the true significance of the changes that had come upon the ancient world. The new Christian Rome, whose advent Prudentius had hailed, was indeed destined to inherit the Roman tradition and to preserve the old ideal of Roman unity in a changed world. For it was to Rome that the new peoples owed the very idea of the possibility of a common civilisation. Through all the chaos of the dark ages that were to follow, men cherished the memory of the universal peace and order of the Roman Empire, with its common religion, its common law and its common culture; and the repeated efforts of the Middle Ages to return to the past and to recover this lost unity and civilisation led the new peoples forward to the future and prepared the way for the coming of a new European culture.
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The influence of Christianity on the formation of the European unity is a striking example of the way in which the course of historical development is modified and determined by the intervention of new spiritual influences. History is not to be explained as a closed order in which each stage is the inevitable and logical result of that which has gone before. There is in it always a mysterious and inexplicable element, due not only to the influence of chance or the initiative of the individual genius, but also to the creative power of spiritual forces.

Thus in the case of the ancient world we can see that the artificial material civilisation of the Roman Empire stood in need of some religious inspiration of a more profound kind than was contained in the official cults of the city-state; and we might have guessed that this spiritual deficiency would lead to an infiltration of oriental religious influences, such as actually occurred during the imperial age. But no one could have foretold the actual appearance of Christianity and the way in which it would transform the life and thought of ancient civilisation.

The religion which was destined to conquer the Roman Empire and to become permanently identified with the life of the West was indeed of purely oriental origin and had no roots in the European past or in the traditions of classical civilisation. But its orientalism was not that of the cosmopolitan world of religious syncretism in which Greek philosophy
mingled with the cults and traditions of the ancient East, but that of a unique and highly individual national tradition which held itself jealously aloof from the religious influences of its oriental environment, no less than from all contact with the dominant Western culture.

The Jews were the one people of the Empire who had remained obstinately faithful to their national traditions in spite of the attractions of the Hellenistic culture, which the other peoples of the Levant accepted even more eagerly than their descendants have received the civilisation of modern Europe. Although Christianity by its very nature broke with the exclusive nationalism of Judaism and assumed a universal mission, it also claimed the succession of Israel and based its appeal not on the common principles of Hellenistic thought, but on the purely Hebraic tradition represented by the Law and the Prophets. The primitive Church regarded itself as the second Israel, the heir of the Kingdom which was promised to the People of God; and consequently it preserved the ideal of spiritual segregation and the spirit of irreconcilable opposition to the Gentile world that had inspired the whole Jewish tradition.

It was this sense of historic continuity and social solidarity which distinguished the Christian Church from the mystery religions and the other oriental cults of the period, and made it from the first the only real rival and alternative to the official religious unity of the Empire. It is true that it did not attempt to combat or to replace the Roman Empire as a political organism. It was a supernatural society, the polity of the world to come, and it recognised the rights and claims of the state in the present order. But, on the other hand, it could not accept the ideals of the Hellenistic culture or cooperate in the social life of the Empire. The idea of citizenship, which was the fundamental idea of the classical culture, was transferred by Christianity to the spiritual order. In the existing social order Christians were peregrini—strangers and foreigners—their true citizenship was in the Kingdom of God, and even in the present world their most vital social relationship was found in their membership of the Church, not in that of the city or the Empire.

Thus the Church was, if not a state within the state, at least an ultimate and autonomous society. It had its own organisation and hierarchy, its system of government and law, and its rules of membership and initiation. It appealed
to all those who failed to find satisfaction in the existing order, the poor and the oppressed, the unprivileged classes, above all those who revolted against the spiritual emptiness and corruption of the dominant material culture, and who felt the need of a new spiritual order and a religious view of life. And so it became the focus of the forces of disaffection and opposition to the dominant culture in a far more fundamental sense than any movement of political or economic discontent. It was a protest not against material injustice but against the spiritual ideals of the ancient world and its whole social ethos.

