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# Out of Revolution

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF WESTERN MAN

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*De Te Fabula Narratur*

Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy

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## CHAPTER NINE

### *The Roman Emperor Without His Empire*

Provinces or Nations?—Imperial Palace or Local Manor?—The Last Song on the Last Judgment (Dante Alighieri)—All Souls: The Christian Democracy of the Last Judgment

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#### PROVINCES OR NATIONS?

NORMALLY, WE TAKE FOR GRANTED THE EXISTENCE OF SEPARATE nations with boundaries, customs, currencies, armies of their own. Yet during a great revolution these boundaries seem to disappear, and the right of nations to a separate existence is called in question. The world unrest of today, caused by the great revolution of the World War, should again bring home to us the truth that the nations of Europe are rather short-lived: when Austria has vanished from the map, it dawns upon us that the great powers themselves are temporary. Not one of them existed in the year 1000. It took three more centuries before Italy, the first of the modern nations, came into being; and it was not until 1500 that England, Germany, France, Russia, Spain, Poland, were moulded to a recognizable degree into "nations."

The nations of the Western World were called into being by five hundred years of clerical revolution. In those days the energies of man's political faith expressed themselves in religious language. But man is the same in all ages. How slight were the solidarity of our race if the centuries before 1500 were simply a relapse into barbarism, and made no contribution to the political progress of modern man! The clerical period of Christianity's struggle for life is as simple and lucid in its achievements as the cycle which we have discovered in

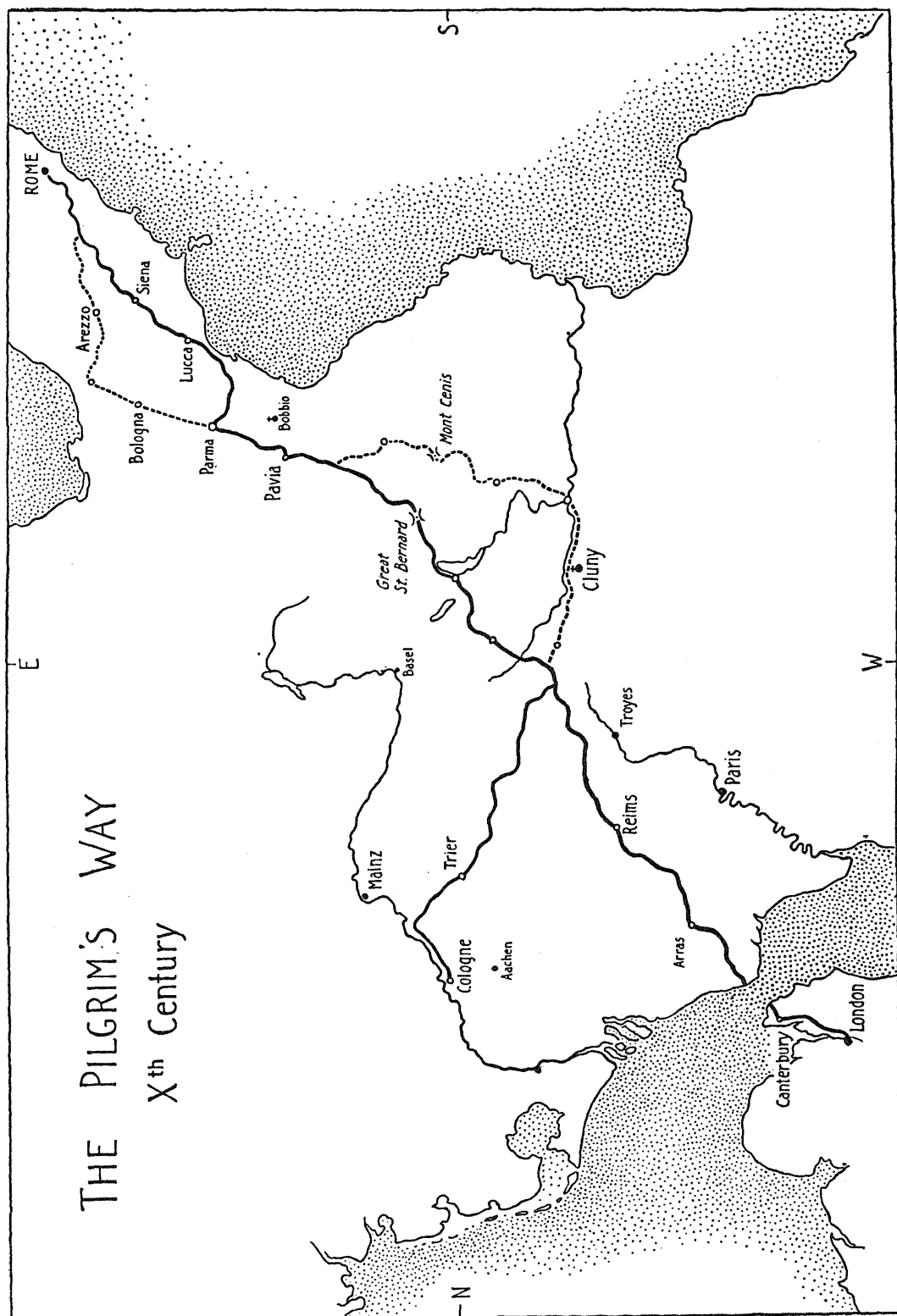
modern times. Conflict, despair, faith, pride, humiliation and fulfilment, the six notes of every revolutionary keyboard, are equally perceptible in the alleged darkness of the Middle Ages. The outcome of that half millennium, the creation of articulate nations, is so definite and so important that we may assume it had had inspired leadership from the beginning. The aversion of old-time Protestants toward the mediæval order does not excuse the civilized world today in overlooking our perpetual dependence on the forces that were set in motion a thousand years ago. The age that produced the great and original musical innovation of counterpoint, the basis of musical harmony as we know it and the underlying principle of all modern art, that built the castles and cathedrals by methods of transportation unknown to antiquity, that invented the drainage system of our lawns and meadows, had a latent energy at its disposal which may well make us jealous.

All the more curious, in view of this vitality, is the geography of 1000 A.D. Scotland was Caledonia; "Britannia" could still signify that part of the island lying west of a line drawn from the Isle of Wight to the Isle of Man. Naples and southern Italy were cut off from the rest of "Italia." "France" was a small part of Gaul; three quarters of Spain centred around the Moslem caliphates; and the frontiers of the Roman Empire cut right through modern Germany. The lands of the old Roman Empire suffered from disintegration. For the sake of peace and order they called forth a new spirit. The result was that Roman provincials became citizens of vast new empires and the static lands of old were transformed into the great nations of the modern world.

#### IMPERIAL PALACE OR LOCAL MANOR?

The external conditions of life in Western Europe in the year 1000 A.D. can perhaps best be described by two negatives. First, the Western World was no longer united, as in Cæsar's day, in an empire of thousands of cities; there was a nominal emperor, but there were no cities to build his empire upon. And second, the modern nations of Europe did not exist; Eu-

# THE PILGRIM'S WAY X<sup>th</sup> Century



THE RUMP OF THE ROMAN WORLD

rope as a whole was split by tribal differences into innumerable particles.

