

THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CHRISTIAN CULTURE

John Courtney Murray

The following is a transcription of three lectures which John Courtney Murray gave at Loyola College in Baltimore on February 11, 18, and 25, 1940. They are found in the Woodstock College Archives, Murray Papers, Box 6, File 422.

I have corrected obvious typographical errors and inserted marginal notes made by Murray on the transcript.

I. PORTRAIT OF A CHRISTIAN

Introduction: the title

Original title: the Concept of a Christian Culture. Changed to: the Construction of a Christian Culture.

Reason: My desire is to present you not merely with a thesis, but with a task. I shall attempt to outline for you the basic ideas upon which a Christian culture must be built; a firm grasp on them is the essential preliminary to all effective action. But it is not enough to have grasped the idea of a Christian culture; that idea must be given shape in the world of human life.

And it is for you to give it shape: on that point I must insist. The most superficial observer of the American scene cannot fail to recognize that our greatest need today is the need for cultural leadership. Without it, political leadership or economic leadership of the most inspired kind would avail us little, even if we could find them; of what use is a prophet, if the ears of the people are dull, and their souls dead?

Moreover, I think that this need of cultural leadership is fairly generally recognized. If you listen closely, you can hear from all parts of the land an obscure, almost inarticulate cry going up, calling for men and women who are clear in their own minds as to what it means to be a man or a woman, and who are courageous and joyous in their will to share with others their own vision of that particular mode of life that is really human, and hence really Christian.

It is upon the presence among us, in sufficient numbers, of men and women who have that vision, that the nation's life depends. "*Paucis humanum vivit genus*": the old Roman proverb is profoundly true. It is indeed in the life of a few that Humanity lives.¹ For few men have vision; and fewer still have courage. So it is the vision of a few that is the salvation of many. Among us especially, the many-headed crowd does not think; it merely quotes the thoughts of a few; it does not itself live; it merely follows the patterns of life that have been set out for it by a few.

And the "few" in this case are yourselves. I do not say this in any idle spirit of flattery, but rather from conviction: you are the few, the *élite*, who must make your Christian thoughts effective in molding the mind of America, and in creating among us such patterns of life as may merit the name of Christian.²

¹ Compare to H. de Lubac, *Catholicisme* (Paris: du Cerf, 1947⁴) 203: "*Paucis humanum vivit genus*: l'axiome antique est profondément vrai."

²In the left margin, Murray wrote: "cultural 'fifth column'".

If you do not take into your hands that task, I do not know into whose hands it will fall. Or rather, I do know. It will fall into the hands of a group, motley enough in its complexion, but whose members have this at least in common, that they are of today, wholly of today, with no roots in humanity's Christian past and no sense of continuity with it;³ nor gratitude for its cultural heritage; men and women whom Bertrand Russell described as "ignorant of the past, without tenderness to what is traditional, without understanding of what they are destroying" (*The Scientific Outlook*, p. 276).⁴ And I may add myself, with little concept of what they are trying to build. One has only to think of our educational leaders, whose name is Legion, and whose badge is intellectual confusion.

I. A general observation:

First of all, the task of constructing a culture is essentially spiritual.

For a culture is not built of bricks and mortar; it is not an article of commerce, to be bought and pocketed; it is not even an object of legislation, to be written into the life of a nation as into a statute book.

It is essentially a spiritual thing, for its home is in a soul. It is to the life of an individual or a nation what the soul is to the body: a "form", that animates, organizes, humanizes what otherwise would be brute matter, inert and disorganized.

It is difficult to describe in itself, but is very manifest in its effects. Its proper effect is to bring order into human life, the order proper to a human life, namely, a spiritual order, that alone makes a life authentically human. For a human life, like a body is humanized in that it is brought under the direction of an intelligence that is conscious of itself and of its spiritual destiny, and in that it is brought under the domination of a will disciplined enough to maintain order among its subservient instincts, and actually to impart to the whole of life a spiritual purpose.

Culture, then, means man's effort to be fully human, and hence his effort to bring spiritual order and spiritual purpose into his life.

It follows therefore that the proper instruments for the construction of a culture are intelligence and will, man's two spiritual powers.