This opposition finds an inspired expression in the book of the Apocalypse, which was composed in the province of Asia at a time when the Church was threatened with persecution owing to the public enforcement of the imperial cult of Rome and the Emperor in the time of Domitian. The state priesthood that was organised in the cities of the province is described as the False Prophet that causes men to worship the Beast (the Roman Empire) and its image, and to receive its seal, without which no man might buy or sell. Rome herself, whom Virgil described as "like the Phrygian Mother of the Gods, crowned with towers, rejoicing in her divine offspring," now appears as the Woman sitting upon the Beast, the mother of harlots and abominations, drunken with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And all the heavenly hosts and the souls of the martyrs are shown waiting for the coming of the day of vengeance when the power of the Beast shall be destroyed and Rome shall be cast down for ever, like a mill-stone into the sea.

This is an impressive witness to the gathering forces of spiritual hostility and condemnation that were sapping the moral foundations of the Roman power. The Empire had alienated the strongest and most vital forces in the life of the age, and it was this internal contradiction, far more than war or external invasion, that caused the downfall of ancient civilisation. Before ever the barbarians had broken into the Empire and before the economic breakdown had taken place, the life had passed out of the city-state and the spirit of classical civilisation was dying. The cities were still being built with their temples and statues and theatres as in the Hellenistic age, but it was a sham façade that hid the decay within. The future lay with the infant Church.

Nevertheless, Christianity won the victory only after
long and bitter struggle. The Church grew under the shadow of the executioner’s rods and axes, and every Christian lived in peril of physical torture and death. The thought of martyrdom coloured the whole outlook of early Christianity. It was not only a fear, it was also an ideal and a hope. For the martyr was the complete Christian. He was the champion and hero of the new society in its conflict with the old, and even the Christians who had failed in the moment of trial—the lapsi—looked on the martyrs as their savours and protectors. We have only to read the epistles of St. Cyprian or the Testimonia which he compiled as a manual for the “miliest Christi,” or the treatise de Laude Martyrum which goes under his name, to realise the passionate exaltation which the ideal of martyrdom produced in the Christian mind. It attains almost lyrical expression in the following passage of St. Cyprian’s epistle to Nemesianus, which is deservedly famous: “O feet blessedly bound, which are loosed not by the smith but by the Lord! O feet blessedly bound, which are guided to paradise in the way of salvation! O feet bound for the present time in the world that they may be always free with the Lord! O feet lingering for a while among the fetters and crossbars but to run quickly to Christ on a glorious road! Let cruelty, envious or malignant, hold you here in its bonds and chains as long as it will, from this earth and from these sufferings you shall speedily come to the Kingdom of Heaven. The body is not cherished in the mines with couch and cushions, but it is cherished with the refreshment and solace of Christ. The frame wearied with labours lies prostrate on the ground, but it is no penalty to lie down with Christ. Your limbs unbathed are foul and disfigured with filth; but within they are spiritually cleansed, though the flesh is defiled. There the bread is scarce, but man liveth not by bread alone but by the Word of God. Shivering, you want clothing; but he who puts on Christ is abundantly clothed and adorned.”

This is not the pious rhetoric of a fashionable preacher; it is the message of a confessor, who was himself soon to suffer death for the faith, to his fellow bishops and clergy and “the rest of the brethren in the mines, martyrs of God.”

In an age when the individual was becoming the passive instrument of an omnipotent and universal state it is difficult to exaggerate the importance of such an ideal, which was the ultimate stronghold of spiritual freedom. More than any other factor it secured the ultimate triumph of the Church,
for it rendered plain to all the fact that Christianity was the
one remaining power in the world which could not be ab-
sorbed in the gigantic mechanism of the new servile state.
And while the Church was involved in this life-and-death
struggle with the imperial state and its Hellenistic culture,
it also had to carry on a difficult and obscure warfare with
the growing forces of oriental religion. Under the viceroy
of cosmopolitan Hellenistic civilisation, the religious traditions
of the ancient East were still alive and were gradually per-
meating the thought of the age. The mystery religions of
Asia Minor spread westwards in the same way as Christianity
itself, and the religion of Mithras accompanied the Roman
armies to the Danube and the Rhine and the British frontier.
The Egyptian worship of Isis and the Syrian cults of Adonis
and Atargatis, Hadad of Baalbek, and the Sun-God of Elnesa,
followed the rising tide of Syrian trade and migration to the
West, while in the oriental underworld new religions, like
Manichaeanism, were coming into existence, and the imme-
memorial traditions of Babylonian astral theology were appear-
ing in new forms.a