No nation, no cities, yet an emperor, was the paradoxical situation a thousand years ago. Since an emperor already existed, the obsession of the last thousand years has been to build cities. Countless words have been derived from the Latin "*civitas*" to express this homesickness of Europe for the lost cities which had once flourished on her soil. *Citoyen*, Civilization, City (*Città del Vaticano*), Civil service, the Italian word *civilta* (culture, politeness, humanity), Civil lists, are offsprings of a permanent longing to re-endow the Western World with some kind of citizenship.

The unique experiment of the Western World consists in regenerating a former world. Not a change in quantity, but a change in quality, is the content of these thousand years of revolution. The Great or Perfect Year of Revolutions is full of attempts to recivilize a given world.

The result is, among other things, the modern nations. Nations have taken the place of the ancient city or *polis*. The word politics or policy signifies today the tendencies of national government, even though "*politikós*" is the adjective of *polis*, which means town, *urbs*. Whenever we speak of policy today, we move in the sphere which has transformed the classical city-state into a world-wide institution. The nations are the cities of today. Nations covering vast continents are the rightful heirs of Civilization, because the empire was recivilized, step by step, by a series of common and interdependent acts of city-founding.

The first attempt of recivilization was an attempt to build the whole Occident into one city, and to this city was given the name Jerusalem. The re-founder of the Roman Empire, Otto I, is represented on a liturgical vessel of the tenth century which bears the inscription *Jerusalem visio pacis*. From this we learn that an emperor, a thousand years ago, did not represent pre-eminently the power of this world. He was considered the state witness of a world beyond. In a world of scattered, continental tribes, who lived surrounded by inhospitable oceans, threatened by Vikings and pirates and Moslems, the

friendly aspect of the old Roman Empire, embracing the shores of the Mediterranean, had completely changed. The Empire was a remembrance and a desire. The emperor, as an institution, could not be explained by the existing economic or social organization; he stood in open contradiction to this organization of society. The figure of the emperor stepped into this world like a stranger, and by its strangeness unleashed an unheard-of cycle of Revolutions, whose vital powers equal the processes of creation which we know in other realms of nature. By the stepping-in of a foreign principle, an absolute claim, a power belonging to past and future, the inhabitants of Europe were created into one city. We used above the equation of *polis* with the particular nation. We were wrong. It was European civilization as a whole which was called upon to represent the idea of the ancient city-state! The civilized nations are sectors of *one* city.

The concept of a universal civilization opposing a multitude of local economic units was the emperor's gift to the European tribes. Unity and Emperor were synonyms in 1000. Social changes have diluted Empire into Civilization, but Unity is still the original capital invested in European history by the person of the emperor.

The emperor was infinitely greater than reality. Stars and suns were the ornaments of his mantle; for the tent of heaven was his proper garb. Mankind, lost in the darkness of dissension and schism, received an image of the unifying sky in the person of the living emperor. He had no empire in the real sense of an established order, at least not in the sense we give to the word empire today. There were no taxation, no officials, no traffic, no money, to make it possible for him to establish a central government. His rule was unique, not central.

It is overlooked that the Church during its first millennium was never called *Una sancta*, the famous term framed by Boniface VIII in 1302. The singular would have had no meaning in a period when Rome was only *prima sedes*, i.e., the first among many sees; until the return of her King, Christ, the Church could not hope for visible unity on earth. The Church existed in endless multiplication, in every sacred spot on the

globe where a martyr had shed his blood. Her Head was in Heaven. On earth the duty of maintaining visible Uniqueness and Unity belonged to the emperor. The popes of the first millennium refused steadfastly to be addressed as "universal."

Without visible centralization, Unity had to be represented by a continuous effort and movement of the emperor and his army. The Roman emperor of the year 1000 had no permanent capital. The Holy Roman Empire was without a capital to its very end in 1806; the emperor had to live on the land. His clergy moved with the imperial court, army and clergy being his only central government. The clergy, having no family nor house of their own, were as movable as the young knights and soldiers. The real life of the most Christian Apostolic emperor contradicted sharply all his universal claims. It was local. Taxation was unimportant as a source of revenue. He had certain big estates, *palatia*, which gave him such and such a number of daily services, each "service" comprising fifty pigs, twenty-five cows, ten measures of wheat, wine in Franconia, or beer in the less fortunate Saxony. The services from his palaces in Saxony would amount to  $365 \times 40$  in the course of the year.

The budget of this emperor of heaven and earth was composed of the daily services of a few score of local manors! The manorial background of the imperial power was its weak point. The spiritual superlative and the material diminutive were directly related to each other.

For the rules and customs of a lord of the manor were the real organization of the imperial court. Government was set up by making an ordinary country house the organ of public administration. Happy times, when neither individuals nor community existed in the way of our modern, atomized world! Public life was tribal organization in clan and army, private life was the economic organization of husbandry. We have seen the change of husbandry and the table in the dining hall of the manor into the table of the House of Commons, on which the Lord of the Treasury places his national budget. Five hundred years before, the emperors had to manage the budget of an empire in the form of a manorial budget. The dignitaries of the empire were treated as servants of an imperial house-

hold. The pope and the bishops were the spiritual chaplains, the teachers and professors, the columnists and librarians of a universal "House." The whole imperial family was an organ of government. Ministers, princes and princesses, marshals, chamberlains, and chancellors formed an indissoluble unity, one indivisible instrument of government. Every part of Europe was covered by manors with the same comprehensive domestic organization. The problem of production was solved by incorporating as many members as the division of labour required, into a household. As in other ways, the pre-War Hungary preserved best the style of the church-castle-manor-factory Unit of older times. The view of a Transylvanian church-castle recalls the complicatedness of a feudal domestic organization. The history of fine art and of architecture has narrowed our outlook on the past, by preserving the word "house," especially for the rooms devoted to everything except work. The mediæval husbandry embraced a large *yard*. Even the *court* of the emperor was but one part of his big palace; a church would belong to it, but also stables, barns, workshops, barracks; and the assembly of his staff which lived around the yard took place in a great hall like the Homeric "Megaron." Here in the hall of the palace the order at table gave an exact picture of the social hierarchy. The Last Supper of Jesus and the Apostles impresses us as something special and peculiar in the classical time of big cities, with their disintegrated society.

In 1000 A.D., the Last Supper was not a contrast, but the crowning symbol of every day's experience. For in the palace, the society at table was a living body for work, courtship, social life and government. The emperor's throne was not a foolish old piece of furniture, used three or four times a year; it was the lord's high seat at table. His wife and the princes would sit on footstools next to him.

