest of ancient kingdoms. In the days of Abraham, it had already made considerable advancement; while, in those of his grandson Jacob, an active commerce was carried on between Egypt and other countries of the East. It would require much more room than we can spare, to discuss the various questions that have been raised respecting the early history of Egypt—e. g. by what branch of Noah's family was the country settled, who was the founder of the monarchy, and what dynastic changes occurred. We only observe, that the first peopling of Egypt must have taken place when the patriarchal system, though declining in purity, was still dominant. Herodotus says that Egypt was divided into *nomes* or districts, distinguished from each other by their objects and forms of religious worship. This was the basis of the earliest arrangement. Power was chiefly in the hands of the priest caste—a circumstance, by the way, proving that the social structure was erected at a time when the patriarch was both priest and king. By a natural process—the several steps of which we cannot stop to point out—the priests and the war-

riors were, in course of time, formed into distinct castes ; and ultimately the whole population was divided into a certain number of castes, of which no intermingling was permitted. The son was bred to the occupation of the father, and in it he was forced to abide. Such a system must have operated in two ways : it would concentrate in the two noble castes all religious and political power—all those influences which control the national fortune ; and it would enable the plebeian castes to acquire great skill in those mechanic arts to which their whole lives were devoted. This may account for the wonderful knowledge displayed by the Egyptians in certain things, and for their ignorance in others. For a time, the caste system, by concentrating knowledge and effort, would operate beneficially. Edifices were built, the like of which the world has never since seen—enduring almost as the very earth itself. The physical resources of the kingdom were rapidly developed, and its wealth greatly increased. But at length, the crowded population of the narrow valley of the Nile was found to be treading on the heels of the means of subsistence, and then the evils of the system were as speedily developed as in former days its benefits had been. Soon the fate of Egypt became apparent and fixed ; her institutions were radically diseased, and their nature was such as to preclude reform. Convulsion followed convulsion ; Egypt sank from one abyss of degradation to another, until at last the prophetic word was literally fulfilled, which declared that she should become “the basest of kingdoms.”

We have already said that the political system of Egypt was based upon the patriarchal, and her history shows how even the simplest and noblest policy, if combined with a false religion, must in the end produce only degeneracy and oppression. In her history, again, we find the first illustration, on a large scale, of a principle nowadays regarded as a fundamental one in political economy—the division of labor. The wonderful sepulchral excavations of Egypt, the artificial lakes emulous of seas, the pyramids rivalling mountains, the temples and palaces encrusted with hieroglyphics, all indicate a nation not only prodigal of labor and fertile in resources, but one in which the powers of the individual were tasked to the uttermost, and, at the same time, guarded by despotic

power. Any one who examines the recent works of Rossellini, Wilkinson, and others, on Egyptian antiquities, will be convinced that the nation made early and rapid progress in practical science and the arts of life; in short, that another instance of the like kind cannot be found in the annals of antiquity. And yet, while Egypt was in one aspect becoming the greatest of states, in a moral point of view she was all the while sinking lower and lower, until she reached the position of "the basest of kingdoms."

Next, we have the Assyrio-Babylonian empire. Its early history is quite as obscure as that of Egypt. The narratives of the Greek historians, which Rollin has collected with such commendable diligence and amusing credulity, are, to say the least, largely fabulous. We shall wait with no little anxiety for the results of the labors of Mr. Layard, who has been engaged for some years past in exhuming the monumental records of a monarchy which, even in the days of Herodotus, was ancient. Meanwhile, our chief reliable source of information is the sacred history; and it is pleasing to observe that, so far as the researches of Mr. L. have gone, they confirm the statements of the Bible. So early as *b. c.* 1400, mention is made in Scripture of an eastern power, under the name of *Aram-Naharaim*, which was probably one of considerable extent. It is supposed that this rising empire was overturned by the Egyptian hero *Sesostris*; at all events, we hear no more of it until the later times of the Hebrew monarchy. Yet *Nineveh* must have existed as a city long before her name appears on the sacred page. She was the capital of the king by whom the ten tribes were removed, though soon after that event the seat of empire was removed to *Babylon*, in consequence of which *Nineveh* rapidly declined, and sank so low that for many ages the very site where she had stood was not certainly known.