But the most characteristic product of this movement of
oriental syncretism was the Gnostic theosophy, which was
an ever-present danger to the Christian Church during the
second and third centuries. It was based on the fundamental
dualism of spirit and matter and the association of the mate-
rial world with the evil principle, a dualism which derived
more, perhaps, from Greek and Anatolian influences than
from Persia, since we find it already fully developed in the
Orphic mythology and in the philosophy of Empedocles. But
this central idea was enveloped in a dense growth of magic
and theosophical speculation which was undoubtedly derived
from Babylonian and oriental sources.

This strange oriental mysticism possessed an extraor-
dinary attraction for the mind of a society which, no less than
that of India six centuries before, was inspired with a
profound sense of disillusionment and the thirst for deliver-
ance. Consequently, it was not merely an exterior danger to
Christianity; it threatened to absorb it altogether, by trans-
forming the historical figure of Jesus into a member of the
hierarchy of divine Aeons, and by substituting the ideal of
the deliverance of the soul from the contamination of the
material world for the Christian ideals of the redemption
of the body and the realisation of the Kingdom of God as a
social and historical reality. And its influence was felt not only directly in the great Christian-Gnostic systems of Valentinus and Basilides, but also indirectly through a multitude of minor oriental heresies that form an unbroken series from Simon Magus in the apostolic age down to the Paulicians of the Byzantine period. In the second century this movement had grown so strong that it captured three of the most distinguished representatives of oriental Christianity, Marcion in Asia Minor, and Tatian and Bardanes, who were the founders of the new Aramaic literature, in Syria.

If Christianity had been merely one among the oriental sects and mystery religions of the Roman Empire it must inevitably have been drawn into this oriental syncretism. It survived because it possessed a system of ecclesiastical organisation and a principle of social authority that distinguished it from all the other religious bodies of the age. From the first, as we have seen, the Church regarded itself as the New Israel, "an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people set apart." This holy society was a theocracy inspired and governed by the Holy Spirit, and its rulers, the apostles, were the representatives not of the community but of the Christ, who had chosen them and transmitted to them His divine authority. This conception of a divine apostolic authority remained as the foundation of ecclesiastical order in the post-apostolic period. The "overseers" and elders, who were the rulers of the local churches, were regarded as the successors of the apostles, and the churches that were of direct apostolic origin enjoyed a peculiar prestige and authority among the rest.

This was the case above all with the Roman Church, for, as Peter had possessed a unique position among the Twelve, so the Roman Church, which traced its origins to St. Peter, possessed an exceptional position among the churches. Even in the first century, almost before the close of the apostolic age, we see an instance of this in the authoritative intervention of Rome in the affairs of the Church of Corinth. The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians (c.a.d. 96) gives the clearest possible expression to the ideal of hierarchic order which was the principle of the new society. The author argues that order is the law of the universe. And as it is the principle of external nature so, too, is it the principle of the Christian society. The faithful must preserve the same discipline and subordination of rank that marked the Roman
army. As Christ is from God, so the apostles are from Christ, and the apostles, in turn, "appointed their first converts, testing them by the spirit, to be the bishops and deacons of the future believers. And, knowing there would be strife for the title of bishop, they afterwards added the codicil that if they should fall asleep other approved men should succeed to their ministry." Therefore it is essential that the Church of Corinth should put aside strife and envy and submit to the lawfully appointed presbyters, who represent the apostolic principle of divine authority.6

The doctrine of St. Clement is characteristically Roman in its insistence on social order and moral discipline, but it has much in common with the teaching of the Pastoral Epistles, and there can be no doubt that it represents the traditional spirit of the primitive Church. It was this spirit that saved Christianity from sinking in the morass of oriental syncretism.

