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JOHN CALVIN'S VIEW OF SECULAR CULTURE;

SOME PATHEISTIC AND RENAISSANCE

ANTICEDENTS

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To Mary and to Professor Theodore Lee Agnew

and

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Chapter I
JOHN CALVIN'S VIEW
OF SECULAR CULTURE

Central to the Weltanschauung of John Calvin, the Geneva reformer, was an allegiance to an absolutely sovereign God. Of course, this could be said of many Christian leaders, but by Calvin this premise was more explicitly stated and its ramifications attended to more closely than by most. One could reasonably declare that Augustine holds a better claim to a conviction of this sort, but there is an unusual difference between the inclusiveness of Calvin's view and the inclusiveness of Augustine's view.

Closer in time and situation to the golden years of the classical world of Greek and Roman than he might wish, Augustine saw its emanations in a rather jaundiced light and only grudgingly recognized its merits: merits which were no doubt of divine origin, but which were so entwined with the character of their pagan recipients that guilt of association hung heavier on them than Godly origins could transcend. These merits, truths, sciences, etc. could be salvaged as could any neutral substance and put to Christian uses without fear of taint, but only as a poor means to an end.¹

¹There are inconsistencies in Augustine's treatment of this area which reflect the difficulties in using this type of rationale; see chapter II of this thesis.

In many respects Calvin followed in Augustine's theological footsteps. He did so consciously and with grateful acknowledgement, however, not without criticism.¹ Indeed, Calvinists living after Calvin could draw from the Institutes and Commentaries of Calvin, a theology as severe and rigid as the denial of the secular world declared by this church father.² But for Calvin and many later Calvinists, secular culture was not so forbidding (or secular) as one might imagine having heard of Calvin's pessimism about man's nature. This impression might be reinforced by the traditional epithets such as "Blue Laws" with their psychological associations if not historical veracity. On the other hand, even recent serious scholarly works emphasize Calvin's narrow view in relation to the Renaissance.³

However, Calvin's appreciation of secular culture and the secular world was strong and frank. The rationale for his appreciation was

¹McNeill, John T., (ed.) Calvin Institutes of the Christian Religion, I, trans. by J. Ford Battles, (Philadelphia, 1960), lviii, note 59. Hereafter referred to as McNeill, Institutes.

²See Herbert D. Foster, "Liberal Calvinism: the Remonstrants at the Synod of Dort in 1618," in Collected Papers of Herbert D. Foster, (New York, 1929). This article was reprinted from the Harvard Theological Review, XVI, (January, 1923). See also the Golden Remains of the Ever Honorable Mr. John Hales of Eaton College (London, 1688), for an account of an English representative to this Synod.

³Eugene F. Rice, Jr. in The Renaissance Idea of Wisdom (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), 143-147, emphasizes the pessimism with which Calvin shrouded his view of man. He finds no recognition by Calvin of the worth in man. He does find that Calvin recognizes secular culture for its "supplementary and utilitarian" value when it is guided by the divine hand, but otherwise it has no merit. This type of conclusion can certainly be well documented; however, Calvin does

much the same as Augustine's; that is, good wherever found comes from a divine source.¹ However, Calvin sees the appreciation of the value of secular culture as anything but weakness or necessity. On the contrary, such appreciation is showing proper respect for the wonders of God which were graciously given to all men and which demand the worshipful study of Christians who can only reject them at the risk of insulting God himself. Thus it can be demonstrated that Calvin's theology included more of human life than the theology of Augustine or the many other preceding Christian scholars. In fact, from a Christian standpoint, the manner of Calvin's incorporation of secular culture and life within a religious scheme is a more satisfying justification of their use and appreciation than that which any of his predecessors reached, largely because of the divine favor shown secular culture by declaring its source to be the grace of God. Calvin's theological treatment of this area more appropriately recognizes the situation of human life with its irrevocable ties with the secular world as well as the spiritual, if one may use that dichotomy.

point out much that is good in man, even corrupted man. And secular culture is a gift of God's grace. Man had a direct hand in forming or passing on the elements of secular culture - the liberal arts, music, painting, etc. - and these things exist for enjoyment as well as utility. They may even contribute to a knowledge of divine things. Richard H. Popkin's review of Rice's book criticizes in a broader perspective the depreciation that Reformation concepts of wisdom receive in The Renaissance Idea of Wisdom. See Renaissance News (Lunenburg, Vt.), XII (Winter, 1959), 265-269.

¹"All good giving and every perfect gift comes from above, from the Father of the lights of heaven." "A Letter of James," The New English Bible; New Testament (Oxford, 1961), 1:16-17, p. 390.

The Sovereignty of God

Calvin outlines his concept of the sovereignty of God over man by a sustained reiteration that the providence of God is the "determinative principle for all human plans and works."¹ This sovereignty prevails over the entire universe which was founded, is presently regulated, and is preserved by God's wisdom and righteousness.² Calvin is concerned with man's place in the universe and his relation to it, - a concern which must resolve itself, yet more especially in man's relation to God. In this latter relationship, which is fundamental and pervasive, including all other relationships and is truly the most important aspect of life, Calvin cannot find "one drop" of either wisdom, light, righteousness, power, rectitude or truth which does not "flow from" God. Man should recognize this source of his being and its scope that "we may learn to await and seek all these things from him, and thankfully ascribe them.....to him."³ Calvin's basic premise revolves around this unilateral God to man theme with a fairly regular consistency.

To make it quite clear that his conception of sovereignty presupposes an active role for God at the expense of independent human action, Calvin declares that God's omnipotence is of the "watchful, effective,

¹McNeill, Institutes, I, I.xviii. 2. p. 292.

²Ibid., I. ii. 1. p. 40-41.

³Ibid., 41. See also ibid., I.ii.2. p. 42.

active sort, engaged in ceaseless activity.

"Not, indeed, an omnipotence that is only a general principle of confused motion, as if he were to command a river to flow through its once appointed channels, but one that is directed toward individual and particular motions. For he is deemed omnipotent, not because he can indeed act, yet sometimes ceases and sits in idleness, or continues by a general impulse which he previously appointed; but because, governing heaven and earth by his providence, he so regulates all things that nothing takes place without his deliberation."¹

In his role of creator, regulator and preserver, Calvin's God is not merely a stern, colorless arbiter, but rather a vibrant and benevolent Lord cognizant of all the needs and desires of man. He has, therefore, adorned the universe and man with many wonderful gifts to make human life more agreeable and to make his glory more evident and because of his gracious nature. Thus the world becomes a "dazzling theater" for men to behold.² And God reveals himself in this mirror of divinity - the world - for all to see. So impressed is Calvin with the beauty of

¹Ibid., I. xvi. 3, p. 200. Charles Trinkaus finds in this and similar passages in the Institutes a "new image of the deity corresponding to the energetic man of affairs of the new economic and political order." "Renaissance Problems in Calvin's Theology," Studies in the Renaissance (Austin, Texas), I (1954), 68. Of course this concept of an active God has obvious antecedents in the Scriptures; e.g. "are not sparrows two a penny? Yet without your Father's leave not one of them can fall to the ground. As for you, even the hairs of your head have been counted." "The Gospel According to Matthew," The New English Bible; New Testament, 10:29-31, p. 18.

²McNeill, Institutes, I, I. v. 8, p. 61. Or e.g. "this most beautiful theater," ibid., I. xiv. 20, p. 179. See also, ibid., I. vi. 2; II. vi. 1; III. ix. 2.

the world as a revelation of God that he declares that even the most humble of men "cannot plead the excuse of ignorance" when called to task for their sins.¹ To make doubly certain that men have the necessary sensitivity to recognize their proper relationship to God, there has been implanted in every man a "seed of religion" or "seed of divinity" which attunes him to divine manifestations.²

Even so, wonderful as the universe may be, man himself is regarded by Calvin as the "most excellent example of [God's] works" formed with "goodly beauty" and adorned "with....great and numerous gifts," to be beheld by all as a divine creation.³ Calvin extols man's ability to

¹Ibid., I. v. 1. p. 51. In Calvin's words, "wherever you cast your eyes there is no spot in the universe wherein you cannot discern at least some sparks of his glory. You cannot in one glance survey this most vast and beautiful system of the universe, in its wide expanse, without being completely overwhelmed by the boundless force of its brightness," ibid., 52.

²Ibid., I. iii. 1-3. p. 49-47. Calvin draws here from Cicero's dialogue on the Nature of the Gods, see McNeill's notes 4 and 5, p. 44. See also McNeill, Institutes, I. iv. 4. p. 51 and I. v. 1. p. 51. In spite of the wonders of the universe and the "seed of divinity" man seems to Calvin exceedingly "dull toward so manifest testimonies, and they flow away without profiting us," ibid., I. v. 11. p. 63; and again, "it is therefore in vain that so many burning lamps shine for us in the workmanship of the universe to show forth the glory of its Author. Although they bathe us wholly in their radiance, yet they can of themselves in no way lead us into the right path. Surely they strike some sparks, but before their fuller light shines forth these are smothered," ibid., I. v. 14. p. 68. What shows itself here is a peculiar habit of Calvin of describing exceptional opportunities or abilities of man on the one hand while taking them away on the other. This habit occurs not infrequently in the Institutes, indicating that the favor Calvin's God shows his gifts is, paradoxically, not shown to man himself, the recipient of the gifts.

³Ibid., I. xiv. 20. p. 180.

search out "heaven and earth and the secrets of nature," organizing and understanding the information gained thereby:

"With our intelligence we conceive the invisible God and the angels, something the body can by no mean do. We grasp things that are right, just, and honorable, which are hidden to the bodily senses. Therefore the spirit must be the seat of this intelligence. Indeed, sleep itself, which hampers man, seeming even to deprive him of life, is no obscure witness of immortality, since it suggests not only thoughts of things that have never happened, but also presentiments of the future. I have briefly touched upon these things which secular writers grandly extol and depict in more brilliant language, but among godly readers this simple reminder will be enough."¹

There should be no doubt in one's mind that this praise of man's abilities is in reality directed toward God rather than man himself. However, the ardent tone Calvin employs to relate man's characteristics in this respect reveals a warm appreciation of man's accomplishments - secular culture. Happily God has ordained that man and the world should show such brilliant reflections of divine glory. Thus Calvin's enthusiasm is not misplaced nor is the sovereignty of God meant to be compromised.

The absolute nature of God's relation to man remains foremost in Calvin's mind, but there is also evidence that his high estimate of man's intellectual abilities is not taken lightly, although not wholly consistently either. In one of the most sacred of all Christian institutions he finds opportunities for human intervention. Thus when men approach

¹ Ibid., I. xv. 2, p.185. See also Ibid., I. v. 5, p.96. Roy W. Bastenhouse recognizes in this and like passages the Platonic division of body and soul and finds it one of the many similarities between Calvin's theology and the ideas of Renaissance Neo-Platonism. "The Doctrine of Man in Calvin and in the Renaissance," Journal of the History of Ideas (Lancaster, Pa.), IX (October, 1948), 468. Perhaps Augustine's favor for Platonism has influence here as well as the Renaissance.

the serious study of the Scriptures they should moderate their fears of inadequacy in order to more clearly interpret the divine word for their benefit:

"What prevents us from explaining in clearer words those matters in Scripture which perplex and hinder our understanding, yet which conscientiously and faithfully serve the truth of Scripture itself, and are made use of sparingly and modestly and on due occasion."¹

Limitations are frequently put on man's capacity to explore the areas of knowledge closer to God, but restrictions are less pronounced in matters more mundane.²

McNeill, Institutes, I. xiii. 3. p. 124. This is consistent with Calvin's repudiation of the Council of Trent's declaration of the infallibility of the Vulgate. In this case he calls attention to the work of Valla, Erasmus and Lefevre in biblical translation and commentary; Quirinus Breen, John Calvin: A Study in French Humanism (Grand Rapids, 1931), 108. One should keep in mind Calvin viewed the Scriptures with a great deal of reverence. At one point he admonished Christians to seek out God only in the Scriptures, to think of God only as prompted by Scriptures and to speak of God only as he was spoken of in the Scriptures. McNeill, Institutes, I. xiii. 21. p. 146. In a later passage Calvin again credits man with extra-ordinary mental ability. When he finds his own intelligence inadequate he urges his readers to go further in the investigation of a particularly complex theological problem, ibid., II. IV. xvii. 7. p. 1367. In short, men have the intelligence to delve into matters of divine import with promise of profit. Limitations are amended to this ability; however, Charles Trinkaus' conclusion that Calvin allowed men "some possibility of realizing limited worldly goals, but none at all of achieving moral and spiritual ends" indicates a consistency and rigidity not always found in the Institutes or the Commentaries, e.g. Calvin states that "men who have either quaffed or even tasted the liberal arts penetrate with their aid far more deeply into the secrets of the divine wisdom," McNeill, Institutes, I. I. v. 2. p. 53. For Trinkaus' views see "Renaissance Problems in Calvin's Theology," Studies in the Renaissance, I (1954), especially 79.

²For example see McNeill, Institutes, I. I. v. 9. p. 61. This is

Ostensibly the position of divine authority is determinant in either of these ranges of human endeavor. To attain to the higher understanding of divine things man must be helped by the Holy Spirit or God given grace; however, this qualification is sometimes implicit rather than explicit. Man apparently have some power in this respect, but it is so "meager and weak" that it must be assisted to the accomplishment of anything good by a divine hand.¹

"For the soul, illumined by him [Christ] takes on a new keenness, as it were, to contemplate the heavenly mysteries, whose splendor had previously blinded it. And man's understanding, thus dazzled by the light of the Holy Spirit, then at last truly begins to taste those things which belong to the Kingdom of God, having formerly been quite foolish and dull in tasting them."²

The sovereignty of God is maintained in this situation and man's independent aspirations to "real" understanding depreciated. Calvin, in most instances, would have God retain the central position regardless of the counter attraction, the obvious good works of man which in part seem to be natural developments.

Therefore the matter cannot be dropped with the discounting of man's capacity to understand, as this still leaves him some initiative. Hence, Calvin finds that man can claim neither the will to do good nor the effort to accomplish it; nor can man claim the faith which is the basis of will and effort. All are obtained freely "out of [the] mere grace"

of course, similar to the conclusions of Charles Trinkaus mentioned in the preceding note. However, a contradiction of terms exists for Calvin as well as his reviewers; for in a world governed by an absolutely sovereign God, heretofore described, how can any area of knowledge be less than divine?

¹Ibid., II, 11. 6. p. 262.

²Ibid., III, 11. 34. p. 582.

of God.¹

The emphasis on an absolutely sovereign God is seen to dominate the discussion of Calvin's theology and its relation to his attitude toward secular culture. It could be flatly stated that Calvin saw all worthwhile aspects of secular culture as divinely inspired. And, in fact, this dictum underlies his view of the world; however, Calvin himself had difficulty accepting this without some equivocation. He found the good aspects of secular culture divinely inspired, but he could not hold a steady course as to how closely these merits were tied to man and what was man's circumstances because of them. His meaning seems to be that God's grace and the divine favor thereof is associated with the gifts but not with man himself.²

The Gifts of God

Unlike Augustine who marked the end of his scholarly career by repudiating whatever in his writings smacked of pagan influence,³ John Calvin enriched the text of his major work with references to classical literature edition by edition until at his death the two citations in the 1536 edition of The Institutes of the Christian Religion had multiplied to the several hundred in the 1559 edition. These references

¹Ibid., II. iii. 8-9. pp. 300-302.

²The academic and cultural environment which influenced Calvin's attitude toward secular culture and probably more or less determined what of it he felt was worthwhile are suggested by Battenhouse, "The Doctrine of Man in Calvin and the Renaissance," Journal of the History of Ideas, IX (October, 1948), 447-471 and discussed in more detail in Breen's John Calvin.

³Labriolle, Pierre de, History and Literature of Christianity from Tertullian to Boethius (New York, 1925), 27.

are not in the least wholly deprecatory.¹ The use of classical ideas and even phraseology is made not infrequently and not without acknowledgment.²

Aside from Calvin's use of secular culture, of particular interest is his formal attitude toward this culture, especially the pagan classics which represent the greater portion of secular culture for which Calvin reserves praise. For example, he declares that the liberal arts give their students better equipment with which to investigate the "secrets of the divine wisdom." Here he emphasizes the usefulness of astronomy, medicine and the natural sciences to more closely examine "God's

Breen, John Calvin, 162. McNeill, Institutes, I, pp. xxvii-xxviii, note 18. The first Latin edition printed in 1536 contained six chapters; the 1539 edition expanded this to seventeen, each equal to one of the original six. Four new chapters were added in 1549. There were minor changes in 1550 and then a much enlarged edition (by eighty percent) was published in 1559. In 1549, 1559 and 1594 there were reprints of previous editions and in 1541 and 1560 popular French translations were published.

²For example, see McNeill, Institutes, I, I. iii. 1. p.44; I. iv. 3, pp. 46-47; I. v. 3. p.55; I. v. 5. p.57; I. v. 12. pp.65-66; I. xv. 6. p. 192. In ibid., I. xi. 6. p.106, Calvin notes with approval a citation from Varro by Augustine in which the former is recognized for arriving at some light. Of course, Dattenhouse in "The Doctrine of Man in Calvin and in Renaissance Platonism," Journal of the History of Ideas, IX (October, 1948), pp. 447-471, finds a more subtle and perhaps unconscious use of pagan or secular ideas in the Institutes. Breen has discussed other secular influences that reveal themselves via the Institutes; e.g. Calvin's literary sophistication and "good taste." Breen, John Calvin, chapter VII, especially pp. 146-158.

providence."¹ The utility Calvin sees in secular culture in relation to man's proper respect shown to God's manifestations, is not surprising and is certainly consistent with his habit of centering everything on an absolutely sovereign God. Significantly, however, Calvin moves beyond this type of justification via utility; in itself not to be disparaged, for by crediting secular learning with the ability to raise man to a higher appreciation of God's glory, he thereby creates a quite favorable atmosphere for scholarship in fields other than theology. However, utility does not play the key role in Calvin's justification of secular culture indicated by a recent writer.² In fact, Calvin has closely integrated his justification of secular culture into his scheme of the sovereignty of God as a positive factor rather than a residual element.

Thus Calvin calls on his readers to recognize that man was endowed at the creation with certain supernatural and natural gifts. Among the former were "faith, love of God, charity toward [his] neighbor, [and] zeal for holiness and for righteousness."³ These gifts were stripped from man at the "Fall" and since that time his natural gifts have become corrupted. These natural gifts, however, yet remain "partly weakened

¹McNeill, Institutes, I, I. v. 3. p.53.

²Hardison, B. Harris, The Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation (New York, 1956), especially 163-164.

³McNeill, Institutes, I, II. ii. 12, p.270. This section appeared first in the 1559 edition. See appendix for the Latin original of this and following passages from the Institutes, II, 11, 12-18.

and partly corrupted, so that their misshapen ruins appear:" principle among them is reason, which "remains as a residuum along with the will."¹ Even though "plunged into deep darkness" human understanding, based on the natural gift, "reason," cannot be rejected as having "no perception of any object whatever" for this would be contrary to "God's Word" and moreover to "common sense."²

"For we see implanted in human nature some sort of desire to search out the truth to which man would not at all aspire if he had not already savored it. Human understanding then possesses some power of perception, since it is by nature captivated by love of truth."³

Regardless of this admission of merit Calvin vacillates between wholehearted support, a not altogether consistent solution by definition of terms, and a rather awesome repudiation of man's capacity to produce "good" ideas via his corrupted natural gifts. An example of his attempt to skirt the problem by definition of terms is his indication that although human scholarship and understanding has been disparaged by others as trifling and vain, "yet its efforts do not always become so worthless as to have no effect, especially when it turns its attention to things below.

¹Ibid., p. 270. This section appeared first in the 1559 edition.

²Ibid., p. 271. Calvin here runs into a problem similar to that Augustine encountered. That is, a natural gift of God can hardly be completely discounted else one becomes guilty of disrespect. The rationalization is to show how men have personally corrupted the gift. Noteworthy, too, is Calvin's concession to what he calls "common sense." It could be justly argued that he means experience, and more particularly, his own academic experience. This section appeared first in the 1559 edition and was retained thereafter.

³Ibid., p. 271.

"On the contrary, it is intelligent enough to taste something of things above, although it is more careless about investigating these. Nor does it carry on this latter activity with equal skill. For when the mind is borne above the level of the present life, it is especially convinced of its own frailty. Therefore, to perceive more clearly how far the mind can proceed in any matter according to the degree of its ability we must here set forth a distinction. This, then, is the distinction: that there is one kind of understanding of earthly things; another of heavenly. I call 'earthly things' those which do not pertain to God or his Kingdom, to true justice, or to the blessedness of the future life; but which have their significance and relationship with regard to the present life and are, in a sense, confined within its bounds. I call 'heavenly things' the pure knowledge of God, the nature of true righteousness, and the mysteries of the Heavenly Kingdom. The first class includes government, household management, all mechanical skills, and the liberal arts. In the second are the knowledge of God and of his will and the rules by which we conform our lives to it." 1

It is interesting to see how chary Calvin is in this instance of absolutely denying man's perception in either earthly matter or even "things above." Although human understanding does not "carry on this

¹Ibid., II, ii, 13, pp. 271-272. This section first appeared in the 1539 edition and was retained thereafter. Here is stronger evidence that Calvin concedes man some perception of divine things - "things above" - through the natural gifts, in opposition to Trinkaus' conclusion that Calvin allowed man no such ability. "Renaissance Problems in Calvin's Theology," Studies in the Renaissance, I (1954), 79. Eugene E. Rice, Jr. comes to a synonymous conclusion - that Calvin considered man to have no perception of divine things. The Renaissance Idea of Wisdom, 147. Their findings are based on Calvin's more numerous and pessimistic pronouncements, e.g., "But we are drunk with the false opinion of our own insight and are thus extremely reluctant to admit that it is utterly blind and stupid in divine matters.... Flesh is not capable of such lofty wisdom as to conceive God and what is God's unless it be illumined by the Spirit of God," McNeill, Institutes, I, II, ii, 19, p. 278. But as can be seen this is not the whole story. And even within this rebuke there is room for the non-elect to perceive divine things through the illumination by the "Spirit of God."

latter activity with equal skill," it is only "in a sense" confined to the more mundane matters, and it can "taste something of things above." The division is convenient and perhaps a useful teaching technique, but it is not rigid nor is the definition held to consistently. The dichotomy is based on man's ability to understand, the better in one case, the poorer in the other, rather than two different types of truth.¹

Calvin continues to point out areas of human achievement, speaking particularly of "things below" that men understand rather well.

"Then follow the arts, both liberal and manual. The power of human acuteness also appears in learning these because all of us have a certain aptitude. But although not all the arts are suitable for everyone to learn, yet it is a certain enough indication of the common energy that hardly anyone is to be found who does not manifest talent in some art. There are at hand energy and ability not only to learn but also to devise something new in each art or to perfect and polish what one has learned from a predecessor. This prompted Plato to teach wrongly that such apprehension is nothing but recollection. Hence, with good reason we are compelled to confess that its beginning is inborn in human nature. Therefore this evidence clearly testifies to a universal apprehension of reason and understanding by nature implanted in man. Yet so universal is this good that every man ought to recognize for himself in it the peculiar grace of God."²

Apparently skill in the manual and liberal arts is a natural gift resulting from the "peculiar grace of God." This conclusion is arrived at because such skill is found universally among all men. Even when such skill is more highly developed than usual or is instrumental in the discovery or transmission of these arts it should be counted a

¹J. T. McNeill notes that "we have no thought of the concept (best represented by Duns Scotus) of two kinds of truth that are not mutually harmonious." McNeill, *Institutes*, I, 274, note 58.

²*Ibid.*, I, II, 11, 14, p. 273. This section first appeared in the 1539 edition and remained thereafter.

natural gift because it is given "indiscriminately" to the pious and the impious. ~~It would seem that Calvin had the alternative of associating this latter instance of unusual skill with some sort of "special gift;" however, he was perhaps, not so favorable to these "arts" as he has shown himself toward other unusually excellent human performances, particularly in classical literature. Therefore it is well to note that up to this point and somewhat beyond, the gifts Calvin praises are those natural, "inborn" gifts left over and subsequently corrupted after the Fall of Man. Noteworthy is that the source of the gifts is God's grace. The warmth of this word grace (gratia) reflects very pleasantly on the gifts themselves.¹ (Since divine grace is the source of all the knowledge of things below and things above, it is difficult to digest Calvin's depreciation of the former.)~~

The strongest praise Calvin hands to secular culture, more especially classical literature, occurs in the next passage.

~~"Whenever we come upon these matters in secular writers, let that admirable light of truth shining in them teach us that the mind of man, though fallen and perverted from its wholeness, is nevertheless clothed and ornamented with God's excellent gifts..... Shall we deny that the~~

¹The terms "common grace" and "special grace" have a long tradition in the history of Calvinism, so much so, that they are generally accepted as technical theological terms. The "special grace" in this tradition is held to be bestowed only on the elect. Calvin has used the term "special grace" in other contexts, as will be seen. But to avoid confusion in this thesis, the term "special gifts" is used to indicate the more specifically directed providence of God toward unsaved man. Quirinus Breen points out the peculiar charm of the New Testament word "grace" used in Calvin's discussion of classical literature. "The Church as the Mother of Learning," *Encounter* (Indianapolis, Ind.), XXII, nr. 4, p. 407.

Shall we say that the philosophers were blind in their
 observation and artful description of nature?
 Shall we say that those men were devoid of understand-
 ing who conceived the art of disputation and taught us
 to speak reasonably? Shall we say that they are insane
 who developed medicine, devoting their labor to our ben-
 efit? What shall we say of all the mathematical sci-
 ences? Shall we consider them the ravings of madmen? No,
 we cannot read the writings of the ancients of these sub-
 jects without great admiration. We marvel at them be-
 cause we are compelled to recognize how preeminent they
 are. . . . The same man whom Scripture (1 Cor. 2:14) calls "nat-
 ural man" were, indeed, sharp and penetrating in their
 investigation of inferior things. Let us, accordingly,
 learn by their example how many gifts the Lord left to
 human nature even after it was despoiled of its true
 good."¹

As can be seen, Calvin is still speaking of natural gifts, "left
 to human nature even after it was despoiled of its true good." How-
 ever, he waxes much more eloquent over these special literary manifest-
 ations of man's natural abilities than he has heretofore over more voca-
 tional attributes, except in general contexts. They are "excellent gifts"

Ibid. II. ii. 15 p. 273. This section appeared first in the 1539
 edition and was retained thereafter. McNeill finds Calvin on com-
 mon ground here with Lactantius who noted something of truth in
 pagan literature when he was writing his Divine Institutes, especially
 Book VII (see chapter II of this thesis). McNeill, Institutes, I,
 p. 274, note 58. There are also similarities with the ideas of
 Clement of Alexandria, Augustine and others which will be discussed
 in chapter II of this thesis. This passage is interesting because
 it shows the tendency of Calvin's so-called natural gifts retained
 from the "fall" of special gifts to go separate ways even though
 they appear to relate to the same manifestations. The result of this
 tendency is the affirmation that special gifts super-natural
 are the first word on the matter, to be discussed shortly.
 Moreover, this and like passages conflict with Eugene Rice's state-
 ment that some knowledge of lower things may be acquir-
 ed by man's natural intelligence. It seems fairly clear that
 Calvin traces any ability to acquire knowledge to a divine source;
 even if he corrupted natural gifts were God given. See The Anal-

which clothe and ornament the mind of man. Calvin has elsewhere declared that classical literature will "allure you, delight you, move you, enrapture you in a wonderful measure." Even when compared with the Scriptures its appeal does not completely vanish.¹ And significantly classical literature was developed out of man's own nature, its elements, of course, a gift of God's grace; but the impression one

Idea of Wisdom, 146. Thereby Calvin avoids supporting the idea that two different kinds of truth exist - one earthly and one divine. Calvin seems to imply that some men have temporarily risen above the corrupt nature of their natural gifts and produced true ideas, but this is shaky ground from which he tends to shrink; unusually, the idea is never stricken from the Institutes.

