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THE CONTRIBUTION OF ALEXANDRIA
TO THE PREPARATION OF THE
WORLD FOR CHRISTIANITY

By

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TO

DR. CAROLINE L. PALMER

my teacher and my friend

whose course in the Inter-Testament period

was the incentive for this study.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A. Nature of the Subject

"When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the King",¹ He came into a world which, through the centuries, had been prepared for His advent and for the message which He brought. "The fulness of time" had come and the waiting world of the first century after Christ was ready to receive the Son of God and of Man and to propagate the unique message of which He was the fulfillment. Through the preceding centuries God had guided the currents of human history to form the stream into which Christ came. Through these preparatory centuries the Divine Hand had brought the Hebrew people, "to originate and preserve in purity the conception of the one God who is the Lord of the whole earth",² and thus cradle the religion which was to change the tenor of the world. In the five centuries immediately preceding the advent of our Lord, momentous changes had been wrought in the life and thought of the peoples who comprised the world which first received the gospel message. It is of one of these great changes that this thesis purports to treat - the change that occurred when Alexander the Great conquered the world in the third century before Christ and altered its civilization; when Jew met Greek and resultant from the contact of these two greatly diversified peoples there ensued

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1. Matthew 2:1

2. R. M. Wenley: The Preparation for Christianity, p. 95.

forces which played a vastly important role in setting the stage for the appearance of Christ some three hundred years later.

In the years following Alexander's conquest these forces which he had loosed were concentrated at one of the great cities of the world - at Alexandria on the northern coast of Egypt. To the northeast lay Palestine, the Divine Locus in God's plan. During this period of three centuries, when the little Jewish state was the pawn of the ruling powers, of the Ptolemies in Egypt or of the Seleucids in Antioch, and contemporary history was inextricably bound up with her destiny, her people reached the period in their development which enabled them to give to the world its greatest gift - Jesus Christ. And the world was ready to receive the gift.

From the great focal center, to the southwest, had issued potent influences. In the course of the three centuries the Greek influence was everywhere at work, modifying the character and ideas of the world and preparing it for the advent of Christ and His gospel. To Alexandria was handed the flaming torch of enlightenment which her founder had kindled in the Mediterranean world that that city might hold it aloft to illumine the way over which the Christian message was to travel. By tolerant treatment of the Jews the great city lighted the path of this people through those preparatory centuries to the time when the whole world might enter into the heritage of the Chosen People. To show the specific ways in which this city made the world ready for the coming of Christ and for the dissemination of His message is the object of this thesis.

B. Definition of Subject

As has been suggested, the five centuries between the closing events of the Old Testament and the advent of Christ in the New Testament, designated as the Inter-Testament period, have been characterized as the preparatory centuries. In this span of approximately five hundred years, divisions may be made according to the civilization dominating the world at the time. Thus, the Persian period, following the captivity of Israel and dating from 536^{to}-333 B.C.; the Greek period, from 333^{to}-63 B.C.; and the Roman period 63 B.C.^{to}-4 A.D. It is to this period of Greek superiority, and within this period, to the years 331 B.C.- when Alexander entered Palestine, until 196 B.C., when Alexandria relinquished its place of prominence to the Syrian capital, Antioch, that the field of this thesis is limited.

In the last half of the fourth century before Christ Alexander of Macedon came out of the west and conquered the then known world, not by the sword so much as by a body of culture which he brought with him. The acceptance of this culture or the rejection of it by the peoples of the East and especially by the Hebrews brought the world one step further in readiness for the reception of Christianity. Alexander founded Alexandria in 331 and through this city was the road of preparation paved. The road crossed Palestine and bridged the distance between two continents and two great periods of history. The discussion of the contribution of Alexandria will be considered primarily in the light of its relation to the Jewish nation, as this great civic center fulfilled its part in the "divine preparation on the path of history for

the advent of Him who is the desire of all nations."¹

C. Plan of Procedure

The three centuries which, preceding the Christian era, saw the meeting of Jew and Greek and the clash of Hellenism and Hebraism, were ushered in by a man who, though himself a product of a pagan civilization, was destined to be in a sense the forerunner of Christianity. Alexander the Great was the promulgator of all the influences which, later dispersed from Alexandria, furthered the course of human history toward its ultimate goal. The first chapter of this thesis will be devoted to a study of Alexander in an effort to understand his significance in the preparatory period. Chapter II will deal with the history and character of the city of Alexandria in the period. A study of the contribution of the city arising from its contact with the Jews will occupy the third chapter. The purpose in each case is to show the peculiar necessity of the subject treated in the working out of the divine plan for the preparation of the world for the message of Christianity. The concluding summary will discuss the total contribution and significance of the period studied.

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1. William Fairweather: The Background of the Gospels, p. 103.

CHAPTER I

THE CONTRIBUTION OF ALEXANDER, THE FOUNDER OF ALEXANDRIA,
TO THE PREPARATION OF THE WORLD FOR CHRISTIANITY

CHAPTER I

THE CONTRIBUTION OF ALEXANDER, THE FOUNDER OF ALEXANDRIA, TO THE PREPARATION OF THE WORLD FOR CHRISTIANITY

A. Significance in Relation to the Problem

The city of Alexandria was a powerful influence in producing the world which was ready to receive and disseminate the message of Christianity. Alexander the Great was responsible for the existence of this city. He fashioned the chain of circumstance which through the last three centuries before Christ led up to "the fulness of time" - a chain in which Alexandria formed one of the strongest links. Alexander was the instigator, the originator of the movements which, centered in the great urban center, swayed the world in the last three preparatory centuries and molded it into readiness for Christianity. He was the source from which sprang the dominant factors influencing the life and times of men in that period. He decided the trend of history and set it on its way. The first century was what it was largely because of what this man had been and what he had accomplished. In the fourth century before Christ, Alexander had changed the course of human history and turned it into new channels. The stream of influences attendant thereto, flowing down through those final centuries, swirled around Alexandria until it widened out and became the broad expanse which was the Christian era.

B. The Life and Character of Alexander

Alexander's path through history was made possible by two things - the powers which were his by nature and training and the opportunities which opened up before him as he blazed his way. These circumstances which opened the way for Alexander the conqueror and produced Alexander the forerunner of Christianity would have gone unheeded had not Alexander the man been ready to grasp and use them for his purpose. To fit him for the role he was to play, he was prepared by natural gifts and by the influences which surrounded him during the early, formative years of his life. He lived only thirty^{three}-six years; he reigned only fourteen years; yet at his death he had carved in the hall of history a niche which no other man has surpassed and few have equalled, and had made an incomparable contribution to the world in preparing it for the advent of the Redeemer. To understand the human phenomenon which was Alexander is to understand first the man.

1. His life.

a. Birth and heritage.

Alexander III of Macedon, termed "the Great", the man who, "On a far greater scale than Alcibiades---was born to do the most good or the most harm to all his world",¹ was, at his birth in B.C. 356, a marked man in the eyes of his own world at least. This son of Philip II of Macedon and Thracian Olympias, was, according to the legend of his birth, also a son of the god, Zeus. Drury gives the legend of his

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1. D. G. Hogarth: Philip and Alexander of Macedon, p. 165.

birth thus:

"Olympias, . . . the night before the marriage, dreamed that a thunder bolt fell upon her which kindled a great fire, whose divided flames were scattered all about and then were extinguished."¹

He remarks that this prodigy was a fitting image of the life of Alexander and of that dominion which was to rise so rapidly, to dazzle the world and so quickly to disappear.² From his Macedonian father Alexander inherited the strength of character which so distinguished him, his kingly bearing and his mastery of will. This inheritance was tempered with that from his Thracian mother; the element of the heroic, the zest for daring achievement, the tinge of the fantastic which combining with his Macedonian heritage, produced a remarkable personality fitted for almost superhuman endeavor.

b. His debt to his father.

As Alexander was to pave the way for succeeding ages, so in the years preceding his birth his father, Philip, had prepared the way for him. Much of what Alexander later accomplished was made possible by what his father had done during the years of his reign. When Alexander at the age of twenty ascended the throne of his country he inherited more than a mere instrument of conquest. To Philip he owed it that he was accepted by the Greeks as a Greek and that he was enabled to carry with him and transplant in the east the spark and inspiration of Hellenic culture. To such an achievement as this long years of patient undiscouraged effort only could have brought any king of Macedon.

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1. Victor Drury: History of Greece, p. 115.
2. Ibid.

For Philip had inherited a kingdom of subjects of gross, uncultured habits, who lacked honorable tradition and were contemptible to their Greek neighbors. He bequeathed to his son a kingdom through which Hellenism, representing the highest standard a man could attain, had crept and lifted the Macedonian domain in the eyes of the world.¹

Alexander, as a son of Olympias, would have been an Albanian chieftain rather than a Greek citizen; as a son of Philip but a rude Hellene, but on this rough stock was grafted by Philip's example and the precepts of the tutors provided by the father, all the most exclusive sentiment of the Greek.²

The heritage which Philip gave his son, Alexander passed on to the world, and, according to Robinson:

"If posterity owes much to Philip's son, it also owes a debt - and no small debt- to the father who bequeathed to Alexander an ideal so high, who set him his task and equipped him with both the power and the training to accomplish what is perhaps (if we except Rome) the greatest cultural conquest in the world's history."³

This cultural conquest was Alexander's unique contribution to the preparatory era.

c. His physical endowment.

The singular endowment of physical strength and beauty set Alexander off amongst his fellows, made him a unique figure among his contemporaries, bore out his own idea of himself as a god, and, coupled

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1. Cf. C. E. Robinson: History of Greece, p. 355.
2. Cf. Hogarth: op. cit., pp. 163-164.
3. Robinson: op. cit., p. 356.

with his characteristic imperiousness and force, was signal in making him the leader he became. He looked the part he played. Alexander's extreme beauty has become a tradition. Hogarth has compiled this description from the extant sources. In all antiquity Alexander was famous for beauty of face, not quite of the then accepted type, but fuller featured and more ardent. His skin was singularly fair and clear and though in statue he was not above the ordinary he had the frame and aspect of an Olympic athlete. His head was habitually inclined to the left shoulder more through unconscious pose than through malformation of disease. His large and liquid but fiery eyes arrested attention most in his face and gave a singular impression of amplitude and life. No less remarkable were the mouth and chin.¹ This grace and beauty, so attractive to any Greek of that period, was no small factor in drawing to him the soldiers whose loyal support made his work possible.

d. His education and training.

The father, with the Hellenic ideal in his heart, surrounded his son with every influence which would make of him a cultured Greek. Nature had endowed Alexander liberally with a brilliant mind, keen perception, fertile imagination. In spite of his splendid physique he cared little for field sports. His chief interests lay in the realm of the intellect. Nor was his education entirely from books. He early acquired a knowledge of the world in which he lived from his contact with the emissaries from all lands who visited his father's court. He

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1. Cf. Hogarth: op. cit., pp. 160-161.

was soon schooled in war, for at sixteen, during Philip's absence, the young prince quelled an uprising of the tribes on the northern border.¹

It was, however, under the tutelage of the great master, Aristotle, who was his teacher for three years, that the future conqueror, realized the development of his powers of intellect, and achieved an appreciation for the finest of that Greek culture which it was his mission to take to all the world. Always a keen and precocious child, the youth, Alexander, attained under Aristotle a real and genuine love of knowledge for its own sake. Aristotle opened up before him all the vistas of the then known learning. Miss Knott says that to the teachings of the great Greek scholar is probably due in large measure Alexander's unbounded admiration for the masterpieces of Greek literature and art. Through the same teaching the young man's imagination had been kindled and his whole personality imbued with the splendor of Greek genius.²

Breasted states:

"Deeds of the ancient heroes touched and kindled his youthful imagination and lent a heroic tinge to his whole personality. As he grew older and his mind ripened, his whole personality was imbued with the splendor of Greek genius and Hellenic culture."³

He was passionately fond of poetry and kept a copy of the Iliad, which he knew by heart, under his pillow; he was so steeped in Homeric mythology that eventually he came to view himself as a sort of superhuman hero, made like his favorite character, Achilles, of finer stuff than

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1. Cf. article, Alexander the Great, Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. I, p. 567.
2. Cf. Laura Knott: Student's History of the Hebrews, p. 336.
3. J. H. Breasted: Ancient Times, pp. 428-429.

ordinary mortals.¹

Like Achilles, he played the lyre and all musical instruments except the flute. Plutarch recounts that music had such a great influence on him that once on hearing the singing of a warlike hymn he sprang to his feet and seized his weapons.²

His love of knowledge led him into every known branch of learning. Aristotle cultivated in the mind of the boy the serious dispositions which already existed there, teaching him many sciences, politics, ethics and eloquence. He inspired his pupil with a taste for medicine.³

The master introduced his pupil to most profound speculations and with boyish precocity Alexander was impatient to probe the deepest mysteries of philosophy before he had mastered its elements and throughout his life he continued to take a keen interest in botany, zoology and other sciences.⁴

Hogarth adds that his interests ranged all the way from the conquest of the world to the collection of specimens.⁵ As Alexander's intellect was given its widest scope there developed within him a strong bent for systematic organization and there increased within him the desire for all that was truly great in peace as well as for that in war. The philosopher who desired to understand all things and reduce them to order was the fitting tutor of the king who wished to conquer all things that he might reconstruct them all. During those years under Aristotle

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1. Cf. Robinson: op. cit., pp. 357-358.
2. Cf. Drury: op. cit., p. 117.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 118.
4. Cf. Robinson: op. cit., p. 358.
5. Cf. Hogarth: op. cit., p. 165.

genius was harnessed and directed and shaped for the use to which it would be put.¹

e. His kingship.