In his polemic against the Gnostics in the following century St. Irenaeus appeals again and again to the social authority of the apostolic tradition against the wild speculations of Eastern theosophy. "The true Gnosis is the teaching of the apostles and the primitive constitution of the Church throughout the world." And with him also it is the Roman Church that is the centre of unity and the guarantee of orthodox belief.7

In this way the primitive Church survived both the perils of heresy and schism and the persecution of the imperial power and organised itself as a universal hierarchical society over against the pagan world-state. Hence it was but a step to the conquest of the Empire itself, and to its establishment as the official religion of the reorganised Constantinian state. Whether Constantine himself was moved by considerations of policy in his attitude to Christianity is a debatable question.8 No doubt he was sincere in the conviction he expresses in his letter to the provincials: that he had been raised up by the Divinity from the far west of Britain to destroy the enemies of Christianity, who would otherwise have ruined the Republic; and this belief may well have been reinforced by a conviction that the order and universality of the Christian Church predestined it to be the spiritual ally and complement of the universal Empire. In any case, this was the light in which the official Christian panegyrist of Constantine, Eusebius of Cæsarea, interpreted the course
of events. "One God," he writes, "was proclaimed to all mankind; and at the same time one universal power, the Roman Empire, arose and flourished. The enduring and implacable hatred of nation for nation was now removed; and as the knowledge of one God and one way of religion and salvation, even the doctrine of Christ, was made known to all mankind; so at the selfsame period, the entire dominion of the Roman Empire being vested in a single sovereign, profound peace reigned throughout the world. And thus, by the express appointment of the same God, two roots of blessing, the Roman Empire and the doctrine of Christian piety, sprang up together for the benefit of mankind." *

In fact the official recognition of the Church and its association with the Roman state became the determining factor in the development of a new social order. The Church received its liberty and in return it brought to the Empire its resources of spiritual and social vitality. Under the later Empire the Church came more and more to take the place of the old civic organisation as the organ of popular consciousness. It was not itself the cause of the downfall of the city-state, which was perishing from its own weakness, but it provided a substitute through which the life of the people could find new modes of expression. The civic institutions which had been the basis of ancient society had become empty forms; in fact, political rights had become transformed into fiscal obligations. The citizenship of the future lay in the membership of the Church. In the Church the ordinary man found material and economic assistance and spiritual liberty. The opportunities for spontaneous social activity and free co-operation which were denied by the bureaucratic despotism of the state continued to exist in the spiritual society of the Church, and consequently the best of the thought and practical ability of the age was devoted to its service.

Thus in every city of the later Empire, side by side with the old citizen body, we find the new people of the Christian Church, the "plebs Christi," and as the former lost its social privileges and its political rights, the latter gradually came to take its place. In the same way the power and prestige of the clergy—the Christian ordo—increased as those of the civil ordo—the municipal magistracy—declined, until the bishop became the most important figure in the life of the city and the representative of the whole community. The
office of the bishop was indeed the vital institution of the new epoch. He wielded almost unlimited power in his diocese, he was surrounded by an aura of supernatural prestige, and yet, at the same time, his was an essentially popular authority, since it sprang from the free choice of the people. Moreover, in addition to his religious authority and his prestige as a representative of the people, he possessed recognized powers of jurisdiction not only over his clergy and the property of the Church, but as a judge and arbitrator in all cases in which his decision was invoked, even though the case had already been brought before a secular court. Consequently, the episcopate was the one power in the later Empire capable of counterbalancing and resisting the all-pervading tyranny of the imperial bureaucracy. Even the most arrogant official feared to touch a bishop, and there are numerous instances of episcopal intervention not only on behalf of the rights of individuals, but also of those cities and provinces.