And notice this: it is not within the province of intelligence and will actually to create a spiritual order for human life; in fact, they do not have to. That spiritual order already exists; it is objective, "given". It is for man to discover it by his intelligence, and submit to it by his will.

Consequently, all man's cultural effort is at bottom an effort at submission to the truth and the beauty and the good that is outside him, existing in an ordered harmony, whose pattern he must produce within his soul by conformity with it. However, this latter point will come up for further discussion later.

For the moment, this is my point: you have all the equipment needed for your task of constructing a Christian culture, for you have intelligence, and will.

And do not think them weak equipment. Intelligence and will were, so to speak, all that God himself had wherewith to create us and this world of ours; and it is solely by their use that he rules

³In the left margin Murray wrote: "share all of today's confusion".

⁴Murray may have derived this quotation from Christopher Dawson, *The Modern Dilemma: The Problem of European Unity* (Essays in Order, 8; London/New York: Sheed & Ward, 1933), 66.

his creatures, and guides them to their appointed spiritual destiny. The Word and the Spirit, as Irenaeus said, are the two hands of God, and in sharing them with you, he shares with you his omnipotence. And omnipotence ought to be enough for any task....

II. The problem confronting us, here today in America

Our first question must be: what is the actual problem confronting us here today in America? What have we actually to do?

Let me say immediately that we have to undertake a work of construction. And that because we are Christians, for whose action an eternally valid rule has been set: "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Mt 5:17): "*plerosai*", to bring to perfection that which is imperfect.

Not that that oft-quoted saying is merely a formula of easy tolerance, justifying us in being indifferent to values, to right and wrong, true and false, beautiful and ugly. Rather, it is the formula of an intelligent love, that seeks the right in the wrong, the true in the false, the beautiful in the ugly, intent to save them and to complete them, and to free them from that which deforms them.

Hence our first task is to discern what is right and true and beautiful in our contemporary American culture, that we may build on it.

But right here our difficulty commences. For it would seem that our American culture, as it exists, is actually the quintessence of all that is decadent in the culture of the Western Christian world. It would seem to be erected on the triple denial that has corrupted Western culture at its roots, the denial of metaphysical reality [in margin: over that of sense], of the primacy of the spiritual⁵ over the material, of the social over the individual.

Hence in view of the fact that American culture is built on the negation of all that Christianity stands for, it would seem that our first step toward the construction of a Christian culture should be the destruction of the existing one. In the presence of a Frankenstein, one does not reach for baptismal water, but for a bludgeon.

And truly, American culture does present itself as something of a monster, the like of which has surely never been seen on this planet.⁶ Its most striking characteristic is its profound materialism; it would seem to be orientated almost wholly to matter, and the things of sense.

It has had, in fact, one dominating ideal: the conquest of the material world, with the aid of science, a conquest that has been conceived as an ultimate, directed toward nothing else. It has made one promise: a more abundant life for the ordinary man and woman, the abundance being ultimately in physical comfort. It has had one technique of social progress: the exploitation, for all they were worth in cold cash, of the resources of land and forest and stream, and of the mechanical inventiveness of its citizens. It has recognized one supreme law: supply and demand.⁷ It has had one standard of value: the quantitative, that judges that best which is biggest. It has aimed at one order: the economic. It confers one accolade on those who serve it: wealth. It knows one evil: poverty. It

⁵ Perhaps an echo of the title of Jacques Maritain's defense of Pius XI's act against Action française, *Primaute du spirituel* (Paris: Plon, 1927).

⁶ Here Murray crossed out of his typescript: "a monster constructed by the techniques of modern science out of our unparalleled natural resources."

⁷Murray crossed out here: "producing power and buying power."

rides on one crusade: for the abolition of physical pain. It turns out one typical product: the "*homo oeconomicus*", the business man, in a business suit, with an eye and a nose for business, whose dreams of paradise are of a land in which there is no red ink.⁸

It has given its citizens everything to live for, and nothing to die for. And its achievement may be summed up thus: it has gained a continent, and lost its own soul.

[Say rather:] It has lived so much on the surface that it has lost contact with its soul,⁹ the profound religious truth that is at the basis of democratic theory and practice, namely, the intrinsic dignity of human nature, the spiritual freedom of the human soul, its equality, as a soul, with others of its kind, and its superiority to all that does not share its spirituality.