¹McNeill, Institutes, I, I, viii. 1. p. 82. The context of this praise of classical literature cures its exuberance, but it has an additional interest as it associates Calvin with several notable scholars of the past and his own time. "For it was also not without God's extraordinary providence that the sublime mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven came to be expressed largely in mean and lowly words, lest, if they had been adorned with more shining eloquence, the impious would scoffingly have claimed that its power is in the realm of eloquence alone. Now since such uncultivated and almost rude simplicity inspires greater reverence for itself than any eloquence, what ought one to conclude except that the force of the truth of Sacred Scripture is manifestly too powerful to need the art of words? ... Now this power which is peculiar to Scripture is clear from the fact that of human writings, however artfully polished, there is none capable of affecting us at all comparably. Read Demosthenes or Cicero; read Plato, Aristotle, and others of that tribe. They will, I admit, allure you, delight you, move you, enrapture you in wonderful measure. But betake yourself from them to this sacred reading. Then, in spite of yourself, so deeply will it affect you, so penetrate your heart, so fix itself in your very marrow, that, compared with its deep impressions, such vigor as the orators and the philosophers have will nearly vanish. Consequently, it is easy to see that the Sacred Scriptures, which so far surpass all gifts and graces of human endeavor, breathe something divine," ibid., 82. The correspondence between Pico Della Mirandola's Oratio Barbaro was no doubt familiar to Calvin. Pico's sentiments concerning the eloquence of the "rustically" written Scriptures corresponds almost identically with Calvin's ideas expressed here: see Quirinus Brean, "Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola on the Conflict of Philosophy and Rhetoric," Journal of the History of Ideas (Lancaster, Pa.), XIII, (June, 1952), especially 396, 399. However, the view against the fusion of eloquence

receives is that man has been able to rise somewhat above the corruption of his natural being and actually produce something worthwhile. Calvin does not dwell on or even make a point of man's independent success in this situation, if that be the case. And in later references he finds divine grace moving in "pagan" men and enabling them to produce such fine works.

On the contrary the allegiance to a sovereign God leads Calvin to a more explicit emphasis of the role of direct divine grace and a de-emphasis of man's independent action. A similar reaction can be noted in Augustine. Thus one finds that within a few pages the place of "natural gifts" is gently usurped by "special gifts" without too much change in definition.

"Some men excel in keenness; other are superior in judgement; still others have a readier wit to learn this or that art. In this variety God commands his grace to us, lest anyone should claim as his own what flowed from the sheer bounty of God. For why is one person more excellent than another? Is it not to display in common nature God's special grace, / specialis Dei gratia / which, in passing many by, declares itself bound to none? Besides this, God

and wisdom promoted by Pico in this correspondence was not shared by Calvin in his own writing. He followed the course set by Cicero and later even Augustine to an extent, whereby wisdom was held to "go hand in hand with eloquence;" see the fourth book of Augustine's De Doctrina Christiana, discussed in Chapter II of this thesis, and Quirinus Breen, "John Calvin and the Rhetorical Tradition," Church History (Norme, Ind.), XXVI (March, 1957), 7. It has been noted previously that Calvin allows scholars some freedom in making clearer perplexing problems in the Scriptures, presumably with some recourse to the human eloquence these particular passages do not seem to possess. (See page 8, note 1 of this thesis). On the other hand Calvin does not appear to have been so enamoured with the cult of eloquence as his contemporary Philip Melancthon. See Quirinus Breen, "Melancthon's Reply to G. Pico Della Mirandole," Journal of the History of Ideas (Lancaster, Pa.), XIII, (June, 1952), 413.

inspires special activities, in accordance with each man's calling."¹

In the commentary by Calvin on Genesis 4:20, the central role of God's grace is foremost as the endowments of the "sons of Cain" are enumerated. The theme of this passage is that good may be derived from individuals "deprived of the Spirit of regeneration" because even they receive God's freely given gifts. "In fact," declares Calvin, "the experience of all ages show us how many rays of divine light have always gleamed among unbelieving nations, and have contributed to the improvement of our present life.

"And today we see glorious gifts of the Spirit spread throughout the whole human race. For the liberal and industrial arts and sciences have come to us from profane men. Astronomy and the other branches of philosophy, medicine, political science - we must admit that we have learned all these from them...in my opinion, Moses here wished to show that the race of Cain excelled in many important endowments which at once made their impiety inexcusable and were shining witnesses to God's goodness."²

A commentary on Titus 1:12 brings out a theory expounded since the Patriotic era.

"From this passage we may infer those persons are superstitious, who do not venture to borrow anything from heathen authors. All truth is from God; and consequently if wicked men have said anything that is true and just, we ought not to reject it; for it has come from God. Besides, all things are of God; and, therefore, why should it not be lawful to dedicate to his

¹Ibid., II. ii. 17. p. 276. The Latin comes from A. Tholuck (ed.), Institutio Christianae Religionis (Berlin, 1846), I. 189.

²Haroutunian, Joseph, (ed.), Calvin's Commentaries (Philadelphia, 1958), pp. 354-355. See also John Calvin's Commentary on the Gospel According to John, I, translated by Rev. William Fringle (Grand Rapids, 1949), 173, on John 4:36.

glory everything that can be properly employed for such a purpose? But on this subject the reader may consult Basil's discourse."¹

Aside from directly confronting the detractors of the classical studies, calling them superstitious, this commentary only hints at Calvin's more sound religious justification by asking why a Christian scholar should not "dedicate to [God's] glory everything that can be properly employed for such a purpose." But the sovereignty of God holds the center of the stage in this passage more directly than merely by being implicit as the source of good in man's corrupted nature.

Possibly the most illustrative instance of this tendency for "natural gifts" to give way in Calvin's mind before the more direct "special gifts" is contained in a passage on the characters of some notable men of the classical era.

"In every age there have been persons who, guided by nature, have striven toward virtue throughout life. I have nothing to say against them even if many lapses can be noted in their moral conduct. For they have by the very zeal of their honesty given proof that there was some purity in their nature. Although in discussing merit of works we shall deal more fully with what value such virtues have in God's sight, we must nevertheless speak of it also at this point, inasmuch as it is necessary for the unfolding of the present argument. These examples, accordingly, seem to warn us against adjudging man's nature wholly corrupted, because some men have by its prompting not only excelled in remarkable deeds, but conduct themselves most honorably throughout life. But here it ought to occur to us that amid this corruption of nature there is some place

¹John Calvin, Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon, translated by Rev. William Fringle (Grand Rapids, 1948), 300-301. Basil's discourse, "Address to Young Men" is not a particularly profound justification of classical studies; however,

for God's grace; not such grace as to cleanse it, but to restrain it inwardly. For if the Lord gave loose rein to the mind of each man to run riot in his lusts, there would doubtless be no one who would not show that, in fact, every evil thing for which Paul condemns all nature is most truly to be met in himself."¹

The problem as Calvin sees it is not yet solved. If God's grace be only a restraint of man's corrupt nature it might mean that an individual with such assistance could cultivate his own nature with a result "not utterly devoid of goodness," thereby retaining some independent value.² Calvin admits, "that the endowments resplendent in Camillus [his example in this instance] were gifts of God and seem rightly commendable if judged in themselves." He then asks, "but how will these serve as proofs of natural goodness in him?" The answer to this question is not an abrupt denial nor a repudiation of their value, but a smooth transition to the overall question of how the non-elect could have such obviously good qualities.

"Here, however, is the surest and easiest solution to this question: these are not common gifts of nature, but special graces of God [*non esse istas communes naturae dotes, sed speciales Dei gratias*], which he bestows variously and in a certain measure upon men otherwise wicked. For this reason, we are not afraid, in common parlance, to call this man wellborn, that one depraved in nature. Yet we do not hesitate

it was a statement from a respected early Christian father well known and appreciated among humanists of Calvin's era. See chapter II of this thesis for a discussion of Basil.

¹McNeill, *Institutes*, I, II. ii. 3. p. 292. "Unfolding the present argument" means proving that "only damnable things come forth from man's corrupt nature," i.e., the title of chapter iii, book II, a seemingly obvious contradiction to parts of chapter ii and elsewhere. This passage and the next two all appeared first in the 1539 edition and were retained thereafter.

²*Ibid.*, II. iii. 4. p. 293.

to include both under the universal condition of human depravity; but we point out what special grace [*specialis gratiae*] the Lord has bestowed upon the one, while not deigning to bestow it upon the other."¹

There is something of a rough spot here when compared with Calvin's earlier statements that attribute worthwhile results to the natural gifts of man, thus leaving man some room for asserting individual power in spite of the corruption of his natural gifts. This shift in emphasis has been noted before but in the third chapter of book two in the Institutes it takes on a more definite form. Man's valuable capabilities, once implied to have been developed in spite of his corrupted nature, are taken out of the human realm, where it must be said they rested somewhat tenuously heretofore considering their ultimate source, and are put directly in the hands of God so that there will be no question in the reader's mind that divine grace is a prerequisite of any good work.

The absolutely sovereign God stands supreme in Calvin's mind. He cannot leave the impression that man has noteworthy ability that he might cultivate valuable ideas out of a corrupt nature independently, even if the latter contained "natural gifts" from God. The "natural gifts"

¹Ibid., 293-294. "Special grace" as used in this excerpt should not be confused with saving grace as was previously indicated. The Latin comes from A. Tholuck (ed.), Institutio Christianae Religionis, I, 194. Statements similar in tone to the above are made further on in the Institutes, e.g. "I do not deny that all the notable endowments that manifest themselves among unbelievers are gifts of God," McNeill, Institutes, III. xiv. 2. p. 769. And "because Rome was the capital city of the Empire, the men there were probably more excellent in doctrine, prudence, skill and breadth of experience, than in any other place. This fact was duly taken into account in order that the removal of the city and also the other much more excellent gifts of God might not seem to be despised." ibid., II, IV, vi. 16. p. 1116. In context, the implication is that

were so corrupted by man's perversity that he must look to God for all good, even the motivation and faith to do good, etc.¹

But the gifts, apart from their human trappings, are retained in a very favorable status, and it should be remembered that Calvin never deleted the passages in which he gave man's natural gifts such appreciative attention. The idea that secular culture could reveal worthwhile knowledge is not in the least retracted and being gifts of God's grace they must have had divine acceptance as well as human. The merits of past scholarship, vocational arts, and the fine arts, retain an enviable position in Calvin's theology. In fact, his scheme accommodates these meritorious works to a broad religious purpose, for he does not end his justification on the mere plausible rationalization that these creditable works of secular culture can be used because they are in reality gifts of God. Calvin steps out boldly with the demand that those aspects of secular culture deemed worthwhile must be appreciated and used because they are gifts of God's grace. And because these gifts result from God's freely given grace they must be appreciated else man be condemned as ungrateful.

and must be appreciated as gifts of God's grace.

Rome was more readily accepted as the center of ecclesiastical affairs in the Patristic era because church officials there were rendered more capable by their more immediate classical heritage.

¹Calvin does not tangle with the problem of how a gift of God could be corrupted without besmirching the character of the giver.

The Justification

The gifts of God's grace call forth a variety of treatments from Calvin. They are meant to reveal God to man and lead him to true happiness; they are useful in the life and the spirit of man; and they are pure pleasures, delights for man to enjoy. In whatever capacity, God's gifts are to be honored as substance favored by God himself (else he would not have given them) and ascribed to his glory.

Although limitations are put on man's relationship to God's gifts they are neither covered nor are they consistently applied. Calvin deals with a tricky problem in an attempt to outline man's proper treatment of these gifts without crediting him with too much ability and thereby giving him an overbold spirit unhinged before God, or without sanctioning too much enjoyment in the secular world and turning his attention away from God.

He is softly turned away from the investigation of God's essence toward an investigation of his works. Of course, Calvin has allowed man some ability in study of the former area as has been noted. And, actually, it would take a keen eye to differentiate between the two realms of knowledge, if that be possible.

"We are called to a knowledge of God: not that knowledge which, content with empty speculation, merely glits in the brain, but that which will be sound and fruitful if we only perceive it, and if it takes root in the heart. For the Lord manifests himself by his powers, the force of which we feel within ourselves and the benefits of which we enjoy. We must therefore be much more profoundly affected by this knowledge than if we were to imagine a God of whom we perceive nothing. Consequently, we know the most perfect way of seeking God, and the most suitable order, is not for us to attempt with bold curiosity to penetrate to the investigation of his essence, which we ought more to adore than curiously to

to search out, but for us to contemplate him in his words whereby he renders himself near and familiar to us, and in some manner communicates himself."¹

Of significance to this discussion is the obligatory call man is given to approach a knowledge of God. In addition there is an emphasis on a serious and devout study. Apparently Calvin is more concerned with the piety of the researcher than he is in limiting his study to the so-called lower realm of God's work.

Piety in the Christian is one of Calvin's great interests and he feels it results from an awareness of God's providence. He declares that a "sense of the power of God is for us a fit teacher of piety, from which religion is born.

"I call 'piety' that reverence joined with love of God which the knowledge of his benefits induces. For until men recognize that they owe everything to God, that they are nourished by his fatherly care, that he is the Author of their every good, that they should seek nothing beyond him - they will never yield him willing service. Nay, unless they establish their complete happiness in him, they will never give themselves truly and sincerely to him."²

¹McNeill, Institutes, I, I. v. 9, p. 61.

²Ibid., I, II. 1, p. 41. McNeill comments at length on Calvin's pietism which the latter repeatedly affirms as the basis for any sound knowledge of God: e.g. Ibid., II, II. 21; especially I, II. 1; also pp. 11-111, and I, II. 1-5 where the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures are shown to be inseparable aids to the Christian because overmuch appeal to revelation leads to fanaticism. This could indicate an almost rational balance in his pietism, an area easily overrought. Pietism is deemed basic to Calvin's conception of what the Institutes are intended to express. Hence they are not a "neatly jointed structure of dogmatic logic" but the emanation of the author's "whole spiritual and emotional" being. Breen's, "John Calvin and the Historical Tradition," Church History, XLVI (March, 1977), 14, is cited by McNeill to show how Calvin abbreviated his logic in the Institutes to enhance their ability to persuade by tapping the emotions, McNeill, Institutes, 11-111, 112-113. Calvin

There is no doubt in Calvin's mind that to strengthen piety man should, and indeed must, study God's works seriously and as he is made more aware of the providence of God he will benefit from such endeavors personally and spiritually. But Calvin places the emphasis not on how such study will serve as a means to an end, but rather how such study will imbue man with a heartfelt respect for the goodness of God to sinful man.

"Indeed, if we chose to explain in a fitting manner how God's inestimable wisdom, power, justice, and goodness shine forth in the fashioning of the universe, no splendor, no ornament of speech, would be equal to an act of such great magnitude. There is no doubt that the Lord would have us uninterruptedly

Calvin himself calls the Institutes a summa pietatis rather than a summa theologiae. His theology is held to be a product of his piety rather than vice versa. This type of emphasis could well account for some of the inconsistencies evident in Calvin's treatment of man's abilities and it accommodates the allegiance he has for a sovereign God. Some other interesting quotes from the Institutes on pietism are found in I. vii. 4; and I. viii. 19 where Calvin discounts the necessity to submit rational proof of Scriptural authority; for such proof "is founded on the inward persuasion of the Holy Spirit." And finally, there is the declaration that the "gospel...is a doctrine not of the tongue but of life. It is not apprehended by the understanding and memory alone, as other disciplines are, but it is received only when it possesses the whole soul, and finds a seat and resting place in the inmost affection of the heart," ibid., III. vi. 4. p. 688. Perhaps an association of "spirit" at the least could be made between Calvin's pietism so expressed and that of late seventeenth century Germany of the conception of life held by the philosopher-historian Wilhelm Dilthey. Richard H. Popkin's has suggested Calvin's relation on this level with later protestant scholars, e.g. Kierkegaard. Renaissance News, XXX (Winter, 1959), 265-269.

occupied in this holy meditation; that, while we contemplate in all creatures, as in mirrors, those immense riches of his wisdom, justice, goodness, and power, we should not merely run over them cursorily, and, so to speak, with a fleeting glance; but we should ponder them at length, turn them over in our minds seriously and faithfully, and recollect them repeatedly. . . . therefore, to be brief, let all readers know that they have with true faith apprehended what it is for God to be Creator of heaven and earth, if they first of all follow the universal rule, not to pass over in ungrateful thoughtlessness or forgetfulness those conspicuous powers which God shows forth in his creatures, and then learn so to apply it to themselves that their very hearts are touched."¹

It is not just helpful to study God's works, it is a religious obligation. ~~However, the study of God's gifts is not limited to the external world;~~ for the meaning of these gifts is fully appreciated only when they are related to man himself.

"We must therefore admit in God's individual works - but especially in them as a whole - that God's powers are actually represented as in a painting. Thereby the whole of mankind is invited and attracted to recognition of him, and from this to true and complete happiness. Now these powers appear most clearly in his works. Yet we comprehend their chief purpose, their value, and the reason why we should ponder them, only when we descend in- to ourselves and contemplate by what means the Lord shows in us his life, wisdom, and power; and exercises in our behalf his righteousness, goodness, and mercy."²

~~McNeill, Institutes, I, I. xiv. 21. pp. 180-181. Another concern of Calvin is the relation of the Scriptures to this aspect of man's life, a balance, perhaps, to secularization. Even though the external world is a valuable aid toward gaining an understanding of divine wisdom, the Scriptures "gathering up the otherwise confused knowledge of God in our minds. . . . shows us the true God." They are spectacles through which man views the world and is directed "a- right to the very Creator of the universe," ibid., I, vi. 1. pp. 69-70.~~

²ibid., I. V. 10. p. 69.

Being the most excellent example of God's works, man should study his own endowments and present condition. The perusal of man's present condition will reveal a rather shoddy picture; however, all is not lost for some ability remains and his endowments are noteworthy.

"First he should consider for what purpose he was created and endowed with no mean gifts. By this knowledge he should arouse himself to meditation upon divine worship and the future life. Secondly, he should weigh his own abilities - or rather, lack of abilities. When he perceives this lack, he should lie prostrate in extreme confusion, so to speak, reduced to naught. The first consideration tends to make him recognize the nature of his duty; the second, the extent of his ability to carry it out."¹

The call to study retains its importance for Calvin, and it points to the central theme of the sovereignty of God which is foremost in Calvin's mind. Although the evidence of God's gifts in the external world and in man is valuable to the knowledge of God, rather than comprise this knowledge they lead us to a contemplation of why such gifts are given and from there to the creator himself. Thus Calvin cautions man not to adore the works without keeping in mind the purpose of such studies.² But this word of caution is not intended to reflect abuse on the gifts themselves, and it is balanced by the much stronger respect for the secular world shown by Calvin than by Augustine, for example, who follows a more narrow

¹Ibid., II. i. 9. p. 244. From the thought expressed in this passage and implied elsewhere it appears that God's special direction is necessary to stimulate man's natural or common gifts to do good works. This idea smooths somewhat the inconsistency in Calvin's view of man's abilities. For it leaves him with the natural gifts with which he is generally inept until touched by the "spirit" of God and then he is able to utilize his otherwise corrupted nature. See conclusion of this thesis.

²Ibid., I.v. 19. p. 63.

"means to an end" line. Where Augustine finds the means of rather mediocre quality, Calvin sees them as excellent gifts of God not to be maligned lightly because they reside in divine grace. Moreover, keeping in mind Calvin's theological framework which will not tolerate aspirations to salvation, or even reception of grace through works, the gifts of God to man cannot be looked upon as a means to an end. They stand in abeyance to a characterization which would give them only utility. The gifts of God have aesthetic qualities which enrich man's life as part of the glory of God. They are not merely to be used and then thrown aside as lesser things because they are possessed by man, but on the other hand they are to be regarded with deep respect and admiration and investigated in order to properly appreciate their intrinsic value and, significantly, because they come to man freely by the grace of God.

The worthwhile elements of secular culture being gifts of God receive from Calvin the same type of recognition given the external world and man himself. Calvin has the problem of how much credit man's efforts can receive; however, what he finds to be gifts of God retain their attractiveness even though he vacillates on that liberal view he has of man and makes God more directly responsible for whatever is good in the world past and present.

"Whenever we come upon these matters in secular writers, let that admirable light of truth shining in them teach us that the mind of man, though fallen and perverted from its wholeness, is nevertheless clothed and ornamented with God's excellent gifts. If we regard the Spirit of God as the sole fountain of truth, we shall neither reject the truth itself, nor despise it wherever it shall appear, unless we wish to dishonor the Spirit of God. For by holding the gifts of the Spirit in slight esteem, we condemn

and reproach the Spirit himself."¹

This is no justification on grounds of mere utility, but worshipful respect shown the gifts of God himself. Calvin reiterates this theme bearing strongly on the instrumentality of the Spirit of God in providing man with secular knowledge and the neglect of men who would not use these gifts and thereby insult the giver.

"It is no wonder, then than the knowledge of all that is most excellent in human life is said to be communicated to us through the Spirit of God. But is there reason for anyone to ask, what have the impious, who are utterly estranged from God, to do with his Spirit? We ought to understand the statement that the Spirit of God dwells only in believers (Rom. 8:9) as referring to temples of God (1 Cor. 3:16). Nonetheless he fills, moves, and quickens all things by the power of the same Spirit, and does so according to the character that he bestowed upon each kind by the law of creation. But if the Lord has willed that we be helped in physics, dialectic, mathematics, and other like disciplines, by the work and ministry of the ungodly, let us use this assistance. For if we neglect God's gift freely offered in these arts, we ought to suffer just punishment for our sloths."²

Calvin shows a narrower view of the benefits of the fine arts than he has shown to secular literature, but here too he feels bound to remind man that painting, sculpture, and music are gifts of God and should be honored as such.

¹Ibid., II, 11, 15, p. 273.

²Ibid., II, 11, 16, p. 273.

"I am not gripped by the superstition of thinking absolutely no images permissible. But because scripture and painting are gifts of God, I seek a pure and legitimate use of each, lest those things which the Lord has conferred upon us for his glory and our good be not only polluted by perverse mis-use but also turned to our destruction."¹

As did Luther, Calvin shows a strong appreciation of music, another gift of God.

"For the discovery of the arts, and of whatever is useful and makes our common life more pleasant, is a gift of God which is not to be despised and an achievement worthy of praise... Although the invention of the lyre and of other musical instruments serves our enjoyment and our pleasures rather than our needs, it ought not on that account to be judged of no value; still less should it be condemned. Pleasure is to be condemned only when it is not combined with reverence for God and not related to the common welfare of society. But music by its nature is adapted to rouse our devotion to God and to aid the well-being of man; we need only avoid enticements to shame, and empty entertainments which keep men from better employments and are simply a waste of time."²

Not to be overlooked among God's gifts is life itself.

"Indeed, this life, however crammed with infinite miseries it may be, is still rightly to be counted

¹*Ibid.*, I. xi. 12, p. 112. "Therefore it remains that only those things are to be sculptured or painted which the eyes are capable of seeing; let not God's majesty, which is far above the perception of the eyes, be debased through unseemly representations. Within this class some are histories and events, some are images and forms of bodies without any depicting of past events. The former have some use in teaching or admonition; as for the latter, I do not see what they can afford other than pleasure." This rather offhand allowance to the pleasure of viewing the arts should not be taken as a rebuke to aesthetic appreciation for which Calvin has a keen taste as has been shown of secular literature, the eternal world and will be shown of music. More likely, this reveals a personal prejudice.

²Haroutounian, Joseph (ed.), *Calvin's Commentaries*, 354-355, on Genesis 4:20.

among those blessings of God which are not to be spurned. Therefore, if we recognize in it no divine benefit, we are already guilty of grave ingratitude toward God himself. For believers especially, this ought to be a testimony of divine benevolence, wholly destined, as it is, to promote their salvation."¹

In this discussion of the gift of life Calvin brings up a topic which has long bothered Christians. That is, what attitude should man take toward things only good for delight or pleasure. The views expressed on music give an answer to a special instance, and the impression one gets from the context surrounding the discussion of classical literature reveals an appreciation for secular culture. Thus it should not be surprising that Calvin finds aesthetic compensation in daily life.

"For if we are to live, we have also to use those helps necessary for living. And we also cannot avoid those things which seem to serve delight more than necessity. Therefore we must hold to a measure so as to use them with a clear conscience, whether for necessity or for delight."²

To press this issue even more firmly Calvin makes an outright attack on asceticism.

"There were some otherwise good and holy men who when they saw intemperance and wantonness, when not severely restrained, ever raging with unbridled excess, desired to correct this dangerous evil. This was their plan occurred to them: they allowed man to use physical goods in so far as necessity required. A godly counsel indeed, but they were far too severe. For they would fetter consciences more tightly than does the Word of the Lord - a very dangerous thing.... Did / God / not.... render many

¹McNail, Institutes, I, III. ix. 3. p. 714.

²Ibid., III. x. 1. p. 719.

things attractive to us, apart from their necessary use?.....Away, then, with that inhuman philosophy which, while conceding only a necessary use of creatures, not only malignantly deprives us of the lawful fruit of God's beneficence but cannot be practiced unless it robs a man of all his senses and degrades him to a block."¹

A final comment from Calvin in the spirit of the repeated admonitions "not to be spurned," "not to be despised," "nor rejected" which append to the accounts of the gifts of God is given below.

"We should use God's gifts for the purpose for which he gave them to us, with no scruple of conscience, no trouble of mind. With such confidence our minds will be at peace with him, and will recognize his liberality toward us."²

¹Ibid., III, x. 1-3, pp. 720-721. This may amend Battenhouse's contention that "the implications of Calvin's view of human nature and destiny" leads in two opposite directions - to aestheticism and asceticism as does neo-platonism. The aestheticism is certainly a part of Calvin, but asceticism is a harsher term than can be readily applied. The commands to man to honor God by making use of his gifts and to turn every effort toward his creator call for discipline but on terms not exclusive of real enjoyment. Battenhouse, "The Doctrine of Man in Calvin and in the Renaissance," Journal of the History of Ideas, IX (October, 1948), 463-464. See also Paul N. Siegel, "Spencer and the Calvinist View of Life," Studies in Philosophy (Chapel Hill, N.C.), XII (April, 1944), 214-222; Herschel C. Baker, The Dignity of Man (Harvard, 1947), 248. McNeill lists pertinent references to authorities on Calvin's aesthetic appreciation as he does on a great many other aspects of Calvin in the 1960 edition of the Institutes mentioned so frequently heretofore; see p. 52, note 4.

²McNeill, Institutes, I, III, xix. 8, p. 840. The "purpose for which he gave them to us" must, of course, include pure enjoyment. Calvin puts limitation on this enjoyment, e.g. "one bridle is put upon it if it be determined that all things were created for us that we might recognize the author and give thanks for his kindness toward us," ibid., III, x. 3, p. 721. This association ties the gifts of the secular world closely to their divine source; a union which Calvin intends. But in addition he feels behooved to state that "there is no surer or more direct course [to eternal life] than that which we receive from contempt of the present life and meditation upon heavenly mortality," ibid., III, x. 4, p. 722. How one could hold the "present life" in "contempt" and yet count it "among those

The Retractions

Calvin's pessimism concerning the situation of man has been indicated in the previous sections; however, a direct appraisal should put it in a more accurate perspective.

