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CHRISTIANITY
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CLASSICAL CULTURE

*A STUDY OF
THOUGHT AND ACTION FROM
AUGUSTUS TO AUGUSTINE*

BY

CHARLES NORRIS COCHRANE
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, TORONTO

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PART I
RECONSTRUCTION

I

PAX AUGUSTA: THE RESTORED REPUBLIC

'MAY it be my privilege to establish the republic safe and sound on its foundations, gathering the fruit of my desire to be known as author of the ideal constitution, and taking with me to the grave the hope that the basis which I have laid will be permanent.'¹ In these words, which translate into the common language of human hope the formal professions of the *Monumentum Ancyranum*, the emperor Augustus is said to have expressed the ambition of his life and rested his claim to a place in history. It was his wish to be remembered as a second founder, the man who had restored and consolidated the republic, giving it a constitution adequate to its present and future needs. And so far were his ambitions fulfilled that his successors, one after the other, swore to administer their office *ex praescripto Augusti*, as they also assumed his name. Thus, if the younger Caesar fell short of greatness in the wider, he fully deserved it in the narrower sense. For he discovered what had eluded earlier statesmen, the formula by which the revolution was concluded and the empire launched upon the course it was to follow for at least two hundred years.

It is not surprising that the principate should have proved to be something of an enigma. Its creation was the personal achievement of a man whose signet-ring bore an image of the Sphinx and whose whole career involved, by his own admission, the deliberate assumption of a role. Originally an intrusion into the machinery of government, it was destined to be transformed, first into the naked military and bureaucratic absolutism of the pseudo-Antonines and later into the theocratic dynasticism of Diocletian and Constantine. It is not unnatural, therefore, to see these elements in the original system of Augustus. From this standpoint the 'destruction of citizenship as a meaningful concept' would coincide more or less definitely with the fall of

¹ Suetonius, *Aug.* 28: 'ita mihi salvam ac sospitem rem publicam sistere in sua sede liceat atque eius rei fructum percipere quem peto ut optimi status auctor dicar et moriens ut feram mecum spem, mansura in vestigio suo fundamenta rei publicae quae iecero.'

the republic, and thenceforth 'all that was new and significant in the political development of Rome' would be 'obscured by the process which reduced it to the form of those Oriental monarchies of which the world had already witnessed sufficient examples'.¹

Such estimates are not confined to modern times. Already in the first century thoughtful men were divided regarding the true character of the principate, and discussion raged as to whether it should be accepted for what it professed to be or understood as a skilfully camouflaged scheme of personal domination.² Again, at the beginning of the third century, when the tide had set toward militarism and bureaucracy and a fresh Roman revolution was in the making, contemporary observers professed to find in the prerogatives of Augustus a precedent for those claimed by the Septimian house or, at least, they minimized the substantial differences between them;³ just as the autocrats of the lower empire identified themselves in name with the Roman Caesars, although the real spiritual antecedents of Byzantinism lay in an indiscriminate mixture of Asiatic dynasticism and Hebraic divine right.

To maintain, however, that 'the aspects of Oriental absolutism, though veiled, were all present in the rule of Augustus' is to do something less than justice to his work. For this is to envisage it, not so much in terms of its actual character and purpose, as of the nemesis which was to overtake it two centuries later. Properly considered, the events which succeeded the fall of Commodus testify to the defeat, rather than to the fulfilment, of the Augustan hope, the failure of the idea to which, in the *Pax Augusta*, the emperor had laboured to give final and permanent expression. Evidence of that failure is everywhere apparent in the intellectual and moral phenomena of the age. In their apostasy from Augustan principles, men groped blindly for a new and commanding formula of life. The Pantheon was crowded to the point of suffocation by a host of extraneous deities. Powerful court circles listened with attention to the ravings of Asiatic theosophists. The vogue of astrology was such as to draw forth the condemnation of successive

¹ R. M. MacIver, *The Modern State*, p. 110.

² The arguments on either side are carefully marshalled by Tacitus (*Ann.* i. 9 and 10: 'multus hinc ipso de Augusto sermo', &c.).

³ e.g. Dio Cassius, liii. 17, where he describes the principate as 'a pure monarchy'.

emperors, culminating in the fiery denunciation of Diocletian, 'the whole damnable art of the *mathematici* is forbidden' (*tota damnabilis ars mathematica interdicta est*). Short-lived war-lords, flung up sporadically on all frontiers, tried to evade their doom by drawing for support upon alien spiritual conceptions rooted in the life of the East. With oriental fanaticism, one prince, Heliogabalus, ventured to depose *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus* in favour of the Emesan Baal (*Sol Invictus Elagabal*). Another, Alexander Severus, with truly classical indifference, included Christ among the gods to be worshipped in his private chapel. Still another, Aurelian, sought to attract to himself something of the prestige of the revived Persian monarchy by assuming the diadem of the Invincible Sun. Diocletian and Maximian solemnly consecrated Mithra as chief tutelary deity of the empire, and represented themselves as his counterparts on earth. The crisis of the third century was thus a crisis of despair; disintegration resolved itself into chaos, and the bankruptcy of the Augustan system was finally exposed when the empire went into receivership at the hands of Constantine.

On the other hand, despite the perils and uncertainties to which it gave rise, the crisis which issued in the principate may be regarded as, on the whole, a crisis of adjustment, during which men never quite lost faith in the possibility of conserving the essential elements of the classical heritage. This, indeed, was precisely the aim of Augustus; his work marks a herculean effort to solve the problems of his age in terms consistent with the thought and aspiration of classical antiquity. From this standpoint, his problem was to associate the notion of power with that of service and thus, at one and the same time, to justify the ascendancy of Rome in the Mediterranean and that of the Caesars in Rome. To see it in this light is not merely to credit the founder with a sincere desire to reconcile the new demands of empire with the ancient claims of civic freedom; it is also to discover the possibilities of Classicism as a basis for the good life in what has been characteristically described as the happiest and most prosperous period in the history of the human race.¹

Thus envisaged, the principate emerges as the outcome of more than a century of civil commotion, the origin of which

¹ Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. Bury (1896), ch. iii, p. 78.

may be traced remotely to the wars of overseas conquest. So long as the activities of the Romans had been confined to Italy they had preserved the character of a peasant society, in which the impulses towards individual self-assertion, powerful though they were, were none the less held in leash by the collective egotism of the civic ideal. But, with the overthrow of Carthage and the kingdoms of the hellenized East, it presently became evident that the spirit which had served to create the empire contained no ingredient by which it might guard against its own excess. Intoxicated by the wine of victory, the Romans proceeded to exploit their position as lords of the world, but with consequences hardly less disastrous to themselves than to their victims. For while the empire, hitherto a model of justice and beneficence, was thus converted into an instrument of intolerable oppression, the constitution of Roman society was itself radically transformed.¹ In that transformation we may perceive the genesis of divisive forces which were destined to shatter the foundations of public concord and lay the republic in ruins. Those forces found their supreme embodiment in Julius Caesar.

From this standpoint the career of Caesar presents itself as the climax of that fierce struggle between Left and Right which constitutes the ultimate phase of republican history; he was, in the words of his biographer, the doom of the *optimates*.² For this he was marked out, not less by temperament and inclination, than by an hereditary affiliation with the family of Marius. With other survivors of the Sullan terror, he had as a young man withdrawn from Rome during the dictatorship. But, from the moment of his return to the city in 78 B.C., he set himself to revive and direct the forces of democracy. Thus, while holding aloof from premature and ill-considered ventures like that of the consul Lepidus, he lost no chance of advertising himself as the hope of the *populares*.³ He seized the occasion of his aunt's funeral to recall the public services of Marius.⁴ He supported the movement which led in 70 B.C. to the restoration of tribunician power.⁵ The descendants of those proscribed by Sulla had been for ever deprived of property and civil rights; Caesar boldly agitated for their restoration. In order to establish the illegality of the so-called ultimate decree or declaration of martial

¹ Sallust, *Cat.* 10. 6: 'civitas immutata; imperium ex iustissimo atque optimo crudele intolerandumque factum.'

² Suet. *Jul.* 1.

³ 3.

⁴ 6.

⁵ 5.

(*clementia*) in the face of savage atrocities perpetrated by the senatorials and their barbarian allies. At the same time, he shook himself free from the more disreputable of his own followers; passing the famous bankruptcy law by which he sought to mediate between the claims of debtor and creditor in a fashion altogether new and refreshing in Roman history.

The victory of Caesar in the civil war made possible the fulfilment of his programme as a statesman. It is an exaggeration to describe that programme¹ as one of regeneration for his deeply decayed country. What Julius accomplished was rather a task of social and political reconstruction, and this was inspired by ideas, all of which fell within the ambit of Graeco-Roman thinking, which hardly contemplated, even in a metaphorical sense, the notion of rebirth. Thus, with regard to domestic problems, Caesar executed the testament of the great reformers from Gracchan times; just as, in the conquest of Gaul, he had fulfilled the dream of Marius and the new democratic imperialism. And, therein, he revealed himself as one of the greatest exponents of scientific statecraft in the history of antiquity. This was shown by measures which ranged all the way from a reform of the calendar to the reorganization of Italy on municipal lines and the extension of municipal rights to the Western provinces, especially Spain.²

There existed, however, insuperable barriers to the possibility of reform which were, as Caesar himself realized, the inevitable consequence of an imposed peace. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the circumstances which ultimately drove him towards complete military autocracy in the form of a perpetual dictatorship. These were not less the untrustworthy character of his own supporters than the behaviour of the conquered aristocracy, which oscillated from stubborn intransigency to disgusting subservience. Caesar laboured assiduously to dispel the impression that the basis of his régime was force and fear. Yet, despite all efforts to conciliate his opponents, he failed to obtain the co-operation needful to support his 'new concord'. Moreover, his own liberalism had inescapable limits: the cynics recalled the profession of loyalty to popular principles with which he had embarked upon the war, when he brushed aside the interference of the tribune Metellus in 49 B.C. and, still more, when

¹ With Mommsen, *History of Rome* (1894), vol. v, ch. xi, p. 308.

² Hardy, *Roman Laws and Charters (Lex Iulia Municipalis)*.

he unceremoniously deposed Flavius and Marullus five years later. Finally, Caesar was acutely conscious of the difficulty in which he was placed by his assumption of personal control over the administration. 'How can I fail to be disliked', he observed, 'when men like Cicero must await my convenience for an interview?'

Such were the fruits of a conflict, the issues of which were presently to excite a storm of bitter controversy. The suicide of Cato at Utica had served, as nothing else could have done, to ennoble the cause for which he had perished; and, already during Caesar's lifetime, opposition to the dictatorship was to discover a focus in the memory of his traditional rival and anti-type.¹ In an effort to neutralize the force of this opposition, Caesar for once abandoned his professional clemency, and pursued Cato in the grave with a vehemence such as he had never exhibited towards him while he lived. But, as the opposition nevertheless continued to stiffen, he was finally compelled to resign all hope of conciliation or compromise. It was then that he determined upon the final subversion of republicanism, the structure of which had been crumbling with progressive rapidity since the outbreak of the civil war. 'The republic', he said, 'is merely a name, without form or substance.'² And, as though to signalize his contempt for republican institutions, he appointed Caninius consul for the last day of the year 45. 'He was', observes Cicero, 'a most vigilant magistrate, for during his term of office he never slept.' Then, too, he accepted what were felt to be 'excessive' honours; breaking 'all laws, human and divine', and scaling the heights of Olympus in a manner which represented a complete departure even from his own earlier pretensions, when he had merely sought for himself a place beside the ancient Roman kings. It might indeed be urged that, since those kings were the legitimate heads of a free people and the natural protectors of the commons, the *regium imperium* could properly be cited as a precedent for that which was to be claimed by Caesar. But no such argument was possible on behalf of a man who evidently aspired to associate himself with glories traditional to the line of Alexander. What Caesar at one time thought of Alexandrianism may be judged from his own scathing comments on the situation which he found to prevail in the

¹ The formal antithesis between the two is established in Sall. *Cat.* 54. For the rapid growth of the Catonian myth see Cic. *Ad Attic.* xii. 4. 2 and 21. 4. ² Suet. *Jul.* 77.

capital when he first invaded Egypt.¹ Yet the evidence leaves no doubt that in his last months he definitely embraced the scheme of Alexandrian monarchy, thus renouncing the visions and ideals of the classical commonwealth and plunging into the most degraded form of contemporary political obscurantism in the vain endeavour to find a basis for his régime. It was, indeed, beyond the capacity of Caesar, master of *Realpolitik* as he was, to discover the formula of transition between the old world and the new. And this he himself appears to have confessed when he remarked that 'by satisfying the claims of honour and glory' he had 'lived long enough'.²

In this significant pronouncement, we may perhaps see Caesar as he saw himself and as he appeared to the eyes of his contemporaries. Modern historical scholarship has discerned in him at once the greatest political architect and the greatest political destroyer of antiquity.³ To antiquity itself he was both or neither; he was *par excellence* the gambler with fortune, and the stake for which he played was nothing less than mastery of the world. It was, on the other hand, equally evident that the destinies of the world were largely bound up with those of Caesar. Thus a contemporary publicist, in the second of two letters addressed to the dictator, hails him as the sole bulwark against perils which threaten the whole future of European civilization. 'Should this empire perish', he declares, 'either from disease or by fate, who can doubt that the result will be world-wide devastation, bloodshed, and strife?'⁴ Such was the prevailing mood during Caesar's lifetime; and to it even Cicero appears to have subscribed at the moment when he wrote the *Pro Marcello*. 'Who', asks the orator, apostrophizing the dictator, 'who is so blind as not to realize that his personal safety is involved with yours; that on the life of Caesar depend the lives of his fellow countrymen. It falls to you alone to restore all that warfare has overthrown and destroyed, to re-establish the administration of justice, to recall confidence, to repress licence, to promote the growth of population, in short to bind together by strong legislation all that you see scattered and dispersed. The task of the day is to heal the wounds of conflict and no one but you can do it.'⁵

¹ *Bell. Civ.* iii *ad fin.*, esp. 110.

² Cic. *Pro Marc.* 8. 25.

³ Mommsen, *op. cit.*, vol. v, chs. x and xi; Ferrero, *The Greatness and Decline of Rome* (1909), vol. ii, ch. xvi, pp. 344-8.

⁴ The pseudo-Sallust, *Ep. ii ad Caes. De ordinanda re publica*, widely accepted as a genuine work of the historian, composed in Africa during the summer of 46. ⁵ §§ 22-3.

But for those like Suetonius and Plutarch, to whom the end was a matter of record, the picture is somewhat differently coloured; both observe, especially in Caesar's closing years, evidences of *adrogantia* or *ἄβρις* which, by exciting divine displeasure, portends ultimate catastrophe. To Suetonius, as a sceptic, the death of Caesar could mean nothing but extinction. Nevertheless, he fails to escape from the impression created in the public mind by that world-shaking event. Accordingly, he notes, coincident with the death of the dictator, the appearance of a new comet in the heavens, the *sidus Iulii* which, in Chaldaean lore, marked his reception into heaven. 'Thus', he concludes, 'Caesar was translated to the number of the gods, not merely by the lips of those who so decreed, but also by popular conviction.'¹ To the meteoric career of Caesar, Plutarch finds an appropriate analogue in that of Alexander; and for him it illustrates at once the glory and the nemesis of power. 'That empire and ascendancy', he says, 'which Caesar, had pursued with so much hazard throughout his career, he did at last with much difficulty attain, only to reap from it nothing but an empty name and invidious glory. But the great genius which attended him in life remained after his death to avenge his murder, pursuing through every sea and land all those who were concerned therein, and permitting none to escape, but overtaking all who were in any way either privy to the deed or by their counsels in any way accessory to it.'²

In the light of these ancient concepts, Caesar emerges as a figure at once fascinating and dangerous. For the spirit thus depicted is one of sublime egotism; in which the *libido dominandi* asserts itself to the exclusion of all possible alternatives and crushes every obstacle in its path. We have spoken of Caesar as a divisive force. That, indeed, he was: as Cato had put it, 'he was the only one of the revolutionaries to undertake, colder, the subversion of the republic'; finding support for his designs with equal readiness among the rabble of the forum, in uncivilized Gaul or in effete and decadent Egypt, and even exploiting to his purpose the fierce religious nationalism of the Jews. A force like this, however, does more than divide, it destroys. Hostile to all claims of independence except its own,

¹ Suet. *Jul.* 88. Cf. Pliny, *N.H.* ii. 25. 94, who adds that for this reason a star was placed on the head of the statue presently to be erected in the Forum. The date of this consecration was 18 Aug., 29 B.C.

² Plut. *Caes.* 69.

it is wholly incompatible with that effective equality which is implied in the classical idea of the commonwealth. To admit it within the community is thus to nourish the lion, whose reply to the hares in the assembly of beasts was to ask: Where are your claws? The problem had long since appeared as one of the most baffling which confronted classical political science.¹ With Caesar, it finally emerged in Rome.

Thus envisaged, the career of the dictator presented itself rather as a warning than a model; and if it be true that his final solution was to 'sell out' in favour of Hellenistic autocracy, it is not surprising that he was in the end repudiated by many, even of his own former adherents. Loathed by the older republicans, such as Cicero, for having had the temerity to parade himself as a god, his name was associated, even in the minds of later Caesarians, with that of his great rival Pompey, as one who 'had hardened his heart to internecine strife and turned against its own vitals the might of the Fatherland'.² Accordingly, the deed of the 'liberators', puerile though it may have been in design and execution, was not wholly in vain. Despite the revulsion of popular feeling occasioned by Caesar's funeral, despite the spontaneous apotheosis of the dead leader, the assassination served to postpone the immediate orientalization of the empire. And, by demonstrating, however perversely, the tenacity of the native civic tradition, it helped to determine the settlement which was ultimately to be effected by Augustus.

In his last few months the dictator is said to have remarked that nothing but his life stood between the empire and chaos. And certainly the existence of Rome, with all that she meant to the world, never hung by a more tenuous thread than during the years of turmoil which succeeded the fatal Ides of March. The question might thus be asked: If Caesar, for all his talent and insight, had proved incapable of solving the Roman problem, who could now be expected to do so? The crisis was accentuated by the hopeless incapacity of the Regicides to control the situation created by their own act, and they soon discovered to their dismay the impossibility of appealing at once to the head and to the belly. Their failure was presently exposed by Marc Antony, whose subsequent career was, in fact, to constitute the most emphatic criticism of their deed. The latter, as sole surviving consul, brazenly abused his position in

¹ Arist. *Pol.* iii. 1284^a.

² Verg. *Aeneid.* vi. 832-3.

order to erect for himself a domination of the Caesarian type. Nor can there be much doubt that his schemes would have succeeded had it not been for the intervention of the young Octavian who, for the purpose of making good his claims as Caesar's heir, associated himself with the senate in its contest with Caesar's ape. Mutual suspicion and fear were soon to destroy this alliance, the incongruity of which became evident when, after Antony's reverse in Cisalpine Gaul, the senatorials endeavoured to break the sword of their self-appointed champion, as a preliminary to reversing the revolutionary measures of Caesar and re-establishing the domination of the oligarchy which for more than a century had lacerated the Roman world.

The result was a speedy recrudescence of Caesarism throughout the West. Octavian, betraying his betrayers, extended the olive branch to Antony, and on his part the humbled Antony revealed a willingness to effect a *rapprochement* with his hitherto despised opponent. One after another, provincial governors proclaimed the adhesion of their troops to the revived Caesarian cause, thus stripping the senate of all power of resistance, and it proved impossible for Cicero to enlist support for what was generally felt to be an empty and barren ideal. Finally, the conference of Bononia delivered the republic into the clutches of the three-headed monster (the triumvirate of Antony, Lepidus, and Octavian) which was destined to vindicate the name and fame of the dictator, to crush the remaining forces of the senate, and to end by destroying itself. Thus the events which succeeded the Ides of March demonstrated the truth of Cicero's lament that to kill the monarch was not to kill the monarchy.

This was but to confirm the verdict of Thapsus and Utica. Stoic idealism was, indeed, in later times to herald Cato as last of all the Romans. And Seneca, developing the Ciceronian thesis, *ab utroque dominatio quaesita*, was to declare: on the one side Pompey, on the other Caesar; between them Cato and the republic. It may well be admitted that the moral leadership of the so-called constitutional party belonged rather to Cato than to Pompey; for when, after his reverse at Pharsalus, the Roman Agamemnon, rather than face the accusing eyes of his partisans, slunk away to perish miserably on the sands of Egypt, Cato rallied the senatorial forces in a last desperate effort to ward off the menace of despotism. And, while it has been urged that a true leader has no business at the head of a forlorn hope,

we should nevertheless remember that causes are sometimes more effectively advocated by the dead than by the living. Certainly, in the spasmodic outbreaks of terrorism which marred the régime of the Caesars, the victims of imperial despotism were to find in the martyrdom of Utica a precious example of inflexible pride and endurance; and, in this sense at least, the spirit of Cato was to find a place in the life of the future. Yet it remains true that Cato was strangely aloof from the realities of his age. As Cicero put it: he spoke as though he lived in Platonopolis rather than in this cesspool of Romulus. Native obstinacy, reinforced by the dogmas of Stoic excellence, might thus teach Cato how to die, but it could provide him with no real remedy for the social and political maladies of his time. The true issue, indeed, was not as between 'liberty' and 'monarchy', but rather the form which monarchy should assume.

Such was the problem as it had already presented itself to Cicero when he wrote the *De Re Publica* five years prior to the outbreak of civil war. As such, it emerged once more amidst the strife of factions which was renewed with increasing violence after Caesar's murder. The issue was for some time confused by the pretensions of rival leaders. Of the professed champions of republicanism, not even Brutus appears to have been wholly sincere; while, on the other hand, each of the representative exponents of the Caesarian tradition claimed in a sense to stand for a restoration of the republic. The situation, in some degree clarified as a result of Philippi, was further defined by the course of events within the period of the triumvirate, which left Antony and Octavian confronting each other and imposed upon contemporary opinion the necessity of judging between their respective claims.

There is nothing in the career of Antony to suggest that he possessed the faintest comprehension of or sympathy with the fading ideals of Roman republicanism. The evidence, such as it is, points to the fact that he was a typical child of the revolution, consumed with a lust for power endemic in his generation, but devoid of the qualities of mind and heart which might have made him in any real sense the spiritual heir of Julius, and capable only of burlesquing his ideas. As consul, he displayed himself as the typical demagogue, seeking to base his domination upon the proletariat and the army. He endeavoured to

by thus capitalizing the Latin political idea, Augustus had demonstrated its continuing vitality. Accordingly, by the very conditions of his victory, he was bound if possible to satisfy the expectations of those whose co-operation had made it possible. In other words, he was committed to a restoration of the Roman peace on fundamentally Roman lines. To this task he devoted the rest of his long and brilliant career.

Within the limitations thereby imposed upon him, there can be no doubt that the efforts of Augustus were successful. Thus Velleius, writing a generation after the inauguration of the new régime, but before the spell had been broken, records the impression made on the popular mind by the *Pax Augusta* in terms which fully admit the claims made by the emperor for himself:¹

'There is nothing that man can desire from the gods, nothing that the gods can grant to man, nothing that wish can conceive or good fortune bring to pass, which Augustus, on his return to the city, did not bestow upon the commonwealth, the Roman people and the world. The civil wars ended . . . foreign wars suppressed, peace re-established, the frenzy of conflict everywhere lulled to rest, validity was restored to the law, authority to the courts, prestige to the senate; the power of the magistrates was reduced to its former limits, except that two were added to the eight existing praetors. The traditional form of the republic was revived. Agriculture returned to the fields, respect to religion, to mankind security of possession, old laws were carefully amended, new legislation enacted for the general good: the senatorial panel was rigorously, if not drastically, revised. Distinguished men who had held office and won triumphs were at the solicitation of the emperor induced to adorn the city with their presence . . . the dictatorship, which the people persisted in offering him, he as persistently refused.'

One may smile at the exuberance of this rhapsody on the part of a courtier, an officer of Tiberius Caesar who, like Tiberius himself, regarded the Augustan settlement as the last word in political wisdom. Velleius, indeed, writes like the retired colonel that he was. His observations must nevertheless be accepted as an authentic expression of the spirit of his time. They record the widespread sense of relief occasioned by the cessation of prolonged civil strife, and by the realization of security and well-being under the protection of a strong government. They are a reflection, in terms of the average limited intelligence, of

¹ Velleius, ii. 89.

sentiments which pervaded the literature and thought of the Augustan age.

These sentiments, so far from implying any subjection to alien ideals, register the apparent achievement of purposes inherent in the traditional idea of the commonwealth. They express, in fact, the almost universal belief in the final accomplishment of that new deal (*nova concordia*) towards which the aspirations of all but a few senatorial reactionaries had pointed ever since Gracchan times. Accordingly, they disclose Augustus as the ultimate heir and executor of the revolution whose gains he was now to consolidate. But this, in itself, does not exhaust the meaning of the Augustan settlement. For, in order to effect his purpose, Augustus alined himself with what was strongest in the conservative tradition which the elder Caesar had never understood. Moreover, he made heavy drafts on the Graeco-Roman social heritage which was common to Left and Right alike. In this sense, the *Pax Augusta* emerges as a final and definitive expression of the spirit of classical antiquity.

The character and aims of Roman radicalism, which gave rise to the tumultuous revolutionary activity of the first century B.C., may perhaps be illustrated by reference to the works of Sallust, the *Jugurtha*, the *Catiline*, and the fragmentary *Histories*, together with the two *Letters to Caesar* which, whether or not apocryphal, certainly embody stock ideas of the time. To judge from these works, the long period of senatorial ascendancy, dating from the wars of overseas conquest, constituted a usurpation which, notwithstanding the profit and glory it had brought to Rome, entailed the evils of monopoly. The genuine civic ideal, on the other hand, was enshrined in the forms of the primitive commonwealth, a society of peasants and soldiers from whose ranks were recruited the physical force (*vis*) necessary to protect the state, as well as the authority (*auctoritas*) and wisdom (*consilium*) by which it was directed and controlled. This society, by overcoming its economic problems (debt and land) through the conquest and federation of Italy, seemed to the author to have realized the fullest potentialities of the Roman order.

Accordingly, with Sallust, the Roman order is ultimately referred to a material principle. In this principle he discovered the secret both of its strength and of its weakness. For while it served to provide the impulse to overseas expansion, the process

of expansion sapped the foundations upon which it was thought to rest. In other words, the acquisition of empire served to introduce an era of unrestricted competition, transforming the community of embattled farmers into a vast cosmopolitan society in which a *bloc* of landed magnates and financiers confronted a submerged mass of proletarians, subjects, and slaves. Thus, by the conquest of the world, the Romans had prepared a virtual servitude for all but the few in whose hands lay the means of exploitation, the control of economic and political power.

To what extent the balance had been upset was revealed to the new proletariat in the burning rhetoric of Gracchus: 'You boast that you are Lords of the World, but you do not possess a foot of land which you can call your own'. In the unforgettable phrase already quoted,¹ Sallust records his sense of the evils produced by this predatory imperialism at the same time as he suggests its deeper implications. To him it not merely involves a crime against the subject peoples; but, by undermining the material basis of civic life, it overthrows the rights and liberties of the commons. In so doing, it subverts the entire basis of the Latin commonwealth.

In this context the revolution was conceived as a conservative movement, a protest against the prostitution of a common good (*res publica*) to the interests of a narrow and selfish plutocracy. Hence its characteristic features; such, e.g., as the persistent attempts made by reformers to break down senatorial control over the executive and the judiciary as well as to restore the material basis of freedom through a programme of land-assignments in Italy and abroad, and to humble, if not to destroy, the power of the speculator and money-lender. It was, no doubt, as part of this scheme that the dole was introduced and developed to the point where it became a scandal even to revolutionaries. It could, however, be defended as a palliative, which was at least less demoralizing than the bread-lines already fashionable among great nobles as a means of exhibiting their generosity and of acquiring political influence (*gratia*).

In such phenomena may be seen the blind but not wholly ineffective revolt of the masses against tendencies which, as has been suggested, involved the extinction of their civic personality. These tendencies are clearly revealed in the speeches which

¹ p. 4, n. 1 above.

Sallust puts into the mouth of a Lepidus or a Catiline. They explain the utter inability of academic republicanism, such as that professed by a Cato or a Brutus, to cope with the situation. There was nothing in the armoury of their ideas by which they could appeal with conviction to men whose bellies were empty and whose spirits were soured by the glittering spectacle of aristocratic wealth and arrogance. They explain also the suspicion with which the masses received the advances of Cicero, whose liberalism hardly served to conceal his association with financial and political privilege and who, after the part he had played in suppressing the Catilinarians, was, by his own admission, the most unpopular individual in Rome.