The complete identity of the emperor's instruments of governmental administration with every nobleman's household weakened the emperor's position. He was, after all, only the peer of thousands of house-lords. The economic system had to be administered on the spot. Consequently the emperor could not interfere with local administration. Every father and

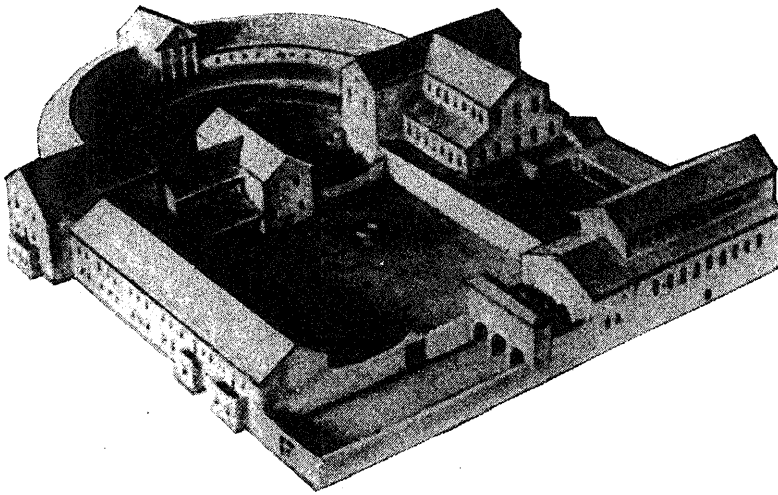


mother ruled over the members of their household as absolutely as the emperor. Fatherhood and motherhood were *economic offices*; "son" and "daughter" were titles signifying a definite function in society. In so far as children or servants worked in the household, whether it was a duke's palace or a peasant's farm, no emperor could interfere.

The uniqueness of the emperor was, then, hard to express in a world of local government. Judge, administrator, manager of business—every house-father was that. Patriarchalism was nothing peculiar to the emperor. The local character of economy spurred the emperor to special efforts. Otherwise, in a world of thousands of patriarchs, the Unity of a City of God could not become visible.

The emperor's house had to include a set of persons lacking in other households. Kings and dukes served at his table and they were not allowed to sit while the emperor took his meals. With kings as his servants, the emperor was exalted. And in other ways his house was exalted beyond the houses of other lords. He shared his meals with the highest priests of the Catholic Church. His companion was an archbishop or the pope himself, and he could talk to him at table. Sharing his meals, the clergy removed the emperor into the atmosphere of clerical and divine remoteness. A shroud of mystery surrounded the emperor; wherever he went, he was a member of the clergy. He was a prebendary of the cathedrals of his empire. In Cologne the emperor and the pope, with their following, each occupied one side of the choir.

The first interest of the emperor was the Church and the reform of the Church. He was responsible for the prayers recited and the masses sung in his empire. For more than two centuries (800-1056) the emperors imposed on the Roman church the forms of mass, the ceremonials, the ritual, the creed, and the prayers of their imperial palace and court. When Rome was an Augean stable, the German emperors saved the purity and growth of religious worship in Roman Christendom. But in spite of the hopeless corruption of Rome itself, the word Roman was the only symbol of unity for a divided



THE PALACE OF A MEDIÆVAL EMPEROR:  
Ingelheim (reconstruction).



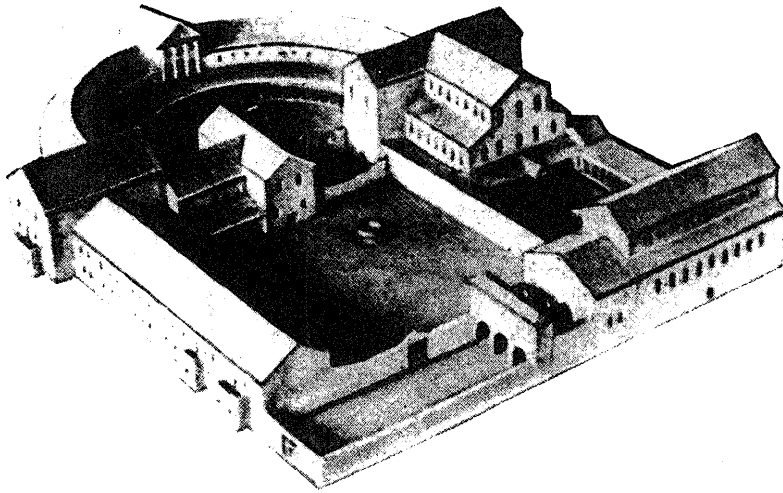
THE EMPEROR AS PROTECTOR OF THE HOLY GHOST, IN  
THE FORM OF A DOVE. ABOUT 980

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continent. The emperor, though a German, had to move and act as a Roman.

The millennium of creation and revolution had to revive all the dead words of the Latin language, one after the other, to resurrect the corpse of the Occident, as it had been in goo. For this continent, hopelessly divided, as it was, into small cantons and valleys, was held together by one language. The Latin tongue comforted the souls of these natives of little places in the Alps, or the northern plains, by reminding them of the great past. But the sea, the ancient road of commerce, being in the hands of Moslems, Normans, Byzantines, Danes, and the continent itself overrun by the frequent raids of Huns and Magyars, the Latin speech was more like a reminiscence of unity and universality than an everyday fact.

A comparison will help, perhaps, to explain. When in 1869 the American transcontinental railroad was finished, the workers who met at the junction were Chinese coolies and Irish immigrants. This was a peaceful meeting. To understand the longing of the Europeans for Rome, you have only to imagine that Chinese and Irish had come with the support of their respective motherlands, and that parts of several Middle Western States and of the Western provinces of Canada were the only regions free from invasion.

Let us assume that these fragments had resolved to preserve the sacred name of the United States, that they were happy to bring Greenland, thickly populated by means of her technical devices, into their league, and that after a long campaign, Washington, D. C., had been saved by these far distant Greenlanders from being absorbed either by a de Valera or by the troops of a Sun Yat Sen II.

These few States, out of so many, would base all their politics on the old claims of Washington to be the capital of the United States. Perhaps in some of them, facing the dismemberment of their territory, the restoration of the union would dominate all political thought for centuries.

A thousand years ago, the situation on the Continent of Europe recalled somewhat the one we have outlined here. The Europeans of that day struggled for Rome as the only imag-

inable centre. For them, the last ruler of the Roman Empire in the West had not been the little Romulus Augustulus whose downfall in 476 figures in our textbooks as the beginning of the Middle Ages. Happily enough, they enjoyed life without even knowing the term Middle Ages. It had not been invented by the Lutherans then!

Roman was the whole past millennium, and Charlemagne was looked upon as but the last in the long series of emperors of Rome. Charles' Frankish army, having conquered most of the Western provinces of ancient Rome, was regarded as the pillar of the Roman order of things.

"Roman" was the spell of unity that enabled the provinces of Europe to go along as children born of one cradle, eternal Rome, *Roma æterna*. "Public" is a Latin word, because only Latin could make Europe the field of one public law, one public spirit and public opinion. This spell of "Roman" is fast vanishing. We shall live, probably, to see its extinction or its natural death. It is after all, not more than a background before which the characters of the great national civilizations have unfolded themselves. But they unfolded themselves by translating something general, something that had been Roman, into English, French, Italian, etc. The nations of Europe gave a particular answer to a general appeal. But nations cannot build up a centennial memory without institutions. The appeal could only become real and permanent through an institution. The permanent appeal for regeneration was conveyed and enshrined in the Catholic Church, with its life of adoration and prayer. The prayers and adorations of this church were the quintessence of antiquity.