The premise behind Calvin's pessimism is apparently Augustinian or perhaps it could be said to be inherent to Christianity, that is, man's nature is sinful; his supernatural gifts have been stripped from him and his natural gifts have been corrupted by his own actions.¹ On the other hand under this pessimism must lie an optimistic view of what man ought to be, that is what he was before the "Fall" - the image of God.²

But, to attain once more to such an image, if that be possible, man should not look to his own abilities, rather he should look to God. And

blessings of God which are not to be spurned" is not resolved. Naturally, Calvin is apprehensive of giving man's delight in the secular world too much emphasis, for fear it would detract from the central position of God. Hence he binds the one to the other by God's grace. Apparently he cannot sever himself completely from the traditions of self-denial, Christian or Platonic, with its chimerical preference for the so-called spiritual realm over the material. The contention of Charles Trinkaus, that Calvin believed man must use the divine gifts to meet the contingencies of life because they "were themselves part of providence and it became [man's] pious duty to God to exert themselves "prudently" with these gifts, may close the old conflict between free will and fortune, but it does not sufficiently recognize the delight men may have in those gifts and thereby misconstrues Calvin's consideration of the secular world as a matter to be approached with only frugality and discipline. See "Renaissance Problems in Calvin's Theology," Studies in the Renaissance, I (1954), 71. Trinkaus refers to the Institutes, I. xvii. 4, 9 and 11 to support his conclusions which are, no doubt, valid, but perhaps they could be given more breadth.

¹McNeill, Institutes, I, II. 11. 12. p. 270.

²Battenhouse, "The Doctrine of Man in Calvin and in the Renaissance,"

in order to place God in a sovereign position in this respect, Calvin finds it necessary to vitiate man's natural, albeit God given, gifts left over from the "Fall" in favor of a more direct endorsement from God in individual and special cases.

"There is no doubt that Adam, when he fell from his state, was by this defection alienated from God. Therefore, even though we grant that God's image was not totally annihilated and destroyed in him, yet it was so corrupted that whatever remains is frightful deformity.....God's [the] perfect excellence of human nature which shines in Adam before the defection [has been so corrupted that] nothing remains after the ruin except what is confused, mutilated, and disease-ridden."¹

After depicting the worthwhile products of man's natural gifts discussed in the previous section, Calvin reverses his field in order not to let it appear that man is really in himself a center of attention that could detract from the sovereignty of God. Calvin does this in spite of his rationale for accepting the good in man as divinely inspired which would be sufficient justification.

"Man is half alive, they say; therefore he has something safe. Of course he has a mind capable of understanding, even if it may not penetrate to heavenly and spiritual wisdom. He has some judgement of honesty. He has some awareness of divinity, even though he may not attain a true knowledge of God. But what do these qualities amount to? Surely they cannot make out that we are to abandon Augustine's view, approved by the common consent of the schools; the free goods upon which salvation depends were taken away from man

Journal of the History of Ideas, III (October, 1948), 450-462. As Hartenhouse notes the similarities between Calvin's discussion of man's condition before the Fall and Pico della Mirandola's eulogy of man in On the Dignity of Man.

¹McNeill, Institutes, I, I, xv. 4. pp. 189-190.

after the Fall while the natural endowments were corrupted and defiled. Therefore let us hold this an undoubted truth which no stage engines can shake: the mind of man has been so completely estranged from God's righteousness that it conceives, desires, and undertakes, only that which is impious, perverted, foul, and impure, and infamous. The heart is so steeped in the poison of sin, that it can breathe out nothing but a leathern stench. But if some men occasionally make a show of good, their minds nevertheless ever remain enveloped in hypocrisy and deceitful craft, and their hearts bound by inner perversity."¹

So far as man's abilities are surveyed they are denounced as totally inadequate to produce the valuable contributions to secular culture for which Calvin has previously made them responsible. The favor shown secular culture is not shown man himself. The contradiction is obvious; or better Calvin can be criticized for not carrying through his own justification to its logical end and maintaining it throughout the Institutes. But such criticism might overlook the deep commitment Calvin cultivated for an omnipotent and all-pervasive God. That a justification was made at all is significant and especially so because it carried secular culture such a long step out of its religious "limbs." It is unfortunate that the "pagan" men associated with the origins of classical literature and other secular culture were not redeemed along with their works, but this might be asking too much of Calvin.

¹Ibid., II, v. 19, p. 340. This matter of man's ability to penetrate divine wisdom has already been discussed, but another excerpt will show how Calvin eased man out of this area after admitting that he had some ability in it. "Certainly I do not deny that one can read competent and apt statements about God here and there in the philosophers, but these always show a certain giddy imagination. As was stated above, the Lord indeed gave them a slight taste of his divinity that they might not hide their impiety under a cloak of ignorance. And sometimes he impelled them to make certain utterances by the confession of what they would themselves be corrected. But they saw things in such a way that their seeing did not direct them

Perhaps the contradiction was obvious to Calvin, but if so it was retained through three revised and enlarged editions of the Institutio over a twenty year period; a testimony to the reformer's strong feelings on both sides of the problem. As has been seen, trying to solve the inconsistencies obvious in a rationale which credits the worthwhile aspects of secular culture to the natural gifts at one point and special gifts at another; which shows divine favor for the gifts but not to the giver; and which allows man some ability in exploring divine matters on the one hand while limiting him to terrestrial matters on the other, by integrating them within the larger subject of the sovereign God will not render a uniform answer agreeable to Calvin at all times, even though the answer most prominent is apparently capable of so being. The depth of Calvin's pietism probably accounts for part of the inconsistency, but on the other hand the attraction of secular culture was also influential. A justification comprising both was worked out but the vitality of its elements and the strength of Christian tradition prevented their being conformed to a regular fit. However, the religious justification - that God's gifts must be respected, enjoyed or used because they come freely from a divine source, God's grace, and rejection would mean contempt directed at God himself - can legitimately stand somewhat apart from the

to the truth, much less enable them to attain it! They are like a traveler passing through a field at night who in a momentary lightning flash sees far and wide, but the sight vanishes so swiftly that he is plunged again into the darkness of the night before he can take even a step - let alone be directed on his way by its help." ibid., II. ii. 18. p. 277.

entanglement of man's alleged corruption and retain its validity.¹

J. T. McNeill offers a list of references to the various types of divine grace which are mentioned so frequently by Calvin in connection with secular culture, the physical world, etc. He also affirms that receiving divine grace (other than salvation itself) has no bearing on the salvation of the recipient and he implies that a definite doctrine of common or special grace cannot be determined. McNeill, Institutes, I, 276, notes 63 and 64. Sympathetic discussions of the common grace idea can be found in: Abraham Kuiper, Calvinism: Six Stone Lectures (Grand Rapids, 1931) and Herman Havinck's article "Calvin and Common Grace" in Calvin and the Reformation (New York, 1909). Herman Kuiper, Calvin on Common Grace (Grand Rapids, 1930), lists and discusses most of the references to common grace in Calvin's works. Calvin makes it quite clear that evidence of divine grace in man should not be looked on as proof of salvation. McNeill, Institutes, I, II, III, 3-4, pp. 292-293. Nor even among the "elect" should confidence be placed in such evidence. "Those whom the Lord has destined by his mercy for the inheritance of eternal life he leads into possession of it, according to his ordinary dispensation by means of good works. What goes before in the order of dispensation he calls the cause of what comes after. In this way he sometimes derives eternal life from works, not intending it to be ascribed to them; but because he justifies those whom he has chosen in order at last to glorify them (Rom. 8:30), he makes the prior grace, which is a step to that which follows, as it were the cause. But whenever the true cause is to be assigned, he does not enjoin us to take refuge in works but keeps us solely to the contemplation of his mercy.... For, although he loves the gifts which he daily confers upon us, seeing that they proceed from that source, still it is our part to hold to that free acceptance, which alone can support our souls; and so to subordinate to the first cause the gifts of the Holy Spirit he then bestows, that they may nowise detract from it," ibid., III, III, 21, pp. 787-788. In the first instance the divine gifts retain a claim to respect and study even though their vehicle is corrupted and similarly in the case of the "elect" they have value, but it is subordinate to the "first cause" rather than being a part of the "first cause" as they might be. The over-riding influence of an absolute and active God pushes secular culture or man's ability pretty much into the background. However, their validity was noted and described with praise and their features stand out in spite of Calvin's pessimism. Implied are the recognition and justification of the legitimate status of the secular world alongside the religious, or both as part of the same world.

Chapter II

SOME PATRISTIC ANTECEDENTS

Confronting the Christian scholar of the first few centuries A.D. was a problem of cultural assimilation vitally significant to his religion. Secular education and literature held to be so representative of the faults of paganism were necessarily the basis and vehicle of his own expression. He was almost certainly educated in a secular school where the Latin and Greek heritage was imbibed through language and literature. The society he lived in was administered as part of the Latin world. He wrote in Latin or Greek in order to be read by his acquaintances or those he wished to be his acquaintances in the literate world.

At times even the use of Latin and Greek literature in the most utilitarian manner was denied in the Christian community; however, to transform Christianity from a Galilean sect to a religion prepared to "make all nations [Christ's] disciples"¹ meant approaching the world of Plato and Cicero even as had Saint Paul, in a language and manner it could understand. To meet the sophisticated arguments of learned pagans, Christianity had to bring forward rebuttals that would be held valid by them. The Latin and Greek world could only be appealed to in a language and form it could comprehend. Compelled to take on this challenge by the missionary commands of Scripture and Church, the Christian of

¹The Gospel According to Matthew, "The New English Bible; New Testament (Oxford, 1961), 28:19, p. 56.

necessity used the extant literary means for defense and propagation.

The problem plaguing the Christian scholar, committed to what he felt were the ideals of his religion, was the proper attitude he should take to the aesthetic charms and secular virtues of the pagan classics, and to the presence of apparent truth or good counsel in them.¹

Many prominent Christians of these first centuries were educated in secular institutions and reached maturity before being converted to the new religion. An affection, common to scholars, for Latin and Greek literature was not unusual among them. Others, such as Jerome, even though brought up in a Christian family, cultivated a warm appreciation for classical literature. It being the expression of a singularly great cultural heritage, a scholarly and aesthetic attraction to the literature of the Greeks and the Romans is presently understood without too much trouble; but to the Christian community struggling to make itself known in a cosmopolitan political and cultural empire it was a different matter. A strong aesthetic or scholarly empathy for classical literature seemed to impinge on the exclusive commitments required of a Christian. At its worst the study of "pagan" literature meant, to many Christians, pursuing idolatry and license, and at its best it gave only a befogged view of corrupted truth. The whole truth was only to be had from God and the Scriptures. Hence, a love for classical literature was largely a waste of time, time better spent studying Scripture, and it might interfere fatally with a Christian's commitment to his Savior by fostering an

¹For a discussion of the "virtues" see H. Mattingly, "The Roman Virtues," Harvard Theological Review (Cambridge, Mass.), XXX (January, 1937), 103-117.

independent and proud will.

The usefulness of the skills evident in "pagan" literary expression was generally admitted, but this admission was rarely extended to cover a view broader than that of a means to an end, and poor means at that.

Perhaps it could be said that Christianity revolted not so much against the validity of the aesthetic and human intellectual achievement as it did against the self-sufficient attitude of the Graeco-Roman world.¹ Aesthetics and the achievements of men received ample expression in classical literature. To the Christian the "pagan" world had a false foundation, for it was unable to comprehend the real source of truth and its products or elements were very likely spoiled by the association with the erroneous basis. But false base or not, the appeal of classical literature was strong and its study a gratifying and enlarging experience. To some Christian scholars recognizing this appeal was personal weakness and giving in to worldly pleasures, to others it appeared simply to mean picking out useful techniques to apply to Christian preaching, and to still others it was in actuality a preparation for the study of Christianity.

"Abstain from all the heathen books. For what hast thou to do with such foreign discourses, or laws, or false prophets, which subvert the faith of the unstable? For what defect dost thou find in the law of God, that thou shouldst have recourse to those heathenish fables? For if thou hast a mind to read history, thou hast the book of Kings, if books of wisdom or poetry, thou hast those of the Prophets, of Job, and the Proverbs, in which thou wilt find

¹Cochran, Charles Norris, Christianity and Classical Culture (New York, 1944), v-vi.

greater depth of sagacity than in all the heathen poets and sophisters, because these are the words of the Lord, the only wise God. If thou desirest something to sing, thou hast the Psalms; if the origin of things, thou hast Genesis; if laws and statutes, thou hast the glorious law of the Lord God. Do thou therefore utterly abstain from all strange and diabolical books."¹

The "Apostolic Constitutions" are dated toward the end of the fourth century A.D.; however, the first six books were based on a third century work which in turn was contributed to by an early second century "Didache."² In most respects the "constitutions" were regarded favorably and the above exhortation, where known, was possibly a familiar topic among early Christian congregations.³

A more liberal view toward the "strange and diabolical books" was often held by the better educated of the Christians. The first few centuries of Christian development found many converted in their later years, after being thoroughly trained under classical education programs. Justin Martyr was one of several famous Christians who defamed their new association with techniques and ideas appropriate to the secular curriculum.⁴

¹The Apostolical Constitutions, The Ante-Nicene Christian Library, Roberts and Donaldson (eds.), trans. by Donaldson, (Edinburgh, 1870) XVII, book 1, chap. 6, p. 29. The Ante-Nicene Christian Library will hereafter be referred to as ANL followed by the appropriate volume, book, chapter etc. The American reprint of The Ante-Nicene Library will be noted when used.

²The Catholic Encyclopedia (New York, 1910), I, 636.

³Ibid., 636. See also Edwin Hatch, The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages Upon the Christian Church (London, 1914), 131-132.

⁴Origines of Saint Justin Martyr, The Fathers of the Church, A New

"The first prominent defender of the Christian faith against non-Christians and the enemies of the Church," Justin Martyr (c. 100 A.D. - c. 160 A.D.) contributed several works to the then meager stock of Christian literature: two of these works are extant, an "Apology" with an appendix usually referred to as the "Second Apology," and the "Dialogue with Trypho."¹ These, written in Greek, appeared between 153 A.D. and 160 A.D.

Justin's defense of his faith was noteworthy for its comparatively mild attitude toward Greek classical literature. In the "First Apology" he circumvented the claims of classical Greek literature to independent intellectual achievement by claiming whatever truth it might contain was

Translation, Arbesmann et al (eds.), trans. by Falls (New York, 1948), VI, 10. Hereafter The Fathers of the Church will be referred to as FC followed by the appropriate volume, book, chapter etc.

¹Ibid., 9. Paul Oscar Kristaller finds that it is not fully appreciated by present day scholars that a large portion of the Greek patristic literature was first translated into Latin in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Scholars such as Leonardo Bruni and Ambrogio Traversari made accessible more of these writings in Latin to the libraries of the Renaissance than had heretofore been known. Some of this literature had been translated in the patristic period, e.g., Rufinus' and Jerome's work on Origen, and during the twelfth century more was added. This was published again in better translations. In the sixteenth century much of this writing was published in the original. The Latin versions were quite popular. What influence this literature may have had on the theology of the Renaissance is open to conjecture. P. O. Kristaller, The Classics and Renaissance Thought (Cambridge, Mass., 1955), 80-81.

culled from Moses and the Hebrew prophets.¹ The idea, that whatever of truth found in the Greek classics was plagiarized from Moses and the prophets, was manufactured by the Alexandrine Jews prior to the Christian era. It occurs often in the writings of the early patristic fathers, and eventually was carried into the middle ages by Cassiodorus.²

In answer to those who declared that all who lived and died before the coming of Christ were not accountable for their deeds, Justin states, probably more inclusively than he would be ready to defend, "those who have lived reasonably and still do, are Christians, and are fearless and untroubled."³ "Socrates, Heraclitus, and others like them" as well as the "Old Testament" characters such as Abraham were included in this benevolent though loose classification.⁴ In a similar vein, Justin has a few good words for the Stoics, "because they were praiseworthy in their ethics, as were also the poets in some respects, because of the seed of

¹"First Apology," EC, VI, chap. 44, p. 81. "Indeed, Moses is more ancient than all the Greek authors, and everything the philosophers and poets said in speaking about the immortality of the soul, or retribution after death or speculation on celestial matters, or other similar doctrines, they took from the Prophets as the source of information, and from them they have all been able to understand and explain these matters. Thus seeds of truth seem to be among all men, but that they did not grasp their exact meaning is evident from the fact that they contradicted themselves." See also "First Apology," EC, VI, chap. 54, pp. 91-99; chap. 59, p. 97; and chap. 60, pp. 97-98. Also, "Second Apology," EC, VI, chap. 7, p. 159.

²Labriolle, Pierre de, History and Literature of Christianity From Tertullian to Boethius, 19.

³"First Apology," EC, VI, chap. 46, p. 84.

⁴Ibid., 83-84.

reason implanted in all mankind."¹

The "seeds of reason" Justin discovered "in all mankind" was evidence of his attempt to reconcile the old learning with the new religion. He tried to "reconcile faith and reason" according to one authority and "in combining Plato's world of ideas with the word-concept of the Holy Scripture, he became the originator of the philosophical exposition of the Logos."² Although Justin's synthesis has been called into question it was used effectively as the basis for his appraisal of "pagan" literature. Thereto "philosophers and scholars believed in Christ, of whom even Socrates had a vague knowledge (for He was and is the Logos, who is in every person, and who predicted things to come first through the prophets and then in person when he assumed our human nature and feelings and taught us these doctrines)."³ Thus Justin explains the obvious "truths" in classical literature: "Everything that the philosophers and legislators discovered and expressed well, they accomplished through their discovery and contemplation of some part of the Logos. But, since they did not have a full knowledge of the Logos, which is Christ, they often contradicted themselves."⁴

¹"Second Apology," FC, VI, chap. 8, p. 127.

²FC, VI, pp. 17-18. Jules Lebreton, in the Catholic Encyclopedia, says about the Logos concept of Justin, "the relation of the integral Word, i.e. Jesus Christ, and the partial Word disseminated in the world is more specious than profound." Catholic Encyclopedia, VIII, 583.

³"Second Apology," FC, VI, chap. 10, p. 130.

⁴Ibid., 129.

A few chapters further on Justin indicates he was attracted to Christianity because it appeared to embody the best of the Stoics, the poets, the historians, and Plato. "For each of them, seeing through his participation of the seminal Divine Word, what was related to it, spoke very well. But, they who contradicted themselves in important matters evidently did not acquire the unseen wisdom and the indisputable truth. ..Indeed, all writers by means of the ingrafted seed of the Word, which was implanted in them, had a dim glimpse of the truth."¹

Justin defends the Christian position in part by pointing out parallels between it and "paganism," but the new religion gave the more complete teaching. It answered the inconsistencies of the old learning.² Justin was more interested in what he considered was the new philosophical basis for life presented by Christianity, than in justifying an appreciation of a literature which expressed only partial truth.³ Except for an enthusiastic declaration in favor of philosophy, Justin seems quite positive when he says "beyond all doubt, therefore, our teachings are more noble than all human teaching, because Christ, who appeared on earth for our sake, became the whole logos, namely, logos body and soul."⁴

¹*Ibid.*, chap. 13, pp. 133-134. This theme, of "a dim glimpse of the truth" used to explain the valid ideas in classical literature, also appears frequently among the patristic writers. Its status depends a great deal on a particular writer's understanding of the ultimate ideals of Christianity.

²"First Apology," *FC*, VI, chap. 18, p. 53; chap. 20-22, pp. 95-96.

³Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, 222.

⁴"Second Apology," *FC*, VI, chap. 10, p. 129. Philosophy, Justin states, was "sent down to man," as a gift of God presumably. "Philosophy is indeed one's greatest possession and is most precious in the sight of God, to whom, it alone leads us and to whom it united us, and they in

The favor Clement of Alexandria (150 A.D. to c. 211 or 216 A.D.) showed the old learning was preceded in time only by Justin's attitude. Otherwise, the greater quantity and scope of Clement's works give him the primary position. The tenor of Clement's view is caught when he describes the educational process: "by time and toil truth will gleam forth, if a good helper is at hand. For most benefits are supplied from God through men."¹ Clement looks to men for much of his knowledge and those men most qualified are the ancient Greeks.²

As was the current vogue among Christians, Clement here and there discounted the validity of "pagan" learning, but very mildly. He says, "according to some.....Hellenic philosophy....apprehended the truth accidentally, dimly, partially;"³ or that philosophy "sees the truth in a dream" and "gets a feeble grasp of it."⁴ The Greek poets also uttered

truth are holy men who have applied themselves to philosophy." Unfortunately, what philosophy actually was and why it has been given to men was not discovered by classical philosophers. However, Platonic philosophy was more knowledgeable on these points than most. So here, too, Justin finds that a real understanding of even philosophy was to be discovered only through what he considered was the significance of Christ. "Dialogue With Trypho," RC, VI, chap. 2, pp. 149-151.

¹The Writings of Clement of Alexandria, "Miscellanies," trans. by Wilson, ANP (Edinburgh, 1867), IV, book 1, chap. 1, p. 359.

²Clement of Alexandria with an English Translation by G.W. Butcherworth, "Exhortation to the Greeks," Loeb Classical Library (London, 1919), chap. 6, p. 155. The "Exhortation" was written c. 190 A.D.

³"Misc.," ANP, IV, book 1, chap. 16, p. 404.

⁴"Exhortation to the Greeks," Loeb Classical Library, chap. 5, p. 145.

some truth because they "received certain scintillations of the divine word;" however, they revealed their inadequate knowledge by their inability to discover the correct "end."¹

It was obvious that "truth" was not "hidden" from the Greeks, indeed, they even "received" it so far as Clement is concerned.² And they received it from a divine source: "He [i.e. Christ] has dispensed his beneficence both to the Greeks and the Barbarians."³ More specifically, he recounts how Plato, Euripides, Democritus, Xenophon, Cleanthes and Pythagoras had "true" ideas of the Christian God. Their true "sayings" have been recorded by their authors through God's inspiration.⁴

The description of the bestowal of these gifts is interesting, as it appears later in the writings of other Christian moderates. Greek culture and philosophy "is shown to have come down from God to man, not with a definite direction, but in the way in which showers fall down on the good land, and on the dunghill, and on the houses...but the times

¹"Exhortation to the Heathens," ANF, IV, chap. 7, p. 74.

²Ibid., 74.

³"Misc.," ANF (Edinburgh, 1872), III, book 7, chap. 2, p. 410. See also ibid., book 6, chap. 5, p. 327 and book 6, chap. 8, p. 342; "Misc.," ANF, IV, book 1, chap. 2, p. 360 and book 1, chap. 5, p. 366.

⁴"Exhortation to the Greeks," Loeb Classical Library, chap. 6, p. 163. More harmonious to the Greek tradition of individual competence is the statement that "Hellenic philosophy has torn off a fragment of eternal truth...from the theology of the ever living Word." "Misc.," ANF, IV, book 1, chap. 13, p. 390. See also Werner Jaeger, Paideia: the Ideals of Greek Culture (Oxford, 1939), I, xix-xxii and ANF, IV, "The Instructor," I, vi, 33, p. 217.

and places which received [such gifts] created the differences which exist."¹ Granting that this dispensation may have been accidental, Clement says, "it is an accident of divine administration."²

Clement expresses even greater latitude in his concept of Christianity by his statements on the nature of man. Rather than confine the Christian to contemplating only the divinity, he maintains that one should "contemplate human nature, also, and live as the truth leads him."³ Ideas of this type put Clement outside the tradition of the Roman Church characterized by Augustine.

Clement's assimilation of Greek and Christian ideas was made in the face of opposition which he recognized, and yet he felt justified in maintaining his position.

"I am not oblivious of what is babbled by some, who in their ignorance are frightened at every noise, and say that we ought to occupy ourselves with what is most necessary, and what contains the faith; and that we should pass over what is beyond and superfluous, which wears out and detains us to no purpose, in things which conduce nothing to the great end. Others think that philosophy was introduced into life by an evil influence, for the ruin of men, by an evil inventor. But I shall show, throughout the whole of these Stromata, that evil has an evil nature, and can never turn out the producer of aught that is good; indicating that philosophy is in a sense a work of Divine Providence."⁴

¹Misc., "ANF, IV, book 1, chap. 7, p. 374.

²Misc., "ANF, IV, book 1, chap. 19, p. 415.

³Clement of Alexandria: *Christ the Educator*, trans. by Good, EE (New York, 1954), LXVII, book 1, chap. 12, p. 89. This was written c. 190-195 A.D.

⁴Misc., "ANF, IV, book 1, chap. 1, p. 359.

Later he declares "the multitudes are frightened at the Hellenic philosophy as children are at masks, being afraid lest it lead them astray."¹ To this opposition, as well perhaps as to his own convictions, Clement concedes that the "truth" found in the classical literature was taken from the "Hebrew prophets and Moses."² At the same time such a tactic enables him to point out that classical learning must be well done to have approached so closely the divine truth.

Clement did not directly justify the study of classical literature as an end in itself,³ but based its merit on its usefulness as a preparatory study to Christian theology. "For like farmers who irrigate the land beforehand, so we also water with the liquid stream of Greek learning what in it is earthy; so that it may receive the spiritual seed cast into it, and may be capable of easily nourishing it."⁴

¹"Misc.," ANF, XII, book 6, chap. 10, p. 350.

²"Misc.," ANF, XII, book 2, chap. 1, p. 1. See also: ibid., book 2, chap. 5, pp. 12-15; book 2, chap. 18, p. 47; book 5, chap. 14, pp. 274-301; and book 6, chap. 3, pp. 319-323. Also, "Misc.," ANF, IV, book 1, chap. 1, p. 354; book 1, chap. 25, pp. 459-460 and "Exhortation to the Heathen," ANF, IV, chap. 6, pp. 69-72. "Exhortation to the Greeks," Loeb Classical Library, chap. 6, p. 159.

³However the implication is so strong it could not very well be avoided. He goes as far as to say, "as a guide to the full knowledge of God / the best of the classical philosophers' thoughts / are sufficient for every man who is able, even in a small measure to investigate the truth." "Exhortation to the Greeks," Loeb Classical Library, chap. 6, p. 163. Of course, he reconciles this great value in "pagan" literature with divine truth by finding the latter a source of the former.

⁴"Misc.," ANF, IV, book 1, chap. 1, p. 369. Analogies such as this seem fairly clear until one presses the various elements in an attempt to discover their relation to one another. For instance, does individual initiative or does divine inspiration prompt the "watering" of Greek learning, and for that matter it appears that Greek learning contains some sort of natural worth, but distinct delineations are difficult.

This type of justification was extended to cover the important branches of classical learning. To those who demanded "bare faith alone" as preparation for Christianity, Clement replies that they are attempting to gather "fruit" before the "vine," i.e. God, has been properly tended, or understood.¹ In Clement's mind the Scripture called "every secular science or art by the one name wisdom" and this wisdom was used to more readily understand godliness and thereby find "divine knowledge."² In fact this wisdom itself is a manifestation of God.³

Philosophy was the keystone of the preparatory study. For "philosophy is characterized by investigation into truth and the nature of things (this is the truth of which the Lord himself said 'I am the truth')."⁴ The unique value of philosophy was sketched broader by another statement.

"Before the advent of the Lord, philosophy was necessary to the Greeks for righteousness. And now it becomes conducive to piety; being a kind of preparatory training to those who attain to faith through demonstration. 'For thy foot,' it is said, 'will not stumble, if thou refer what is good, whether belonging to the Greeks or to us, to Providence.' For God is the cause of all

¹ Misc., ANF, IV, book 1, chap. 9, p. 379. The intellectual nature of this understanding of God was evidently more efficacious than faith or will.