Our limits will not permit us to dwell upon the events which led to the transfer of the government to *Babylon*—the invasions, the conquests, the dynastic revolutions, which the change involved. Amid all these the structure and spirit of the government remained essentially the same. Like the Egyptian monarchy, that of *Assyria* was an offshoot of the patriarchal system. But whereas in the former there was a

division of authority between the priesthood and the king, in the latter the whole power of the state was lodged in the hands of the sovereign alone ; and thus the way was opened for giving the world a splendid proof of the triumphs that may be achieved by skill, intelligence, and power, all knit together and directed by one capacious and despotic mind. Under such a monarchy the whole energies of the state could be wielded with vastly more promptitude and effect than under one of a limited character. It was admirably adapted for conquest, and we know that the empire of Nebuchadnezzar embraced almost the whole of the then known world. But on the other hand, it was exposed to the danger of sudden decay. Everything depended on the character of its head. Like the mystic image described by Daniel, it needed only one vigorous stroke to scatter into fragments the gold, iron, and clay of which it was composed. The monarchical principle was fully displayed in its best and worst conditions, and the world taught that it may be the best or worst form of government, but has no mediocrity, is incapable of continuance, and hence is unfitted to promote the steady and progressive improvement of the human race.

The religion of Assyria differed in several important particulars from that of Egypt. Both were idolatrous indeed, but the former, if not purer than the latter, was less degrading. Very considerable progress was made, too, in science, particularly in astronomy, and, as appears from recently discovered monuments, sculpture and its kindred arts were brought to a high degree of excellence. But in one respect Babylon and Egypt were alike—an ever deepening darkness rested upon both. Moral corruption was ceaselessly at work. Each succeeding generation gave incontestable evidence of its ignorance of God, and of the true remedy for its moral disease.

The Babylonian monarchy was overthrown by Cyrus at the head of the renowned and warlike tribes of Persia, and a new empire was founded on its ruins, of which the old capital on the banks of the Euphrates continued to be the seat. The dominion of Persia lasted for about two hundred and seven years, i. e. from the capture of Babylon to the death of Darius, B.C. 331. As the events of this period come within

the sphere of ascertained profane history, it is the less necessary to dwell upon them. Indeed, an account of the rise, progress, and decline of the Persian empire, is just an epitome of the history of Asia. We see a hardy race of mountaineers descending from their hills, to share as mercenaries in the contests of the more effeminate dwellers in the plains. They are charmed with their new quarters, and soon learn that it is quite as easy to become masters as to remain allies. For one or two generations the career of victory is unbroken; but gradually the children lose the vigor and the virtue of their fathers; luxury produces upon them its invariable effect, and in the end they become an easy prey to some new conqueror, or some half savage horde rushing down upon them from their home in the rugged mountains or the desolate steppes. Such is the process which has been repeated time and again, by Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, the Saracens, and the Turks.

In the Persian constitution we meet with a system differing in some important particulars from those that precede it. Nominally the power of the monarch was absolute, while, really, it was limited and controlled by sundry checks. The nobility of descent, in virtue of which the king ruled, being shared by the whole tribe, there arose an aristocracy whose social rank and political power were quite independent of the royal will. In the pure despotisms of earlier ages, the whole functions of government, legislative and executive, were vested absolutely in a single person, whose will was law. It now pleased Divine Providence to call prominently forward a nation in which a greater extension of political principle had been established, that it might be seen whether such a constitution, with its aristocratic element, and its limits upon the exercise of supreme authority, was not more favorable to the general welfare than any preceding one. There might still be, perhaps, a mighty monarchy ruling over a large part of the world, but not requiring the blind submission demanded by those that had hitherto prevailed. From the effects of this slight recognition of individual rights, the tendency of the principle to elevate society might be discerned. It might be supposed that the prevalence of such a system, in which a limit was put upon despotic sway, could hardly fail to bring the blessings of civilisation into more immediate contact with

the great body of the people. Yet the result, after a few generations, was that the king, freed from the cares of government, gave himself up to the enjoyment of voluptuous ease, while his satraps, freed from the royal control, became the oppressors of the provinces committed to their charge.

