

THE THOUGHT OF GEORGE MONRO GRANT

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GEORGE MONRO GRANT, CLERGYMAN, educator, patriot, and controversialist, was one of the most active of the small group of intellectuals who, in the last years of the nineteenth century, strove to give direction and content to life in the new Canadian nation.¹ The result, embodied in a steady stream of books, articles, essays and lectures, was a vision of man, nationality, and the imperial future action in conformity with which, Grant firmly believed, would set Canadians on the path to greatness and salvation in the present and for generations to come. To examine the contours of that vision is, then, to consider a system of ideas which stood in dynamic relationship to a particular appreciation of what was happening in Canadian society, to a precisely defined assessment of the direction events in the world at large were taking, and to a certain understanding of the principles structuring the operations of the universe itself. Unless that point is grasped at the outset, the full meaning of what Grant tried to accomplish will remain unclear.

No small part of the precision and insistence with which Grant spelled out his views derived from his belief — rooted in his early Christian training, reinforced by his seven-year sojourn among the leading proponents of Scottish idealism,² and sharpened by his association with the distinguished Queen's philosopher John Watson³ — that the nature of reality could be understood only by those who saw that the truth which really mattered lay far beyond the realm of the senses. Its beholders must for that very reason report what they had seen with force and exactitude, for in an age already too much inclined to disregard phenomena for whose existence no direct and tangible proof was available such things were to be spoken of with special care. Making clear how one acquired knowledge was a matter of particularly great importance, for only if that were firmly established could the claims of the century's ever more confident empiricists be viewed in the proper perspective. In spite of all the advances made by science God's truth could not, it was crucial to see, be fully understood by those who persisted in using nothing but its method. Beyond a certain point on the road to understanding — here a distinctly Kantian element entered Grant's thought — "nature's face is veiled," and once those who sought to uncover her secrets using the technique of science had reached that point, they could do no more than speak of an

“unknown and unknowable God.” An altogether different approach was, in consequence, required if one wished to move into the realm of ultimate truth. Faith was a necessary element in the journey, and faith, as Grant put it, “cometh not of science. Faith is the vision of the unseen, faith assumes revelation.”⁴

One could not, however, conclude from this — here was the other, equally important side of the proposition — that intellect had no role at all to play in the process by which man came to know God’s truth. It was, indeed, only through a Christian ordering of man’s mind and reason that the “nobler elements” of his nature could be brought into play, an essential step if he were to comprehend the Divine order in anything like its full range and subtlety. The church, the press, the school, and the college therefore had important responsibilities, for more than any other of society’s agencies, they had the power to make men free. The results to be yielded by the exercise of that power might come slowly — Grant was under no illusions on that score — but “in the end” what he called “the educational method” was, he assured Canadians, bound to “prevail.”⁵

A partisan of rigour in matters of schooling — he remained convinced throughout his life that study of the classics played an important role in training the mind⁶ — neither Grant’s enthusiasm for traditional methods nor his belief that scholarship and science could carry one only so far down the road to understanding blinded him to the relevance new departures in the world of learning might bear to the search for truth. In thus supporting such innovations in scholarship as textual criticism⁷ and in opposing the hand of authority in matters of the intellect, he made it clear that, in his view, a refusal to accept change and development would militate against attainment of the very objectives it was supposed to help achieve. “How,” as he put it, “can a Church expect to produce great divines if it muzzles the thinker and scholar?”⁸ Rejecting the instruments — linguistic criticism, epigraphy, archaeology — which had done so much to amplify God’s truth would, indeed, be tantamount to blasphemy, for were not these things gifts of the Creator Himself?⁹ Even Darwin’s work earned a positive response from Grant, for he found in it a demonstration of the mystery and strange purposefulness of God’s ways. In thus recognizing, as one of his contemporaries observed, “no conflict between the teachings of true religion, in its broadest sense, and the discoveries of modern science,”¹⁰ he gave clear evidence of his belief that all forms of inquiry had a place in the grand search for truth.

If education had a signal role to play in this fundamentally important enterprise, its part in the determination of secular affairs was, thought Grant, even more central. His belief that there was no real division between spirit and matter — “the ideal divorced from the actual,” he once put it, “is a mere Chimera”¹¹ — led him to argue that even as improving the mind brought society’s members closer to knowledge of God it would lead to a practical strengthening of the community. He therefore opposed anything that looked like a tax on knowledge,¹²

and made it clear that a major requirement for Canada's development was "properly-educated brains."¹³ Cultivating the powers of the intellect on a broad scale was, indeed, a *sine qua non* of national survival. "Every country," he pointedly remarked, "must take its share in the common burden and give its contribution to the solution of these problems, old as the race, which appear in new forms of every age, or accept the position of a mere dependent upon others and sink into spiritual decrepitude or petrification."¹⁴

Grant's emphasis on the relevance education bore to the country's future never, of course, involved him in losing sight of its higher purposes — "universities," he wrote on one occasion, "represent the spiritual side of man"¹⁵ — and he made it clear that education, even in the service of national development, was a serious matter which could be properly managed only if it concentrated first on those at the apex of the learning pyramid. "It is a sound maxim," he informed those who heard his inaugural address at Queen's, "that if you would improve the education of a country you must begin at the top."¹⁶ The educational edifice had, in sum, to be shaped by men who realized that education was important, "not because of its money value, but because — if of the right kind — it develops the spirit in man, the spirit which values literature, science, art, in a word, all truth, for its own sake."¹⁷

Insistence upon the importance of spiritual development in its relation to national growth was, Grant thought, particularly vital, for in the absence of such development there could be no national existence worthy of the name. Only those who had grasped the fact that the foundations of reality were moral and ideal and were able to engage their fellow men at the same high level of discourse and comprehension could be trusted to give the national life the richness and form it required. "A nation to be great" — the point emerged with naturalness and inevitability from all that he wrote on the subject — "must have great thoughts; must be inspired with lofty ideals; must have men and women willing to work and wait and war 'for an idea'."¹⁸ Or again, at the end of his life, "a nation is saved by ideas; inspiring and formative ideas."¹⁹ The structuring of a mature and self-reliant polity thus required — it was an observation which appeared perhaps more frequently in Grant's work than any other — "not more millions either in men or money . . . but more of the old spirit in the men we have; not a long list of principles, but a clear insight into those that are fundamental."²⁰

As a man who considered his own list of principles short and his insight clear, Grant thought himself well-fitted to discharge the important obligation of equipping his fellow Canadians with the knowledge they needed if they were to guide their actions properly. Capable of being succinctly stated — all things in God's universe were directly linked to Him, and to each other, by the indissoluble bonds of the spirit; there was no real division between matter and mind, for one was but

an aspect of the other; one could envision no genuine hierarchy of any sort among God's creatures, for each of them stood in the same relation to the Creator, and each had its own essential part to play in the shaping of His grand design²¹ — the body of principle which made up that knowledge informed all of his writing. And in communicating awareness of it to his compatriots — here one gets a particularly clear view of the importance he attached to the preaching of the word — he intended far more than that they should simply assimilate its meaning; their grasp of its significance would be manifest in behaviour as well as thought, for — he believed — it was hardly possible to understand the principles in accordance with which God intended the world to be run without wishing to do one's part to insure that it would in fact be regulated by them. The faith Grant placed in his system's power to inspire right action was, then, one of his most telling characteristics. Nothing offers more eloquent testimony to his belief in the force of ideas, and nothing explains more clearly the importance he attached to specifying the proper principles of behaviour in all departments of human activity.

THE INSISTENCE ON THE EQUALITY of God's creatures which formed a central part of Grant's system had a particular relevance for his understanding of the principles which ought to govern human relations. One should, he believed, strive to prevent those relations from coming to rest on the assumption that men were irreducibly different. What appeared at first sight to be mankind's complicating and troublesome diversity was, in fact, no more than a veil behind which reposed a collection of beings each of whom had been created by God and all of whom were engaged in the same divinely inspired enterprise.

