

Demop. If instead of prophesying with undisguised pleasure the downfall of Christianity, you would only consider how infinitely indebted European humanity is to it, and to the religion which, after the lapse of some time, followed Christianity from its old home in the East! Europe received from it a drift which had hitherto been unknown to it--it learnt the fundamental truth that life cannot be an end-in-itself, but that the true end of our existence lies beyond it. The Greeks and Romans had placed this end absolutely in life itself, so that, in this sense, they may most certainly be called blind heathens. Correspondingly, all their virtues consist in what is serviceable to the public, in what is useful; and Aristotle says quite naïvely, "_Those virtues must necessarily be the greatest which are the most useful to others_" (?????? ?? ????????? ????? ?????? ??? ????? ?????????????????, _Rhetor_. I. c. 9). This is why the ancients considered love for one's country the greatest virtue, although it is a very doubtful one, as it is made up of narrowness, prejudice, vanity, and an enlightened self-interest. Preceding the passage that has just been quoted, Aristotle enumerates all the virtues in order to explain them individually. They are _Justice, Courage, Moderation, Magnificence_ (????????????????), _Magnanimity, Liberality, Gentleness, Reasonableness, and Wisdom_. How different from the Christian virtues! Even Plato, without comparison the most transcendental philosopher of pre-Christian antiquity, knows no higher virtue than _Justice_; he alone recommends it unconditionally and for its own sake, while all the other philosophers make a happy life--_vita beata_--the aim of all virtue; and it is acquired through the medium of moral behaviour. Christianity released

European humanity from its superficial and crude absorption in an
ephemeral, uncertain, and hollow existence.

... _coelumque tueri

Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus_.