It is worthy of remark that the religion of the ancient Persians was decidedly the purest of all the forms of idolatry. Magianism, which consisted in the worship of the supreme Deity under the image of the sun, discarded and denounced the idols of other false religions. And as reformed by Zoroaster, who, Hyde and others say, was contemporary with Darius Hystaspes, Magianism maintained its dominion for many centuries over some of the most populous regions of Asia. The basis of the system is the doctrine of a good and evil principle, Ormuzd and Ahriman, the respective sources of all the good and ill in the universe. These kingdoms of light and darkness are eternally opposed to each other, but the time shall come when the power of Ahriman shall be destroyed, and the reign of light and peace, under Ormuzd, shall be universal. Besides his speculations respecting the origin of evil, Zoroaster drew up a body of laws intended to promote the moral improvement of the people, many of which are really very excellent.

The part performed by Persia in carrying forward the culture of the world is not difficult of discovery. Descending from their mountains as auxiliaries to the Medes, a kindred race, they brought with them their peculiar institutions, which afterwards gave tone and color to their political rule. In the course of their conquering career, Lydia with its vast wealth, and Babylon with its imperial magnificence, came into their hands. Herodotus says that they were much given to imitation, and hence they soon adopted whatever in the usages of other nations could minister to pride, vanity, and sensual delight. Some idea may be formed of the pitch to which they carried the arts of luxury from the fact that Xerxes offered a reward to the man who should discover a new pleasure, or invent a new method of enjoyment. By thus combining the courtly elegance of the Medes, the refined effeminacy of the Lydians, with the lofty ambition of the Babylonians, the Persians carried the physical culture of

the world to the highest degree. During the age of their ascendancy, the love of pomp, the taste for elegance, and even the gratification of the animal desires, may be said to have been so far idealized as to become sources of semi-intellectual enjoyment.

The period of the world's youth was now drawing to a close, and the time of its opening manhood was near, when intellect should assert its dominion. And where else could its throne be erected but on the shores of Greece? Man's physical nature had been fully developed, and now ample scope and culture was to be given to his mental nature, if, perchance, he might thus be raised from his deep moral degradation.

One who attempts to give an outline of Grecian history finds it to be no easy task, not from the paucity, but the plethora of the materials—from the multitude of great men, mighty deeds, important ideas, which crowd upon the memory and excite the imagination. Between the two leading Hellenic tribes, the Ionians and Dorians, of which Athens and Sparta became the central abodes, there was a marked distinction of character, causing perpetual rivalry, and ending in their common ruin. The chief element of Dorian or Spartan character was a severe simplicity, a grave dignity, the effect of which was visible in all their institutions, in their aristocratic tendencies, and their respect for age and rank. On the other hand, the Ionians or Athenians were lively, excitable, changeable, with a keen relish for enjoyment of all kinds, an exquisite sense of the beautiful, the sublime, and the ridiculous. Ready to bestow boundless applause on the performer of noble deeds, they were as quick to thrust aside the idol of the hour, and to rush after some new favourite. Hence their intense democratic tendencies. Between powers so strongly contrasted there could scarcely fail to be incessant hostility. They had a common language, with only dialectic shades of difference, and in many respects a common mind and common interests; and this restless antagonism, this endless strife for ascendancy, favored the growth of each up to a certain point; it urged forward the civilization of Greece by preventing her finely strung intellect from becoming dormant or stagnant.