This was, Grant thought, a lesson his compatriots, open to immigration and exposed by geography and membership in the Empire to influences of a worldwide scope, were particularly fitted to absorb. Canadians, of all peoples, should be able to see "that the life of the world is one, that all men are brothers and that the service of humanity is the most acceptable form of religion to the Common Father."²² The truth of the proposition that the elements composing reality had within themselves the stuff of a transcendent unity was, indeed, being forced on Canadians by what was happening at their very doorstep. The different strands of the Canadian experience, it was clear to all who troubled to look, were being inexorably knit together by the Canadians' emerging realization that what they had in common was of far more consequence than the elements by which they were divided. One had only to remember that "it takes a long time to build a national structure; and the greater the variety in the materials the longer the time needed, though as a compensation the more beautiful will the structure eventually be."²³

Grant's relegation of diversity to the status of an element which would do no more than impart texture and spice to a national life whose components would otherwise be united in support of a common body of goals and principles gave him a conceptual tool of great utility. Retention of their culture by the French Canadians was not, it enabled him to assert, a threat to the nation's survival. Notwithstanding their attachment to their own ways they had in war and peace alike demonstrated a capacity to serve the higher unity.²⁴ The generous and accommodating principles encased in the Quebec Act thus remained the best guide to the handling of the French Canadians, for applying them insured, not division and strife, but co-operation in pursuit of the highest goals.²⁵ The lesson all of this taught was clear: "The supposition that national unity requires uniformity of language and race is an abstract conception scarcely worth refuting. . . . The highest form of national life does not depend on identity, but rather on differences that are transcended by common political interests and sentiments. . . ." ²⁶

The country's experience as a whole, Grant was convinced, more than confirmed the truth of this proposition. Far from impoverishing the national life, weakening its thrust towards unity, or interfering with the emergence of a national frame of reference, the existence of regional and provincial differences had enriched the nation. In the very act of confronting their dissimilarities, Canadians were being brought to see how fundamental were the possessions they had in common. And if Grant's own experience showed this process to be a reality — "I . . . have," he noted in the midst of the growing provincial rights agitation of the late 1880's, "learned to respect my fellow-countrymen and to sympathize with their Provincial life, and to see that it was not antagonistic but intended to be the handmaid to a true national life"²⁷ — he believed that Canadians in general were no less touched by it. Indeed, with Confederation and the opening of the West, a kind of moral transformation had taken place among them. They had developed a broader field of vision, become noticeably less provincial, and set themselves firmly on the path to nationhood. In these new and salutary circumstances, it was hardly surprising that "old religious differences shrivelled into insignificance, and old watchwords once thought sacred lost their meaning."²⁸

As much of the foregoing implies, Grant's acceptance of diversity, in principle unlimited, was in practice subject to one overriding condition. Those whose attachment to their own ways was being tolerated must be in process of demonstrating that their reverence for their own culture and values was compatible with union with their fellows in support of the higher truth which bound all men together. He distinguished sharply between those who held the conviction that movement towards this goal was the direction in which man's destiny was carrying him and those who still laboured under the weight of their own narrow concerns. And if those in the second group could hardly be allowed to shape

events, it was equally plain that this responsibility must be seized by those in the first. Grant did not, accordingly, hesitate to suggest that, in some circumstances, movement towards the higher unity could best be encouraged by a careful curtailment of the activities of certain groups. In considering the vexed question of oriental immigration, he thus opposed legislation on the California model, not on the ground that it would work an injustice on a group which, like the French Canadians, had proved its capacity to unite with the majority in support of the higher truth, but because such legislation would represent a triumph for the small and mean in the Canadians' own outlook. Men with a properly developed sense of the whole had a duty to see that its interests were fully served, and in the circumstances created by the anti-oriental agitators, that meant reminding the collectivity that its most treasured beliefs and ideals would be endangered if it allowed itself to be swayed by the arguments of the exclusionists. "We cannot live," Grant forcefully reminded his compatriots, "where men are treated as anything less than men . . . the common weal is most promoted when the rights of the meanest are respected. . . ." ²⁹

Grant's decision to fight the battle on this piece of ground was of immense significance, for it demonstrated his willingness to intervene in the community's growth in order to be sure that it proceeded in a manner consistent with movement towards the kind of unity he favoured. Progress towards that important goal could not be left to chance. If necessary, steps must be taken to insure that those who would interfere with its achievement be prevented from having their way. Paradoxically, then, the building of the whole might involve restricting the activities of certain of its parts. In one set of circumstances such a proscription might simply mean — as it did in the case of the British Columbia exclusionists — a refusal to tolerate racist proposals. But in others — here the logic of Grant's position drew him on to quite another sort of ground — it could entail a much different result.

What that result might be emerged with particular force from the view he took of prairie settlement. Immigrants to the Canadian west must, he argued, set down their roots in soil that would grow a society of the proper sort. It was the job of those who oversaw that settlement to insure this happened. The surest way to guarantee that outcome was to import the institutional framework of the older provinces. The life of the prairies must replicate that of the East. Alien influences, in short, were to be carefully limited. "The people who go to the North-west from our older provinces," he argued, "should feel that they are going away neither from their own country nor their own Church. In the interest of patriotism and religion it is desirable that all the forces that mould the character of a people to high issues should be brought to bear upon the immigrants who are pouring into the North-west."³⁰ If a society of the kind he envisioned failed to emerge as a consequence of this procedure, Grant was prepared to go still further. Those

whose refusal to respond to the imperatives of their new situation was complicating the thrust towards the higher unity were, quite simply, to be turned away. Men of low character, whose only interest was in free land, were certainly to be viewed with suspicion — “Why,” asked Grant, “should the country pay men to coax foreigners to accept from us free farms?”³¹ — while the admission of those whose cultural and ethnic heritage made it doubtful that they could attune themselves to the nation’s higher purposes ought surely to be curtailed. “Let our governments,” he urged, “recall the agents who are paid to bring us any and every kind of immigrants. We have as many people of strange languages as we can digest. Our best settlers are our own children, and those who come from the south of their own accord . . . [along with] those who have suffered for conscience sake. They are sure to be good stock.”³²

For all his anxiety lest precipitate action be taken in the matter of British Columbia’s Asians, Grant’s overriding concern with creating conditions likely to foster the higher unity led him to reconsider his position even on that contentious issue. He remained, to be sure, unsympathetic to exclusion. It would complicate relations with China, be inconsistent with missionary work in that country, and, as always, constitute a denial of the Asians’ basic humanity.³³ British Columbia’s evolution as a harmonious community, and its effective integration into Canada and the Empire was, nonetheless, the primary consideration, and Grant’s observation of affairs in the American south led him to believe that racial homogeneity would aid the achievement of those goals. While Canada ought not to act arbitrarily in the matter, it should seek an agreement with China by which, just as the Chinese limited the sojourn of foreigners there, so the Canadian government would be able to limit the stay of the Chinese in Canada. It was above all else imperative that the thrust towards unity be sustained and that it not lose its fundamental character. “We intend,” Grant made clear, “British Columbia to be Canadian, and of the Caucasian, not the Mongolian type.”³⁴

The case of the French Canadians, too, came in for additional scrutiny at the end of the century. Here, however, Grant saw no need to alter his position. Even in the circumstances created by English Canada’s resentment of the French Canadians’ lack of enthusiasm for the imperial enterprise, he thought it enough to insist that the French speakers’ loyalty and support would be kept in the future, as they had been secured in the past, by toleration of their language and culture. The French Canadians’ defining peculiarities had, he insisted anew, long since been emptied of significance by their proprietors’ acceptance of their duties in the Empire. Indeed, he argued, the degree to which French Canadians showed acceptance of the new imperialism was far more remarkable than the extent to which they opposed it.³⁵ In this situation the point, spelled out clearly enough in the past,³⁶ that toleration of their language and ways was not at all incompatible with the aim of insuring their assimilation to the truths that really counted could

be restated with special force. No harm, he therefore insisted once more, would be done the majority by its concession of French Canadian rights, while the French Canadians, assured again of its goodwill, would move the more readily to embrace its principles. It was, in fact, only in this way that the desired result could be obtained. "There," as Grant put it, "the *habitant* was, there he had been from the first, there he intended to remain; and the more generously his rights were recognized the sooner would fusion take place."⁸⁷

The goal towards which all men must move was, then, acceptance of the proposition that they were bound together in common service to a set of transcendent truths. Those who accepted this broad vision could be left in possession of their own language, culture, and local loyalties, for they had seen that these things were not the end-all of existence. Those, on the other hand, who had not caught this vision were to be denied — so far as was possible — the opportunity to trivialize and demean the world with their small and narrow vision of the particular's importance. Certainly no other approach would work for Canada, for without this emphasis on the higher unity the nation would dissolve into a claque of squabbling rivals, each consumed by its own self-interest. Only by keeping firmly fixed in their mind's eye a vision of the higher truth could Canadians avoid this fate and in so doing build a nation capable of the great work for which it had been destined.