So, too, the Church came to the economic help of the people in the growing material distress and impoverishment of the later Empire. Its vast endowments were at that time literally "the patrimony of the poor," and in great cities like Rome and Alexandria the Church by degrees made itself responsible for the feeding of the poor as well as for the maintenance of hospitals and orphanages.

St. Ambrose declared that it was a shameful thing to have gold vessels on the altar when there were captives to be ransomed, and at a later period when Italy was devastated by the famine and barbarian invasion St. Gregory is said to have taken his responsibilities so seriously that when a single poor man was found dead of hunger in Rome, he abstained from saying Mass as though he were guilty of his death.

This social activity explains the popularity of the Church among the masses of the people and the personal influence of the bishops, but it also involved new problems in the relation of the Church to secular society. The Church had become so indispensable to the welfare of society, and so closely united with the existing social order, that there was a danger that it would become an integral part of the imperial state. The germs of this development are already to be seen in Origen's theory of the Church. He draws an elaborate parallel between the Christian society and that of the Empire. He compares the local church to the body of citizens in
each city—the Ecclesia—and as the latter had its Boule or Curia and its magistrates or archons, so, too, the Christian Church has its ordo or clergy, and its ruler, the bishop. The whole assembly of churches, "the whole body of the synagogues of the Church," corresponds to the unity of the cities in the Empire. Thus the Church is, as it were, "the cosmos of the cosmos," and he even goes so far as to envisage the conversion of the Empire to Christianity and the unification of the two societies in one universal "city of God."

In the fourth century the ecclesiastical organisation had become closely modelled on that of the Empire. Not only did each city have its bishop, the limits of whose see corresponded with those of the city territory, but the civil province was also an ecclesiastical province under a metropolitan who resided in the provincial capital. By the end of the fourth century an effort was even being made to create an ecclesiastical unity or "exarchate" corresponding to the civil diocese or group of provinces that was governed by an imperial vicar.

The logical culmination of this development was to make the capital of the Empire also the centre of the Church. The solution indeed might seem to have been already provided by the traditional primacy of the Church of Rome, the imperial city. But in the fourth century Rome no longer occupied the same unique position that it had held in the previous centuries. The centre of the Mediterranean world had shifted back once more to the Hellenistic east. Since the reorganisation of the Empire by Diocletian, the emperors no longer resided at Rome, and the importance of the old capital rapidly declined, especially after the foundation of the new capital at Constantinople in 320.

These changes also affected the position of the Roman Church. Under the early Empire Rome had been an international city and Greek was the language of the Roman Church. But from the third century A.D., Rome and the Roman Church gradually became Latinised, and East and West tended to drift apart. The ecclesiastical aspect of this centrifugal tendency is already visible in the middle of the third century, in the opposition of the Eastern bishops, under St. Firmilian, to Pope Stephen on the question of the re-baptism of heretics, and the tendency became still more marked in the following century. From the time of Constantine onwards the Eastern churches began to look to Constantinople rather than to Rome for guidance, and it was the imperial court rather
than the Apostolic See that was the centre of unity. This was already evident in the later years of Constantine himself, and his successor, Constantius II went so far as to anticipate the Caesaropapism of later Byzantine history and to transform the Church of the Eastern provinces into a State Church closely dependent on the imperial government.

The essential organ of the ecclesiastical policy of Constantine and his successors was the General Council, an institution which was not, like the earlier provincial councils, of purely ecclesiastical origin, but owed its existence to the imperial power. The right of convocation was vested in the emperor, and it was he who decided what was to be discussed and ratified the decisions by his imperial sanction. But, though in the hands of a crowned theologian like Constantius or Justinian, the General Council was an instrument of the imperial control of the Church rather than an organ of ecclesiastical self-government, it was also a representative institution, and the great ecumenical councils were the first representative deliberative assemblies that had ever existed. Moreover, the Eastern churches in the fourth century were far from being the passive servants of an Erastian government. They were full of independent spiritual and intellectual life. If the Western Church takes a second place in the ecclesiastical history of the time, it is largely because the great religious forces of the age had their centre in the East.