We can hardly conceive of a region more admirably suited for the residence of the human being than was the land of Greece. The picturesque, the beautiful, the sublime, are singularly combined in her scenery. Snow-topped mountains, rocky hills, delightful valleys, and spreading plains, are crowded into a narrower space than in any other part of the world, and are washed by a sea studded over with islands of every size and shape. The soil of Greece, while poor enough to demand skill and labor in its cultivator, is at the same time rich enough to reward his efforts with exuberant harvests. With the brilliant skies of the south, her atmosphere has the bracing qualities of that in more northern climes, the heats of the summer and the colds of the winter being tempered by breezes from the most beautiful of seas. In short, if there is any land in which we may expect to find the "sana mens in corpore sano," we may look for it in Greece. Be this as it may, the rapidity with which Greece rose from the depths of barbarism to the proud position which she gained of mistress of the world in philosophy and art, is one of the most surprising things in her intellectual history. She was indeed indebted to Egypt and Phœnicia for the rudiments of her civilization. She willingly received the knowledge and the superstitions of other lands, but under her plastic hands the crude materials were moulded into a shape of elegance, the like of which the world had never before seen. An ethereal change passed upon everything on which the light of her genius fell; it trod the earth, it sparkled in the fountain, it glided in the stream, it dived into the ocean caves, it soared to the summits of Olympus in the power of its newly imparted divinity. All the powers and phenomena of nature were idealized, by being first cast into the mould of humanity, and then with it deified and worshipped. The human form was the model by which the external aspect of their gods was shaped, and the human mind the type, in conformity with which their attributes were conceived and arranged. And hence came one of the most essential points of difference between the mythology of Greece and that of other nations.

The whole mental development of Greece was greatly promoted by the absence of an hereditary and privileged priestly caste. All history bears witness to the fact, that

wherever such a priesthood has prevailed it has been an incubus on society, retarding improvement, and dwarfing the national mind. Only one exception can be found—the Jewish priesthood, which, though hereditary and privileged, produced no such effects. The times of Jewish prosperity were precisely those of most exact conformity to the Mosaic ritual. And to our mind this fact is a decisive proof of the divine origin of the Hebrew priesthood. The absence of such an order in Greece allowed the free exercise of the public mind on all subjects, so that even religion itself was refined by taste, and received those forms of ideal beauty which distinguish Grecian mythology. But there were limits beyond which the free inquirer within the sphere of religion was not to go. The system, in its notions and observances, was so intertwined with the national poetry and fame, that it took a strong hold on the popular love. And accordingly, when the ever active mind of Athens, thwarted in its ambitious schemes by the steady perseverance of Sparta, sought relief in the wide regions of speculation, the philosopher who valued his life needed to take good care not to expose himself to the charge of contemning the gods. Such men could not fail to detect the absurdity of the popular creed; and as they did not dare to proclaim their scepticism in the streets, they indemnified themselves by teaching their disciples in secret to despise what in public they treated with seeming veneration.

While the philosophers were thus undermining the fabric of the national religion, they were unable to erect a better structure in its room. They could detect the fallacies of the popular creed, but beyond this they could not go. Occasionally the gathering gloom was broken by momentary beams of rare brightness, and at last one luminary arose, lighting for an instant the lowering scenes, and then leaving it to be covered with a curtain of a still thicker darkness,—Socrates, the glory and shame of Grecian philosophy and Grecian superstition. In this remarkable man we have an example, showing the utmost height to which philosophy can soar, and a proof of her utter inability to enlighten the world, or even to save itself. Who can read without deep melancholy the record of those speculations with which Socrates occupied himself in his last moments, when he seems groping about the margin of

that unknown region, into the palpable obscure of which, with his utmost straining, he could not pierce. The most strenuous effort of human nature's noblest son to solve the great questions of its life ends in total failure, and the last act of the man to whom Plato looked up with such docile reverence was one of gross idolatry.