For, as they implied a social rot of which Cicero, for all his generous ideas, was only dimly conscious, so also they required more drastic treatment than it was within the power of this self-styled saviour of society to provide. In other words, they called for a Caesar, as the only possible answer to an insistent demand for the subjection of power by power. But the spirit of Cicero was nevertheless seen in the terms and conditions by which that power was to be manifested in the Augustan principate.

The ascendancy of Augustus was signaled by the dramatic transfer of the republic from his own control to the authority of senate and people, and by the subsequent arrangements whereby, as prince, he accepted a delegated authority and a determinate commission. This undoubtedly involved an element of farce, the object of which was to conciliate the prejudices of an aristocracy to whom its rights and liberties were little less than a fetish. For, in thus paying his respects to the shades of Cato and Brutus, Augustus had no intention of putting back the hands of the clock, and this must have been evident to all but the purblind worshippers of an impossible past. Nevertheless, it is easy to underestimate the import of these arrangements, since to recognize the authority of the prince as derived was to assimilate it to the ancient *imperium legitimum*, thus stamping it as fundamentally magisterial in character. Such authority, coined so to speak in the mint of Roman law, differed *toto caelo* from the crude sovereignties which were the characteristic expression of Oriental mysticism.¹

It is, therefore, significant of the role played by Augustus that he should have submitted to the necessity of formal election and

¹ See below, Chs. III and IV.

that, as occasion demanded, he should have asked for the concession of special powers analogous to his own for those who were to be associated with him in the administration, choosing this means, in particular, of designating his successor and of introducing him to public life, while, at the same time, he gave him a practical initiation in his duties. It is significant, also, that the imperial prerogative should have developed as an accumulation of extraordinary rights and duties in the main detached from public office; so that the form and appearance of the republic were preserved and, in some respects, the powers of magistrates and senate substantially increased. For this meant that, behind the façade of traditional republicanism, the scattered elements of executive authority were drawn together. On the one hand, the prince was clothed with rights of initiative, control, and revision, sufficient to ensure to him the effective direction of public policy. On the other, he himself assumed responsibility for the conduct of certain departments, the most important of which was that of foreign affairs and imperial defence, involving command of the fighting forces by land and sea, as well as the administration of unsettled frontier provinces. The powers and duties thus assigned to the emperor were broad and comprehensive. They were, moreover, rapidly enlarged as functions traditionally attached to republican magistracies were transferred one after another to the new executive, and executive action invaded fields which, under the former system, had been consecrated to senatorial or popular control.¹ Finally, by virtue of specific provisions, the substance of which is indicated in the maxim *princeps legibus solutus*, the emperor was freed from constitutional limitations which might have paralysed his freedom of action; while his personal protection was assured through the grant of tribunician inviolability (*sacrosanctitas*) as well as by the sanctions of the *Lex Maiestatis*. The prerogative was thus built up by a series of concessions, made by the competent authority of senate and people, no single one of which was in theory un-republican. Examined *en bloc*, they reveal the principate as a wide and elastic commission, the terms of which were to be embodied under Vespasian in the so-called *Lex Regia*, the instrument by which successive princes were invested with the *imperium*.²

¹ Tacitus, *Ann.* i. 2: 'munia senatus, magistratuum, legum in se trahere'; xi. 5 'cuncta legum et magistratuum munia in se trahens'.

² Bruns, *Fontes Iuris Romani Antiqui*, ed. 7 (1909), p. 202, no. 56: *S.C. de imperi Vespasiani*.

Thus envisaged, the principate represented, of course, a radical departure from the ideals of the free republic. The essence of republicanism, as a political device, lay in the attempt to establish a system of checks and balances, based on the annual and collegiate principle and designed to neutralize the powers of the military *imperium*, thus securing to the subject a measure of freedom. This system, long since moribund, now became for practical purposes obsolete. Through his sole command of the legions and of the praetorian guard, the emperor possessed an effective reserve of power, contingent only upon his ability to 'hold the wolf by the ears'. Resistance was rebellion, and the only justification of rebellion was success. Political opposition was, if possible, still more futile. By virtue of his *maius imperium* and his *tribunicia potestas*, the emperor possessed the representative character of the magistracy and the anti-magistracy alike, wielding paramount authority over magistrates, senate, and people. All possibility of independent political action disappeared as the organs of republican expression slowly withered beneath the shadow of the imperial power. Thus the principate emerged as a *de facto* sovereignty, the implications of which were perhaps fully realized only after the death of the founder. For the crisis which marked the election of his successor made it evident that, extensive as were the prerogatives assigned to the prince, they could be neither discontinued nor divided; 'so completely had the long ascendancy of Augustus inured the Roman people to subservience'. A later and more acute crisis was to emphasize the truth that the principate was the only arrangement possible for a people 'capable neither of complete servitude nor of complete freedom'.¹ Thus the vitality of the institution enabled it to survive the manifold perversions to which it was liable and the fatal evils which they engendered, the tragic conflicts which blighted the life of the first century, constituting the theme of early imperial history and forming the grounds of Tacitus' famous indictment of the Caesars.

For, with all its inherent defects, the principate was dedicated to a re-establishment of the *res publica*, the common good implied in the Latin idea of the commonwealth. This fact determined the programme of the Caesars, and, despite their individual vagaries, imposed it decisively upon them as an inescapable condition of power. Thus, for example, it com-

¹ Tacitus, *Historiae*, i. 16.

elements as might enlarge its numbers and, in particular, supply the man-power needed to maintain the armies in the field.

Beyond this, however, there was demanded a thorough purgation of society; the suppression of *gratia, tumor, voluptas* (Sallust), *luxus, ambitus, libido* (Cicero), the *desidentes mores* to which Roman moralists agreed in attributing the evils of revolutionary times; together with the inculcation of a public spirit which would enable the imperial people to reassert their place in the world. The details of this programme, so far as they concern us, will be reserved for future discussion. It is here sufficient to point out that the task was conceived as political, to be accomplished by means of the instruments which organized society affords.

Accordingly, while appropriating what was salutary in the ideals of the revolution, the principate nevertheless managed to avoid the imputation of decadence to which the Roman Left was exposed, and which was destined to a belated triumph in the bureaucratic socialism of the lower empire. This it did by alining itself with what was best in the liberal-conservative tradition of Cicero and Livy. In this way it came to embody a principle which (in the words of Mommsen) made it at least as different from the constitution of the lower empire as it was from that of the free republic; at the same time entitling it to rank as something more than a mere compromise between the two and justifying the effort of the founder to discover a new designation for what was in fact a novel manifestation of power.

Through this principle Augustus hoped to salvage what was vital in the idea of the commonwealth, and thus commend his work to the sober judgement of posterity. For it enabled him to find a sanction for his authority and, at the same time, to transform the state into a vehicle for the expression of what was perhaps the most characteristic aspect of the Roman genius. This was the rule of law; and, in this sense, law was to be the gift of the Caesars to the world. For as there can be little doubt that, even under the republic, the *imperium* rather than the *comitia* had been the really creative source of law; so the rehabilitation of the *imperium* by the Caesars made it possible to unfetter law from the dominance of interest and make it the expression of scientific and philosophic principle. This was effected through a development of the legal prerogatives of the prince, based on the imperial court of appeal which, though constituted with strictly limited competence, found the scope

of its activities vastly enlarged as the popular courts disappeared in favour of magisterial *cognitiones*.¹

Involving as it did the supersession of politics by law as the final expression of Roman genius in statecraft, the principate excluded much of the past. In particular, it left no room for the vivid life of senate-house and forum, the conflict between *optimates* and *populares* rendered familiar to students of the later republic in the pages of Sallust, Caesar, and Cicero. Yet, in compensation for this loss, it seemed to justify the ardent hope of contemporaries that the highest promise of Graeco-Roman civilization was at last to be fulfilled. For, if the claims of interest were not wholly eliminated (as the disputes between Sabinians and Proculians show), those claims were nevertheless subordinated to principles of natural reason and equity, in the absence of which power was conceived as tyranny, and in terms of which it was 'justified'. In this way the City of Man was to be attuned to standards cherished within the heavenly city of Antonine philosophy. And if, as was inevitable, the goal was missed, this at least was achieved that, through the principles of classical jurisprudence, men were at last freed from the intolerable necessity of having to rule as the only alternative to being ruled—the exploitation of one another by contending factions which tore the mask of social harmony from the face of the Greek *polis*. For, public and private rights being henceforth conceived as mutually independent, the latter, so far from being impaired by the destruction of the former, were to attain under the Caesars their most perfect development and their fullest meaning.

Thus envisaged, the *Pax Augusta* gave fresh significance to the classical concept of the commonwealth. In the principate the Romans met the ultimate demand of the political idea and produced the *protector*, *rector*, *gubernator*, or *moderator rei publicae* of whom Cicero had dreamed, the agent through whom it was proposed to assert afresh the ideal of justice alike against the powerful forces of monopoly and the excesses of mob-rule. In this sense, the Caesars came not to destroy but to fulfil, and they restored the 'republic' not less in spirit than in form. This is not to suggest that they introduced any immediate millennium. Conservative in spirit and outlook, they attacked specific evils, which they aimed to restrain rather than to eradicate. Thus

¹ Greenidge, *Roman Public Life*, p. 381.

panis et circenses, the plague of the expiring republic, by-product of the fierce competition of great nobles for place and power, survived in a modified form under the new régime; and nothing more was attempted than to bring this deep-seated malady under a rigorous control. Under the Caesars, moreover, distant echoes were still to be heard of the exploitation of subjects and allies which had brought the republic down in ruins.¹ Finally, there was the Tantalean problem of combating venality and corruption within the administration, and the scandals of Claudian times were to show that the battle was a losing one. Nevertheless, with an extraordinary tenacity of purpose, the Caesars tried to overcome the forces of lawless impulse and passion, the excesses of the acquisitive spirit which had threatened the Roman system with disaster at a moment when its historic mission was still unfulfilled; looking for a corrective to those excesses in the sense of order which was so deeply rooted in the Roman temperament. They thus utilized the raw materials of human nature as they found it in order to realize the classical ideals of stability, prosperity, and leisure, the elements of what they conceived to be the 'good life'. In this sense, Cato in Hades 'delivering statutes' was to rank as a posthumous hero of the new régime.

For these reasons, the imperial system appeared to merit the consecration which it received in the apotheosis of Augustus and Rome. To grasp the full meaning of the imperial cult, it is necessary to consider the mental processes which led to its establishment. This we shall try to do at a later stage of the present work.² At this point, it is sufficient to observe that it constituted a public official recognition of 'surpassing qualities' of mind and heart thought to be embodied in the spirit (*genius*) of the city and its ruler. As such, it found expression in two modes, the veneration of the living and the deification of the dead emperor. In neither sense could it be regarded as wholly a novelty in Rome.³ It has thus been noted that the veneration accorded to sovereigns throughout the Hellenistic world was extended to include Roman magistrates whose duties took them to the East. This began as early as the time of Flamininus

¹ Tac. *Ann.* iii. 40-6 and iv. 72-4.

² Ch. III, below.

³ The origins of Caesar-worship have been studied by various writers, of whom we may mention W. Warde Fowler, *Roman Ideas of Deity in the Last Century of the Republic*; Toutain, *Les Cultes païens dans l'empire romain*; Lily Ross Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor*; Lebreton, *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, i, p. 26 foll.

(196 B.C.), who was worshipped in Hellas in conjunction with Heracles and Apollo;¹ and it included others like the Scipios, Metellus Pius, Marius Gratidianus, and Sulla. Even Cicero was offered (and refused) divine honours during his proconsulate in Cilicia.² The triumph of Julius Caesar in the civil war was signaled by cults set up to him throughout the East;³ while texts of Priene and Halicarnassus record the voting of similar honours to Augustus.⁴ These cults served to mark the recipients as the source of beneficent activity issuing in some form of 'common good'. On the other hand, the consecration of deceased emperors had at least one precedent in Rome in that of the deified Julius, duly authorized by the senate in 42 B.C.⁵ Following this precedent, it became the prime duty of a new prince, on succeeding to the imperial dignities, to nominate his predecessor to membership in the Pantheon. This was, on the one hand, a mark of *pietas* or loyalty; on the other, it was connected with the ratification of his *acta*, the executive measures which he had enforced during life by virtue of his *imperium*, and it had the effect of giving to them permanent validity. Applied in this way, it served also to register the verdict of what was equivalent to modern 'public opinion' with respect to the character and achievement of deceased princes. Thus, as the 'good' emperors were successively elevated to divine status, their spirits were thought to take a place alongside Juppiter, Juno, and Minerva as guardians and protectors of the Eternal City.

¹ Plut. *Flamin.* 16. 4.

² *Ad Attic.* v. 21. 7 and *Ad Quint. Fr.* i. 9. 26.

³ Toutain, op. cit., vol i, bk. i, ch. i, p. 26 foll.

⁴ Dittenberger, *Orientalis Graeci Inscip.* Sel. ii. 458, quoted by Lebreton, op. cit. i, p. 26; Brit. Mus. no. 894, quoted by Lebreton, p. 27.

⁵ Dio, xlvii. 18-19.

II

ROMANITAS: EMPIRE AND COMMONWEALTH

THE Augustan settlement was hailed with almost universal enthusiasm as marking the successful termination of a crisis which threatened not merely the existence of the empire but the whole future of Western civilization. Defeatism and despair were succeeded by unbounded confidence and hope—confidence that the troubles which menaced the integrity of the state had been triumphantly surmounted, hope that, with the protection of the Roman gods and under the military presidency of the Julian race, nothing less than the golden age of Saturn would be restored.

That sentiments of this kind were widely entertained at the time needs no argument; for centuries, indeed, unique associations were to cling to the reign of Augustus as the dawn of a new and better epoch for humanity. To these the noblest expression was given by Vergil, who was at the same time largely responsible for their diffusion. Thus, despite the characteristic melancholy of the poet,

Majestic in thy sadness
At the doubtful doom of human kind,

Vergil constitutes a supreme embodiment of the optimism of his age. In him we may perceive the scope and character of those aspirations to fulfilment which were stirring in the contemporary world and which had come to a focus in the programme of the Caesars. But this, in itself, by no means exhausts the significance of his work. For, while revealing the substance of the Augustan hope, Vergil at the same time disclosed its essential basis, relating it to a vast background of human history and giving it, indeed, a cosmic setting. Viewed in the light of his imagination, the *Pax Augusta* emerged as the culmination of effort extending from the dawn of culture on the shores of the Mediterranean—the effort to erect a stable and enduring civilization upon the ruins of the discredited and discarded systems of the past. As thus envisaged, it constituted not merely a decisive stage in the life of the Roman people, but a significant point of departure in the evolution of mankind. It marked, indeed, the rededication of the imperial city to her secular task, the realization of those ideals of human emancipation towards

¹ Verg. *Aeneid*, vi. 789-800.

into the consciousness of mankind his vision of the commonwealth, he offered a basis for imperial solidarity throughout successive generations; a touchstone of thought and action which maintained its potency at least until the collapse of the great Antonine experiment. In so doing, he not merely provided an ethical sanction for the system, but he gave final utterance to the spirit of classical paganism, the religion of culture which was later to be confronted by the culture of religion; and, by throwing down a defiant challenge to alternative systems of life, he compelled them at least to formulate their principles with reference to those embodied in the imperial city.

Vergilianism marks the resolution of a problem with which the Romans had been confronted since the dawn of national self-consciousness in the days of Cato the Censor. With the conquest of the Mediterranean, this nation of intelligent peasants, suddenly transformed into a great imperial power, was plunged into a state of unparalleled moral and intellectual confusion. Dimly conscious of the unique position into which chance or destiny had thrust them, but disconcerted by the novel character of the problems which they faced, their bewilderment found expression in the conflicting historical movements of the second century B.C. These movements came to a head in the revolution, the issue of which we have tried to describe. The outbreak of disorder and bloodshed on the streets of the capital had been the signal that the *Pax Romana*, the traditional basis of social peace, was hopelessly destroyed;¹ and this fact imposed upon the Romans a problem of reconstruction, the solution of which became increasingly pressing as it slowly became evident that the alternative was collapse. Coincident, therefore, with the development of the crisis, there occurred in Rome a series of tentative efforts to formulate a new and more adequate basis of concord. It is no disparagement of these efforts to say that, coming as they did in a time of unprecedented economic, social, and political upheaval, none of them proved to be final. The Romans had, indeed, to wait until, with Vergil, they at last discovered the answer by which their doubts and perplexities were resolved; it was he, more than any other man, who charted the course of their imperial future. Nevertheless, the elements of the problem as he saw it were inherited from his predecessors, and for his solution he made heavy drafts upon them; so that,

¹ Appian, *Civil Wars*, i. 1 and 2.

directly or indirectly, they also contributed important ingredients to the common body of ideas which was to dominate the life of imperial society.

The perils by which the ancient *Pax Romana* was threatened were already evident in the days of the elder Cato, even if their meaning was not yet fully understood. It was, indeed, Cato himself who first sounded the note of alarm.¹ Viewing with apprehension the rapid disintegration of the traditional morale, he attributed it to a 'mixture of elements' brought about by the wars of overseas conquest, which had exposed the state to the influence of 'foreign customs and novel examples of living'. In scathing terms he denounced the various forms of alienism rampant within the empire, especially those which, derived in the main from the degraded Hellenistic world, flaunted themselves in Rome under the distinguished patronage of the Scipios. In these men Cato saw a personification of the sinister forces which were invading and poisoning Roman life. From this standpoint, their virtues themselves were hardly less abhorrent than their vices, both alike being the reflection of a self-assertive egotism which was as dangerous as it was novel. Conspicuous for their public services during the Hannibalic crisis, exponents of the new imperialism which followed the Second Punic war, the Scipios claimed to be judged by standards other than those which applied to ordinary men.² While, therefore, they accorded an easy hospitality to relaxed modes of personal conduct, at the same time they asserted a right to special consideration and preferential treatment at the hands of their fellow countrymen. By thus demanding exemption from the categories of behaviour traditional to Roman citizens, they foreshadowed the collapse of the established order and pointed the way to the dangerously un-republican theory of the superman.³

In his hostility to influences such as those represented by the Scipios may be found the explanation of Cato's famous observation that the reception of Greek culture would mean ruin for the Roman state. And therein he was right, in so far as Scipionic ideas of emancipation were drawn from the cosmopolitan Hellenistic world, in which the deference paid to the divine βασιλεύς was easily transferred to the republican *imperator*.

¹ See Livy, xxxiv. 2-4 (his speech on the repeal of the *Lex Oppia*) and xxxix. 40-4; cf. Plut. *Cato Major*, 4 foll. ² Livy, xxxviii. 42 and 51-60; xxxix. 6.

³ See below, Ch. III, p. 113.

Already with Aristotle, despite the fact that his gaze was fixed upon the past, political philosophy had come to terms with this phenomenon of the future:

'but when a whole family, or some individual happens to be so pre-eminent in virtue as to surpass all others, then it is just that they should be the royal family and supreme over all, or that this one citizen should be king of the whole nation. . . . For it would not be right to kill or ostracize or exile such a person, or to require that he should take his turn in being governed. The whole is naturally superior to the part, and he who has this pre-eminence is in the relation of a whole to a part. But if so, the only alternative is that he should have the supreme power, and that mankind should obey him, not in turn, but always.'¹

By thus endorsing doctrines which undermined the very being of the commonwealth, Aristotle revealed the inadequacy of philosophic naturalism to provide an effective sanction for the claims of civic freedom and equality. And if Aristotle thus played false to commonwealth ideals, what was to be said of Aristotle's successors in the Hellenistic cosmopolis? Cynics, Cyrenaics, Epicureans, as well as the earlier Stoics, whatever their internal differences, were nevertheless, historically speaking, the product of a time when, following the hint earlier thrown out in a moment of pessimism by Plato, men in general had abandoned the hope of political salvation. Addressing themselves to a world of *déracinés*, they preached a gospel of purely individual salvation or of salvation in 'society' regarded as distinct from and independent of political forms. It was these sects with whose activities the Romans were most familiar; and, dimly as they might apprehend their doctrines, they knew enough to realize that their purport was not merely to weaken, in general, the motive of communal action, but to threaten in particular the specifically Roman virtue of patriotism. In the contemporary world, the currency of these philosophies was paralleled by the widespread popularity of mystery cults, not the least subversive of which (that of Dionysus) had already in Cato's day raised its head in Rome itself.² And, if its appearance

¹ *Pol.* iii. 1288^a 15 foll. (Jowett's translation); Plato, *Politicus*, on the queen bee.

² Livy, xxxix. 8-18; xl. 19. Bruns, *op. cit.*, p. 164. For details of the cult of Bacchus at Rome see the valuable analysis in Cumont, *Les Religions orientales dans le paganisme romain*, ed. 4, appendix, p. 195 foll., and notes, p. 303 foll. Also Tenney Frank, 'The Bacchanalian Cult of 186 B.C.', *Cl. Quart.* xxi (1927), p. 128 foll.

was the signal for bloody and brutal measures of repression, it was nevertheless a portent the significance of which could not fail to be understood. For this incident registered the profound change which, since the feverish years of conflict with Hannibal, had been creeping over the Italian temperament—a moral and spiritual lapse, especially of the younger generation, from the principles for which their ancestors had fought and died. Within the century the effects of this lapse were to be seen, not merely in widespread social unrest, but in the spectacle—unprecedented in Roman annals—of indiscipline and mutiny among Roman troops in the field.

In a gallant but unavailing effort to combat pernicious tendencies such as these, Cato undertook to lay the foundations of what was intended as a native approach to the problems of his day. Deeply suspicious of 'that nation of babblers', whose history had shown them incapable of preserving the idea which they had given to the world, he rejected the findings of Greek philosophy in order to fall back upon a shrewd peasant wisdom, the tenor of which is indicated by his many pithy observations on men and affairs. Stoutly empirical and pragmatic, his attitude may be illustrated by the famous remark on the state, quoted with approval by Cicero:¹

'Cato used to say that the superiority of our city to others depended upon the fact that the latter almost always had their laws and institutions from a single legislator . . . whereas our republic was not created by the genius of any individual, nor in the lifetime of one man but through countless centuries and generations. For, as he observed, there never was a human being so perspicacious that nothing could escape him, nor have the combined talents of any single age been such that it could look forward and anticipate all possibilities without the lessons of time and experience.'

In this typical statement we may catch the spirit of a moral and political fundamentalism thenceforth to be associated with the name of Cato.

From this narrowly restricted point of view Cato discovered an adequate formula for conduct in the imitation of those representative figures who appeared to embody in their lives the traditional ideals of republican virtue as well as, by their careers, to exemplify the legitimate modes of republican self-expression. Of such men, Fabius Maximus and Manius Curius still survived

¹ *De Rep.*, ii. 1. 2.

to bear witness to a demoralized generation of the qualities which had served to create and maintain the state. Taking these men as his models, Cato schooled and disciplined himself in such a way that, if his name became proverbial for harshness, coarseness, and inhumanity, it stood also for endurance, temperance, industry, and self-control. These qualities he endeavoured, by both precept and example, to impress upon his son, whom he thus 'formed and fashioned to virtue' by giving him personal instruction in the arts, according to a 'simple, almost wholly technical and vocational scheme, embracing the study of oratory, agriculture, law, medicine, and war'; in this way taking his place at the head of the roster of Roman educationalists.¹ To this aspect of Catonism belongs also the famous treatise, *De Re Rustica*. First among the works of its kind to be produced in the native agrarian tradition, this essay shows that the author was fully alive to the possibilities of the newly established villa-system for the intensive exploitation of land and chattels, including the breeding and sale of slaves. But its chief significance is that, by exhibiting farming as a way of life, it illustrates the Catonian faith in work as supplying, if not a moral equivalent to, at any rate the moral counterpart of war.

Such was the mental equipment which Cato brought with him into a public life which, like that of Nestor, extended over three ordinary generations. Throughout that time he constituted himself a threat to evil-doers, making it his constant business to indict malefactors of rank and power.² But the high-water mark of his career was undoubtedly the censorship of 184 B.C., which he rendered notable, not merely by a vigorous execution of public contracts and by other measures calculated to restrain the activities of those who made free with the common property, but by extending the traditional functions of purgation connected with the censorial office, as, for example, by a steeply graduated luxury tax.³ In imperial politics he placed himself in opposition to fresh conquests and commitments in the East; but, in view of the reviving menace of Carthage, this policy of 'limited liability' broke down in the West. While it

¹ Plut. *Cato Major*, 20.

² Plut. op. cit. 15; Livy, xxxix. 12-44.

³ Catonian influence may also, perhaps, be detected in the S.C. of 161 B.C. whereby the praetor was authorized to expel all teachers of philosophy and rhetoric from the city. Suet. *Rhet.* i.

was probably for moral rather than for economic reasons that Cato raised the cry *delenda est Carthago*, nevertheless, in so doing, he disclosed the essential ambiguity of his attitude and played, so to speak, into the hands of the enemy. The fall of her ancient rival has rightly been taken to indicate a definite turn for the worse in the fortunes of the republic, marking the operation of those inexorable forces against which Cato and Catonism struggled in vain, and bringing the state one step nearer to revolution.

Accordingly, while the name of Cato might survive as of one who had sought 'to reclaim the commonwealth when it was declining into vice', nevertheless, in the society of his day, the man and his methods were equally anomalous. For mere republicanism could not save the republic. Thus, within little more than a decade after his death, the swift march of events delivered the state into the hands of his bitterest enemies. There can be little doubt that, with the Gracchi, Rome experienced the first shock of Scipionic ideas in action, just as, throughout subsequent years of trial and suffering, she was to experience other and still unsuspected aspects of the revolutionary spirit. It was, indeed, inevitable that the city should go through the fires of purgation in the process of adjustment to her imperial future. To state the principles of Catonism is thus to reveal its limitations. Nevertheless, it remains true that, as the Romans fumbled towards a new order, they still retained a memory of the salutary elements in Cato's teaching, and that reconstruction, when it did come, was based on principles not wholly alien from his life and thought.

The day of reconstruction, however, was still remote; and, with the steady progress of the revolutionary spirit, all the elements against which Cato had battled so vigorously came defiantly to the surface. Thus, in the society of Cato's great-grandson, the last shreds of traditional restraint had been contemptuously flung aside, and the dominant note was one of individual freedom and self-assertion. Inflamed by an insatiable thirst for novel forms of experience, members of the aristocracy let themselves go in a protracted orgy of extravagance and debauchery. The world was ransacked to provide the rarest and most exotic means for the satisfaction of the senses, and the last refinements of luxury and vice were introduced to titillate appetites already jaded by pleasure in its cruder forms. A

literature of lyric poetry grew up which reflected only too vividly the prevailing atmosphere, and Catullus and others survive to bear witness to the sophistication and decadence of the imperial city during the revolutionary age. On the other hand, history and satire, developing about the same time, adopted a somewhat peevish and moralizing tone which, as it presently became conventional, was to be imitated by writers who, generations later, lashed at social evils which by their day were largely obsolete.

Nor was the epidemic confined to the more exalted circles of imperial society. Among the masses, bread and circuses on a rapidly expanding scale afforded a counterpart to the Lucullan banquets of the rich. At this time, also, the Roman tiger acquired his taste for blood, and political ambition was taxed to discover means for the satisfaction of a voracious and depraved appetite by the provision of increasingly elaborate and gory spectacles. If, indeed, we may trust the sober and judicious observation of Seneca, this was the climax of a materialism which brought with it a speedy nemesis in the utter demoralization of Roman life. High and low alike, without distinction of age, rank, or sex, the Romans indulged in a riot of sensationalism and emotionalism which, while it promoted social disintegration, at the same time stimulated that fierce competition for *dominationes* and *potentiae* which laid the political fabric in ruins.¹

To this distracted world there came a message of salvation, the gospel of Epicurus, naturalized by Lucretius in the *De Rerum Natura* and advocated with all the persuasive and charming eloquence of one who was not less artist than philosopher. It is a wholly superficial view which sees in Lucretius nothing but the rationalization of contemporary tendencies towards intellectual and moral anarchy. His object, indeed, was to show how that anarchy might be overcome; and if, in a sense, he speaks the language of revolt, it was with no intention of feeding the devouring flames of revolutionary passion, but rather to establish a new principle of understanding and control. That principle was reason, which, as embodied in the teachings of the master, represented for him the culmination of speculative achievement. To it he looked for a revelation of the truth which underlies phenomena, as the presupposition to a valid theory of human life.