² Ibid., chap. 1, p. 358; book 1, chap. 4, pp. 365-366; book 1, chap. 14, p. 391. For Scriptural sources see: "Exodus," 31:2-6; "Colossians," 1:28; "Proverbs," 2.

³ Ibid., book 1, chap. 4, p. 365.

⁴ Ibid., book 1, chap. 6, pp. 369-370; book 1, chap. 20, p. 419.

good things; but of some primarily, as of the Old and the New Testament; and of others by consequence, as philosophy. Perchance, too, philosophy was given to the Greeks directly and primarily, till the Lord should call the Greeks. For this was a schoolmaster to bring 'the Hellenic mind,' as the law, the Hebrews, 'to Christ.' Philosophy, therefore, was a preparation, paving the way for him who is perfected in Christ.¹

Any single philosophy was inadequate for Christian use because any particular sect could "only partially" understand the truth.² By philosophy, Clement did "not mean the Stoics, or the Platonists, or the Epicurean, or the Aristotelian, but whatever has been well said by each of these sects, which teach righteousness along with piety - this eclectic whole I call philosophy."³ Such a philosophy was "strictly systematic wisdom."⁴

In his attempt to unite the new religion with the Greek learning Clement seems to have no small difficulty restraining himself from giving the latter a disproportionate weight. He finally settles on the compromise of one being preparatory to the other; however, if the question were asked, does this mean learning was a necessary step? he would reply, with a little effort, in the negative. But he would try to preserve the

¹Misc., "ANF, IV, book 1, chap. 9, p. 366. Here again the intellectual, "reasonable" apprehension of God is given more weight than an act of faith.

²Misc., "ANF, III, book 6, chap. 7, pp. 335-336.

³Misc., "ANF, IV, book 1, chap. 7, pp. 374-375. In a later book Clement excludes the Epicurean philosophy; it "exists among the Greeks as opurious fruits of the divinely bestowed husbandry."

⁴Misc., "ANF, III, book 6, chap. 9, p. 342.

⁴Misc., "ANF, III, book 6, chap. 7, p. 335. See also "Misc., "ANF, IV, book 1, chap. 1, pp. 353, 358; book 1, chap. 9, p. 369; book 1, chap. 13, p. 389. The last reference (Misc., "book 1, chap. 13, p. 389)

reputation of classical learning by declaring it helpful to the Christian (especially the scholarly minded). The Greek tradition "equips" the Christian to demonstrate his cause more effectively, particularly to educated "pagans."¹ Clement's explanation of "Proverbs" 5, indicates that although he felt obliged to reserve the primary position to the ideals of Christianity, the content of classical literature was an asset. "He [i.e. God] admonishes us to use indeed, but not to linger and spend time with secular culture."² Learning enables one to "comprehend the things which are declared in the faith;" however, "a man can be a believer without learning," albeit a less steadfast believer.³ The Christian theme was retained on the issue, "men must then be saved by learning the truth through Christ, even if they attain philosophy."⁴

states that "all philosophies in my opinion are illuminated by the dawn of light [i.e. Christ]."⁵

¹ Misc., "ANR, IV, book 1, chap. 2, p. 360.

² *Ibid.*, book 1, chap. 5, p. 367.

³ *Ibid.*, book 1, chap. 16, p. 322; book 1, chap. 19, p. 416.

⁴ Misc., "ANR, III, book 5, chap. 13, p. 273. See also Henry Osborne Taylor, Classical Heritage of the Middle Ages (New York, 1903), 113. Contrast the above with this, "by reflection [i.e. in a mirror - see I Corinthians 13:12] and direct vision, those among the Greeks who have philosophized accurately, see God;" but, "I do not think philosophy directly declares the Word, although in many instances philosophy attempts and persuasively teaches us probable arguments; but it assails the [heretical] sects." Misc., "ANR, IV, book 1, chap. 19, pp. 415-416. Classical philosophy has a firm hold on Clement's mind, a hold which the new religion cannot completely uproot: even though he recognizes that it might seek to do so.

Clement's successor as head of the Catechetical School of Alexandria, Origen (c. 185 or 186 A.D. to 234 or 255 A.D.) shared his agreeable attitude toward classical learning. Origen encouraged the study of the classics in order that the student might build a strong background for Christianity.¹ The latter was the apex of philosophy, giving it its purpose, point of view, and final end.² In addition the other secular arts and sciences were "fellow-helpers to Christianity," assisting in explaining Scriptures.³ To the Christian's use of classical learning, Origen applied the phrase "spoiling the Egyptians" referring to the command given Moses prior to the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt.⁴ Origen appears to be the first Christian scholar using this Scriptural reference to justify the study of classical literature. His eclecticism in this respect was quite similar to that of Clement; however, Origen was somewhat less enthusiastic about the old learning and made it more explicitly only a preparation to Christianity.⁵

¹Leistner, H.L.G., Christianity and Pagan Culture (Ithaca, 1951), 60-61.

²The Writings of Origen, "Origen to Gregory," trans. by Crombie, ANF (Edinburgh, 1878), X, 388.

³Ibid., 388.

⁴Ibid., 388.

⁵Elispermann, Gerald Leo, The Attitude of the Early Christian Latin Writers Toward Pagan Literature and Learning (Washington, 1949), 12.

Only a few decades after Justin's death and in the Latin West, Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus (c. 160 A.D. to c. 225 A.D.) descended on classical literature with a vehemence departing widely from the former's method of denoting "points of contact" between Christianity and the old "pagan learning."¹ Tertullian would discount the effectiveness of such a technique because even that in pagan literature "which is a witness to Christianity is rejected by pagans."² Classical literature, deprived of even this validity, found little comfort in Tertullian's attitude. He was disgusted with the pretension and affected sophistication of Latin letters. An eloquent plea for simplicity was his alternative.

"I call thee not as when, fashioned in schools, trained in libraries, fed in Attic academies and porticoes, thou boldest wisdom. I address thee simple, rude, uncultured and untaught, such as they be at very thing of the road, the street, the work-shop, wholly....I demand of thee the things thou bringest with thee into man, which thou knowest either from thyself, or from thine author, whoever he may be."³

¹Catholic Encyclopedia, VIII, 983.

²Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian, "The Soul's Testimony," Coxe (ed.), trans. by Thelwall, ANE (New York, 1925), III, chap. 1, p. 175. This edition is a "new impression" of the Edinburgh edition.

³Ibid., 175-176. "Unquestionably the soul existed before letters, the speech before books, and ideas before the writing of them, and man himself before the poet and philosopher. It is then to be believed, that before literature and its publication no utterances of the sort we have pointed out came from the lips of man? Ibid., chap. 5, p. 178. See also "The Chaplet," chap. 8, p. 98.

Adherence to "plain realities" rather than "tricks of art" was admonished in a passage similar to that previously quoted from the "Apostolic Constitutions."¹ What similarity could there be, Tertullian exclaims, "between the disciples of Greece, and of heaven? between the man whose object is fame, and whose object life? between the talker and the doer... between the one who corrupts the truth and one who restores and teaches it?"² Tertullian quotes the "Wisdom of Solomon" to add Scriptural validity to his stand "the Lord should be sought in ~~simplicity of heart.~~"³

It comes as no surprise when Tertullian states that "there is nothing in heathen writers which a Christian approves."⁴ Although not approving there are concessions made to the obvious. As was mentioned, he acknowledged points in classical literature which were a "witness to Christianity." But this need not mean that truth belonged to the

¹"The Shows," ANF, III, chap. 29, p. 91.

²"The Apology," ANF, III, chap. 46, p. 61. See also "On Prescription Against Heretics," ANF, III, chap. 7, p. 246.

³"On Prescription Against Heretics," ANF, III, chap. 7, p. 246. Tertullian has denounced, here, the heretical dangers immanent in applying secular philosophy to Christianity, rather than denouncing philosophy *per se* (however he has disclaimed the whole of philosophy in other passages, e.g. "The Apology," chap. 51), but this amplifies the emphasis on the necessarily unadorned life of the Christian which was central to Tertullian's attitude and personality.

⁴"The Soule Testimony," ANF, III, chap. 1, p. 195.

pegan, only that they lifted it from the "Scriptures of God" which were "much more ancient than any secular literature."¹ He can scarcely allow the classical philosophers to comprehend even this second-hand knowledge, for it must have been gained "by some happy chance" or "through blind luck alone."²

Standing incongruously is a brief statement, with no qualification, made in "A Treatise on the Soul." Here Tertullian says that the soul is "sharpened by learned pursuits, by the sciences, the arts, by experimental knowledge, business habits and studies; it is blunted by ignorance, idle habits, inactivity, lust, inexperience, listlessness, and vicious pursuits."³ This is a fairly decent justification of the use of classical literature, but it also contradicts what he has declared in most of his other works and what he indicates of his own temperament. Possibly this direct statement was something of a slip of the pen. In other places, Tertullian concedes the "necessity of literary erudition," but only grudgingly.⁴ Learning literature was "allowable for believers" as dictated by necessity, however, teaching literature was prohibited because of the

¹Ibid., chap. 5, p. 178.

²"A Treatise on the Soul," ANF, III, chap. 2, p. 162.

³Ibid., chap. 20, p. 201.

⁴"On Idolatry," ANF, III, chap. 10, p. 66. "Let us reflect that partly it cannot be admitted, partly cannot be avoided."

greater intensity of application and commitment to the subject.¹ The necessity that caused a Christian to resort to "pagan" expression was the demands of the "business and commerce of life" and of "performing our devotion to God."² Such a retreat before necessity is quite different in spirit than his statement concerning the use of literature to "sharpen the soul," but it is more apt to Tertullian's general attitude.

Evidently Tertullian knew precisely that which he criticized. His personal temperament, no doubt, colored his thoughts, but he understood clearly the dispute between the secular virtues consecrated in the Roman tradition, and the new religion, Christianity.³ His declarations on the cleavage between the two were a "partial" statement rather than a "mis-statement of the Christian position."⁴

For good reasons Lactantius (c. 250 A.D. to c. 317 A.D.), "the Christian Cicero," found far more admirers at the beginning of the Renaissance than in Christian antiquity.⁵ His writing style was above

¹Ibid., 66.

²"The Chaplet," ANR, III, chap. 8, p. 97.

³Cochran, Christianity and Classical Culture, 113, 130, 214, and 227. Tertullian's declarations indicate more of the spirit of opposition to imperial persecution and heretical movements within the church than the "normal" attitude of the Christian which possibly was reflected in his few liberal statements. His severe asceticism dominated this opposition and colored it more harshly than would have been the case of a less narrowly conservative Roman. See Labriolle, History and Literature of Latin Christianity, 79-81; Taylor, Classical Heritage of the Middle Ages, 110.

⁴Cochran, Christianity and Classical Culture, 224, 224n. 1.

⁵The title was given to him by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola; Labriolle, History and Literature of Latin Christianity, 192 n., 219. Leonardo Bruni said that "Lactantius, by common consent [was] the finest

reproach; however, his theology was less noteworthy. Jerome complains that although "Lactantius has a fine flow of eloquence worthy of Tully" he would be far more valuable had he been "as ready to teach our doctrine as he was to pull down those of others."¹ To the same effect Edward Gibbon cites a reference allowing Lactantius a much better training in rhetoric than theology.² In fact, the "brand of Christianity he expounds is relatively innocuous," but how he expressed it was a delight to Renaissance ears.³

Lactantius' intent as a Christian apologist was to persuade educated men that Christianity was a significant religion, worthy of their attention.⁴ Secondly, it seems there was a desire to write a De Officiis which would embrace both "pagan" and Christian elements in the new empire of Constantine.⁵ Hence, there is a conciliatory attitude toward

stylist of the post classical period." William Harrison Woodward, Vittorino Da Feltrre and Other Humanist Educators (Cambridge, 1897), 124-125; see also pp. 129-130 and 151-152.

¹St. Jerome: Letters and Select Works, A Select Library of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Church, Second Series, Schaff and Wace (eds.), trans. by Freemantle, Lewis, Martey, (Oxford, 1893), VI, letter 58, paragraph 10, p. 122. Hereafter, this series will be referred to as NPNFCS.

²Gibbon, Edward, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (New York, ND), chap. 20, note 57. See also Taylor, Classical Heritage, 216, note 2; Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 191, 196; Labriolle, History and Literature of Latin Christianity, 207.

³Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 196.

⁴Labriolle, History and Literature of Latin Christianity, 9.

⁵Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 191.

classical learning evident in his writings.

"For...shall we so teach as though we were delivering the first elements of virtue, which would be an endless task, but as though we had undertaken the instruction of him, who, with them, appears to be already perfect. For while their precepts remain which they are accustomed to give correctly, with a view to uprightness, we will add to them things which were unknown to them, for the completion and consummation of righteousness which they do not possess."¹

Lactantius' softening of the fall of the old gods derives thereof.

"Why then, some one will say, were they believed to be gods? Doubtless because they were very great and powerful beings; and since, on account of the merits of their virtues, of offices, or the arts which they discovered, they were beloved by those over whom they had ruled, they were consecrated to lasting memory. And if anyone doubts this, let him consider their exploits and deeds, the whole of which both ancient poets and historians have handed down."²

Of the conversion of "paganism" by Christianity Lactantius declares that moderation must be used, "there is no occasion for violence and injury, for religion cannot be imposed by force; the matter must be carried on by words rather than by blows, that the will may be affected."³

An obliging attitude toward the old tradition caused Lactantius to note what he felt was "useful" and "true" in the classics. He adopted the often used technique of citing pagan authors as witness to the truth of Christian doctrine.⁴ "Pagan" myths were interpreted to fortify major aspects of Christian doctrine, and "pagan" oracles were referred to as

¹Lucius Caecilius Firmianus Lactantius, "The Divine Institutes," trans. by Fletcher, *ANF* (New York, 1925), VII, book 6, chap. 2, p. 164.

²*Ibid.*, book 1, chap. 8, p. 8.

³*Ibid.*, book 5, chap. 20, p. 156.

⁴*Ibid.*, book 1, chap. 5, p. 13. "For the demonstration of the truth, let us cite as witness those very persons who they [the "pagans"]

prophesying Scriptural occurrences.¹

The effort here was strained or shallow, probably the latter. In another statement along this line Lactantius criticizes the manner used by a prominent Christian to effect a conversion without appealing to the subject's "pagan" heritage.

"For, since he [Cyprian] was contending against a man who was ignorant of the truth, he ought for a while to have laid aside divine readings, and to have formed from the beginning this man as one who was altogether ignorant, and to have shown to him by degrees the beginnings of light, that he might not be dazzled, the whole of its brightness being presented to him. For as an infant is unable, on account of the tenderness of its stomach, to receive the nourishment of solid and strong foods, but is supported by liquid and soft milk, until, its strength being confirmed, it can feed on stronger nourishment; so also it was befitting that this man, because he was not yet capable of receiving divine things, should be presented with human testimonies - that is, of philosophers and historians - in order that he might especially be refuted by his own authorities."²

Also for purposes of persuasion, the secular art of rhetoric was useful to Christianity.

"Although truth may be defended without eloquence, as it has often been defended by many, yet it needs to be explained, and in a measure discussed, with distinctness and eloquence of speech, in order that it may flow with greater power into the minds of man, being both provided with its own force and adorned with the brilliancy of speech."³

are accustomed to make use of against us." See also *ibid.*, book 5, chap. 12, p. 148; book 6, chap. 8, p. 170.

¹*Ibid.*, book 6, chap. 5, pp. 140-141; book 4, chap. 18, p. 121.

²*Ibid.*, book 5, chap. 4, p. 140.

³*Ibid.*, preface to book 1, pp. 9-10. This argument with only slightly

Lactantius espoused an eclecticism that sounds like that of Clement of Alexandria, but he has less foundation for such a policy. He found bits of truth in most philosophies and in literature on other subjects. If these particles were reduced to a whole they "assuredly would not disagree with us [i.e., with Christian doctrine]."¹ His comments are interesting in this respect for the phrasing he uses to describe the inability of the "pagan" to illustrate truth accurately, and for his omission of an adequate discussion of the source of this truth. Clement indicates truth came from God, Lactantius fails to bring the matter up directly.

The poets did not fabricate their tales, but "obscured by oblique fashioning" that which was true.² They "partly corrupted the secrets

less candor will be repeated by Augustine, a better theologian than Lactantius. However, they both seem to realize that they are treading on delicate ground when they say "divine truth" benefits in expression from the fruits of a "pagan" developed art; or more basically that mundane and finite humans can make "infinite truth" more "true" (they would probably say more acceptable to shortsighted men.) Among the more discerning humanists of the Renaissance this problem continued to cause trouble. See Quirinus Breen, "Giovanni Pico Della Mirandole on the Conflict of Philosophy and Rhetoric," Journal of the History of Ideas, XII (June, 1952), 384-412. Pico takes Lactantius to task for his inability to expound Christianity as well as he could turn a phrase, much the same as had Jerome. Augustine's use of eloquence was not criticized, ibid., 399.

¹"Divine Institutes," ANF, VII, book 7, chap. 7, p. 204.

²Ibid., book 7, chap. 22, p. 217.

of the truth" or "the opinion being scattered through different mouths and various discourses changed the truth."¹ The implication was, of course, that "truth" existed in some ancient time and was befuddled as it passed down through the generations.

Philosophers, too, comprehended something of the truth.

"But different persons brought forward all these things, and in different ways, not connecting the cause of things, nor the consequences, nor the reasons, so that they might join together and complete that main point which comprises the whole. But it is easy to show that almost the whole truth has been divided by philosophers and sects. For we do not overthrow philosophy, as the Academics are accustomed to do, which is rather to calumniate and mock; but we show that no sect was so much out of the way, and no philosopher so vain, as not to see something of the truth."²

Because of this perception the philosophers should be treated with "indulgence;" however, they "fell upon the truth....by accident" or "by chance" and "so act that it is refuted by others" or "being destitute of divine knowledge, they neither brought forward true arguments by which they might overcome, nor evidence by which they might convince."³ It appears philosophy was in the end rejected because it "could not speak truly," not having acquired "the truth from Him in whose power it was."⁴ But, though secondary, secular knowledge was helpful and even indispensable, if the following analogy of Lactantius can bear weight.

¹Ibid., 217.

²Ibid., book 7, chap. 7, p. 204.

³Ibid., book 3, chap. 13, p. 81; book 3, chap. 18, p. 88; book 3, chap. 20, p. 91.

⁴Ibid., book 3, chap. 11, p. 70.

"Therefore, that the body may be alive, and capable of sensation, both the knowledge of God is necessary, as it were the head, and all the virtues, as it were the body. Thus there will exist a perfect and living man; but however, the whole substance is in the head; and although this cannot exist in the absence of all, it may exist in the absence of some. And it will be an imperfect and faulty animal, yet it will be alive, as he who knows God and yet sins in some respect. For God pardons sin. And thus it is possible to live without a head. This is the reason why the philosophers, though they may be naturally good, yet have no knowledge and no intelligence. All their learning and virtue is without a head, because they are ignorant of God, who is the Head of virtue and knowledge; and he who is ignorant of Him, though he may see, is blind; though he may hear, is deaf; though he may speak, is dumb."¹

In order to cultivate these virtues, which are not completely expendable, Lactantius points to the wisdom in classical literature. Even "pernicious" as it were and able to "ensnare unwary souls by the sweetness of discourse," a sweetness which "concealed poison," if "connected" with Christianity that "vain [pagan] system" would not "injure the studious" but "may even by of the greatest profit, if he who has learned it should be more instructed in virtues and wiser in truth."² Ambiguous as this latter statement may be, it sanctifies the use of classical literature, shorn of its adverse elements by the association with Christianity, to train the Christian in the traditional secular virtues familiar to the classical reader and evidently not seen as a threat by Lactantius. He undoubtedly appreciated the ultimate spirit of Christianity, but its roots were not as deeply grown in him as the old learning.

¹*Ibid.*, book 6, chap. 9, pp. 171-172.

²*Ibid.*, book 5, chap. 1, p. 136.

A clearer defense of the eclectic use of "pagan" literature was made earlier by the Alexandrians, Clement and Origen. This trend continued in the Greek Christian world implemented by the "three Cappadocians," Basil (330 A.D. to 379 A.D.), Gregory of Nyssa († to c. 395 A.D.) and Gregory of Nazianzen (c. 325 A.D. to c. 389 A.D.). In their writings and those of subsequent Christian scholars the subordination of the old learning to a particular status becomes firmer and somewhat more consistent, at least on the surface. The subordination involves a paradox as it assures classical literature a place, if the less, within the framework of the new religion; not always a firm place it must be admitted, and theoretically only a place of utility. Approval of the aesthetic qualities in classical literature was often given but usually overridden as a vital factor in the final judgment of an author, although not always convincingly. The educational aims of classical literature were readily recognized and in part denounced. Scientific knowledge, technical skills, and matters of form and style recognized as useful to the Christian were adopted and taught via the "pagan" literature. But this idea that classical literature could educate men to realize their "moral potentialities," that it could reveal "a broad and compelling ideal of humanity," that it was "rooted in the depths of the human soul," found fewer supporters among Christians.¹

Many felt only Christianity could claim to meet such goals; that

¹See Warner Jaeger, Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture, I, 34-56.

actually classical literature could only benefit a student relative to the amount of divine truth it had somehow managed to stumble upon, perhaps by the grace of God. Since the sum of such truth was small, and even it corrupted by those who lacked the revelation of Christianity, and a great deal of the literature seemed licentious, a Christian was better off eschewing the whole lot for the complete and eternal truth of the Scriptures and communion with God himself, the source of all things. Indeed, empathy with the spirit of classical literature could lead one to a feeling of independent human achievement disastrous to his relations with God.

Basil's attitude toward classical literature was directly presented in his "Address to Young Men, on How They Might Derive Benefit From Greek Literature." As was Lactantius' work, this "Address" was received most appreciatively by the Renaissance.¹ There again, the fact that the treatise was here and there shallow, with a minimum of philosophic or

¹The "Address" was "the first Greek work translated by Leonardo Bruni in the Renaissance." He dedicated it to Coluccio Salutati. It was printed first at Venice, 1470-1471, and by 1500 A.D. nineteen or more editions of the translation were printed in various cities: Venice, Parma, Buda, Milan, Nuremberg (two editions), Ulm, Mainz, Leipzig (five editions), Burgos (three editions), Zamora, Salamanca, and Pamplona. The text was "regularly" used at the University of Paris in the early 1500's. Saint Basil: The Letters and Address to Young Men on Reading Greek Literature (London, 1934), IV, 371-373. Aeneas Sylvius referred to Basil's address in his De Liberos Educatione (written in 1449) as "a clear guide" to using classical literature. Other works of Basil were used in the Renaissance humanists' retort to the Dominican order's protests against the revival of classical learning. William Harrison Woodward, Vittorino Da Feltria and other Humanist Educators, 120, note 4, 150.

theological justification, was not especially needed.¹ Its significance lay in its being a statement favorable to classical literature from a respected Christian authority.

Early in the "Address" Basil sounds a note quite similar to Clement's use of the classics as studies preparatory to Christianity.

"So we also must consider that a contest, the greatest of all contests, lies before us, for which we must do all things, and, in preparation for it, must strive to the best of our power, and must associate with poets and writers of prose and orators and with all men from whom there is any prospect of benefit with reference to the care of our soul. Therefore, just as dyers first prepare by certain treatments whatever material is to receive the dye, and then apply the colour, whether it be purple or some other hue, so we also in the same manner must first, if the glory of the good is to abide with us indelible for all time, be instructed by these outside means, and then shall understand the sacred and mystical teachings; and like those who have become accustomed to seeing the reflection of the sun in water, so we shall then direct our eyes to the light itself."²

"Wisdom drawn from the outside," as Basil denotes knowledge gleaned from pagan literature, buttresses Christian truth and has "an aspect not devoid of beauty."³ Quite readily he ascribes "usefulness" to pagan

¹ Saint Basil: The Letters and Address to Young Men on Reading Greek Literature, IV, 405-407.

² Ibid., chap. 2, p. 365.

³ Ibid., chap. 2-3, pp. 339-337. The implication of this classification of wisdom could be significant, but it seems more appropriate that Basil, who was probably aware of Clement's ideas, was not attempting to present a formal epistemology, but rather a light treatment of the subject at hand.

learning; however, the problem, as he saw it, was the proper method of participating in this usefulness. Thus one,

"ought not to give attention to all they [i.e., Greek poets] write without exception; but whenever they recount for you the deeds or words of good men, you ought to cherish and emulate these and try to be as far as possible like them; but when they treat of wicked men, you ought to avoid such imitation, stopping your ears no less than Odysseus did, according to what these same poets say, when he avoided the songs of the Sirens. For familiarity with evil words is, so it were, a road leading to evil deeds. On this account, then, the soul must be watched over with all vigilance, lest through the pleasure the poets' words give us may unwittingly accept something of the same evil sort, like those who take poisons along with honey."¹

Dealing in turn with "pagan" prose writers, Basil uses a natural and graphic commonplace to describe the correct Christian treatment of their literature. As he says,

"neither approach all flowers equally, nor in truth do they attempt to carry off entire those upon which they alight, but taking only so much of them as is suitable for their work, they suffer the rest to go unharmed. So ourselves, too, if we are wise, having appropriated from this literature what is suitable to us and akin to the truth, will pass over the remainder. And just as in plucking the bloom from a rose-bud we avoid the thorns, so also in garnering from such writings whatever is useful, let us guard ourselves against what is harmful."²

Basil's description of the proper attitude to take toward both "pagan" poetry and prose was easier taught than practiced.

Speaking more strongly once the initial rationalization was made,

¹Ibid., chap. 4, pp. 382-389.

²Ibid., chap. 4, pp. 391-399.

Basil says, "we ought especially to apply ourselves to such literature" as "has been uttered in praise of virtue by poets...historians, and... philosophers."¹ To these pagan writers "who have some reputation for wisdom" and who "discoursed in their works in praise of virtue, to these men we must hearken and we must try to show forth their words in our lives."² The latter statement is surprising for its generous standards of selection; however, more unusual is the emphatic "we must hearken."

An ambivalent attitude toward the same proposition was expressed toward the end of the "Address." Basil declares that "although we Christians shall doubtless learn all these things more thoroughly in our own literature," the reader will profit from the study of the instances from classical literature presented in the "Address;" for "'adding little to little' holds good no more for increment of money than it does for increment in respect of knowledge of any kind whatever."³ In Basil's mind it behooved the Christian to fortify "virtue" with examples from "pagan" sources or whatever. The question of the primacy of the Scriptures was hardly discussed, although if it had been the outcome probably would not have been unorthodox. The significant point being that "classical" literature was highly valuable to Christian education and even immortality

¹Ibid., chap. 5, p. 393.

²Ibid., chap. 6, p. 399.

³Ibid., chap. 10, p. 429.

whether it could be justified or not: "It is for this eternity [i.e. eternal life in heaven] that I would exhort you to acquire travel supplies [i.e. "virtua"] leaving no stone unturned, as the proverb has it, wherever any benefit towards that end is likely to accrue to you."¹ Basil's view stated here was broader perhaps than would have been accepted generally until much later.