Never did there exist a country and a people so adapted to the task of training the intellectual capacities of man as Greece. She was the very home of art, science, literature, of every form in which genius puts forth its power and wins its trophies; the human mind in its most perfect state was aptly lodged in a body of most perfect organization, and placed in a land unsurpassed for its picturesque beauty; in short, the human being there reached the highest degree of physical and mental perfection of which it seems capable, and produced works in every department of skill and genius which have served as models for all nations, in all succeeding times. And what was the result? Her philosophers did not even pretend to have discovered any means by which the mass of society could be enlightened, reformed, and elevated; they looked with scorn upon the unlettered multitude; and would have regarded it as a profanation of philosophy to popularize it. They did not even dare openly to publish their own convictions, but in public appeared among the most devout assistants at a worship which in secret, among their chosen disciples, they laughed at as a senseless mummery. Philosophy herself, with all her boasted power, confessed that she knew of no other method of keeping the world in order than through the very superstition which, amid her own quiet retreats, she ventured to denounce as false and absurd. And what was the moral influence of the music, the sculpture, the painting, the poetry of Greece? They combined to idealize the fiercest passions and the grossest vices of our nature. Each of them shared in the general apotheosis of human nature, and in the worship of its appropriate divinity each had an unlimited gratification. It was impious for a votary of Bacchus to be sober, or for those of Venus to be chaste. The rites in the festivals of certain deities were of so licentious a nature that no woman of modesty and virtue could appear at such seasons in the street. Yet females in abundance were found to take

part in these abominations; nor did they belong to the lowest and most degraded class. In fact, the most cultivated females of Athens, with whom the men of genius conversed, were all of them courtesans. The modest women, the wives and mothers, were little else than a sort of household slaves, whose only business was to make the dwelling of the husband comfortable and convenient. Such a state of society, however fair externally, however numerous and magnificent its monuments of art, must be, beneath the surface, unspeakably loathsome; the fountains of its life are poisoned, and the waters that flow from them are the waters of death.

One more trial was needed to complete the process of developing what is in man, and the record of this we find in the history of Rome. The character of Rome was formed amid the pressure of circumstances the best adapted to impress upon it the features for which it became distinguished—unconquerable resolution, inflexible perseverance, stern, determined will. From her earliest youth, Rome was assailed by dangers of every kind, and thus her energies were constantly tasked to their highest exercise. One difficulty was the precursor of another; but Roman hardihood grew with every trial; her confidence in her own resources and trust in her fortunes rose with every triumph. And never was she more to be dreaded than in the hour of apparent defeat. Cicero, comparing the earlier Romans with those of his own age, says:—*Nam mores et instituta vitæ, nos profecto et melius tuemur et lautius; rem vero publicam nostri majores certe melioribus temperaverunt et institutis et legibus. Jam illa, quæ natura, non literis, assecuti, neque cum Græciâ neque ullâ cum gente sunt conferenda. Quæ enim tanta gravitas, quæ tanta constantia, magnitudo animi, probitas, fides, quæ tam excellens in omni genere virtus in ullis fuit, ut sit cum majoribus nostris comparanda?** In this description some allowance perhaps should be made for the patriotic animus of the writer, yet it is on the whole truthful. The same author by a single stroke reveals the difference between Greek and Roman character, the speculative tendency of the one, the practical of the other. Among the Greeks nihil mathema-

ticus illustrius ; while among the Romans the art terminated metiendi ratiocinandi utilitate.

Such was the character of the people with whom the last great experiment in regard to the capacities of human nature was to be made. There is something noticeable, too, in the spot chosen to be the cradle of Roman greatness ; it was in the "far west," it was so secluded, so remote from the older seats of civilization as to exempt the Roman people from the influence of oriental nations. A new race is selected, free from many of the degrading vices prevalent in other lands, a race grave, earnest, religious in its way, in a word, endowed with elements of character fitting it for the attainment of that universal empire which it ultimately won. Bred in the midst of foes and dangers, the ancient Roman felt the need of superior aid, and amid all his idolatry retained feelings akin to real piety. For ages the sanctity of an oath was rarely violated, and every interest, public and private, was readily sacrificed to what was deemed the will of the gods. Hence the abundant use of omens and auguries, without which no enterprise was undertaken. Surely, if it were possible to take from the quarry of human nature the materials for a noble structure, we might expect that a truly magnificent and permanent edifice should rise from such a foundation. Compared with the bases of other social structures, that of Rome was indeed firm and strong. In the Roman republic, the popular will was so controlled by constitutional checks that ordinarily the "sober second thought" alone became the rule of state policy. At an early period in the history of the republic a body of laws was enacted for the protection of persons and property (the source of the civil law) ; popular rights, magisterial duties, patrician privileges, were accurately defined ; and it is wonderful with what a force this constitution kept the discordant elements of Roman society in organic union, and when we consider the reverence that was paid to it, even amid the furious strifes of faction. Rome was the first to teach the world the vital lesson that a sacred regard for law is essentially connected with the internal strength and welfare of a state. Alexander and others had shown what the talent and indomitable perseverance of an individual monarch can do. In Rome we see a *nation* animated with a stern, resolute will