It was in the East that there arose the monastic movement which created the dominant religious ideals of the new age, and though it spread rapidly from one end of the Empire to the other, it continued to derive its inspiration from the hermits and ascetics of the Egyptian desert.

It was the East also that created the new liturgical poetry and the cycle of the liturgical year which was to become the common possession of the Christian Church.

Above all, it was the East that unified the Christian tradition with that of Greek philosophical culture and embodied Christian doctrine in a scientific theological system. The foundations of this development had already been laid in the third century, above all by Origen and the catechetical school of Alexandria, and the work was carried on in the following century by Eusébius in Palestine, by Athanasius at Alexandria, and finally, by the three great Cappadocian Greeks, St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, and St. Gregory of Nyssa. Thanks to their work the Church was able to formulate a profound
and exact intellectual statement of Christian doctrine and to avoid the danger of an unintelligent traditionalism on the one hand, and on the other, that of a superficial rationalisation of Christianity, such as we find in Arianism.

No doubt this process of theological development was accompanied by violent controversies and the intellectualism of Greek theology often degenerated into metaphysical hair-splitting. There is some justification for Duchesne's remark that the Eastern Church would have done well to think less of speculative questions about the Divine Nature and more about the duty of unity; but the development of scientific theology was not the only or even the principal cause of heresy and schism, and without that development the whole intellectual life of Christendom would have been immeasurably poorer.

In order to realise what the West owed to the East, we have only to measure the gap that divides St. Augustine from St. Cyprian. Both of them were Westerners, and Africans, both of them owed much to the older Latin tradition of Tertullian. But, while Cyprian never indulges in philosophical speculations and is not even a theologian in the scientific sense of the word, Augustine yields nothing to the greatest of the Greek Fathers in philosophical profundity. He is, as Harnack puts it, an Origen and an Athanasius in one, and something more as well.

This vast progress is not to be explained as a spontaneous development of Western Christianity, even though we admit the supreme personal genius of Augustine himself. The theological development of the West in the century that followed Tertullian was in fact a retrograde one, and writers such as Arnobius and Commodian possess no theology, but only a millenarian traditionalism.

The change came with the introduction into the West of Greek theological science during the second half of the fourth century. The agents of this transformation were the Latin Fathers, Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrose of Milan, Jerome, Rufinus of Aquileia, and the converted rhetorician, Victorinus; while at the same time St. Martin of Tours and Cassian of Marseilles, both of them natives of the Danube provinces, brought to the West the new ideals of oriental asceticism and monasticism.

The Latin Fathers, apart from St. Augustine, were not profound metaphysicians nor even original thinkers. In theological matters they were the pupils of the Greeks, and their liter-
any activity was mainly devoted to making the intellectual riches that had been accumulated by the Christian East available in the Latin world. Yet at the same time they were the heirs of the Western tradition, and they combined with their newly acquired knowledge the moral strength and the sense of discipline that had always characterized the Latin Church. Their interest in theological problems was always subordinated to their loyalty to tradition and to the cause of Catholic unity. In the Western provinces the Christians were still but a small minority of the population, and consequently the Church was less exposed to internal dissensions and still preserved the spiritual independence that it had possessed in pre-Constantinian times.