Alexander was twenty years of age when he ascended the throne and inherited the inevitable task of adding the East to the domain of Macedon. He was the confident heir of a new made order, cradled in the late invented militarism and imbued almost at his father's knee with the idea that whoso disposed of the forces of Macedon could dispose also of the earth.²

From the outset he was supremely conscious of his own abilities and very sure of his ultimate success. Hogarth sees him ascending the throne:

"A most masterful and conscious character, self-reliant to a fault, little hampered by restraints of constitution or family, but disciplined somewhat in Philip's hard school of arms. Add a most brilliant, precocious intellect, given the widest scope by contact for three years with the mind of Aristotle, and deeply tinged again with the romantic side of Hellenic culture; add the frame and constitution of an Olympic victor and again the beauty of a Praxitelean god."³

Alexander soon made it evident that he was not to be content with small things. He was to be "the Great" or nothing. Philip's death was a signal for a simultaneous uprising of all his subject provinces. Within a fortnight Alexander, by a quick grasp and expert handling of the situation had shown who was the master. He saved Greece for it was as her representative and champion that he meant to

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1. Cf. Drury: op. cit., p. 119.
2. Cf. Hogarth: op. cit., p. 164.
3. Ibid., p. 165.

march into the East. With characteristic thoroughness he levelled the city of Thebes to the dust as an example to other rebels. After that, all Greece knew she now had one master - but in losing liberty she had gained an apostle for her culture.¹

In April 334, Alexander, then twenty-two years old, left his native shores for Asia, bent on the conquest of Greece's traditional foe, Persia. He met the enemy at the river Granicus and emerged victorious from the fray. Wheeler gives this picture of him:

"The flush and vigour of splendid youth were upon him and no one called him a stripling. He wore the crown of success that genius and not luck had won him and that age might envy."²

Alexander had proved his mettle. From that moment on success attended his every move. He marched through Syria, Palestine and Egypt and those countries bowed to him. In 331 he met the Persians again at Gaugemela and there ensued the greatest battle in the record of the ancient world. On that day Alexander wrested from the hand of Darius, king of Persia, the sceptre of power and the crown of the East passed to the Macedonian's head. Concerning the battle of Gaugemela Wheeler comments:

"The issues of centuries had struck their balance in a day. The channel of history for a thousand years had been opened with a flying wedge."³

In the few years of his life which remained Alexander extended his domain into India and was, at the time of his death, preparing to enter Arabia. Three days before the Arabian expedition was

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1. Cf. Robinson: op. cit., pp. 358-360.
2. B. I. Wheeler: Alexander the Great, p. 227.
3. Ibid., p. 368.

due to depart he died. He was only thirty-three but he had in his brief span, made an indelible imprint on the annals of time. At his death his empire was broken up. The world was thrown into confusion but out of the chaos emerged order; and out of the darkness of despair there came the glimmers of the dawn which heralded that Light of all the world which came three centuries later.

Wheeler has beautifully expressed the fact and import of Alexander's death:

"The story of Alexander had become a story of death. He died himself before his time. With his life he brought the Old Greece to its end; with his death the state he had founded. But they all three, Alexander, Greece, the Grand Empire, each after its sort, set forth, as history judges men and things, the inner value of the saying, 'Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth alone.'"¹

2. His character.

Alexander is generally conceded to be something of a human wonder-worker. The versatility of his accomplishments, the breadth of his genius, the power of his personality set him aside as a unique individual. He was king, conqueror, statesman, emperor, civic promoter, god (according to his own opinion) and man. He was by no means perfect but he was unique and represented the best of the civilization of his day. God used him in a great work. From a multitudinous array of personal characteristics and from the almost limitless outreaches of his varied interests and abilities, there emerge those traits which, acting negatively or positively, principally determined his career and set his feet in the direction followed.

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1. Wheeler: op. cit., p. 501.

a. A leader of men.

Alexander was preeminently a leader of men. Had he not been, his career would have never reached the realm of the extraordinary, for his army, drawn from every people he touched, was the practical means by which he achieved desired ends. He was the leader of his men through inheritance - but he kept that position because he commanded and kept their respect, because he was the embodiment of all that they admired. In commenting on this trait Hogarth says:

"Alexander's physical excellence attracted those whom his intellectual force might have daunted or repelled; and the two together endowed him with a personal magnetism which seems to have been felt equally by the subtlest Greek and the rudest barbarian in his service."¹

Unlike any other army in ancient history, Alexander's men were fighting, not for a cause, but for a man.

Alexander was egoistic, selfish and inordinately proud. He made no secret of the fact that he considered himself superior to his fellows and that the best was not good enough for him. Yet men trusted him, loved him, adored him. He exemplified the unbridled passion, the brutal disregard of the Oriental for human life, the heartless tyranny of the despot, yet the passion was subdued through iron control of will and only on rare occasions burst its bounds; the cruelty was offset by many moments of tenderness, the tyrannical despot often became the soldier fighting with his comrades.

Adventure was the mainspring of his whole personality. He imparted this zeal to others and could inspire his soldiers with the

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1. Hogarth: op. cit., p. 165.

same unbounded belief in his star that he himself possessed, so that Greek soldiers whose fathers had grumbled at Cyrus when he proposed to lead them beyond the bounds of Asia Minor, were ready to follow Alexander past the ranges of the Hindu Kush or through the wilds of Turkestan.¹

Alexander was frank and open and sincere and passionately scorned any deed which "was not able to stand in the sun." Too, his respect for women and his moral cleanliness made him an exception to his times.²

Toward the closing years of his life a perceptible change crept into his character. Success came too easily and with it a gradual hardening of his whole being. His deification and his international policy resulted as it must in personal detriment. He lifted himself to a lofty and lonely eminence wherein his most devoted friends could not follow him.

Tragic consequences attended the last two years of his life. His insensibility to pain became positive cruelty, impetuosity grew to foolhardiness, diplomacy to deceit.³ Exuberances and passions were exaggerated to the point of disease. Through it all, however, his powers of leadership suffered no real deterioration; he was never more clear and tenacious of purpose or more astute and bold in adopting and adapting means.⁴ Whatever the decay of his character, neither was his mental force nor was the absolute devotion of the rank and file to him-

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1. Cf. Robinson: op. cit., p. 358.
2. Cf. Wheeler: op. cit., p. 228.
3. Cf. Hogarth: op. cit., p. 234.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 260.

self abated.¹

b. A practical genius.

A master of tactics, and a master of strategy, a ceaseless worker and a tireless organizer, Alexander handled his army with superior skill and, during his life, held every rein which kept in check the vast domain he ruled. He was efficient and capable and performed tasks which would have completely exhausted a less powerful man. He had a gift for organization and a unique capacity for action. Botsford thinks, however, that he was "too romantic and egoistic" for real statesmanship.²

Alexander died before the real test of his powers as a statesman came but during his life he was weaving the threads of two vast empires, the Greek and the Persian, together, and although his political structure collapsed at his death, he had set up the frame over which was spread that which constituted his real conquest - the diffusion of Hellenic culture.

Robinson summarizes the influence of his statesmanship:

"As a conqueror he was perhaps unrivalled in antiquity; and the genius of his military exploits so impressed themselves on Asia that the romance of his career became a fairy tale in the folklore of a score of languages. . . . But the influence of his constructive statesmanship went deeper still, producing in the history of civilization consequences which he himself for all his powers of vision could never dimly have foreseen."³

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1. Cf. Hogarth: op. cit., p. 234.
2. G. W. Botsford: Hellenic History, p. 451.
3. Robinson: op. cit., p. 409.

c. An idealist.

Combined with the practical genius which was the flower of one phase of his makeup was the vision, the idealism, the mystical element of his nature which entwined with his untiring capacity for action, is the secret of his greatness. Alexander was given by his mother a sense of mission. This sense was heightened by his contact with the culture of Greece under Aristotle and became the driving force of his life and crystallized in the desire to make universal the Hellenistic ideal of life. Idealism flamed within the man and practical minded though he was, he was swayed by his ideals. He loved music and song and the conversation of men. He knew the charm of letters and gave to their gods their due.¹

Although he was not conscious of his place in the working out of the plan of the true God, his sense of the mystical made him conscious that he was an instrument in the hands of that which controlled the universe, in his conception, the gods of mythology.

3. His Place in History.

The external facts alone of his career would place ^{him} in a conspicuous and uncrowded corner of the corridor of history. It is remarkable that in fourteen years the ruler of a comparatively obscure kingdom should become emperor of Europe and Asia - and that emperor be only thirty-three years of age. Breasted thinks that he was well termed "the Great" for few men of genius and certainly none in so brief

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1. Cf. Wheeler: op. cit., p. 228.

a career have left so indelible a mark upon the course of human affairs.¹

Alexander's star flashed out of the western sky and did not set in the east until it had shed its light in every quarter of the world and the horizon was definitely illuminated by its reflection. During the short span of fourteen years, the Macedonian moved across two continents, joining East and West, breaking the barriers of race and custom and changing the character of all that he touched.

Hogarth gives him this place in history:

"Judge how we may his intentions and acts, this at least cannot be doubted, that since so much that he said and did, and so much that is credited to him, has passed into the common thought and speech of mankind, saint or sinner, devil or god, Alexander is among the Immortals."²

C. The Extent and Character of Alexander's Conquests.

Alexander the conqueror was the medium through which Alexander the man became Alexander the forerunner of Christianity. His conquest of the world by the sword was, unconsciously at first, and later, when total conquest was assured, consciously, a means to a much greater end. This end was the universal diffusion of Hellenic culture. Alexander died before he saw this aim accomplished objectively but the line of Greek influence had been flung out by him to all parts of the empire to serve a larger purpose than Alexander ever dreamed of - to unify the world and so prepare it to receive Christ.

1. His ambition for universal Hellenization.

When Alexander left his native shores in 334 his sole aim was

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1. Cf. Breasted: op. cit., p. 446.
2. Hogarth: op. cit., p. 282.

to vanquish Persia and to subjugate the peoples of the East to the dominion of Macedon. This objective was soon attained. The battle of Granicus made him master of the Greek colonies of Asia Minor; the battle of Issus in 335 opened the way to Syria and Egypt, to the siege and capture of Tyre in July, 332, and to the founding of Alexandria at the mouth of the Nile in the same year. The battle of Arbela in October, 331, which sounded the death knell of Persian supremacy, gave Alexander complete control of the Asiatic world. Within three years he had established his authority to the boundary of India and in three years more, by the summer of 325, he had compelled submission as far as the river Indus. Two years later, in 323, he died in the midst of plans for the Hellenization of Asia and the unification of the world.¹

The aim for mere conquest had grown into the desire to tie together his heterogeneous possessions with finer and stronger cords than those of mere political lordship. Alexander envisaged a universal empire in which nationalities would merge in one allegiance and barriers of race would be forgotten. Hellenic culture would be the leaven.

A variety of motives are attributed to the conqueror in this work of universal amalgamation. Sanders maintains that his motivation was partly selfish, at least racially so, and partly altruistic.²

Hogarth warns against giving Alexander credit for too exalted an ideal, for to suppose that he foresaw altogether even what Hellenism would effect for his own selfish end of empire is to rank him with the prophets.³ This writer believes:

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1. Cf. F. F. Sanders: History of the Hebrews, p. 281.

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 280.