THERE WAS, GRANT HELD, A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP between awareness of one's association with all other men and one's sense of the principles which ought to govern action in the everyday world. This relationship was founded on the assumption that those principles, like the reality of association itself, derived — here Grant's idealism revealed its unmistakably Protestant character — from the fact that the spiritual dimension of man's being linked him directly with God. As he put it in 1894, the Protestant reformers had "discovered the individual and gave him his rightful place in the Church and in society . . . they taught that man as man entered into union with God by a spiritual act, and that every man who did so was a king, a priest, and a prophet."⁸⁸ The individual, thus exalted, was not, of course, free to think of himself as an isolated being, at liberty to go his own way; on the contrary his relationship with God at once linked him to all other men and defined his life in terms of duties he could not properly shirk. In giving him the potential to understand something of God's nature and plans for his universe, it in fact conferred on him the obligation to act in a manner consistent with that knowledge. He must, in particular, strive to live a life worthy in its morality and discipline of a being who was simultaneously linked to the Divine and able to comprehend something of its true nature.

Realizing what was best in himself thus became a personal duty and an obligation to God.

Throughout Grant's work the man who remained mindful of this sublime obligation won high praise.³⁹ Lives of this quality were not, of course, lived easily. Grant accordingly set much emphasis on the fact that the development of one's capacity to place himself in harmony with the divine order was owing to constant and ceaseless effort. As he put it near the end of his own struggle, "all life is a battle, but only in overcoming these is character formed and life made complete."⁴⁰ What this life-defining contest might yield was, Grant thought, particularly evident in the case of his fellow Nova Scotian Joseph Howe, for Howe had seen clearly that he who would be a truly successful man must learn restraint, self-discipline, and the secret of work. Perhaps, observed Grant, "the great lesson that Howe's earlier years teaches is the one so hard to learn, that there is no royal road to success. When a man wakes up some morning to find himself famous, we may be sure that he has earned the success by years of previous toil. . . ."⁴¹

Grant's insistence on the centrality of these truths was in part a reflection of his belief that, notwithstanding their importance, society as a whole was far from allowing itself to be guided by them. The speculators in the east who preyed like "a brood of barnacles and vultures" on the settlers clearing the land,⁴² the factory owners who denied the just claims of their workers,⁴³ the tariff legislators who kept the farmers in thrall,⁴⁴ and "the insane greed of corporations and their callousness to the interests of the community"⁴⁵ alike offered proof that too many individuals were prepared to follow the low road of greed, immediate gain, and self-indulgence. It was, indeed, in this fact that the origins of society's problems lay: they were ultimately to be explained by the failure of the individual to act according to his best lights. While, then, Grant was at one with reformers in denouncing certain abuses in society — and in this he was far in advance of most of his colleagues who thought it no business of a clergyman to be involved in the wages and other questions — he was equally at odds with progressive opinion when it came to specifying a cure. Since abuses in society ultimately derived from a failure of Christian leadership, it followed that, once that failure was repaired, abuses would disappear. "Honest and capable leaders,"⁴⁶ men who understood that "true leadership consists not in yielding to the cries of the people, but in persuading, inducing, and enabling them towards effort in the right direction"⁴⁷ were what was required.

In emphasizing the results which could be expected to flow from the moral regeneration of individuals, Grant made a basic distinction between the outcome of the process he envisioned and the kind of consequences the reformers and radicals of his day expected to flow from their activities. This distinction, in its turn, rested on a quite different understanding of the nature of the individual's power. Where the reformers thought man's ability to understand his world gave

him the capability to intervene in its operations and change them at will in accordance with their rationally arrived at sense of how matters ought to operate, Grant considered that this same capacity would lead to the humbling realization that reality, complex and interdependent, was shaped by a host of forces of which man was only one. To be sure, he shared with some of the reformers the view that man was socially defined. "Only in society," as he put it, "is man understood, and only in society does he attain the perfection of his being."⁴⁸ This did not, however, mean that society was to be viewed as a mechanism to be endlessly rebuilt in the hope of altering its impact on the individuals it enclosed. It was instead to be seen as a complex, living organism, the production of a long history, possessed by its own spiritual character, an entity on whose being the action of a mere individual could have little impact. If he were to make effective use of what power he did have the individual must first realize this. Then he would begin to understand why the framework within which he existed could be altered only slowly, and why he should look to self-improvement rather than changes in his social environment as the source of ameliorative action. While government could doubtless do some of what was necessary — Grant did not hesitate to call for legislation when he thought it appropriate — in the last analysis reform could come only from a species of inner renewal manifesting itself in a kind of *noblesse oblige* on the part of society's leadership and in a sense of individual responsibility on the part of its members. Those who advocated only institutional and social change could, then, hope to touch no more than the externals of the problem. They would, in fact, distract attention from the real issue which, in his view, had to be conceived in far subtler terms. Socialism and anarchism could thus be pronounced "anti-Christian,"⁴⁹ with anything that looked like support for the idea that they would cure the ills of society being dismissed out of hand. Even the ideas of Henry George, at first — thanks to the tones of righteousness in which they were enunciated — in receipt of a rather more careful and positive scrutiny,⁵⁰ were finally rejected.⁵¹ In Carl Berger's words, Grant's style of improvement remained throughout his career "the kind of reform which is addressed to the reformation of character as opposed to the redistribution of property."⁵²

As individuals grew by taking positive action, so, Grant believed, national character was built when a people, having discerned the nature of its collective responsibilities, moved to meet them. But if the nature of the challenge was clear — the country, like the individuals of which it was composed, must with God's help overcome selfishness and materialism in order to attain its "great future"⁵³ — it seemed less obvious to Grant that the battle to accomplish this end had even been joined. This was, of course, partly owing to the fact that the Dominion, adrift in an historical backwater, had had little opportunity to display the stuff of which it was made. "Our national sentiment," as Grant explained it, "has never been put to the test."⁵⁴ There was, however, evidence that this unfortunate

situation was changing. The shifting world order, the evolution of Empire, and Canada's own growth were creating a new set of opportunities which seemed tailor-made for Canada. The way in which it met them would, indeed, determine whether or not it would exist as a nation worthy of the name: "we are," Grant warned his countrymen in 1887, "nearing that point in our history when we must assume the full responsibilities of nationhood, or abandon the experiment altogether."⁵⁵ By 1894, in Grant's view, that point had been reached. Of equal importance, the evolution of opinion in Canada was showing that Canadians had begun to realize that they as a people could achieve their destiny only by accepting the obligations that circumstance had placed on them. They must do their share in upholding the principles upon which their faith and civilization rested, and that, they were now seeing, meant nothing less than action, within the framework of the Empire, on the world stage. "The days of isolation," Grant enthused, "are over. Canada cannot hold aloof even if she would, and her young men are too virile to shun the needed strain and conflict if they could."⁵⁶

What Grant viewed as Canada's increasingly prominent role in imperial affairs was, he thought, proof positive that the nation had come of age. At first inclined towards support for the Boers of South Africa in their struggle against Britain, he came to see the Laurier government's despatch of troops to their country as a step of key importance on Canada's march towards nationhood, for it demonstrated beyond doubt acceptance of the obligations and responsibilities of maturity. "The larger patriotism, which has now taken possession of Canadians, cannot," his contemplation of it led him to proclaim, "possibly vanish. . . . We are henceforth a nation. . . ."⁵⁷ Continuing in this track would, indeed, allow Canada to challenge the power of her New World rival itself, for "we shall be . . . equals [of the Americans] only when we share the burdens and responsibilities as well as the privileges and glory of the Empire."⁵⁸

Grant's doctrine of responsibility thus arose directly out of his understanding of the manner in which nations and individuals alike formed part of a comprehensive whole. Only by bearing their share of the burden that whole had to carry could they contribute to its strength and integrity, and only by making such a contribution could they insure that their own lives were appropriately rich and full. Personal duty, public good, and service to God were linked in a splendid and all-encompassing construct whose true purposes could be served only by those who understood the universal significance of individual action and acted in a manner consistent with the demands that understanding made upon them.