¹ See the description of contemporary society in Sall. *Cat.* 24. 3-4 and 25.

In so doing, Lucretius reflects one of the finest and most distinctive aspects of the classical spirit. It would, indeed, be hard to point to any classical author who is clearer in his perception or more emphatic in his denunciation of evils which vitiated the life of antiquity. These evils he ascribes to belief in the traditional gods of popular and poetic paganism. To this source he traces the multifarious impulsions and inhibitions which go by the name of *religio*, and which are evoked by a desire to win the favour or avert the wrath of beings supposed in some sense to control the destinies of mankind. And in it he sees the cause of evil and suffering such as no other force could possibly inspire.

From this analysis of the situation, the remedy follows as a matter of course. For the ills which thus afflict mankind are, as we should say, psychological; they are the product of 'unreasonable' hope or fear. As such, they depend upon a misconception regarding the character of ultimate reality. To remove this misconception, it is only necessary to destroy the foundation upon which it rests. This Epicurean science undertakes to do by propounding a view of nature which, as it discloses nothing but atoms moving in the void, stamps the claims of *religio* as sheer illusion. It thus offers to mankind emancipation from the terrors of the unseen and the impalpable; and, to replace the vast aspirations of pagan mysticism, it proposes a goal for life which, because it is independent of support from superhuman powers, is not doomed in advance to frustration. This goal is not to be attained by yielding to the savage urges of desire and passion. It is to be the outcome of a rational ordering of life in terms of the concrete satisfactions to be discovered in the normal human relationships, as measured by the criterion of individual pleasure and pain. What Lucretius thus advocates is, in a word, salvation through enlightenment. All that it involves is submission to the demands of mechanical law as revealed by the inspection of nature, *naturae species ratioque*, and, for this, nothing is required except the mere act of apprehension. Otherwise spontaneous and automatic, it depends, indeed, upon 'taking no thought for the morrow'. It thus deliberately cuts the nerve of effort:

... nostro sine quaeque labore
sponte sua multo fieri meliora videres . . .

Accordingly, the doctrine of Lucretius was administered, not as

a stimulant, but as a sedative; as such, it was proffered as a specific for the disorders of imperial society.

The gulf between Cato and Lucretius is a measure of the distance which Rome had travelled in the intervening century. For both, indeed, the Roman problem was, in the last analysis, a psychological and moral problem. But the generation of Lucretius had embraced Hellenism as whole-heartedly as it had been rejected by Cato. While, therefore, Cato was disposed to see in native practice the real key to a solution, Lucretius had fallen back upon Greek science for a truer understanding of the meaning and purpose of human life. From this standpoint, he offered an analysis of the individual and of society in terms which would have stripped them both of mystery; rendering equally absurd the cult of the divine community and that of the divine man. But, in so doing, he set up a moral atomism which imposed no effective check upon the sway of individual caprice and provided no basis for political and social cohesion. It would, indeed, be false to describe Epicureanism as anarchic; since it recognized the state as the product of a compact intended to secure the *communia foedera pacis*.¹ Nevertheless, both because of its claims and because of the type of activity which it engendered, organized society, as it existed, lay under deep suspicion as the cause of dissatisfactions unknown to primitive man:²

at non multa virum sub signis milia ducta
una dies dabat exitio nec turbida ponti
aequora lidebant navis ad saxa virosque . . .

While, therefore, prepared to accept the state as an economic expedient, Epicureanism explicitly rejected its pretension to be anything more, and pointed to distinctively non-political ends as the goal of human activity.³ In so doing, it offered a complete negation to the classical idea of the commonwealth.

From this standpoint, Epicurean ἀταραξία or detachment implied both a repudiation of the Roman past and the denial of a specifically Roman future. Its vogue, therefore, such as it was, passed with the passing of the republic. With the rise of the principate it suffered an eclipse, so that while, in imperial times,

¹ *De Rerum Natura*, v. 1155. ² *Ibid.* 999, cf. ii. 23-39; iii. 37-93; v. 1105-1135.

³ C. Bailey, *Phases in the Religion of Ancient Rome*, pp. 225-7, argues that it offers the basis for a kind of morality in an imitation of the gods, conceived as ideals of tranquillity.

there were no doubt endless numbers who practised, few openly professed, the doctrines of Lucretius. This fact does not, however, mean that his teaching was without effect. For, in making the first systematic attempt to reach a solution of the Roman problem in terms of nature and reason, it raised the discussion from the level of prejudice to that of principle, thus serving as a challenge to alternative ways of thought. The challenge was accepted by Cicero, who undertook to answer Lucretius in similar terms.

The tendency of modern criticism has been to dismiss the work of Cicero as a compendium of platitudes; it is even suggested that, in the whole of his philosophical or semi-philosophical writings, there cannot be found a single original idea. This, however, does not in the least detract from his historical importance, which is out of all proportion to the intrinsic significance of his thought. No author has been more widely known or more intensively studied, and the range of his influence is indicated not merely by this fact but by the direct testimony of enthusiastic admirers. Velleius Paterculus, for example, credits him with establishing the autonomy of Latin letters and predicts for him a literary immortality as the one Roman with insight sufficient to comprehend the universe and power to elucidate its meaning.¹ Seneca, endorsing an opinion of Asinius Pollio, declares it superfluous to enlarge upon his talent and industry;² and, if we may believe the story told by Plutarch, the emperor Augustus himself pronounced him 'a great scholar and a great patriot'.³ The almost unanimous verdict of early imperial times finds confirmation in Quintilian, who equates his name with eloquence itself and, in philosophy, couples it with that of Plato.⁴

The pre-eminence of Cicero both as thinker and writer was no less secure in the fourth and fifth centuries than it had been in the first. Speaking as a pagan, Ammianus Marcellinus delights in allusions to him and his teaching; and a famous passage in praise of philosophy⁵ is no doubt meant to recall a similar passage of the *Pro Archia*.⁶ On the other hand, as Cicero had done so much to create the moulds of *Romanitas*, so his spirit survived to influence, if not to dominate, the forms of Christian

¹ ii. 34 and 66.

² *Suasor.* 6. 24.

³ Plut. *Cic.* 49.

⁴ *Inst. Orat.* x. 1. 112 and 123.

⁵ xxix. 2. 18: 'o praeclara informatio doctrinarum, munere caelesti indulta felicibus, quae vel vitiosas naturas saepe excoluisti!'

⁶ 7. 15.

culture by which *Romanitas* was superseded. The *Institutes* of Lactantius are so evidently modelled on his work that Lactantius has often been described as the Christian Cicero. St. Ambrose, both in his *De Officiis* and in his Epistles, deliberately imitates Ciceronian diction and form. The well-known lament of Jerome, *Ciceronianus non Christianus sum*, testifies to the attraction of the orator for the translator of the Vulgate. But perhaps the highest tribute ever paid to Cicero was that of Augustine, who asserts that with him Latin speculation began and ended, and generously ascribes to him the inspiration of his own passion for philosophy.

These opinions, Christian as well as pagan, have been cited, not with a view to supporting Cicero's reputation, but simply to illustrate the extraordinary grip which he had upon the imagination of posterity. They bear witness to the fact that, so far as such a thing may be said of any individual, he was the medium for the propagation of those ideas which informed the law and institutions of the empire. From this standpoint, he was destined to a renaissance of his own in modern times. To Erasmus, the *Essay on Duties* was a vade-mecum which embraced all the principles necessary for a young man on the threshold of a public career; and, even to-day, Ferrero regards this work as 'embodying an important theory of the possibility of social and moral regeneration for Rome'.¹ Without entering upon a discussion of this question, we may agree that the essay provides a fairly comprehensive statement of doctrine to which Cicero did so much to give currency, the stock of 'commonplaces' cherished by unregenerate but high-minded pagans from his day to our own. And if modern liberalism, in its effort to combat the sinister and chaotic forces with which contemporary life is menaced, holds up the ideal of a world-society founded on justice, freedom, and humanity, calling for a united effort to release mankind from the obstacles which prevent a realization of that ideal, its purpose and methods must alike be understood, if not as a direct legacy from Cicero, at least as in close affinity with his way of thought.

Cicero was not less conscious than Lucretius of the malady which afflicted revolutionary Rome; the competition for domination and power which, in his own words, opened the door to 'theft, forgery, poisoning, assassination, the spoliation

¹ *Greatness and Decline of Rome*, iii, p. 108 foll.

of fellow citizens and allies, a thirst for ascendancy over free men', in short to every conceivable form of anti-social behaviour.¹ Like Lucretius, also, he traced these evils to a psychological cause; in his case, the emancipation from control of the so-called 'expansive' emotions (*affectiones animi*), notably those of desire, fear, anxiety or solicitude, and pleasure which, thus running riot, brought destruction not merely on individuals and families but on whole communities. On the other hand, he was equally anxious to discover an answer to the claims of self-assertive egotism, a principle whereby it might be possible to overcome the fatal antipathies which it excited, quenching the flame of passion and laying solid foundations for individual and social peace (*tranquillitas animi et securitas*). Finally, with Lucretius, he looked to philosophy to supply such a principle, regarding its findings as imperfect unless they pointed to conclusions which would be of practical service to mankind.

To Cicero, however, a cure for the contemporary fever was not to be found in Epicureanism, which was repugnant to him on both intellectual and moral grounds. Intellectually, he felt that the physics of scientific materialism were little better than a tissue of absurdities. 'It is astonishing', he says, 'that, when one soothsayer meets another, he does not smile; still more that, when you Epicureans come together, you can possibly refrain from laughter.'² But the real weakness of the system, as he saw it, lay in its implication for ethics. This weakness was twofold. In the first place, it raised in a particularly acute form the problem of human freedom and responsibility. Secondly, by identifying the good with emancipation from all obligation, it set up a cult of selfishness which left no place for the social virtues. By so doing, it subverted what were to Cicero the richest and truest values of life.

In undertaking to defend those values Cicero sought to avoid the imputation of obscurantism.³ Himself a representative product of the Greek enlightenment, he was fully alive to the dangers of superstition which, with sturdy common sense, he tried to keep at arm's length. 'It is undeniable', he declares, 'that superstition, epidemic throughout the nations, has taken advantage of human weakness to lay its heavy hand upon

¹ *De Offic.* i. 20. 66-9.

² *De Nat. Deor.* i. 26. 71: the remark is put into the mouth of the Academic, Cotta.

³ *Op. cit.* i; *De Fin.* i.

almost every one . . . could we but eradicate this evil, we should be doing ourselves and the world an immense service.'¹ But, at the same time, he was convinced that sentiments like loyalty and justice (*pietas et iustitia*), upon which the life of organized society depends, had their ultimate basis in religion and that they could survive only if this fact were recognized.² Accordingly, he rejected the facile identification which scientific materialism had made between religion and superstition, and maintained that the true alternative to superstition was a form of high religion, i.e. of religion purified and illumined by the knowledge of nature.³

The question thus presented itself: Was such knowledge possible? One of the strongest objections which Cicero had to Epicureanism was its intensely dogmatic character; its exponents, he says, delivered themselves with the self-assurance of men who had just descended from Epicurus' *intermundia* and whose one fear was that they might seem to have any doubts whatever.⁴ The same objection applied with hardly less force to the rival system of the Stoics, whose rigid and inflexible tenets he subjected to ridicule in the *Pro Murena*. To Cicero himself nothing was more evident than the uncertainty of all speculation. This he ascribed in part to the extreme obscurity of the subject-matter, in part to the fallibility of the instrument, as indicated by the sharp differences of opinion which existed among conflicting schools of thought. Accordingly, he felt that the part of true wisdom was to follow the New Academy in admitting the principle of suspended judgement or philosophic doubt.⁵ In the acceptance of such a principle he saw no reason for despair. On the contrary, it offered him ground for confidence that the intellectual and moral values established by antiquity (*vetustas*) could not be wholly false; to this extent, he alined himself with old Cato in the belief that truth was the daughter of time. But, with Cicero, respect for established values did not exclude a qualified faith in the judgements of the

¹ *De Divinat.* ii. 72. 148. For the exact connotation of the words *religio* (Lucretius) and *superstitio* (Cicero) see Mayor, *De Nat. Deor.* ii. 72 (vol. ii, p. 183).

² *De Nat. Deor.* i. 2. 4.

³ *De Divinat.* loc. cit. Cf. *De Nat. Deor.* i. 42. 117: 'non modo superstitionem tollunt in qua inest timor inanis deorum, sed etiam religionem, quae deorum cultu pio continetur.'

⁴ *Ibid.* i. 8. 18.

⁵ 'Academicorum dubitatio'; 'suspensio assensionis'. For the spirit of Cicero's scepticism in general see *Acad. Prior.*, esp. ii. 17, 18, 32-6, 99, 103, and *Tusc. Disput.* v. 4. 11.

wise, i.e. in the power of reason and conjecture to yield a fund of knowledge, the validity of which was attested by its service in rescuing humanity from the grip of circumstance. Such knowledge had been progressive and cumulative, at least from the time of Thales, and every extension of it narrowed the frontiers of blind hazard (*fortuna*) to which primitive life was exposed.¹ Accordingly, to possess this knowledge was to vindicate one's claim to be civilized and, at the same time, to enter into the spiritual inheritance of mankind.

From this standpoint, there was nothing in the universe superior to reason; it constituted the link between man and man, and between man and God.² This it did by revealing the 'divine' order of nature, the law of which was identical with that of 'right reason'.³ At this point, Cicero forgets both the objections raised by the incredulous and his own principle of philosophic doubt to assert in the most unequivocal terms his belief in the existence of a real and fundamental distinction in nature between truth and error, right and wrong. To make this assertion is to affirm that reason is not the servant of desire, except in so far as it reaches out towards its affinity, viz. the truth. As such, its function is not, as Lucretius had supposed, to minister to the demands of utility. It is rather to legislate and to judge; and this it does according to a standard which claims to be 'objective' and rooted in the very substance of things. As thus conceived, the dictates of reason are mandatory and constitute, so to speak, the law for man. That is to say, mankind is 'born for justice', which thus exists not by 'convention' but by 'nature'. In this natural justice is to be found the *ratio* or principle of human association, the bond of community in human life.⁴ Accordingly, to the Lucretian gospel of freedom from the state, Cicero replies with a message of freedom in the state, holding out the vision of the *bene honesteque vivendi societas* as embodying the highest values of civilized man. In so doing, he reasserts the characteristic hope of classical antiquity.

¹ *De Divinat.* i. 49-50. 109-112 and ii. 6-7. 15-8. ² *De Legg.* i. 7. 23 foll.

³ *Loc. cit.*; see also *De Rep.* i. 36. 56 and iii. 22. 33; also *De Nat. Deor.* ii. 22. 58: 'mens mundi . . . vel prudentia vel providentia appellari recte (potest)'. With Seneca (*Nat. Quaest.* ii. 45. 1) it was destined to emerge as 'rector custosque universi, animus ac spiritus mundi, operis huius dominus et artifex', i.e. as 'creator and preserver of the cosmos'. From this standpoint, man, because of his participation in reason, is thought of as a microcosm.

⁴ *De Offic.* i. 7. 20: 'ea ratio qua societas hominum inter ipsos et vitae quasi communitas continetur.'

prietors in the country, business men as well as freedmen. Great, however, as are their number and variety, the group as a whole may accurately and summarily be defined as follows: All men are optimates who are inoffensive, of pure morals, not subject to passion or involved in debt. These are the safe and sane, the sound elements in the community; their ideal is that which appeals as finest and most eligible to persons of this character: it is social security (*otium cum dignitate*). All who cherish this ideal are optimates; those who work for it must be regarded as true men and genuine conservatives (*conservatores civitatis*). As for the foundations of this social security, to be defended even at the cost of life and limb, I may enumerate them as follows: the official religion of worship and divination, executive authority, senatorial influence, statute and customary law, the popular courts and magisterial jurisdiction, good faith, the provinces and allies, imperial prestige, military and financial strength.

'A state as large as ours includes multitudes who, from a consciousness of villainy and fear of punishment, are eager for revolutionary agitation and change or who, because of a kind of congenital madness, batten on civil discord and strife or who, since they are plunged in debt, prefer to see the community go up in flames rather than be themselves burned.'¹

This declaration is not less illuminating than the formal treatises in which Cicero labours to expound and justify his political faith. Written shortly before the catastrophe which was to complete the ruin of his hopes, it reveals him, even more truly than Aristotle, as 'the first Whig'. As such, his creed finds appropriate expression in the twofold conception of order and freedom (*imperium et libertas*); and this he boldly identifies with the rights of property. It was indeed Cicero, rather than Locke, who first asserted that the purpose of organized society was to establish and maintain this principle.

'The primary concern of those responsible for the conduct of public affairs', he says, 'will be to make certain that every man is secure in his possessions, and that there is no invasion of private right on the part of government. . . . This, indeed, is the reason why states and republics have been created. For, though nature herself prompts men to congregate together, nevertheless it is in the hope of protecting what they have that they seek the protection of cities.'²

With all the fervour of a true Roman, Cicero believed that the mission of his country was to make the world safe for property. This he conceived not in any absolute sense but, in the termino-

¹ *Pro Sestio*, 45-6. 96-9.

² *De Offic.* ii. 21. 73.

logy of jurisprudence, as an object (*res*) which exists only for a subject of legal right (*persona*); in other words, as an 'extension of personality'. As such, its function was to ensure independence, thus making possible either of the alternatives characteristic of a well-ordered society, inactivity without loss of standing and activity exempt from risk.¹ With these refinements, the Romans had arrived at a point of view which was foreign to the political thinking of the Greeks. For whereas the word *polis* had carried with it the suggestion of 'one big family' or an all-in partnership, the term *res publica* could hardly be used without an implied reference to its counterpart, the *res privata*. *Res privata*, although distinct from, was not in conflict with *res publica*, but rather its correlative, indissolubly linked to it by what may be called 'a principle of polarity' and, in a precisely analogous sense, the object of right. Thus envisaged, the 'republic' may be defined as 'that which belongs to the people', a people being 'no heterogeneous collection of human beings, but a society organized *iuris consensu et utilitatis communione*, i.e. on a basis of agreed rights and common interests'.² These rights and interests constitute citizenship and they exist, he adds, in order to make possible 'a better and happier life'. Accordingly, their origin may be traced not so much to human weakness as to the compulsions of nature, which have made mankind a gregarious and social rather than a solitary animal. But, in this respect, the role played by nature is that of stepmother (*natura noverca*); since, while she prompts men to associate, she leaves it to them to create the forms of association which will meet their needs.

The social thinking of Cicero, thus developed against the revolutionary background, is, so to speak, distilled into the *De Officiis*, a work which, composed for his son in the summer of 44 B.C., may well be described as his spiritual testament. The title³ itself is significant of Cicero's attitude to life; he sees it as a complex of obligations to oneself and others, in the discharge of which a man realizes the fullest potentialities of his being. Of such obligations the most fundamental are those prescribed by the demands of rectitude, the absolute moral ideal (*τὸ καλόν*

¹ *De Orat.* i. 1. 1: 'qui in optima re publica . . . eum vitae cursum tenere potuerunt, ut vel in negotio sine periculo vel in otio cum dignitate esse possent.'

² *De Rep.* i. 25. 39.

³ i. 3. 8: 'perfectum officium rectum, opinor, vocemus quoniam Graeci *κατόρθωμα*, hoc autem commune officium vocant.' The *De Officiis* is, thus, a text-book of 'civics'.

or *honestum*) as envisaged by Plato and those who shared his faith in the existence of a realm of truth independent of the material flux. A second group of obligations is that imposed by the requirements of expediency (*utile*); these being defined as 'duties which appertain to the embellishment of life, as well as to the provision of means and resources advantageous to mankind'.¹ Additional problems of obligation are thought to emerge (a) whenever the claims of expediency appear to conflict with those of rectitude, and (b) when it becomes necessary to institute a comparison of values, whether (i) from the standpoint of honour, or (ii) from that of utility. Cicero thus arrives at five topics or 'heads of deliberation', in terms of which he claims to comprehend the subject of obligations as a whole.

As for the specific duties which arise under these various categories, this question is, in Cicero's opinion, to be solved by reference to 'nature'. Accordingly, in language borrowed largely from the Stoics, he offers a *conspectus* of human nature designed to reveal the impulses and appetites fundamental to mankind. Of these, the first is the urge to self-preservation and reproduction common to all living beings. It is this which prompts a man to defend his existence, avoiding that which is harmful and pursuing that which is serviceable to this end. But, over and above these primary objects of desire, Cicero discerns certain appetites which he regards as distinctively human, since they depend upon the fact that mankind is endowed with reason, whereby he relates means to ends in an ordered scheme of life. The first of these is an inclination to social intercourse ('*hominum coetus, orationis et vitae societas*'). This causes him to identify his life with that of his fellows and to develop various forms of association with them. It thus becomes the chief motive for achievement ('*quae cura exsuscit animos et maiores ad rem gerendam facit*'). The second is the pursuit and investigation of truth ('*veri inquisitio atque investigatio, cognitionis et scientiae cupiditas*'), which is excited with the liberation of the human being from the necessity of pursuing basic physical needs. It is with the satisfaction of this appetite that he comes to be most truly himself. The third is a passion for prominence or distinction ('*adpetitio quaedam principatus*'). This desire lies at the root of aspirations to knowledge and power. At the same time, it determines the limits of authority

¹ *De Offic.* ii. 1. 1.

and subordination among men, for deference may justly be paid only to the claims of superior wisdom or of power which is exercised for the common good. The fourth and last is a love of order and sense of propriety, leading to moderation in word and deed (*τὸ πρέπον*, or *decorum*). No animal shares in the sense of beauty and harmony possessed by human beings and on the satisfaction of which their conduct so largely depends.

Starting from this conspectus of human nature, Cicero undertakes to erect a scheme of ethics. Four possible ideals emerge, corresponding to the four traditional cardinal virtues. These are: (1) the life of wisdom or contemplation, (2) the life of justice and beneficence, (3) courage or loftiness and strength of mind, (4) temperance or moderation and propriety. These possibilities he considers in turn, but with a characteristically Roman bias, as when he asserts that the pursuit of individual excellence is in all cases to be subordinated to the paramount need of maintaining the security and welfare of the organized community. Thus, for Cicero no less than for Vergil, salvation is not individual, but marks the achievement of purposes which are to be realized only in the corporate life.

With this preliminary warning, Cicero proceeds to discuss wisdom or the life of contemplation. This he dismisses with a brief reference to its besetting sins—hastiness of judgement and the waste of time involved in aimless and unprofitable studies which supersede activity—a kind of virtuosity by no means extinct in modern times.¹

Next comes justice, which, as the basis of human relationships and, in a peculiar sense, the Roman virtue, receives a much fuller treatment than the contemplative ideal.² Justice is described as the bond and principle of civil society. Its content is indicated in two formulas:

To harm no one unless provoked by injury ('ne cui quis noceat nisi lacessitus iniuria').

To employ common goods for communal ends, private goods for one's own ('ut communibus pro communibus utatur, privatis ut suis').

Thus civil society, considered as an embodiment of justice, exists for the double purpose of redressing injuries and of enforcing rights. Of these rights the most fundamental is that of property. Tracing property to an origin in long-standing

¹ i. 6. 18-19.

² i. 7 foll. 20-60.

occupation, conquest, agreement, or allotment, Cicero asserts that it constitutes a right, to interfere with which is to violate the purpose which underlies human society. Justice includes also the reciprocal exchange of mutual services ('communes utilitates in medium adferre mutatione officiorum dando accipiendo'). As such, its basis lies in good faith, i.e. fidelity to engagements. The mark of a just society will therefore be (a) respect for the sanctity of contract, and (b) a determination to see that every man receives his due ('tribuendo suum cuique et rerum contractarum fide'). From these principles it is possible to infer the character of injustice, the genesis of which may be traced to selfishness, fear, or greed. It thus becomes evident that there is a 'natural' limit to the pursuit of wealth, beyond which it serves no useful purpose. To forget this limit is to open the door to unrestricted competition (*contentio*) such as had marked the economic and political imperialism of Crassus and Caesar or to 'unsocial' money-making, the satisfaction of an instinct for acquisition which reflects nothing but political indifference or a miserly fear of incurring expense.

Justice involves a number of positive obligations; in describing which Cicero (notwithstanding his supposed lack of originality) attains a position radically different from that of Greek idealism in its loftiest flights. For, while affirming that this principle is the bond of men in states, Aristotle had accepted the corollary that it is without application to members of different communities, where there are 'no common magistracies to enforce engagements', thereby consigning inter-state relationships to the sway of expediency or force. Cicero, however, with the long background of Roman history behind him, propounds the view that, while the use of force is characteristic of the beast, the method of settling differences appropriate to men is that of debate or discussion ('vis proprium beluarum, disceptatio proprium hominis'), and this rule he applies to the relations of communities no less than individuals, making it the basis for a theory of international law. From this standpoint, he denied the legitimacy of war except for the purpose of exacting redress for injuries suffered (*rebus repetitis*), and then only after a formal declaration. On the same principle, he denounced all forms of national aggrandizement which were dictated merely by the love of power and glory, thus transcending the Machiavellism of classical antiquity and proclaiming the doctrine

that states as well as individuals are bound to keep faith.¹ Latin thinking, which recognized a difference between individual and community unfamiliar to the Greeks, gave rise to other no less significant conclusions. Thus, for example, Cicero accepted the distinction between 'combatants' and 'non-combatants' originally proposed by the elder Cato, and maintained that the obligations of individuals do not disappear by reason of the fact that the states of which they are members are at war.² But perhaps the most remarkable implication of Cicero's theory of justice had reference not to aliens or enemies but to slaves. The Stoic Chrysippus, according to Seneca,³ had first enunciated the proposition that slaves are to be regarded as permanent hired employees. This Cicero accepted as a rationalization of existing Roman practice in the formula: 'ita uti ut mercenariis; opera exigenda, iusta praebenda.'

The third virtue to be dealt with is courage or fortitude.⁴ This quality, though commonly regarded as more glorious than any of the other three, must nevertheless be associated with them if it is not to become a vice. For the spirit of fortitude is often accompanied by a love of power and by impatience of control, which give rise to acts of injustice such as those with which the society of Cicero's day was all too familiar. Emphasizing his distaste for militarism and imperialism, Cicero finds that true courage lies in the capacity for passive endurance with complete disregard for outward things, and for the active performance of great deeds attended with danger and difficulty. As such, it depends on (a) a correct appraisal of the good to be achieved, (b) freedom from all improper desires such as wealth, power, and glory. It thus presupposes a rigid subjection of the emotions to the imperatives of reason.

This is to socialize the notion of courage which, while it may dictate withdrawal from active life, on grounds, for instance, of poor health, will, in all but exceptional circumstances, call for the meticulous discharge of civic obligations. Normally, therefore, it will be exhibited in public relations and it will be apparent in the arts of peace no less than of war. When it is a question of vindicating the peace, courage requires that the citizen should take up arms, but the fighting qualities are the least significant element of this virtue, and the general at any rate will need a great understanding no less than a stout heart,

¹ § 38. ² §§ 37, 39. ³ *De Beneficiis*, iii. 22. 1. ⁴ *De Offic.* i. §§ 61-92.

if he is to avoid the behaviour which so often sullies the laurels of victory. Thus for Cicero courage is a moral and intellectual rather than a physical virtue; as such, it finds its supreme embodiment in the statesman who, without thought of private advantage, makes the good of the governed his sole aim, remembering that his office is a trust ('ut enim tutela, sic procuratio rei publicae'). Such a man will rise above partisan feeling and will speak his mind openly without hesitating to give offence; he will shun half-measures and equivocal courses; he will be lenient, affable, and courteous, strictly conscientious and exempt from passion when obliged to inflict punishment.

The fourth and last of the cardinal virtues is temperance.¹ Temperance prescribes a rule of decorum or propriety, which is characteristically defined as behaviour compatible with the inherent dignity of human nature. It thus implies that whatever a man says or does will be appropriate to the occasion. For nature herself has imposed on each and every one a role, which he must study to fulfil. In general, therefore, the duties ordained by propriety are: to follow nature's guidance, cultivating an earnest and thoughtful disposition, and keeping the emotions within bounds. Moreover, every person has two characters to support, viz. the one which he shares with all men as rational beings and the other which is peculiar to himself as an individual. While, therefore, he must take care always to act in accordance with reason, in so doing he will adopt a course which is consistent with his own disposition and aptitudes, thus avoiding the suggestion of incongruity or awkwardness. Accordingly, while developing the common graces of humanity, he will not do so at the cost of thwarting or perverting his own development.