3. Cf. Hogarth: op. cit., p. 177.

"Alexander had no prophetic view of the regeneration of Asia or the mission of the Hellene, indeed no altruistic motive at all. His was simply a highly enlightened selfishness, which, having conquered by the sword, knew it could possess in permanence only by fostering the influences of peace. To Alexander commerce and Hellenism were means, not ends, means indeed far from clearly grasped or understood but in so far as he did grasp and understand them, his glory the glory to all time of having applied on a great scale for whatever end the greatest influences for peace in the world of his day."¹

Whatever his motives it is apparent that he caught a vision of a brotherhood of man which three centuries hence would transcend the superficiality and take root in the heart of man.

2. His Conquests.

a. By the sword.

The story of Alexander's conquest is that of the evolution from king of Macedon to emperor of the world. He was a military genius and his exploits dazzled the earth. He remains the one general of history who won all his battles.²

The desire for acquisition drove him on, for he, like Philip, his father, was but a man of his age and race - an age and race whose greatest teacher laid it down for law that the Hellene was absolutely justified in enslaving the barbarian. No more subtle moral rule claimed the attention of a Hellenic conqueror in that day than the right of the stronger. Hogarth says that:

"The world was that Hellene's oyster whose sword could lift the shell."³

Greece, then Asia and Egypt were brought to subjection. The

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1. Hogarth: op. cit., p. 192.

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 240.

3. Ibid., p. 176.

turn of Alexander's year came with the death of Darius after the battle of Arbela. Though the death of the Persian ruler did not constitute in itself a decisive moment, Hogarth thinks that historians have been right in regarding the summer in which it took place as cardinal in Alexander's career; for it was then that first it became clear to all men that there was presently to be neither king of Macedon nor captain-general of Hellas, nor Great King of Persia, but an emperor of Europe and Asia.¹

However, Alexander is not to be estimated merely as military conqueror. If he had been only this he would have left no greater impression than Attila or Tamerlane.² He must next be considered in the light of his larger purpose, his attempts to unify and amalgamate his empire.

b. By his constructive policy

The world lay at his feet but for Alexander conquest did not find its sequel in oppression or exploitation. He had now to weld that vast territory into an organized whole. The conquest was accomplished but the greater work - that of fusion - lay before him if he would realize his aim and be master of one great Hellenic society.

Alexander had received from his father the idea of a great empire and he now laid the foundation of a realm almost beyond comprehension in the sweep of the plan of organization. Time was given him only to make the initial steps in this work, but in the brief span yet

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1. Cf. Hogarth: op. cit., p. 217.

2. Cf. J. E. H. Thomson: "Alexander", International Standard Biblical Encyclopedia, Vol. 1, p. 93.

Bible

allotted to him, he exhibited a quality of constructive statesmanship, which, according to Robinson, stands beyond question.¹ The empire was to be organized by two general methods - the fusion of the races which was more or less a failure; and the leavening of the East with the methods and ideas of the West.² In later years this latter plan was successful beyond Alexander's expectations.

(1). The fusion of races.

Rostovtzeff avers that to unite the dynasties of Macedon and Persia was easy enough but to establish the new dynasty upon an aristocracy and an army which should be half Macedonian and half Iranian was probably beyond the limits of what is possible for man. The difference was too great between the historical tradition of the two nations and their mental attitude, the growth of the ages, was too far
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apart.

However, to Alexander's imaginative and idealistic mind it looked possible - so he tried it. Robinson gives this discussion of the result: He applied the principle in various ways but in every case it proved a failure. He employed Asiatics and Europeans side by side but out of eighteen native satraps few proved worthy of the trust. In the army he was engaged in drafting Oriental soldiery into the ranks of the Macedonian phalanx and the policy brought nothing but discontent. He brought masses of homeless Greeks as well as his own veterans into his new cities, but his project of wholesale transportations never

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1. Cf. Robinson: op. cit., p. 409.

2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 411-412.

3. Cf. M. Rostovtzeff: History of the Ancient World, p. 351.

came to fruition. He made no attempt to move Asiatics to Europe, and though many Greeks came voluntarily to Asia, the real need, if any genuine fusion of race was to be achieved, was for Greek women. The intermarriage of a few thousand Macedonians with Oriental wives was not enough, and the half-breed population resulting from such unions must speedily have relapsed into barbarism.¹

"The fact is that Alexander was faced by the same problem which modern European nations have encountered in their occupation of backward countries. . . . The obstacles for Alexander were not indeed so great; for between Greeks and Persians the difference of blood is comparatively far less than between British and Indian. Nevertheless, even had he lived, it is unlikely that he would have made much real progress. East is East and West is West, and how to bring them together is a problem that still defies the powers of human statesmanship."²

(2) The leaven of Hellenism.

The second method of amalgamation, however, proved eminently successful. Hellenism, that body of ideas which represented the mental activity of the Greek people, conquered the world for Alexander. Wherever he went, went also the Greek idea of life and the Greeks' way of living it. Greek art and culture followed the conquering army and through Greek institutions permeated the East. Much of the success of this wholesale importation of a new civilization depended on the fact that the organization for the whole was not "imposed from without but contributed by all its members as from within."³

Those whom he conquered, Alexander made sharers in his plans and so won the vanquished peoples to him.⁴ The Greek language, fol-

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1. Cf. Robinson: op. cit., p. 411.

2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 411-412, 411-412.

3. Wheeler: op. cit., pp. 476-477.

4. Cf. Drury: op. cit., p. 209.

lowing in the wake of the army, opened the way for the universal dissemination of all else Greek.

The Greeks lived in city-states and their culture was the product of city life. Hence, Alexander in his process of Hellenization, established cities everywhere. At almost every stage of his advance he planted a township planned on Greek models and populated for the most part by Greeks. Over seventy of these cities are known to have existed and some, like Alexandria, became great and flourishing cities.¹

Native customs retired before the great assimilating force and the subtle leaven of Hellenism entered into the life of the communities, far and wide, and before long the whole was leavened.²

Commerce, bond of the nations, was developed into vast proportions and saw before it routes, either new or for the first time made safe; and harbors, shipyards, havens and stations for the supply which he had prepared for it. Industry was given impetus to production by the immense wealth, long inactive and sterile in royal coffers, which Alexander now threw into circulation.³

In his governmental organization of satrapies there was a strange but wholesome fusion of the Orient with western ideas, which although not ultimately successful, formed for the time one more link in the great chain joining East and West.⁴

At the head of all this great system, keeping check upon every

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1. Cf. Robinson: *op. cit.*, p. 412.
2. Cf. W. Fairweather: *From the Exile to the Advent*, p. 106.
3. Cf. Drury: *op. cit.*, p. 210.
4. Cf. C. L. McGinty: *From Babylon to Bethlehem*, p. 87.

move that was made was one man. All roads of empire led to him. While he lived he ruled one great, united empire. He had fulfilled his vocation as a revolutionary and had opened up the way for the fusion of the diverse tendencies of East and West, which was to result in nothing less than the development of a cosmopolitan religion for man.¹

3. The results of his conquest.

Alexander died at the age of thirty-three, just as his work of amalgamation was beginning. Drury points out that now that the work of force was completed the work of wisdom would have to begin.²

The conqueror died, however, before he was really faced with this latter work in any great extent. At his death his empire was rent to pieces by quarrelling generals. The time had not yet arrived for the unification of the world which must be accomplished before the advent of Christ. Had Alexander lived his personal influence would not have resulted in benefit to the world but rather the reverse. The task of administration would have been so great that he would not have had time to practice the arts of peace. Too, in his later years he and his policies were becoming more and more Asiatized and as time went on Europe instead of Hellenizing Asia would have been, in all likelihood, Asiatized. As it was, the dismemberment of Alexander's empire assured a certain amount of Greek homogeneity throughout the conquered provinces. The work of the Divine purpose could better be promoted in the wholesome emulation of rival states than under a single central government

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1. Cf. Fairweather: From the Exile to the Advent, p. 102.
2. Cf. Drury: op. cit., p. 209.

in which those states were united. With a single great empire there would have been only one center of influence but in the division which followed Alexander's death several great centers existed, each a factor in welding together the various peoples of the widely diverse sections.¹

Death prevented Alexander's undoing that which he had done to make ready the world for the coming Saviour.

His work was of incontestable and lasting value. His earthly empire vanished but his ideals remained and his conception of humanity and his ideal of culture did not die. His endeavors had transformed the East, giving it an entirely new vision of life. The world was literally a different place after he had gone through it. He set free that "lambent winged ethereal spirit of Greece"² which permeated all civilization and changed it.

Hogarth says of him that:

"He did more than any single man to break down that proud division of the world into few Greeks and myriad barbarians, which had stimulated the seed of civilization, but was become a cramping and suffocating influence on the grown plant. He did more than any single man up to his day to make one part of the world known to the other, and, unconsciously enough, so to widen his great tutor's principle of social organization, that little more than three centuries later a church became possible which contained Jews, Greeks, and Latins, Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia."³

As a result of his conquests he had loosed upon the world mighty forces which prepared the soil from which Christianity sprang.

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1. Cf. D. R. Breed: Preparation of the World for Christ, pp. 255-257.
2. H. K. Booth: The Bridge Between the Testaments, p. 9.
3. Hogarth: op. cit., p. 277.

D. The Resultant Contribution of Alexander
to the Work of Preparation

Alexander the Great was more than a conqueror - he was the apostle of one of the greatest influences that ever altered the face of the world. It was as the champion of Hellenism that he became also the forerunner of that greatest movement for which the Grecian spirit paved the way. Three hundred years elapsed between the time of Alexander and the birth of Christ and the character of these years was a result of the contact of the East with the forces of Hellenism. As promulgator of that great body of Greek civilization, Alexander blazed the trail over which Christianity was to travel centuries later.

"For by breaking through the crusted shell of narrow prejudice which for so long had cribbed and confined it, he set the Greek genius free to spread its wings abroad in unrestricted flight and find a lodgment wherever men were prepared to receive it. If he did not create a new national spirit, Alexander created something which at the time was perhaps even more needed: a cosmopolitan or international spirit, a spirit in which a community of intellectual ideas and cultural standards was to transcend the boundaries of country or of continent, a spirit which . . . more than three centuries later made it possible for St. Paul to preach a state of society wherein there should be 'neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian or Scythian, bond or free.'"¹

Through Hellenic culture Alexander fused East and West and in that process of fusion he came into contact with the Jewish people whose reaction to the Greek culture put the finishing touches on a waiting world.

1. By the fusion of East and West.

a. The spread of the Greek language.

In the wake of Alexander's army followed a far more powerful

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1. Robinson: op. cit., p. 415.

and more subtle instrument of conquest - the language of the Greek people. It broke the barriers between two halves of the world; it transcended boundaries between nations; it obliterated the sharpness of distinctions between races. It became the universal tongue and thus the organ through which the Christian message was propagated. When Alexander crossed the Hellespont it meant that the nations of the world were to become a Greek speaking people and three hundred years would be given them in which to learn the language and become familiar with its use before the message of salvation was proclaimed. It took root among the barbarous tribes on the confines of civilization and held them in its magic spell.¹ It became the accepted mode of communication between nations. Thomson holds that it is impossible to estimate the effect of the spread of Greek on the promulgation of the gospel.² The language took firm and permanent hold around the shores of the Mediterranean and Palestine, stronghold of the faith from which Christianity sprang, became bilingual. When the apostles of the new message went forth to preach and teach they could understand and be understood among peoples everywhere.

b. The diffusion of Hellenic culture.

It was inevitable that the culture of Greece should follow her language. Hellenic culture united more firmly those bonds which the language had established. The tribes of three continents were first embraced under one government in order to be unified afterwards in one civilization. Booth believes that:

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1. Cf. Breed: op. cit., pp. 252-253.

2. Cf. Thomson: op. cit., p. 93.

"More potent than Macedonian spears was the force of Attic culture. For in those centuries that followed Alexander's death, while his political kingdom vanished with his dying breath, the Greek language, Greek art, Greek customs, Greek ideas, achieved with amazing swiftness a real and enduring sovereignty over the mind and life of the whole ancient world."¹

The possession of a common culture was no small factor in producing the homogeneous society which could conceive of a larger social order in which all men were equal.

c. The widening of men's sympathies.