Gregory of Nyssa held views toward the old learning similar to those of Basil, his older brother. Many of his ideas also harken back to the Alexandrians, especially Origen. Christian eclecticism was admonished with an emphasis as strong as Basil's. A "discreet use" of secular learning was not only helpful, but became an obligation because the "best" of "pagan" philosophy was "borrowed" from the "Old Testament" sources; hence, using it would be only "reclaiming" divine knowledge from its plagiarizers.² This justification employed the Scriptural instance of "spoiling the Egyptians" and emphasized that a command was involved, a command to redeem the "treasure" from the "pagans" so it could "serve a better purpose."³

"For there is, indeed, something in pagan learning which is worthy of being united to us for the purpose of engendering virtue. It must not be rejected. For the philosophy of both ethics and of nature may well become consort, friend, and life companion of

¹Ibid., chap. 10, p. 439.

²Heiswurm, Alcuis A., The Nature of Human Knowledge According to Saint Gregory of Nyssa (Washington, 1952), 17, 136. There will be a new and no doubt valuable work published on Gregory in the near future by Werner Jaeger; it was completed shortly before he died.

³Ibid., 18.

the higher life, if only that which is born of her bring with itself nothing of the foreign stain."¹

Again Gregory chose to be emphatic: classical literature "must not be rejected." The emphasis, however, was out of place. It seems as if the original source, i.e. the Scriptures from which the truth was plagiarized, could more readily give the Christian the necessary truth; if that truth, as it appeared in classical learning, could only be "redeemed by" searching for the "best" in that literature, one would think a lot of trouble and needless care were to be expended for something quite close at hand. Obviously Gregory recognized an additional value in "pagan" literature than that found in the Scriptures, but he could only partially justify such a view with the "spoil the Egyptians" slogan.

Basil's close friend, Gregory of Nazianzum, was more critical of classical literature. Education in a Christian manner, i.e. via the Scriptures, was more advantageous because it avoided the "rhetorical ornament and glory" of secular education and it contemplated more worthwhile objects; however, the secular world was not to be rejected for it was

¹Ibid., 18. Less pronounced, but evident nonetheless was Gregory's praise of Basil for being an accomplished student of the Greek classics. However, the problem of reconciliation remains before him. He declares that while Basil was "nourished by pagan learning, he always clung to the bosom of the Church, strengthening and maturing his soul with teachings therefrom." Gregory mitigates this dichotomy of education by dedicating the use of both Scriptural and "profane" wisdom to the Christian God. But the dichotomy remains. See Sister James Aloysius Stein, Encenium of Saint Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa on his Brother, Saint Basil Archbishop of of Cappadocian Caesarea (Washington, 1928), 5, 43.

God-created.¹ Gregory points to the physical world when making this last point rather than the intellectual, but then he goes on to a more expansive statement.

"As we know that neither fire, nor food, nor iron, nor any other of the elements, is of itself more useful, or most harmful, except according to the will of those who use it; and as we have compounded healthful drugs from certain of the reptiles; so from secular literature we have received principles of enquiry and speculation, while we have rejected their idolatry, terror, and pit of destruction. Nay, even these have aided us in our religion, by our perception of the contrast between what is worse and what is better, and by gaining strength for our doctrine from the weakness of theirs. We must not then dishonour education, because some men are pleased to do so, but rather suppose such men to be boorish and uneducated, desiring all men to be as they themselves are, in order to hide themselves in the general, and escape the detection of their want of culture."²

The equation of physical and intellectual materials oversimplifies the relation between the student and his object of study or the Christian and secular literature; however, placing literature in such a neutral status enables one to speak confidently of plucking out its useful aspects. Whether this can actually be done without absorbing something more intangible, though quite fundamental, was an issue skirted rather than answered.

In the fourth century world of Latin letters, Christian scholars reached a rationalization of the use of classical literature very much like that of the Greek Christians, although less appreciative of the

¹St. Gregory of Nazianzen, Select Orations and Letters, "The Panegyric on St. Basil," trans. by Brown and Swallow, MFMCS (Oxford, 1894), VIII, oration XLIII, 398.

²Ibid., 398-399.

educational aspects and tending toward the acceptance of the aesthetic or more likely the utilitarian aspects of this literature. One of the most accomplished Latin (and later Greek and Hebrew) scholars, Jerome (c. 348 A.D. to 420 A.D.) was well aware of the charms of "pagan" literature and found the rationalization of utility appropriate; however, it was not sufficiently expansive to enclose his actual attraction to classical works.¹ Counter to this attraction ran a strong personal bent for solitude reinforced by the contemporary Christian ideals of simplicity and asceticism which led to a feeling that classical culture and Christianity were not harmonious in the same individual.² Jerome was unable to reconcile these two sides of his character, although he

¹"Unlike so many other champions of the old church, he was not a convert; he was a Christian from the very beginning, but he was brought up in the atmosphere of the classical heritage, still cherished and dominant in school education, and it impregnated his mind too deeply ever to be obliterated. It made him an antique rhetor with all the merits and faults, mental and literary, which rhetorical training implies: the brilliancy and fluency of style, the power of invention, the subtlety of mind, the ready wit and recklessness of a thorough controversialist, the tendency to superficial ostentation and self-conceited overbearingness. But it filled him also with a deeply rooted love not only of literary form but also of the spirit of classical literature." Harold Begendahl, Latin Fathers and the Classics (Gotaborg, 1936), 93-94.

²Labriolle, History and Literature of Latin Christianity, 333, 338-339. Begendahl, Latin Fathers and the Classics, 310-311, 313, 320, 323, 327, 328.

discoursed for either side at different times.

In 383 A.D. Jerome discussed the question of using "pagan" literature in a letter to Pope Damasus.¹ He described classical literature as being empty of truth, although it had an exterior beauty. If it were used by a Christian he must purge it of its alien characteristics. Even so its use was open to censure for it could lead astray a weaker man, who unaware it had somehow been cleansed might observe a Christian participating in "pagan" learning.

A year later Jerome wrote a letter of guidance to a Roman lady whom he was giving spiritual advice. Part of the letter relates a dream Jerome experienced about 374 A.D. While living in the Chalcis desert he was tormented by his preference for the beauty of classical Latinity over the harsh style of the Biblical prophets. At length he was stricken with illness. In delirium he found himself in the midst of a dream.

"Suddenly I was caught up in the spirit and dragged before the Judge's judgment seat: and here the light was so radiant, that I flung myself upon the ground and did not dare to look up. I was asked to state my condition and replied that I was a Christian. But He who presided said: 'Thou liest; thou art a Ciceronian, not a Christian.' 'For where thy treasure is there will thy heart be also.' Straightway I became dumb and amid the stroke of the whip - for He had ordered me to be scourged - I was even more bitterly tortured by the fire of conscience, considering with myself the verse: 'In the grave who shall give thee thanks?' Yet for all that I began to cry out to bewail myself, saying: 'Have mercy upon me, O Lord, have mercy upon me'; and even amid the noise of the lash my voice made itself heard. At last the bystanders fell at the knees of Him who presided, and prayed Him to pardon my youth and give me opportunity to repent of my error, on the understanding that the extreme of tortures should be

¹Ibid., letter 21, pp. 108-109, 319-320.

inflicted on me if ever I read again the works of Gentile authors. In the stress of that dread hour I should have been willing to make even larger promises, and taking oath I called upon His name: 'O Lord, if ever again I possess worldly books or read them, I have denied thee.' After swearing this oath I was dismissed, and returned to the upper world. There to the surprise of all I opened my eyes again, and they were so drenched with tears, that my distress convinced even the incredulous."¹

In the preface to the third book of a commentary on "Galatians" written a few years later (389-390 A.D.) Jerome feels it necessary to excuse his poor style. Partly, according to him, his style suffered from the suspension of reading classical literature. Evidently this suspension of reading resulted from the oath he took in the course of his "dream" however, the content of the commentary laced with classical allusions bears witness to the losing struggle Jerome experienced trying to remain sincere to his promise.² By 393 A.D. when he wrote a short piece against one Iovinianus, Jerome comes back whole-heartedly to an acknowledged reliance on secular literature for quotations and topics.³ Hitherto this practice had been gradually returning.

Within a few years the change in Jerome's writing habits caused pointed questions to be put forward. Asked by a Roman orator named

¹Select Letters of St. Jerome With an English Translation by F.A. Wright (New York, 1933), Loeb Classical Library, letter 22, p. 127. See also "Against the Pelagians," EPHES, VI, 455.

²Engelshil, Latin Fathers and the Classics, 119-120, 319, 323.

³Ibid., 321-324. He wrote to Paulinus of Nole in the next year and affirmed the great usefulness of classical learning to mankind. EPHES, VI, 98-99.

Magnum why he defiled the "whiteness of the Church with the foulness of heathenism" by quoting from classical literature, he answered by recounting examples of Biblical characters and prominent Christians who used "pagan" literary sources to an advantage.¹ With the same example of purging classical literature of alien characteristics used in letter 21, he explained how these men must have adapted the "pagan" literature to divine purposes.

"It is surprising that I too, admiring the fairness of her form and the grace of her eloquence, desire to make that secular wisdom which is my captive and my handmaid, a mistress of the true Israel? Or that shaving off and cutting away all in her that is dead whether this be idolatry, pleasure, error, or lust, I take her to myself clean and pure and begat by her servants for the lord of Sabbath? My efforts promote the advantage of Christ's family, my so-called defilement with an alien increases the number of my fellow servants."²

Although the arguments presented for classical literature in letters 21 and 70 have recourse to the same analogy lifted from Scripture, the earlier letter ends in misgiving while the later quits on an emphatic appreciation of the value of this literature, and a taunt at the detractor.

"You must not adopt the mistaken opinion, that while in dealing with the Gentiles one may appeal to their literature, and then, in all other discussions one ought to ignore it; for almost all the books of all these writers - except those who like Epicurus are no scholars - are extremely full of erudition and philosophy. I incline

¹*Ibid.*, letter 70, p. 149. In the same treatise by Aeneas Sylvius mentioned above (*De Liberorum Educatione*) Jerome's attitude, described in letter 70, is used to support the humanist's contention that classical literature could be studied without fear or wrongdoing. Basil's address was used in the same argument. Woodward, *Vittorino*, *Da Valtra*, 150.

²*OPUSC.*, VI, 149.

indeed to fancy - the thought comes into my head as I dictate - that you yourself know quite well what has always been the practice of the learned in this matter. I believe that in putting this question to me you are only the mouthpiece of another who by reason of his love for the histories of Sallust might well be called Calpurnius Lanarius [Rufinus]. Please beg of him not to envy eaters their teeth because he is toothless himself, and not to make light of the eyes of gazelles because he is himself a mole. Here as you see there is abundant material for discussion, but I have already filled the limits at my disposal."¹

As the quarrel between Jerome and his one-time friend Rufinus grew more bitter, Jerome was reproached for failing to keep his oath. In defense Jerome refers to the letter to Magnus as his final justification for using "pagan" literature. And, to the charge of perjuring himself or committing a sacrilege, he offered a denial on the weak grounds that he owed any allusions to classical literature in his works to a "memory of the past" rather than to present reading.² Then as if unconvinced himself that testifying that memory alone was a sufficient reason, he deprecates the validity of the oath, it being taken in a dream. "I might well reply as I have done even if it were a question of a promise made with full consciousness. But this is a new and shameless thing; he throws in my teeth a mere dream."³

Jerome never denies that his dream occurred as he had described; nor, in fact, does he admit breaking an oath which he obviously did break.⁴

¹Ibid., 151.

²Theodoret, Jerome, Gennadius Rufinus: Historical Writings, etc., "Jerome's Apology for Himself Against the Books of Rufinus," MPAFCS, III, book 1, section 30, p. 498.

³Ibid., book 1, section 31, p. 499.

⁴Hagendahl, Latin Fathers and the Classics, 324-328.

He cannot give a satisfactory answer to Rufinus on the matter. This must have been realized by Jerome and felt keenly. Although he has rationalized his conduct in respect to classical literature, he could not resolve the doubt that he might be doing wrong.

Jerome wished that serious Christian scholarship would "give birth to something such as Greece with all her burning could not show," but his own attraction to classical literature belied the inaccuracy of such an oversimplified goal.¹

Aurelius Augustinus (354 A.D. to 430 A.D.) died ten years after the death of his friend Jerome. The greater part of their lives was enacted during the same generation. Much of their life experiences and development was parallel; however, while Jerome was drawn ever more strongly toward the secular, Augustine turned his whole being decisively toward the spiritual. When the latter came to the late years of his life he passed in review most of his literary efforts, repudiating what he felt was adverse to his Christian calling and correcting the inaccurate. Among the "Retractiones" was a disavowal of whatever in the content or style of his writings might show an obliging feeling for the Liberalis Disciplinæ.²

This attitude, consciously taken, would appear to preclude the

¹Letters, VI, letter 57, p. 122. That serious Christian scholarship could contribute generously toward infusing the new spirit into the old learning cannot be taken lightly, for indeed it did. But expecting of it the creation of something that would cast in shadow the validity of the same old learning to which it owed so much would deny Christian scholarship its tools. So far as Jerome was concerned it would deny the very qualities in classical literature he valued so highly and was unable to ignore.

²Labriolle, History and Literature of Latin Christianity, 27.

necessity of any investigation into Augustine's view of classical literature. On the other hand, there is strong evidence revealing that Augustine used "pagan" literature as a source to assist him in writing the fourth book of De Doctrina Christiana.¹ ~~The significance of this fact is that the "Retractiones" were interrupted to finish the third book which he felt was incomplete, then the fourth book was written to finish the work.~~²

Perhaps it would be short sighted to accuse Augustine of hypocrisy, and a close look at the statement of disavowal discloses an important insight into his temperament. He felt that using particular types of "pagan" literature and under certain conditions was justifiable, but if an empathy for this literature interfered with the subjugation of the Christian's entire person to the divine will, studying the literature became a heinous act. Perhaps Augustine wished to deny that his appreciation of "pagan" literature was an obstacle between himself and God. If it appeared he was ever enamoured with such literature (which he must have felt it did), his desire was to retract his approval of such instances. There is evidence of a conflict within his mind on the subject, but it

¹Sullivan, Sister Theresa, S. Aurelii Augustini, Hipponiensis Episcopi De Doctrina Christiana, Liber Quartus (Washington, 1930), 6, 8.

²Writings of Saint Augustine, "Christian Instructions," trans. by Gavigan, FC (New York, 1947), IV, 4-5. "Christian Instructions" (De Doctrina Christiana) was the first work of a church father printed in the Renaissance. Around 1465 the edition of the fourth book was printed at Strasburg titled De Arte Praedicandi. Shortly thereafter another was printed at Mainz with the same title.

should not be likened too closely with that of Jerome: Augustine proceeded from a similar educational base, but arrived at a more valid rationalization of his conduct on religious grounds, which were all-important to him. Indeed, he was rather consistent about his approach to classical scholarship, although incongruities were at times subjugated rather than reconciled.

Augustine found his Weltanschauung on an all-inclusive divine source.

"This supreme and true God - with His Word and Holy Spirit which are one with Him - this one omnipotent God is the creator and maker of every soul and of every body. All you find their joy in truth and not in mere shadows derive their happiness from Him. He made man a rational animal, composed of soul and body. He permitted man to sin - but not with impunity - and He pursued him with His mercy. He gave men - both good and bad - their being, as He gave being to the rocks. He let man share generative life in common with the trees, and the life of the senses with the beasts of the fields, but the life of intelligence only with the angels. God is the Author of all measure, form, and order; of all size, number and weight. He is the source of every nature, of whatever sort or condition; of the seed of every form and the form of every seed and the movement of both seeds and forms. He gave to all flesh its beginning, beauty, health, and power of reproduction; the arrangement of its members and the general well-being of a balanced whole. To his irrational creatures He gave memory, perception, and appetite, but to His rational creatures He added a mind with intelligence and will."¹

With this in mind it readily follows that non-Christians as well as Christians benefit from dispensations of divine authorship.

¹ Saint Augustine: The City of God, trans. by Sema and Walsh, FC (New York, 1950), VIII, book 5, chap. 11. The City of God was written c. 413 - 426 A.D.

"According to some, however, they who do by nature the things contained in the law must not be regarded as yet in the number of those whom Christ's grace justifies, but rather as among those some of whose actions (although they are those of ungodly men, who do not truly and rightly worship the true God) we not only cannot blame, but even justly and rightly praise, since they have been done - so far as we read or know, or hear - according to the rule of righteousness; though at the same time, were we to discuss the question with what motive they are done, they would hardly be found to be such as deserve the praise and defense which are due to righteous conduct. Still, since God's image has not been so completely erased in the soul of man by the stain of earthly affections as to have left remaining there not even the merest lineaments of it whence it might be justly said that man, even in the ungodliness of his life, does, or appreciates, some things contained in the law; if this is what is meant by the statement that 'the Gentiles, which have not the law (that is, the law of God), do by nature the things contained in the law, and that men of this character' are a law to themselves, and 'show the work of the law written in their hearts,' - that is to say, what was impressed on their hearts when they were created in the image of God has not been wholly blotted out."¹

In addition unusual talents are bestowed on particular man for special purposes. These are additional to the generally dispensed gifts of intelligence and will. Augustine himself related how he was blessed as a youth with special gifts; a desire for minute accuracy in scholarship,

¹ Saint Augustine's Anti-Pelagian Writings, "On the Spirit and the Letter," Schaff (ed.), trans. Holmes, Wallis and Warfield, NPNF, first series (Boston, 1897), V, chap. 48, p. 103. Written in 412 A.D. See also "Christian Instructions," CC, IV, book 1, chap. 22: 20, p. 41. Non-Christians, have received these divine gifts; Augustine can say without askance, "it gives us pleasures to discuss such writings / i.e. of Tully and the Stoics / because some vestiges of truth are found in them." Saint Augustine Against Julian, trans. by Schumacher, FC (New York, 1957), XXV, 67, 12, 60, p. 218.

a good memory, an ability to speak well, comforting friendships, and a pleasant life.¹ Moreover the framework of the skills of scholarship and art find their creator in the One and True God. A rhetor who praised his forefathers for inventing the principles of his craft, did so mistakenly.

"Men did not ordain that a demonstration of regard would win over a listener, or that a brief and intelligible narration easily makes the impression at which it aims, or that its variety holds its listeners intent without any tedium...men discovered these rules existed, rather than ordained that they should exist."²

Unfortunately, Augustine thinks, men have misused most of the divine gifts, corrupting them, often beyond recognition, by an association with mundane goals rather than seeing through them to their creator. Rendering the besmirched gifts acceptable to Christian standards meant redeeming them from their sinful trappings. The proper conduct for a Christian was to disregard the specious ingredients and spirit of classical literature, and take from the "pagans" what was useful to his new life, "for the lawful service of preaching the gospel;" and in addition, "it is also right for us to receive and possess in order to convert it to a Christian use, their clothing, that is those human institutions suited to intercourse with men which we cannot do without in this life."³ In spite of a great deal of "superstition," "pagan" literature contained "liberal instruction more adapted to the service of truth and also very useful

¹ Saint Augustine, The Confessions, trans. by Bourke, FC (New York, 1959), XXI, 1.20.91; p. 91.

² "Christian Instructions," FC (New York, 1947), IV, 2.3.6:54, p. 108. See also ibid., 238:56, p. 109.

³ ibid., 2.40:60, p. 113.

principles about morals; even some truths about the service of the one God Himself are discovered among them."¹ These particles of truth were not, of course, arrived at independently of God, but were "excavated...as it were, from some mines of divine providence which is everywhere present."²

In this particular context Augustine emphasizes the assistance a knowledge of classical literature can give to interpretation and exposition of the "Sacred Scriptures." Figurative expressions and abstruse phrases may be deciphered "through a knowledge of languages" and "through a knowledge of things;" sources for both were to be found in "pagan" literature.³

¹Ibid., 113. In the same vein Augustine discusses reading heretical writings. "And thus it happens that they who read with judgement, and bestow their approbation on whatever is commendable according to the rule of faith, and disapprove of things which ought to be reprobated, even if they are commit to their memory statements which are declared to be worthy of disapproval, they receive no harm from the poisonous and depraved nature of the sentences." "On the Soul and its Origin," ANNC, first series, V, 2.23, p. 342.

²"Christian Instructions," EC, IV, 2.40:60, p. 113.

³Ibid., 2.16:23, 24, p. 81. Augustine frankly admits the value of classical literature to the Christian life in this and previously mentioned references. In the following pages there will be more of this sort of thing. There is at least one reference, almost skipped over because the context is not involved with literature, which gives secular education and its base classical literature a value great enough that the deprivation of it was a persecution ranking among the most severe of Christian history. Augustine declares, "what about Julian the Apostate? His persecution is not included among the ten. Would they contend that his disqualifying of all Christian teachers and students engaged in liberal education was not a form of persecution?" (Obviously Augustine does). Saint Augustine: The City of God, trans. by Walsh and Rowan, EC (New York, York, 1954), XXIV, 18.32, p. 175. This "persecution" came about as the result of a rescript issued in 363 A.D. from Antioch by the Emperor Julian. The contents of the rescript prohibited Christians from teaching in secular schools because they disbelieved what Julian considered intrinsic elements of the subject matter, classical literature. Said Julian: "I hold that a proper education

results, not in laboriously acquired symmetry of phrases and language, but in a healthy condition of mind. I mean a mind that has understanding and true opinions about things good and evil, honorable and base. Therefore, when a man thinks one thing and teaches his pupils another, in my opinion he fails to educate exactly in proportion as he fails to be an honest man. And if the divergence between a man's convictions and his utterances is merely in trivial matters, that can be tolerated somehow, though it is wrong. But if in matters of the greatest importance a man has certain opinions and teaches the contrary, what is that but the conduct of hucksters, and not honest but thoroughly dissolute man in that they praise most highly the things that they believe to be most worthless, thus cheating and enticing by their praises those to whom they desire to transfer their worthless wares. Now all who profess to teach anything whatever ought to be men of upright character, and ought not to harbour in their souls opinions irreconcilable with what they publicly profess; and above all, I believe it is necessary that those who associate with the young and teach them rhetoric should be of that upright character; for they expound the writings of the ancients, whether they be rhetoricians or grammarians, and still more if they are sophists. For these claim to teach, in addition to other things, not only the use of words, but morals also, and they assert that political philosophy is their peculiar field. Let us leave aside, for the moment, the question whether this is true or not. But while I applaud them for aspiring to such high pretensions, I should applaud them still more if they did not utter falsehoods and convict themselves of thinking one thing and teaching their pupils another. What! Was it not the gods who revealed all their learning to Homer, Hesiod, Demosthenes, Herodotus, Thucydides, Isocrates and Lyaias? Did not these men think that they were consecrated, some to Hermes, others to the Muses? I think it is absurd that men who expound the works of these writers should dishonour the gods whom they used to honour. Yet, though I think this absurd, I do not say that they ought to change their opinions and then instruct the young. But I give them this choice; either not to teach what they do not think admirable, or, if they wish to teach, let them first really persuade their pupils that neither Homer nor Hesiod nor any of these writers, whom they expound and have declared to be guilty of impiety, folly and error in regard to the gods, is such as they declare. For since they make a livelihood and receive pay from the works of those writers they thereby confess that they are most shamefully greedy of gain, and that, for the sake of a few drachmae, they would put up with anything. It is true that, until now, there were many excuses for not attending the temples, and the terror that threatened on all sides absolved men for concealing the truest beliefs about the gods (i.e. under the Christian Emperors Constantine and Constantius it was dangerous to worship the gods openly.) But since the gods have granted us liberty, it seems to be absurd that men should teach what they do not believe to be sound. But if they believe that those whose interpreters they are and for whom they sit, so to speak, in the seat of the prophets, were wise men, let them be the first

Studying Scripture was given a special assistance, Augustine

to emulate their piety towards the gods. If, however, they think that those writers were in error with respect to the most honoured gods, then let them behave themselves to the churches of the Gallileans to Empord, Macthus and Lika, since you Gallileans are obeying them when you ordain that you shall refrain from temple worship. For my part, I wish that your ears and your tongues might be 'born anew,' as you would say, so regards these things in which way I ever have part, and all who think and act as is pleasing to us." The Works of The Emperor Julian, Loeb Classical Library (London, 1923), III, 117-121. Inasmuch as the rescript was only in effect for a few months and then rescinded after Julian's death by the Emperor Valentinian, it was unusual that so much protest came from Christians. Augustine says that Christian students were forbidden an education on account of the rescript; however, Julian specifically excludes students from the effects of the order; Ibid., XIX-XII. The volume of protest very well indicates the desire of learned or well-to-do Christians after secular education, unreconciled though this might be with their religion. It also reveals the preponderant position the "old" learning held, and its presence in scholarly as well as day to day activities. "Old learning" is perhaps a misnomer for to most of the Christian community it was the learning and a major part of the only cultural heritage in which they all lived. The rescript was disconcerting for it played on an obvious weakness in contemporary Christian thought. Classical literature as a basis of secular education was recognized as virtually indispensable by educated Christians, but how could a Christian reply to an attack such as Julian's? Very possibly this rescript reinforced the search for a policy of reconciliation of the classical heritage and the Christian ideals. Glanville Dooney, "The Emperor Julian and the Schools," The Classical Journal (Wilmette, Ill.), XIII, nr. 3 (December, 1957), 97-103. Dooney, "Julian and Justinian and the Unity of Pagan and Culture," Church History (Berne, Ind.), XXVIII, nr. 4 (December, 1959). For the "pagan" side of the argument see Dooney's "Themistocles and the Defense of Hellenism in the Fourth Century," Harvard Theological Review (Cambridge, Mass.), I, (1957), 259-274. See also Cochran, "Christianity and Classical Culture," 288-289. Dooney also has a history of Antioch in preparation.

thought, by history.

"Whatever that science called history teaches us about the order of past events is a very important help to us. Through it we are aided in understanding the Sacred Books even tho we learn it outside the church through our study as children."¹

Secular music could be helpful, too, yielding one a knowledge of instruments, chords, and terminology which might elucidate some expression in "Sacred Numerology" or Scriptural Allegory.² Neither music nor literature should be shunned because of their connection with "pagan" superstition; nor, for that matter, should other points of truth in the secular world be shunned, for "every good and true Christian should understand that whatever he discovers truth it is the Lord's."³ For similar reasons of utility, medicine, agriculture, and government, or vocations such as dancing and wrestling may be participated in to the extent that an

¹"Christian Instructions," FC, IV, 2.28:42, p. 98.

²Ibid., 2.18.28, p. 87. Augustine sums up his list of qualifications for the study of the Scripture in this well done paragraph: "A man who fears God carefully searches for His Will in the Holy Scriptures. Gentle in his piety, so that he has no affection for wrangling; fortified by a knowledge of languages, that he may not be perplexed over unknown words and codes of expression; protected also by an appreciation of certain indispensable things, that he may not be unaware of the power and nature of those which are employed for the sake of analogy; aided, too, by the integrity of the texts which an intelligent accuracy in correction has assumed; - let him approach thus trained, to the investigation and explanation of the obscurities of the Scripture." The underlying assumption was, of course, that the Scriptures were the source of the whole truth and one should be so trained in order to obtain the full significance, ibid., 3.1:1, p. 117.

³Ibid., 2.18.28, p. 87.

appreciation is formed sufficient to enable Christians to understand analogies to them in the Scriptures.¹ Care must be taken, however, that Christians acquire their knowledge of such "arts in a superficial and cursory fashion, so that we do not devote ourselves to them."² Comparing the knowledge of the Scriptures to "all knowledge gathered from the works of the pagans," useful as it might be as tools to more clearly understand the former, classical literature remained simply a means to an end.³

Thus Augustine arrives at a position which appears scornful of the "truth" that is "the Lord's" if it be found in "pagan" learning, presumed because it has been clouded over by willful men and so does not compare in lucidity with the Scriptures which in some instances, according to himself, must have the application of the knowledge reposing in "pagan" literature to clear up obscurities therein!

