



The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century (Volume 1)

Houston Stewart Chamberlain

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The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century, first published in German as “Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts” in 1899, is an intellectual tour de force which juxtaposes European Christian civilization—under the leadership of the Teutonic, or Germanic peoples, against the Semitic world.

Volume 1 starts by sketching the origin of present-day European civilization in the ancient systems developed by classical Greece and Rome.

It then moves on to an in-depth discussion of the figure of Jesus Christ and his message, which the author differentiates from the history of the Christian Church.

Although widely regarded as purely anti-Semitic, the book actually posits the Teutons against the entire Semitic world—Jewish and non-Jewish (Muslim) alike—and adopts a stridently pro-Christian stance, endeavouring at length to show that Jesus Christ was not Jewish in spirit or origin.

It then moves on to discuss the effect of Jews on Western civilization from the time of the decline of the Roman Empire to the nineteenth century, and finally the effect of the Teutonic peoples during the same time period, positing all of history as a struggle between these two groups.

Along the way, it discusses race, using an early cranial classification to differentiate between races, and remarking as follows on racial differences:

“Certain anthropologists would fain teach us that all races are equally gifted; we point to history and answer: that is a lie! The races of mankind are markedly different in the nature and also in the extent of their gifts, and the Germanic races belong to the most highly gifted group, the group usually termed Aryan. Is this human family united and uniform by bonds of blood? Do these stems really all spring from the same root? I do not know and I do not much care; no affinity binds more closely than elective affinity, and in this sense the Indo-European Aryans certainly form a family.”—from Chapter 6.

The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century was a best-seller which went into eight editions and sold more than a quarter of a million copies by 1938.

Reviews:

“A monument of erudition.”—*The Spectator*.

“Glowing with life, packed with fresh and vigorous thought.”—*The Birmingham Post*.

“It is difficult to over-estimate the stimulating qualities of this book.”—*The Glasgow Herald*.

“This is one of the books that really matter.”—*The Times Literary Supplement*.

“A historical masterpiece. Those who fail to read it, will be unable to talk intelligently about contemporary sociological and political problems.”—George Bernard Shaw, writing in the *Fabian News*.

This new edition is not a facsimile, but has been fully reset and contains the complete original text.

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