Alexander "was the first to transcend national boundaries and to envisage, however imperfectly, a brotherhood of man in which there should be neither Greek nor barbarian."²

Thus writes W. W. Tarn in discussing Hellenic civilization. The vision was a purely cultural one but it was a great advance in an age which set up strict distinctions between the learned and the ignorant. To Europe and to a large part of Asia Alexander brought new ways of looking at the world, a much wider range of thought, a sympathy hitherto practically unknown, for men of other races.³ His empire blended Jew and Gentile, although imperfectly, in a brotherhood of which the world before his time had had no conception. Commerce, city life, travel, brought people in closer contact; the Greek became known everywhere at the centers of civilization and reciprocal respect for men of other races was born, preparing the world-mind for an order which would count all men as equals.

d. The intellectual awakening.

As Alexander brought a new sympathy for men he also brought

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1. Booth: op. cit., pp. 9-10.
2. W. W. Tarn: Hellenistic Civilization, p. 73.
3. Cf. T. R. Glover: The World of the New Testament, p. 56.

the need of a new philosophy to meet the changed status of society, a new necessity for rethinking all the old conceptions of God.¹

Tarn states that a dominant feature of the time was the striving after one god. Alexander had transcended national states, which implied transcending national cults. Though there was no longer one empire, there was one 'inhabited world' and one culture, which imported one god, an idea to which philosophy had accustomed the educated.² The grasp of the monotheistic belief which must precede the understanding of the Christian message was working its way into the thinking of men in the later preparatory centuries.

The Greeks brought, too, an intellectual breadth of which the East knew nothing. They taught the world to think.

Hellenism provided a medium of ordered thought. When Christ's earthly career had ended and those who believed on Him and who were entrusted with the transmission of His message were compelled to make their beliefs articulate, they turned to the one method of discovering and expressing truth recognized by the ancient world - to the philosophy of the Greeks. It was on the structural foundation of Greek thought forms that the precepts of the Christian message were securely grounded and so made comprehensible to the world.

As Hellenism was the primary means which enabled Christianity to transcend sectional barriers, so eventually it proved the means by which the nations conceived of the spirit and ideas of the Christian message.

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1. Cf. Glover: op. cit., p. 56.

2. Cf. Tarn: op. cit., p. 304.

2. In his relation to the Jews.

a. The contact of Hellenism and Hebraism.

When Alexander came in contact with the Jews he touched the heart which confined the germ cell of Christianity. From the moment of this contact with Alexander and all the Greek influence which he brought with him, the face of the Hebrew people was turned from the East toward the West. When Alexander marched from Tyre to Jerusalem and was met by the Jewish priests and paid homage to the Hebrew God¹ there was no intimation of the clash which was to follow later between that body of culture which Alexander represented and that body of tradition which the Jewish dignitaries upheld.

The interactions resulting from this clash were the heart of the transformation which took place in the Jewish people between the times of Nehemiah and those of Jesus. When Alexander came up to Jerusalem the exclusiveness of the East met the Hellenizer from the West.²

In this meeting:

"Greek worldliness dashed up against Hebrew religion; Greek freedom encountered Hebrew legalism; Greek philosophy was met by Hebrew simplicity; Greek radicalism was resisted by Hebrew conservatism. It was the shock of progress. Each had something to gain from the other. The blending of two such contrary forces proved rich in results for the whole world."³

As Alexander changed world history so he changed the course of this little people who gave to the world its Greatest Gift. In those last three centuries of preparation the Jews underwent a great internal revolution, the outcome of the appearance of Alexander in the East - a revolution which purged their nation and strengthened it and

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1. Cf. Josephus: Antiquities of the Jews, Bk. 11, ch. 8.

2. Cf. McGinty: op. cit., p. 88.

3. Fairweather: From the Exile to the Advent, p. 105.

developed it to produce and receive or reject the Christ.

Alexander himself exercised only an indirect influence on the future of Judaism but in the years following his conquest, says Ottley:

" . . . everywhere the Greek influence was at work, insensibly modifying both the character and the religious ideas of the Jewish people, and preparing it in manifold ways for the advent of the Redeemer."¹

b. "The Diaspora."

Before the time of Alexander chiefly through the beneficence of the Persian rulers, Jewish settlers had gone to many parts of the world. With the coming of Alexander and the Greeks a new dispersion was inspired. Jews settled in the Greek cities which Alexander founded round about Judaea. The Macedonian treated the Jews kindly ~~kindly~~ finding them good colonists and gradually there grew up in the succeeding years two classes of the Hebrew people. There were the Jews of the dispersion and the Jews of the homeland and upon each group the Greek influence made its mark, shaping the people for their part in the drama of the first century of the new era.

c. The founding of Alexandria.

In the founding of the city of Alexandria lies Alexander's great personal contribution to the preparation of the world for Christ. The city became a new and important center of Jewish thought and activity where the Hebrew faith and Greek culture met on equal ground and the immediate effects were beneficial to the Jews.²

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1. R. L. Ottley: A Short History of the Hebrews, p. 246.

2. Cf. Sanders: op. cit., pp. 281-282.

The city, with its far-reaching influences produced that individual, the Grecian Jew, without whom the Christian message might never have exceeded the narrow bounds of Palestine. Through Alexandria the Jew was transformed and became the "ordained mediator of the new era."¹

3. Summary of his contributions.

In summarizing the place of Alexander the Great in the divine plan of preparation, these facts may be noted:

a. His preparation for his work.

He was fitted for his part. Endowed with unusual gifts both physical and mental, and with a remarkably attractive personality; and equipped by education and training as he was, he was ready to take his role in the pageant of history and alter its direction.

b. The importance of his conquests.

Alexander the man became Alexander the conqueror. He followed up his conquests by the sword with conquest by the arts of peace, diffusing Hellenic culture and thus consolidating his vast empire. Constructive statesmanship made permanent an empire whose military glory soon passed away. East and West were made one and a bond established among the different nations of men that made them capable of receiving the gospel of brotherhood in Christ.

c. Alexander the forerunner of Christianity.

Alexander the man became Alexander the conqueror that he might become Alexander the forerunner of Christianity. This title he

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1. Breed: op. cit., p. 275.

merits because he did much to make ready the way for the message of Christ. He started movements which resulted in the fusion of continents and nations that Christianity might exceed the narrow bounds of one little strip of country; in the provision of a universal language through which the message could reach all men; in the broadening of the intellectual interests of men; in the implanting of new desires in their hearts that they might understand and accept the Truth when it came to them. In founding the city of Alexandria, the conqueror directly affected the Jewish people who came in contact with influences there and who were prepared by these same forces for the conception of the larger purpose of their religion. Alexandria provided a distributing center for the Greek culture which brought about the profound changes completing the work of preparation.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY AND CHARACTER OF ALEXANDRIA IN RELATION TO
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A. Introduction.

The forces which Alexander had loosed in the world swirled around Alexandria. From its foundation in 332, through the years of our Lord's earthly ministry and the first difficult decades of the new faith, until the supremacy of power passed into the hands of Rome, and until, in the third century after Christ, the heart of Christianity moved from the East to the West, Alexandria was the focal point of men's living and thinking. From the time of its foundation, the city blazed an upward trail of glory until it reached the pinnacle of commercial and intellectual greatness. During the early years of the city's history wise and cultured rulers guided its destiny. The center of the best of Hellenic culture, it became the melting pot of the races, the pulse of their very life. Into this melting pot poured the Jews, now dispersed throughout the entire world, to blend with the Greek thought their unique religion, to be set free from the trammels of provincialism, that ^hrough them in the first century of the new era, their religion, now flowered into fulfillment, might wing its way to all the peoples of the earth.

The Greeks were very necessary in the plan of preparation. The Jews occupied an indispensable place. The two peoples met in the city of Alexandria to give and to take from each other and so bring

to its culmination "the fulness of time." This city was fitted to engender and nourish and bring to fruition the forces resultant from that meeting.

B. The Advantages of Alexandria as a City.

1. In its origin.

Alexander's trip to Egypt in B.C. 332 resulted in one work of lasting value to the world and of momentous consequence in the work of Divine preparation - the founding of the city which bears his name. His motive in establishing the metropolis was primarily commercial. In the summer of that year the conqueror had laid siege to Tyre on the eastern coast of the Great Sea and had left the world without a mistress of her trade. He may have wanted to create a new port in Egypt, a "Macedonian Tyre" which would take the place in world commerce, and more than the place, which the original Tyre had taken.¹

Tarbox suggests that, too,

"... he had his dream of future repose and greatness when the world should be subdued under him, and he should sit in state in the proud capital called after his name, and all nations should do him reverence."²

The site which he selected bears out the conclusion that it was a commercial capital which he had in mind preeminently. Alexandria, distinguished from the rest of Egypt as "the city", was built, not inland as were the other great cities of the ancient world, but on the shores of the same great sea on which Tyre stood and at a point better suited to the new condition of the world.³

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1. Cf. Edwyn Bevan: History of Egypt, p. 4.
2. I. N. Tarbox: Tyre and Alexandria, p. 232.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 218.

Near the little fishing village of Rhacotis, on a dry lime-stone site, opposite the Isle of Pharos and situated between the Mediterranean Sea on the north and Lake Mareotis on the south, rose the new municipality. Alexander intended it to be easy of access for the Mediterranean merchant ships and the central part of his empire and there was no other site on the Nile delta so suitable for this purpose.¹

Glover says that the city was:

"Well planned as to site, safe from the silt which the Nile brought down; safe from the west wind which made harbors impossible in that area, and supplied by nature with fresh water, it had many advantages. Otherwise the site was as dull as Cambridge, flat and sandy as Chicago. But it became a magnificent city and the pattern of many more."²

Alexander himself occupied Pharos and had a walled city marked out by Dinocrates on the mainland to include Rhacotis. A few months later, after the actual building had begun, the founder left Egypt for the East, from which he never returned alive. But the city was "so planted and rooted that it was destined to live and grow,"³ and to serve the world far beyond the purpose for which it was originally intended by its founder. It did become the great commercial emporium of the time. It became also, by circumstances which Alexander had not foreseen, a great cosmopolitan center, molding the character of the first century world.

"Whatever was in Alexander's mind, he did a great thing for mankind; the city and its thinkers and writers stand high in human history; and if we say, as we surely may, that Christ captured the strongest of them, what is the inference?"⁴

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1. Cf. E. A. W. Budge: A History of Egypt, Vol. VII, p. 150.
2. Glover: op. cit., p. 193.
3. Tarbox: op. cit., p. 233.
4. Glover: op. cit., p. 200.

2. In its location and plan.

"The city" stood on the neck of land between the sea and Lake Mareotis, with harbours on both, commanding the commerce of the empire. Legend has it that the architects used grain in laying out the city for Alexander's inspection and when the birds came down and devoured the grain it was taken as a sign that the produce of Alexandria was to feed the world, a prophecy which ultimately came true.¹

The city itself originally consisted of little more than the island of Pharos, which was joined to the mainland by a mole nearly a mile long, called the Heptastodion, to the east of which was a natural basin and to the west an artificial port, formed by breakwaters and connected with Lake Mareotis by a canal.

But by the reign of Ptolemy II the city of Alexandria, eighty-six years after its foundation, stood complete in its essential features, possessed of that complexion and character which made an impress on the world - a city planned with skill and executed with care and taste, whose separate districts were laid out with regularity; whose sites for public buildings and open spaces were carefully chosen; whose private homes were convenient and beautiful. Dinocrates planned the city on the rectangular outlay usual in all Hellenic cities and the metropolis covered a stretch of territory four miles long by three-fourths of a mile broad.² It was bisected from north to south and from east to west by two great colonnaded streets, each more than thirty yards in width. The principal street, the Canopic street, ran

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1. Cf. Bevan: op. cit., pp. 7-8.

2. Cf. Tarn: op. cit., p. 159.

lengthways from the Canopus Gate on the east to a corresponding gate on the west, being crossed in the centre of the town by another street running from sea to lake. Many of the lesser streets, parallel to the two main streets, were passable for wheeled traffic.¹

Conspicuous among the blocks of beautiful buildings with which the city was replete was the Royal quarter, Brucheion, lying on the eastern harbour and occupying nearly one-third of the city area.