Another side of Augustine's association with "paganism" was his attraction to what he called Platonism. He was strong in his attestations of its merit, although he was not explicit on how a Christian might gain a profit from the philosophy or what that profit might be. Platonism was admired because it approached so closely to the Christian position on many important points.⁴ Personally its influence was an initiation to the

¹Ibid., 2.30:47, p. 102.

²Ibid., 102.

³Ibid., 2.42:63, p. 63.

⁴Saint Augustine: The Confessions, FC, XII, 7.9.13, 14, 15, p. 176-180; 7.21.27, p. 192.

path toward conversion.¹ For "in the writings of the Platonists, God and his Word are indirectly introduced at every turn."² Everywhere, he declares, "there are declarations in Plato and Porphyry which, if they could have been integrated might have made Christians of both of them."³ How could "pagans" come so very near to divine truth? Augustine tries to answer that by adopting the belief that Plato came in contact with the prophet Jeremiah or read the Scriptures in his travels in Egypt.⁴ He later retracted this theory, but continued to think there was some Scriptural influence on Plato.⁵ It would appear that Augustine could have accounted for this similarity in Plato with his pervasive doctrine that all truth came from God; however, he seems to think that Platonists might have done more than this ~~philosophical argument that he came so~~ close to Christian tenets.

Significantly, this very closeness to Christian theology shown by Platonism was seen as a threat by Augustine.⁶ He feels that only

¹Ibid., 7.20.26, p. 190.

²Ibid., 8.2.3, p. 198. See also Saint Augustine: The City of God, trans. by Walsh and Monahan, FC (New York, 1952), XIV, 8.4-7, pp. 28-34; 8.10, p. 40.

³Saint Augustine: The City of God, FC (New York, 1954), XIV, 22, 27-28, pp. 493-494.

⁴Ellepermann, The Attitude of the Early Christian Latin Writers Toward Pagan Literature and Learning, 218.

⁵Ibid., 218.

⁶Saint Augustine: The Confessions, FC, III, 7.20.26, pp. 191-192.

through the direction of God was he guided through the proper educational sequence. The Platonists were studied prior to the Scriptures:

"I believe that thou didst wish me to encounter them before I thought upon Thy Scriptures, precisely so that an impression would be made on my memory as to how I was affected by them. Thus, afterwards, when I had been made gentle by Thy book, and when my wounds had been touched by thy healing fingers, I could perceive and distinguish what a difference there is between presumption and confession, between those who do indeed see where they must go, but do not see the way, and the way that leads to that happy land which is not to be observed but to be lived in....For, if I had been first informed by Thy holy writings and if Thou hadst grown dear to me through my familiarity with them, and if I had later fallen upon those other books, perhaps they would have torn me away from a firm foundation of piety; or if I had stood firm in the disposition which I had acquired [from] Platonism as a saving influence, I might even have thought that this could be acquired from those books, if one had studied them alone."¹

To some extent Augustine found Platonism to be a preparation to Christianity. It is doubtful that he would recommend this as valid for everyone. He could not, it being directed by God. His attitude here has only limited similarities with that of Clement of Alexandria. It was a spiritual development, prescribed by God, from a lower to a higher plane, which, when reached, was mostly aware of the negative aspects of its former state.

What if he considered his conversion self-made via the books of the Platonists, as he stated might have happened but for the influence of God? This would place his allegiance with the world and independent

¹Ibid., 191-192.

human achievement, the antithesis of his religious outlook.¹ Following his own allowances to truth in the secular world and the abilities of man, both gifts of God, it would appear likely that an assiduous student could discover divine truth, but to do so unassisted was unthinkable to Augustine. The aid of God and acknowledgement of such aid was indispensable, without it a student would fall into the snares of self-pride, which Augustine thought was reflective of the greatest evils in "paganism."

That there was a definite place for the techniques of "pagan" arts shorn of their presumptiveness, superstition, and vice was demonstrated by what Augustine called Christian eloquence. A secular skill was adapted to Christian preaching; at least that was the intention; perhaps more "paganism" was incorporated than Augustine was aware. Written in 426 A.D. or 427 A.D. the fourth book of the "De Doctrina Christiana" mounted a Christian sentiment and purpose on the "pagan" base of Cicero's De Oratorio, Quintillian's Institutes and others.² In spite of the fact that Augustine asked the reader of the fourth book not to expect any of the rules of rhetoric as taught in the secular schools, he goes on to present what apparently were the most suitable opinions culled from "pagan" sources.³

Eloquence, Augustine declared, was a tool which could be used effectively for right as well as wrong; therefore, Christians should take it up

¹The possibility that there could be an intellectual progression from Manichaeism to Platonism to Christianity disappeared in favor of divine will.

²E.g. see "Christian Instructions," CC, IV, 4-5. See also S.T. Sullivan, S. Augustini Augustini.

³"Christian Instructions," CC, IV, 4.1.2, p. 168. He excused himself

and use it to present their case to the same advantage as did "pagan" orators.¹ The basic rules of this art should be picked up when young for they were not important enough to merit the attention of grown men; nor should they take the time of all young men as there was certainly more pressing interests of service to the Church "which undoubtedly should be preferred to this study."² But if a young man learned quickly and could spare a little time from more worthwhile tasks, he would find this study of some profit to his career as a servant of the church. If formal study were inconvenient, reading and listening to speeches and discourses of eloquent men was a good if not better method; a combination of the two being the most effective.³ Reading was limited to the "canons" and "ecclesiastical writings." "By reading these, a talented man in the course of his reflections is imbued with the eloquence with which they are expressed, even though he does not strive for this, but is intent only upon the subject there described."⁴

from presenting such rules on the ground "they should be learned somewhere else," and "not because they have no utility."

¹Ibid., 4.2.3, p. 169.

²Ibid., 4.3.4, pp. 169-170.

³Ibid., 4.3.4-5, pp. 170-171.

⁴Ibid., 170.

The Christian teacher should consider a thing better expressed that was "expressed more truthfully."¹ Hence the primary prerequisite to Christian eloquence was an ability to "argue and speak with wisdom."² The audience benefits from the speaker's wisdom more so than his words, but the speaker who is master of both is the more "useful."³ Augustine finds value in both factors in speaking and therein lies a problem with which he attempts to deal.

He sees eloquence as an asset to the propagation of Christianity, but seeks to mute the importance it held in contemporary society. Secular schools evidently put more emphasis on rhetoric than he feels a Christian needs, though some of this training has utility. And, in fact, a wise man was not made more worthy by eloquence, but he was made more "useful" to the church. Augustine cuts a fine line in this matter, obviously wanting to incorporate the stylistic aspects of "pagan" literature into Christian service, but cautious not to cast the means in so bright a light that they detract in any way from the end. However, on the one hand he concedes importance to human appreciated aesthetics and on the other, he incorporates more of the spirit underlying the style than he may have recognized. The dichotomy of style or form and content was in many cases a false division, for one side drew meaning from the other.⁴

¹Ibid., 4.28.61, p. 231.

²Ibid., 4.5, p. 173.

³Ibid., 173; see also 4.5.8, p. 174.

⁴Jaeger, Paideia, I, 34-35.

Augustine appears of two minds. The fourth book of "De Doctrina Christiana" was written to admonish the Christian to more eloquence and it drew from "pagan" sources; but, while "those who speak eloquently are listened to with delight, those who speak wisely are listened to with a profit" and studying classical literature was ignored for the "canons" and "ecclesiastical writings."¹ There was an appreciation for both attitudes of mind, but in reconciling the aesthetic with the Christian life, it becomes the "merely delightful" added to the absolute values and purposes of divine import; the latter being by far the most important.

Two minds are revealed in other writings of Augustine. Of particular interest are some of the letters and the parts of the Confessions dealing with secular education. The absolute literature used in the secular schools of his boyhood was criticized bitterly. It was called "ugliness" and "vileness," the "vine of error which was pounced... by besotted teachers."² The methods of recitation were "mere smoke and wind," and "trifling vanities."³ Actually his criticism does not bear on what he saw as the vehicle of expression so much as it does on the superficial and immoral content. "I do not accuse the words themselves for they are like choice and precious vessels."⁴ However, the words

¹Ibid., 4.5.8, p. 174.

²Saint Augustine, The Confessions, EC, XXI, 1.16.26, p. 26.

³Ibid., 1.17.27, p. 27.

⁴Ibid., 1.16.26, p. 26.

could be misused in other ways. Overmuch attention given to style and grammar caused a rhetor to be more "afraid of an error in grammar" than in the proper direction of his personal values.¹

Not only rhetoric, but the whole curriculum of the "liberal arts" was reproached. "For they have nothing that resembles truth,"

"So, then, neither the numberless irreligious tales with which the works of futile poets are filled, nor the high-flown, carefully styled lies of the orators, nor even the wordy hair-splitting of the philosophers themselves have anything in common with our liberty, since they obviously either did not know God, or when they knew God, they have not glorified him."²

The "futilities," "false fancies," "airy nothings" and "proud lies" of "pagan" literary expressions were denounced for attempting to pass for liberal studies.³ The sole exception to this condemnation was history.

"Their history might perhaps have some claim to consideration from us who are free, especially as their writers show a certain respect for reliability in their narrative, since they give us a true account whether they speak of the good or evil deeds of men. Yet, I simply do not see how men who lacked the help of the Holy Spirit in recognizing the truth, and who were forced by the very limitations of human weakness to rely on hearsay, could have failed to go wrong in many of their facts. Still, they have some semblance of liberty, if they do not deliberately falsify their narrative, and do not deceive men except in so far as they are themselves misled by their informants through human proneness to error."⁴

¹Ibid., 1.18.28, p. 28; 1/19.30, p. 30.

²Saint Augustine: Letters, trans. by Parsons, FC (New York, 1953), XVIII, letter 201, p. 145.

³Ibid., 145.

⁴Ibid., 145-146.

Perhaps the difficulty Augustinus had accepting this validity provides another insight into his religious position, encompassed by an omnipotent, omnipresent God.

Augustine's chief objections to pagan literature are generally the same as the more respected "pagans" held, which he recognizes.¹ Frugality, temperance, fidelity and charity are to be found both in Cicero and preached in the Christian Church. But in either place the depraved lives of the gods and the debauchery of comedies were decried. Outside these objections Augustine treats the great classical writers with deference. Now and then he gave these authors unfeigned admiration, or at least so much as he feels any human can give. In its context the following quotation is almost a sidelight in a reply to a question from a "fellow bishop" concerning the purported descent into hell by Christ after the crucifixion. The Scriptural text was obscure, indicating that something or someone was somehow freed from hell. Among other things Augustine says:

"But it would be rash to say exactly who they are, for, if we say that all of those who were found there were set free without exception, it would be a cause of gratification - if we could prove it - especially in the case of some whom we have known intimately through their written works, whose eloquence and genius we admire, not only the poets and orators who have shown in many passages of their works that those same false gods of the Gentiles were worthy of scorn and ridicule, and have even at times confessed the one true God, although they shared the ancient superstitions with their contemporaries; but also those who have made the same profession, not in verse or in oratory, but in philosophy; many, even whose works we do not possess, but of whom we learn in

¹Ibid., letter 91, pp. 43-45.

others' works, that they led praiseworthy lives, according to their light, and although they did not worship God, but erred in following a vain worship, which was the public cult of their times, serving the creature rather than the Creator, in their moral practice of frugality, continence, chastity, scorn of death for the welfare of their country, and fidelity to trust, they might well be offered as models to be imitated by citizens and foes alike. Yet, when all these good acts are not directed to the end of an upright and true devotion to God, but to the empty pride of human praise and glory, they fade away and are, so to speak, devoid of fruit. Even so, some of these authors rouse such an attraction in us that we could wish to have them freed from the sufferings of hell - whether we are singular in that or like others - but human feeling is not the same as the justice of the Creator."¹

Almost without a second thought Augustine attests to the merit and appeal of classical literature to himself, and then finds this unreconcilable with Christianity. The last few lines of this excerpt describe the crux of the conflict between the secular and the spiritual for a Christian. "Human feelings," Augustine names them, seem legitimate, but are not to be considered on the same plane as a Christian's highest aspirations. He recognizes the validity of such feelings but he feels they cannot be of much value in the face of the "justice of the creator."² In short, he sanctions a belief that delight taken in secular arts or scholarship was necessarily inferior to the ideals of Christianity; and indeed, the latter worked to exclude the former. Taken with his other discussions of the subject, it can be said that a tendency of Christians to look down on all secular life was strengthened, even to the extent that it was sinful to

¹Saint Augustine: Letters, trans. by Parsons, FC (New York, 1953), XX, letter 164, pp. 383-384.

²This nagging thought, that secularly oriented tasks (e.g. scholarship) are not as worthwhile as religiously oriented tasks continued to be at the bottom of the perplexities confronting a scholar who has strong

take delight in temporal experiences. But the other mind was not miserly in its affection of the "eloquence and genius we admire."¹ However, it conditioned itself to a subordination of emotions and even intellect, not estimating realistically the independence and vitality residing in them. Failing to recognize that it was degrading not just self-indulgent pleasures and a willful, independent spirit, Augustine's other mind subjugated a greater part of life itself to a domination it would not easily tolerate.

When a young man who had finished his formal education found that he actually had serious gaps in his learning, gaps that would jeopardize his aspirations for public esteem, he presumptuously asked Augustine for answers to a long list of questions.² The reply was much more considerate than would be expected of a stranger. Augustine rebuked him for taking public esteem as his goal, informed him what his goal should be, and then answered the more important questions at length while only jettisoning down key points to the remainder. The latter was done in spite of Augustine's statement that his religious duties were taking all his time and he had more obligation to carry them out than correspond on such subjects.

commitments to Christianity and a love of scholarship in secular as well as religious areas.

¹"That great poet of your far-famed literature," was a phrase used to identify Virgil to a Latin correspondent. Letters, PL, XVIII, letter 91, p. 43.

²Letters, PL, XVIII, letter 118, pp. 262-294.

"But I should like to tear you from the midst of your delightful inquiries, and set you down among my cares, so that you might learn not to be vainly curious, or not to venture to impose the task of feeding and nourishing your curiosity on those who have as one of their most pressing duties to curb and restrain the curious. If time and effort are to be spent in sending you letters, how much better and more fruitfully will they be spent in cutting away your vain and deceitful ambitions, which are to be the more carefully avoided the more easily they lead you astray, veiled and cloaked, as they are in some image of honorable pursuit, or under the name of liberal studies."¹

The tone of criticism Augustine sets is plain. The young graduate proposes to use his abilities to shallow ends. His field of study was perhaps honorable, but his intention to capitalize on it for the sake of personal vanity was a misuse of those abilities, and subject matter, and a shortsighted view of his life's purpose. The men he studied so eagerly have little to offer compared with that "Truth Itself" which had "become man."² And, his avowed purpose was opposed to real learning, being founded on a pride that blinded him to the true goal.

"Our Lord Jesus Christ was humbled in order that he might teach this most beneficial humility, and it is directly opposed, I repeat, to that sort of ignorant knowledge - if I may use that expression - which makes us take pleasure in knowing what Anaximenes, Anagoras, Pythagoras and Democritus thought, and other things of that kind, for the sake of appearing learned and well informed. In reality, that is far removed from learning and erudition."³

¹Ibid., 262-263.

²Ibid., 291-292.

³Ibid., 282-283.

Augustine sees the pride of this young man leading not only to a superficial and ostentatious knowledge, but to a position of intellectual and emotional self-sufficiency which he considers a major threat to one participating in classical literature.¹ Without the intervention and guidance of God, Augustine feels the sound approach to life claimed by the various "pagan" philosophies was incapable of being attained. To realize the value of the spiritual meant the subordination of all material, or man-made systems to a dependence on divine guidance. The spiritual advancement of a Christian did not necessarily cast aside classical learning as sinful, but either ascended beyond it or bent it to the ultimate purpose. "Earthly life" was for a Christian "a school training him for life eternal, a school in which he learns to use

16. N. Cochrane says that in Augustine's treatment of this problem, "we may perceive a fresh approach to the classical problem of sin and error, as well as to that of incontinence; the origin of which Augustine ascribes to a bad will, rooted in a bad love. This bad will he defines as 'the will to power' when, as he says, 'the soul, loving its own power, relapses from the desire for a common and universal good to one which is individual and private.'" As such, it gives rise to phenomena such as a passion to explore the secrets of nature (*haustio curioſitas*) or a thirst for domination over one's fellow man (*ambitio, fastus*) or, simply, the filthy whirl of sensual pleasure (*caenosus gurgas carnalis voluptatis*), but, whatever its particular manifestations it involves the subordination of spiritual to material goods, i.e. to some form of what he calls the *cupiditas mundi*. It may thus be traced, in the first instance, to pride (*superbia*), the desire 'to try out one's own power' and so 'to become like gods;' otherwise, to the pursuit of an ideal of self-sufficiency, in utter disregard for the fact that human nature has not received the capacity to achieve felicity without acknowledging its dependence upon the principle of its life and being." Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, 448.

temporal goods in the spirit of a pilgrim refusing to be enslaved by them;¹ or "there was created by Divine Providence, for our salvation, the whole temporal dispensation which we ought to use, but not with any permanent affection and pleasure. Ours should rather be like the transitory pleasure felt toward the road, or conveyances or any other means to an end."²

¹Saint Augustine: The City of God, EC, VIII, 1:29, pp. 65-66.

²Christian Instructions, EC, IV, 1.35:39, p. 56.

Chapter III

SOME RENAISSANCE ANTECEDENTS

There is no difficulty involved in discovering Christian scholars in the Renaissance period who harbored a congenial attitude toward secular culture. The era derives the greater part of its meaning from an acknowledged and fervent interest in secular culture of classical vintage. In fact, Christianity seems to hold a secondary status among the literati of the revival of learning when compared with their love of things classical. However, this observation must be hedged very carefully, for it is not meant to imply a conversion to paganism or a sterility of Christianity. But on the other hand, it means that scholarly endeavor had a vastly increased affection for secular culture. — An affection which competed successfully with Christianity for the time and appetite of the humanists.

Perhaps credit should be given to the centuries that had passed for the less defensive situation of Christianity. The authority of the church organization over the secular world was certainly challenged by such as Marsilius of Padua, but the spirit of Christianity no longer seemed in need of protection against an overwhelming paganism fostered by a political system and imbued in secular culture as was the case in the early years of the Church. Christianity had enemies to be sure, but the work of the humanists cannot be counted among its most active disputants.

Savonarola and his ilk lashed out with a passionate religious feeling at the revival of classical learning, but it is doubtful that their adversary was aggressively threatening Christianity.¹ Humanism did strengthen a tendency to compartment life into several areas, each having a valid existence. But there is reasonable evidence that Coluccio

type of Renaissance man, maintained a serious religious interest - as did much of the humanist world - alongside an admittedly more spectacular newcomer, secular culture.² And on the other hand, a devout monk, Ambrogio Traversari, was employed in the translation of the Greek classics; however, he was apologetic about this secular activity, feeling more comfortable working with Christian sources.³

¹See Kristeller's chapter, "Paganism and Christianity," in The Renaissance and Renaissance Thought, and Jacob Burckhardt, The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy (Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1958), II, 460-462.

²Burckhardt notes the feeling among the humanists that they comprised a new element in society and in fact were recognized as such. See The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy, I, 211, note 1. For the two sides of Salutati see Rice, The Renaissance Idea of Wisdom, especially pp. 236-243; and Hans Baron, "Secularization of Wisdom and Political Humanism in the Renaissance," Journal of the History of Ideas (Lancaster, Pa.), XII (January, 1960), especially pp. 132-134 and 136, note 1. The Baron reference is a review-discussion.

³Voigt, Georg, Die Niederbelehme des Classischen Alterthums, (Berlin, 1893), I, 321. Voigt declares, "so haben wir das erste Beispiel eines Mönches, in welchem der Schöngelst mit dem heiligen Geiste im Kampfe lag...."

There was also a problem involved in the proximity of secular and Christian substance among the humanists less formally committed to Christianity than Traversari. The ramifications of the issue did not reach quite the height evident in previous encounters; but it became, nevertheless, a topic worth a paragraph or a book depending on the personality of the scholar. The striking quality of these discussions is the strength of the secular culture represented. The humanist appears committed more closely to the secular world than the religious, but it could be inaccurate to state that the one was felt to exclude the other. In fact, when the problem was considered, an attempt was usually made to demonstrate that the two interests could co-exist. However, the thought that an interest in secular culture stood opposed to Christianity sparked some soul searching. The search was taken up to find religious support for classical studies and secular ambitions already firmly ensconced, and it was not always pressed diligently. But among serious Christian scholars it did evoke concern.

The "first modern scholar and man of letters," that is, the first Renaissance humanist Francesco Petrarch (1304 A.D. to 1374 A.D.) dealt with the conflict of religious and secular culture at more length than his successors.¹ This was, no doubt, evidence of a greater concern on his part, but suspicions grew in the reader's mind about Petrarch's sincerity. The scholar was worried by the apparent disparity between his attitude toward secular culture and his attitude toward Christianity—

¹The epithet comes, of course, from the title of James Harvey Robinson and Henry Winchester Selig's book, Petrarch: the First Modern Scholar and Man of Letters (New York, 1907).

or he would not have written as he did. But he frankly feels that Christianity cannot demand a denial of secular ambitions and the study of secular culture. And yet he is not fully certain it does not make such a demand. In any event, he cannot resolve the puzzle.

In letters written toward the end of his life, Petrarch justifies aspirations toward secular learning on a rather shallow religious basis, but he seems confident it is sufficient. Earlier in his life he had expressed an inability to arrive at a satisfactory answer to the conflict in his mind, but it does not appear to have deterred his interests in secular pursuits. Nevertheless he seems to have been pricked from time to time with a disquietude over the possibility that his secular studies were a contrary influence to a deeper understanding and peace of mind through Christianity. Petrarch's anxiety in this case seems bound up with a fretfulness about his physical and intellectual situation and his social commitments, etc., and he tends to identify the one with the other. But the reader does not feel that Petrarch's concern is constant nor that he is as interested in his religious condition as he is in rationalizing his secular desires. He is disturbed that a commitment to Christianity could undermine an affinity for secular culture and significantly he holds out for the latter. Worthy of note, however, is his effort to find a common ground on which both Christianity and secular culture can exist without compromising the former.

Petrarch attempts to defend his love for secular desires and culture in the Secret or the Soul's Conflict with Passion. Since he bases his claim to fame on his literary production which in turn is founded

mainly on classical studies, this small book is a useful source for the investigation of his attitude toward secular culture. Petrarch contrives a series of dialogues (three) between himself and St. Augustine to carry out his defense. Augustine's part is enacted with some fairness, but he is made overly stern and unimaginative generally and sometimes shallow or obsequious. Petrarch seems to reveal himself truthfully, both in his speeches and Augustine's.

Petrarch's inconsistency is exposed early in the first dialogue and Augustine remonstrates with him on its meaning.

Petrarch: "I tell you I know, and you yourself are witness, how often I have wished to and yet could not rise. What floods of tears I have shed and all to no purpose."

Augustine: "O yes, I have witnessed many tears, but very little will...your tears have often stung your conscience, but not changed your will."¹

Petrarch does not feel that his conduct postulated insincerity, but rather he is convinced that his lack of resolution is basic to his quandary. And he is worried because the aspirations to the higher goals Augustine has in mind hold so little power over him. At this point Petrarch does not clearly specify his position. He only outlines a yearning for a more even intellectual and emotional balance which he thinks is disturbed by the counter attractions of the world and the spirit. Augustine suggests that Petrarch ought to rectify the wavering of his mind by ridding himself of the worthless associations of the present world and centering his efforts on eternal goals.

¹Petrarch's Secret, trans. by William H. Draper. (London, 1911), 18-19.

"St. Augustine: 'The desire of all good cannot exist without thrusting out every lower wish. You know how many different objects one longs for in life. All these you must first learn to count as nothing before you can rise to the desire for the chief good...When all these passions are extinguished, then, and not till then, will desire be full and free. For when the soul is uplifted on one side to heaven by its own nobility, and on the other dragged down to earth by the weight of the flesh and the seductions of the world, so that it both desires to rise and also to sink at one and the same time, then, drawn contrary ways, you find you arrive nowhere.'"¹

"What, then, would you say a man must do for his soul to break the fetters of the world and mount up perfect and entire to the realms above," asks Petrarch. ".....the practice of meditation on death and the perpetual recollection of our own mortal nature," replies Augustine.² But Augustine does not drop the matter before sharply reviewing the source of Petrarch's discontent and what he finds preventing the humanist from seeing the real truth. Before doing so, however, Augustine is diverted neatly into a recitation of the values of secular literature.

"St. Augustine: 'And yet in that book ~~The True Religion~~ allowing for a difference in phraseology such as becomes a teacher of catholic truth, you will find a large part of its doctrine is drawn from philosophers, more especially from those of the Platonist and Socratic school. And

¹Ibid., 25. Now and then Augustine is more accommodating to Petrarch than is reasonable; e.g. Augustine says, "the desire of virtue [which Petrarch presumably has] is itself a great part of virtue," ibid., 24. This treatment is used more pointedly later when Augustine is shown to draw extensively on the pagan classics for inspiration and authority as well as technique. Moreover some of Augustine's comments sound most definitely like Petrarch's manipulations; e.g. "Conscience is the best judge of virtue" or "reason [is] the true source of all remedies," ibid., 23, 162.

²Ibid., 26.

to keep nothing from you, I may say that what especially moved me to undertake the work was a word of your favorite Cicero. God blessed that work of mine so that from a few seeds came an abundant harvest...But let us come back to the matter in hand.'

Petrarch: 'As you wish; but, O best of Fathers, do not hide from me what that word was which gave you the starting point of so excellent a work.'

St. Augustine: 'It was the passage where in a certain book Cicero says, by way of expressing his detestation of the errors of his time: 'They could look at nothing with their minds, but judged everything by the right of their eyes; yet a man of any greatness of understanding is known by his detaching his thought from objects of sense, and his meditations from the ordinary track in which others move.' This, then, I took as my foundation, and 'built' upon it the work which you say has given you pleasure.'

Petrarch: 'I remember the place: it is in the Tusculan Orations. I have been delighted to notice what a habit it is of yours to quote those works here and elsewhere in your works; and they deserve it, for they are words that seem to blend in one phrase truth and dignity and grace. Now, since it seems good to you, pray return to our subject.'¹

The diversion is obviously contrived. Yet it means to show that benefits, even for Christianity, are bestowed on men who study classical literature. Indeed, Petrarch implies classical literature was an indispensable source for such a great church father as Augustine. From this sidelight Augustine proceeds to discuss Petrarch.