The total revolutions of our era were all answers given by the will and the unlimited faith of the laymen to a gospel preached by Latin tradition. We have regarded the answers. We shall understand them better when the appeal is revoiced directly. We have in fact listened to the dialogue between the parents—Roman Empire and Roman Church—and their children through all the centuries. We could not begin with the exhortations of the parents because our ears are deafened by the noise of recent centuries. But now the noise once being

phoneticized we turn to the original language about our world, our general and universal destiny. All universal meaning and intrinsic requirements of life, a thousand years ago, were felt and expressed in the name Roman. Our own remembrance of the world of free trade of our pre-War days, now relapsing into a welter of tariffs, passport regulations, immigration quotas and all kinds of barriers, sub-divisions and sectionalism, can easily find its own likeness in the situation of a Roman empire which had lost its hold over the earth, but still conveyed to everybody who thought and fought politically, the two motives of unity and universality.

A history of the world can only be based on these two elements of unity and universality. No nation can plan or restore peace and prosperity without facing the question of what must remain united in spite of antagonism or seclusion, and what has to be universal in the future, in spite of territorial or continental particularities.

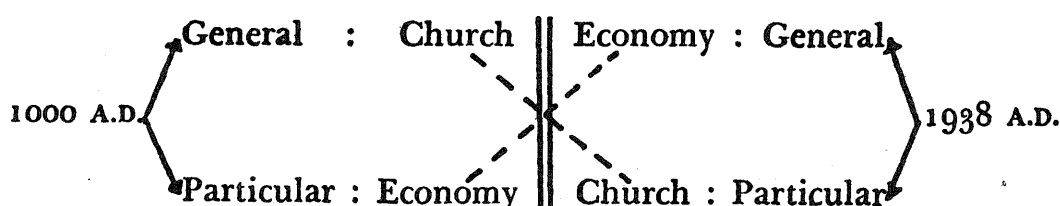
A friend of mine once tried to discover the *unum* and *universum* of the future. What is going to be the world-wide unity for our children? It seems as if it must be something in the nature of an economic unity. My friend found his suggestion corroborated by the fact that Christians today dream of the "*Una sancta*" alone, dropping the word *ecclesia* (church), to which "*una sancta*" originally belonged. That omission, he argued, forecasts a future when society, not church, will be the Universal City, the "*Una sancta*," the "city without a temple" of Revelation, Chapter 21, 22. Many sects, many creeds, many races, many ways of education and self-expression, but one unshakable bondage or freedom of economic organization may remain for us in the future. The various creeds and denominations and national beliefs will be small parishes in a world-wide economic society.

In the beginning of European history, the opposite proportions between Church and economy prevailed. Economy was husbandry,—something local, parochial, narrow,—split into myriads of atoms. Christianity claimed universality and unity. One great ocean of creed and an archipelago of economic islands—that was the situation in the year 1000.



This unity of creed was the necessary condition of any general experience, because work and labour and capital were special, fixed to the soil. When men were summoned to join in a common purpose, a general effort, they could understand only a Roman effort, a Roman purpose, because they knew that unity and universality had existed once before in the form of Rome.

Church and economy have changed their places during the last thousand years.



But this scheme conveys a wrong idea unless we take account of the steady march of the nations from the old situation into the new. We have to add to our scheme two arrows hinting at the movement, the revolutions which obliged the nations to move on two levels. The universal church becomes more and more particular in her operations; economy becomes more and more universally organized. We still pray for One Catholic Church. The real trouble of the future will be, whether we can pray for it sincerely or not. It is true that for ten centuries the nations carried both visions, the vision of local rights and private property, and the vision of a universal realm of peace. Private property is being attacked today on the same ground as the unity of faith. Both ideals are imperilled. Bolshevism is radical enough to make the church a private affair for the individual, and property the public affair of the community. But the question is not dependent on any subjective theory about Marxism. It is an issue for any government which subsidizes industry, taxes private educational institutions, propagates political ideas, or repopulates its deserted villages with self-subsisting homesteads.

The same question is put to us constantly: how to balance local interests and the universal welfare of humanity? Our ancestors threw in their lot for local rights and universal peace,

as we try to do now. The march of the nations is always moving towards a two-fold goal. Every stage of this campaign was marked by a new compromise, a new covenant of the children of Japhet with God. Every time, the covenant was declared sacred and inviolable. Every time, a part of Christianity found the last covenant most unsatisfactory and stated a new one, producing a new order of society, a new type of man, a new form of life.

Man is but a brute when he does not struggle for both ends simultaneously. The dualism of liberty and particularity, on one side, and unity and universality, on the other side, is what makes man a man. Pitt renovating the English finances and nevertheless plunging his country into appalling debts for the Napoleonic Wars, is a good example of this double-edged character of man's struggle for life.

The American Civil War did not pay, certainly not. Yet it was inevitable because the equality of men was a universal goal which men could not forget or suppress. The other side of the medal was industrial revolution and it, too, was urgent. We gain our ends by a strange dualism. If a man thinks of money or private interests only, he will fail in the long run. His bank will go bankrupt, his children will become lazy; for once money is the highest good, why think of anything else? But the public-spirited man who lacks a healthy shrewdness for his own interests will fail as well. We walk very slowly on this earth, in a mutual interdependence of unitarian and universal duties and rights and particular and individual rights and duties.

Many people think of their interests primarily as rights, and only reluctantly as duties. They do the same in public affairs. They enjoy the rights of a voter more than the duties of a tax-payer. They think they can do as they please; it seems not to matter. But after a time, duties and rights are revalued. A bankruptcy, a war, a riot, an earthquake in the social world, upsets the scales and they cry for united support in their private affairs, and go in with their life and property for public business.

Religion can become less universal and economy can be

made less particular. Are we in earnest when we pray for a universal church? Or are we on the road to a united economy?

When Luther abolished the hundred monastic "religions" in Saxony, restoring one united religion and one common fund for the church and the schools in each territory, he made economy very much more general and universal than it ever had been before. But his church became less universal. It became at its best a national church, somewhat bigger, as we have seen, than one particular State, and extending over the whole body of a nation that comprised six kingdoms, 100 princes and innumerable High Magistrates; but the gains in economic unity and the loss of ecclesiastical universality are both unmistakable.

In England, the Anglican Church struggled hard to maintain a broader area than that of the Commonwealth. But it did not succeed. Non-conformity spread. The Commonwealth became larger than the Anglican Church. In the nineteenth century, the concept Nation was accepted as the spiritual unit; the economic reality embraced all civilized nations on equal footing; another half of the globe was treated as zones of interest, colonies, spheres of expansion. In the economic confederacy of liberalism, the colonial territories were the underdog. In the Soviet-system, there is an attempt to make the despised colonial ground the cornerstone of the social order.