NOTWITHSTANDING THE POWERFUL EMPHASIS he placed on its utility in the development of national character and strength, Grant's concern that Canada acknowledge its imperial obligations rested on more than

his belief that there was a relationship of decisive importance between fulfillment, growth, and the acceptance of responsibility. In shouldering its share of the imperial burden Canada would, he believed, be doing nothing less than demonstrating its fitness to act out the role assigned to it by the historical process. God, it was not to be doubted, revealed His plans for mankind in the dimension of time no less than the amplitude of space. To contemplate the flow of history was, in consequence, to consider yet another set of divine lessons for the edification of mankind. "We should," he therefore informed Canadians, "study the history of the past for our guidance in the present. History is indeed that revelation which, as Carlyle says, no one in or out of bedlam can question."⁵⁹

The nature of the truth which would be revealed by this quasi-religious scrutinizing of the historical record was, Grant believed, clear: Britain, even a casual glance at the evolution of nations made obvious, had been created the first among the world's civilizations. Nowhere had institutions and culture combined over time to produce a more perfect mixture of the elements of true freedom. All that man required to live a fulfilled and godly existence was available to him there. As Grant put it, "Let the history of liberty and progress, of the development of human character in all its rightful issues, testify where liberty and authority have been more wisely blended than in the British Constitution."⁶⁰

As the heirs and benefactors of this triumphant resolution of the central problem in the organization of man's affairs — here, for Grant, was the real lesson — Canadians were obliged to see that its integrity was maintained and its influence extended. The accomplishment of these goals must, in fact, become one of the major impulses informing their lives. They must take as their guiding sentiment "a faith that the British name and British institutions are worth making sacrifices for." Action in the future was to be governed by knowledge of what had happened in the past, and — Grant brought the point sharply into focus — "the chief glory of that past from the days of Alfred, the barons of Runnymede, Hampden, or Sydney, is the memory of ancestors who have willingly died for the good old cause of human freedom."⁶¹ The Canadians' honouring of that memory could best be done by remaining faithful to the work these great men had sought to do, and that, it seemed clear, meant continuing their struggle. Canadians must, then, do in the present what these illustrious figures had done in the past. They must act to insure that the forces which had shaped so fruitful and glorious a tradition be allowed to work their will in the future. Any attempt to interfere with those forces was, indeed, to be vigorously resisted, for it would represent a denial of all that had gone before. Particularly to be eschewed was anything that would involve weakening the British tie. "We believe," as Grant told Canadians in the early 1870's, "that loyalty is a better guarantee of true growth than restlessness and rebellion [and] that building up is worthier work than pulling down."⁶² Action

consistent with maintaining the integrity of the British and imperial past was therefore the only action permissible, for any other kind threatened to disrupt the measured pace of freedom's unfolding. The web of history had been delicately woven, and "every break in the continuity of its life is injurious."⁶³

If Grant's insistence on maintaining history's even flow gave him a powerful argument in support of imperial consolidation, the refusal to accept disruptive change that was its obverse provided him with a weapon he used with no little effect in his continuing campaign against those — Goldwin Smith was the leading example — who were urging some form of Canadian-American union. Such proposals were unsound, he argued, not because they sought to associate the two countries,⁶⁴ but because they proposed to do it by violating the deliberate march of historical development. Smith's suggestion that union between Canada and the United States would do nothing more than duplicate the relationship between Scotland and England was of particularly dubious validity, for it overlooked the fact that Canada, unlike Scotland, would have to sunder a pre-existing association.⁶⁵ "We too," Grant was at pains to make clear, "hope for a reunion of the English-speaking race, but we seek it along historical and not theoretical lines. It must not begin with further disunion; and a preliminary sacrifice of the Queen, the Prince of Wales, the House of Lords, the Established Churches, India, and other trifling possessions ought not to be absolutely necessary."⁶⁶

The proper course to follow was, then, plain. Only consolidation of the empire was consistent with the movement of history. Only "imperial federation" would place "the capstone on that structure of Canadian nationality which we have been working at so long." Canadians would as a consequence of such action not only find themselves getting "full citizenship" in the Empire, and occupying ground that would make them "peers and not the dependents of their fellow citizens in the British Islands."⁶⁷ They would be attaining the sublime state towards which everything in their experience from their most cherished traditions to their internal history on the North American continent had been impelling them.⁶⁸ In doing that, moreover — for Grant, a hardly less important point — they would be giving clear proof of their understanding that the imperatives created by the historical process could not be set aside. In thus demonstrating acceptance of the proposition — again a characteristically vigorous figure of speech — that "the nation cannot be pulled up by the roots,"⁶⁹ they would be making it clear that they saw, as he did, that no other line of action would give them a chance to carry their burden in the world, do so much to fulfill their individual and collective potential, or provide them with the opportunity to maintain the continuity of the historical process. They would, in sum, be showing their final acceptance of the fact that they had no option but to follow the course all things in their experience had set before them.

If the unfolding of the historical process was impelling Canada in a clear and unmistakable direction, so too, Grant believed, were the country's geographical circumstances. To be sure, its configuration in space presented certain problems. As a nation of sections next to a powerful and seductive neighbour, it had to take firm steps to insure that it neither fragmented nor got drawn into the arms of what lay to the south. Grant's willingness to talk of military installations as part of what was necessary to meet the second of these challenges was one measure of how seriously he viewed it,⁷⁰ but in the main he relied on the railway and immigration to do what was necessary. Canadians must make good their claim on "half a continent" by populating it, while the construction of a national communications system would at once knit the country together and make possible its resistance to American expansion.⁷¹ To Smith's argument that all of this was an artificial and foredoomed attempt to set aside the dictates of nature Grant found a ready reply in the contention that much of human history depicted man's delimitation of the natural world by virtue of his intellect and technical prowess. "Man," he noted, "triumphs continually over geography or nature in any form."⁷² Canadians, whatever Smith thought of the matter, were thus doing what their species had done since time immemorial. What was more, they were succeeding at it. "We have established," Grant felt able to argue by 1896, "an unequalled system of internal navigation from the Straits of Belle Isle into the heart of the continent, and we have added to that an unparalleled railway system . . . every part of our great Northern Confederacy has been linked together by steel as well as sentiment. . . ."⁷³

In effectively ending any likelihood that the country would be absorbed by the United States, consolidation of its material base did not mean, Grant was anxious to point out, that Canada should insulate itself from involvement with the Republic. Its people must, of course, be watchful of their relations with that powerful state; but completely isolating themselves on the North American continent would be as much at variance with their national interest as it would be contrary to the dictates of geography.⁷⁴ The nation must, indeed, not only welcome contact with the United States, providing such contact was on the right terms; it must recognize the fact that it, too, was a community of the New World, heir to the abundance, resources, and regenerative powers of that fabulous place, and, in the end, even more likely than the United States to play a decisive role in the re-making of the world. Grant had, in fact, been struck from the moment of his first contact with "Greater Canada" by the immensity of its material wealth. Notwithstanding the contention in the pages of his *Ocean to Ocean* that "the destiny of a country depends not on its material resources . . . [but] on the character of its people,"⁷⁵ that record of his journey across the new dominion made clear his belief that Canada was a country of extraordinary potential.⁷⁶ Thanks

to what geography had conferred upon it, the country possessed resources sufficient to underpin limitless growth.⁷⁷

If Grant's satisfaction in contemplating the physical endowments of the Dominion was obvious enough, he was no less struck by the opportunity the opening of a new and untouched world offered for the creation of a better human society. In a land uncontaminated by the vices of civilization, men of character, morality and determination would find it possible to create a community unparalleled in human history for its virtue and justice. Canada's settlers thus had every reason to hope that they would "found in the forests of the west a state in which there would be justice for all, fair reward for labour, a new home for freedom, freedom from grinding poverty, freedom from the galling chain of ancient feuds, mutual confidence and righteousness between man and man, flowing from trust in God."⁷⁸

Canadians in fact occupied a uniquely privileged position in the scheme of things. Vitalized by the abundance and opportunity of the New World, yet mindful of all that their position as heirs of the British tradition could teach them, they enjoyed the best features of the Old and the New. "We have . . . not," noted Grant, "been obliged to sacrifice any of the inestimable treasures accumulated by our fathers, while at the same time we keep our minds and eyes open to receive new teaching from this new world where everything is possible to man."⁷⁹ Canada thus combined — in Grant's view the point could not be made strongly enough — "the self-control, reticence, and modesty begotten by conservative training . . . with that freedom from routine and readiness to experiment that belongs to a new country."⁸⁰

For all that he allowed himself to be enraptured by geography's influence in giving Canada an unmistakable new world dimension, the country's location in space, Grant made equally clear, allowed it to be defined in other terms as well. Utilizing a line of argument being developed by the British geographer H. J. Mackinder, Grant took the view that Canada was delineated not only by its position on the North American continent but by its location between the two great oceans of the world. Seen from this perspective, the nation had a relevance that was truly global. It was, indeed, nothing less than "the natural keystone between the old world of northern Europe and the older world of China and Japan . . . the living link between Great Britain and the sunny lands under the Southern Cross . . . the bridge between East and West, and the bond that unites the three great self-governing parts of the British Empire."⁸¹

What, in short, its history demanded, its geography made possible. Equipped with every conceivable material advantage, possessing a land mass that linked it to all corners of the world, Canada could do no other than take up the work every element of its being and circumstances directed it to perform.