St. Augustine: '...overwhelmed with too many divers impressions made on it, and everlastingly fighting with its own cares, your weak spirit is crushed so that it has not strength to judge what it should first attack or to discern what to

¹Ibid., 44-45.

cherish, what to destroy, what to repel...so it suffers that same evil which befalls those who sow too many seeds in one small space of ground. As they spring up they choke each other. So in your overcrowded mind what there is sown can make no root and bear no fruit. With no considered plan you are tossed now here now there in strange fluctuation, and can never put your whole strength to anything. ~~Hence it happens that whenever the generous mind approaches (if it is allowed) the contemplation of death, or some other meditation that might help it in the path of life, and penetrates by its own acumen to the depths of its own nature, it is unable to stand there, and, driven by hosts of various cares, it starts back. And then the work, that promised so well and seemed so good, flags and grows unsteady; and there comes to pass that inward discord of which we have said so much and that worrying torment of a mind angry with itself; when it loathes its own defilements, yet cleanses them not away; sees the crooked paths, yet does not forsake them; dreads the impending danger, yet stirs not a step to avoid it.~~

Petrarch! 'Ah, woe is me! Now you have probed my wound to the quick. There is the seat of my pain, from there I fear my death will come.'"¹

Augustine's more general discussion of Petrarch's irresolution gives way to a long dialogue which is meant to show the foundations of the scholar's troubles - his involvement with the secular world. Augustine recounts ~~how secular ambitions and secular culture leave man with an inadequate answer to his problems and, no doubt, voices the negative feelings and frustrations plaguing Petrarch.~~

"Look what snares the world spreads for you;
 what vanities it dangles before your eyes;
 what vain cares it has to weigh you down.
 To begin at the beginning, consider what made
 those most noble spirits among all creatures
 fall into the abyss of ruin; and take heed

¹ibid., 45-46.

lest in like manner you also fall after them. All your forethought, all your care will be needed to save you from this danger. Think how many temptations urge your mind to perilous and soaring flights. They make you dream of nobleness and forget your frailty; they choke your faculties with fumes of self-esteem, until you think of nothing else; they lead you to wax so proud and confident in your own strength that at length you hate your Creator. . . You trust in your intellect; you boast of what eloquence much reading has given you; you take pleasure in the beauty of your mortal body. Yet do you not feel that in many things your intellect fails you? . . . Search well your heart and you will find that the whole of what you know is but like a little shrunken stream, dried by the summer heat compared to the mighty ocean. . . . For though the applause of those who hear you may seem to yield a certain fruit which is not to be despised, yet of what worth is it after all if in his heart the speaker is not able to applaud? . . . The Greeks reproach you, and you in turn the Greeks, with having a paucity of words. Seneca, it is true, accounts their vocabulary the richer, but Cicero at the beginning of his treatise On the Distinctions of Good and Evil makes the following declaration, 'I cannot enough marvel whence should arise that insolent scorn of our national literature. Though this is not the place to discuss it, yet I will express by conviction, which I have often maintained, not only that the Latin tongue is not poor, as it is the fashion to assert, but that it is, in fact, richer than the Greeks;' and as he frequently repeats elsewhere the same opinion, so, especially in the Tusculan Questions. . . Seneca, who is ours, while doing all justice to Cicero, gives his final verdict for the Greeks, notwithstanding that Cicero is of the contrary opinion. As to my own opinion on the question in debate, I consider that both parties to the controversy have some truth on their side when they accuse both Latin and Greek of poverty of words: and if this judgment be correct in regard to two such famous languages, what hope is there for any other? . . . Here, unless I am mistaken, are the causes that inflate your mind with pride,

forbid you to recognize your low estate, and keep you from recollection of death.¹

The passing commentary on the status of the Greek and Latin languages blunts the edge of Augustine's rebuke and allows Petrarch to exercise some results of research in classical literature. The digression leaves the reader with some doubt of the seriousness of Petrarch's attention to the discourse.² Coupled with the previous discussion of the source of the inspiration for Augustine's *The True Religion*, this critique of Latin and Greek forms part of a flanking movement, so to speak, compromising the intensity and perhaps even the veracity of Augustine's discrimination against secular culture. But there is a frankness and detail in this "sermon" that cannot but arise from a sincere doubt, however small, that there are in reality elements antagonistic to Christianity in the makeup of Petrarch's secular ambitions and studies.³ Thus tactical maneuvers such as the testimony that Augustine relied heavily on classical literature and was influenced by it do not give Petrarch sufficient justification, albeit some comfort. However, they do re-emphasize that a very prominent church father was a student of secular culture to his advantage, and they allow Petrarch to show his erudition. Petrarch and his fellow humanists were quite happy to find references

¹Ibid., 49-55.

²There seems to have been a fairly widespread opinion unfavorable to Greek in the early Renaissance; however, it cannot be said that this opinion was based on any great knowledge of that language. See Burckhardt, The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy, I, 204-205, esp. 205, note 1.

³Perhaps Petrarch suspected that some of the ideas he denounced in

to the use of classical literature by well known churchmen, and they were not prone to hide this light under a bushel.

In the "Second Dialogue" Petrarch tempers Augustine's observations on the secular world and himself in an attempt to show that a balance might be reached between Christianity and secular culture. Thus the secular world should not be completely eschewed but rather it should be used in moderation.

"St. Augustine: My opinion is that in every condition man should aim at the golden mean...so I do not tie man's life down to dry bread and water; such maxims are as extreme as they are troublesome and odious to listen to. Also in regard to your infirmity, what I enjoin is not to overindulge natural appetite, but to control it."¹

Praise is even voiced by Augustine for Petrarch's scholarship.

"St. Augustine: Among the clouds themselves you have clearly discussed the light of truth. It is in this way that truth abides in the fictions of the poets, and one perceives it shining out through the crevices of their thought...."²

But neither the admonitions to moderation or the mere recognition of examples of inspiration in classical literature provide a justification for secular culture suitable to Petrarch who holds it so dear, nor do they erase the thought that Christianity is being offended by overmuch concern with earthly things. Consequently in the final "Dialogue" the

a poorly understood Averroes were a party to his secular desires, ibid., II, p. 510. Robinson and Rolfe, Petrarch, 211-217.

¹Draper, Petrarch, 67.

²Ibid., 69.

conversation turns again directly on the things marked by Augustine in the "First Dialogue" as the source of Petrarch's problem, his secular ambitions, employments and desires.

Firstly, Augustine passes judgment on Petrarch's love for Laura "a mortal woman, in admiring whom [he], alas! Spent a large part of [his] life," quoting copiously from classical literature in so doing and using surprisingly little Scriptural or Patristic material.¹ The basic issue remains that of the secular world versus the spiritual world. Petrarch never challenges the dichotomy of secular and spiritual; however, the spiritual ambitions depicted by Augustine are rather narrow in scope and rigid in tolerance. Petrarch remains firm in his conviction that his love for Laura is the "noblest action" of his soul in spite of Augustine's exasperated rebukes. "Ah! Blindfold one! You see not what foolishness it is so to subject your soul to the things of the earth."² And finding continued argument on this score unprofitable Augustine turns to another secular "vice," Petrarch's ambition.³

¹Blanchard, Harold Hooper (ed.), Prose and Poetry of the Continental Renaissance in Translation (New York, 1969), 36.

²Ibid., 38.

³There is apparently no change in the goals of either character in the three dialogues. In the "First Dialogue" Augustine indicated at one point that a man who enjoys earthly life to the full without intervening hardship is actually more to be pitted than one less fortunate materially. Petrarch's response to this is almost flippant. "Petrarch: 'I suppose you mean that a man whose pleasures are uninterrupted comes to forget himself, and is never led back to virtue's path; but that he who amid his carnal delights is sometime visited with adversity will come to the recollection of his true condition just in proportion as he finds fickle and wayward pleasure desert him. If both kinds of life had one and the same end, I do not see why he should not be

Augustine: 'Ambition still has too much hold on you. You seek too eagerly the praise of men, and to leave behind you an undying name.'

Petrarch: 'I freely confess it. I cannot beat down that passion in my soul.'¹

As has been said before, Petrarch based his claim to fame on his literary ability which was founded in classical studies.

From the first of this discussion Petrarch reveals himself more sensitive to Augustine's disapproval than in the case of Laura. Of this one aspiration, which of course includes several areas of secular culture, Petrarch harbors a sincere doubt. He lets Augustine criticize the shortsightedness of his goals and the ostentation of his literary style. And when he replies "mortal myself, it is but mortal blessings I desire," the ominous response of Augustine causes him to cringe, saying "I said - or if perchance, I am mistaken, I intended to say that my wish was to use mortal things for what they were worth, to do no violence to nature by bringing to its good things a limitless and immoderate desire, and so to follow after human fame as knowing both myself and it will perish."²

counted the happier who enjoys the present time and puts off affliction to another day, rather than the man who neither enjoys the present nor looks for any joy hereafter; unless you are perhaps moved by this consideration that in the end the laughter of the former will be changed to more bitter tears." Draper, Petrarch's Secret, 37-38. As will be shown shortly Petrarch presents a similar course within the last few pages of the "Third Dialogue."

¹Blanchard, Prose and Poetry of the Continental Renaissance in Translation, 47. Theodor H. Mommsen renders this passage thusly: "You are seeking fame among men and the immortality of your name more than is right." Petrarch replies, "this I admit freely and cannot find any remedy to restrain that desire." The nuance of emphasis indicates that Petrarch expended less negative effort denying his secularism, but rather was carried away by something beyond his control. Hence he pleads for coexistence rather than a purge. "Rodolph Agricola's Life of Petrarch," Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Eugene F. Rice, Jr. (ed.), (Ithaca, 1959), 236.

²Blanchard, Prose and Poetry of the Continental Renaissance in

Petrarch does not have Augustine comment on this passage save to agree.

But his next observation meets with a quick and heated retort.

Petrarch: "...I think, it is in the true order that mortal men should first care for mortal things; and that to things transitory things eternal should succeed; because to pass from those to these is to go forward in most certain accordance with what is ordained for us, although no way is open for us to pass back again from eternity to time.

Augustine: "O man, little in yourself and little wisdom! Do you then, dream that you shall enjoy every pleasure in heaven and earth, and everything will turn out fortunate and prosperous for you always and everywhere? ...thinking to have one foot on earth and one in heaven, they could neither stand here below nor mount on high."¹

Neither side of this argument seems valid. Both oversimplify their rationale and either would have a difficult time defining his terms. A long discourse on the minuteness of the universe, earth, man, fame etc., all that is not God, follows this collision.

At its conclusion Petrarch asks:

Petrarch: "Is it your wish that I should put all my studies on one side and renounce every ambition, or would you advise some middle source?"

To which Augustine answers:

St. Augustine: "I will never advise you to live without ambition; but I would always urge you to put virtue before glory...follow after virtue, and let glory take care of itself...and so, in regard to yourself, while you are wearing your strength out by such great labors in writing books, if you allow me to say so, you are shooting wide of the mark. For you are spending all your efforts on things that concern others, and neglecting those that are your own; and so, through this vain hope of glory, the time...is passing away."²

Translation, 50-51.

¹Ibid., 52.

²Ibid., 55-56.

Another long discourse is made by Augustine on how Petrarch should order his life - that is, to contemplate the mortality of man. But this is traveling an old road and as Petrarch indicates he has already made his commitment to "studies" - secular culture. Even though he was not unaware that the course Augustine charted "would be much safer," "to attend only to the care of [the] soul, to relinquish altogether every bypath, and follow the straight path of the way of Salvation," he could not forsake secular culture.

Petrarch: 'But I have not strength to resist that old bent for study altogether.'

Augustine: 'We are falling back into our old controversy. Want of will you call want of power.'¹

And so it be. Petrarch cannot settle his conflict but he chooses to remain with the secular world and his conception of Christianity rather than turn to a life of self-denial that he believes is the alternative. He stands for secular culture, win or lose - he cannot resist its charms, nor can he find in it all the evil presumed by his Augustine. It must have true value else it would not lead him to such noble ideas and beauty. Petrarch knows there is a problem involved in the attraction of self satisfaction gained through secular culture, but the doubt in his mind is not strong enough to cause him to forsake his cherished studies. He cannot find in self-denial anything meaningful enough to undermine the appeal of the secular world. ~~There is no contempt held for Christianity. There is only an unsuccessful attempt to mitigate the one-mindedness of the type~~

¹Ibid., 57.

of Christianity Petrarch associates with Augustine in order that the secular world might be revived from an unjustified neglect.

Two letters written in the later years of Petrarch's life give what amounts to a pragmatic sanction to the study of secular literature. To Boccaccio in 1362 A.D. he writes that classical studies give an educated person a "fuller understanding of natural things," aid in the "advancement of morals and eloquence," and are helpful "for the defense of our religion."¹ A knowledge of literature may not be necessary to piety, but as the writings of the church fathers attest it does not "prove a disadvantage...it was a source of glory." "Ignorance, however devout, is by no

¹This letter written when Boccaccio was fifty-one years of age was occasioned by his report of the warning given him by the monk Gioacchino Ciani to give up his secular studies or suffer an early death. See Burckhardt, The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy, I, 214. A few years later Boccaccio revised his Genealogy of the Gods adding two books which were intended to defend poetry against a charge of heresy. See Charles G. Osgood, Boccaccio on Poetry (New York, 1956), xiii, note 1. Therefore Petrarch's advice was apparently followed. In these additions, Boccaccio justifies the study and use of classical literature with references to Jerome's figure of the captive woman and Augustine's and other church fathers' use of such sources. "If poets are altogether to be scorned, then it will be wrong to pick up a pearl from the mud, since then dirt, though it may be wiped off, will make it less precious," ibid., 14.18, pp. 82-86. He grants that some should be prevented from studying pagan antiquity. But there is no reason to be as rigid on this score as the early church, for "today by the grace of God, our strength is very great; the universally hateful doctrine of paganism has been cast into utter and perpetual darkness and the church in triumph holds the fortress of the enemy. Thus there is the very slightest danger in the study and investigation of paganism. As for Boccaccio he feels himself a solid orthodox Christian in this respect ".... sincere faith and eternal truth.... is so deeply implanted in my heart that by no influence of pagan antiquity nor any other power can it be torn out, or be cut off, or fall away." But there remains some misgivings. "True, we deceive ourselves who trust too much in our own strength" that is when one thinks his own powers are sufficient to avoid the dangers of paganism inherent to classical studies."

means to be put on a plane with the enlightened devoutness of one familiar with literature." "In a good mind [secular literature] excites the love of virtue and diminishes the fear of death."¹

In 1373 A.D. in a letter to Luigi Marsigli, an Augustinian monk, Petrarch repeats his sanction of the study of secular literature on the grounds that "Lactantius and Augustine had found [them] indispensable."² As an afterthought it seems he declares that "the theologian...needs wide almost universal knowledge...all knowledge is indeed one body, and derived from God."³ This latter idea was not developed, nor does Petrarch appear to have felt any pressure to form it into a religious justification.

So Boccaccio puts his trust "in the grace of Jesus Christ...I am sure He will not suffer me...to go astray in my old age." As for others "while it is not desirable for everybody to study paganism, it is not equally improper for everybody," *ibid.*, 15.9, pp. 123-124, 127-129. "For example, the harp has some strings stretched more lightly than others, to make the difference, when they are touched by the plectrum in a skilful hand, they give forth sweetest harmony," *ibid.*, 15.10, p. 130. Petrarch and Boccaccio have a similar faith that secular culture must have its religious justification somewhere and until it be found they will hold fast to their books about which they can really see no harm if one is discreet.

¹Robinson and Rolfe, Petrarch, 391-393. Toward the end of the letter Petrarch reminds Boccaccio that if his arguments are not strong enough to divert him from carrying out his decision to forsake literary pursuits, he will be happy to receive Boccaccio's library, *ibid.*, 396.

²Wilkins, Ernest Hatch, Petrarch's Later Years (Cambridge, Mass. 1959), 256.

³*ibid.*, 256.

Any number of Renaissance humanists are found to be in the same situation. They either do not have the desire or they do not feel the necessity for a full-fledged religious justification of their vocations. They seem to have been content with repeating Basil or Jerome's opinions or citing the other prominent church fathers who had either dealt with the problem favorably to their interests or showed the influence of wide learning in classical literature.¹

A more liberal attitude is shown to the various elements of the secular educational curriculum than was common among the early fathers. Religion became a part of education rather than its primary adornment. Although theology was often declared to be the foremost of the studies to which secular knowledge contributed, the majority of time and space was used to secular ends and the interests of teachers and students yielded them satisfied with a partial justification for such a fusion of Christian and secular elements.

The education of all facets of the human mind and body was the avowed endeavor of the better humanist teachers, of whom Vittorino De Feltra (1378 A.D. to 1446 A.D.) was unsurpassed in this respect. Vittorino guided his students toward a goal which "combined the spirit of the Christian life with the educational apparatus of classical literature, whilst uniting with both something of the Greek passion for bodily culture and for dignity of the outer life."² There is reportedly no thought by

¹Woodward, Vittorino De Feltra. 212-214.

²Ibid., 21.

Vittorino of a contradiction among the elements of this educational scheme. The justification suggested for him by his commentator is not satisfactory but it serves to indicate Vittorino's broad approach to education.

"Vittorino fully realized the difficulties attending the use of some of the classical authors for school purposes...probably Vittorino was satisfied with the practice of Jerome and Basil or with principles laid down by Plutarch as to the care necessary in the choice of teachers, selection of matter, and the distinction to be drawn between literary form and content."¹

"Christianity and Humanism were the two coordinate factors necessary to the development of complete manhood. There is no reason to suppose that Vittorino was embarrassed by a sense of contradiction between the Classical and the Christian ideals of life. To him, and to men of his temper since, the thought and morals of the ancient world were identified with the ethical precepts of the Stoics and the idealism of Plato; and it was easy for them to point to the consistency of this teaching with the broader aspects of the Christian life."²

Augustine could argue that Christianity supplied all man's needs while employing all the skills of classical scholarship to prove and ornament his point. Renaissance educators such as Vittorino more frankly declared the advantages of secular culture while retaining Christian moral teachings. Christianity emerged from this amalgam shorn of its cultural exclusiveness and perhaps a little less ascetic. What Vittorino actually thought about the matter is difficult to determine for he left little

¹Ibid., 97-98.

²Ibid., 67.

written testimony to his ideas. An unusual religious spirit or piety is allowed him and also the knowledge of classical literature. Although he was apparently never bothered with the conflict between pagan and Christian value systems, it cannot be said that he arrived at a valid religious justification of classical studies in spite of his reviewer's claims.

"Classical history, letters, and ethics were to him a historic past which had fallen into its due place under the higher law of Christianity. Hence, if the Christian life were rightly inculcated as part and parcel of humanist training the proper subordination of antique ideas would be secured."¹

But it would be an oversight to pass Vittorino by for contributing nothing to the solution of the problem. He and his kind reaffirmed the importance of the secular world to man and ~~viewed the entire man as being~~ a worthwhile subject of improvement, not his soul alone.

The secular side of man is treated much more exclusively by Leonardo Bruni (1370 A.D. to 1444 A.D.). He concludes a treatise on education with these words.

"But my last word must be this. The intelligence that aspires to the best must aim at both knowledge and power of expression. In doing so, all sources of profitable learning will in due proportion claim your study. None have more urgent claim than the subjects and authors which treat of Religion and of our duties in the world; and it is because they assist and illustrate these supreme studies that I press upon your attention the works of the most approved poets, historians and orators of the past."²

¹Woodward, William H., Studies in Education During the Ages of the Renaissance 1400-1600 (Cambridge, 1906), 73.

²Woodward, Vittorino Da Feltre, 133. From De Studiis et Literis. This passage is highly reminiscent of the rationalization of

Bruni's interest in religion is probably not insincere, but it is definitely not his chief motivation. He finds that the Scriptures "compare unfavorably" here and there with the verses of the classical poets on similar subjects and his attitude toward the Scriptures in general is somewhat cool.¹ A large and important area of classical literature, poetry, is viewed in an almost completely secular vein.

"We know, however, that in certain quarters - where all knowledge and appreciation of letters is wanting - this whole branch of literature [i.e. poetry], marked as it is by something of the Divine, and fit, therefore, for the highest place, is described as unworthy of study. But when we remember the value of the best poetry, its charm of form and the variety and interest of its subject matter, when we consider the ease with which from our childhood up it can be committed to memory, when we recall the peculiar affinity of rhythm and meter to our emotions and our intelligence, we must conclude that nature herself is against such headlong critics."²

The appeal is made to man's appreciation of poetry and its status ordained by nature, more so than the "Divine something" that lies in it. Bruni repeats his secular or human estimation of poetry with an additional emphasis on its inherent part in education.

"Hence I hold my conviction to be securely based - namely that Poetry has by our very constitution a stronger attraction for us than any other form of expression, and that anyone ignorant of, and indifferent to, so valuable an aid to knowledge and so ennobling a source of pleasure can by no means be called educated."³

classical learning and Christianity used by the Greek fathers, especially Clement of Alexandria and Basil. It should be recalled that Bruni translated Basil's "Address to Young Men."

¹Ibid., 131-132.

²Ibid., 130.

³Ibid., 191. See Burckhardt, The Civilization of the Renaissance in

As did Vittorino, Bruni saw man and life in a much broader perspective than one of severe religiosity. ~~But nonetheless a Christian scholar with a complete commitment to his religion would find little comfort in Bruni's dictums and only somewhat more in Vittorino's and that because of the latter's personal piety.~~

Aeneas Sylvius (Pius II: 1405 A.D. to 1464 A.D.) could be looked upon as the more run-of-the-mill humanist for his rather uncomplicated attitude toward the conflict between Christianity and the Classical revival. ~~He is neither as frank as Bruni on the secular charms of literature nor seems to have the depth of personal piety found in Vittorino.~~ He merely refers the reader to the fact that the early Christian fathers used classical sources and they are even quoted in the Scriptures.

On the other hand, he does see moral pitfalls in the classics, but resolves this danger by selectivity. "The crucial question is: how do you use your authors? Basil has left us a clear guidance on the matter."¹ Basil's guidance was more comforting than definitive as was indicated earlier in this thesis. But of some interest here, is the manner in which the problem is skirted by using the authority of the patristic fathers and then making the issue seem more solvable by bringing it within the range of human competence. In short, this humanist had a shallow, religious justification for his classical studies, the shallower for its imitiveness.

¹Italy, I, 206-207. For an interesting passage on Bruni's attempts to dissuade Foggio Bracciolini from learning Hebrew.

Edward, Vittorino Da Feltra, 150.

But even better equipped scholars found the problem abstruse. Classical philosophy found its most brilliant students at the Florentine Academy. Here Marsilio Ficino (1433 A.D. to 1499 A.D.) was also involved with the rift between Christianity and the new studies, more especially Neo-Platonism. He did not reach a satisfactory reconciliation of the two, if he were striving toward that end. It is not known how much this apparent lack worried him. Ficino traced both Platonism and Christianity to the same source, "contemplative experience or the inner relationship with God."¹ Hence the two must agree in content, though not in form. The relationship between philosophy and Christianity was not passive, nor was the one isolated from the other. Platonic philosophy was felt to be a "necessary instrument for the eternal plan of divine providence."² It was to be used to prove religious truth by "rational means and thus make it convincing to unbelievers."³ Ficino cites Augustine in support of his reconciliation, but it is difficult to believe that this church father would condone, at least consciously, an ideology allowing man such an important part in salvation, in spite of his good will toward Plato.⁴

¹Kristeller, Paul Oscar, The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino (New York, 1943), 320. See also pp. 359, 397-398.

²Ibid., 27-29.

³Ibid., 321.

⁴Ibid., 15.

In general it appears that most Italian humanists tended to be rather less subject to prolonged fretting over a religious justification of their vocations. There are, however, cases of humanists who were more than passingly concerned with the opposition of secular culture to traditional Christianity. As has been seen, Petrarch's concern was real if somewhat one sided. The peculiar situation of Ambrogio Traversari has also been noted. Another humanist who took a less resolute but nonetheless serious view of the problem was the German, Rudolph Agricola (1444 A.D. to 1485 A.D.). Agricola gained a great deal of fame among humanists for his understanding of classical Greek literature; however, in the last few years of his short life he began to express doubt about the propriety of his secular scholarship. Greek literature held a "charm" for him "but beyond charm nothing...Beyond an unfruitful delight there is nothing to hope for," he wrote in 1479 A.D.¹ From "cultivating sterile sand," that is Greek literature, Agricola turned to a study of Hebrew, but Greek remained a close companion. He took the "greatest delight" in studying Greek literature. But:

"It is losing its bloom and so perhaps its fruit also. Therefore, I have thought that my mind should be stirred again by certain new allurements in studies, which I think I should receive by something more splendid. Thus while in my entire life I am pursuing these sterile literary studies and consequently I work at them sluggishly; in my Hebrew study, however, I seem to work with a set purpose."²

¹Breen, Quirinus, "Melancthon's Sources for a Life of Agricola: The Heidelberg Memories and the Writings," Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte (Germany), LII (1961), nr. 1, p. 69.

²Ibid., 72.

This new endeavor may have received some stimulation from a desire to attain greater stature among his associates, but the more apparent motivation is a personal wish for a serious area of study suitable to his own likes and more mature years rather than that which was dictated by academic circles and had occupied his youth.¹ Agricola felt that Hebrew "would enable him to penetrate the better substance of the Bible. All the while, he thinks in philological terms and his only reference to theology is made with a view to explaining it with rhetorical literary refinement. There is no hint of evangelical devotion to the Bible."² But, there are strong indications that Agricola appreciated a feeling, historic in Christian scholarship, that religious studies held more meaning than secular studies. His sensitivity to this feeling resulted in his taking up Hebrew, but Greek literature retained an appeal. Therefore an unresolved if somewhat undefined problem accompanied Agricola through his last few years.

As Renaissance approached Reformation the problem of conflicting value systems, Christian and classical-pagan, became more pronounced. Humanism contributed no small account to the technical aspects of Biblical translation evident in the Reformation, and the Renaissance itself with its secularization worked its way into the doctrines of the new faiths, but consciously at least it was considered a subordinate and very probably heretical spirit. However, subordinancy was not held

¹Ibid., 70-71.

²Ibid., 72.

to imply that a man could as well live in ignorance of classical learning if only he had Christianity. The emphasis of the Renaissance on the whole man remained a strong factor.

In De Transitu Hellenismi ad Christianismum (1534 A.D.) Guillaume Bude (1468 A.D. to 1540 A.D.), the famous French humanist, defended the study of Greek literature from a contemporary charge of heresy. He argued that Greek opened the door to the wisdom of the ancients which could be used advantageously as a preparation for Christianity.¹ But on the other side of the card, Bude criticizes "pagan doctrine" as being "sterile compared to the Christian."² In this and ramifications of similar problems Bude seems to stand with one foot in the Renaissance and the other in the Reformation.³ He appears to have repudiated that part of Italian humanism

¹Sandys, John Edwin, A History of Classical Scholarship (Cambridge, 1908), II, 171. The Greek patristic fathers, particularly Clement of Alexandria, used this "preparation" rationale. See discussion of Clement in Chapter II of this thesis.

²Breen, John Calvin, 119.

³Bude also considered favorably legitimate self-interest and ambition, frugality, foresight, political activity and the moderate acquisition of fame and wealth. Restrained secular ambitions of this sort were generally condoned by John Calvin as well, in what seems to be part of a broad religious justification of some of the features of the Renaissance that took account of man's secular position. See Georgie Harkness, John Calvin, The Man and His Ethics (New York, 1931), chapters VIII through X. The justification could be Charles Trinkaus' conclusion that Calvin believed man should exert himself in secular pursuits to fulfill a predestined plan, but as was demonstrated in chapter I of this thesis, Calvin's justification of the appreciation and use of secular culture and man's abilities pertaining thereto is aimed at the recognition and glorification of the sovereign God. See p. 33, note 1, chapter I of this thesis.

which was associated with Epicureanism. This influence in humanism caused to be placed beside one another Christianity and classical pagan values as self-sufficient in themselves with the latter receiving the greater attention.¹ Bude apparently identified the spirit of Greek philosophy with this Renaissance Epicureanism and eschewed the lot as an inadequate value system on grounds that would become familiar to the Reformation. Greek wisdom was entirely taken up with this present earthly life whereas Christianity directed its entire energies toward eternal life and divine substance. The Greeks trusted too fully in man's own abilities, cultured an arrogant, skeptical spirit and disregarded the necessity of God's protection.²

"Antiquity was convinced that the wise man formed himself, that sapientia was a naturally acquired virtue - it depended on man alone to be what he was or wished to become. But we Christians, taught by Scripture, know better that man cannot form himself to wisdom without the intervention of God, that God inclines our wills to good and evil, is the sole source of real wisdom."³

And yet humanist philology is extolled because it leads to Christian theology which is the highest adornment of man's mind.⁴ Without

¹ Lehmann, Joseph, Bude und Calvin (Wien, 1930), 71-72.