"Amid the temples and specious gardens stood the Palace, the Museum and Library, the quarters of the Guard, the tombs of the Ptolemies and the wonderful tomb built for Alexander's body by Ptolemy II when he brought it from Memphis."²

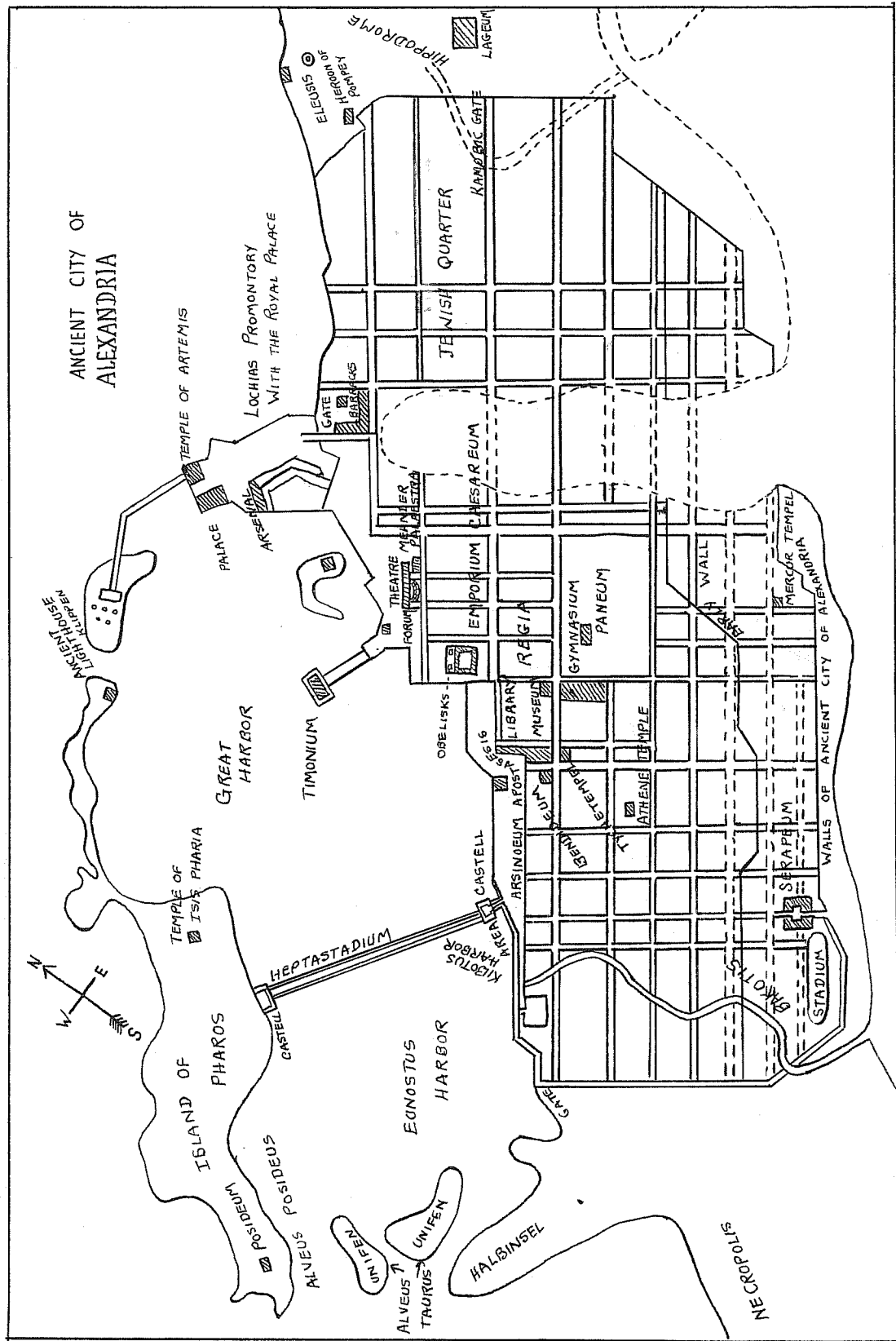
The Palace fronted on the sea and overlooked the Great Harbour; the Museum and Library were closely connected at its western end.

Within the city were the buildings which housed the central offices of the administration; the central stores for corn, oil and other products, the Hall of Justice and the gymnasium, a magnificent building. Beyond the east gate lay the stadium and the hippodrome; in the west, near the native quarter, stood the great temple of Serapis; the Peneum, an artificial mound dedicated to Pan gave a fine view of the whole city.³ The Theatre was in the Palace area with a view of the sea for the spectators in the higher tiers.⁴ Shops and bazaars lined the central thoroughfares. A canal brought Nile water to the city, distributed through conduits to underground cisterns.

The city overflowed its wall on both sides. To the west of the Greek section lay the native Egyptian quarter, to the north the

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1. Cf. Bevan: op. cit., p. 91.
2. Tarn: op. cit., p. 160.
3. Cf. Ibid.
4. Cf. Bevan: op. cit., p. 94.



Jewish section, on the direct east the gardens of the wealthy extended to Canopus, Alexander's playground.

The harbour wharves with their great warehouses formed a district walled off from the city itself. Outside the walls to east and west, a tract of land was given up to cemeteries.

Out from the city on the island of Pharos stood the lighthouse, an engineering triumph lighting the way to the harbour. It was symbolic of the light shed from within the walls of the great city by scholarly minds and the arts of civilization that a greater Light might change the darkness of the world to dawn with the coming of the Divine Son.

3. In its population.

A city without its people was but an empty shell. However, almost immediately there poured into the waiting metropolis a great influx of humanity. Alexandria fulfilled the genius of her founder. Above all other cities of the east, and excepting Rome, of all the world, this city was the meeting ground of the races.¹ In the streets of Alexandria met the artisans and commercial peoples of all nations. To the great Library and Museum flocked the literati of the period. As these peoples mingled in Alexandria under the spell of Greek culture, there came the first glimmer of the era of enlightenment wherein barriers would indeed crumble before the Christian principle that all men are equals.

The largest element of the population was composed of Greeks who constituted the citizenship of the city. Tarbox points out that with

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1. Cf. Glover: op. cit., p. 93.

such wealth and resource at his disposal it was easy for Alexander to set the currents of life in motion and direct the streams where he chose. Multitudes in Macedon were eager to improve their fortunes by coming to the rising capital.¹ The Alexandrians considered themselves Macedonians and Greeks and in their social life, their intellectual and artistic culture were Greeks.

Aside from the Greek portion of the population, the most numerous were the Jews and the Egyptians, each occupying a distinct section of the city. The native element were near at hand and now forming a part of a growing empire were not averse to living in its capital city, although they were not given the rights of citizenship.

Next to the Greeks the Jews formed the most important element. Whether or not they had rights of citizenship is a debatable question but they were granted special privileges and recognized by the wise Ptolemies as a superior and altogether desirable people. Alexandria soon became the center of the western dispersion and during the three centuries preceding the Christian era the Jews^{*} came to number about a million out of a total population of approximately seven and a half millions.² Alexander and Ptolemy after him transplanted masses of this people to the new center and large groups coming in voluntarily to make Alexandria their home were drawn into the life of the Greek metropolis. As they left an indelible impress on its character so they in turn were affected by the influences there.

Intermingling with Greek and Jew and Egyptian on the docks and on the streets were Indians, Arabs, Romans, Syrians, Persians,

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1. Cf. Tarbox: op. cit., p. 234.

2. Cf. Bevan: op. cit., p. 111.

* i. e. in all of Egypt, but Alexandria alone.

negroes. There came at once the clash of opposition and the peaceful process of mutual assimilation as East met West. Under the alchemy of the process toleration replaced narrowness, the provincial became cosmopolitan, the sectional, universal and the limitations of nationalism crumbled in the wider intercourse of humanity. Representatives of all nations walked together - to mingle, to absorb the culture of Greece, to wear down barriers of race and custom, to approach in some measure an international brotherhood, the foreshadowing of the larger unity of mankind which Christ would bring.

4. In its place in the world.

In the third century before Christ Alexandria became the center of civilization, literally and metaphorically the heart of the world.¹

To this meeting place of Europe, Asia and Africa came men and treasures from all over the world. Fulfilling the dream of its founder, the city became a great international mart, inheriting the trade of ruined Tyre and drawing to her ports also the new commerce between Europe and the Arabian and Indian East. Harbors brought the city in touch with the Mediterranean world; the canal connecting with the Nile was the first stage of the long voyage to India. Booth describes the city as a "busy, bustling, thriving metropolis; fairly throbbing with restless vitality."² Through the docks flowed an endless tide of trade; through the harbours filtered the produce of the world. Opened up to the city were all the vistas of interest and

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1. Cf. Fairweather: The Background of the Gospels, p. 316.

2. Booth: op. cit., p. 54.

achievement attendant upon that center which holds the commercial key to the world.

As Alexandria controlled the wealth and commerce of the world, so the city became mistress of its spirit and its intellect. By the middle of the second century preceding the Christian era, Alexandria was the rival of Athens for the intellectual mastery of mankind. In this home of science and philosophy, the imagination of the East and the culture of the West joined hands to be leavened by the religion of the Hebrew. The intellectual atmosphere was unique and characterized by extraordinary activity, as Hebrew religion, Greek speculation and Oriental mysticism acted and reacted upon each other.¹ The syncretism of Hellenism and Semitism cast the mold of the city's spirit. Freedom and light were the keynotes of life: the freedom which ensued from the conception that all men were not created inferior to one nation, Greece, the light of intellectual power. Throughout these centuries old and new, East and West commingled at Alexandria until the cosmopolitan seat of pagan learning became, in the first century of Christ, the stronghold of Christian thought and doctrine.

C. The Contribution of Ptolemaic Alexandria to the Preparation of the World for Christianity.

1. The Ptolemies lay the foundations of greatness.

The gradual evolution of commercial mart into mistress of pagan learning into capital of Christian thought which took place at the close of the old era and the opening of the new; the accumulation

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1. Cf. Fairweather: The Background of the Gospels, p. 316.

of the heritage which Alexandria bequeathed to Christianity was due to those men who occupied the throne of Egypt from the death of Alexander until the dominancy of Rome - the Macedonian Ptolemies. The first three rulers in this line determined what the character of the new city should be and set in motion a current of influences which were still in effect long after the Ptolemaic line had outlived its strength. Most prosperous and most brilliant of the three domains into which Alexander's empire was divided was the Egypt of the Ptolemies.

The first three Ptolemies were true successors of the conqueror and as such, true disciples of the culture which it had been his ideal to spread universally. Under them Hellenism was solely a civilizing power. Ptolemy Soter, founder of the line and his son and grandson, designated by Cornill as the most important historical personages of the entire Hellenistic period,¹ ruled wisely and well. They promoted the culture which was their heritage but made no attempt to force it upon their subjects. They spent time and treasure on the pursuit and patronage of learning and the peaceful character of the period afforded ample opportunity for the cultivation of the arts of peace.

Ptolemy I, the man of war with the scholar's taste, of more than ordinary culture and enlightenment, founder of the Museum and Library,

"... gathered into his capital every kind of splendor. He had secured for it the most important monument of its kind in the world, the tomb of the great Alexander. . . . He established the most brilliant palace and court, with festivals which were

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1. Cf. C. H. Cornill: History of the People of Israel, p. 180.

the wonder of the world. He gathered all that he could command of learning and literary fame. And for this the city was adequate, by the largeness and splendor of its external appearance."¹

Ptolemy Philadelphus, the son of Soter, the "magnificent voluptuary with intellectual and artistic interests",² carried on diligently the great work which his father had begun, bringing to completion the Museum and Library.

The third Ptolemy, Euergetes, likewise a patron of the arts and of literature was once more a strong man on the throne for,

"By a kind of oscillation in heredity, just as the vigorous founder of the dynasty had been succeeded by the soft dilettante, the dilettante was succeeded in turn by a man in whom the warlike Macedonian stock showed itself still persistent in spite of the influences of a luxurious court and the climate of Egypt. In Ptolemy III we see less the son of Ptolemy Philadelphus than the grandson of Alexander's marshals, Ptolemy and Lysimachus."³

Under Euergetes, the glory of Alexandria was undiminished.

Ptolemy IV came to the throne already corrupt, reproducing his grandfather's vices in a more extravagant form and indifferent to the affairs of the people who directed the affairs of the kingdom as long as they provided him with the means for a life of literary and aesthetic sensuality and saved him the trouble of governing.⁴

However, in spite of his life of sloth and indulgence, he never ceased to take an interest in the Alexandrian Library and in the building of temples which his father had begun. Too, like his father and grandfather, he lived in terms of friendship with the leading literary men of the day and showed his devotion to Homer by dedicating

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1. J. P. Mahaffy: The Empire of the Ptolemies, p. 96.
2. Bevan: op. cit., p. 56.
3. Ibid., pp. 189-190.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 220.

a temple to him.¹

The succeeding members of the line, who remained in power until the occupation of the throne by the Roman Augustus in A.D. 31, were more concerned in intrigue and in a struggle for existence than in the promotion of the arts; but the mold for Alexandria's life had already been set and the first century of Our Lord was the heir of the glory which had accrued to the city in the early days of the Ptolemaic dynasty.