That truth, which we sum up in the Kantian phrase: the individual man is an end in himself", is undoubtedly the most dangerous truth that has ever been let loose on mankind, and the social order that is based on it is of all the most unstable. The reason is that that truth, when detached and isolated from its proper place in the whole order of truth, so flatters the pride of man as to seduce him into belief that he is not only an end in himself, but his own last end, that he is freed from all obediences, and a law unto himself, that he can wrest the universe to his individual will, and make it serve his private purposes. And that is blasphemy,¹⁰ whose punishment is death. For such a belief, widespread, is the destruction of all spiritual order, all social order, all order within the individual personality, and hence the ruination of all genuine human culture.

Now, it would be idle to pretend that America has not succumbed to the temptations of her fundamental belief; as it would be fatuous not to do something about it.

Obviously the first thing to do is to study the history of the idea of human dignity and of human liberty; such a study would give the key to an understanding of our present materialistic culture, and likewise indicate the point of insertion for our constructive efforts in the direction of a Christian culture.

But it would be too large a subject to open here. Let me just sketch the three stages of deformation, or I may better say, materialisation, which the spiritual truth on which democracy is based has passed. I risk a simplification, but one that does not, I think, distort the historical reality.

Briefly, the process was this: the ideals of humanist democracy, received very largely from France in the revolutionary period, had been divorced from their proper religious setting in the Christian revelation, but still had the form of a philosophy.¹¹ Later they were stripped of their intellectual content by the Calvinist spirit of the Northern States, and made over¹² into a postulate, that animated a program of economic individualism. And finally, when Calvinistic moral earnestness

⁸ See Maritain, "Religion and Culture," in *Essays in Order*, 25: "A *homo oeconomicus* will be invented whose sole function is to accumulate material goods."

⁹The bracketed words and the words that follow are written in the margin. Murray crossed out from his typescript: "But right here, when the picture becomes blackest, a ray of hope emerges. For the fact is that American culture had a soul once, a magnificent thing, of unparalleled spiritual power. It boasts of being a democratic culture, rightly enough in a sense. And consequently buried somewhere in its origins, as the animating principle that gave it whatever vitality it has had, lies"

¹⁰Murray crossed out: "in fact suicide." In the margin, he wrote "the 'law'".

¹¹

¹²Murray crossed out: "moralised".

had died out, they survived as a humanitarian emotion, three degrees removed from their original source of inspiration.¹³

Thus from a philosophic doctrine, the idea of individual dignity and liberty became a moral postulate, and from a moral postulate it has become a mere emotion. And it is upon that idea, emotionalised into a caricature of itself, that we are trying to live today, very dangerously. For if democracy as a doctrine is dangerous, as an emotion it is big with disaster: [handwritten note: "believe it all-destructive power of human selfishness, enemy of spiritual order"].

Now, it would take too long to describe in detail those three stages of evolution, or rather, degeneration. Let me, however, speak briefly of the second stage, which was the decisive one.

I blame for it the Calvinistic Puritanism of the Northern States. But with no intention, on the one hand, of indicting John Calvin himself, for whose intellectual qualities and religious genius I have rather an admiration, and who certainly did not foresee, any more than Luther did, the cultural consequences of the doctrines he taught. Nor on the other hand do I wish to discredit the Puritan soul as such; it had its elements of greatness, and its virtues were in many ways very real. But I do hold it responsible, indirectly, and perhaps inculpably, for the orientation of American culture toward material values and an excessive individualism.

Consider three things. First of all, the fact that the Calvinist soul was probably unique in the history of souls for its abhorrence of what we term humanism. The witness thereof could be the New England Sunday "blue-laws", or that ferociously moral, and most unspeakably drab and joyless education administered, or should I say spanked into children in early American sectarian schools. Puritanism, as a religion, was exclusively a culture of the will, imposing an inhumanly rigid ethical discipline, professedly anti-intellectual, and on principle contemptuous of all aesthetic and sensuous culture.¹⁴ Democracy as a basis for a genuinely humanist way of life had no meaning for it.