This is very evident in the case of the Arian controversy, for Arianism appeared in the West as not so much an internal danger to Christian orthodoxy as an attack from without on the spiritual liberty of the Church. The Western attitude is admirably expressed in the remonstrance which Hosius, the great bishop of Cordova, addressed to the Emperor Constantius II: “I have been a confessor,” he wrote, “in the persecution that your grandfather Maximian raised against the Church. If you wish to renew it you will find me ready to suffer all rather than to betray the truth and to shed innocent blood. . . . Remember that you are a mortal man. Fear the day of judgment. . . . Do not interfere in ecclesiastical affairs, or dictate anything about them to us, but rather learn from us what you ought to believe concerning them. God has given to you the government of the Empire and to us that of the Church. Whosoever dares to impugn your authority, sets himself against the order of God. Take care lest you likewise render yourself guilty of a great crime by usurping the authority of the Church. We are commanded to give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s. It is not lawful for us to arrogate to ourselves the imperial authority. You also have no power in the ministry of holy things.” 18

St. Hilary of Poitiers goes still further and attacks the emperor with all the resources of his classical style. “We are fighting today,” he writes, “against a wily persecutor, an insinuating enemy, against Constantius the antichrist, who does not scorch the back, but tickles the belly, who does not condemn to life but enriches to death, who instead of thrusting men into the liberty of prison, honours them in the
slavery of the palace... who does not cut off the head with
the sword, but slays the soul with gold...” 10

The language of Lucifer of Cagliari is still more uncom-
promising, and the very titles of his pamphlets, “On royal
apostates,” “On not sparing the persons of those who offend
against God,” or “On the duty of martyrdom,” breathe a spirit
of hostility and defiance against the secular powers that re-
calls that of Tertullian.

Thus the Western Church was far from being dependent
upon the state; the danger was rather that it might have be-
come permanently alienated from the Empire and from the
traditions of ancient civilisation, like the Donatist Church in
Africa, or the Church in Egypt after the fifth century.

This danger was averted, on the one hand, by the return of
the Western Empire to orthodoxy under the house of Valen-
tinian, and on the other, by the influence of St. Ambrose and
the new development of Christian culture. In St. Ambrose,
above all, the Western Church found a leader who could
maintain the rights of the Church no less vigorously than St.
Hilary, but who was at the same time a loyal friend of the
emperors and a devoted servant of the Empire.

Ambrose was indeed a Roman of the Romans, born and
trained in the traditions of the imperial civil service, and he
brought to the service of the Church the public spirit and the
devotion to duty of a Roman magistrate. His devotion to
Christianity did nothing to weaken his loyalty to Rome, for he
believed that the true faith would be a source of new strength
to the Empire and that as the Church triumphed over pagan-
ism so the Christian Empire would triumph over the bar-
barians.

“Go forth,” he wrote to Gratian, on the eve of his expedi-
tion against the Goths, “go forth under the shield of faith and
girt with the sword of the Spirit; go forth to the victory prom-
ised of old time and foretold in the oracles of God.” . . .

“No military eagles, no flight of birds here lead the van of
our army, but Thy Name, Lord Jesus, and Thy worship. This
is no land of unbelievers, but the land whose custom it is to
send forth confessors—Italy; Italy oft times tempted but
never drawn away; Italy whom your Majesty has long de-
fended and now again rescued from the barbarian.” 10

Thus Ambrose is the first exponent in the West of the
ideal of a Christian state, as was Eusebius of Caesarea in the
East. But he differs utterly from Eusebius in his conception of
the duties of the Christian prince and the relations between
the Church and the state. Eusebius' attitude to Constantine is
already that of a Byzantine court bishop, and he surrounds
the figure of the emperor with a nimbus of supernatural au-
thority such as had always characterised the theocratic monarchies
of the ancient East. But Ambrose belongs to a different tradi-
tion. He stands midway between the old classical ideal of
civic responsibility and the mediaeval ideal of the supremacy
of the spiritual power. He has something of the Roman mag-
istrate and something of the mediaeval pontiff. In his eyes
the law of the Church—the *jus sacerdotale*—could only be
administered by the magistrates of the Church—the bishops,
and even the emperor himself was subject to their authority.
"The Emperor," he wrote, "is within the Church, not over it";
and "in matters of faith bishops are wont to be the judges
of Christian emperors, not emperors of bishops." And ac-
cordingly, while Eusebius addresses Constantine as a sacred being
exalted above human judgment, Ambrose did not hesitate
to rebuke the great Theodosius and to call him to account for
his acts of injustice. "Thou art a man, temptation has come
upon thee. Conquer it. For sin is not removed save by tears
and repentance." 23