Thus envisaged as a question of 'my station and its duties', the dictates of propriety become clear. Obligations of magistrate and subject, of citizen and alien, will depend upon and vary with their respective relations. The magistrate, for instance, will recognize that he acts in a representative capacity, 'carrying the person of the state'. His first obligation will therefore be to protect its dignity and prestige, and to maintain and expound its laws, remembering that these are the functions which have been entrusted to him. The private citizen, on the other hand, will seek to comport himself on a basis of equality

¹ i. §§ 93-151.

with his fellows, avoiding any excess of abasement and self-assertion, and desiring for the commonwealth justice and tranquillity. The alien, on his part, will confine his attention to his own affairs, eschewing impertinent interference with public business which is none of his concern.

Specific injunctions of propriety include modesty and decency in behaviour and speech, together with the maintenance of a suitable establishment. This last requirement involves a discussion of the occupations appropriate to a gentleman. 'Liberal' occupations are defined in general (according to a convention which is still maintained) as those which involve the exercise of more than ordinary sagacity and from which accrue results of more than ordinary utility. They therefore embrace agriculture, together with medicine, architecture, higher education, and commerce 'if on a large scale'.

Concluding with an effort to formulate a hierarchy of duties, Cicero reaffirms the superiority of justice to wisdom, and repeats that philosophy is without value unless it be applied to the practical purposes of life and to the advantage of mankind. Tracing the origin of civil society to social requirements rather than to necessity, he finds it to be inherently moral. This sets a limit to the claims of patriotism and disposes of any supposed obligation to defend the fatherland under all circumstances. The state, as an embodiment of the social consciousness, has no right to expect immoral conduct of its members. Accordingly, in the schematization of duties, the demands of religion come first, those of patriotism second, thirdly, domestic obligations, and, finally, the remaining obligations of civilized man.¹

Having thus concluded his examination of rectitude, Cicero proceeds to discuss the question of 'utility' or, as we should say, of economic advantage as a motive in human life. That this was a factor of great importance he is fully aware; to the spokesman of financial interests in the Roman senate, it could hardly indeed have been otherwise. Accordingly, he pays to the economic motive a generous tribute as the source and inspiration of the arts to which social life owes its superiority over that of solitude, including among these the care of health, agriculture, navigation, export and import trade, the construction of buildings, roads, and aqueducts, together with enterprises such as irrigation and mining.² Nevertheless, as a humanist, he asserts

¹ §§ 152-60.

² ii. §§ 12-14.

his unequivocal opposition to the view that it is possible to dissociate the concept of utility from that of rectitude and to accept it as an independent principle; for him, its significance is and must be as the means to an end. From this standpoint, there cannot be any true utility which does not conform to the demands of the moral ideal (*nihil utile nisi quod honestum*).

On the other hand, it is possible to consider the elements of this world as ministering to our advantage; and, thus envisaged, they may be classified as inanimate, animate, and rational, i.e., as he says, 'gods and men'. Of these, the last are of the greatest moment, whether for good or evil;¹ to co-operation with one another, rather than to 'fortune' or 'circumstance', must be ascribed the most important achievements of mankind. Accordingly, to succeed in life, one must win the support of one's fellows, and for this purpose one must know the true grounds of honour and esteem among men.²

In this connexion, Cicero vehemently denies that the secret lies with persons like Crassus and Caesar, the contemporary exponents of power-philosophy to whom fear and interest were the sole motive-forces in human life.³ Citing the fate of these men, he takes it to demonstrate the futility of their creed and to prove that goodwill provides the only sound basis for co-operative endeavour, a rule which he applies to the relations of societies no less than to those of individuals. From this point of view, the prestige of Rome in its best days was to be explained by the fact that it was in reality a *patrocinium* rather than an *imperium*, a big brother's movement and not a system of organized might.⁴ On the other hand, Caesar and Crassus failed because they were guilty of a fundamental confusion of mind; with them, the lust for ascendancy (*libido dominandi*) had usurped the place of a thirst for distinction (*appetitio principatus*) which might have been satisfied without injury to their fellow men. For this reason, they missed the very glory on which they had set their hearts.

True glory depends upon affection, confidence, and admiration, sentiments which are to be evoked by acts of justice and beneficence. Of these, justice is the more important; on it rests the possibility of common action, and, in this respect, it is indispensable even to a gang of thieves.⁵ Beneficence, however, is also a legitimate avenue to glory. As such, it takes the form

¹ § 16.

² 19.

³ 22.

⁴ 27.

⁵ 40.

With these general conclusions, Cicero arrives at the problem of conflict between the demands of rectitude and those of expediency, a problem which, to him, was more apparent than real. Recalling the principle *nihil utile nisi quod honestum*, he ventures the broad generalization that service is the law of life, and that to pursue one's own advantage to the detriment of another is to destroy the fellowship of mankind, just as the debilitation of any one of the bodily members involves the destruction of the organism as a whole. Nature, he affirms, denies to no man 'the right to live', but nature and the law of nations alike forbid him to harm others in the effort to do so, and this it is the purpose of law to prevent. It must thus be accepted as axiomatic that 'the good of each and every individual is the good of the whole' (*eadem utilitas uniuscuiusque et universorum*). To this law there can be no possible exception; it postulates the same consideration for fellow citizens as for kinsmen, and for aliens as for fellow citizens. To its elucidation and vindication he consecrates his third and final book.

The doctrine thus propounded admits of an interesting qualification which, as we may pause to note, Cicero accepts. This is that, strictly speaking, there can be no fellowship with 'tyrants', economic and political dynasts like Crassus and Caesar whom he describes as 'wild beasts in human form' (*ista in figura hominis feritas et inmanitas beluae*), and whose very existence he regards as incompatible with that of the commonwealth. With respect to such men, he boldly enunciates the proposition: killing no murder. 'This pestiferous and impious tribe must be expelled from the society of the free, as one cuts off a limb when it becomes moribund and threatens to poison the other parts of the body.'¹

The good citizen, on the other hand, must resist with all his might the temptation of Gyges.² This temptation may arise from the supposed demands either of political expediency or of friendship.³ In the one case, it results in acts such as the Roman destruction of Corinth, on which Cicero's comment is that nothing which is shameful can be truly expedient.⁴ In the other, the only safe rule is that one should never serve a friend to the injury of the public or in violation of one's pledged word.⁵ No reward, however great, is sufficient to justify crookedness, and the man who practises it is bound, in the end, to lose.⁶

¹ iii. § 32.² 38.³ 43 and 44.⁴ 49.⁵ 43.⁶ 79-81.

The truth thus stated is vouched for and authenticated by nature herself. This fact is evident from the findings of jurisprudence in the light of which the hoary maxim *caveat emptor* is shown to be obsolete. For the true spirit of law, as revealed by the *Lex Aquilia de dolo malo*, is opposed to misrepresentation and fraud of any kind. This statute provides that, in selling an article, the vendor shall make known to the purchaser any defects of which he is cognizant; and, in confirmation of this, the jurists have held that it is an offence for him to remain silent when questioned. In so doing, it implies that the demands of good faith are paramount, binding even upon enemies so long as faith and honour may be postulated on both sides.¹ But, in its effort to realize the ideal of *bona fides*, moral philosophy goes farther than jurisprudence, which is concerned merely with objective fact. Accordingly, there arises a distinction between the civil law and the law of nature, and it constantly becomes necessary to invoke the latter in order to correct deficiencies in the former, according to the maxim of Scaevola: *INTER BONOS BENE AGIER OPORTET ET SINE FRAUDATIONE EX BONA FIDE*. This rule applies to all forms of contract—wardships, partnerships, trusts and commissions, purchases and sales, hirings and lettings—and rightly, because it is in accord with the highest demands of our nature, which is, at bottom, the real source of law; and it absolutely condemns sharp practice (*simulatio intellegentiae*) in all forms.² On it depends the obligation of keeping faith even in the crucial instance of pledges given to an enemy; for, in the last analysis, the oath has reference to the honour of the man who takes it rather than to any supposed vengeance of the gods. Regulus, therefore, was no fool in sacrificing himself to this principle.

We have already referred to the estimates placed upon the *De Officiis* by great modern authorities. In this essay the author gives final utterance to his conviction that the end for which nature has designed mankind is the achievement of what may be called empirical selfhood, and that the purpose of organized society is to promote its development by establishing and maintaining adequate social controls. In so doing, Cicero proclaims an ideal of excellence not unworthy of human beings. At the same time, he insists upon their capacity to realize that ideal through a self-imposed discipline in which the passions are

¹ § 61.

² 72.

made himself an accessory to the Regicide, and for this he was in due course to pay the penalty with his life. But, if he thus seemed to perish as the martyr to a lost cause, his eclipse was only for the moment. By reaffirming the eternal, though partial, truths of classical liberalism and by exhibiting their dependence upon idealistic foundations, he helped to check the progress of barbarization within the empire and to strengthen republican prejudices in such a way that they had to be reckoned with in the final accounting by Augustus Caesar. These prejudices were never quite to die out in the Western world; and they have emerged in curious places and unexpected forms in modern times. We may see them in the bitter denunciation of autocracy contained in Machiavelli's *Discourses*, and Jefferson restates them when he declares that, if the tree of liberty is to flourish, it must frequently be watered with the blood of its foes.

In his effort to give new life to the republic, Cicero appears to break new ground in at least one important particular. This is in what he has to say about public opinion as a factor of democratic control. It had been assumed in pre-revolutionary speculative circles that the problem was one merely of political mechanics and that its solution lay in a balance of opposing forces within the constitution. This, it was supposed, would neutralize possible excesses whether of the magistrate, the aristocracy, or the commons, thus preventing their respective 'perversions', tyranny, oligarchy, or mob-rule.¹ Furthermore, it was generally agreed that, by the establishment of such a balance, permanent equilibrium had actually been achieved at Rome. The disorders of revolutionary times were to expose the fallacy of this view and, doctrinaire though he was, Cicero was too acute not to perceive it. Thus, though he offered a nominal adherence to the theory of the mixed constitution, he recognized that this in itself was no adequate safeguard of freedom. What was needed, he urged, was an active and vigorous public opinion, such as was possible through the co-operation of men in all walks of life who believed in the preservation of republican ideals. This is what he meant by the *consensus* or *concordia ordinum*, a mobilization of sanity, as it seemed for a moment to have been realized at the time of his own consulship. In that case, however, the 'united front' was the result of a purely temporary panic; the question was how to give it permanence. This he

¹ Polyb. vi.

In Cicero's eyes, the failure of Pompey and Caesar was the result of a radical defect of character; 'both wanted power, their ambition was to be kings'. True leadership, on the other hand, was immune from temptations such as those to which Pompey and Caesar had succumbed. Superior to the vanities and deceits of material self-assertion, it was inspired by a thirst for honour and glory which found sufficient reward in ministering to the common good. In this way, it satisfied the demand of society for 'an element of monarchical distinction' (*quiddam praestans et regale*) without doing violence to the most exacting standards of republican virtue. But, as such virtue was in his day conspicuous by its absence, Cicero discovered it, as he discovered the commonwealth of his dreams, in the past. In the idealized figure of the younger Scipio he saw precisely that combination of loyalty or devotion (*pietas*) with enlightened and refined perceptions of right (*iustitia*) which qualified him to be a true guardian or protector of the republic.

We need not pause to consider how far the portrait thus drawn corresponds with fact; certainly the Cato of history would have failed to recognize himself in the gentle and humane philosopher of the dialogue *De Senectute*, and in all probability the same may be said of Scipio Aemilianus. But, for the author, the question was not so much one of historicity as of artistic verisimilitude; and this is by no means accidental. He spoke as the exponent of Academic idealism, for which a genuine incarnation was both inconceivable and unnecessary. To this fact we may perhaps ascribe the deficiencies of Cicero the 'trimmer', the man whose professions were not seldom at variance with his practice, the *imperator* who was too proud to fight.

It is strictly in accord with this type of mind that, since it recognizes its inability to integrate thought and action in this world, it should look for a principle of integration in a world of the imagination. In this respect, also, Cicero runs true to type; for the only principle he can discover comes to him in the shape of a dream. The *Somnium Scipionis* represents the frail embodiment of his hope for a political salvation, and in it we may perceive the sanction for that hope. This depends, in part, upon traditional Roman beliefs regarding the stock; the faith that, while the individual was the creature of a day, the 'family' was immortal; the business of its members, while they live, being to 'carry the person' of the family, showing themselves worthy

representatives of the ancestors whose names they bear. But, in the case of Cicero, these beliefs were reinforced by certain intimations of personal immortality, based on philosophic fancies derived from Pythagoras and Plato.¹

We may thus conclude that, in his person, Cicero illustrates to perfection the strength and weakness of classical liberal idealism. From this standpoint, there can be no doubt that, so far from forecasting the concrete realities of the Augustan principate, he would have found them hardly less distasteful than, in fact, he found the monarchy of Julius. For, as the course of events was to demonstrate, a régime of justice and equity such as he desiderates was not to be realized even under the aegis of Augustus and Rome. It is none the less true that, if Cicero did not anticipate the work of Augustus, Augustus on his part did look back to Cicero, seeing in his doctrine a much-needed justification for his power. In this way, the spirit of the orator, tortured and frustrated throughout his life, came to enjoy a vicarious immortality in the household of his enemies.

It is a truism to say that ideas have no legs; by themselves they do not march. Something, therefore, in the nature of a dynamic was needed in order to impart to Ciceronianism the vitality which it lacked; something to win it acceptance and make it what it was destined to become—the common coin of posterity. This dynamic it was the function of Vergil to provide. In providing it, he supplied the final ingredient to the ideology of the Augustan age.

It is evident that the work of Vergil was written with conscious reference to his predecessors and that, to obtain the effects which he desired, the poet drew freely upon the whole classical heritage, Greek as well as Latin. The truth of this is amply illustrated by the commanding skill with which he appropriates to his use the language as well as the thought of antiquity. Nevertheless, in his attitude to questions which were of vital interest to his generation, he represents a sharp reversion from the Hellenic to the Italian point of view; and, just as the raw materials of his work are derived from native life and history, so also its matrix lies in *religio*, undoubtedly the most characteristic element of Italian experience. What we see in Vergil is thus a Catonism, but with its foundations widened and deepened, its character purified and ennobled, by the findings of Ciceronian

¹ Especially *Timaeus*, 41 D-42 E.

will: virtue is not so much knowledge as character; and its fruits are seen in activity rather than in repose or contemplation. Aeneas is thus the pilgrim father of antiquity; his followers the *Mayflower* company of the Ancient World; while the organized society of the empire is the Graeco-Roman counterpart to the New England Kingdom of the Saints; subject, it may be added, to limitations and threatened by dangers which confront all societies in which consecrated egotism (*amor sui*) disguises itself as the love of God.

Accordingly, Vergil gives authentic expression not merely to the Roman temper but in considerable degree to that of Western civilization as a whole. In so doing, he touches a high-water mark of achievement in Latin letters; in him alone you see them all. For he discloses the real nature of the concord or agreement which underlies the Roman philosophy of the state—no shallow intellectual assent or compact but, as it had been defined by Cicero and as the word itself implies, 'a union of hearts'.¹

The spirit and method of Vergil are evident even in his non-political works. The *Georgics* have been described as an epic of mother earth; they are not so much that as of 'wheat and woodland, tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and herd'; that is to say, a monument to the human effort which transforms the face of the earth and imparts to it, as has been said,² something of the warmth and life of an Italian landscape. What they suggest is not sentimental rapture but a call to work for the realization of moral values associated with the life of the farm, the qualities which enable Vergil thus to salute his native land:

Salve, magna parens frugum, Saturnia tellus,
magna virum . . .

as though the finest product of a country were the men she breeds.

Such ideas, already adumbrated in Vergil's earlier works, were to receive detailed treatment in the *Aeneid*. The epic is charged with a sense that, with the rise of Rome, fate has given birth to something novel in the evolution of peoples. And this, her last and greatest achievement, she has accomplished in the West. Thus did Vergil proclaim for the first time the autonomy

¹ Cic. *De Rep.* i. 32. 49 and ii. 42. 69.

² Wight Duff, *A Literary History of Rome*, p. 449, quoting *Georgics*, i. 99: 'exercetque frequens tellurem atque imperat arvis'; cf. Tenney Frank, *Vergil*, pp. 160-6.

Hellenism should devote its energies to exploring the manifold possibilities latent in that idea.

In saying this, we do not forget that, for two elements at least of Greek society, such possibilities were not likely to have much appeal. These we may designate as the 'rugged' and the 'soft' individualists respectively. The former included, on the one hand, eccentrics like the cynic Diogenes; on the other, Thrasy-machean *supra-homines*, economic and moral dynasts who resented the pretensions of the organized state as arbitrary restrictions upon what they held to be a natural right of self-assertion. The latter consisted of Sybarites or hedonists who, with the lyric poets of Ionia, were prepared to dismiss the illusion of perfectibility and to abandon themselves to the seductions of mere sense. Manifestations of either kind were, no doubt, both frequent and dangerous, as indeed they proved to be in more than one celebrated case.¹ Yet their occurrence serves to emphasize the truth that, with the vast majority of men, allegiance was given to the *polis*, the development of which was thenceforth to become one of the chief preoccupations of the Greek mind. The result was a persistent effort of experimentation, as a consequence of which the Mediterranean coastland was strewn with the wreckage of working, if defective, models which, for one reason or another, failed to withstand the tests imposed upon them.² And, with a characteristic fertility of invention, Greek theory set itself to obviate the difficulties revealed in practice by devising an endless variety of ingenious and (more or less) instructive schemes.

It would be false, however, to suppose that all or, indeed, any considerable proportion of Hellenic polities were consecrated to a realization of human excellence (*ἀρετή*), as this was apprehended by poets and philosophers. Plutarch, in fact, asserts that of the vast number which had flourished and passed away, one only, viz. Lycurgan Sparta, consciously and deliberately embraced such an ideal.³ To the great majority of Greeks the *polis* must have commended itself, as it did to Pindar, as on the whole the most eligible 'state' for the man of middling circumstances. To such a man it offered the best prospect of obtaining

¹ e.g. that of Alcibiades. See Plut. *Alcib.* and Thuc. v-viii *passim*, esp. vi. 89-92, his speech at Sparta.

² In this connexion it will be remembered that Aristotle is supposed to have examined more than 150 such models in preparation for his *Politics*.

³ *Lycurg.* 29-31.

what he really wanted—security from external danger and the promise of material well-being. Historically speaking, the *polis* was thus a middle-class solution to the problem of power, and, as an institution, its fortunes and misfortunes were bound up with those of the small landed proprietor.¹

But it is precisely this fact which lends significance to the Aristotelian formula. Aristotle, like his master Plato, held that what was really wrong with these communities was the lack of a sound principle of organization. In default of such a principle they had succumbed to notions such as those popularized by the sophists, whereby power was resolved into a question of social mechanics and identified with the acquisition of specific techniques. In this connexion we may recall his criticism of Hippodamus, the 'town-planner', who professed an ability to lay out a society as he had laid out the Piraeus, according to a mathematical scheme; as well as of those contemporary statesmen who confined their attention exclusively to problems of economics or finance.² These criticisms have more than a merely antiquarian interest; they point, indeed, to what idealism conceived to be the essence of the problem.

For philosophical idealism the secret of power is 'order'; and order, if it is to be well founded, must be 'just', i.e. it must bear a definite and intelligible relation to a cosmic principle which lies deeper than all mere conventions of behaviour, whether of individual or communal life. Idealism is thus committed to the discovery of such a principle as the necessary basis for a valid science of 'nature' and of 'man'.

In this connexion we can afford to ignore the distinction between Platonic and Aristotelian science (*ἐπιστήμη*, *scientia*). For Plato the principle in question is strictly transcendental; for this reason it is 'hard to apprehend' and 'hard to communicate'. Nevertheless, it is (dogmatically) conceived as cosmic Mind or Intelligence (*νοῦς*), which thus presents itself as the 'beginning of motion' (*ἀρχὴ κινήσεως*) to which is ascribed the characteristic structure of the universe and all that it contains. As such, however, it does not operate *in vacuo*. On the contrary, it presupposes a substrate of uncreated primordial matter (*ἄλη*).

¹ See Thuc. viii. 97, on the government of the 5,000 in Athens. Also Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 33.

² *Pol.* ii. 1267^b22 foll. and i. 11. 1259^a36; cf. Aristotle's attitude to sophistic rhetoric, 'the Art', as expressed in his own work on the subject.

somewhat fanciful, in order to focus attention upon the individual or *prima substantia*. Yet he fully agrees with Plato in supposing that the individual substance possesses significance only, so to speak, as the 'carrier' of a type; furthermore, that, while everything else in him belongs to the ephemeral world of *γένεσις* and *φθορά*, the 'typical' alone is permanent, essential, and intelligible (*πάσα ἐπιστήμη τοῦ καθόλου*); finally that for the realization of this permanent, essential, and intelligible 'part' of his being, what he requires is to live the life of the *polis*.

Thus envisaged, the *polis* constitutes a response to the specifically human demand for a specifically human order. In this sense it may properly be described as 'natural'. But its 'naturalness' is in no sense that of a spontaneous growth. On the contrary, it is that of an institution designed, within limits conditioned by the potentialities of the material, to secure mankind from 'accident' or 'spontaneity' (*ταυτόματον*), thereby making possible the attainment of his proper *τέλος*. From this standpoint the order embodied in the *polis* is profoundly un-historical. What it promises, indeed, is immunity from the 'flux' which is all that idealism discerns in mere movement. And this is the reason why, according to Aristotle, 'the man who first invented the state was the greatest of benefactors.'¹

In this concept of the *polis* Aristotle finds a theoretical basis for classifying constitutions according to whether or not they minister to the end in view. It explains also his strictures on existing states, all of which, he declares, are either oligarchies or democracies, organized to promote the exclusive interests either of the 'rich few' or of the 'many poor'. In particular it accounts for his attitude to types such as those represented by Athens and Sparta, the one approximating to the libertarian, the other to the authoritarian ideal. With respect to Athens his criticism includes not merely the 'ultimate democracy' or ochlocracy which, by discarding all formal restrictions, publicly consecrates disorder as the norm of life.² It embraces also the earlier versions of democracy, with their roots in 'expansive emotion' as represented by the sea-faring rabble (*ναυτικὸς ὄχλος*). For Plato, the beginning of Athens' downfall dated from the overthrow of the Areopagus (461 B.C.) and the consequent elimination of religion (*αἰδώς*) as a force of restraint

¹ Pol. i. 2. 1253^a30.

² Ath. Pol. 41 for the abolition of the *γραφὴ παρανόμων* and its consequences.

upon the community.¹ Aristotle would agree, but he goes further even than Plato, for he sees little good in anything Athenian subsequent to the reforms of Solon.² So much for the idealist attitude towards 'liberty' as a principle of political cohesion, to the advocacy of which Pericles had addressed himself with such eloquence in the Funeral Speech.³ As for Spartan authoritarianism, Aristotle's comments on it are hardly less pungent. Sparta, he admits, does indeed stand for a positive principle of social order and, in this sense, must be regarded as superior to her rival. But the order in question is not and cannot be enforced; its conventions are defied by Spartan citizens whenever they find an opportunity. The reason for this lies, not so much in human perversity, as in defects inherent in the order itself. The Spartans have concentrated upon the promotion of an exclusively military *ethos*. This, however, is but one aspect of excellence and to it they have sacrificed other elements even more essential. On this account their constitution falls short of what is demanded by true political 'justice'.⁴

These criticisms do not in the least suggest any loss of faith in the political idea. On the contrary, they serve to indicate what idealism conceives to be the task of creative politics. Translated into terms of practice, they point to an elaborate and comprehensive scheme of social planning in which, with the *τέλος* of man constantly in view, 'function' shall be 'adjusted to capacity' and 'instruments to both'.⁵ In this connexion, we may pause to note that the work of statecraft is complicated by the fact that the elements with which it has to deal are more or less inclined to resist manipulation. Hence, to begin with, the necessity for a rigorous delimitation of the field. This necessity finds expression in an ideal of communal self-sufficiency (*αὐτάρκεια*, 'autarky') which carries with it important implications in respect both to men and material. Thus, from the standpoint of economy, it postulates a territory capable of producing everything needed for the secure and easy provision

¹ *Laws*, 698 B.

² Pol. ii. 12. 1274^a.

³ Thuc. ii. 37-46. It will be noted that Pericles employs a wholly fresh terminology to describe the relations of men within the new society, as he conceives it. This, it would appear, is deliberate. It emphasizes his contention that Athens is a *παράδειγμα* for the future; i.e. a real 'school for Hellas'.

⁴ Pol. ii. 9. 1271^b.

⁵ For details see, *inter alia*, Barker, *The Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle*.

the king. Finally, fourth-century experiments in federalism were equally ineffective as a cure for the maladies of Hellas, serving merely to widen the area and complicate the issues in dispute. It is a curious and instructive commentary on human limitations that Aristotle should have been at such pains to vindicate the necessity of the *polis*, at the very moment when the *polis*, her historic mission concluded, was being relegated to the limbo of antiquities in order to make way for a fresh organization of power. This power was, of course, that of hellenized Macedonia.

Alexander the Great began his career as hereditary chieftain to a Macedonian tribe; he ended it as sovereign of the first empire which, by uniting East and West in one huge physical system, might justly claim to be universal. This achievement, made possible by force of arms, appeared to involve the promise of a radically new future for mankind. The question arises: What significance had that future for the history of politics?

So far as concerns contemporary opinion, the answer to this question must have been doubtful in the extreme. On the one hand, observers like Aristotle, however much they might admire Alexander as a man, could hardly have anticipated much good from his programme. For them the obliteration of the independent, self-sufficient *polis* must have implied the extinction of the political idea, in any sense in which it might be expected to minister to the demand for a truly human good. On the other hand, there can be no question that, to a very considerable number of Greeks, the Macedonian actually appeared as a deliverer. Hellenism had always envisaged two quite distinct types of human excellence, that of the 'hero' and that of the 'citizen'; the problem, indeed, was to reconcile the two.¹ During the brief hour of glory which followed the national wars of liberation the tendency had been to lay all possible stress upon 'civic excellence', and to attribute the victory of Hellas over Xerxes and his host to the disciplined valour and common patriotism of the co-operating Greek states.² Yet, even with respect to the *polis* as an institution, the Greeks always contemplated the necessity of occasional action, so to speak, from 'outside'. Its very origin, indeed, was commonly ascribed to the 'wisdom and strength' of hero-founders like Lycurgus and

¹ Arist. *Pol.* iii. 13. 1284^a.

² Thucydides (i. 69. 5) is sceptical of this interpretation.

Theseus.¹ Moreover, a crisis of political life was thought to justify the intervention of heroic virtue; such as occurred, for instance, during the late sixth and early fifth centuries where tyrannies or dictatorships everywhere seemed to be the need of the hour. In this connexion the example of Gelo, 'king' of Syracuse, provides an instructive comment on the technique of effective action.² Accordingly, with the progressive disintegration of the city-state after the Peloponnesian war, the Greek mind once more began to turn towards the idea of a hero-saviour. In the realm of pure theory Plato was calling for a 'dictatorship of intelligence', a model of which he offered in the 'philosopher-king'. But, as was perhaps suspected by the less guileless, qualities other than mere intelligence were also required of the successful leader; and Xenophon in his historico-philosophical romances³ seeks to envisage the type from this more comprehensive point of view. From the moment of Isocrates' famous *Address to Philip*, the question, hitherto purely academic, entered upon a new phase. Thenceforth it became a problem of practical politics upon which Greeks of whatever shade of opinion were required to take sides. As such, it was to be decided (except for purposes of rhetoric) on the battle-field of Chaeronea.

Meanwhile, what of the man who was cast for the role of deliverer? Alexander, the son of Philip, fell heir to a kingdom which had been built up during a lifetime of skilful and unscrupulous intrigue, supported by ever-increasing military and economic power. He also inherited his father's passion for expansionist imperialism. But, over and above this, he had the benefit of what has been described as the best available education of his time, Aristotle himself having served as one of his tutors. Alexander could thus think of himself as a reincarnation of Achilles, a heroic spirit thirsting for glory and ready to endure anything for the satisfaction of his pride; or as a second Heracles, the man who, by labouring to benefit his fellow mortals, achieved a personal immortality, and whose descendant (as

¹ See Plut. *Lives*, and note especially the *Life of Theseus*, chs. 35-6, for the use made of the myth in relation to Cleisthenic democracy (marked by the translation of the bones of the hero to Athens under Cimon and by the formation of an official and popular cult).

² Hdt. vii. 153-65. See also Arist. *Pol.* v, on 'tyranny', where he anticipates almost every thing which was to be said on the subject by Machiavelli.