—a nation that had marked out for itself a path leading to universal dominion. Who or what can stand before the legions of such a power? All the appliances of civilization proved vain in the presence of such conquerors, and so they would even now.

But when we come to gather up the moral results of this grand experiment, what do we find? Just this, the most abundant proof that no kind of mental, moral, or political culture could avail to rescue man from his perishing condition. Under all forms of society and government, the leaven of evil is discovered to be at work, corrupting all that is good, deforming all that is beautiful, blighting all that is fair. As the opportunities of Rome were the best, and her means of improvement the greatest, so her degeneracy was the most complete. The treasures of all past experience were laid at her feet, while her own culture had been severe, protracted, and in other respects better than that enjoyed by any other nation; yet the result of the experiment was signal and hopeless failure. In the whole history of antiquity there is no chapter whose perusal awakens such a sense of loathing as that which we feel when reading the annals of Roman degeneracy under the rule of Nero and Domitian. The very qualities which had contributed to the growth of the Roman power, now gave increased virulence to the corruption which had seized the body politic; the strong will that had hewed out for itself a road to empire, now rushed with equal energy to the perpetration of crime; the stern spirit which had carried the old Roman on through torrents of blood, impelled his degenerate descendants to plunge into the deepest enormities.

But while Rome still held the sceptre of the world with a firm grasp, and while her heart had yet life enough to send its warmth through her vast frame, a voice is heard "as of one crying in the wilderness," proclaiming the advent of another potentate, travelling in the greatness of his strength, "mighty to save." According to the express testimony of profane historians, the general attention was turned, as by a spontaneous impulse, to the land of Judea; the whole powers of nature seemed to assume an attitude of earnest expectancy of some grand event, with which the highest welfare of humanity was

bound up ; the fierce energy of human passions was suspended, the din of arms hushed into repose ; and the whole earth in stillness and peace awaits the entrance of the predicted Prince of Peace. The *Fulness of the Time* had come. The world had gone through a series of changes and of successive developments of human capability, mental, moral, political ; and the result of all was to show most conclusively that man unaided, even under the most favorable circumstances and prolonged opportunities, could not shake off the thralldom of evil. Neither the simple institutions of patriarchal ages, nor the time-defying science of laborious Egypt, nor the imperial magnificence of Babylon, nor the luxurious refinements of Persia, nor the genius of intellectual Greece, nor the profound sagacity or the stern will of Rome, sufficed to educe from man powers able even to retard the progress of sin. God must interpose, or the race must perish. God must command the light to shine in darkness, and by a gracious exercise of his own omnipotence reimpress upon the soul of man the divine image it had lost, and again breathe into him the breath of life. Universal history proclaimed this ; and now, when the experience of all nations had evinced that human wisdom is folly and human might is weakness, it pleased God in the *Fulness of Time*, to send forth his Son, "made of a woman, made under the law," that *through him* the world might be saved.

ART. VI.—THE ORDER OF THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS THAT
ARE TO PRECEDE CHRIST'S COMING.

THERE has seldom been a period when the future was more generally contemplated by the considerate of all classes with uncertainty and apprehension than at present. That the governments on the continent of Europe, with the exception of the Russian, have lost the affections of the people, are sustained by mere force, and are, by their lawless tyranny and the exhaustion of their means and credit, laying the foundation for their speedy overthrow, is felt and admitted by writers of all