Second, consider the fact that Max Weber in his much-controverted, but still essentially sound book, *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*, has pointed out, that Calvinism brought one thing into the world that was "unquestionably new: the valuation of the fulfillment of duty in worldly affairs as the highest form which the moral activity of the individual could assume" (Weber-Parsons, p. 80).¹⁵ To the English or American Puritan, business activity for profit was a definitely religious "*Beruf*", vocation, a divine call, towards which he had an ethical

¹³This paragraph seems to be dependent on Christopher Dawson, "Christianity and the New Age," in *Essays in Order* (New York: Macmillan, 1931) 167-69; e.g., p. 168: "Thus the ideals of humanist democracy, which were received from France in the revolutionary period, were stripped of their intellectual element and moralised as a justification for the unregulated activity of the ordinary man. This led, on the one hand, to the individualistic cult of material success and, on the other, to a humanitarian idealism that is in reality nothing else but the same ideal in a socialised form."

¹⁴In his notes on Weber (see next note), Murray refers to Weber's comments on "the entirely negative attitude of Puritanism to all the sensuous and emotional elements in culture and in religion, because they are of no use toward salvation and promote sentimental illusions and idolatrous superstitions. Thus it provides a basis for a fundamental antagonism to sensuous culture of all kinds"; *Protestant Ethic*, 105.

¹⁵In the same file of Murray's Papers can be found a single hand-written sheet, with several references to Weber's work, in the edition edited by Talcott Parsons; see Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Catholicism* (New York: Scribner's, 1958). The pagination of this edition is the same as the 1930 edition, which Murray used.

obligation; his success in it was the evidence of his "election", the source of his "certitude of salvation", the single goal of his religious striving.¹⁶

For a combination of moral earnestness and business acumen one can find no equal to John Milton's "unscrupulous merchants" in the Puritan circles of England in the 18th century, or to certain early American industrialists, with their peculiarly pious ruthlessness. Even the history of the Standard Oil Co. reveals those qualities.

If you wish the typical American incarnation of the Calvinist spirit, just at the time when it was beginning to decay, take Benjamin Franklin, and his *Necessary Hints to Those Who Would Be Rich*, or his *Advice to a Young Tradesman*, or even his *Autobiography*. Books that have been of incalculable influence in forming the culture of America.

"Remember that time is money.... Remember that money is of the prolific, generating nature. Money can beget money, and its offspring can beget more, and so on.... He that wastes idly a groat's worth of his time per day, one day with another, wastes the privilege of using one hundred pounds each day". And so on--the philosophy of avarice, preached as an ethic, so that its infringement is not only foolishness, but morally wrong, a sin, since it merits the loss of the American Puritan sanctifying grace: Capital. [In margin: a question mark] Contrariwise, honesty, punctuality, industry, frugality are virtues because they merit its increase. And if you ask Franklin: Why should a man make money? he answers with an echo of his Calvinist youth (forsaken for a colourless deism): "Seeth thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings" (Proverbs 22:29). The making of money is virtue: such is the Alpha and Omega of Franklin's ethic, that became the ethic of America.¹⁷

Consider lastly the unprecedented inner loneliness of the Calvinist soul, bred into it by its dogma of predestination, the belief that man follows his path alone to a destiny decreed for him from eternity, alone, isolated, beyond the help of anyone or anything.¹⁸ This inner loneliness, accentuating the all-importance of the individual, was moreover still further emphasized by persecution, that roused in the Calvinist breast an angry spirit of protest against external authority.

In terms of these three qualities of the Puritan soul, its anti-intellectualism and anti-humanism, its this-worldly morality, its intense individualism,¹⁹ you will, I think, find a major (though obviously not in itself adequate) explanation of the transformation of early American ideals of democracy. They were dehumanized, de-intellectualized, moralised, clothed with fierce emotion, and made the justification for the unregulated activity of the individual in the field that absorbed him, business, economic life.

¹⁶ Murray's page of notes contain references for these remarks to Weber, *Protestant Ethic*, 80 and 112 [110-12].

¹⁷ These paragraphs on Franklin are heavily, some times literally, dependent on Weber, *Protestant Ethic*, 48-53.