³ e.g. the *Cyropaedia*.

industry are non-existent among the Greeks. In fact, the sloth of that people has cost them their very freedom. Are we to suppose that, by following their precepts, we can hold this empire together?

In these words the author proclaims his conviction that, despite contemporary degeneracy, Rome provides the best model for the reconstruction of Rome.

This, however, was merely to raise the question what was peculiar to the Roman genius. Of this Julius Caesar¹ had indicated at least one important aspect when he insisted that the Romans had never shrunk from adopting novel expedients in order to meet new facts and needs; and that they were ready to appropriate serviceable ideas alike from friend and foe. The record of the city was, indeed, one of persistent borrowings, the tradition of which goes back to her earliest contacts with her neighbours in prehistoric Italy. She had thus drawn upon the Etruscans for notions of industry, commerce, and building-construction, above all of religious practice, including the technique of divination (*haruspicina*). To the Greeks she ascribed the very framework of her constitution, together with elements of her fundamental law.² From the Samnites she boasted of having derived the legionary organization and equipment with which she had crushed the armies of Hannibal and Philip V; from the Carthaginians a model of the war-galley which served to win for her control of the sea in the First Punic war.

These examples will suffice to illustrate at least one significant element of the Roman character. What they reveal is a spirit bent on worldly success and capable of profiting by such gifts as fortune threw in the way, indeed of turning even the direst necessities to advantage. But, in this sense, they point to other and not less remarkable qualities of the imperial people. Our object is not to undertake an independent examination of those qualities, to which a vast amount of scholarly attention has been given.³ We are merely concerned to discover, if possible,

¹ In Sall. *Cat.* 51. 37-8; cf. Polyb. vi. 25. 11.

² The Tarquins were supposed to be descendants of an immigrant Corinthian, Demaratus, Livy, i. 34. Parts of the XII Tables were based traditionally on Solon's legislation, in reality perhaps on that of Magna Graecia.

³ For a general estimate see Grenier, *The Roman Spirit*; for specific aspects, various works on religion including Warde Fowler, *The Religious Experience of the Roman People* and *The Roman Festivals*; also C. Bailey, *Phases of the Religion of Ancient Rome*, Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*. Other phases of Roman life are dealt with by Tenney Frank, *An Economic History of Rome*, as well as by numerous writers on ancient law and institutions.

how they were apprehended by contemporaries of Augustus. For this purpose we must consider, in addition to works like those of Vergil and Horace, the monumental effort of Livy to achieve a 'rationalization' of Roman life. His attitude will be apparent from what he has to say about 'history'.

cf. Herodotus
 'It is', declares Livy,¹ 'the peculiar value and profit of history that it provides you with evidence to illustrate in a striking manner every possible aspect of behaviour (*omnis . . . exempli documenta in industri posita monumento*). From these you may select both for yourself and for your country what is worthy of imitation; in them you may perceive these things—evil in inception and issue—which you must avoid.'

Envisaged in the light of this idea, the history of Rome assumes for the author a quite unique significance.

'Either I am blinded by love for my task, or there never was a state greater, purer, and richer in good examples; no community into which avarice and luxury penetrated so late; none where poverty and thrift were for so long held in such high esteem. The fewer our resources, the less there was of cupidity. It is but recently that an accumulation of wealth has stimulated avarice; the superabundance of material goods an itch on the part of men to indulge a passion which is ruinous to everything including themselves.'

This pronouncement conceals assumptions of the utmost importance for an understanding of the contemporary mind.² What they involve is a claim that it is both desirable and possible to erect a future upon the basis of an idealized past. Such a claim is, however, utterly unrealistic. In the first place it ignores the truth that history does not repeat itself; that ever-changing situations constitute a perpetual challenge to the ingenuity and endurance of mankind. In the second, it presupposes that men are in fact at liberty to choose between perfectly arbitrary and abstract alternatives of 'vice' and 'virtue'; in other words, that there is nothing to prevent them, should they so desire, from living the life of their own grand-

¹ *Praef.*, §§ 10-12.

² And, it may be added, for that of the classical Renaissance. The criticism of Livy which follows applies with equal force to his disciple, Machiavelli. The latter is commonly regarded as a hard-boiled 'realist'. He was, in fact, a romantic visionary, quite as much out of touch with the needs of his day as was Julian the Apostate with those of his. And for precisely the same reasons! In this connexion it is instructive to study the *Discourses on Livy* and the *History of Florence* alongside the *Prince*. See also the *Life of Castruccio Castracani* for use made of the classical concepts of *virtù* and *fortuna*.

or distrust but by love—a world from which the divisions and oppositions of secular society have vanished and there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free. The consequence is a new sense of community which finds expression in mutual service. Furthermore, the values to which the neophyte has dedicated himself are felt to be ultimate. They thus provide an irrefragable sanction for pure and upright living. And finally, since there is no inherent reason why the Gospel should not be universally accepted, there is an overmastering passion to communicate its benefits to all men.

This pronouncement may be taken as a faithful reflection of apostolic and sub-apostolic teaching; and it loses nothing of its significance when we remember that, according to tradition, Justin Martyr was himself a former Platonist, converted about the year 133.¹ For this means that he had discovered in Christianity what philosophy had failed to give him, namely, the basis for a radically fresh and original attitude towards experience, in the light of which the wisdom of the *saeculum* appeared, in the words of St. Paul, to be mere foolishness. That interpretation rested, not on the guesses of human sagacity, but on a revelation in the Master of the 'good, unbegotten God', and from this standpoint everything depended upon belief in Christ as the 'rock' upon which the edifice was to be erected. The statement of Justin thus serves to introduce what has sometimes been described as the issue between 'science' and 'faith'.

In their efforts to formulate this issue certain of the Christians indulged in such extravagant language as to leave the impression that their opposition to 'science' was an opposition to reason itself. Thus Tertullian, in a familiar outburst, was to ask:

'What has Athens to do with Jerusalem, the Academy with the Church? . . . We have no need for curiosity since Jesus Christ, nor for inquiry since the Evangel.'

'Tell me', he adds, 'what is the sense of this itch for idle speculation? What does it prove, this useless affectation of a fastidious curiosity, notwithstanding the strong confidence of its assertions? It was highly appropriate that Thales, while his eyes were roaming the heavens in astronomical observation, should have tumbled into a well. This mishap may well serve to illustrate the fate of all who occupy themselves with the stupidities of philosophy.'

He then proceeds to outline the reason for his attitude:

¹ Duchesne, *op. cit.* i, p. 205.

'This is the substance of secular wisdom that it rashly undertakes to explain the nature and dispensation of God. . . . Heretics and philosophers deal with similar material, and their arguments are largely the same. It is the Platonic ideas which have supplied the Gnostics with their aeons, the Marcionite deity (the ideal of tranquillity) comes from the Stoics, the identification of God with matter is a doctrine of Zeno, with fire of Heraclitus, . . . the Epicureans supply the notion of annihilation of the soul; and all alike are agreed in denying any possibility of regeneration for the flesh. . . . Unhappy Aristotle, who supplies them with a logic evasive in its propositions, far-fetched in its conclusions, disputatious in its arguments, burdensome even to itself, settling everything in order to settle nothing.'¹

Hence, as he elsewhere demands,

'What is there in common between the philosopher and the Christian, the pupil of Hellas and the pupil of Heaven, the worker for reputation and for salvation, the manufacturer of words and of deeds, the builder and the destroyer, the interpolator of error and the artificer of truth, the thief of truth and its custodian?'²

The conclusion follows: 'To know nothing against the rule of faith is to know everything.'³

The appeal of Tertullian thus resolves itself into an appeal to 'simple faith'.

'It is not to thee that I address myself, the soul which, formed in the schools, trained in the libraries, belches forth a fund of academic wisdom, but thee, the simple and uncultivated soul, such as they have who have nothing else, whose whole experience has been gleaned on street-corners and cross-roads and in the industrial plant. I need thine inexperience since in thy little store of experience nobody believes. . . . It is the "secret deposit of congenital and inborn knowledge" which contains the truth, and this is not a product of secular discipline. The soul comes before letters, words before books, and man himself before the philosopher and the poet.'⁴

In these words he sums up his notion of the *anima naturaliter Christiana*.

The hostility of Tertullian to classical discipline prompts him to state the doctrine of the incarnation in a most provocative way. 'The Son of God was born, I am not ashamed of it because it is shameful; the Son of God died, it is credible for the very reason that it is silly; and, having been buried, He rose again, it is certain because it is impossible.'⁵ This is the notorious

¹ *De Praescript.* 7.

² *Apol.* 46.

³ *De Praescript.* 7.

⁴ *De Testimonio Animae*, chs. 1 and 5.

⁵ *De Carne Christi*, 5.

credo quia absurdum which, by asserting the shameful, the silly, and the impossible as against the evidences of good taste, probability, and reason itself, hurls a defiant challenge in the face of the classical world.

These sentiments are not, perhaps, quite typical; they are inspired by a passionate fear of the dangers to be apprehended from contemporary movements both outside and inside the Church: on the one hand, the seductive religious liberalism professed by certain members of the Septimian dynasty; on the other, the development of speculative activity among theologians in a way which seemed to obscure, if not to undermine, the foundations of the faith. Nevertheless, they may be accepted as an overstatement¹ rather than a misstatement of the Christian position. For if there was any single thing to which Christian teaching pointed, it was to a recognition of the authority of the Master as the one avenue to truth. This authority was conceived as absolute and exclusive. As such, it involved consequences of the most far-reaching character, the full significance of which was certainly not apparent, at any rate during the ante-Nicene period. But this much, at least, was evident, that it meant a departure from what, as we have elsewhere tried to show, was the conventional classical approach to the problems of human life, that is, through 'nature and reason'. At the same time it suggested a new ideal and a new method of thought to be achieved through 'dependence' on Christ. And, from this standpoint, the duty and privilege of the Christian were not so much to investigate as to apprehend.

Accordingly, the primary obligation of believers was to determine their convictions with respect to the Master. And here the appeal was, in the first instance, to history, i.e. to the recognition of Jesus of Nazareth as an actual human being who 'ate, drank, and suffered' under Tiberius Caesar.² This was fundamental, for on it depended the distinction between Christianity and the pagan mystery cults whose objects were, in general, 'mythical'; i.e. figments of the imagination.³ The second question was one of greater delicacy: it was to formulate their sense of the meaning of Jesus' life in terms which should record

¹ Better, perhaps, a partial or *ex parte* statement.

² Ignatius, *Ad Trall.* 9. 1; *Ad Smyrn.* 2.

³ The point has been emphasized by Lebreton, *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, i, p. 181.

with strict fidelity the sense of Scripture and, at the same time, be comprehensible to the contemporary mind. In so doing, the Church was governed by texts such as that which concludes the Gospel of St. John: 'This has been written in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, so believing, you may have life in His name.'¹ Thus epitomized, the fundamentals of Christian doctrine found expression in the so-called rule of faith (*regula fidei*) to be professed by believers at baptism. This formulation, which is thought to embody apostolic teaching, was already traditional in Rome in the third century, and types analogous to it were current among the Churches of Egypt, Palestine, and Asia Minor.²

The rule of faith contained two propositions of vital importance. To begin with, it affirmed that the historical Christ was the 'only Son' of the Father and so, quite literally, the God to end gods. It thus underlay what was commonly regarded as 'Christian atheism'. For to accept this thesis was to reject as fraudulent the multifarious deities of secularism and, in particular, the claim to divinity put forward on behalf of the 'virtue' and 'fortune' of Caesar. At the same time it was to dissociate oneself from the hopes and fears embodied in the Augustan empire. It thus accounts for that sense of alienation which led the Christian to describe himself as a pilgrim or foreigner in imperial society, and for his absolute refusal to participate in many of its most significant activities. It also explains why he found himself denied the easy toleration which was normally accorded to 'unlicensed cults'.

The second element of the Christian *credo* was no less important than the first. This was the prospect of 'eternal life' extended to the faithful. That prospect was based, not on the common pagan aspiration to transcendence, but on a new sense of the relationship between 'body' and 'spirit' as revealed in the life of the Master, and therewith of the potentialities of human nature to be realized through a 'redemption' of the flesh. The problem was to grasp the meaning of this revelation, especially in relation to ideas of apotheosis prevalent in the contemporary pagan world. In this connexion, perhaps the chief difficulty was to overcome the tendency to think in terms of 'form' and 'matter'; i.e. of concepts which were a legacy from

¹ xx. 31; cf. 2 Pet. i.

² Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, sub voc. 'Creeds'.

the effort of classical *scientia* to construct for itself a picture of the cosmos. We have already noted certain of the developments to which this led in imperial philosophy.¹ In the religious consciousness the counterpart to these developments was the rise of various systems of 'gnosis'. These systems had little in common except the desire to escape from what was felt to be the 'contamination' of body, and the claim to have discovered an effective technique for so doing. In this crisis the Church found a champion in Irenaeus, who vigorously opposed the Gnostics in the name of the Incarnated Word.²

The error of the Gnostics was to have misconceived the significance of matter and motion which they regarded as inherently 'evil'. In this they were not unique, for a precisely similar tendency was presently to manifest itself among an important group of churchmen, the Christian idealists of Alexandria. It has, for instance, been noted that Clement puts forward a theory of Christian gnosis which is hardly to be distinguished from that professed by contemporary pagan mystics, whereby the *logos* serves to guide the neophyte through successive stages of illumination. At the same time he advocates a scheme of Christian propaedeutics which is obviously based on Neopythagorean-Platonic practice. With Origen the admission of pagan ideology is hardly less apparent. He has thus been convicted of a wholesale adoption of Aristotelian terminology and definitions.³ And, in his great work on First Principles (*περὶ ἀρχῶν*), he envisages his problem in terms of the concepts traditional to pagan science. The starting-point is the conventional opposition of the 'One' and the 'Many', contact between which is established by means of a hypothetical *logos*, envisaged as a 'second god' and so a 'creature' (*κτίσμα*) who is thought to contain within himself the archetypes or forms of the spiritual world. These, in turn, are 'imprisoned' in bodies, angelic, demonic, and human, as a 'punishment'. The cosmos is without beginning and without end, but an escape from the world of body is offered through belief in Christ conceived as 'pure' spirit.⁴ So far was Origen from appreciating the significance of Christianity as an 'historical' religion based on

¹ Ch. IV, p. 164 foll.

² For his services in this connexion, see Lebreton, *op. cit.* ii, p. 395 foll.; cf. E. Brunner, *Der Mittler (passim)*.

³ G. Bardy in *Mélanges Glotz*, i, pp. 75-83.

⁴ Duchesne, *op. cit.* i, p. 340 foll.

upon tradition for the interpretation of scriptural texts as, for example, in the matter of St. Paul's observations on marriage and their relation to problems of his own day. While thus taking refuge in a kind of theoretical conservatism, he emerged as a strong practical leader who carried his flock through successive crises of persecution under Decius and Valerian.

It is none the less evident that the real problem of the Church was to work out the elements of a philosophy in keeping with its own distinctive first principles; that is, it was a problem of understanding and application. And, from this standpoint, the third-century fathers deserve the consideration of pioneers who, by their very errors, made the discovery of new worlds possible. For the lack of just such a philosophy, that century marked a turning-point in the history of the Church. Morally bold and vigorous, it was still intellectually timid or weak; and, victorious as a way of life, it was still philosophically deficient. Accordingly, it suffered hardly more from the malice of its enemies than from the ineptitude of its friends and, impotent to overcome its own intellectual difficulties, it was obviously without the heavy artillery needed to beat down paganism. Hence paganism was to survive in the more exalted circles of imperial society, in order to make a final bid for ascendancy under Julian the Apostate.

The evolution of a specifically Christian philosophy was to some extent promoted by theoretical attacks against the faith such as those levelled by Celsus and Porphyry in the third, and by Julian and his circle in the fourth, century. It was stimulated also by events in the world of action, such as the persecutions from Decius to Diocletian and, subsequently, the Caesaro-papism of the New Monarchy. It was, indeed, this latter which gave point and significance to the theological controversies which intervened between the adoption of the Nicene Creed in 325 and its confirmation, fifty years later, at Constantinople. And it was not until she had undergone these experiences that the Church was in a position to 'spoil the Egyptians'; that is to say, until she could construct out of the dismantled fragments of Romanitas a system of thought designed to supplement and reinforce the appeal of naïve Christianity, and thus secure its final victory. But in this respect her shortcomings were in 313 still painfully apparent. Accordingly the day was yet remote when a Christian could write: 'Can paganism, I ask you,

produce anything equal to ours, the one true philosophy?'¹ Yet this was the moment when the emperor Constantine made his astonishing gamble with fortune by calling upon the Christians to provide an immediate and specific remedy for the ills of an expiring world.

The problems of Christianity were not lessened but increased through the political revolution by which it was drawn into the full current of imperial life. To begin with, there was the powerful attraction of the Constantinian court, with its strongly marked secular interests, including an evident desire to transform the Church into an instrument of public policy. Then, too, there was a natural desire on the part of churchmen to compromise, so far as possible, with the wishes of their powerful patron. And finally, there was still the vitally important question, of understanding and application. In this connexion, discussion centred on the meaning to be attached to the life and personality of Christ. Thus, for example, Eusebius of Caesarea notes the revival in his day by Paul of Samosata of the so-called heresy of Artemon.

'This heresy,' he says, 'which claims that the Saviour was a mere man (*ψιλὸς ἄνθρωπος*), has been criticized² as a recent innovation, which its authors have sought to make respectable by ascribing to it an origin in antiquity (195 B). . . . They have brazenly corrupted Holy Scripture, they have set aside the traditional rule of faith, they have ignored Christ; not searching for what the Scriptures have to say but sedulously considering what kind of reasoned argument may be devised to support their atheism. . . . If any one confronts them with a text of Holy Writ, they discuss whether it can be put in the form of a conjunctive or disjunctive syllogism. . . . Repudiating the sacred writings, they apply themselves to geometry. . . . Of the earth earthy, they speak as it were from below and reject Him who comes to us from on high. They study and admire Euclid, Aristotle, and Theophrastus; some of them, no doubt, bow down and worship Galen' (197 A, B).

The suggestion that the Redeemer was a 'mere man' had horrified Eusebius; but the question arose, if this was not the case, what then was He? To this question Arius, presbyter of Alexandria, was now to attempt an answer.³ The object of Arius

¹ Augustine, *Contra Iulianum*, iv. 14. 72: 'obsecro te, non sit honestior philosophia gentium quam nostra Christiana, quae una est vera philosophia.'

² *H.E.* v. 28, quoting an unknown author of the period.

³ For the personal history and background of Arius, including his connexion

nature. On the other hand, as embodying the intellectual determinations of the Father, He appeared specifically as the *ratio*, the principle of order and discrimination in the cosmos. Similarly with the third person, the Holy Spirit, the principle of energy or movement, which was said to 'reveal the substance of the Father which is in the Son', therein discharging a dual function as the source both of life and perfectibility in the creature. Thus constituted, the Godhead might be described either as 'trinity in unity' or 'unity in trinity'. To envisage it as a trinity was to see its elements as in some sense 'opposed' to one another; being was not to be identified with order, nor order with process, nor yet were all three to be resolved into terms of an undifferentiated, all-inclusive one. It was, moreover, to recognize that the oppositions in question were substantial; i.e. that they possessed the real existence of 'persons' and were not mere logical distinctions subsisting only in the human mind. On the other hand, to envisage it as a unity was to acknowledge that these oppositions, far from being ultimate, were simply those of necessary relations on what was essentially the same plane of reality.

We may here observe that there was no attempt whatever to demonstrate the truth of these assertions in terms acceptable to classical science. On the contrary, they were propounded as strictly *de fide*, a matter of faith, beginning and ending as affirmations of the religious consciousness. As such, their validity was felt to depend ultimately upon the sense of scripture, and disputes which arose, for example, as to the propriety of using the word 'consubstantial' to indicate the relation of persons within the Trinity, turned on the question of whether this adjective had adequate scriptural authority. But they were not on that account put forward, in the defiant spirit of Tertullian, as inconsistent with nature and reason. Rather, they were offered as the clue to an understanding of problems by which the natural reason had hitherto been baffled. They did, however, suggest a fresh attitude to these problems, the approach no longer being, as for Classicism, through nature to God, but rather through God to nature.

The doctrine of the Trinity provided the basis for a radically new and unclassical account of the structure and content of experience. The assumption of Classicism, or at least of Platonism, had been that there was, in nature, an exact equivalence

between 'being' and 'knowledge'. Its effort had therefore been directed to the attainment of a 'pure' knowledge as the means of apprehending 'pure' reality. Behind this assumption there lurked the heresy of two worlds, the one that of the intelligibles (*κόσμος νοητός*) accessible to the scientific understanding (*ἐπιστήμη*), the other the sensible world (*κόσμος αἰσθητός*) of which no genuine science was possible but only opinion (*δόξα*) or belief (*πίστις*). Christianity denied the original assumption and, therewith, the implied heresy. For it there was but one world of experience and that common to all human beings on precisely the same terms. It thus dismissed as a vain illusion the Platonic dream of an *ἀρχὴ ἀνυπόθετος* to be apprehended through the disciplined mind, together with its corollaries, the Platonic dictatorship of intelligence and Platonic 'orthodoxy'. As against these notions, it asserted that the true starting-point for thought and action must remain for ever invisible to the eye of the flesh.¹ This was to alter the entire perspective and to maintain that, for all men without exception, the question of primary importance was not so much their capacity for thinking as the presuppositions which governed their thought. And, from this standpoint, faith in the God of revelation was proposed as indispensable to full understanding. To accept this faith was to believe that, however obscure this might appear to the scientific intelligence, the *esse* of the Father embraced within itself the elements of order and movement and that these were not less integral than substance to the divine nature. It was, moreover, to hold that on these essential constituents of the Deity depended the structure and process of the universe. Thus envisaged, however, the Deity presented itself, not as an object of, but as the basis for, experience, the God 'in whom we live and move and are'.

This vision of the *operatio Dei* shed fresh light on certain of the traditional problems which had haunted the classical mind. The first of these had to do with the question of cosmology. Thus, for example, the classical materialists, beginning with the concept of an independent, self-moving matter, had found themselves in the position of explaining the universe, including that of thought, in terms either of 'chance' or 'necessity' or, if it was to contain any element of freedom, an arbitrary com-

¹ Col. i. 15 τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου.

the fourth century. At this point, we need only say that it put an end to 'the search for causes' as this had been understood and practised by the philosophers of classical antiquity. Likewise, it disposed of all the multifarious theosophies which had been devised by human ingenuity during classical and post-classical times. But it did so, only to raise fresh problems of understanding, such as were to constitute the theme of discussion from Athanasius to Augustine. This discussion was largely concerned with man and with his status in the hierarchy of nature.

We may here note, to begin with, that to envisage man as a creature in nature was to think of him as a being whose structure and functions, like those of other creatures, were completely dependent upon 'the will of God'. But, on the other hand, his *esse* contained elements of *nosse* and *posse*, which served to distinguish him from other beings whether animate or inanimate by making it possible for him to know himself. In this sense, he was said to have been made 'in the image of the Trinity', naturally (not potentially or hypothetically) immortal and 'marked out' for 'divine sonship'.¹ Paradoxical as this may sound, it nevertheless underlay the whole of Christian teaching with regard to the constitution and history of mankind. For, they insisted, it was by virtue of this gift of self-consciousness that man was enabled to recognize his powers and limitations and, thereby, to 'co-operate' with the Creator in accomplishing his destiny.

But, if the destiny of man was eternal life, how then was it possible to account for the notorious fact that he was everywhere subject to death? To this question there could be but one answer, sin. To say this was to offer a new interpretation of what had long since engaged the attention of Classicism as the *ἀμαρτία* or *vitium* of human life. This defect, as the Christians saw it, could not possibly be one of nature; that is to say, it was not inherent in the substance of his being. Nor yet was it a defect of habit, to be ascribed ultimately to the material conditions under which he lived. This is not to suggest that the Christians were oblivious to physical or social evil; quite the contrary. But it does indicate that they considered this evil to be the by-product of an evil which was much more fundamental, namely, the refusal of man to acknowledge his privi-

¹ See below, p. 448, n. 7.

leges and responsibilities in the economy of nature, the vain dream that he could usurp the place of the Creator and be another God. To indulge this dream was not, of course, to alter in the slightest the laws which governed that economy; it was merely to incur the penalty inevitable to their violation. And, from this standpoint, the failure of man was a matter of record; his history, indeed, was one of continuous and persistent self-abuse. This self-abuse began with Adam when, according to the legend, he consciously and deliberately defied the precept of probation. By this act he was said to have lost the 'gift of integrity', that is, of perfect adjustment to the demands of his nature, and to have started the warfare of the members—a conflict between flesh and spirit the inevitable issue of which was physical death. It was thus 'through one man', as the Apostle had expressed it, 'that sin came into the world'.¹ This sin persisted in all the sons and daughters of Adam not as 'actual' or positive wrongdoing, but as a state, tendency, or predisposition to repeat his error, and from this none was exempt, if only because it was a potential of human freedom and the human capacity for choice. It was thus described as *una cum origine* or original, and said to have been 'propagated by generation' from the seed of Adam. We are well aware of the curious and shocking interpretations that have been placed upon this doctrine which, indeed, constitutes one of the supreme problems of Christian thought. As Augustine was to put it: 'there is nothing more notorious and yet more difficult to grasp'.² In considering what it really means, it is well to remember that 'original sin' was specifically distinguished by post-Nicene theologians from 'ancestral sin', a kind of hereditary biological or social taint such as had been envisaged by the Greek tragedians, and that it was diagnosed as strictly individual, *peccatum personale*, or, as we should say, a problem of personality. In this connexion it will be recalled that Adam was an individual and, at the same time, he is everyman. We may thus conclude that, in a very real sense, the original sin is being a man.

Paradoxical though it may seem, the Christians discovered in this doctrine reason for comfort rather than despair. To apprehend it was to grasp what St. Paul had called the law of life or law of the Spirit which was thus put forward as the one means of

¹ Rom. v. 12: δι' ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἡ ἀμαρτία εἰς τὸν κόσμον εἰσῆλθεν. ✕

² Augustine, *De Mor. Eccl.* i. 22.

redeeming men from the 'law of sin and death'.¹ For it enabled them to perceive that the only creature of whom eternal life could properly be predicated was the individual human being, because he alone was the real unit of conscious and deliberate activity. From this it followed that, just as sin and error were matters of individual aberration, so also salvation depended in the last analysis upon the individual, and this was merely a question of getting him to recognize the truth. This was to set up a wholly new ideal and a wholly new technique of human perfectibility (Christian *τελείωσις*), namely, the recovery of the natural *donum integritatis* to be achieved through the 'rebirth' of the 'carnal' as a 'spiritual' man.

To examine in detail the various controversies to which this doctrine gave rise would be to anticipate discussions which have been reserved for a more appropriate place in this work.² Here we need only observe that regeneration, in the sense just indicated, was felt to be contingent on divine grace. This was no more than to acknowledge that, ultimately, the remedy for the ills of life must come from the same source and on the same terms as life itself; in other words, that it was not to be achieved by kicking against the pricks. But in asking the question 'Hath not the potter power over the clay?' the Apostle had not meant to suggest any programme of mere passivity or resignation, but merely to stipulate as the *sine qua non* of effective action a willing acceptance of the conditions under which it becomes possible to act effectively. And, of these conditions, the first and foremost was that the individual should cease to regard himself as an accident of cosmic process, whether that of aimless self-moving matter or that of self-existent forms, patterns, or types in whose hypothetical reality he vaguely 'participated'. This was to insist that human experience was not to be comprehended 'objectively' in terms applicable to the study of phenomena in nature, but only in terms of the movement of the Spirit, that is, of what is in the minds and hearts of men. To think of it otherwise was to miss its essential significance. It was, indeed, precisely this error which, they held, had vitiated human life and transformed it, in the words of Augustine, into a 'race towards death'. To eliminate it was, therefore, the

¹ Rom. viii. 2: ὁ νόμος τοῦ Πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἠλευθέρωσέν σε ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τῆς ἁμαρτίας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου.

² Part III below.

necessary preliminary to any real understanding of the nature and conditions of progress.

Of all elements in Christian teaching, there was none more remarkable than the notion of progress and none more incongruous with the thought and practice of classical antiquity. As originally put forward in the apocalyptic literature, it took shape as the vision of a millennium, the character of which was depicted in language so charged with metaphor and allusion as to give rise to strange misapprehensions on the part of Christian and pagan alike. It thus presented a formidable problem of interpretation which had, nevertheless, to be solved, for it was in a very real sense the *ultima ratio* of the whole Christian attitude to life.