The literary and political language of every nation is the result of a special balance between spirit and economy at a certain period. Each expresses a decision on the proportions between capital and faith. Each swept Europe in its own time as the best expression for the right balance between individuality (rights) and universality (obligations). And finally, because they all expressed a sincere disclosure of the human soul, each took permanent roots in one of the provinces of Europe and shaped this part by a great institution. Therefore, different as the European languages are, they are branches on the same tree since the dualism of faith and wealth is the problem of all of them. Without this dualism man is a mere brute and denies his history. We can only feel at home, and within our own family, in places where one certain form of

this dualism is respected and revered and lived. The deeper meaning of civilization can be defined by referring to the ambiguity of the word citizen. City of God and City of Durham: Citizen of a place and citizen of a greater kingdom you must be if you are a human being. Two allegiances are the secret of civilization. Since the Russians are in their Restoration-period now and have joined the League of Nations, their faith will quickly take its seat among the previous creeds. It coexists with older systems.

For every modern man or political group a certain expression of this dualism in the past or abroad can be a real power of life. He can visit, as a friend, the home in which this expression of something eternal was born, and come back from his visit enlarged and better equipped for his own two-edged struggle for life.

#### THE LAST SONG ON THE LAST JUDGMENT (DANTE ALIGHIERI).

European history is the sequence of these equations between universal and particular, between local rights and federal government; it is a sequence as complete as a paradigm of word-forms in grammar. The oldest form of this equation is, on one side, the Emperor of Holy Rome marching on his laborious way through the Continent as the sole and universal judge, and on the other, the Lords of the Manor asking absolute loyalty, including the vendetta, from their knaves, chaplains and children.

No wonder that before anything else the final judgment caught the imagination of the Imperial period. A universal judgment—that was a political programme of truly world-wide character. It would release men from local bondage and arbitrary power. The more rarely the actual presence of the emperor secured a fair trial, the more passionately the picture of universal and efficient judgment was drawn by all the souls who longed for a definite redistribution of justice. Now, the hope of such a final and accomplished judgment was easily sublimated into a great system of thought and this system has not vanished from the earth and never will. The hope of a

Last Judgment will always reappear, and whenever it is resuscitated it will make man the brother of the Holy Emperor.

For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office, and the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes. . . .  
But that the dread of something after death,  
puzzles the will.

This old system is fully accessible, is so to speak still palpable, in a great work of art. The quintessence of the Holy Roman Emperor's mission in a weary world was condensed into a majestic vision by the last great Ghibelline, the last believer in the emperors from the North.

The Divine Comedy of the Last Judgment was sung by Dante Alighieri of Florence. He visits the eight circles of Hell, the mountain of Purgatory, then Paradise and the blinding brightness of Heaven; and he dares to conceive for the first time the great idea of Revolution. At the end of his poem he says that one and the same power moves the life of mankind and the life of Stars and Suns. Our actions and movements, therefore, when prompted by love, are near to the constellations and revolutions of the celestial bodies. With this bold equation, Dante transferred and projected our deepest and most human experience upon the sky of the external world. He prepared the reapplication of the world revolution to Society. For Dante made these revolutions of the stars the symbols of life, and their motivation identical with the passions of our own life. No wonder that his century, the fourteenth, is the century in which the main concept of this work, Revolution, was first used by Italian chroniclers to draw a parallel between heaven and earth, between the meteoric changes in the sky and those in the political life of the Italian City-States. But the most important feature of Dante's poem is that it bears witness to the old time when the Sacred Emperor, marching through this world, still paved the road for God's Last Judgment.





THE APOSTOLIC EMPEROR AND EMPRESS

They are ushered in by the Apostles Peter and Paul and crowned by Christ. About 1008-09.

The imperial form of the dualism pervading humanity is present and accessible to us in Dante's great poem, *The Divine Comedy*. This poem, begun in 1300, testifies to a much older dualism. The dualism for which the song of Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven was conceived as a high dirge was the dualism of the Roman Empire during the tenth and eleventh centuries. The emperors of the North, from Henry I (1002-24) to Henry VI (1307-13) were the heroes of Dante. Much trouble has been taken to show Dante's training in the Scholastic literature of the thirteenth century. It is obvious that he lived physically in the time of Giotto and Albertus Magnus; but what matter? An English country squire can live in flesh and blood in the same world with Mr. Stalin; but are they contemporaries in the real sense of the word? For any important issue, they are not. This is precisely the situation of Dante in his day. Facing a changed world, he had to sing the Last Judgment so that the great period when the emperors had acted as judges of Christianity might be eternalized in a work of art. As a simple outline of Dante's vision of the Last Judgment, we can say that he draws a line from everybody's specific and particular existence to his place in the universe which lies beyond the visible organization of earth. His Last Judgment applies the categories of unity and universality to the Beyond, because earthly life is local, parochial, particular, fragmentary. He is obliged to trace everybody's destiny to its last judgment; it is the only way to unite men who are separated on earth. The realm of faith is the only universal and unifying home for the scattered villages of the tenth century.

Manorialism prevailed in the economic world. Dante himself, it is true, already lived in the Free City of Florence, which, as we shall see, passed successfully from the manorial unit into a larger economic concept. But he was exiled when the old families of clannish tradition were driven from the town. He was perhaps the last great victim of this first step beyond the clans and tribes of imperial days! Dante was driven out by the Italian revolution into the life of a refugee. He was made, less by his theory than by his fate, into a Ghibelline, a partisan of the age of the emperors from the North. He was, like an





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American Loyalist in 1790, a stranger to his time. He owed his immortality to the immortal achievements of a Roman Empire that lay between local feuds, local monasteries, local economy, and the Last Judgment of the Universe. It is the first immortal period of our past; in it we can experience the principle of Church and economy in a form far removed from our own situation and yet perfectly close to our own doubts and experiences.

Dante looked on the emperor as the only legal vicar of the terrors of the Last Judgment. On his campaigns in Italy, in Poland, in France, in Burgundy, in Hungary, the emperor protected the widows and orphans, the poor and the weak, against the local politician. The Majesty of his Sword stood in judgment over the wickedness of local despots. The lord of the manor had to tremble, because before the court of the emperor the poorest serf could bring his complaint. The emperor wore a mantle decorated with the galaxy and the sun and the moon as symbols of his universality. With his mantle covering heaven, the emperor's sword held together the local fragments of an unarticulated Continent.

The old Romans had never liked the Continent. They had organized the coasts of the Mediterranean. The ports of this well-articulated sea had formed the highways of antiquity. Antiquity had not known the rudder for steering a boat. But it knew even less about mass transportation on land by mechanical aid. It was completely ignorant of how to harness a horse or a bull for haulage over a long distance.

The indefatigable march of the Emperor and his army was therefore the only moving force for unity and universality. To understand Dante's concentration on the cruelties and blessings of the Last Judgment, we must think of the loneliness of the clans and individuals who were threatened by the merciless persecution of feud and vendetta, wandering from one country to the next to find refuge. The sudden apparition of the emperor could suppress the vendetta, restore peace, establish security. Like lightning in the dark the emperor appeared to the tribes in their local system.

The emperors found little or no support in Rome. The

bishops of Rome had degenerated. Nobody doubted the fact of the papal succession to St. Peter. But it would be fatal to think that this was a great comfort; for the Church of Rome was rotten and known to be rotten. Pornocracy, "pig-rule," historians have called this squalid period of the papacy. The vicars of St. Peter were despised by clergy and laity alike. No wonder that the emperors who succeeded in raising a Christian army for a march to Rome appeared as the true heads and reformers of the Christian Church.