¹⁸ Cp. Weber, *Protestant Ethic*, 104: "In its extreme inhumanity this doctrine [predestination] must above all have had one consequence for the life of a generation which surrendered to its magnificent consistency. That was a feeling of unprecedented inner loneliness of the single individual. In what was for the man of the age of the Reformation the most important thing in life, his eternal salvation, he was forced to follow his path alone to meet a destiny which had been decreed for him from eternity."

¹⁹In left margin Murray wrote: "plus character of country-Industrial Revolution".

That was an essential transformation of the ideals of democracy, the dignity of the individual and his personal freedom.²⁰

The third stage in the transformation was not long in coming. the element of moral earnestness in the program weakened from lack of support; the "divine Call" gave way to the voice of individual selfishness; the Calvinist soul, that, it must be admitted, had a real spiritual power, died, and American civilization became as a body without a soul.²¹

Without a soul, I say: that is, literally without a spiritual principle to animate its program of economic and material organization. True, the insistence on the rights and dignity of the individual man persisted, and even waxed stronger. America grew even more clamorously democratic. But the body of its democratic culture was inhabited no longer by a spiritual soul, an idea or a moral intuition, but by its base and material counterfeit; humanitarian feeling, serving as a convenient emotional justification for unlimited, individualistic economic enterprise, is not a spiritual principle.

Thus American culture became doubly material: material in its body, its economic order, and material in its soul, emotional individualism.

And that is why observers from abroad, who see us sometimes more truly than we see ourselves, consider our democracy as moribund, and our culture as contemptible. They bring serious charges against us: that our soul has been so materialised that our minds are incapable of any metaphysical conviction,²² and our wills incapable of spiritual purpose; and this, our lack of soul, casts out their fear of our size and their respect for our material riches. The refinement of the Greeks, they say, did not save them from the Macedonians, nor the comfort of the Romans save them from the Goths.²³ And we might, it seems, do well to cease our shouting at their barbarism over there, to meditate a while upon history. A nation cannot live without a soul.

Now, if the foregoing analysis has any validity, our cultural problem should be as clear in its outlines as it is urgent in its demands for a solution.

It is, I said, a problem of construction, and the point of insertion for our effort, has, I hope, been made clear. At the basis of our culture is a spiritual idea, a religious truth that has been impoverished and deformed. The truth, I mean, that man is a person, sacred, inviolable, gifted with the divine prerogative of freedom, and charged with all the responsibilities of that gift, that reach horizontally out to the farthest confines of human life, and vertically up into the heart of eternity.

The world owes that truth to Christianity; it did not exist before Christ; it came to earth in him. The Hellenic mind, intellectualist, abstract, and at bottom determinist, had but a slight

²⁰Murray crossed out here: "it is the moral postulate for a program of economic individualism, pursued in the name of morality."

²¹ Compare Dawson, p. 168: "But when this religious inspiration has evaporated, American civilisation without Calvinism, like modern European civilisation without humanism, becomes a body without a soul."

²² Compare Dawson, p. 166-67: "In Western Europe the decadence of the humanist tradition has left the European mind so weak that it is no longer capable of any metaphysical conviction."

²³ Compare Dawson, *The Modern Dilemma*, 37: "The most civilised people of antiquity, the Greeks, failed, not because it was too complex and refined. Their standards of life, their ideals of civic and individual liberty and enjoyment, were too high to stand the strain of political competition, and they went down before ruder and harder peoples like the Macedonians and the Romans, who asked less of life and got more."

apprehension of it; the Oriental mind today, save where it has been influenced by Western teaching, still does not apprehend it.

And if we have it, it is because of Him who said, "If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (Jn 8:32). Christianity is throughout, as von Hügel finely said, "the revelation, through the Person and example of its Founder, of the altogether unsuspected depth and inexhaustibleness of human personality, and of this personality's analogue in God" (*The Mystical Element in Religion*, I, p. 26).²⁴

Through the veils of the humanity of Christ, man was given what he has always longed for, a vision of God: "Philip, he who seeth me, seeth the Father" (Jn 14:9). And it was this vision of God, his Father, that man needed in order truly to see himself, that is, to search down into the inmost recesses of himself, where he is most himself, and there to make the glad discovery that he is not the victim of cosmic law nor the slave of matter in its cyclic changes, but a person, spiritually free, because he bears stamped upon his soul the image of God's Most Blessed Trinity, because he and his world have been ransomed from their slavery to sin by the blood of Christ, and in him raised to the glorious freedom of the sons of God.