In approaching the problem, the first thing necessary is to distinguish between progress as a fact and progress as an idea. The fact of progress is indisputable; it is, as Aristotle had observed in the *Politics*,¹ bound up with the notion of conscious and deliberate activity; 'all men', as he puts it, 'aim at some good'. But so also, we may add, is the fact of retrogression; for the activity of men is often such as to destroy the good at which they aim. The question, then, resolves itself into one of meaning: what is the ultimate good and how is it to be achieved? And here the greatest difficulties arise both as to ends and means. The history of Classicism provides ample evidence of both.

And first as to ends. For Classicism, two general possibilities had presented themselves: the good, it asserted, consists either in the life of thought or the life of action, or some combination of the two. With respect to the former, we may remember how Sophocles, in a famous chorus of the *Antigone*,² had proclaimed the conquest of nature by the 'versatile mind of man', or rather the conquest of everything in nature except death, which was thus conceded to be an inescapable law of life. By this admission he provoked a question which could not long remain unanswered without inspiring the gravest doubt as to the ultimate value of classical *curiositas* or the 'life of science'. Vergil, on the other hand, was an apostle of action which, as we have seen,³ he sought with all his immense gifts to explain and justify. And, while profoundly sensitive to the transitory and painful character of individual experience, he discovered a compensation for

¹ i. 1.

² ll. 332-75

³ Ch. II above.

this in the welfare and 'eternity' of the whole. For this ideal of corporative immortality he invited his countrymen to work and die while, at the same time, reserving a heaven of individual apotheosis for those exceptional spirits who, as he agreed with Cicero, could properly be described as saviours of the state. In so doing, he pronounced the *passo romano* to be for all time the march-step of humanity. This also, as we may well suspect, was not enough. Like the ideal of science, it fell short of the justice which was demanded by the reason and conscience of mankind.

The Christians broke with these interpretations in order to assert that the good for man is eternal life and that this consists in the knowledge and love of God as the principle of his own being. In this connexion, it is important to notice that the good thus proposed was strictly a 'personal', not a 'corporative' or 'collective' good. As such, it claimed to be real, not problematical or imaginary, both because its subject was real, the concrete individual, and because it was the object of his immediate experience. But to say this was to raise the question of direction and process.

And here, so the Christians claimed, the error of Classicism had been to look 'outside' for the creative and moving principle. This, they insisted, was to expose oneself to the danger of idolatry, that is, of identifying reality with the picture or representation of it framed by the conceptualizing imagination. It was also to create an insoluble problem of intelligibility, thus permitting the materialist or idealist magician to produce any rabbit he liked out of the philosophic hat. Finally, it was to give rise to false antitheses in flat contradiction to the findings of experience, such as that between formless matter and motionless form; and then attempt to construct out of these nonentities an authentic description of the universe.

To these difficulties of Classicism the answer of the Christians was a demand that it should acknowledge the Trinity as the creative and moving principle. To do so, they urged, was to perceive that the difficulties in question, however serious, were difficulties not in the structure of reality but merely in the effort to apprehend it. It was to recognize that what, in fact, constitutes the nature of any substance is the order and movement which are in it, and that these are not to be thought of as in any sense external to that substance, dependent either on

self-existent 'types' or on a substratum of anarchic 'matter'. It was thus to see in the world of natural objects not God, indeed, nor any part of God but, as they put it, the *vestigia* or traces of divine activity. As for the human being, the knowing subject, what they claimed for him was the unique satisfaction of access to this eternal truth through the Word and the Spirit.¹ And, from this standpoint, the only barrier to his progress towards full perfection was that which he imposed upon himself by his blind and stubborn refusal to see it.

Such, if we are not mistaken, were the nature and basis of the Christian theory of progress. Considering its remoteness from the common sense of antiquity, we need not wonder that it proved to be a difficult notion to communicate to the classical mind. Nor is it surprising that the Christians themselves should have experienced some perplexity in formulating it in intelligible terms. For what it pointed to was a way of thought utterly different from that in which they had been brought up. We thus find Origen, for instance, protesting vigorously against the Platonic theory of cycles—the notion, as he says, that 'in another Athens another Socrates will be born who will marry another Xanthippe and will be accused by another Anytus and another Meletus'.² But it is one thing to deny with him the possibility of such repetitions and quite another to discover how to break away from 'the wheel'. Tertullian, on the other hand, was much more sensitive than Origen to the fact and necessity of change. This is illustrated by his attack on convention and especially the conventions of *Romanitas*. 'The truth', he declares, 'appears to be instinctively hated.'³ Nevertheless, things do move, even in a society ridden by traditional standards.

'In your clothing, your food, your habits, your feelings, finally even in your language, you have repudiated your ancestors. You are always praising antiquity, but you renew your life from day to day.'⁴

'Consider whether the general accusation which you bring against us, namely, that we have discarded ancestral custom, may not be levelled equally against yourselves. To me it appears that, in every aspect of your life and discipline, the practice of antiquity has been corrupted and destroyed . . . your own authority overrides the whole authority of the past.'⁵

¹ John xvi. 13: *ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὀδηγήσει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν ἀλήθειαν πᾶσαν.*

² *Contra Celsum*, iv. 68.

³ *Apol.* 14.

⁴ 6.

⁵ *Ad Nat.* i. 10.

This change he is inclined to identify with progress.

'If you look at the world as a whole, you cannot doubt that it has grown progressively more cultivated and populated (*cultior de die et instructor pristino*). Every territory is now accessible, every territory explored, every territory opened to commerce. The most delightful farmsteads have obliterated areas formerly waste, plough-land has subdued the woods, domestic cattle have put to flight the wild beast, barren sands have become fertile, rocks are reduced to soil, swamps are drained, the number of cities to-day exceeds the number of isolated huts in former times, islands no longer inspire fear nor crags terror: everywhere people, everywhere organized communities, everywhere human life. Most convincing as evidence of populoussness, we men have actually become a burden to the earth, the fruits of nature hardly suffice to sustain us, there is a general pressure of scarcity giving rise to complaints, since the earth can no longer support us. Need we be astonished that plague and famine, warfare and earthquake come to be regarded as remedies, serving as it were to trim and prune the superfluity of population?'¹

But, when Tertullian undertakes to prove the reality of progress, what he does is actually to fall back for evidence, in a genuinely classical manner, upon external nature ($\tau\acute{\alpha}$ $\xi\xi\omega$; $\tau\acute{\alpha}$ $\xi\xi\omega\theta\epsilon\nu$), the only difference being that, whereas Classicism had seen in nature order or rather a tendency towards order, Tertullian sees in it nothing but change or mutation. This law, he declares, manifests itself in the regular movement of celestial bodies (*naturae totius solemne munus*), the solar year, the monthly phases of the moon, the rising and setting of the constellations (*siderum distincta confusio*), day and night, sunshine and cloud, storm and calm. The earth as a whole has changed; at one time it was entirely submerged in water. Sea-shells are to be found even on the mountain-tops, as though to vindicate the contention of Plato that the very highlands were once flooded, and even to-day earthquakes occasionally produce changes of the kind.² This law of physical mutation, he thinks, applies also to animals and men; these since primeval times having extended their habitat over the greater part of an empty world.³ Although, he significantly adds, this cannot in all respects be considered an improvement.⁴

It will be evident from these statements that Tertullian has utterly missed the point of the Christian position as we have

¹ *De Anima*, 30; no apologies to Malthus!

² *De Pallio*, 2.

³ 3.

⁴ 4.

tried to put it. He has failed to realize that the law of progress is a law for man, and that no coherent and intelligible theory thereof can be erected on speculation regarding the structure and process of external nature. 'Heaven and Earth shall pass away but my Words shall not pass away.' As a consequence of this mistake, Tertullian emerges not as an exponent of the Christian theory of progress but as the first apostle of modern relativism. This comes out especially in his idea of progressive truth. Thus, in the *De Virginibus Velandis*, a treatise of his Montanist period, he argues that no prescription whatever can be imposed upon truth. Nothing, he declares, has power to do so.

'Our Lord Jesus Christ described Himself as truth and not as custom. . . . Apart, therefore, from the one immutable and irrefutable principle, the rule of faith, all other truths whatsoever of theory and practice admit of modification, since presumably the grace of God continues to operate and to produce results till the very end of time. . . . The Lord has sent His spirit, the Paraclete. . . . I have much still to say to you, He declares, but not until you have power to receive it. . . . When the Spirit of truth shall have come, It will guide you into the way of all truth and will proclaim to you what is still to come. . . . What, then, is the service of the Spirit except to make possible the direction of training, the revelation of Scripture, the reform of understanding, the achievement of better things? . . . *Nihil sine aetate et omnia tempus expectant*; there is nothing which has not its season and all things await their time.'¹

But it is one thing to admit that there is much truth still to be discovered, and quite another to suggest that the discovery of this truth is contingent upon the working of an erratic and wholly incalculable force, the Montanist Paraclete.

The difficulties of Tertullian have been traced to what has been called the 'unexpunged remnant of classical materialism', which was embedded in his thought. This finds expression in interesting and often startling ways. It comes out, for instance, in his attempt to visualize the soul as a sort of astral or ghost body.² Then too, it underlies his notion of a material millennium as an event which is, so to speak, fatally determined, quite regardless of whatever efforts human beings put forward to bring it about. In other words, it is involved in 'the movement of matter' and thus, in the last analysis, quite unin-

¹ *op. cit.* 1.

² *De Anima*, 7-9 and 53; cf. *De Resur. Carnis*.

telligible. But the supreme example of Tertullian's materialism is to be found in his notion of Hell as a kind of unearthly Colosseum in which, by way of compensation for their former sufferings, the saints and martyrs of the Church are provided with ring-side seats in order that they may taste the peculiar physical satisfaction of watching the physical torment of the damned.¹ This sort of thing, it should be noted, was deeply rooted in the ideology of the early Church and it was by no means easy to dispose of. We may thus find it emerging as late as Augustine, when he seriously discusses, *inter alia*, the prospect of a Gehenna of fire and brimstone, though such a possibility is clearly inconsistent with his own best level of eschatological thought.²

The effect of the Nicene formulation was largely to exclude errors such as had marred the thinking of Origen and Tertullian, and to lay the foundation for a new and distinctively Christian *Weltanschauung*, to accept which was to enter into an area of experience utterly different from that of secular society. The problem arises: What was the relation between this world and the vast structure of secular values which had been erected under the auspices of the pagan empire? The question resolves itself entirely into one of meaning. And, in this connexion, we may agree that for vast numbers who were content not to think but simply to follow the leadership of the emperor, it was merely a matter of substituting Christ for Juppiter, the Eucharist for the sacrifice, baptism for the *taurobolium*, and pretending to themselves that otherwise everything was the same.³ But for those who could not be satisfied to live a life of flagrant inconsistency, no such solution was possible. What, then, did the change imply for them? We have seen how, with men like Tertullian, it resulted in a rash and hasty repudiation of all natural values, including even the simplest satisfactions of normal life. Christians, he declared, should practise the most rigid asceticism; second marriages (especially for widows) are tantamount to bigamy, and to be fat is merely to provide good food for the lions.

But what application had such doctrine to a period when the lions had ceased to roar for Christians, when the empire had not only desisted from persecution but had actually taken them

¹ *De Spect.* 30.

² *De Civ. Dei*, xxi. 9 and 10.

³ See Duchesne, *op. cit.* iii, p. 159.

to its bosom? Merely to formulate the question is to realize that it must have involved the greatest confusion and perplexity, especially as it first presented itself toward the beginning of the fourth century. But certain considerations were soon to become evident. One was that Christianity subverted the ancient interpretation of life in terms of the concepts virtue and fortune, or rather that virtue and fortune were thenceforth to lose their status as independent principles. And, therewith, it subverted the notion of felicity (the *summum bonum*) to be realized through security and independence, otherwise control of the environment (*τὰ ἔξωθεν*) or the monopolization of physical and economic power. That is to say, it subverted the central idea of creative politics as this had been pursued throughout classical antiquity. But if the state thus ceased to be regarded as final, what then was to replace it? And what was to be the relation of the New Republic to any fresh institution which might arise, with claims to finality not less insistent than those of the now discredited *polis*?

Such questions are much easier to ask than to answer. But of one thing, at least, we may be sure, and this was that the state did not propose to yield the substance of its traditional prerogatives without a struggle. We thus find Constantine already in 335 (only ten years after Nicaea) looking for a way of escape from the implications of the Nicene formula, and seeking to have it neutralized in the direction of Arianism. He began by condoning Arian attacks on Athanasius at Tyre. Shortly afterwards he banished the stubborn ecclesiastic to the remoteness of Trèves, and formally demanded of a metropolitan synod the readmission of Arius to communion. Finally, he indicated his own personal feeling by accepting baptism at the hands of the Arian Bishop of Nicomedia, thus dying in the odour of Arian sanctity and leaving a legacy of trouble to his sons.

The Christological controversies which immediately broke out and which were to continue for the better part of the fourth century may, perhaps, be dismissed as 'meaningless and unedifying wrangles' by those who perversely regard thought as a function of matter. But for those who believe that what men do has a direct relationship to what they think and what they want, it is impossible to avoid the issues raised at that time. And, from this standpoint, those issues concern the historian no less

vindicem ducit'). By thus exciting a spirit of religious fanaticism and strife, by fomenting discord within the empire, it helped to seal the doom of Constantinianism and to make inevitable the coming reaction under Julian.

Throughout this period the watchword and motto was *cesset superstitio, sacrificiorum aboleatur insania*.¹ Under this caption, paganism was now to experience the nemesis of its own earlier offences. By an edict of 346, dated from Constantinople and repeated, in substance, ten years later at Milan, all temples whatsoever were to be closed, except as museums of art, access to the altars being specifically forbidden; the death-penalty, together with confiscation of goods, was to be inflicted upon persons found guilty of participating in sacrifices, and magistrates were threatened with fines for any failure to enforce the law.² The animus against pagans was reflected also in an increasingly restrictive and ungenerous attitude to the Jews. Any Jew purchasing a slave of Gentile stock was liable to have him summarily confiscated; for the purchase of slaves known to be Christians, he was to suffer the total confiscation of all his servants; if he presumed to have such slaves circumcised, the penalty was death.³ As for the association by Jews in their rites of Christian women operatives in the *gynaeeceae* or state textile works, this crime also was to be visited with capital punishment.⁴ Shortly afterwards the conversion of free men to Judaism was discountenanced by the threat of total confiscation of goods.⁵ Meanwhile, under the criminal law (bk. ix), it was made a capital offence for any one to consult a *haruspex*, a *hariolus*, or a *mathematicus*; *sileat omnibus perpetuo divinandi curiositas*, ran the edict.⁶ And, despite the immunity from this punishment normally accorded to members of the imperial service, *magi* and diviners caught in its ranks were declared liable to torture.⁷

But, while thus implementing against pagans the sentence of God upon paganism, Constantius undertook at the same time to promote and foster the interests of Christianity, and the spirit of his missionary effort may be judged from a series of

¹ *Cod. Theod.* xvi. 10. 2 (341). In connexion with this and other enactments we may recall the salutary warning of Toutain, *Economic Life of the Ancient World*, p. 327: 'The mere fact that so many were issued shows how ineffective they were.' All that can safely be inferred from them is the spirit and direction of governmental policy.

² xvi. 10. 3, 4, and 6.

³ xvi. 9. 2 (339).

⁴ xvi. 8. 6 (339).

⁵ xvi. 8. 7 (357).

⁶ ix. 16. 4 (357).

⁷ ix. 16. 6 (358).

edicts issued in his name. Thus, in a manifesto addressed to the clergy,¹ he declared that they and their slaves were exempt from all new and special levies, as well as from liability to the onerous obligation of quartering imperial officials (*hospitalitas*); they were likewise authorized to conduct business enterprises for purposes of subsistence, free from the *lustratio* or business tax. In 349 all clerics were pronounced exempt from curial and other obligations, their children, unless liable by origin to curial duties, to be classified as ecclesiastics;² four years later they and their children were specifically exempted from personal burdens (*sordida et corporalia onera*) and from the business tax (*lustratio*) on account of profits from shelters and workhouses, on the ground that these institutions were helpful to the poor. This indulgence to sweated labour was extended also to the wives, children, and slaves, male or female, of the clerics in question, and repeated in substance after a further interval of four years.³ About the same time Constantius conceded to bishops accused of criminal offences the right to be heard only before their peers, thus giving a dangerous complexion to the Constantinian ecclesiastical courts.⁴ The concession of such special immunities and privileges was only too eagerly accepted; and the appetite apparently grew by what it fed on. Towards the close of the reign (359 or 360), the emperor was confronted with a brazen demand put forward by the ecclesiastical synod of Ariminum, viz. that *iuga* or taxable land-units belonging to ecclesiastics should be exempt from public obligations. This impudent suggestion he had the courage to refuse; but he confirmed the immunity of small businesses undertaken by clerics for maintenance, ordering all others to be put on the *matricula* or business assessment roll. The general spirit of his policy was expressed in a final edict (361), which exempted from public obligations all those who devoted themselves to the 'Christian law', i.e. the monks.⁵

But while Constantius thus professed to see in prayer rather than work the bone and sinew of the New Republic, his critics preferred to interpret his policy as a deliberate attempt to prostitute the Church to his own sordid purposes. Thus, in a

¹ xvi. 2. 8 (343).

³ xvi. 2. 10 (353) and 14 (357).

⁵ xvi. 2. 16: 'gaudere enim et gloriari ex fide semper volumus, scientes magis religionibus quam officiis et labore corporis vel sudore nostram rem publicam contineri.'

² xvi. 2. 9.

⁴ xvi. 2. 12 (355).

famous passage,¹ the sturdy and sensible pagan, Ammianus Marcellinus, declares that the emperor confounded the Christian religion, simple and clear by nature, with womanish superstition; and the text may be accepted as referring to the legislation reviewed above, as well as to the specifically ecclesiastical policy. For, as a means of reducing the Church to a condition of subservience, Constantius added to this gross and demoralizing patronage an attempt to complicate the 'clear and simple truths' aforesaid with subtleties propounded no doubt mainly by Valens, the Arian bishop of Mursa who, having helped by his prayers to win the battle against Magnentius, had been accepted by the emperor as his confidential spiritual adviser. These subtleties Constantius endeavoured to impose upon the Church; and, as he merely succeeded in stirring up discord, he convoked synod after synod in an effort to have them ratified, so that the imperial transport service almost broke down under the strain of carrying ecclesiastics dashing hither and thither at the behest of the emperor.

In these synods Constantius assumed the impossible position of Bishop of Bishops and, as has earlier been suggested,² boldly asserted the principle later to be known as that of divine right. In order to make good his claims, he harried his opponents within the episcopacy and, in particular, put intolerable pressure upon the aged Liberius, bishop of Rome; altogether his efforts might well have succeeded, had it not been for the lion in his path.³

The spectacle of *Athanasius contra mundum* has excited the generous admiration of Gibbon, who describes in detail the resistance which this gallant soldier of the Church put up against imperial interference, in the face of obloquy and persecution during which he suffered no less than five different periods of exile under three successive monarchs of the Constantinian house. The strength of Athanasius was the strength of the man with but one idea; the defence of orthodoxy was the inspiration of his life's work. And, if it be true that Nicaea put teeth into Christianity, it is equally fair to say that, with Athanasius, the Church showed how she could bite the hand that fed her. For while Arian and Catholic bishops, as individuals, were per-

¹ xxi. 16. 18.

² Ch. V, p. 187 above.

³ Athanasius, elected bishop of Alexandria in succession to Alexander, who died 18 April 328.

haps equally capable of compliance or intransigency, according to whether their interests were promoted or threatened, nevertheless it cannot well be denied that there was an element of hardness in the orthodox position, as represented by Athanasius, which was lacking on the other side. And, as the spirit of persecution invoked by Constantius against paganism was presently applied to the 'healing' of schism within the Church itself, Nicene orthodoxy was now to experience treatment such as it had not yet learned to expect at the hands of a nominally Christian emperor. As Athanasius himself put it, 'persecution was peculiarly the disgrace of the new heresy'.¹

Among those who supported the effort of Constantius to subvert the Trinitarian position, orthodoxy discovered two allied and partially co-operating groups. The first was composed of the so-called Anomoeans or extreme Arians who declared that the Son was of quite another essence than the Father; the second of the semi-Arian *Homoiousians*, whose position differed from the orthodox or *Homoousian* faction 'merely by an iota'. But, in that iota, as Athanasius saw it, lay all the difference between the claim of the Evangel to finality and a Platonic theory of 'participation' which, by leaving open the question of 'how much' the Son resembled the Father, was exposed to the possibility of numberless other 'revelations', past, present, and to come.

The special contribution made by Athanasius towards an elucidation of the theological and philosophical issues involved must be reserved for its appropriate place in this work.² At present we are concerned with him merely as a man of action who, in defence of what he conceived to be spiritual truth, stubbornly opposed the pretensions of the Arianizing court.³ With this purpose in mind he was ready in practice to adopt any one of four different kinds of action. In the first place, he never tired of recalling the plenipotentiary authority of the oecumenical council as the original author of the Nicene formula. Secondly, he made it his business to mobilize whatever episcopal support could be mustered in defence of that formula, especially at Rome and throughout the West during his exile at Trèves. Thirdly, he developed the use of direct popular propaganda as, for example, when he caused a letter of public protest to be drafted and circulated for signature at Alexandria, begging the emperor to desist from his anti-

¹ *Hist. Arian.* 67 foll.

² Ch. X below.

³ Athan. *Hist. Arian.*

Trinitarian programme 'for the sake of his immortal soul'. Finally, he showed himself willing to submit to personal indignity, as attested by various humiliations which he suffered on account of his refusal to accede to the emperor's demands. In helping to frame a theory of ecclesiastical independence, the work of Athanasius was no less important. He repeatedly asserted the impropriety of imperial intervention in the internal affairs of the Church. 'When', he demands,¹ 'has an ecclesiastical judgement ever received its validity from the emperor? Or rather, when has his decree ever been recognized by the Church?' Moreover, he protested against the assumption by imperial power of any control over ecclesiastical organization and discipline, and denounced the episcopal appointments of Constantius as the work of Antichrist.² In this it would appear that he was fully justified, if the elevation of the notorious George of Cappadocia to the see of Alexandria may be regarded as, in any sense, typical.³ In these various respects he laid the foundation of a specifically Christian political theory.

Space forbids us to trace in detail the progress of a struggle during which the emperor, in his endeavour to escape from the net which was closing about him, resorted to the most amazing expedients. It is sufficient to observe that, by his actions, he laid the material for a crisis in the relations of Church and state. On all sides there was increasing evidence of venality in ecclesiastical high places. Meanwhile the widespread corruption of the imperial civil service, already referred to, was being traced by observant critics to the scandal of the palace, from which the eunuchs, a specifically Byzantine importation from the Orient, now for the first time in Roman history dictated the policy of the empire.

Constantius' policy was one of recession from the difficulties of the Constantinian system. There was no formal repudiation of Christianity; quite the contrary, as is shown by evidence from the Code. Nevertheless, the 'supreme God' who, under the father, had slowly assumed the lineaments of Jehovah, was under the son imperceptibly metamorphosed once more into his original self. But the fact that Constantius remained a nominal Christian added a certain piquancy to Athanasius' denunciation of the pious emperor as Antichrist; and thus gave

¹ *Op. cit.* 52.

² *Op. cit.* 74-5.

³ See below, Ch. VII, p. 271, on this extraordinary character.

VII

APOSTASY AND REACTION

WITH the entry of Julian into Constantinople (December 361), philosophy, for the second time in Roman history, assumed the imperial purple.¹ A son of Julius Constantius brother of Constantine the Great, the new emperor had been born in the capital just thirty years before. As a child of six he had suffered a terrible shock through the extermination of his kinsmen in the massacre of potential rivals which marked the accession of the sons of Constantine, Julian himself and his elder brother Gallus having alone escaped from the slaughter. At the age of thirteen he had been relegated, along with Gallus, to the remote and inaccessible fortress of Macellum in Cappadocia, there to spend the next seven years in close confinement, 'cut off from every liberal study and from all free intercourse'.² But the dynasticism, which had thus seared his childhood and adolescence, was later to bring about a strange reversal of his fortunes. On the death of Constantine, Constantine II, his eldest son, had inherited the Gauls, Spain, and Britain, while the youngest, Constans, received Italy, Illyricum, and Africa as his portion of the empire. Within three years Constans had overthrown Constantine and seized his dominions to make himself sole Augustus in the West (340). Ten years later Constans himself was murdered by Magnentius, his Master of the Horse. The usurpation of the purple by Magnentius, coincident with the revolt of Vetricio in Pannonia, made it necessary for Constantius, now sole survivor of the brothers and himself without an heir, to invoke the aid of his cousins, if the dynasty was to be preserved. Thus Gallus, by his appointment as Caesar, was suddenly translated from the prison to the throne (351); while Julian, then a youth of twenty, was removed to the capital in order to receive the status, if not the consideration, of a prince of the blood. Gallus, however, was soon deposed and executed by Constantius (354), partly because the overthrow of Magnentius had rendered him superfluous, partly also by reason of temperamental vices which made him a

¹ Dessau, *I.L.S.* 751: d. n. Fl. Cl. Iulianus dominus totius orbis filosofiae magister venerandus princeps piissimus imperator victoriosissimus Augustus. *ὁ ἐκ φιλοσοφίας βασιλεύων*. . . Φλ. Κλαυδ. Ιουλιανὸς ὁ μέγιστος καὶ θεϊότατος αὐτοκράτωρ.

² Julian, 271 c (except where otherwise stated, references are to the Teubner text, ed. Hertlein, 1875).

liability, rather than an asset, to the Flavian house. Meanwhile, since the emperor was then in the West, Julian was ordered to Milan and kept under strict surveillance at the court. There, however, the friendship of the empress Eusebia won him a brief interlude of freedom and happiness; as a result of her entreaties, the young man was permitted to withdraw for study to Athens and Bithynia.¹ But the depredations of the Germans soon put an end to his leisure and, in the year following (355), he was dragged from his retirement in order that, as Caesar, he might represent the family interest in the Gauls.² In that capacity, Julian was evidently expected merely to serve as a mask for the corrupt and inefficient administration of Constantius' praetorian prefect; but, stimulated by an ideal of public service out of all proportion to the resources at his command,³ the shy and diffident scholar emerged as a man of action, whose skill and enterprise in clearing the West of barbarians were equalled only by his solicitude for the harried and overtaxed provincials within his jurisdiction. The position of colleague and understudy, at all times difficult, could in no case have been more so than with Julian in Gaul; and it is not surprising that an attempt on the part of his cousin to weaken him by withdrawing all but a fragment of his veteran formations should have provoked the mutiny which led to his assumption of the diadem. In declaring himself emperor, the action of Julian was more than a protest of bitter personal resentment against domestic tyranny; for it placed him at the forefront of a major revolutionary movement, the most significant since the rise of Constantine himself. But, unlike the movement headed by Constantine, that of Julian was one of reaction, the watchword of which was to be, *from Christ to Plato*.

Julian's undertaking was in a peculiar sense a personal enterprise, and it can be understood only if this fact is borne in mind. In this connexion we may note that the Apostate was endowed with not a little of the genius hereditary to the second Flavians. As Caesar in Gaul, he had developed qualities of statesmanship which served vividly to recall the memory and achievements of his grandfather, Constantius Chlorus, while his work as a soldier was not unworthy of Constantine himself. The boldness

¹ Julian, *Oratio*, iii. 118 c.

² Amm. xv. 8. 1 foll.

³ Julian, 277 D and frag. ζ'. He had been furnished with just 360 soldiers, 'who only knew how to pray!'