2. Alexandria a center of learning under the Ptolemies.

a. A common culture transmitted through the Library and Museum.

If the Ptolemies were the men responsible for bringing Alexandria her intellectual riches, the Museum and Library were the means through which the wealth came, for in these institutions, in the age of Alexandrian supremacy, centered the culture and learning of Greece. Founded by Soter, and the philosopher, Demetrius of Phaleron; carried to completion by Philadelphus, who scoured the world for first editions; supported by the bounty of each ruler, the Museum and Library reached the height of their magnificence under the liberality of Euergetes, and continued to dominate the intellectual horizon of the world far into the Christian era.

Mahaffy thinks that the idea of making Alexandria a centre of letters matured gradually in the mind of the first king. Ptolemy was by no means interested in the spread of any special doctrine, but what he wanted was to have celebrated men thinking and writing at Alexandria.

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1. Cf. Budge: op. cit., p. 247.

It would seem that what the king and his minister of education founded was an institution more like an old college at Oxford or Cambridge than anything else. It was a foundation supported by the king and adjoining the royal buildings, in which there was a commons Hall, courts, cloisters and gardens where dwelt men selected for their literary and scientific eminence. This college was rather a home of critical research and erudition than of new ideas and the advancement of knowledge. In literary criticism, in exact science, in geography and kindred studies, the Museum made advances in knowledge which were among the most important in the progress of human civilization.¹ This university of scholars became the scene of scientific research and literary labor unrivalled in antiquity.² It was "a kind of 'Round Table' for erudite men"³ who on annual stipends allowed by the king were to devote their lives to the Muses.⁴

Rostovtzeff points out that it was typical of the Hellenistic age that learning and the importance of learning were for the first time recognized and appreciated by the state. Private philosophical schools still went on but side by side with them rose the Museum of Alexandria, the first learned society maintained by the state.⁵

To the Museum in the third and second centuries came the great minds in all fields of learning, among them: Euclid, Aristarchus and Eratosthenes, the scientists; Callimachus, Aratus, Theocritus, the poets.

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1. Cf. Mahaffy: op. cit., pp. 93-96.
2. Cf. Robinson: op. cit., p. 417.
3. George Bushnell: "The Alexandrian Library", Antiquity, June, 1928, p. 196.
4. Cf. Bushnell: op. cit., p. 197.
5. Cf. Rostovtzeff: op. cit., p. 395.

The great Library, containing approximately 500,000 rolls of books, was the handmaid of the savants who gathered at the Museum. In it were gathered the literature and learning of the world and hosts of copyists, students and writers, attracted to Alexandria by Ptolemy II, kept busy adding to its treasures and producing standard editions of the great library works on which all other libraries came to depend. This Ptolemy was responsible for the number of first editions which the library contained. He secured from the Greek the originals of the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. He was responsible for the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek.

Literature acquired a new character as gradually writers came to produce their work for all men rather than for a narrow circle of highly educated Greeks; and as the minds of men were prepared to appreciate literature. The creative genius of Greece finally lost its local limitations.¹

Perfection of form rather than originality and fertility of idea was the dominant note of the literature and eventually among the Alexandrian scholars pedantry took the place of genuine, creative work.²

The literary men, however, did more than create a new literature. They studied attentively and guarded well the literature of the past, preserved in the great Library. They published critical editions and commentaries on those productions; introduced past literature into the schools as an indispensable study for every educated man; under their influence books made their way into private homes; they promoted

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1. Cf. Rostovtzeff: op. cit., p. 381.
2. Cf. Robinson: op. cit., p. 418.

trade in books and laid the foundation for publishing houses.¹ They were responsible for putting books into the hands of the people, thereby producing the reading public.

Among the first librarians were Zenodotus, Demetrius, Callimachus, Eratosthenes, Apollonius, Aristophanes. Of them Callimachus stands most prominent for he it was who prepared a catalog of all books in the Library and devised the method of dividing a book into several rolls that the original might not be so bulky.²

Trained critics were engaged in editing the more famous of the classics, dividing up their contents to suit the convenience of the reader. The new art of editing and arranging textbooks required much language study and involved the question of correct copies when two differed. Alexandrian scholars began to make dictionaries; to write treatises on the rules of syntax and to expound the masterpieces of earlier days - the city became the book-mart of the world.

The most remarkable achievements of this Ptolemaic age were performed in the realm of science. During the third and second centuries an enormous amount of work was done at Alexandria on biology, botany, geology, scientific agriculture and other departments. Ptolemy II had special scientific interest in exploration and in the curiosities of natural history. Alexandrian scholars incorporated in a regular treatise Hippocrates' observations of certain maladies. Herophilus made marvellous anatomical and physiological discoveries. There were many more.

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1. Cf. Rostovtzeff: op. cit., p. 388.

2. Cf. Bushnell: op. cit., pp. 200-201.

Philosophy became detached from science and occupied a special position of its own, becoming entirely devoted to the study of humanity and preferring the psychological point of view to the physiological, as men sought feverishly for a meaning of life, an ideal, and for rules of conduct.¹

b. Influence of Alexandrian learning in the preparatory era.

All of this, the philosophy and the science which sought for the truth, the literature which discussed problems of private and public morals, the contact of Greek thought with the religions of the East, particularly the Hebrew, had brought about a close connection between religion and morality and was preparing the world for the growth of Christianity with its high moral and ethical teachings.² The possession of a common language and a common culture, the advancement of learning to free men's mind from ignorance, the ever-increasing realization that no one of the great philosophies could give to life its fullest meaning - this was the contribution of Alexandrian learning to preparing men for the time when all should be one in Christ. The Ptolemies had started movements which were not arrested,

"... but continued in full force until the Redeemer came and the empire of the Ptolemies succumbed to the all-conquering arms of Rome, its great mission having been accomplished."³

D. Conclusion.

A connection, divinely made, may be discerned between the

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1. Cf. Rostovtzeff: op. cit., p. 393.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 383.
3. Breed: op. cit., p. 268.

founding of Alexandria, Greek capital of Egypt, and the subsequent spread of the message of Christ some three centuries later.

The city was founded in B. C. 332 by Alexander the Great that it might be the scene of a pageant of events which fitted the world for the Great Gift of the first century. It was founded pre-eminently to be a capital of the world's commerce, but, in the scheme of the world's history, it far transcended the original purpose. From the beginning, the city was renowned for the beauty and wealth which made it attractive to the nations of the world and won for it the place of supremacy among the great centers of civilization. As it was the capital of Egypt, so also, in the course of the game of politics in the East, it became the capital of Judea, native soil from which the Christian message sprang. Among the people attracted to the metropolis were the denizens of Judea who were destined to become a part of life in Alexandria that they might ally their religion with Greek thought and so achieve the mind set which could comprehend the message of Christ.

See Knaeb who repeats the old story

Under the munificent rule of the Ptolemies, Macedonian rulers on Egyptian soil, Alexandria achieved affluence and prominence. Direct outcomes of the splendid Museum and Library, founded by the first Ptolemy and completed by his successors, were the spirit of freedom and profundity of thought which eventually would grasp and transmute the Christian message. In the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the city, men of all nations met to achieve a common culture and so a measure of unity which was but a harbinger of the greater fellowship to come. Kindly treated by beneficent monarchs, the Jews were enabled to mingle with other peoples. While they gradually became one with the Greek in

spirit and culture, they kept intact the priceless heritage of their religion. In the liberal and advanced intellectual atmosphere of the city, the bars between the nations were let down that the heritage might pass also to the Gentile.

CHAPTER III

THE CONTRIBUTION OF ALEXANDRIA
TO THE PREPARATION OF THE WORLD FOR CHRISTIANITY
ARISING FROM ITS CONTACT WITH THE JEWS

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A. Introduction.

In Alexandria Jew and Gentile met on common ground and were the participants in a mutual reciprocation of spirit and idea. The city became the center of the Western Dispersion of the Jews who flourished under the favorable treatment of the Ptolemies. Together in the Greek metropolis the Jew and the Gentile acquired a common language and a common culture and conceived a common mode of thought through which they might express their beliefs. When the transformation was complete and in place of the Jew and the Greek, there emerged the Grecian, the nexus between the old era and the new had been provided. Hebrew religion and Greek philosophy had granted, each to the other, its distinctive gift that the faith of the one might be disseminated and defended through the method of the other. Of vast moment to the preparation of the world for Christianity were the events which transpired at the Egyptian capital during the last three centuries before the coming of the Redeemer. One may see a link, providentially formed, between the founding of the capital city on the southern shore of the Mediterranean and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

B. The Contribution of the Grecian.

1. Definition of Grecian.

When the time came for the message of Christianity to be disseminated beyond the borders of Palestine, a mediator had been provided to bridge the gap between Jew and Gentile, to carry over to the waiting world the Great Message. This mediator was the Grecian, a personality who was both Greek and Jew. Breed characterizes this person as a true hybrid and considers his production one of the most remarkable illustrations of divine providence anywhere afforded.¹ In the three centuries following the advent of Alexander and preceding the birth of Christ, a fusion of races had been in progress and the Grecian, Hellenized Jew of the Western Dispersion, emerged. He was a true Jew and a true Greek in the same person but in him the stern and repulsive aspects of Judaism had been softened and broadened by the contact with Hellenic culture. The Grecian adhered to the God of Israel and prayed toward the temple at Jerusalem but he spoke the language of Athens and lived in the atmosphere of the Acropolis.²

His production was a concrete result of the great intellectual revolution which came with the universal spread of Hellenic culture when the Attican and the Hebrew met on the shores of Egypt and elsewhere. The two had much to give each other that the message of Christ might be spoken through the amalgamation of the twain. Judaism was to lose its provincialism and while preserving its spirit to acquire the externals

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1. Cf. Breed: op. cit., p. 274.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 275.

of Greek civilization. Greek culture was to give of the best of its expression and thought to provide the medium through which the spirit of Judaism might be liberated. That the synthesis might be accomplished,

"The providence of God . . . fairly forced upon the Jews the Greek language and some attention at least to the Greek learning. They began to speak Greek; their children learned to read Greek authors, and their grandchildren, some of them, actually married Greeks, and the intellectual hybrid at last appeared. The chasm was bridged by a single cable where soon should be suspended a solid highway."¹

It was only natural that Alexandria, pivot of the world's life in so many phases, should become the center of the Western Dispersion of the Jews and that here primarily the fusion of Jew and Greek into Grecian should take place.

2. The transformation of the Western Jew.

"At the time of the Saviour's coming the Jew was not only at the center, as he had been upon previous occasions, but he was everywhere. The Jewish people had been scattered abroad over the whole earth, and wherever they appeared it was as witnesses to the truth of God and to the hope of Israel."²

Since the close of the eighth century, when occurred the deportation of the inhabitants of Palestine to Assyria, the Dispersion had been in effect and the Jews had been scattered abroad. When Alexander overwhelmed the Persian empire many Jews moved from East to West to the centers of Greek civilization and before very long there was scarcely any part of the civilized world in which Jewish settlements did not exist; in Asia Minor, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, in Rome, and in Egypt.³ In Egypt where they

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1. Breed: op. cit., p. 279.

2. Ibid., p. 435.

3. Cf. Acts 2:9-11.

flourished especially under beneficent rulers, there had been a nucleus of a Jewish population since the fifth century. At the opening of the Alexandrian age Jews flocked to the city in large numbers and that city became the most important center of the whole Dispersion. The Jew of Alexandria became the true Grecian.

Jews were welcomed in Alexandria, as elsewhere, because they were good colonists. The Macedonian rulers found them superior in culture and stability of character to other small nations of Syria and Egypt.¹ The strategic position of Palestine gave the Hebrew a political importance.

In the northeast corner of the Egyptian capital the Jews lived together under their own laws and leaders and grew wealthy and influential and liberal minded.² Conscious of their religious superiority they could be content with the political position. The Alexandrian Jew remained a Jew at heart and kept the spirit of his religion although freed from binding Pharisaical interpretation of its daily expression. He continued to hold close intercourse with his Palestinian brother, contributing to the support of the temple there. Circumcision was, as a rule, insisted upon, the sanctity of the Sabbath was observed and the great festivals regularly celebrated. Numbers of the Jews made pilgrimages to Jerusalem to keep the three principal feasts, Tabernacles, Passover and Weeks.³ The synagogue flourished in the Greek city and was the center of Jewish life. The Greek translation of the Scriptures kept the word of His God before the Jew. To the faith of

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1. Cf. Laura Braley: The Neglected Era, p. 37.