And it is this vision of the Christian soul, given us in Christ, that we must give to America. It alone will fill up the spiritual void that exists at the center of our culture, and that explains its materialism and profaneness; it alone will be the interior vital principle that will give to our democracy and its economic achievements a spiritual purpose and hence a permanent vitality.

Here, then, is the solution for our cultural problem that I wish to propose.

But notice its terms. Too long, I say, we have been trying to live on bread alone;²⁵ we are suffering from religious rickets, spiritual recession, and from unemployment of the soul. Even in the sphere of terrestrial and temporal life, with which alone culture is directly concerned, man cannot live on bread alone. We shall surely perish, unless we turn for nourishment to the Living Bread that came down from Heaven, and gave life to the world, His Eternal Word, made flesh.

But let me say frankly that I am not pleading for a return to "Christianity", as the religion of the liberal humanitarian created by Alfred Harnack: "the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man"; nor am I making a plea for Mr. Will Durant's "Church of the Future", that last gasp of a human intellect ere it expires in despair; not yet again would I resurrect Matthew Arnold's Christianity: "morality tinged with emotion."

Rather, I would take as the creative principle of our Christian culture the full, metaphysical theology of the Incarnation. The Incarnation, I mean, not as understood by Paul Elmer More or Mr. Middleton Murry,²⁶ but as understood by Cyril of Alexandria and the Council of Ephesus, and by Leo the Great and the Council of Chalcedon. Hence the theology that regards Christ, not as the

²⁴This passage is quoted in de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 439.

²⁵Murray crossed out here: "and the effects tell us that we have had enough of that experiment."

²⁶Paul Elmer More (1864-1937) was a journalist, literary critic and Christian apologist. He published *The Christ of the New Testament* (1924), *Christ the Word* (1927), and *The Catholic Faith* (1931). John Middleton Murry wrote *To the Unknown God*, *Jesus, Man of Genius* (1926). *The Betrayal of Christ by the Churches* (1940), and *Christocracy* (1942). Dawson criticizes Murry's views in "Christianity and the New Age," 192-97, 214-16.

incarnation of the ethical ideals of humanity, but as the Incarnation of the Son of God, His subsistent Word and Image.

That was the historical Christ that awakened man intellectually and spiritually, and created Western civilization; and he alone can reawaken man, a Lazarus in the tomb of materialistic individualism, and breathe into him once more the Holy Spirit he has lost.

Now, to develop this thesis, let me first state the theology of the Incarnation, and then draw out, briefly, its cultural significance. Thus I shall, I think, be tracing the portrait of a Christian, whose strong and gentle, beautifully human features we must strive to engrave upon the countenance of America.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... And the Word was made flesh, and pitched his tent among us, and of his fullness we have all received": so St. John states the fundamental fact of Christianity.

And St. Paul: "When the fullness of time was come, God sent his Son, born of a woman....that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal 4:4-5).

And the faith of John and Paul received its classical formulation at the Council of Chalcedon (fourth ecumenical) in the year 451. Let me give you its majestic words:

Following therefore the holy Fathers, unto the praise of the one same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, with one voice we put forth our clear teaching, that he, one and the same Christ, is perfect in divinity, and perfect, too, in humanity; truly God and likewise truly man, with a rational soul and a body; of one nature with the Father according to his divinity, and of one nature with us according to his humanity, in all things like unto us, save in sin. Before all ages born of the Father according to his divinity, and in these latter times, for us and for our salvation, born of Mary, Virgin, Mother of God, according to his humanity.

We know him as one and the same Christ, the Only-begotten Son and Lord, in two natures, which are not confused nor altered, but each is undivided in itself and inseparable from the other; their differences not being destroyed by their union, but each preserving that which is proper to itself, and coming together into one person and one subsistence, not partitioned or divided into two persons, but (he) the Only-begotten Son, the Word, the Lord, Jesus Christ, is one.