Christianity as a typical escape-religion, the attraction of which was that it offered a means of evading 'the iron law of retributive justice'. A competition having been held among the deified emperors (including Alexander and Caesar) for the prize of excellence, the award is made to Marcus, the philosopher-king. The contestants are ordered to depart and live in future, each under the tutelage of his appropriate deity. This they proceed to do. As for Constantine, failing to discover among the gods a pattern of himself, he at last catches sight of *Luxury* (*Τρυφή*) and sits down beside her. Luxury receives him with tender affection and, having adorned him with embroidered raiment, presents him to *Incontinence* (*Ἀσωτία*). At this moment, the emperor discerns Jesus, pacing to and fro and shouting aloud: 'He that is a seducer, he that is a murderer, he that is stained with the corruption of sacrilege, let him approach fearlessly. With this water I shall wash him and at once make him clean.' 'And, though he be guilty again of the same offence, I shall permit him to be cleansed, if only he will smite his head and beat his breast.' 'To him', adds Julian, 'Constantine joyfully attached himself.' 'Nevertheless', he concludes, 'the avenging deities punished both the Emperor and his sons, by exacting from them requital for shedding their kinsmen's blood, until Zeus in his mercy granted them a respite for the sake of Claudius Gothicus and Constantius Chlorus.'¹ It would be grossly unjust to accept this statement as evidence of the spirit in which Constantine had, in fact, embraced Christianity, but it does indicate quite clearly what Julian thought about it. To him Constantine was a renegade, the Marc Antony of his age, ready to sell out to barbarism in order to gratify his own barbarous instincts; and for this he found the necessary sanction in a gospel which put forward ideals of pity, love, and forgiveness in lieu of justice, the basis of the classical commonwealth. But, in accepting this gospel, he had planted a mere 'garden of Adonis' which was soon to wither away, because its roots were not in the soil of reality.²

From this standpoint, the advent of Christianity, so far from heralding a new dawn for mankind, represented³ merely the

¹ 336 A and B.

² 329 C and D.

³ The text of Julian's formal attack on Christianity, the *In Galilaeos*, is lost, but a reconstruction has been made by Neumann from fragments embedded in the refutation by Cyril of Alexandria. This is reprinted in the Loeb edition of Julian's works. On the following pages references to the *In Galilaeos*, as distinguished from Julian's extant works, are indicated by an asterisk.

latest phase in the endless conflict between civilization and barbarism. In this sense, the faith had a natural history which could be traced to the laws of Moses, the *fons et origo* of Hebrew life.¹ But while Julian, like Machiavelli, thus cites the legislative activity of Moses as the point of departure for Judaism, he is at pains to demonstrate the inferiority of the Mosaic order to those set up by Lycurgus, Solon, and Romulus, the great lawgivers of classical Greece and Rome. Accordingly, he everywhere opposes characteristic examples of Jewish wisdom to their Graeco-Roman counterparts and asserts that, by comparison with the immense achievements of *Romanitas*, the record of the Hebrews is contemptible.² If history proves anything, it is that the Jews are a god-forsaken race and not, as they imagine, the special favourites of the Deity. They have shown themselves deficient in general enlightenment, and their story has been one of successive captivities.³

To Julian, however, this 'Galilean superstition'⁴ could not claim to represent even the better side of Judaism. For, of the two strains within the Jewish tradition, the 'Law' and the 'Prophets', its affiliations were with the latter, i.e. with those who would innovate upon rather than with those who would conserve the Mosaic Code. Thus, as he says, 'the Galileans, like leeches, have sucked the worst blood from that source and left the purer'.⁵ 'They have deliberately followed men who have transgressed their own law and who have paid an appropriate penalty for having chosen to live in defiance of the law and to proclaim a strange and novel gospel.'⁶

In this spirit, Julian draws up a more or less comprehensive indictment of the Christian faith. He begins by denying the divinity of the Master as a fable which appeals only to that part of the soul which is childish, silly, and credulous.⁷ For him Jesus of Nazareth, so far from embodying a full and final expression of the Word, is nothing but an illiterate peasant whose teachings, while devoid of truth and beauty, are at the same time weak, impractical, and socially subversive.⁸ In this connexion, he

¹ *43 A; 253 B. ² *168; 171-94; 200 foll., esp. 209-18; 235 B and C.

³ *209 D and E; 213 A; 218 B; 221 E.

⁴ 380 D; *δαιμονία*.

⁵ *202 A.

⁶ 432 D, *ζῆν παρανόμως*; various illustrations, e.g. *351 (circumcision abandoned), *354 (use of unleavened bread), &c.

⁷ *39 A and B; cf. Ep. 79 (Bidez and Cumont, no. 90).

⁸ *191 D.

the heritage of Classicism, had thrown away inestimable advantages to embrace a life of self-sacrifice, self-abnegation, and mortification of the flesh—the ideal of a barbarous and servile mentality which, in his eyes, was fittingly symbolized in the worship of its ‘bleeding and dying god’. And, as the appeal of the ‘crucified Jew’ was presently extended to include an ever-widening circle of followers, the Christians had added as objects of adoration ‘to the original corpse a host of other corpses newly dead’.¹ It remained, indeed, for the sophist Eunapius, friend and contemporary of the emperor, to utter what was perhaps the bitterest of all pagan comments upon the devotion of Christians to the saints and martyrs of the faith. ‘Pickled heads and mouldy bones,’ he declares, ‘these have become the new gods of the Roman people.’² But if the remark was his, the sentiment was that of Julian; for it was with mingled pain and disgust that he saw his countrymen turn aside from the brilliant Olympians to venerate what he regarded as a heterogeneous mob of arch-criminals and renegades, the ringleaders of Christian ‘atheism’. The same objection to what he considers degrading superstition comes out in the jibe that ‘the sum and substance of their theology boils down to these two things: whistling to keep away the demons and making the sign of the cross upon their foreheads’.³

Among contemporary manifestations of the Christian life, none perhaps excited greater attention than that of monasticism. This movement, which had already begun in the later third century, was to attain enormous proportions during the fourth, its growth having no doubt been stimulated by the desire of earnest men to escape from the projected Caesaropapism of the New Republic. Inspired by a passion for Christian perfection, monasticism took the form of a flight from the world, a renunciation of its conventions and obligations no less than its seductions and its snares, the devotees either retiring to the fastnesses of the Egyptian or Syrian deserts in order to embrace the life of hermits, or entering into communities whose members submitted themselves to a régime of strict discipline according to the ‘Christian law’.⁴

The development of monasticism inevitably gave rise to

¹ *335 B. To this charge Augustine among others was to undertake an answer. *De Civ. Dei*, viii. 26 and 27 (on hagiolatry).

² Eunapius, *Vita Aedesii*, quoted by Gibbon, ch. xxviii, p. 208.

³ *Ep.* 78 (Bidez and Cumont, no. 79), no paging.

⁴ See below, pp. 338–44.

extravagances which were mainly the result of an exaggerated desire to display exemplary conduct. Chief among these was perhaps a tendency to exhibitionism, of which the behaviour of Simeon Stylites remains the classical example, although it may be remarked that Simeon belongs to the pathology of the movement, and his conceit can hardly be regarded as typical. Others took to the road with staff and cloak and, exploiting the sanctity conferred upon them as exponents of the ‘Christian law’, assumed the character of sturdy beggars, to prey upon the soft-hearted and the sentimental when they were not engaged in more sinister activities; for it soon became notorious that, in any lawless assault upon Jews or pagans, leadership was provided by the haggard and wild-eyed monks. Other characteristics of the profession, if not so perverse, were hardly less offensive. In Theodosius’ time, for example, there was said to be a colony established on Capraria which, like the animal from which the island takes its name, could be smelt from afar. But while such manifestations contributed no doubt to throw discredit on the movement, its real danger was that it denied the claims of organized secular society. A formal statement of the emperors Valentinian and Valens specifically accuses the monks of bad citizenship while, at the same time, it imputes to them at least the suspicion of hypocrisy.¹ In this sense, monasticism may be taken to embody the fourth-century version of the traditional Christian animus against the *polis*; and even Theodosius, good Christian though he was, confessed to the difficulties which their existence presented when he pathetically demanded of Ambrose: What am I to do with these fanatical monks?

Accordingly, it is not surprising that Julian should have regarded monasticism with the greatest distaste and that, in administering a rebuke to the degenerate Cynics of his day, he should have compared them with these professional exponents of the ‘Christian law’.

‘Long ago’, he declares, ‘I hit on a way to describe you, but now, I think, I shall write it down. To certain sectaries (solitaries and heretics) the impious Galileans apply the word. Of these the majority are men who, at little personal sacrifice, have accumulated much or rather everything from all sources, in addition to which

¹ *Cod. Theod.* xii. 1. 63 (370? or 373): ‘quidam ignaviae sectatores, desertis civitatum muneribus, captant solitudines ac secreta et specie religionis cum coetibus monazonton congregantur.’

who disgraced the Constantinian Church, the most notorious was beyond doubt George of Cappadocia, Arian bishop of Alexandria, whom Julian knew, both as 'an impious creature guilty of inexpressible crimes' and as a bibliophile who had accumulated one of the most valuable private libraries at that time in existence. George was a man who systematically exploited his position for selfish and worldly ends. Finally, in the name of Christ, he introduced an army into Alexandria, seized the shrine of the national god Sarapis, and stripped it of its treasures and objects of art; whereupon he was assaulted and lynched by an exasperated pagan mob.¹ Julian rebuked the Alexandrians in such mild terms as to give the impression that he condoned their lawless act. At the same time, he made every effort to secure George's collection for the imperial library.

The animus of Julian was not, however, confined to men like George; it included churchmen like Athanasius, whose stubborn factiousness was even more obnoxious to him than were the luxury and vice of his Arian rival. Speaking of Athanasius, Ammianus Marcellinus describes him as 'a haughty prelate, who was reputed to have cultivated the arts of soothsaying and augury, as well as to have indulged in other illicit practices'.² To Julian, the bishop of Alexandria embodied all that was objectionable in Christianity, and, in various allusions to him, the emperor almost exhausts the Greek vocabulary of vituperation.³ Julian's attitude was dictated by a sense that, if unreason was the mark of Christianity, Athanasius in his person represented the very spirit of unreasonableness. In a well-known passage Ammianus describes the emperor as censuring the Christians for their quarrelsome disposition; at the same time, he hints that Julian's edict of universal toleration was inspired by a Machiavellian hope that, in order to destroy Christianity, it was necessary only to give the brethren freedom, 'knowing by experience as he did that there are no wild beasts so hostile to mankind as are the Christians to one another'.⁴

¹ For an account of the circumstances see Bidez, *L'Empereur Julien*, p. 234.

² Amm. xv. 7. 7 foll.: 'Athanasium episcopum eo tempore apud Alexandriam ultra professionem altius se efferentem. . . . Dicebatur enim fatidicarum sortium fidem quaeve augurales portenderent alites scientissime callens aliquotiens praedixisse futura.' He must certainly have been a mystery to the pagans.

³ 376 B and C: ὁ θεοῖς ἐχθρός, μαρός; 398 D: πολμηρότατος, ἐπαρθεῖς θράσους; 435 B and C: πανοῦργος, πολυπράγμων, ἢ τοῦ δυσεβοῦς αὐτοῦ διδασκαλείου μοχθηρία.

⁴ Amm. xxii. 5. 3-4; cf. xxvii. 9. 9: 'Christianorum iurgia.'

The pagans ascribed Christian disputatiousness partly to an *odium theologicum* such as is apparent in Tertullian, partly to the struggle for place and power within a world-wide organization which had by this time the richest of earthly prizes in its gift. The Constantinian age provided ample evidence of both. We have already referred to the controversies which shook the Roman world in the fifty years succeeding the Nicene Council.¹ Ammianus took these controversies to illustrate the passion of ecclesiastics to force everything into conformity with their own notions.² As for the growth of avarice and ambition within the Church, the same author mentions it repeatedly, and contrasts the behaviour of metropolitan bishops with that of the provincials, who had not forgotten their vows of poverty and humility.³ With these developments Julian was sufficiently familiar, even if he did not live to witness the scandal of the century, the open bloodshed which marked the contest between Damasus and Ursinus for election to the see of Peter.⁴ It was this incident which provoked the famous *bon mot* of Praetextatus, the urban prefect: Make me bishop of Rome and I will at once become a Christian.

But while, with the growth of monasticism and ecclesiasticism, a vast amount of energy was being diverted to anti-political or, at least, non-political ends, the efforts of the government showed that Christianity, at any rate in its orthodox form, was hardly to be pressed into the service of the state. Julian describes the attempt of his cousin to impose a formal Arianism upon the Church.⁵ 'Many were imprisoned, persecuted and driven into exile. Whole troops of those who were styled heretics suffered death. . . . In Paphlagonia, Bithynia, Galatia and many other provinces, towns and villages were utterly destroyed.' Facts such as these were enough to convince Julian that, in Christianity, the empire had taken to its bosom a vampire which, if not immediately extirpated, would soon drain its life-blood. This conviction determined the spirit and purpose of the reaction of which he made himself the head.

With the return to Hellenism under Julian, the wheel of destiny came full circle. Starting from the Platonic solar mono-

¹ Ch. VI, p. 232 foll.

² xxi. 16. 18: 'ritum omnem ad suum trahere . . . arbitrium.'

³ xxvii. 3. 14-15.

⁴ xxvii. 3. 12 foll. (367). For the facts, see Duchesne, ii, pp. 455-8. ⁵ 436 A.

From this confession of faith, two fundamental facts become apparent. In the first place, the Idea is hypostatized, i.e. invested with the character of being; in the second, it is envisaged as a cause. 'We assert', he declares, 'the existence of matter as well as of form embodied in matter or material form. But if no prior cause be assigned to these, we should unconsciously be thinking in terms of Epicureanism. For, if there be nothing higher than these two principles, then spontaneous motion and chance must have brought them together.'¹ Julian thus offers the usual idealistic objection to the theory of mechanical or automatic generation. Envisaging the world of bodies (σώματα) as 'compounds' of form and matter, he assumes that matter is the negative or passive, form the active or dynamic principle. From this assumption he argues that, since there must be reasons and causes (λόγοι καὶ αἰτίαι) for the material forms, and since these reasons and causes must themselves be material (ἐνυλοὶ αἰτίαι), so also for the material causes there must exist causes which are immaterial (αἰτίαι ἄυλοι) until, in ascending order, he arrives at the third creator who is described as a 'wholly immaterial cause' (αἴτιος παντελῶς ἄυλος). In other words, he asks his reader to accept the existence of a hierarchy of substances and forces culminating in Helios, the Intellectual Sun, who, as the ultimate in nature (ἡ τελευταία φύσις), contains within himself the various patterns of the 'material forms' as well as the 'connected chain of causation' and, through his superabundance of generative power, descends through the starry empyrean as far as earth on his creative mission.²

This notion of form as essence and cause is, of course, a commonplace of Platonic idealism. As applied by Julian to the science of man and society, it yields conclusions of considerable interest. In this connexion we may note what he has to say of human nature. 'Why', he asks, 'are there so many kinds of creatures? Whence arise male and female? Whence the differentiation of things in types according to their species, unless there are pre-existing and pre-established forms existing beforehand to serve as patterns and causes?'³ In this doctrine he finds the secret of racial character and genius.⁴ 'Tell me,' he demands, raising again the question to which the physician Hippocrates had originally attempted an answer seven cen-

¹ 162 A: *Mater Deorum*.

³ 162 D, 163.

² 161 D.

⁴ *134 D foll.: *In Galileos*.

The foundation for individual is, at the same time, a foundation for social ethics. For, since the 'incorporeal reason'¹ is by its very nature common, there can arise no conflict between the demands of an individual and of a social good. In other words, man *qua* man is a communal and political animal.² As such, his obligations are summed up in the word 'philanthropy' (*φιλανθρωπία*) and, in the light of philanthropy, 'Every beggar in the street becomes an insult to the gods.'³ The 'incorporeal reason', which is thus put forward as a basis for communal and political solidarity, serves also to yield a basis for the solidarity of mankind. For, just as the national or group spirit finds expression within the *polis*, so also the spirit of humanity as a whole is embodied in the imperial system, the 'form' of which exhibits a relatively higher degree of universality. In the celestial hierarchy, national and political (local) gods, while representing the group-life of autonomous communities, will, at the same time, find a place as functional, departmental deities in the imperial pantheon, presided over by King Helios, divine sovereign of the universal empire. Thus, in solar monotheism, Julian discovers the basis for a grandiose syncretism which is to include even Jehovah, if only Jehovah will make up his mind to come in.

In this moral and political 'set-up' the achievement of even a moderate degree of excellence calls for the exercise of all the faculties; as for the perfection of virtue, the task is veritably Herculean. Yet the prize of success is correspondingly worth while, nothing less, in fact, than a Herculean or conditional apotheosis. Julian is obsessed with the problems and obligations of leadership. From this standpoint, his essay on the *Caesars* is to be taken, not as a mere *jeu d'esprit*, but rather as a synopsis and criticism of various possible ideals of imperial virtue. Considered as such, it is not surprising that, among the kings of men, Alexander and Caesar, Octavian, Trajan, and Constantine, all fall short of the ideal, Marcus alone measuring up to the requirements, because in his private and public conduct he alone makes it his object 'to imitate the gods'.⁴ The obligation to do so lies most heavily upon those who presume to the right of governing their fellows. 'Even though the prince be by nature human, he must resolve to become divine and a demigod,

¹ 182 D: ἀσώματος λόγος.

² 201 C: κοινωνικὸν καὶ πολιτικὸν ζῶον.

³ 289, 291, 292.

⁴ 333 C.

Bearing in mind the results of this analysis, it becomes possible to appreciate more exactly the spirit of Julian's apostasy, as well as to assess his projects of purgation and reform. Advertised as a return to the liberalism of Constantius Chlorus, the programme of Julian was in fact revolutionary in so far as it embodied a deliberate attempt to platonize the state. From this standpoint, we may estimate at their proper valuation certain polite gestures of the emperor to the older republicanism; such, for example, as his contemplated rejection of the diadem along with the title of *dominus*,¹ or his rebuke to the consuls who rushed to offer him the conventional New Year's salutation, by the affectation of a pose of *civilitas* which, in the circumstances, was little less than inane.² Of still slighter moment, if possible, was the appeal to public opinion with which Julian inaugurated his régime in a series of manifestoes addressed to historic communities whose approval was as devoid of significance as was their political position in the fourth century. For, as has been seen, Julian was no liberal. And all his pedantry does not serve to conceal the truth that he no more dreamed of restoring Augustan 'liberty' than the Ciceronian humanism which was its basis. But, if he disbelieved in the ancient freedoms, still less can it be said that he gave his adherence to the new. It must not, therefore, be supposed that, in reviving the edict of toleration, Julian had any more intention of enforcing an effective separation of Church and state than had Constantine himself when he originally introduced it. With Julian, as with Constantine, this was but a necessary step towards securing the predominance of his own religious principles.³ It was in this spirit, certainly, that he legislated to prevent any interference with pagan rites and ceremonies, as well as to provide endowments for a state-supported pagan priesthood. Thus, also, he suppressed tumults at Alexandria, provoked through resentment of the Athanasian faction at the appointment of George of Cappadocia, by methods analogous to those which Constantine had employed against the African *circumcelliones*, thereby involving himself in what might easily have developed into the horrors of a religious war.⁴ Finally, it has been suggested that his projected restoration of the Temple at Jerusalem was intended as a counterblast to Constantine's erection of the Church of the

¹ 343 c and d.

³ *Ibid.* 5. 2.

² *Amm.* xxii. 7. 1-2.

⁴ *Ibid.* 11.11; cf. Julian, *Ep.* 10.

Holy Sepulchre, and conceived in precisely the same spirit.¹ Indeed, it might almost be said that the policy of Julian was modelled upon that of his predecessor, whose actions he endeavoured, in a spirit of slavish imitation, to reverse.

To assert this without qualification, however, would be to ignore certain positive and salutary elements of the *Pax Iuliana*. Of these, perhaps the most significant was a return to 'republican' justice. Needless to say, this did not embrace the elimination of the imperial bureaucracy—a project excluded not less by the logic of events since Diocletian and Constantine than by that of Platonism itself. As a good Platonist, Julian must have believed in a specialization of functions within the body politic. Accordingly, his efforts were directed to a rationalization of the existing system and, in particular, the destruction of parasitism within it. With this end in view he invoked the heavy sanctions conventional to his age and authorized, so to speak, by Plato himself. Thus, while he simplified judicial procedure by permitting provincial governors to depute cases of minor importance to subordinates,² at the same time he tried to facilitate the rapid decision of suits by prohibiting the dilatory methods of litigants and lawyers.³ On the other hand he authorized the infliction of torture upon tax-assessors convicted of fraud;⁴ and, to check abuses in the transport service, he withdrew from provincial presidents and vicars the privilege of issuing passes, limiting this right to viceroys (*praefecti praetorio*) on whom, at the same time, he imposed rigid restrictions as to its use.⁵ He also forbade the employment of public wagons for the conveyance of private goods, in certain areas prohibiting entirely the requisitioning of transport from the *plebs rustica* by public officials.⁶

The checking of corrupt practices on the part of the bureaucracy was, however, but one aspect of a wider programme which aimed at the rehabilitation of municipal life. For, little as the depressed *curiales* of the lower empire might be supposed to resemble their prototypes of the ideal republic, nevertheless for Julian they were still the mainstay of *Romanitas*. Accordingly, he sought to improve their lot, principally by equalizing and

¹ *Amm.* xxiii. 1. 2: 'imperii sui memoriam magnitudine operum gestiens propagare.'

² *Cod. Theod.* i. 16. 8 (362).

³ ii. 5. 2 (362): 'studio protrahendae disceptationis'.

⁴ viii. 1. 6 (362).

⁵ viii. 5. 12 and 13 (362).

⁶ viii. 5. 15 and 16 (363).

of human relationships which prevailed within the Constantinian empire. 'Innovation', he declares, 'I abominate above all things, especially as concerns the gods, and I hold that we ought to maintain intact the laws which we have inherited from the past, since it is evident that they are god-given.'¹ In this spirit he undertook to disestablish and, if possible, to destroy the Constantinian Church. But, in his dealings alike with individual Christians and with the Church as a body, it is not too much to say that, by repudiating as barbarous the harsh and indiscriminate methods of his cousin, he introduced a new phase of the secular conflict between Christianity and Classicism. In this phase the main assault was directed, not so much against individual believers as against the ecclesiastical corporation, regarded as the chief instrument of intellectual and moral corruption, the chief obstacle to a reassertion of social justice and social peace.

The problem being conceived as 'political', it was to be solved by essentially political methods. This involved, of course, the immediate cancellation of immunities and exemptions lavished by previous emperors upon the Church, together with a restoration to municipalities of public property (temples, &c.) which, 'in the recent troubles, had passed into private hands, such property to be leased out at a just valuation'.² It involved, also, the general edict of toleration, whether or not this was actually inspired by the hope that 'as freedom served to foment their dissensions, the government should no longer have to fear the unanimity of the Christian populace'. These measures were subsidiary to the enforcement among the sectaries of a *Pax Iuliana* which, while it guaranteed them freedom from molestation at the hands of their enemies, undertook also to mitigate the violence and disorder (*ἀκοσμία*) prevalent among themselves.

'By heaven,' declares Julian, 'I want no Galileans killed, scourged or otherwise injured contrary to law.'³

'It is by reason that we ought to persuade and instruct men, not by blows, insults or physical violence. I therefore reiterate my injunction upon all true believers to do no wrong to the Galilean communities, neither to raise hands nor direct insults against them. Those who err in matters of the gravest import deserve pity, not hatred; for, as religion is indeed the greatest of all goods, so is

¹ 453 B.

² *Cod. Theod.* x. 3. 1 (362).

³ 376 C.

censure the emperor for 'an excessive interest in the knowledge of portents (*praesagiorum sciscitatio*) which carried him beyond the bounds of legitimate divination into gross superstition'.¹ Among the numerous instances of this superstition may be cited the fact that he desisted from rebuilding the Temple when 'terrific balls of fire, bursting with frequent explosions from the foundations, rendered the place inaccessible to the workmen'. These explosions, the true cause of which was probably the release of imprisoned subterranean gas, were ascribed by the emperor to supernatural agency.² But this is to point to deficiencies, not so much in the character of Julian as in the system of thought which he professed.

In this connexion we may perhaps recall the observation of Gibbon that the 'genius and power of the emperor were unequal to the enterprise of restoring a religion which was destitute of theological principles, of moral precepts, and of ecclesiastical discipline'. That is to say, he put forward in King Helios a sun without heat, and thus incapable of resolving ambiguities which were inherent in the idealist approach to experience. And, from this standpoint, even the frivolity of contemporary materialism must be regarded as a rebuke to his misguided zeal. His failure, however, cannot be ascribed merely to the fact that the materialists were deaf to his message. For it contained no real appeal to old-fashioned humanists such as Ammianus; and, among the Christians, there were few serious thinkers whom he could hope to seduce from the faith. Accordingly, he was driven for support to the narrow band of Neoplatonic intellectuals, 'the sophists', whose academic advice and assistance proved, indeed, to be in the nature of a boomerang. Otherwise the emperor ploughed a lonely furrow. To his profound dismay he presently discovered that, as his mission produced not the slightest conviction, so it evoked not the least spark of enthusiasm in the minds of men. Misunderstanding himself, he could not, indeed, hope to comprehend the minds and hearts of others. Accordingly, the result of his effort was merely to confirm the verdict of the third century. But, in his failure, Julian assumes the proportions, if not of a heroic, at least of a tragic figure, like Cato in his generation throwing away his energies and his opportunities for a lost cause.

¹ Amm. xxv. 4. 17.

² xxiii. 1. 3.

STATE AND CHURCH IN THE NEW REPUBLIC

WITH the accession of Valentinian, *Romanitas* entered upon the penultimate stage of its existence as an organized system of life. During this period the storms of religious and philosophic controversy which, under the sovereigns of the Constantinian dynasty, had blown with unremitting violence, at last subsided; and, in view of the increasing perils which encompassed the empire, the question arose whether, in their efforts to achieve a new world, the Romans were not in danger of losing all that was best of the old. In this atmosphere the native genius once more asserted itself in a characteristic effort of consolidation. Protected by nominal conformity to the demands of a Christian order, the ancient culture dug itself in; and, as the forms of secular life were fixed and hardened, the Roman world prepared for the last phase under Theodosius.

The defeat of Julian had been dramatically emphasized, not merely by his death on the plains of Mesopotamia but in the election of his successor. Attended though it was by the conventional pagan rites,¹ the choice of the troops fell on a man who, by reason of his notorious adherence to the faith, was to be known in history as *Christianissimus Imperator*. An obscure and undistinguished figure, Jovian, for the greater part of his brief reign, appears to have governed in the name of his predecessor. Few as they were, however, his official acts suffice to indicate a sharp reaction from the principles and policy of Julian. As the readiest means of extricating the remains of the Roman grand army from a difficult, if not impossible situation, Jovian procured a safe retreat by ceding to the hereditary enemy the five provinces beyond the Tigris annexed in 297 by Diocletian together with eastern Mesopotamia, including the great fortresses of Nisibis and Singara, while, at the same time, he renounced the traditional Roman claim to a protectorate over Armenia. The judgement 'ignominious but inevitable', pronounced by Christian historians upon the hastily negotiated peace of Dura, was perhaps inspired by religious bias rather than by any serious consideration of the political and military factors involved. The verdict is nevertheless supported by the fact that

¹ Amm. xxv. 6. 1: 'hostiis pro Ioviano extisque inspectis.'

Jovian's successors honoured the treaty, conscious though they must have been of the dangers which it presented to the Asiatic empire of Rome. While thus cutting the losses of Julian abroad, Jovian at the same time reversed his internal policy, by restoring to the Christian Church the status and privileges of which it had been deprived by the Apostate. In so doing he signalized the definite and final repudiation of official paganism.

The failure of reaction, by exploding for ever the hope of reconstruction upon a strictly 'political' basis, clarified to that extent the issues of the century. Following the time of Julian, the old religion showed little or no fight and, within less than a generation, it was to accept its death sentence with hardly an effort of resistance. On the other hand, the attempt of Julian to destroy Christianity had served, by a curious irony, to invigorate the faith. Deprived of imperial favour the Church was purged of many of the scandals of Constantinian times, while it also recovered something of the spirit with which it had resisted third-century persecution. At the same time, in the face of a common danger, contending factions drew together, Catholics and semi-Arians discovering at last a formula (*μία οὐσία ἐν τρισὶν ὑποστάσεσιν*) whereby their mutual animosities were overcome and a wide measure of agreement achieved. In consequence of these developments the Roman world was once more committed to evolution upon Christian or nominally Christian lines.

From this standpoint, however, the role of 'his most Christian majesty' was simply to point the way to the future; the actual course of events was to be charted by other hands. With the Apostate, devotion to the empire had involved treason to God. With his successor, devotion to God seemed to imply treason to the empire. And, while Rome might accept the restoration of Christianity, the defeatism of the Christian emperor was more than it could endure. Thus, when Jovian suddenly died, leaving the purple to his infant son, the army, ignoring the recent investiture, discharged its historic role by once more electing a soldier as its *imperator*. Conscious of the urgency of his problems,¹ the new Augustus lost no time in co-opting a trustworthy colleague; and, for eleven years, Valentinian and Valens, proclaiming a fraternal unity of purpose,² together supported the burden of administration.