IN SPECIFYING THE NATURE OF THE ROLE Canada was fore-ordained to play, its geography and history did more, in Grant's view, than simply disclose what lay in the immediate future. The securing of a position of influence and power within the framework of the Empire was, of course, a vital short-term goal. Grant did not, however, consider its accomplishment an end in itself. The nation, positioned by its circumstances to serve the cause of British liberty and Christian truth, was destined for nothing less than duty on the most sublime field of action imaginable. In association with its imperial partners, it would serve as the successor of the Old Testament Hebrews, the agency which would bear witness to God's presence in the world. "We have," Grant accordingly told his countrymen, "a mission on earth as truly as ancient Israel had. . . ." ⁸²

What precisely that mission was, and how exactly it was to be fulfilled, could, Grant thought, be clearly specified. There was, in fact, an ineluctable logic about the whole process: the first stage — aiding in the consolidation of the Empire — was obvious enough. That accomplished, two further objectives would remain. Attaining the first of these would involve the country in exploiting its position as a community with roots on both sides of the Atlantic. It must use that position to bring Britain and the United States together. Notwithstanding the fact that it was occasionally a source of friction between the two powers, its place in their ultimate reconciliation was, in Grant's view, assured. For all that the eventual reunion of the two would owe to their common traditions and "high common ends," ⁸³ that momentous event would be materially aided by the intervention of Canada. His nation would, in fact, function as nothing less than "the link that shall unite the great mother and her greatest daughter, the United States of America." ⁸⁴ So important was this task, and so central was the role Canada would play in accomplishing it, that there must be no mistaking the significance of either. "No greater boon" — Grant spelled the matter out in the clearest possible terms — "can be conferred on the race than the healing of [the] schism of [1776]. That is the work that Canada is appointed by its position and history to do. . . . We are to build up a North American Dominion, permeated with the principles of righteousness, worthy to be the living link, the permanent bond of union, between Britain and the United States." ⁸⁵

The forging of that link — the flow of Grant's argument hardly showed — was, in its turn, of inestimable importance, for it would make possible the gaining of the second grand objective. The union of the Anglo-Saxon race which would result from Canada's mediation between the two great nations to which it was bound would mean the creation of a force capable of establishing world hegemony. One could, in consequence, anticipate the day when the globe as a whole would be brought under the sway of Christian principle and Anglo-Saxon virtue. The solidarity of the race would, then, function as much more than a vehicle by

means of which Canada and Canadians, or even Anglo-Saxons generally, could achieve their own destiny. It would be an important stage in the process by which the fragmentation of mankind would be overcome. Under the auspices of this revitalized Anglo-Saxon influence the world's people would be bound together in a complex yet perfectly integrated whole at the same time that Christianity's unfolding truth came to permeate every fibre of their being.

Grant had no doubt that this grand vision, involving all the peoples of the world, was a pluralist one. Although it would be the Canadians and the British, and — once they had seen the light — the Americans who would take the initiative "in the glorious mission of establishing freedom, righteousness, and peace upon earth,"⁸⁶ his tolerance, humanity, and respect for what was good in other traditions led him to deal circumspectly with the precise weight Anglo-Saxon influence would have in the character of the new order that would be created by this action. The result of it, he suggested on more than one occasion, would be a kind of grand synthesis in which each individual would be united with his fellows in support of a common body of principle to the making of which all had contributed. "Our evolution," Grant told the World's Parliament of Religions in 1893, "has taught us that ideas belong to no one country, that they are the common property of mankind, and that we should borrow from every country that has found by experiment that they work well."⁸⁷ He wrote, too, of Tennyson's Parliament of Man, that great "Federation of the World" in which its people would come together and yet retain their own character and identity.⁸⁸ When all, however, was said and done his commitment to a world order which would combine elements from different traditions in a grand pluralistic whole was more apparent than real. In the end his tolerance functioned essentially as a tactical device, the effect of whose operation would be — as in the Canadian case — to insure final admission to the inner circle only of those who were prepared to assign their own culture and values an inferior place to those he himself espoused. His rhetoric left no doubt that the truth in support of which all men must ultimately unite would be a Christian truth, just as his Tennysonian frame of reference made it clear that the institutional complex in which this unity would find expression would be an Anglo-Saxon one.

Canada, "in the van of the world's battle," would thus come to play a central role in the process by which the peoples of the world, uplifted by their association with the Anglo-Saxons of the North Atlantic, would realize their potential for unity by accepting a destiny that was specifically linked to the religious experience of that Protestant civilization. Mankind's "common humanity," attaining fulfillment in "accomplishing its mission to establish the Kingdom of God upon earth," would define its being in the explicit and unambiguous language of evangelical Protestantism.⁸⁹ The vast edifice of universal peace and harmony, in whose construction Canada was to play so important a part, would finally come to rest, not

on a genuinely pluralist and synthetic foundation, but on a base provided by one civilization's view of what constituted man's purpose and destiny on earth. All men would indeed be bound together, but their unity would derive from their acceptance of a particular body of truth whose doctrines would by virtue of that acceptance vanquish all rivals.

GRANT'S SYSTEM OF IDEAS can best be understood as the construct of a man deeply concerned lest forces of change and innovation sweep away the values and the leadership he believed essential to a properly functioning Christian society. More, accordingly, is involved in understanding the genesis and character of that system than a simple application to its diagnosis of the proposition that ideas and interests are closely linked. Account must also be taken of the fact that concern to maintain and extend acceptance for one's world view will be particularly strong if one sees it, and the social arrangements it validates, being challenged by a rival set of conceptions. In the words of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, "the appearance of an alternative symbolic universe poses a threat because its very existence demonstrates empirically that one's own universe is less than inevitable. . . . The confrontation of alternative symbolic universes implies a problem of power — which of the conflicting definitions of reality will be 'made to stick' in the society."⁹⁰ Grant, thanks to the emergence of the new and vastly more complex Canada created by industrialization, immigration, and the shrinking globe, found himself in the midst of just such a confrontation. Determined that the selfish particularisms of the new order and its representative men should not abridge the bright promise of a vital and expansive Christian community acting in fulfillment of a global mission, he sought to insure that it would be the definition of reality held by men who thought as he did that would be "made to stick" in Canadian society.

His anxiety to contain the new forces all around him never, however — and in this one can see the full measure of his intelligence and subtlety — led him to pursue the path of blind reaction. He believed the challenge the new realities represented could best be met by effecting their absorption into the very system they threatened to displace. It is, indeed, a measure of his belief in that system's resilience and flexibility that he thought its power would be augmented by the assimilation of elements which at first sight seemed to guarantee its destruction.

Yet the decision to attempt the accommodation of the new forces was not a purely tactical one. In Grant's Hegelian-influenced view, the Christian idealism it was his aim to promote was to be defined largely in terms of its extraordinary capaciousness. Doing one's duty to it would involve an approach to all the elements of which reality consisted, which, with a generosity borne of the confi-

dence that one understood the workings of the universe, would recognize the fact that each of them, no matter how fractious and contrary it seemed, had a role to play in the total scheme of things.