2. Cf. Sanders: op. cit., p. 282.

3. Cf. W. O. E. Oesterley: The Books of the Apocrypha, p. 55.

his fathers the Alexandrian Jew, in most cases, was steadfast, sincerely worshipping the True God. His religious conceptions were heightened and deepened by the contact with the Greeks but not changed, for the Jew recognized his own faith as infinitely superior to anything about him.

But to the influence of the Greek life which surrounded him on all sides penetrating into every phase of his life except in the matter of his religious belief, the Jew was not immune. Alexandria was the greatest center of Hellenistic culture, and that culture met the Hebrew faith on equal ground with the Jew the immediate beneficiary. There was not the clash of opposition which prevailed in the homeland when Hebraism and Hellenism met. The Jew of the Dispersion looked upon the larger horizon with interest and sympathy and with a tolerant attitude toward the Gentile, with an open mind to receive whatever was good and true. The kindly treatment of the Ptolemies, which provoked the "Golden Age" of the Hebrews at home and abroad, produced in that people a lenient attitude towards the Greek culture, and a quiet and peaceful process of Hellenization went on among them.

Possessed of an unusual linguistic ability, the Jews were not long in acquiring the Greek language and that attainment opened up the whole field of Hellenistic culture. When the Jew stepped outside the circle of home or synagogue,

". . . he was surrounded by the all-pervasive, subtle influences of Greece. As he passed through the streets of the market place he heard nothing but the Greek language, and soon he was forced to adopt it to carry on his business affairs. In an unbelievably short time, actually not more than a half-century, he had lost all knowledge of his mother-tongue and spoke only Greek. And once having learned the language, its culture began

to penetrate his soul. In the marketplace men were ever discussing the ideas of Plato and Aristotle and Zeno; and he could not help but overhear, and in spite of himself be impressed by their beauty and lofty idealism. In this city of universities and libraries the little papyrus rolls were ever being passed from hand to hand, or unrolled and read. Snatches of Homeric hexameter, or the stately lines of Aeschylus, or the magic music of Sappho, or a glowing Pindaric ode would fall on his ears with an entrancing charm. Or, as he paused by some group in a cool colonnade, he would catch the laughter of the listeners at some witty sally of a comedy of Aristophanes, or their applause for the telling climax of an oration of Demosthenes. Like every Alexandrian, he had often strolled through the royal mausoleum, and paused by the glass sarcophagus to look on the body of Alexander the Great; or looked up at the facade of the great Museum; or wandered through the endless halls of the Library - and, try as he might, he could not escape the sense of the vastness and splendor of Greek culture. Or, as he stood in his doorway, down the street would come a gay choric procession of Aphrodite or Dionysus, all garlanded in blossoms, rhythmic with weaving dances and vocal with pipe and song. And while he might frown and turn away, we may be sure that the pageantry and color would entrance the souls of the gaping younger folk, and the music set their pulses to leaping, when we remember that even in our sophisticated age there is a perennial charm in a parade. To the great chariot races that absorbed the thought and conversation of Alexandria for weeks in advance, the Jew would find himself irresistibly drawn, to sit on a stone bench in the stadium, and feel the mad excitement of the mob, and even find himself joining in their wild cheers as their favorite steeds swept on to victory.

"So it was inevitable that imperceptibly yet surely the mind and life of the Jew of the West should be influenced by Hellenism, be broadened and liberalized. For he could not turn away in disdain, as he had done from the absurd superstitions and crass idolatries of old Egypt or Canaan. This Greek culture was so brilliant, so attractive, so refined, so full of beauty and charm that it could not be put aside. So, in varying degrees the Jew of the West became Hellenized, conforming to the language, customs and ideas of the Greeks."¹

Thus was the Jew transformed into the Grecian, adapted to be the mediator between two eras. He was the type of Jew among whom John Mark, himself a Hellenistic Jew, could come, and proclaim the Gospel which he had written and, if tradition be true, establish the first

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1. Booth: op. cit., pp. 56-58.

Alexandrian church.¹ The transformation produced men like "a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, an eloquent man", who "was mighty in the scriptures" and had been "accurately instructed in the way of the Lord." Apollos, who could "powerfully confute" the Jews in Achaia.²

3. The philosophy of the Grecian.

In the intellectual character of the Grecian lay his potentiality for welding the last link in the chain between the preparatory centuries and the time of Christ. Hebrew religion and Greek philosophy worked together to prepare the soil in which Christianity first took root intellectually. The Divine Hand which had planted the seed of the faith many centuries before in Palestine now transplanted the partly grown fruit of that seed in the Grecian soil of Alexandria that it might acquire new vitality and so blossom far beyond the confines of its native heath. In Alexandria the spirit of Greek philosophy permeated Judaism. Fairweather thinks that in the mental and spiritual exchange which took place at this epoch the men of the East gave as much as they received. The elaboration of the resultant structure was due to the philosophical acumen of the Greeks; whatever soul there was in it was implanted by Judaism.³ It was the mind which conceived this combination that accepted and propagated the teachings of Christ. Its most famous disciple, the apostle Paul, brought the first union between Jew and Gentile churches.

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1. Cf. Eusebius: Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, ser. 2, Vol. I, Bk. II, chapter xvi.
2. Cf. Acts 18:24-28.
3. Cf. Fairweather: The Background of the Gospels, p. 112.

a. Its relation to the Christian faith.

Robinson believes that in the evolution of the actual faith of the Christians Greek played an all-important part as a medium of ordered thought and systematic formulation of belief. He observes that as long as men's personal memory of Christ was vivid and all-absorbing, and their hope of His imminent return still strong, there was little room for speculation or reflective questioning. But when both memory and hope began to fade, more thoughtful believers almost of necessity were compelled to ask themselves what it was they believed. Was Christ God, or was He man? If He now reigned in heaven, what was His relation to the Supreme Deity and what His relation to His followers on earth? In seeking a solution to such questions, it was equally inevitable that men should turn increasingly to the one method of probing and expressing truth then recognized by the ancient world - the philosophy of the Greeks. Even so early a theologian as the writer of the Fourth Gospel displays a close affinity to the theories of both Platonists and Stoics; and when he declares that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us", he is employing the actual terminology of the contemporary pagan schools.¹ Robinson concludes:

"In short, if Hellenism was primarily the means of enabling Christianity to spread beyond the narrow limits of a small Jewish sect, it was equally the means whereby the Faith was raised above the level of a merely emotional mysticism and securely grounded on the essentially Greek belief that Truth is knowable and that even the deepest of religious mysteries can be apprehended by the mind of man."²

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1. Cf. Robinson: op. cit., p. 428.
2. Ibid., p. 429.

b. Its exemplification in the philosophy of Philo Judaeus.

This Hebraic-Graeco conception of God and the universe and the method of expressing truth found its most typical exponent in Philo of Alexandria who lived on the borderland of time between the old era and the new. Philo's aim was to show the harmony of the divine revelation of the Old Testament with all that was best in Greek philosophy. His own mode of thought and life were fundamentally those of the Greek philosopher and he undertook to show by applying the allegorical system of interpretation to the Scriptures that underneath them lay concealed all that was wise and exalted in Greek philosophy.¹

Oesterley says of him that "no Jew was so immersed in the spirit of Greek wisdom nor did more to try and harmonize Greek and Hebrew thought."² His philosophical system became a combination of Greek philosophy and Hebrew theology and although his liberalism led to excessive allegorizing of the Scriptures, he did effect the harmony of the two essential bases of the Christian philosophy and made it possible for the followers of Christ to grasp the doctrine of the Logos, one of the main assertions of the philosophy of Philo.

c. Its culmination in Neo-Platonism.

The philosophy of the Grecian headed up, in the early part of the first century after Christ, in the system of the Neo-Platonists which combined the leading principles of Platonism with elements derived from other Greek philosophers and religious elements from the

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1. Cf. A. H. Newman: A Manual of Church History, Vol. I., pp. 59-60.
2. Oesterley: op. cit., p. 61.

East. It failed as a religion but as a philosophy left a permanent impress on the Christian world.¹

W. Harvey-Jellie, writing in the Homiletic Review, says that the willingness to give free scope to reason in matters of faith and to accept the methods of the Greek philosophers came from contact with the Neo-Platonists of Alexandria.²

According to Dr. Schaff:

"The Grecian philosophy, particularly the systems of Plato and Aristotle, formed the natural basis for scientific theology; . . . Indeed, not a few ideas and maxims of the classics tread on the threshold of revelation, and sound like prophecies of Christian truth; especially the spiritual soarings of Plato, the deep religious reflection of Plutarch, the sometimes almost Pauline moral precepts of Seneca. To many . . . Greek philosophy was a bridge to the Christian faith, a scientific schoolmaster leading them to Christ. Nay, the whole ancient Greek church rose on the foundation of the Greek language and nationality, and is inexplicable without them."³

4. Conclusion.

The Alexandria of the Ptolemies, the Alexandria of the Grecian Philo, the Alexandria of Apollos and John Mark became the Alexandria of the Christian fathers. There, during the last preparatory centuries, in the contact of Greek with Jew the Grecian was produced, the Judaeo-Hellenistic philosophy evolved. When the full force of Greek criticism was brought to bear upon the Christian message and it had to be thought out anew and related to all the best in the Greek heritage, the message

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1. Cf. J.C.A., Jr., in Cyclopedia of Education, edited by Paul Monroe, Vol. IV, p. 410.
2. Cf. W. Harvey-Jellie: "Bridging the Gulf Between the Testaments", Homiletic Review, March 1934, p. 187.
3. Philip Schaff: History of the Christian Church, Vol. I., p. 78.

stood the test and the Alexandrian school was established - to gather to it "the finest trophies of the cross" and "to make itself felt forever in the definitions of orthodoxy."¹

C. The Contribution of the Septuagint.

As the Egyptian capital supplied the Grecian mind to span the gulf between Jewish theology and Greek philosophy, so the city furnished the literary bridge by which the Old Testament Scriptures of the Jews crossed over to the Greek speaking world. This connecting link was the Septuagint, the Old Testament in Greek, "a book from the Hellenistic world for the Hellenistic world."²

1. Composition of the Septuagint.

a. Its origin.

The Septuagint grew out of the literary spirit of the age and out of the needs of the Alexandrian Jews. Its actual production is attributed to Ptolemy Philadelphus. It is plausible that his motive in accomplishing the work was inspired as much by his desire to meet the needs of the Greek speaking Jews in Alexandria as by his ambition to enhance the treasures of the Library.

(1). In the needs of the Alexandrian Jews.

As long as the Hebrew race maintained its isolation no occasion arose for the translation of their scriptures into a foreign tongue.³ But with the Dispersion that isolation dissolved and the Jew, a citizen

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1. Cf. Cleveland Cope: Introductory Note, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. III, p. 166.
2. Adolf Deissmann: Philology of the Greek Bible, "The Expositor", October 1907, p. 290.
3. Cf. H. B. Swete: Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek, p. 2.

of a Greek speaking world, especially in Egypt, where the knowledge of the Greek language was a necessity of common life, outgrew his native tongue and used the Greek almost exclusively. Swete points out that the adoption of the Greek tongue was a tribute gladly paid by the Alexandrian Jews to the great Gentile community which sheltered and cherished them.¹ However, with the acquisition of the new language came lessened ability to read the Scriptures. The desirability of a Greek translation soon developed into a real need.

(2) In the literary interests of Ptolemy.

The presence of a large Jewish colony could hardly have failed to awaken in king Ptolemy and in the scholars of the Museum an interest in the ancient laws and Scriptures of the Jewish race.² This interest crystallized in the actual transmission of the Hebrew scriptures into the Greek.

Tarbox says of Ptolemy that,

"He had built the famous lighthouse on the Isle of Pharos . . . and now he proposed to construct a great intellectual lighthouse, which might throw abroad its rays far and wide over the nations."³

Josephus, in giving the story of the origin of the Septuagint, writes a tale which is regarded as legendary in its trappings but factual in its main outline. According to this ancient historian, Ptolemy II at the suggestion of his librarian, Demetrius Phaeleros, sent to Eleazer, the High Priest in Jerusalem, for copies of the Scriptures and for seventy-two elders, six from each tribe, to make the translation.

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1. Cf. Swete: op. cit., p. 9.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 117.
3. Tarbox: op. cit., p. 276.