The desires and longings of the time are expressed remarkably well on the golden bowl from the tenth century, which we reproduced on p. 492, the significance of which has never been pointed out because the finding and interpretation of it are of rather recent date. The legend on the basin reads: "Jerusalem visio pacis." In the centre is the Emperor Otto, holding up a bottle for the oil of baptism and a dove, the symbol of the Holy Ghost. Otto appears on a sacramental vessel because only he can restore the Jerusalem of Eternal Peace. To him is entrusted the Dove of Inspiration. Public Spirit, to us a general force of democratic inspiration, centres in the emperor. What is certainly a blasphemy to us, is no blasphemy in a time of piggishness among the clergy, when the marching army of the empire was the only force for restoring peace. The placing of the Holy Ghost in the hand of the emperor is a colossal deviation from orthodoxy, but a deviation in self-defence. It is a real outcry for a force which can at least unite and universalize life. This force has always been idolized by mankind, and always will be. "When Otto III sat in judgment, Heaven groaned, earth boomed," sang a poet.

No wonder that this emperor sought for the model of his action not in Roman history, but in the past of the Roman Church. The pagan Cæsars did not attract him, the devoted Christian. Was he not rather the successor of St. Paul the Apostle? Was he not inculcating the Gospel in a clergy that for its worldliness was called "*mundus*," world, and in Christians of so little faith that a man had to become a monk before he could be called "convert" and "religious." "*Conversus*" and "*religiosus*" had become names for monks alone.

Otto III ordered a statuette of St. Paul, perhaps the most individual piece of art we have from his time. In an imperial monastery, Echternach, a master carved it and added, on a roll in the hand of Paul: "*Dei gratia sum id quod sum*"—the proud word of the apostle: "By the grace of God I am what I am." Now, this "by the grace of God" was exactly the title on which the emperors so strongly based their sovereignty. Otto went so far as to adopt St. Paul's formula from his letters, and to call himself "*servus Jesu Christi*."

It is true that when Otto III (984-1002) reformed the Holy See and installed northern-born popes, first his cousin Gregory V and later his teacher, Sylvester II, the reform itself, by exalting the bishops of Rome, was bound to weaken his own apostolic claims. Therefore he now called himself "*servus apostolorum*," seneschal, majordomo of the apostles. On the maps of the time the earth was shown divided into twelve sections, one for each apostle. The emperor, as the majordomo of our Lord's twelve apostles, had to administer the apostolic inheritance (see illustration facing page 501).

It was with deep feeling that the renovation of the Christian Church was introduced. Sylvester was the first pope who called himself "the Second," after Pope Sylvester, who had, according to the legend, baptized Constantine, the emperor of the Council of Nicæa.

A renaissance begins where names forgotten for 700 years are brought back into man's ken. And the existence of a Pope Sylvester II suggested an Emperor Constantine II. Only, after all, Pope Sylvester I had converted the pagan emperor Constantine to Christianity, while the pious emperor Otto III in his zeal for the Church had himself installed Pope Sylvester II. No wonder that he felt himself superior to the pope. St. Paul appeared to Otto in a vision and strengthened him in certain plans for reforms in Rome, against the objections of Pope Sylvester. As Paul had preached, founded, reformed in Asia Minor and Spain, in Rome and Illyria, as a "free-lancer" of inspiration, as the faithful legate of the Holy Ghost, so Otto would hurry from Posen to Aachen, from Aachen to the south of Italy. Thus, the dove of the Holy Spirit seemed to fly over the

lightless earth as the dove had flown in Noah's day, after the great flood of sin. A poet summoned the emperor "as a second St. Paul" to clean the Augean stable in Rome!

The appeal to the authority of Paul was more easily conceivable because the eastern emperors and patriarchs of Constantinople were given to playing up Paul against Peter. I shall mention only one great example of this practice of the Oriental Christians. To the second universal Council of Nicæa, in 787, the pope wrote a long letter in which his authority was duly based on St. Peter. When his legates arrived in Nicæa, they conceived how little interest Peter's authority would arouse among clergy who came from the oldest churches of Christendom. They changed or forged, in the Greek translation, the mention of Peter into a mention of Peter and Paul. The Greeks in answering did not mention Peter at all, but based their respect for Rome on the fact that St. Paul himself had praised the orthodoxy of the Romans! Whereas Peter gave Rome a monopoly, Paul was both Roman and universal, sweeping, like the Holy Ghost itself, freely over the whole earth. "*Sanctus Paulus Romanus et non Romanus est*," "Paul is a Roman and not a Roman," was the remark of one of the popes, Victor III himself. Thus the emperor's universal task was emphasized by his acting under the special auspices of St. Paul.

The emperor was even called the vicar of God by his enthusiastic chroniclers. Today, the theory of such a government is preserved in the rights of the only respected (though not existing) Apostolic Majesty, the "kiraly" of Hungary. This kiraly-king got his name from "Karolus"—Charlemagne. And the Hungarian Crown of St. Stephen enjoys today all the ecclesiastical privileges of the Roman emperor in 1000, on Hungarian territory. Roman Catholic bishops and abbots, for example, may be appointed by the Crown, an incredible anachronism today, but an undoubted maintainer of unity in 1000; under the Regent of a country that easily never will see a king again, the "Crown of St. Stephen" still is the objective embodiment of apostolic ruling. And all through the last thousand years, the Roman See has had severe headaches from time to

time, when they saw, preserved in Hungary, that which pointed to a pre-Gregorian Church of imperial reform.

ALL SOULS: THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT.

This universal power standing above local tyranny had to be more than a naked sword and a merciless crushing force of conquest. Dante's Last Judgment reveals its moral majesty by showing all the tears and fears of a human heart under the weight of true judgment.

The emperor's Pauline dignity, when it had to restore the papacy and govern the Christian Church, could rely on an army of monks who centred around the monastery of Cluny. It was they who, for the first time, wrote the idea of super-local unity into the constitution of a monastic order, and, by inserting a new day in the calendar, wrote the notion of universality into the hearts of the Christian peoples.

They united monasticism by imitating imperial centralism. As the emperor had distributed public duties among the many imperial monasteries, so did now the abbot of Cluny for spiritual purposes. Cluny incorporated all the "Roman" monasteries which were reformed by it. The abbot of Cluny was the only abbot, the other monasteries being ruled by friars, vicars president. Cluny became a super-abbey.

For the first time in history space was conquered by the legal personality of a corporation, scattered though it was all over the empire.

The constitution of Cluny is the first trust, the trans-local corporation. It was even attacked on that ground. In a venomous satirical poem, the bishops ridiculed the "kingdom of Cluny." But in the loose fabric of the tenth-century world it was a great step forward.