Fully effective assimilation of the new forces required, of course, more than a simple acceptance by Grant and those who saw the world as he did of a conceptualization of the universe which insisted that each of the elements in it belonged to the Kingdom of God and, whether they realized it or not, were contributing to that Kingdom's triumphant onward march. All of the human agents through which these forces operated had to be made conscious of this truth. Only then would a comprehensive spirit of co-operation with the acceptance of Christianity's imperatives replace the indifference and hostility to them which seemed so conspicuous as features of modern life. Here as well Grant's Christian idealism was of immense assistance. By inviting all men, no matter what character their activities possessed, to conceive of themselves as essentially moral beings linked to each other and to the divine by their common participation in a spiritual whole it in fact provided a near perfect vehicle for the attainment of this end. In insisting on the directness of each individual's link with God it simultaneously commended itself to him by exalting his importance and gave him an inducement to think in terms that transcended his immediate interests. And, in insisting that once he had accepted this larger view of himself he act in a manner consistent with the dignity and responsibility of a being who was linked to the divine, it provided a powerful argument in support of the contention that his behaviour should approximate the standards laid down by those who — like Grant — had caught the full vision of what this involved. Such men would thus, if all went as it should, be in a position to define the elements of good behaviour in the new circumstances as they had in the old.

Despite his appreciation of his creed's potential as an agency which, properly deployed, could blunt the force of the new realities, Grant was by no means persuaded that the values and behaviour it would serve to strengthen were in fact holding their own. The end of his life thus saw him disposed to argue that the forces against which he had fought throughout its length still maintained a global presence. "The nineteenth century," he sadly informed his readers, "is closing in moral gloom as dense as that which shrouded the closing decade of the eighteenth."⁹¹ What was happening at home, moreover, made it clear that the enemies of Christian truth and honourable behaviour were maintaining themselves on the domestic front as well. "What threatens the life of Canada most seriously," he wrote after a lifetime's effort to root it out, "... [is] the uncleanness... the vulgar and insolent materialism of thought and life... [and the] aggressive commercialism which penetrates to the innermost courts of the sanctuary..."⁹²

Too much should not, however, be made of his disappointment at the failure of his world view to win a clear triumph over its adversaries. Far more central to

an understanding of his system, its character, and its place in nineteenth-century Canadian life is a sense of the prodigious effort he made on its behalf. In articulating it with such vigour and consistency he at once provided a measure of the extent to which he felt it threatened and made himself a leading spokesman for the values it contained. If, in sum, an examination of his thought sheds light on the way in which ideas may be related to shifting patterns of status and influence in society, it also provides opportunity for contact with a particularly forceful, clear, and comprehensive expression of an important strain in late nineteenth-century Canadian thought. In thus allowing a close look at a representative expression of that strain, in directing attention to the status of its proponents, and in making possible the construction of an argument suggesting how the two were linked, it does much to refine our grasp and extend our understanding of the elements defining the English Canadian phase of the great nineteenth-century struggle between liberal and conservative modes of thought. Its relevance is ultimately more than national, as Grant himself was much more than merely a patriot.

NOTES

- ¹ For an account of the Canadian formulation of some of the leading ideas of this period, see A. B. McKillop, "A Disciplined Intelligence: Intellectual Inquiry and the Moral Imperative in Anglo-Canadian Thought 1850-1890." Unpub. Ph.D. thesis, Queen's Univ., 1976. [Rev. & pub., McGill-Queens, 1979.] For an examination of some representative Canadian intellectuals active in the generation following, see S. E. D. Shortt, *The Search for an Ideal: Six Canadian Intellectuals and their Convictions in An Age of Transition 1890-1930* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1976). For the ideas of Canadian conservatism in the late nineteenth century, see Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism 1867-1914* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1970). The thought of Grant's most implacable opponent is summed up in Goldwin Smith, *Canada and the Canadian Question*, introduction by Carl Berger (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1971).
- ² "The Pulpit in Scotland As It Is, And As It Was Forty or Fifty Years Ago," *Queen's Quarterly*, 7 (Jan. 1900), 195.
- ³ The Scottish born and educated Watson was an influential figure in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century idealist circles on both sides of the Atlantic. For an account of his life and ideas, see J. M. MacEachern, "John Watson," in R. C. Wallace, ed., *Some Great Men of Queen's* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1941), pp. 22-50; and W. E. McNeill, "John Watson," *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, Series III, 33 (1939), 159-61. McKillop considers Watson at some length. Watson's own views on the relationship between Christianity and Idealism are set out in his appropriately titled *Christianity and Idealism* (New York: Macmillan, 1896). For a general account of philosophical activity in Canada in this period, see John A. Irving, "The Development of Philosophy in Central Canada from 1850 to 1900," *Canadian Historical Review*, 31 (Sept. 1950), 252-87. T. A. Goudge, "A Century of Philosophy in English-Speaking Canada," *Dalhousie Review*, 47 (Winter 1967-68), 537-49, contains some material on Watson but is mainly concerned with the twentieth century. For a discussion

- of idealist modes of thinking in terms of their relevance to the thought of men like Grant, see Terry Cook, "George R. Parkin and the Concept of Britannic Idealism," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 10 (Aug. 1975), esp. 22-31.
- ⁴ Cited (no source given) in W. L. Grant and F. Hamilton, *Principal Grant* (Toronto: Morang, 1904), p. 74.
 - ⁵ "Current Events," *Queen's Quarterly*, 5 (April 1898), 332.
 - ⁶ "Castell Hopkins' Life of Mr. Gladstone," *Canadian Magazine*, 6 (Nov. 1895), 87.
 - ⁷ "The Pulpit in Scotland As It Is, and As It Was Forty or Fifty Years Ago," *Queen's Quarterly*, 7 (Jan. 1900), 202.
 - ⁸ "Presbyterian Union and Reformation Principles," *Queen's Quarterly*, 1 (Jan. 1894), 181.
 - ⁹ *Principal Grant*, p. 486.
 - ¹⁰ Author unknown, "Distinguished Canadians. The Rev. George Munro [sic] Grant, D.D.," *Canadian Methodist Magazine*, 18 (Oct. 1883), 293.
 - ¹¹ "Hopkins' Life," p. 86.
 - ¹² "Anti-National Features of the National Policy," *Canadian Magazine*, 1 (March 1893), 9-13.
 - ¹³ "The Jason of Algoma: An Account of the Wonderful Industrial Development in New Ontario," *Canadian Magazine*, 15 (Oct. 1900), 490.
 - ¹⁴ "The Religious Condition of Canada," *Queen's Quarterly*, 1 (April 1894), 320.
 - ¹⁵ "Current Events," *Queen's Quarterly*, 5 (Oct. 1897), 169.
 - ¹⁶ *Principal Grant's Inaugural Address Delivered at Queen's University, Kingston, on University Day* (Toronto: Grip, 1885), p. 11.
 - ¹⁷ "The University Question," *Queen's Quarterly*, 8 (Jan. 1901), 211.
 - ¹⁸ *Ocean to Ocean* (Toronto: J. Campbell, 1873), pp. 347-48.
 - ¹⁹ "Thanksgiving and Retrospect," *Queen's Quarterly*, 9 (Jan. 1902), 232.
 - ²⁰ "Our National Objects and Aims," in *Maple Leaves: Being the Papers Read Before the National Club of Toronto at the 'National Evenings' During the Winter 1890-1891* (Toronto: National Club, 1891), p. 20.
 - ²¹ "To [Grant]," recalled his biographers, "all the universe was God's universe; every truth was God's truth . . . [spurning] the theory which cuts the world in two with a hatchet . . . he believed that the universe was an organic whole belonging to the Almighty. . . ." *Principal Grant*, pp. 77-78.
 - ²² "Response on Behalf of Canada to Address of Welcome, at the World's Parliament of Religions," *Queen's Quarterly*, 1 (Oct. 1893), 160. Sometimes Grant's exposure to other currents of thought flowing in the late nineteenth century led him to cast the same point in less mystical terms. Taking a leaf from the Spenserians' notebook, he noted in 1900 that that diversity might simply demonstrate the capaciousness of a complex yet fully integrated life-form. "The British Empire," as he puts it, "is a . . . complicated and highly developed organism . . . and can therefore include the most widely differing stages of political life." "Current Events," *Queen's Quarterly*, 8 (July 1900), 77. Occasionally, too, emphasis on the unity and coherence of experience yielded to an unambiguous pluralism. Grant's concern to see Queen's preserved as an independent institution led him to oppose the creation of a single agency of higher learning in Ontario, while the polyglot nature of Winnipeg society in the 1880's seemed to him an unmistakable sign of