The authority of St. Ambrose had a far-reaching influence
on the ideals of the Western Church, for it helped to
strengthen the alliance between the Church and the Empire,
while at the same time it preserved the traditional Western
conception of authority in the Church. In the East the Church
was continually forced to turn to the Emperor and to the
councils which he convoked in order to preserve its unity; in
the West the conciliar system never attained such importance,
and it was to the Roman See that the Church looked as the
centre of unity and ecclesiastical order. The attempts to de-
define the jurisdiction of the Papacy by the Council of Sardica
in 343, and by the Emperor Gratian in 379, are of minor im-
portance in comparison with the traditional belief in the ap-
ostolic prerogative of the Roman See and in the "Romana
fides" as the norm of Catholic orthodoxy. In the fifth century
this development was completed by St. Leo, who united the
conviction of St. Ambrose in the providential mission of the
Roman Empire with the traditional doctrine of the primacy
of the Apostolic See; while, earlier in the same century, St.
Augustine had completed the Western theological develop-
ment and endowed the Church with a system of thought
which was to form the intellectual capital of Western Christendom for more than a thousand years.

And thus, when the Western Empire fell before the barbarians, the Church was not involved in its disaster. It was an autonomous order which possessed its own principle of unity and its own organs of social authority. It was able at once to become the heir and representative of the old Roman culture and the teacher and guide of the new barbarian peoples. In the East it was not so. The Byzantine Church became so closely bound up with the Byzantine Empire that it formed a single social organism which could not be divided without being destroyed. Anything that threatened the unity of the Empire also endangered the unity of the Church. And so it was that while the Eastern Empire resisted the attacks of the barbarians, the Eastern Church lost its unity owing to the reaction of the oriental nationalities to the ecclesiastical centralisation of the Byzantine state. Among the oriental peoples, nationality took on a purely religious form and the state was ultimately swallowed up by the Church.

But although from the fifth century the two halves of the Empire drifted apart in religion as well as in politics, the division was not complete. The Papacy still preserved a certain primacy in the East, for as Harnack says, “even in the eyes of the Orientals there attached to the Roman Bishop a special something, which was wanting to all the rest, a nimbus which conferred upon him a special authority.” 24 And similarly, the Western Church still regarded itself as in a sense the Church of the Empire, and continued to recognise the ecumenical character of the General Councils which were convoked by the Byzantine Emperor.

These conditions characterised the whole period with which we are about to deal. It was not until the eleventh century that the religious bond which united East and West was finally destroyed and Western Christendom emerged as an independent unity, separated alike in culture and religion from the rest of the old Roman world.
THE CLASSICAL TRADITION
AND CHRISTIANITY

If Europe owes its political existence to the Roman Empire and its spiritual unity to the Catholic Church, it is indebted for its intellectual culture to a third factor—the Classical Tradition—which is also one of the fundamental elements that have gone to the making of the European unity.

It is indeed difficult for us to realise the extent of our debt, for the classical tradition has become so much a part of Western culture that we are no longer fully conscious of its influence on our minds. Throughout European history this tradition has been the constant foundation of Western letters and Western thought. It was first diffused through the West by the cosmopolitan culture of the Roman Empire. It survived the fall of Rome and remained through the Middle Ages as an integral part of the intellectual heritage of the Christian Church, and in the age of the Renaissance it arose with renewed strength to become the inspiration and model of the new European literatures and the basis of all secular education.

Thus for nearly two thousand years Europe had been taught in the same school and by the same masters, so that the schoolboy and undergraduate of the nineteenth century were still reading the same books and conforming their minds to the same standards as their Roman predecessors eighteen hundred years before.