One abbot of Cluny refused to become pope in Rome. The monasteries carried the reform in spite of Rome's decay. And the monasteries gave comfort to the layman, too. They invented the *treuga dei*, the truce of the land. The liturgy of the church was used to restore peace. The week of Easter, from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, with Maundy Thursday and Good Friday in it, was taken as a model for daily life. Monday,

Tuesday, Wednesday, a man was allowed to fight his kind. But from Thursday to Sunday, Cluny imposed abstinence from all violence. Holy Week was epoch-making in that it divided life again into peace and war, making peace and war definite, abolishing their complete confusion; and ennobling the task of the common knight as a defence of God's peace. The ritual of a king's coronation was extended to the knighting of every soldier of God.

But Cluny's greatest act was giving to mankind the day of All Souls. All Souls is a Holy Day celebrated by Catholics on the second of November, the day after All Saints.

"All Saints" represents the last feast common to Greeks and Romans, Orthodox and Catholics. Its celebration dates back to the ninth century, two centuries before our period.<sup>1</sup> It is a day of triumph for the redeemed and victorious part of humanity. It is the day of all those since St. Stephen, the first martyr, who by their deaths have opened the dark mystery of heaven to us. Glee and jubilation fill the day of All Saints.

All Souls is a day of purgatory. The Church in 1000 is no church of saints. It is a church of sinners, who by their blood-ties are all involved in bloodsheds: pious bishops fighting in the imperial army, innocent children being biassed by vendetta.

All Souls established the solidarity of all souls from the beginning of the world to the end of time. We learn, from the biographer of St. Odilo of Cluny, how Odilo conceived the idea of begging on the hill of Purgatory for all souls ever born or to be born. The liturgy of the mass for the day is full of deep shadows. He who has ever heard a Catholic mass at a funeral should know that it is taken from the formula invented by Odilo of Cluny, probably in 998, certainly before 1031, to celebrate All Souls.

The Empire, with all the apostolic majesty of one sacred emperor at the top of the hierarchy, was a Christian democracy. By a late ritual in Austria the corpse of the emperor was ordered to be carried to the door of an abbey. The chamber-

<sup>1</sup> H. Quentin, *Les Martyrologes historiques du Moyen Âge*, pp. 366 ff., Paris, 1908.



lain who leads the cortège knocks at the door. A friar opens the window and asks: "Who knocks?"—"The Emperor."—"I know no man of that name." The chamberlain knocks again. "Who is there?"—"The Emperor Francis Joseph."—"We do not know him." Third knock, and the same question. After reflection, the chamberlain now answers: "Brother Francis." Then the door opens to receive a comrade in the army of death, on equal terms with all souls.

The first universal democracy in the world was a democracy of sinners, united by their common confession of sins in expectation of the Last Judgment. That is why the members of this democracy wore the uniforms of death. It was an army in winding-sheets. The forms of this confederacy were first developed, not for a personal day of death, but for that general day. From it, the ceremony was carried over to individual burial.

Oswald Spengler says in one of his deepest remarks that every civilization sets out with a new experience of death. In so far, Europe started with a new experience when All Souls was added to All Saints. For it gave comfort to innumerable people in the loneliness of their hearts to celebrate the truth that death was universal and that all men would be rallied at the Last Judgment. And they would actually spend two thirds of their fortune to arm themselves against this last day.

I hope I have succeeded in overcoming our common notion of the Last Judgment as a mere religious concept without practical consequences. In fact, it was a political agency of the first importance; it attracted the wealth of the people like a magnet, building up an immense property in the hands of a disinterested trustee, the Church.

And this confederacy was also democratic. In Dante's poem, there are popes in hell and emperors in purgatory. From the complicated structure of Society in his time, he drew his wires to a common focus in the Beyond. All people had to be deeply impressed by the fact that they were equal in the sight of God. It is the poet's and the artist's privilege to use his art like God, to see, not with the eyes of the transient hour, but with the vision of eternity. Dante's *Divine Comedy* is divine because it reveals how men can be equal in the eyes of the Creator.

But poetry and fiction and art are always a sequel to religion. Goethe's *Faust* translated the experience of Luther and of his singing congregation to the unbelieving public of the nineteenth century. Dante, writing as a lost, an exiled, soul, at the end of the imperial period, enables us, who are not contemporaries of the eleventh century, to share the feeling stirred by the introduction of All Souls in 998.

In All Souls, every Christian anticipated through the common purgation of death, what we would call the final judgment of world history. He was changed into dust, a mere part of this passing world. World was not "without end" in 1000. "World" was an utterly unstable fog of blindness, vanity, insecurity, crisis. Yet Odilo of Cluny discovered world history as a universal order and fact, when he ordered the whole religious fraternity to pray for the liberty of "*omnes omnimodo fideles*." Up to that time, monks had prayed only for their abbey, their relatives, their friends, their connections. Odilo conjured up instead<sup>2</sup> the universe which lies *between heaven and hell, between saints and sinners*, waiting for our prayers, and which consists of all those who have been, from the beginning of the world to its end.

The liturgical readings for All Souls emphasize the utter naught which is man. Man is like Job, like grass, like a shadow. Yet God thinks highly enough of him to fix His eyes upon him and to call him to judgment.

In these prayers the idea of Judgment was called a privilege. "Last Judgment" conveyed more than terror; it revealed man's dignity, his claim not to be thrown into the fire like a weed, but to be judged. And is that not true? Is not a fair hearing the first human claim? Can we ask for more in this vale of tears? It is true, man trembles at the idea of being judged.

"All Souls" continues: "Spare me, because my days are nought." But the army of Christian soldiers marches with irresistible faith before the Saviour who was their comrade, and is now their judge. The triumphant outcry, in the mass

<sup>2</sup> Migne, *Patrologia*, Vol. 142, 1038.

for the dead on All Souls, runs: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and I shall rise on the Last Day."

Liberty was promised to all souls, liberty, the great promise of Revolution, is first heard in the Occident at All Souls. This cry for liberty divides East and West, the Eastern church being the quiet church of holiness and adoration, Western Christianity fighting for salvation and deliverance: "Free Thou," the Mass for All Souls beseeches Heaven, "Free Thou the souls of all believers from the punishment of hell, from the deep abyss, free them from the lion's maw. May thy standard-bearer, Michael, bring them into the Holy Light which thou didst promise to Abraham and his seed." "*Visio pacis Jerusalem*," was the motto of the Empire. The vision of peace promised to Abraham, the ancestor of Jerusalem, now appeared to the Army of the Dead.

The crowning hymn of All Souls is the "*Dies iræ, dies illa*," a song which has been translated into English more than one hundred and fifty times. It cannot be translated; the words created, the language shaped, in a real revolution of the human heart, are untranslatable. The mass being sung in Latin, the song of Thomas of Celano (1226) on the Last Judgment was in Latin, also. But Latin, which was then sung and prayed all over the Continent in the form of plain chant, was a more natural language for mankind than English or French today. On All Souls, the priest used the real first and last language of our soul, which is *before the division of song and speech*. The plain song of the mass also keeps alive the oldest of all truths, that language is living and life-giving speech. This language is not to be found in the dead, soundless prose of our daily talk and chatter. We whisper; our language is a dead branch of the living tree of speech. Souls dive into language as into their true element and where they dare commit themselves to the flood of sincere speech, there is no division of language, no Babylonian confusion of tongues. Where mind and heart are fully represented, mankind knows only one language. English psalms, French ideas, German chorales, Russian statistics and diagrams—what else have they tried to do but to restore the unity of language throughout mankind? The

unifying power of all the great revolutions is what makes them life-giving, creative, restoring. The imperial democracy of All Souls and the Last Judgment attempted the same thing. The plain-song of the mass represents man in his deepest emotions. Man knows nothing of division. "The division of man" is the fall of man. It was not William Blake alone who preached this gospel. Division has been man's ruin again and again. The "*Dies Iræ, Dies Illa*," restored unity in a divided world, restored man's union by singing and playing in child-like plasticity before the Creator.