- its vitality and exuberance. See *Grant's Inaugural Address*, p. 10; "The University Question," p. 220; and "The Northwest: Manitoba" in G. M. Grant, ed., *Picturesque Canada: The Country As It Was And Is* (Toronto: Belden Bros., 1882), I, 288.
- ²³ "Current Events," *Queen's Quarterly*, 7 (Jan. 1900), 256.
- ²⁴ They might, he asserted, have "remained French in appearance and French to the core, yet [they] fought repeatedly and are ready to fight again side by side with the red-coats of Great Britain. . . ." "Quebec: Historical Review," in *Picturesque Canada*, I, p. 2.
- ²⁵ "Review of William Kingford's History," *The Week*, 9 (Aug. 12, 1892), 587.
- ²⁶ "Canada and the Empire: A Rejoinder to Dr. Goldwin Smith," *Canadian Magazine*, 8 (Nov. 1896), 77.
- ²⁷ "Canada First," *Canadian Leaves* (New York: Napoleon Thompson, 1887), p. 264.
- ²⁸ "The Religious Condition of Canada," *Queen's Quarterly*, 1 (April 1894), 318.
- ²⁹ "British Columbia," in *Picturesque Canada*, II, p. 880.
- ³⁰ "Churches and Schools in the North-West," in John Macoun, ed., *Manitoba and the Great North-West* (Guelph: World, 1882), p. 528.
- ³¹ "Current Affairs," *Queen's Quarterly*, 1 (Oct. 1893), 156.
- ³² "Thanksgiving and Retrospect," *Queen's Quarterly*, 9 (Jan. 1902), 227.
- ³³ Berger, *Sense of Power*, p. 28.
- ³⁴ "Current Events," *Queen's Quarterly*, 4 (Oct. 1896), 159, 158.
- ³⁵ "Instead," Grant suggested at one point, "of wondering that French-speaking Canadians are not as enthusiastic in this [Boer] war as their English-speaking countrymen, the marvel is that their representative men have as a rule spoken so warmly on behalf of the Empire. . . ." The attitude of the French Canadians, he argued at another, has, "on the whole," been "admirable." See "Current Events," (Jan. 1900), p. 256, and (April 1900), p. 333.
- ³⁶ Impatience with the French Canadians and their culture would, he had argued in 1891, irritate them, heighten their self-consciousness, and delay their accommodation with their fellow Canadians — results the more unfortunate at a time when it was clear that an essentially anglo-saxon nation based on Canada's existing stock and immigrants who would assimilate to English Canadian culture was taking shape. See "Review of G. Smith, *Canada and the Canadian Question*," *The Week*, 8 (May 15, 1891), 382.
- ³⁷ "Thanksgiving and Retrospect," p. 224.
- ³⁸ "Presbyterian Union and Reformation Principles," p. 181.
- ³⁹ Sometimes the type was exemplified by the Highland Scot who, isolated at Red River, had not forgotten his God; sometimes by the pioneer farmer engaged in the shaping of a British and Christian west; sometimes by the creative entrepreneur whose energies were directed towards enlarging society's bounty rather than personal gain; sometimes by the university students who, in working their way through college, "paddle their own canoes. . . [thanks to their] habits of industry, economy, and forethought. . ."; and sometimes by the ordinary Canadian who in his simple Christian life provided an example of honour and integrity as uplifting as it was modest. See "Churches and Schools in the Northwest," p.

- 524; "The North-West: Manitoba," 1, p. 293; "The Jason of Algoma: An Account of the Wonderful Industrial Development in New Ontario," *Canadian Magazine*, 15 (Oct. 1900), 483-94; "Anti-National Features," p. 12; and "Thanksgiving and Retrospect," p. 220.
- ⁴⁰ "Thanksgiving and Retrospect," p. 225.
- ⁴¹ *Joseph Howe* (Halifax: A. & W. MacKinlay, 1904), p. 37. Grant's account of Howe's life was first published as a series of articles bearing the title "The Late Hon. Joseph Howe," in the *Canadian Monthly and National Review*, 7 (May 1875), 377-87; 7 (June 1875), 497-508; 8 (July 1875), 20-25; 8 (Aug. 1875), 115-22.
- ⁴² "The North-West," 1, p. 293.
- ⁴³ "Current Events," *Queen's Quarterly*, 1 (July 1893), 67.
- ⁴⁴ "Current Events," *Queen's Quarterly*, 4 (April 1897), 318.
- ⁴⁵ "Current Events," *Queen's Quarterly*, 5 (Jan. 1898), 252.
- ⁴⁶ "Current Events," *Queen's Quarterly*, 2 (Oct. 1894), 182.
- ⁴⁷ "The Jason of Algoma," p. 491.
- ⁴⁸ "Presbyterian Union and Reformation Principles," p. 177.
- ⁴⁹ "Religious Condition of Canada," p. 319.
- ⁵⁰ *Sense of Power*, pp. 183-84.
- ⁵¹ Ramsay Cook, "Henry George and the Poverty of Canadian Progress," *Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers*, 1977, pp. 150-51.
- ⁵² *Sense of Power*, p. 185.
- ⁵³ *Ocean to Ocean*, p. 358.
- ⁵⁴ "Canada First," p. 252.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 251.
- ⁵⁶ "The Religious Condition of Canada," p. 320.
- ⁵⁷ "Introductory Chapter," in T. G. Marquis, *Canada's Sons on Kopje and Veldt: An Historical Account of the Canadian Contingents* (Toronto: Canadian Son's Pub. Co., 1900), p. 6.
- ⁵⁸ "Thanksgiving and Retrospect," p. 225.
- ⁵⁹ "Review of William Kingsford's History," p. 586.
- ⁶⁰ *Ocean to Ocean*, p. 368.
- ⁶¹ "British Columbia," p. 880.
- ⁶² *Ocean to Ocean*, p. 358.
- ⁶³ "Review of William Kingsford's History," p. 586. Grant's views on the nature of the historical process were sometimes cast in language which argued the existence of a parallel between man's activities through time and the character of growth and development in the natural world. "No living organism," he once wrote in support of his argument that Canada must move steadily towards national maturity within the framework of the British Empire, "can continue long in a state of arrested development . . . it must grow to its full stature or petrify." Such imagery was particularly useful in stressing the evolutionary and cumulative character he thought human affairs must have. "I do not look," it allowed him to

- note at one point, "for any startling Constitutional change or any paper scheme for re-organizing the Empire. That is not the way of the British. They build after the fashion of the insects that construct coral reefs, atolls, and fair islands in the Southern seas. They do the duty of today, and that becomes precedent, and so 'freedom slowly broadens down,' based not on theories but on necessities." See *Imperial Federation: A Lecture Delivered in Victoria Hall, Winnipeg, on September 13th, 1889* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Free Press, 1890), p. 1, and "Introductory Chapter," in Marquis, p. 6.
- ⁶⁴ Grant did not share the extreme and negative views of the United States voiced by some of his compatriots. For an account of his feelings on the subject, see *Sense of Power*, p. 171. For the opinions of others see *Sense of Power*, pp. 153-76; and S. F. Wise and Robert Craig Brown, *Canada Views the United States: Nineteenth Century Political Attitudes* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1967).
- ⁶⁵ "Review of G. Smith," p. 381.
- ⁶⁶ "Current Events" (July 1893), p. 79.
- ⁶⁷ *Imperial Federation*, pp. 5, 4.
- ⁶⁸ Confederation itself, thought Grant, was to be viewed as part of the process. "Canada," he noted in 1895, "took a long step politically, in the direction of Imperial unity, when Confederation was affected. . . ." "Current Events," *Queen's Quarterly*, 2 (Oct. 1895), 157.
- ⁶⁹ *Ocean to Ocean*, p. 366.
- ⁷⁰ "Quebec: Historical Review," *Picturesque Canada*, I, p. 31.
- ⁷¹ "Quebec," p. 31.
- ⁷² "Review of G. Smith," p. 382.
- ⁷³ "Canada and the Empire," p. 76.
- ⁷⁴ Grant did not hesitate to identify the United States as Canada's "natural market," to suggest that "we desire to trade with everyone, and most of all with our neighbours," and to celebrate the fact that while "on this continent there are barbarous alien labour laws and hostile tariffs between kindred peoples . . . so far these do not extend to free interchanges of brain, heart, and capital." See "Canada First," p. 13; and "The Jason of Algoma," p. 494.
- ⁷⁵ P. 366.
- ⁷⁶ One reviewer, struck by just this feature of it, called it "a graphic account . . . of the magnificent material resources of the country." See the *Canadian Methodist Magazine*, 5 (May 1877), 477.
- ⁷⁷ Virtually all parts of the country, Grant argued, shared in this bounty. If what lay between Lake Huron and Red River was endowed with minerals "beyond conception," he was equally anxious to make it clear that "our western islands are rich in coal . . . and almost every variety of mineral wealth, in lumber, fish, and soil, and blessed with one of the most delightful climates in the world." His view of the prairies' potential was expressed in particularly forceful terms. There, he wrote, was to be found "an immense tract of the finest land in the world. . . ." The fields of Red River, he noted in 1882, "have raised wheat continuously ever since" their first cultivation. Indeed, he announced the same year, the "vast region" of the west was "the true habitat of the wheat plant. Here it attains perfection." One could, in view of these circumstances, hardly doubt that the Northwest "bids fair to be the future granary of the world." See *Ocean to Ocean*, pp. 352-53; "Churches and Schools," p. 527; and "The North-West: Manitoba," p. 298.