¹ Amm. xxvi. 4. 3: 'magnitudine urgentium negotiorum.'

² Dessau, *I.L.S.* 762: 'fratres concordissimi.'

The 'divine brothers', like Jovian, both professed orthodoxy, although Valens was to be accused of a lapse toward Arianism at the close of his reign. But the re-establishment, in their persons, of a strong and efficient Christian régime excited no revival of the grandiose expectations of Constantinian times. The basis of Constantinianism had been the semi-pagan promise of an earthly millennium, to be attained through the amalgamation of principles which third-century apologists had loudly declared to be incompatible. But, as the vision of universal peace, of an empire united in the bonds of confraternity with its neighbours, had long since been dismissed to the limbo of illusion, so also had vanished the dream of a society which, while cherishing the elements of its imperial heritage, was nevertheless to be rejuvenated through the acceptance of 'Christian ideals'. Half a century of bitter controversy and strife, culminating in the crisis of reaction under Julian, had sufficed to dissipate the hopes of the first Christian Caesar and to reveal the truth that, so far from repairing the inner deficiencies of *Romanitas*, the new faith had brought with it not peace but a sword.

The change of atmosphere was marked by a reversion, on the part of the new administration, to the position originally assumed by Constantine and Licinius in 313. In language which recalls the terms of the Edict of Milan, Valentinian once more proclaimed the principle of toleration as fundamental to the New Republic:¹ 'testes sunt leges a me in exordio imperii mei datae, quibus unicuique quod animo inibisset colendi libera facultas tributa est.' In this declaration we may perceive at once a sharp revulsion from the spirit and methods of Constantinian Christianity and, at the same time, a fresh attempt to come to terms with the forces stirring in the contemporary world. Theoretically it embodied a declaration of neutrality towards the claims of conflicting religions, thus foreshadowing the nineteenth-century ideal of a free Church in a free state. In practice it pointed to a deliberate and sustained effort to satisfy the reasonable aspirations of pagan and Christian alike, thus disposing of a question which had confused the issues of the last fifty years.

This intention is apparent in the measures whereby Valentinian sought to implement the principle of toleration. Thus,

¹ *Cod. Theod.* ix. 16. 9 (371)

were prohibited; teachers of the *profana institutio* were stigmatized as infamous; lands and buildings devoted to the cult were declared liable to confiscation. A subsequent enactment threatened with fines all magistrates who failed to enforce the law.¹

In these measures may be found an index to the spirit and purpose of Valentinian. By contrast with the missionary enterprise displayed under Constantine and his successors, they embody a policy of studied moderation towards the diverse religions current within the empire—a policy which, on the testimony of Ammianus Marcellinus, constituted the chief glory of the reign.² Thus far, they mark the acceptance by Valentinian of the Constantinian revolution and, at the same time, his determination to avoid the errors of the Constantinian house. But, while dissolving the alliance between religion and politics which had transformed emperors into bishops and bishops into politicians, he did not thereby admit the autonomy of the 'inner' or 'higher' life. For, however generous and liberal in spirit, his measures were dictated throughout by concern for the public order and, in defence of that order, they presumed a right to regulate the forms not merely of action but of belief. By thus undertaking to determine questions of faith and morals from the standpoint of political expediency, Valentinian reaffirmed in substance the ancient claim of the classical commonwealth. Moreover, both in his hostility to foreign or subversive influences and in his tenderness to the traditional Graeco-Roman cults, he betrayed the fact that, despite a nominal adherence to Christianity, his spiritual affiliations were in reality with the Roman past rather than with the future promised by the Church.

From this standpoint, the first concern of the emperor was the defence of the community against military dangers the like of which had not been experienced since the terrible years of the third century. For, with her field armies shattered in consequence of Julian's misadventure, with fallen prestige and diminished resources, Rome was suddenly confronted by an unprecedented movement among the barbarian peoples, a

¹ xvi. 5. 3 (372) and 5. 4 (376).

² Amm. xxx. 9. 5: 'hoc moderamine principatus inclaruit quod inter religionum diversitates medius stetit nec quemquam inquietavit nec ut hoc coleretur imperavit aut illud; nec interdictis minacibus subiectorum cervicem ad id quod ipse coluit inclinabat, sed intemeratas reliquit has partes ut repperit.'

honorific titles, ranging from the *illustres*, *spectabiles*, and *clarissimi*, the three grades within the imperial aristocracy, to the *egregiatus* or *perfectissimatus* which satisfied the ambitions of civil servants or *municipales* who had lived to fulfil certain specified duties; and the scheme included fresh distinctions such as that of count, as well as the historical *senatoria dignitas*. Within this latter, the honour of the new patriciate instituted by Constantine, combined with that of the ancient dignity of consul, constituted a distinction which raised the possessor to a social equality with holders of the great vice-royalties or prefectures. Such titles were eagerly coveted, if not for their intrinsic value, at least for the privileges and immunities which their tenure conferred. The importance of status was further emphasized in an elaborate order of precedence, the general principle of which was to be laid down by legislation of Theodosius¹ and defined by his successors. It was emphasized also in a ceremonious code of etiquette which included the specification of forms of access and address (*ius adeundi*, *ius osculandi*, &c.) to be employed in relation to various grades of the civil and military hierarchy.

Such was the system which, evolving out of that erected by Augustus and the Antonines, and developed by successive administrations during the third and fourth centuries, was finally to be projected into the Theodosian age. To each of these administrations it owed something, if only by way of accretion; and of such accretions, certain ones like that of prostration, may undoubtedly be traced to influence from the Orient. Nevertheless, the elements of this order were still Roman and, as such, they might have been understood by Augustus or by Hadrian. In the words of Gibbon,² 'the forms, the pomp and the expense of the civil administration contributed to restrain the irregular license of the soldiers; and, although the laws were violated by power or perverted by subtlety, the sage principles of Roman jurisprudence preserved a sense of order and equity, unknown to the despotic governments of the East'. That is to say, despite the efforts of various emperors to give it a fresh complexion, *Romanitas* still embodied at heart the classical ideal of *εὐνομία* or good order. From this standpoint, it should be remembered that the role of individuals and groups within the system was to adjust themselves to the demands of an architectonic whole,

¹ vi. 22. 7 (383).

² Op. cit., ch. xvii, p. 200.

Contemporary tendencies towards a state monopoly of education found expression also in the establishment of imperial universities both in Old and New Rome.¹ By the constitution of these universities the urban prefect was invested with proctorial power; and students applying for admission were required to present a certificate from the authorities of their place of origin, accrediting them as fit and proper persons to attend. They were required also to outline a proposed course of study, for the approval of the prefect. The *consuale officium* was to keep a record of their place of residence in the city. It was to warn students of the dangers of unseasonable and excessive indulgence, especially by way of too frequent attendance at the spectacles; and, in the case of offenders, it was to inflict the punishment of public flogging and rustication. Diligent and well-behaved students, on the other hand, were permitted to continue their work till the age of twenty; and the names of successful students were to be reported annually to the imperial record office as potential recruits for the civil service. Coincident with the foundation of these state universities went the rehabilitation of the national libraries, through the appointment of a permanent commission to repair and replace books.²

As the crown and apex of a national system of education, the imperial universities, thus established by Valentinian, were to survive, like so many of his institutions, into Theodosian times. An enactment of the younger Theodosius completed their constitution by adding to the existing chairs in grammar and rhetoric (Greek and Latin), one in philosophy and two in law. At the same time it reasserted the state monopoly by forbidding unauthorized persons to offer public instruction and by denying them the immunities accorded to the Capitoline staff.³ Thus the Capitol, in ancient times the seat of Juppiter, Juno, and Minerva, branded by Tertullian as 'temple of all the devils', the place where once the sacred geese had cackled, now echoed to the voices of professors expatiating on the language, literature, and institutions of classical Greece and Rome.

The programme of Valentinian provides ample evidence of what has been described as the heroic effort of consolidation characteristic of the reign. At the same time it emphasizes the truth that this effort was directed towards maintaining, at all costs, the existing structure of secular society. For this purpose

¹ xiv. 9. 1 (370).

² xiv. 9. 2 (372).

³ xiv. 9. 3 (425).

the old way of thought over the new, he associates himself, in effect, with what still survived of the sentiments and aspirations consecrated in the secular system of Rome.

In these circumstances it becomes instructive to consider the estimate which contemporary secularism placed upon the position and prospects of the empire. For this purpose we may advert once more to the authority who, of all that survive, was perhaps best equipped to undertake an analysis and interpretation of the existing scene. At once a man of letters and of affairs, Ammianus combined in his person the qualities which antiquity demanded of the ideal historian. As a soldier he had served under Constantius and his successors; he had witnessed something of Julian's fatal Persian expedition and its aftermath, and he had participated, with Valens, in the fighting on the north-east frontier. He was, moreover, conversant with the workings of the imperial administrative system and thus in a position to discern both its strength and weaknesses. Finally, his experience included a first-hand acquaintance with the society, not merely of the provinces, but also of Rome and Italy. To his work as an historian Ammianus brought an independence of judgement which was the result both of temperament and training; in particular, he was deeply suspicious of the methods adopted by the second Flavians to bring about a new heaven and a new earth. But, while detached and critical in his attitude towards the project of a Christian social order, he was nevertheless far from being a reactionary, and his conservatism was satisfied with the arrangement whereby Valentinian attempted to polarize the relations of Church and state. In this respect he revealed himself decisively as a man of his age. As such, his observations carry with them the authority of one who saw the existing system, so to speak, from within.

With regard to this system, Ammianus has but two general comments to offer, and, of these, the first concerns the Roman aristocracy. In a number of striking passages, which have been used by Gibbon as the basis for a brilliant portrayal of contemporary imperial society, Ammianus lets himself go in a scathing indictment of this class.¹ With Juvenalian scorn he stigmatizes the aimless frivolity of lives made possible only through swollen incomes derived from the exploitation of the provincials and consecrated to no purpose worthier than the ostentatious dis-

¹ xiv. 6; xxviii. 4; Gibbon, *op. cit.*, ch. xxxi, p. 295 foll.

play of wealth and pride. He describes the incessant round of amusements, bathing, driving, hunting, yachting, and the exchange of hospitality, whereby the worthless aristocrats of his day sought to conceal from themselves the futility of their existence. He points with disgust to their moral and spiritual shortcomings, their cowardice and effeminacy, their avarice and wastefulness, their quickness to borrow, their slowness to repay; above all to the childish superstition which prompts them to resort, on the slightest pretext, to diviners and soothsayers who prey upon their fears. This superstition he attributes to the lack of any serious principles of conduct, a defect for which they have themselves to blame, inasmuch as they have turned from the cultivation of the mind, rejecting the heritage of philosophy through which alone such principles may be attained, in order to immerse themselves in mere sensationalism. Accordingly, among their retainers, the crooner has replaced the philosopher, the teacher of histrionics that of oratory; they seal their libraries like tombs, but construct for themselves hydraulic organs.¹

By thus resigning themselves to the cult of futility, the Roman aristocrats no doubt exposed themselves to criticism such as has always been levelled against the idle rich. Yet, in view of the conditions which governed ancient life, the influence of their follies and extravagances must have been relatively circumscribed and, in order to see and appreciate their worthlessness, it was necessary to visit the imperial playground which had once been Italy. Whatever importance they had was, therefore, mainly symbolic: it pointed to a callous indifference on the part of the possessing classes to the hardship and suffering rampant throughout the provinces. Otherwise, their lives possessed not the slightest social significance.

A second and much more incisive criticism was one which applied, not to any limited class within the community, but to imperial society as a whole and which, so far as it could be substantiated, indicated a failure on the part of the Roman order to make good its essential claim. It had been generally accepted, since the time of Vergil, that the Eternal City had realized an ideal of social justice through the establishment and maintenance of a rule of law; and that, in thus discharging her

¹ Amm. xiv. 6. 18: 'denique pro philosopho cantor et, in locum oratoris, doctor artium ludicrarum accitur et, bibliothecis sepulchrorum ritu in perpetuum clausis, organa fabricantur hydraulica . . .'

secular mission, *Romanitas* had found justification in the eyes of the world. But, as Ammianus points out, the subject, to whom this priceless boon was offered, accepted it only to find himself enmeshed in one of the most elaborate legal systems ever devised, and hence a potential victim to the machinations of lawyers by whose sinister activities the ideal of justice was systematically warped and perverted. This danger had become increasingly great with the evolution of bureaucracy and socialism during the fourth century; for, under these conditions, imperial society had become more than ever before a society of lawyers. Lawyers crowded the ranks of the civil hierarchy, importing into it their characteristic point of view. They were active in the courts of justice throughout the provinces. Thus what had once been a flourishing, honoured, and useful profession had become one of the chief plagues of contemporary society. To Ammianus, as a simple and rugged soldier, lawyers are a violent and rapacious crew, dashing from town to town, besieging the door-steps of the rich and, like thoroughbred hounds, sniffing even at bedroom doors for cases. They capitalize domestic differences in order to build up an edifice of hate and, by undertaking to unearth obsolete laws for a sufficient price, they guarantee to secure the acquittal of a man, even if he has murdered his mother. Once in their clutches, the victim is sucked to the marrow without a hope of getting away.¹

The criticisms thus launched by Ammianus, however acute, are obviously lacking in depth and penetration. He carps at the abuse of privilege; but he does not appear to realize that privilege was a value built into the very structure of Graeco-Roman life. He assails the perversion of law, without for a moment considering whether the classical ideal of justice might not itself be imperfect. Yet in the very superficiality of his opinions lies their historical significance; it testifies in the clearest possible way to limitations in the ideology of Graeco-Roman secularism. These limitations are emphasized in what he has to say about the empire. He has no sense of the deeper perils confronting the Roman order, and he fails completely to appreciate the force of the indictment levelled by Christianity against it. For him, as for those to whom he owed his ideas, the greatness of Rome had been the result of a 'unique and almost incredible combination of *virtue* and *fortune*'. What threatened that great-

¹ Amm. xxx. 4. 8 foll.

later the government publicly admits that this is precisely what has, in large measure, taken place.¹ As with the local aristocracies, so also with the members of local guilds. An edict of 400² declares that the municipalities, deprived of their services, have lost their pristine glory, the majority of the *collegiati* having forsaken urban life to bury themselves in secret and inaccessible places; while, at the same time, it decrees that such of them as may be unearthed are to be relegated without exception to their original duties.

The bankruptcy of the municipalities was the bankruptcy of an empire based upon them. Whatever the form to be assumed by the society of the future, it was clearly not to be that of Antonine or even of Constantinian times. Meanwhile, the conditions which so adversely affected municipal life were operating to modify the life of other classes within imperial society as well. It was, indeed, still possible in the middle of the fifth century for members of the senatorial aristocracy (such as Sidonius Apollinaris) to maintain themselves in something like their customary grandeur upon their vast and largely self-contained estates throughout the provinces. This they could do, however, only by dissociating themselves from their traditional relationships and by repudiating their obligations to the central power. An edict of Valentinian, Theodosius, and Arcadius³ declares that, in view of complaints on the part of senators that they could no longer support the *onera glebalia*, the senate had resolved that those unable to discharge their liabilities should compound for them by an annual payment of seven *solidi*, *pro sua portione*, to the treasury. 'This we ratify', add the emperors, 'with the qualification that they may be free to choose whether they should not rather resign from the senate.'

Apart from the multitudes who lost their lives in the turmoil and confusion of the times, it is difficult to know what became of those who obeyed the impulse to cast off burdens long since become intolerable. Some, no doubt, found their way into the ranks of the clergy. Others put themselves under the domination of men still powerful enough to guarantee them protection. Still others went over, body and soul, to the barbarians, among whom they discovered opportunities for freedom and happiness denied them in the moth-eaten society of the declining empire; the history of such renegades provided interesting variants on

¹ xii. 19. 2 and 3.

² xii. 19. 1.

³ vi. 2. 15 (393).

the traditional theme of the advantages of barbarism as compared with those of civilization.¹ But the vast majority, if they did not perish, must have taken refuge in the woods and mountains, to eke out a precarious existence by rapine and murder.

A sharp increase in the number of such public enemies towards the end of the fourth century gave rise to a heightened sense of insecurity among the civilian population, a sense of insecurity which the government could do little or nothing to allay. Legislation of 383 or 391 provided that any one giving aid or comfort to brigands should be liable to punishments ranging from fines to the lash, while the agent or foreman of an estate who, without knowledge of the proprietor, concealed such vagabonds or neglected to give them up to justice, was threatened with burning alive.² By another edict, householders were permitted to resist with arms the clandestine entry of robbers into their homes by night, as well as open attacks during the day.³ Still another edict decreed that all deserters from the army should be rounded up and placed in custody, there to await the decision of the emperor.⁴ But the final paralysis of government was revealed in a law which authorized all persons *pro quiete communi* 'to exercise with impunity the right of public vengeance against the common enemy' by exterminating malefactors, brigands, or deserters, wherever they could be found.⁵ With this humiliating confession of impotence *Romanitas* virtually abdicated her secular task. The imperial power which, in words ascribed to an enemy, had made a desert and called it peace, had encountered its ultimate nemesis; as the Roman wolf, which for centuries had waxed fat on the carcasses of its victims, at last perished not of surfeit but of anaemia. And, when the great beast finally expired, there was once more resumed the warfare of each against all, the interminable strife

'wherein men live without other security than what their own strength and their own invention shall furnish them withall. In such condition, there is no place for Industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain; and consequently no Culture of the Earth; no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by Sea; no commodious Building; no Instruments of moving and removing such

¹ See the story of one such individual retailed by Gibbon, *op. cit.*, ch. xxxiv, p. 429; see also Salvian, *De Gubernatione Dei* (circa 455). ² *Cod. Theod.* ix. 29. 2.

³ ix. 14. 2 (391).

⁴ vii. 1. 16 (398).

⁵ vii. 18. 14 (403).

things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and, which is worst of all, continuall feare, and the danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish and short.'

Translated from terms of analysis into those of history, this means that Europe now made ready for her dramatic plunge into the Dark Ages.

In this way the city, which had shown the world how the political community could be organized, was in the end to provide a spectacular illustration of how that community is dissolved. And, as the heavy hand of autocracy was suddenly relaxed, the ghosts of dead ideas came floating out of the distant past to haunt the troubled present. The emperor Honorius vainly sought to evoke the spirit of patriotism and local self-help, to be achieved through the creation of municipal militia. In Britain and Armorica, after their final evacuation by the legions, the embers of that spirit appear for a moment to have flickered into life in formal 'declarations of independence' made by the co-operating *civitates* and confirmed by the emperor who 'thus permanently abdicated his sovereignty over them'.¹ Meanwhile, in Egypt, the fighting bishop Synesius indulged in the dream of 'a nation in arms' as the only possible hope of salvaging the wreckage of an empire.²

In general, however, such visions of freedom and of co-operative effort were condemned in advance to futility. They were, indeed, but the pale reflection of notions wholly alien to the mentality and circumstances of the Theodosian age. And this fact may serve to emphasize a truth upon which we have elsewhere insisted and which, indeed, is the underlying theme of this work. The fall of Rome was the fall of an idea, or rather of a system of life based upon a complex of ideas which may be described broadly as those of Classicism; and the deficiencies of Classicism, already exposed in the third century, were destined sooner or later to involve the system in ruin. Recognizing this fact, the object of the renovationist emperors had been to come to terms with Christianity as a force calculated to invigorate the state. In this respect, the difference between Constantine and Theodosius lay in the distance to which each was prepared to go in conforming to its demands. From this point of view, the inclination of Constantine was, as we have seen, to burke the

¹ Gibbon, *op. cit.*, ch. xxxi, pp. 351-6.

² *De Regno*, 21 foll. (circa 398).

logical consequences of his action in 'recognizing' Christianity; but Theodosius went to the ultimate limit possible for a Roman emperor by instituting the forms and order of the Catholic state. Despite this difference, however, both emperors were alike in one fundamental respect: what they required of Christianity was that it should subserve a definitely social and economic function, i.e. they still thought 'politically'. In this fact, perhaps, may be found an explanation for the failure of their efforts, the net result of which was simply to hasten the end.

If this be so, it raises a question of profound interest and importance. That question is whether there was, at bottom, any real possibility of effecting a reconciliation between Classicism and Christianity, between the claims of a system which was directed to the achievement of temporal peace and one which aimed at the realization of a peace not of this world. To this question no final answer is perhaps possible. It should, however, be observed that, while Christianity contained elements which might be employed to reinforce the established order, at the same time it embodied ingredients of a highly explosive character, sufficient indeed to shatter the already weakened faith in classical ideals and thus to empty the system of whatever meaning it still possessed. Hence, without denying to both emperors and churchmen of the fourth century credit for sincerity and good will in their efforts to compromise or at least to conceal their differences, we are bound to insist that they failed to arrive at anything like a permanent solution of the problem of the two societies. It might, indeed, be asserted that, by bringing to a focus the issue between them, they precipitated the downfall of the ancient world.

To speak in terms of 'downfall' is, in a way, indecent: it is to put oneself in a false position and to abandon all real sense of historical perspective. To a Julian or a Symmachus, the events of the fourth century must certainly have appeared to portend the end of civilization and, with it, everything which gave value and significance to human life. For the modern, however, these momentous developments were the necessary preparation for a new and radically different future; and, in order that this future should materialize, it was inevitable that *Romanitas*, despite her pretension to eternity, should perish from the earth.

In conclusion it should be noted that, in the process of dis-

mantling the empire, Christianity and barbarism were associated rather than allied powers. What the barbarians coveted was a place in the sun; and, in some degree, their ambitions were realized in the form of those short-lived Gothic and Vandal kingdoms which, in the period from Alaric to Clovis, rose and fell throughout the Western provinces. Christianity, on the other hand, concerned itself with the problems of economic and cultural life only in a secondary sense; despite the fumbling and uncertain character of its efforts, its real object was still to build the Kingdom of God. From this point of view it becomes possible to estimate the role of the Church in the period succeeding the eclipse of the empire. The Church did, indeed, help to civilize the barbarians, partly by assuming custody of the literature which, throughout classical times, had contained the spiritual nourishment of men, partly by communicating to the invaders something of the spirit of order and discipline which it had acquired from its association with the fallen empire.¹ Infinitely more important than this, however, its problem was to offer them a faith less inadequate to human needs than that which they had brought with them from the forests of Germany. The question thus arises: how far was it equipped to do so? To answer this question, it becomes necessary to retrace our steps and, within the necessary limitations of this work, to examine, in certain of its more significant aspects, the development of Christian thinking in the period subsequent to Nicaea.

¹ Gibbon, op. cit., ch. xxxviii, p. 142, on Visigothic Spain.

any other aspect of his experience. The incidents which he recounts are, perhaps, sufficiently familiar. But it may be noted that, in recording them, the author makes a discovery of fundamental importance, viz. that experience is both continuous and cumulative. It is continuous in the sense that, from the most primitive and rudimentary indications of consciousness to its highest and fullest manifestations, it involves a progressive unfolding of the so-called faculties without *saltus* or break. It thus begins, in the new-born infant, with elementary motions such as reaction to light, followed by a gradual establishment of location in space and contact with the immediate environment; and this the infant accomplishes in a fashion peculiarly his own: 'iactabam et membra et voces, signa similia voluntatibus meis'.¹ From such beginnings, he presently develops the less generalized and more specific characteristics of the human ego; especially as there dawns upon him a sense that 'in ordered and coherent utterance' effective communication becomes possible with the outside world: *puer loquens eram*.² With the discovery and perfection of this means of self-expression, the child is 'launched more deeply into the stormy intercourse of human life'. But, if such development is continuous, it is also cumulative; for it is marked by a constant carry-over of impressions and feelings from the past into the present, as the mere process of living calls into play the mysterious forces of imagination, memory, and recollection.³ Thus it is that, however transitory and fleeting, each 'moment' of experience somehow enters into and remains, if obscurely, within the constitution of the whole. It is likewise to be noted that every single one of these moments has a certain emotional content, a 'value' of pleasure or pain, of satisfaction or distress. These also, the *affectiones animi* as Augustine calls them, are retained within 'the spacious palace of memory', to be evoked on occasion 'not as the mind felt them at the moment of experience but otherwise, according to a power of its own'. 'For without rejoicing I remember myself to have joyed; without sorrow I recollect bygone sorrows. That I was once afraid I recall without fear; and without desire am reminded of desires past.'⁴ Nevertheless, since 'that which all men will is happiness, and there is none who altogether wills it not',⁵ the values thus established play their part in fixing the

¹ *Conf.* i. vii. 11; cf. *De Civ. Dei*, xi. 2.

³ x. viii. 12 foll.

⁴ x. xiv. 21.

² *Conf.* i. viii. 13.

⁵ x. xx. 29.

norms of appetite and aversion which go to make up a characteristic mode or pattern of behaviour.

Thus with Augustine each individual human being is envisaged as a centre of radiant energy. Born into a world of contacts, he presently develops a whole tissue of external relationships, but the 'subject' is not on that account to be resolved into any or all of the relationships thus established. On the contrary, it accepts the raw material of sense-perception streaming in through the various channels; recording, sorting, and assessing it in the light of standards which mature with maturing experience, only to make it the basis of further demands upon what appear to be the available sources of satisfaction. From this standpoint, the different so-called faculties may all be considered as functions of will. Thus regarded, the apparently spasmodic and mechanical reactions of the infant, tossing himself about and giving vent to incoherent sounds, may be accepted as evidence of incipient volition, destined as such to find expression in the consolidated dispositions and aptitudes of the adult man. As he elsewhere puts it, *quid sumus nisi voluntates?*

It thus becomes apparent that, so far as concerns the human animal, the problem of life is a problem of consciousness. But, if so, the question arises: in what is consciousness to discover the fullest measure of satisfaction? This question is not gratuitous; but, in view of the multifarious possibilities offered by life and of the consequent necessity for discrimination, it presents itself as inescapable. It is, indeed, true that, in some degree, the spirit of man finds gratification on what may be called the lower planes of acceptance. Life itself has a natural sweetness, as Augustine observes in agreement with Aristotle; and the mere exercise of the vital functions such as eating and sleeping, if unimpeded, is attended by a relatively innocuous, though hardly exalted, pleasure. But it is none the less evident that, for the normally constituted human being, the demands of consciousness are not completely fulfilled on those levels of life which he shares with brute creation; and it is equally certain that those demands cannot permanently be denied. This being so, there remains the insistent problem of how, in the last analysis, they are to be met. To this problem Augustine proposes three possible solutions, the merits of which he canvasses in turn.

The first and perhaps the most obvious of these solutions is

any other aspect of his experience. The incidents which he recounts are, perhaps, sufficiently familiar. But it may be noted that, in recording them, the author makes a discovery of fundamental importance, viz. that experience is both continuous and cumulative. It is continuous in the sense that, from the most primitive and rudimentary indications of consciousness to its highest and fullest manifestations, it involves a progressive unfolding of the so-called faculties without *saltus* or break. It thus begins, in the new-born infant, with elementary motions such as reaction to light, followed by a gradual establishment of location in space and contact with the immediate environment; and this the infant accomplishes in a fashion peculiarly his own: 'iactabam et membra et voces, signa similia voluntatibus meis'.¹ From such beginnings, he presently develops the less generalized and more specific characteristics of the human ego; especially as there dawns upon him a sense that 'in ordered and coherent utterance' effective communication becomes possible with the outside world: *puer loquens eram*.² With the discovery and perfection of this means of self-expression, the child is 'launched more deeply into the stormy intercourse of human life'. But, if such development is continuous, it is also cumulative; for it is marked by a constant carry-over of impressions and feelings from the past into the present, as the mere process of living calls into play the mysterious forces of imagination, memory, and recollection.³ Thus it is that, however transitory and fleeting, each 'moment' of experience somehow enters into and remains, if obscurely, within the constitution of the whole. It is likewise to be noted that every single one of these moments has a certain emotional content, a 'value' of pleasure or pain, of satisfaction or distress. These also, the *affectiones animi* as Augustine calls them, are retained within 'the spacious palace of memory', to be evoked on occasion 'not as the mind felt them at the moment of experience but otherwise, according to a power of its own'. 'For without rejoicing I remember myself to have joyed; without sorrow I recollect bygone sorrows. That I was once afraid I recall without fear; and without desire am reminded of desires past.'⁴ Nevertheless, since 'that which all men will is happiness, and there is none who altogether wills it not',⁵ the values thus established play their part in fixing the

¹ *Conf.* i. vii. 11; cf. *De Civ. Dei*, xi. 2.

³ x. viii. 12 foll.

⁴ x. xiv. 21.

² *Conf.* i. viii. 13.

⁵ x. xx. 29.

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