Though the "*Dies Iræ*" was written two centuries after the inauguration of All Souls, it faithfully repeats words, ideas and associations which we find expressed in the verses of Odilo's biography. In our human world, when one faith pervades it, time works as an evolutionary force. It takes a number of generations to carry to perfection what the soul began to express in a new outbreak of inspiration. Our pragmatic history-writing exaggerates the external evidence of contemporaneity. The finest flower of a civilization springs up after centuries of growth. Dante was no contemporary of the people who asked him to apologize to them before returning to Florence. It is not only admissible, but necessary, to declare that the seed was planted when the first revolutionary set out with a new faith in the meaning of life and death. Since the year 1000 all souls have prayed the *dies iræ*:

*Dies iræ, dies illa  
Solvat sæclum in favilla  
Teste David cum Sybilla.*

*Quantus tremor est futurus  
Quando iudex est venturus  
Cuncta stricte discussurus.*

*Tuba mire spargens sonum  
Per sepulchra regionum  
Coget omnes ante thronum.*

*Mors stupebit et natura  
Cum resurget creatura,  
judicanti responsura.*

## THE ROMAN EMPEROR

*Liber scriptus proferetur  
in quo totum continetur  
Unde mundus judicetur.*

*Judex ergo cum sedebit,  
Quidquid latet, apparebit,  
Nil inultum remanebit.*

*Iuste iudex ultionis,  
Donum fac remissionis  
Ante diem rationis.*

*Lacrimosa dies illa  
Qua resurget ex favilla  
judicandus homo reus,  
huic ergo parce, deus.*

Day of wrath, that (very) day  
shall dissolve the age into ashes  
our witnesses being David and the Sybil.

What a tremour is to be  
when the judge is to come  
everything strictly examining.

The trumpet spreading marvellous the sound  
through the graves of (all) regions  
shall force all before the throne.

Death shall be stunned and Nature  
when shall rerise the creature  
to him who judges giving answer.

Book written will be brought forth,  
in which the whole is contained  
whence the world is to be judged.

The Judge, then, when he will take his seat  
whatsoever is hidden, will appear  
nothing unvindicated will remain.

O righteous judge of vengeance  
the gift make of forgiveness  
before the day of accounts.

Full of tears will be that day  
 when man shall rise again from his ashes,  
 to be judged, in thy court.  
 Spare him (for whom we here pray), O Lord.

Human prayers anticipate the inevitable, and by anticipating they create a field of force for liberty. Liberty is nothing but the taking of death into our lives. By anticipating death, we are delivered from evil. Love, prayer, solidarity, sacrifices can shorten the process of purification. So-called world history became a reality from the moment when All Souls began to work on every man.

In war there is no time. In war people have lost control over time. Then it is that the wheel of nature grinds us in its turning. Peace restores to us the room for free action. But unless we carry into this action an idea of the future, of final values, of direction, our liberty will not be of any use. In anticipating the lessons of death, Europe learned democracy, she learned Unity, she learned Universality. All Souls is the cornerstone of all our modern civilization.

The day of All Souls, proclaiming purgatory to be the stage for all contemporaries, has separated us forever from the jubilant glee of the ancient church. In a minute correction, this change was expressed most strikingly by the Cluniacs: At Easter time, everybody was happy in the experience of resurrection, and evil itself was redeemed since God can make use of evil as well as of good; in recognizing the restoration of the world, the old church sang: "O happy fault that produced this redeemer!"<sup>3</sup> Cluny resented this slighting of our human

<sup>3</sup> Adam lay ibounden,  
 Bounden in a bond;  
 Four thousand winter  
 Thought he not too long;  
 And all was for an apple,  
 An apple that he took,  
 As clerkes finden  
 Written in their book.  
 Nor had the apple taken been,  
 The apple taken been,  
 Nor had never our Lady  
 A-been [of] Heaven Queen.

guilt: the prayer "*O felix culpa*" was suppressed.<sup>4</sup> Losses and gains in the life of the spirit are interdependent, so it seems. Man grew up to a greater knowledge of his own nature when he started the anticipation of the Last Judgment in his Great Year of Revolution.

All Souls became a popular Holy Day. It made its way from Cluny in spite of the conservative attitude of the popes. Some inhibitions against it exist even today in the Roman practice which tries to protect the day of All Saints and its claim to be a feast of two days, including the Second of November. Long before Papal Rome was able to regularize All Souls—a last regulation was tried by the Pope during the World War—the monks of Cluny flooded the Occident with an ocean of masses on this day. The monks, in an alliance with the apostolic majordomos of the Church, the great German Emperors, educated the tribes of Europe in a faith of repentance and prayer. This was done without the support of bishops and popes. Ghibelline and Dantesque Christianity is a special stratum of Catholic faith; this stratum is older than Roman Catholicism in the modern sense. Protestants and Dante's Christians easily meet. They are not in a deadly opposition. The very existence of the imperial period of Christianity prevented—in Luther's days—the Reformation from destroying the unit of our faith totally and forever. For Roman Catholicism contained many more layers than popery against which Luther raged, and especially a strong imperial and monastic admixture.

And in all later centuries, liturgical revivals like Anglo-Catholicism and similar movements have freely used the treasures of All Souls and of the Christian democracy of the Last Judgment.

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*Blessed be the time  
That apple taken was.  
Therefore we moun singen  
"Deo Gratias."*

Quoted with spelling modernized, from Sloane Ms. 2595 (according to Bradly Stratmann early fourteenth century) as printed in *Early English Lyrics*, E. N. Chambers and F. Sedgwick, p. 102, London, 1907.

<sup>4</sup> Cardinale Schuster, O.S.B., *Liber Sacramentorum*, Vol. IV (1930), p. 49, and p. 18, Note 1.

At every moment our field of free action is imperilled. The World War has destroyed it again. Where there is no choice, there is no soul. When Dollfuss, the Chancellor of Austria, was deliberately deprived of the comfort of the last anointment, when confession and the solace of a priest were denied to the victims of the German Purge in 1934, the World War revealed its destructive force as the end of a civilization. All Souls died in 1934, because the Christian democracy of the dead and the dying was no longer real. Modern man believes, perhaps, in equality of birth. But he fancies that everybody dies alone and individually.

The complete breakdown of a civilization that does not anticipate death is certain. Common sufferings create. Common tears restore. That is why the spiritual regeneration of Cluny was called "*dona lacrimarum*," the gifts of tears. A stream of tears cleansed the soil, long smirched by bloodshed, and the lands of the former empire were inundated by a peace unknown in ancient Rome.