- ⁷⁸ "Our National Objects and Aims," p. 34.
- ⁷⁹ "Response on Behalf of Canada," p. 159.
- ⁸⁰ "The Religious Condition of Canada," p. 321.
- ⁸¹ "Responses on Behalf of Canada," pp. 159-60.
- ⁸² "Current Events," *Queen's Quarterly*, 5 (July 1897), 85.
- ⁸³ "Current Events," *Queen's Quarterly*, 7 (July 1899), 80.
- ⁸⁴ "Canada First," p. 249.
- ⁸⁵ "Our National Objects and Aims," pp. 22, 26.
- ⁸⁶ "Current Events" (July 1897), p. 85.
- ⁸⁷ "Response on Behalf of Canada," pp. 159-60.
- ⁸⁸ "Current Events" (July 1893), p. 73.
- ⁸⁹ "Thanksgiving and Retrospect," pp. 232-33.
- ⁹⁰ *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor, 1967), p. 109. This confrontation, at base one between the groups or classes that hold these ideas, may take a variety of forms. At its most obvious in the conflict between major systems of thought — conservatism, liberalism, socialism — in clearly class-conscious societies, it can also manifest itself in the ideological devices used by threatened groups in the course of their efforts to maintain their status and influence. The distinction drawn between landed wealth and wealth earned in trade by the defenders of a British aristocracy very much concerned to resist displacement by a class whose ascendancy was based on commerce and manufacturing is a well-known case in point. That distinction, and the special landed virtue to whose existence it was supposed to point, represented the making of a very clear set of claims on behalf of the aristocracy, "claims which," as F. M. L. Thompson points out, "it was scarcely necessary to formulate explicitly until the paramountcy of landed property became the subject of dispute." Even societies not normally thought of as characterized by a high degree of social conflict may exhibit tendencies of this kind. Historians of the United States, certainly, have uncovered a number of instances in which ideas professed by members of certain groups have been intimately related to the fact that those who hold those ideas felt their status, prestige, and power threatened by changes in the nature of their society and so sought to enforce dominance of their beliefs and values as a means of limiting the influence of those identified as the agents of this change. John Higham has, for example, suggested that the patterns of thought associated with American nativism may be best understood as phenomena arising out of the reality of "status rivalries" in American society. The importance of preserving "traditional" ideals and behaviour was emphasized not only by those of Protestant Anglo-Saxon stock who saw these values, and their own dominance, being threatened by European and Catholic immigrants but also by members of some immigrant groups, who, having begun to acquire status and position largely through their acceptance of these values, saw their position hardly less endangered by the newcomers than that occupied by those who had been in the country for generations. Historians of "genteel" culture in post-Civil War America have similarly suggested that the intensity with which its partisans held to their faith was a function of their concern to resist displacement by the new mass culture rooted in the vulgar civilization of the urban, industrial America they saw growing up all around them. "In the real world of cultural conflict," reports Stow Persons, "the status of the high culture of which the gentry were always the patrons and

practitioners has been found by many observers to [have been] precarious in the extreme." Finding themselves being shouldered aside, they sought to maintain their influence by a vigorous, if cultivated, insistence on the continuing relevance of their values. "The genteel authors..." argues another historian of their thought and writing, "were significant because they were the architects of a culture that embodied conservatism in a threatening age." Partisans of reform, too, have been identified as no less status-conscious than their explicitly conservative compatriots. Support for abolitionism, argues David Donald, can be linked to the declining status of its advocates: "Descended from old and socially prominent Northeastern families, reared in a faith of aggressive piety and moral endeavor, educated for conservative leadership, these young men and women who reached maturity in the 1830's faced a strange and hostile world. Social and economic leadership was being transferred from the country to the city, from the farmer to the manufacturer, from the preacher to the corporation attorney.... Expecting to lead, these young people found no followers. They were an elite without a function, a displaced class in American society... their appeal for reform was a strident call for their own class to re-exert its former social dominance." Perhaps the most familiar attempt to use this construct in the clarification of an historical situation has been made in relation to the American Progressives. Their concern to contain, direct, and regulate the forces of big business, argues Richard Hofstadter in *The Age of Reform*, was a function of the fact that they as clergymen, academics, journalists, and lawyers felt that their position in American society was being undermined by the new elites created by America's emergence as a business civilization. Progressive opposition to those elites was thus rooted in a strong desire to limit the growth and influence of the new groups and so preserve that of the old. "Progressivism," contends Hofstadter, "was to a very considerable extent led by men who suffered from the events of their time not through a shrinkage in their means but through the changed pattern in the distribution of deference and power." The group of educators, clergymen, journalists, and intellectuals with whom Grant can be most closely associated had much in common with the men and women described by these commentators. Their rural or small town backgrounds, their Christian upbringing, their humane education, and their own involvement in the life of the mind left them badly equipped to respond in positive terms to the new urban and industrial society growing up around them. Their ideology was not, to be sure, the effete conflict-avoiding construct of the genteel tradition, nor did it always — as the case of Grant himself makes clear — manifest itself in an uncomplicated equivalent of American nativism. But if its content frequently differed, it was nonetheless shaped by a similar concern that old values be asserted in the face of change. Like other Canadians of his type and generation — George Denison, George Parkin, Stephen Leacock, Andrew MacPhail, J. A. Cooper, James Cappon, Archibald MacMechan, Maurice Hutton — Grant, deeply disturbed by what the emergence of the new civilization implied for the future of men like him and ideas like his, sought to maintain the influence of both by linking the survival of the good and the true to the dominance of men and principles cut from the same cloth as he was. See F. M. L. Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1963), 4; John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1955); John Higham, "Another Look at Nativism," *The Catholic Historical Review*, 44 (July 1958), 147-58; Stow Persons, *The Decline of American Gentility* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1973), vii; John Tomsich, *A Genteel Endeavor: American Culture and Politics in the Gilded Age* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1971), 195; David Donald, *Lincoln Reconsidered: Essays*

on the *Civil War Era* (New York: Knopf, 1956), 33-34; Richard Hofstadter, "The Status Revolution and Progressive Leaders," in his *The Age of Reform* (New York: Vintage, 1961), 135; and, for a discussion of the lives and thought of some of Grant's associates and contemporaries, *The Sense of Power* and *The Search for an Ideal*.

⁹¹ "Current Events," *Queen's Quarterly*, 8 (Jan. 1901), 234-35.

⁹² "Thanksgiving and Retrospect," p. 231.

POSTSCRIPT

Daryl Hine

I wrote the world and its reply
Arrives in this white envelope,
Inevitably self-addressed
And stamped with its own worldliness,
Bleak season's greetings tendered by
A winter who could hope to cope
With coolly? Nothing but the best
Wishes of the wilderness.
Beyond this horizontal plain
Sealed by the incessant snow,
A table raised upon itself,
Immaculate of any stain,
Where distant stands of timber grow
Like bibelots upon a shelf:

Morning's lyrical plateau,
A desert by the afternoon,
The waste of time, with one oasis,
Comfortable evening,
Nocturnal bottomlands where flow
The frozen rivers of the moon
Through unilluminated places.
Eventually everything
Caught in earth's magnetic field,
Mountains, forests, valleys, seas,
With their obscure inhabitants
Sympathetically yield
To the rhythm that decrees
The patterns of diurnal dance.