² Ibid., 72-74.

³ Rice, The Renaissance Idea of Wisdom, 148 and note 1, p. 148. This passage quoted by Rice is from De Aetate by Bude.

⁴ Braen, John Calvin, 120.

⁴ Woodward, Studies in Education, 137.

this type of humanist training based on classical studies the "true beauty and meaning" of the Scriptures is lost.¹ And without the knowledge of classical wisdom man will not have full cognition of richness of life nor the opportunity to develop his whole being.²

Bude' is reported to have declared that the natural reason of man was sufficient to "prudently" acquire the knowledge of "all things divine and human."³ Evidently Bude' gave several definitions of wisdom in his various works. They reflect a severe contradiction in his view of man's natural abilities and the assistance secular culture could offer, as against his religious orientation which bowed to God's sovereignty in these matters, leaving man more or less naturally bankrupt. The significance of his position should not be discounted on this score, however, for his combination of these two forces served to reaffirm the importance of the secular world while looking to the Reformation conviction of the determinant direction of the divine will. The juxtaposition of secular culture and divine sovereignty in the mind of Bude' was not a good fit, but the same situation in John Calvin's mind resulted in the justification heretofore discussed; hence, Bude's position is suggestive of the grounds upon which Calvin worked and an unusually appropriate contrast to the able solution of the latter.

¹Woodward, Studies in Education, 137.

²Ibid., 133.

³Rice, The Renaissance Idea of Wisdom, 94.

CONCLUSION

The Geneva Academy was formally established in 1559 through the influence of the reformer, John Calvin. Aside from the expected religious elements in the curriculum such as reading from the Greek New Testament and Psalm singing, the college was a "typical Renaissance school."¹ French, Latin and Greek grammar, composition and reading was stressed and the latter two languages were taught via Latin and Greek classical literature. Classical literature was also used to teach rhetoric and dialectic. In fact, the majority of time by far was spent on secular texts.

The emphasis on classical literature in the Geneva Academy is not surprising if one recalls the use made of this literature in Calvin's Institutes and the praise it receives there. Moreover Calvin's humanist background is an obvious antecedent to both of these situations. The Renaissance was inculcated in Calvin's personality and consequently his pietism and theology. He was in all respects a child of his age. Classical literature and indeed secular culture were approached squarely and the friendship was deep and mutually profitable. There is no hint of the theme "spoiling the Egyptians" with its implication of disapproval shown the secular world. Nor does Calvin accuse the classical writers

¹McNeill, John T., The History and Character of Calvinism (New York, 1954), 194-196.

of plagiarizing from Moses and the prophets - a plagiarism itself from the Alexandrine Jews. Secular culture is looked upon with candid favor. The same type of appreciation of secular culture can be found in Basil, Jerome, and even Augustine, but the justification of utility they used neither fulfilled their own needs nor satisfied succeeding Christian scholars. They viewed secular culture as something apart from Christianity.

Several of the patristic fathers, notably Clement of Alexandria, Basil, Lactantius and Jerome held secular literature and "pagan" learning in high esteem. But secular culture was reproached for its "heathen" taint; hence if a Christian were to approach it, it must first be purged.

So much for formal declarations. The fact is that some or all of the patristic fathers were so greatly influenced by classical literature and institutions that their character owed more than they knew to its influence. Several fathers openly held a much more favorable attitude to classical culture than their hard-worked rationalizations of utility or redemption could support. The important observation here is that none reached a justification of secular culture adequate to their own appreciation of it nor fair to its actual value. In the main, the patristic fathers realized this shortcoming and it troubled some of them without end.

John Calvin implies that secular culture was not secular at all but actually its worthwhile aspects were a gift of God's grace. Clement of Alexandria and Augustine also viewed the "best" of secular culture as God inspired, but Augustine did not see that this worth was really an intrinsic part of a Christian's life and Clement would not pursue the

question to an affirmative solution even though he was well aware of the value in classical literature. Calvin is quite clear that the freely given gifts of divine grace as he refers to much of classical literature as well as the physical world and man's intellectual and emotional capacities, are not to be spurned. They deserve the admiration and investigation suitable to their divine origin. The gifts of God must be appreciated, studied and enjoyed, else man be found guilty of disrespectful conduct toward a gracious God. Basil, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzum all emphasized that man should not reject classical culture, but none reached the clarity nor the strength of Calvin's religious justification and none of the patristic fathers appear to have pointed to the grace of God as the source of the gifts. The warmth of the word "grace" used by Calvin embraces classical literature and other elements of secular culture in a very favorable light.

Undoubtedly the influence of Renaissance humanism accounts for Calvin's greater sensitivity to the value of the secular world and the importance of accommodating it in any realistic religious scheme. But the Renaissance humanists apparently reached no better formal justification than their patristic predecessors. To a great extent they went no further than to repeat the time-worn themes used by the early church fathers. However, the weight of influence was definitely with secular culture. Unable to justify their vocations, they did promote the cause of secularism till it forced a compromise from severe religiosity. The final result of humanist activities in this sphere is, perhaps, represented by Philip Melancthon (1497 A.D. to 1560 A.D.). He recognized much of

secular culture as a gift of God. "It behooves the church of God to take the greatest care than one be most nobly instructed in the arts and letters which she herself truly knows to be gifts of God on account of the great uses they bring to the human race."¹ As is seen, he feels Christians must utilize these gifts. There is no doubt about Melancthon's love for classical literature and admiration of other humanists. It would seem that his view ante-dates Calvin, but Melancthon does not really do justice to the secular world, for it remains for him a thing apart; he keeps his religion in another pocket.² The dichotomy of Christianity and life shown by Melancthon must give way to Calvin's more comprehensive justification. However, it did assure secular culture of a place, albeit subordinate place, in religious education.

When surveying man's abilities Calvin stumbles over the place of natural gifts and special gifts. In several notable sections Calvin states that man's natural gifts even though corrupted have been able to produce the masterpieces of classical literature and other valuable elements of secular culture. Later in what is an apparent contradiction, he rescinds this idea in favor of more directly given gifts - that is God's special gift or gifts account for these worthwhile works of classical literature. Man's natural gifts may play a part in these manifestations but only when sparked by God's special attention. The fact that

¹Quoted by Quirinus Breen in "The Two-Fold Truth Theory in Melancthon," Review of Religion (January, 1945), 126.

²Ibid. 132-135.

Calvin at one point seems to find such significant ability in man, that he can rise somewhat above the corruption of his natural gifts leaves one with the impression that Calvin harbored strong feelings about the inherent value of man; however, Calvin does not close the door on this issue until he has made it quite clear that whenever valid ideas were produced by "pagans" they were initiated and directed by divine grace. In spite of the limitations he amended to this discussion of man's natural gifts, he never withdrew his original praise.

But aside from his inconsistent consideration of man's abilities, Calvin realized a justification of the use and enjoyment of secular culture whether manifested through God's natural, common grace or God's special gifts. Unhappily Calvin could not keep a straight course on the value of man's natural abilities and this reflects disadvantageously on the gifts themselves, since he originally explained that the worthwhile aspects of secular culture resulted from man's natural abilities - themselves God-given. And, of course, discounting man's natural abilities is an inadequate consideration of human capacities for some critics; although it is difficult to see how Calvin could have done more and remained true to his religious convictions. It should be remembered that he did allow man great abilities which he never retracted in spite of an apparent amendment. But in the main it seems evident that Calvin's justification of secular culture remains valid and can be viewed somewhat apart from man's natural condition. The gifts are to be appreciated and studied because they come from God's freely given grace, regardless of the participation of their human vehicles. Some would criticize him

for making the gifts subordinate to the "first cause" or the divine purpose, but considering Calvin's period it is admirable that such a potentially satisfactory solution was sketched out as part of a general religious scheme. This solution differs in emphasis and detail from Augustine's opinions on the matter, but in this case the emphasis and detail are the important factors. Secular culture and man's undeniable appreciation of it, virtually excluded from a Christian's life by Augustine, is reinstated by Calvin, not as a mere necessity but as an intrinsic part of Christian life. The Christian is obliged to be constantly gratified for the providence of God. Hence the gifts of God's grace, classical literature or secular culture and even life itself must not be spurned else man be found contemptuous of God himself: this view was never retracted nor amended. The inconsistencies in Calvin's declarations are more apt to prompt a greater liberalization of religious dogma through more study than invalidate his own ideas which he leaves open to development.

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There are several sources used for this thesis which deserve special attention or explanation; among them is the edition of Calvin's Institutes edited by John T. McNeill. Aside from being the most recent English translation of the Institutes, this edition contains extensive notes, indexes and bibliographies as well as a valuable introduction. McNeill's notes are especially praiseworthy. In addition the superscript symbols in the text indicating the various editorial strata are quite helpful. Another source of particular value is The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation. This series is also of recent vintage, and I assume it will continue to increase in size. The introductions, brief histories of manuscripts etc., make this source more than just a new translation. Harold Hagendahl's Latin Fathers and the Classics has not the size of the preceding reference but it has equal quality - especially valuable is his work on Jerome which comprises the greater part of the book. Professor Breen's work is always of interest because this problem of the conflict of secular culture and christianity has held his attention for many years. R. R. Bolgar's The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries is widely used, but he seems to treat some of his data rather casually. The work by Charles N. Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, has been taken to task by Paul Oscar Kristeller but it remains a worthwhile and inspiring work. Somewhat narrow in scope but useful for its listing

of pertinent references is Gerald L. Ellspermann's The Attitude of Early Christian Latin Writers Toward Pagan Literature and Learning.

The scope of the problem considered in this thesis and the capacities and interests of the author have resulted in the use of a rather limited amount of the vast quantity of secondary material available in this area. Hence it is hoped that this investigation will serve, at the least, as an introduction and orientation ground for future works. However, several sources, used too little or discovered too late to be listed in the bibliography, should be noted here because of their relevance to the many facets of the issue concerning secularism and Christianity. Another posthumous addition to an already impressive list of publications is Early Christianity and Greek Paideia (Cambridge, Mass., 1961) by Werner Jaeger. Also Jaeger's work on Gregory of Nyssa is yet to appear. Ernest Robert Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages (New York, 1953), should be mentioned as well as Harry Austryn Wolfson's The Philosophy of the Church Fathers (Cambridge, Mass., 1956) and his works on Philo and Spinoza. The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century (Cambridge, Mass., 1927) by Charles Homer Haskins, and Etienne Gilson's The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy (New York, 1940), also will be valuable for a coverage of an important area not treated in this thesis.

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APPENDIX

The following is from Institutio Christianae Religionis edited by

A. Tholuck, book II, chapter II, pp. 189-184.

12. Ac illis quidem vulgaris sententia, quam sumpserunt ex Augustino, mihi placet, naturalis dona fuisse corrupta in homine per peccatum, supernaturalibus autem exinanitum fuisse. Nam hoc posteriore membro intelligunt tam fidei lucem quam iustitiam, quae ad coelestem vitam aeternamque felicitatem adipiscendam sufficerent. Ergo se abdicans a regno Dei, simul privatus est spiritualibus donis, quibus in spem salutis aeternae instructus fuerat: unde sequitur, ita exulare a regno Dei, ut quaecumque ad beatam aeternam vitam spectant, in eo extincta sint, donec per regenerationis gratiam ipse recuperet. In his sunt fides, amor Dei, caritas erga proximos, sanctitatis et iustitiae studium. Haec omnia quum nobis restituit Christus, adventitia censentur, et praeter naturam: ideoque fuisse abolita colligimus. Rursus sanitas mentis et cordis rectitudo simul fuerunt ablata: atque haec est naturalium donorum corruptio. Nam etsi aliquid intelligentiae et iudicii residuum manet una cum voluntate, neque tamen mentem integram et sanam dicemus, quae et debilis est, et multis tenebris immersa: et pravitas voluntatis plus satis nota est. Quum ergo ratio, qua discernit bonum inter bonum et malum, qua intelligit et iudicat, naturale donum sit, non potuit in totum deleri: sed partim debilitata, partim viciata fuit, ut deformes ruinae appareant. Hoc sensu dicit Ioannes (1,5.) lucem adhuc in tenebris lucere, sed a tenebris non comprehendi: quibus verbis utrumque clare exprimitur, in perveras et degeneras hominis naturae micare adhuc scintillas, quae ostendant rationale esse animal et a brutis differre, quia intelligentia praeditum sit: et tamen hanc lucem multa ignorantiae densitate suffocari, ut efficaciter emergere nequeat. Sic voluntas, quia inseparabilis est ab hominis natura, non perit, sed pravis cupiditatibus devincta fuit, ut nihil rectum appetere queat. Haec quidem plena est definitio, sed quae pluribus explicanda est. Ergo, ut secundum primam illem distinctionem (lib. I. c. 15 s. 7. et 8.), qua hominis animam in intellectum et voluntatem partiti sumus, operationis ordo procedat: vim intellectus priore loco excutiamus. Perpetuae coecitatis ita eum damnare, ut nihil intelligentiae ullo in genere rerum reliquum facias, non modo verbo Dei, sed sensus etiam communio experimento repugnat. Videmus enim insitum esse humano ingenio desiderium nescio quod indagandae veritatis, ad quam minime aspiraret, nisi ei aliquo eius odore ante percepto. Est ergo iam haec nonnulla humani intellectus perspicientia, quod veritatis amore naturaliter repituri

cuius neglectus in brutis animantibus arguit crassum absque ratione sensum. Quamquam haec qualiscumque appetentis, antequam cursus sui stadium ingrediatur, deficit: quia mox concidit in vanitatem. Siquidem mens hominis, praes habitudine, rectam veri investigandi viam tenere nequit, sed per varios errores vagatur, et tanquam in tenebris palpando subinde impingit, donec tandem palata evanescat: ita veritatem quaerendo, quam sit ad ipsam quaerendam et inveniendam inepta prodit. Altera deinde vanitate graviter laborat: quod in quarum rerum notitiam incumbere expediat, saepius non discernit. Itaque in disquirendis supervacuis ac nihili rebus ridicula curiositate se torquet: ad res maxime cognitivas necessarias aut non advertit, aut contemptum et raro deflectit: studium certe suum vix unquam serio applicat. De qua pravitate quam passim conqueruntur profani scriptores, omnes fere se esse implicuisse comperiuntur. Quare Salomon in toto suo Ecclesiaste, ubi ea studia est persecutus, in quibus sibi videntur homines valde sapere, insania tamen esse et frivola pronuntiat.

13. Neque tamen ita conatus eius semper in irritum cedent, quin aliqui assequatur, praesertim ubi se ipsam ad inferiora ista intendit. Quin etiam non ita stupida est, quin exiguum quiddam et de superioribus delibet, utcumque negligentius illis percontandis vacet: non id quidem aeque facultate. Nam quam supra vitae praesentis spatium evenitur, tum praecipue demon convincitur esse imbecillitatis. Quare, ut melius perspiciamus quousque pro gradibus suae facultatis in unaquaque re procedat, distinctionem nobis proponere operae pretium est. Sit ergo haec distinctio, esse aliam quidem rerum terrenarum intelligentiam, aliam vero coelestium. Res terrenae voco, quas ad Deum regnumque eius, ad veram iustitiam, ad futurae vitae vestitudinem non pertinent: sed cum vita praesenti rationem relationemque habent et quodammodo intra eius fines continentur. Res coelestes, puram Dei notitiam, verae iustitiae rationem, ac regni coelestis mysteria. In priore genere sunt, politica, oeconomia, artes omnes mechanicae, disciplinaeque liberales. In secundo (de Quibus §. 13. ss.), Dei ac divinae voluntatis cognitio, et vitae secundum eam formandae regula. De priori autem sic fatendum Quoniam homo animal est naturae sociale, naturali quoque instinctu, ad fovendam conservandamque eam societatem propendet, ideoque civilis cuiusdam et honestatis et ordinis universales impressiones inesse omnium hominum animis conspicimus. Hinc fit ut nemo reperietur, qui non intelligat, oportere quovis hominum coetus legibus contineri, quique non earum legum principia mente complectatur. Hinc ille perpetuus tam Gentium omnium, quam singulorum mortalium in leges consensu, quis insita sunt universis, absque magistro aut legislatore, ipsarum semina. Neque morer dissensiones et pugnas, quae mox emergunt, dum alii cupiunt ius et fas esse inversum, soluta legum repagula, libidinem solam pro iure grassari, ut fures et latrones: alii (quod vitium plus quam vulgare est) iniquum esse putant quod pro aequo ab aliis sancitur: contra laudabile contendunt quod ab aliis vetatur. Siquidem illi non ideo leges oderunt, quod ignorant bonas et sanctas esse: sed praecipiti cupiditate furentes, cum manifesta ratione pugnant, et quod mentis intelligentis probent, pro sua libidine abominantur. Posterius certamen tale

est, ut primam illam conceptionem aequitatis non dirimat; siquidem de legum capitibus dum inter se disceptant homines, in quandam aequitatis summam consentiunt. In quo debilitas certe humanae mentis arguitur, quae, etiam dum viam sequi videtur, claudicat et vacillat. Manet tamen illud, insperatum esse universis semen aliquod ordinis politici. Atque hoc amplum argumentum est, in huius vitae constitutione, nullem destitui luce rationis hominem.

14. Sequuntur artes tum liberales, tum manuales, quibus discendis, quia inest omnibus nobis quaedam aptitudo, in eis etiam apparet vis humani oecuminae. Quanquam autem non sunt omnes omnibus discendis idonei, satis tamen communis energiae certum specimen est, quod nemo prope reperitur, cuius in arte aliqua perspicacia non se exerat. Neque sola suppetit ad discendum energia et facilitas, sed ad excogitandum in unaquaque arte novum aliquid, vel amplificandum et expoliendum quod alio praesente didicaris. Quod ut Platonem perperam impulit, ut traderet comprehensionem eiusmodi nihil esse quam recordationem: ita nos optima ratione cogit fatari, esse ingenitum humano ingenio eius principium. Haec ergo documenta aperta testantur universalem rationis et intelligentiae comprehensionem esse hominibus naturaliter inditam. Sic tamen universale est bonum, ut in eo pro se quisque peculiarem Dei gratiam agnoscere debeat. Ad quam gratitudinem nos abunde expergeficit ipse naturae conditor, dum moriones creat, in quibus representat, quibus excellat dotibus hominis anima nisi eius lumine perfusa; quod sic naturale inest omnibus, ut prorsus gratuitum sit erga singulos beneficentiae eius manus. Ipsarum porro artium inventio aut methodica traditio aut interior et praestantior cognitio (quae propria est paucorum) non est quidem solidum argumentum communis perspicaciae: quia tamen promiscue contingit piis et impiis, iure inter naturales dotes numeratur.

15. Quoties ergo in profanos scriptores incidimus, illa, quae admirabilis in iis affulget, veritatis luce admonemur, mentem hominis quantumlibet ab integritate sua collapsam et perversam, eximis tamen etiam Dei donis vestitam esse et exornatam. Si unicum veritatis fontem Dei spiritum esse reputamus veritatem ipsam neque respicimus, neque contemnemus, ubicunque apparebit: nisi velimus in Spiritum Dei contumeliosi esse. Non enim donis Spiritus, sine ipsius contemptu et opprobrio, vilipenduntur. Quid autem? veritatem affulsisse antiquis iureconsultis negabimus, qui tanta aequitate civilem ordinem et disciplinam prodiderunt? Philosophos coecutisse dicemus, cum in exquisitis ista naturae contemplatione, tum artificiosa descriptione? Dicemus mentem illis defuisse, qui arte disserendi constituta, nos cum ratione loqui docuerunt? Dicemus eos insanisse, qui medicinam excudendo, suam industriam nobis impenderunt? Quid mathematica omnia? putabimusne amentium deliria? Imo ne sine ingenti quidem admiratione veterum scripta legere de his rebus poterimus: admirabimur autem, quia praecelara, ut sunt, cogemur agnoscere. Porro laudabiliana aliquid aut praecelaram censebimus, quod non recognoscamus o Deo provenire? Pudeat nos tantae ingratitude, in quam non inciderunt Ethnici poetae, qui et philosophiam, et leges, et bonas omnes artes deorum inventa esse confessi sunt. Ergo quum homines istos, quos Scriptura... vocat, usque eo fuisse potest in rerum inferiorum investigatione scutos et perspicaces, talibus exemplis dicemus, quot naturae humanae bona Dominus reliquerit, postquam vero bono

spoliata est.

16. Neque tamen interim obliviscamur hæc præstantissima divini Spiritus esse bona, quæ in publicum generis humani bona, quibus vult dispensat. Si enim Beseleel et Ooliab (Exod. 31, 2. 35, 30.) intelligentiam et scientiam, quæ ad fabricam tabernaculi requirebatur, oportuit a Spiritu Dei instillari: non mirum est, si earum rerum, quæ sunt in vita humana præstantissimæ, cognitio per Spiritum Dei communicari nobis dicatur: Neque est cur roget quisquam, Quidnam cum Spiritu commercii impiis, qui sunt a Deo prorsus alieni? Nam quod dicitur Spiritus Dei in solidis fidelibus habitare, id intelligendum de Spiritu sanctificationis, per quem Deo ipsi in templo consecramur. Neque tamen ideo minus replet, movet, vegetat omnia eiusdem Spiritus virtute, idque secundum uniuscuiusque generis proprietatem, quam ei creationis lege attribuit. Quodsi nos Dominus impiorum opera et ministerio in physica, dialecticis, mathematicis et reliquis id genus voluit adiutos, es utamur: ne si Dei dona ultro in ipsis oblata negligamus, demus iustas ignavie nostræ poenas. At vero, ne quis hominem valde beatum putet, quum sub elementis huius mundi tanta veritatis comprehendendæ energie illi conceditur: simul addendum est, totam istam et intelligendi viam et intelligentiam, quæ inde consequitur, rem esse fluxam et evanidam coram Deo, ubi non subest solidum veritatis fundamentum. Verissime enim Augustinus (cf. hui. cap. 9. 4. 8t. 12. cui subscribere, ut diximus, coacti sunt Magister sententiarum [lib. 2. dist. 25.] et Scholasticus), ut gratuita homini dona post lapsum detracta esse, ita naturalis hæc quæ restabant, corrupta fuisse docet, non quod per se inquinari possint, quatenus a Deo proficiscuntur sed quia polluto homini pura esse desiderant, ne quam inde laudem consequatur.

17. Hæc summa sit, in universo genere humano perspicui, naturæ nostræ propriam esse rationem, quæ nos a brutis animalibus discernat, sicut ipsa sese differunt a rebus insensatis. Nam quod nascuntur moriones quidam vel stupidi, defectus ille generalem Dei gratiam non obscurat: quin potius tali spectaculo monemur, quod nobis relictum est, Dei indulgentias merito debere ascribi: quia nisi nobis pepercisset, totius naturæ interitum secum traxisset defectus. Quod autem alii præstant acutius, alii iudicio superant, aliis mane agillior est ad hanc vel illam artem discendam, in hæc varietate gratiam suam nobis commendat Deus, ne sibi quisquam velut propriam arroget, quod ex mera illius liberalitate fluit. Unde enim alius alio præstantior, nisi ut in natura communi emineat specialis Dei gratia, quæ multos præteriens, nemini obstrictam esse clamat? Adde quod singulares motus pro cuiusque vocatione Deus instillat: cuius rei multis occurrunt exempla in libro Iudicum (6, 34), ubi dicitur Spiritus Domini induisse, quos ad regendum populum vocabat. Denique in eximiiis quibusque factis specialis est instinctus. Quæ ratione Saulem sequuti sunt fortes, quorum tetigerat Deus corda (I. Sam. 10, 26.). Et quum prædicatur inauguratio in regnum, ita loquitur Samuel (I. Sam. 10, 6.), Transibit super te Spiritus Domini, et eris vir alius (cf. ib. 16, 13). Atque hoc ad totum, gubernationis cursum extenditur: sicuti postea narratur de Davide, quod transierit super eum Spiritus Domini a die illa in posterum. Sed idem alibi traditur quoad particulares motus. Imo apud Homerum ingenio polere dicuntur homines, non modo prout cuique distribuit Iupiter, sed Et certe experientia ostendit, dum attoniti sæpe hærent, qui maxime ingeniosi erant ac sollertes, in manu et arbitrio Dei esse mentes hominum, ut eas singulis momentis regati quæ ratione

Dei est

dicitur auferre sensum prudentibus, ut errent per inuia (Ps. 107, 40.). Caeterum in hac diversitate conspicimus tamen aliquam imaginis Dei superstites notas, quae totum humanum genus ab aliis creaturis distinguunt.

18. Nunc exponendum est, quid cernat humana ratio, ubi ad regnum Dei venit et spiritualem illam perspicientiam: quae tribus potissimum rebus constat, Deum nosse, paternum erga nos eius favorem, in quo salus nostra consistit: et formandae secundum legis regulam, vitae rationem. Cum in primis duobus, tum vero in secundo proprie qui sunt hominum ingeniosissimi, talis sunt coerciores. Equidem non inficior, sparsim quaedam apud philosophos de Deo legi scite et apposite dicta: sed quae vertiginosam quandam imaginationem semper respiciant. Praebuit quidem illis Dominus, ut supra dictum est, exiguum divinitatis suae gustum, ne ignorantiam impietati obtenderent: et eos interdum ad dicenda nonnulla impulit, quorum confessione ipsi convincerentur: sed ita viderunt quae videbant, ut tali intuitu minime ad veritatem dirigerentur, nedum pertingerent: qualiter nocturni fulguri cernationem, qui in medio agro est viator, longe lateque ad momentum videt, sed ad eo evanido aspectu, ut ante noctis caligine resorbeatur, quam pedem movere queat: tantum abest ut in viam tali subsidio deducatur. Praeterea illae veritatis guttulae, quibus libros tanquam fortuito aspergunt, quot et quam portentosis mendaciis sunt inquinatae? Denique illam divinae erga nos benevolentiae certitudinem (sine qua hominis ingenium immensa confusione repleri necesse est, ne olfecerunt quidem unquam. Ad hanc ergo veritatem nec appropinquat, nec contendit, nec collimat humana ratio, ut intelligat quis sit verus Deus, qualisve erga nos esse velit. (vid. lib. 3. c. 2. s. 14. 15. 16.).

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry should be supported by a valid receipt or invoice. The second part of the document outlines the procedures for handling discrepancies and errors. It states that any error should be reported immediately to the supervisor and corrected as soon as possible. The third part of the document provides a detailed explanation of the accounting cycle, including the steps from journalizing to closing the books. The fourth part of the document discusses the role of the accountant in providing financial information to management. It notes that accountants should be able to identify trends and provide recommendations based on the data. The fifth part of the document describes the various types of financial statements that are prepared, including the balance sheet, income statement, and cash flow statement. The sixth part of the document discusses the importance of internal controls in preventing fraud and ensuring the accuracy of financial reporting. The seventh part of the document provides a summary of the key points discussed in the document. The eighth part of the document discusses the future of accounting and the role of technology in the profession. The ninth part of the document provides a list of resources for further study. The tenth part of the document provides a list of references.

Typed by Mary Jo Hall