Eleazer dispatched the delegates, with a magnificent copy of the Scriptures, to Egypt. The Jewish fathers, after being royally received by the king, and exhibiting their wisdom in a public display, were relegated to the Isle of Pharos, where in seventy-two days, they transcribed into the Greek the books of the Law. Ptolemy was delighted with the result, and had the book placed in the royal library. The elders returned to Jerusalem, laden with many gifts.¹ Substantially thus the Septuagint, "book of the Seventy", made its original appearance.

b. Date of completion.

The remainder of the books, apart from the Pentateuch, were translated at different times by different authors, as differences in the style and method show. Oesterley believes that most of the Old Testament books, if not all, were translated before the beginning of the Christian era.² Tarn agrees that the majority were completed then but thinks the last book, Ecclesiastes, was not translated until about A. D. 100.³ Swete thinks the whole was probably done in the B. C. era.⁴

c. Its literary quality.

The quality of style in the Septuagint reveals wide divergence. According to Swete, the colloquial Greek of Alexandria, not the pure, elevated Attic tongue, was used.⁵ Davis maintains that the

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1. Cf. Josephus: op. cit., Book XII, Chapter II., pp. 313-314.
2. Cf. Oesterley: op. cit., p. 60.
3. Cf. Tarn: op. cit., p. 194.
4. Cf. Swete: op. cit., p. 9.
5. Cf. Ibid., p. 25.

translation of the Pentateuch, except for poetic portions, is the best part of the work, and says that the translators of Proverbs and Job were masters of good Greek style.¹ Glover, in summing up the literary quality of the Septuagint, says that it is significant that the translators, whether working as a group or as individuals, in spite of natural tendencies to literalism and to the use of Hebraisms here and there avoided renderings too literal of phrases congenial in another age and another language. It is not common for a translator to achieve a beauty of style beyond his author; more usually the version falls short of the original; and those who commend the Septuagint have but qualified praise for its language and music. It reads more happily in the narrative passages than in the prophetic or lyric. All this, however, is aside from the point, which is that the version was needed, was called for, was accepted, and had untold influence in the religious development of mankind.²

2. Influence of the Septuagint.

The very fact that the Old Testament was translated and had to be translated into Greek, is an historical fact of the greatest importance. It was not made by a Luther or by a modern missionary to secure a change in thinking; it was made because a race had changed its language and wished to understand its religious faith.³

The Septuagint, with the synagogue, was the chief influence in keeping the Jew a pure monotheist in the midst of the attractions of

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1. Cf. John Davis: Dictionary of the Bible, article: Versions, p. 798.
2. Cf. Glover: op. cit., p. 126.
3. Cf. Ibid.

paganism. It was the literary medium by which the Hebrew conceptions of God and the universe reached the Gentile mind and so prepared it to receive the Christian conceptions; and it was the forerunner of the New Testament, to which it materially contributed.

"Take the Septuagint in your hand and you have before you the book that was the Bible of the Jews of the Dispersion and of the proselytes from the heathen; the Bible of Philo the philosopher, Paul the Apostle, and the earliest Christian missions; the Bible of the whole Greek-speaking Christian world; the mother of influential daughter-versions; the mother of the Greek New Testament."¹

a. On the Jews.

In the midst of his new environment the Jew was never cut off entirely from his past. In spite of the dazzle and lure of Hellenistic lack of religion and the attractive life which paganism offered the Jew remained firmly grounded in the fundamentals of his own faith. With the synagogue, the tie which bound him fast to his faith was this Greek translation of his own Scriptures, through which came constantly the conviction and challenge of a religion which he recognized as superior and the only living one. The Old Testament glowed with a sure and steady beam in the midst of the changing, flickering lights of Hellenism.

b. As a medium between Jew and Gentile.

The religion of the Jews rose infinitely higher than any contemporary cult. To a superstitious and bewildered world, seeking some meaning in life, this faith of the Hebrews revealed higher and more

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1. Deissmann: op. cit., p. 291.

positive doctrines. Their conception of Jehovah, of the coming Messiah, their forward look lent them a religious force lacking in any of the current systems of belief. Through the Septuagint all men could become familiar with the Hebrew conceptions. Through the Septuagint the Gentile world was introduced to the treasures of Jewish thought. The Old Testament became the property of the world and the Jews made many proselytes. With the translation of the Scriptures into Greek, the spiritual inheritance which God had given, soared beyond the limits of a single race.

Deissmann says of St. Paul, who more than any other, was the means of mediation between the Jew and the outside world, that he is not comprehensible without the Septuagint. Paul, he says,

"... is not only the great Christ Christian but also the great Septuagint Christian. And the whole of primitive Christianity as far as it is missionary Christianity, rests on the Lord and the Gospel as one pillar, and on the Septuagint Bible as the other."¹

c. As a forerunner of the New Testament.

"Concerning the story that has got itself told about the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament Bible, we have this to say: true or untrue, quoted by the Christian fathers or repudiated by the Christian fathers, the book does not need it. The Septuagint is great without it. . . . It was the power of God among the Jews of the Dispersion because it could not help being such. . . . Such was the effect upon the Greek-speaking Hebrews, that it fitted them to prepare the nations in which their lot was cast for the coming of Christ; and the coming of the missionaries of the Cross of Christ. Because of it there were Wise Men in the East ready to start with their gifts to the cradle of Bethlehem the moment Jesus was born; and because of it, there were open doors into every nation for the incoming of the Gospel. It

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1. Cf. Deissmann: op. cit., p. 291.

made the foreign Jews missionaries of the Old Testament, and these Old Testament missionaries prepared mankind for the New Testament missionaries who came after. In other words, the Old Testament in Greek prepared the world for the New Testament in Greek. If there had never been a Greek Old Testament, there would never have been a Greek New Testament. The Greek Old Testament was the forerunner of the Greek New Testament."¹

The Septuagint is cited many times in the New Testament and forms the principal source for Old Testament quotations. The Fourth Gospel, e.g., quotes the Septuagint verbatim as do Acts and the Catholic Epistles. More than half of the direct quotations from the Old Testament in the Pauline Epistles are taken from the Septuagint without material change. The Epistle to the Hebrews is in great part a catena of quotations. In addition to these direct quotations there are many more cases of indirect quotations taken from the Septuagint. These are found principally in the words of Christ; in the canticles of Luke; in Stephen's speech; in the epistle of James and the First Epistle of Peter; in the Epistles of Paul; in the Epistle to the Hebrews and especially in the Apocalypse where references to the Greek Old Testament abound in every chapter.²

In concluding his discussion of the use of the Septuagint in the New Testament, Swete says:

"Not the Old Testament only, but the Alexandrian version of the Old Testament has left its mark on every part of the New Testament, even in chapters and books where it is not directly cited. It is not too much to say that in its literary form and expression the New Testament would have been a widely different book had it been written by authors who knew the Old Testament only in the original, or who knew it in a Greek version other than that of the LXX."³

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1. David Gregg: Between the Testaments, pp. 37-38.
2. Cf. Swete: op. cit., pp. 398-404.
3. Ibid., p. 404.

D. Conclusion.

In its relation to that people who formed so integral and salient a part of its population lies Alexandria's unique contribution to the preparation of the world for the message of Christianity.

From the contact of Greek and Jew emerged the Grecian, in whom was blended the best each nation had to offer that he might become the mediator between the old and the new orders and receive and promulgate the message of the gospel. In the mind of the Grecian was evolved the Judaeo-Hellenistic philosophy, an attempt at reconciliation between Jewish theology and Greek philosophy. When Christ had come to his earthly ministry and His disciples went forth to tell of Him to all the nations, the yawning gulf between Jew and Gentile had been spanned by the Grecian and his philosophy and on that span the message crossed over.

Because of the interest of the second Ptolemy in adding to his Library and because the Alexandrian Jews could no longer read their Scriptures in their native tongue, the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, came into being. Begun under Ptolemy II and finished by the time of the Advent, it gave to the nations the background of the faith that the message might find receptive soil outside the confines of Palestine. The Septuagint had kept the Jew a monotheist, had brought Greek and Jew to a common background and had formed the source from which developed in part the spirit and construction of the New Testament.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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The world into which God sent His Son was ready to receive that Priceless Gift. The seed of the new message fell on prepared soil; the condition of the first century world favored the continued growth of the faith. Behind that day in Bethlehem when Christ was born, making that moment possible, lay centuries of preparation in which the Divine Hand had shaped the destinies of men and the course of events that such a time as that might come and that the import of the Advent might be made known to all men everywhere.

It is with one period in this era of preparation that this thesis has treated in an attempt to show the peculiar necessity of the contribution made by the city of Alexandria to the preparation of the world for Christ and His message.

In the third century before Christ a unique personality dominated the stage of the world's history and changed its course. Alexander the Great, conqueror of the world, desirous of making his native culture universal, founded the city which bears his name that it might be the Greek capital of a Greek world. In the first chapter we endeavored to attest the significance of this man's life and career as he indirectly made possible the spread of the Christian Gospel some three centuries after his own time. Fitted by natural endowment and by training for the momentous tasks which he accomplished, he became conqueror of the whole world that through him forces might be released which would bring the world to a state of readiness to receive

the King of Kings. As Greek culture followed the adoption of the Greek language by the conquered peoples the barriers between East and West gave way and men began to grasp a larger vision of humanity and of its possibilities. Among the peoples whom Alexander touched were the Jews and as Greek met Jew there came the initial clash of those two forces which were to mean so much in combination - the pure, monotheistic religion of the Hebrews and the philosophical spirit of the Greek.

To crown his achievements Alexander founded the city of Alexandria and in the centuries following there gathered around the Greek metropolis on Egyptian soil those tides of influence which largely determined the character of the world into which Christ came.

In the second chapter, we attempted to point out the relation of the history and character of "the city" to the work of preparation. As a city, Alexandria was fitted for its part. Situated so that it soon became the captain of the world's trade it drew to itself men of all nations to become a part of its life and to acquire its culture, and so attain a common ground on which to understand each other. In it was gathered the flower of the intellect of the world. Under the Ptolemies, magnificent rulers in the third and second centuries, Alexandria achieved its supreme glory. These Macedonian kings of Egypt drew to their city all that which made it great. They established the famed Museum and Library from which was disseminated a common culture and in which the best of the thought of the world was assembled. Alexandria, seat of pagan learning, was to become the center of Christian learning. As the sympathies of men were broadened that their hearts

might understand the message so were their minds enlightened that they might comprehend its mysteries.

During these centuries when Alexandria as a city made its contribution, a transformation of personality, unique in character, vast in importance, was taking place within its walls. Alexandria became the center of the Western Dispersion of the Jews. As that people lived among the Greeks from the contact there evolved the Grecian - the Hellenized Jew. The third chapter was devoted to a discussion of the contribution of Alexandria arising from its contact with the Jews.

In becoming the Grecian the Jew remained rooted in his ancestral faith, he was set free from narrow conceptions on the wings of the Greek spirit, he acquired a mode of thinking wherewith he could express and defend the ultimate Truth when it was shown. The heart and spirit of Christianity were to be made known to the world through the thought forms of the Greeks whose best minds asserted that truth was knowable and whose language was adequate to express the known. This Judeo-Hellenistic philosophy found its advocate in Philo Judaeus, who attempted to reconcile the Hebrew Scriptures with Greek philosophy. It culminated in the philosophy of the Neo-Platonists who, although they failed as the exponents of a religion, made a permanent contribution to Christianity as a philosophy.

Because the Alexandrian Jews had forgotten their native tongue and so could not read their own Scriptures and because Ptolemy II was interested in them as colonists and also was desirous of adding

to his Library, the Septuagint, Greek translation of the Old Testament, came into being. Although not completed until years later, the bulk of the book was in the hands of the Jews of the Dispersion and served a purpose throughout the last centuries of the era. The Septuagint helped to keep the Jews pure monotheists that they might not defile with the attractions of paganism the origins of their faith. It enabled the Gentile to become familiar with the Hebrew religion and so gave him a common background with the people from whom Christ came. The Greek translation served as a forerunner of the New Testament, for the Old Testament was the Bible of those men who produced the New, and without it the New was not possible.

Thus Alexandria played its part in the drama of preparation. The drama had not closed. Syrian persecution was yet to strengthen Jewish monotheism and so make Jerusalem an invincible stronghold of the faith. The world was to become more closely unified under the political supremacy of Rome as first Antioch and then the great capital of western Europe dominated the scene. Succeeding events were dependent upon the part which Alexandria had played. The Greek city fulfilled an indispensable role in preparing the world for Christianity. Without the contribution made by Alexandria the acceptance and transmission of the Christian message would have been impossible.

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