So the prophets before him spoke of him; so he himself taught us of himself; and so to us the creed of our Fathers has handed on this faith.

Such is the faith of Chalcedon, formulated by the universal Church with anguished accuracy, for upon the exactness of its phrases the life of mankind depends: Christ is God, perfect in divinity, Christ is man, perfect in humanity; Christ is not two, but One. God is one with man, and man is one with God. God is still God, and man is still man, yet they are one: The Word was made Flesh, the Son of God was born of a woman.

And the primary cultural significance of this theology is that in its light man, as St. Thomas said, now dares to think worthily of himself.

What is man? What are we? We are they with whom God has sought resemblance in all things, save in sin. We are they to whom God has come close, closer than he has come to the angels; for he has become "*unus ex nobis*", in the Patristic phrase, one of us; he is of our race, sharing in flesh and blood with us; he is of our history, part of our past.

Thus the Incarnation is the revelation to us of the dignity of man; his nature is a nature that God has hallowed by substantial contact, making it his own, inseparable from himself. For as the Fathers teach, "What once he assumed, he has not ever laid down."

Think of the consequence: now a Humanity can and must be adored. Let me put it thus strongly: the dreams of all idolators have come true: a thing of flesh and blood has become so one with the divine that before it "every knee must bend, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (Phil 2:11) Chalcedon does not shrink before that conclusion; rather, it smites with its anathema Nestorius, who would not adore the man, Christ Jesus, with the same adoration that he gave to the Person of the Word. Against him Chalcedon teaches, in the eighth of the Cyrilline anathemas, that one worship and one hymn of praise goes up to Emmanuel, God with us, for the Word has become flesh. A human nature has become adorable, and has launched, on metaphysical foundations, the cult of man.

What philosopher's theory of the dignity of man can rival this? Yet this is no theory, but sober historical fact.

But there is more. The Incarnation is not only a revelation of what man is, but of what he can become, if he chooses to lay hold of the new divine energy [marginal note: "Grace"] that has been put at his disposal through the Humanity of Christ. I mean that man can become lord of creation and like to God: "for to many as received him, he gave them power to become the children of God", enjoying the freedom of his house on earth, having access to the mansions of his own blessed immortality.

Thus in Christ man received the answer to the two fundamental questions that vexed the mind of pagan antiquity, and that must, in fact, vex any human mind that reflects upon itself.

The first was this: how shall man achieve "salvation" from the tyranny of destiny, the "*heimarméne*", the iron law of fate that apportions him a place in the scheme of things entire? How shall he achieve the spiritual freedom that he obscurely knows to be his birthright, but that he feels himself powerless to seize? How shall he rescue himself from beneath the hoofs of Time, and break the chains that bind him to the wheel of matter?

The second question is correlative: how shall man become like unto the gods, perfect in their perfection, sharing their changeless beatitude, quaffing the nectar of immortality?

The anguished note of these two questions runs all through Greek philosophical and religious thought. To find the answer to them,²⁷ were directed all the philosopher's contemplative effort, and all the solemn initiations of the mystery cults.

But one answer never entered their heads: that God himself should raise them to his blessed freedom and immortality, by coming down to them, to share in time their slavery and thus to shatter it, to grapple in combat with their death, and thus to overcome it.

The word of Athanasius, echoed by all the Greek Fathers, and caught up by Augustine in the West, would have fallen upon their ears as too glorious to be true: "The Word of God was made man, that we might be made gods" (*De incarn. Verbi*, 54).

You see, they did not know God well enough, nor did they know themselves, nor what in the power of God they could become; they dared to aspire and to hope, but they dared not believe in the reality of their hope nor in the term of their aspiration. God had to come down to man, and present to him his hope realized in sensible form, a human nature united to the divine, before man could have the right and the courage to believe that such a thing is possible.

²⁷Murray crossed out: "to these questions, which they never thought to be delusory."

"For," says St. Thomas, "if it were promised to man that he would attain to a happiness of which even the angels are hardly capable, consisting as it does in the vision and enjoyment of God, man, knowing his own weakness, would scarcely be able to cherish it as a hope, unless first the dignity of human nature were shown to him, in the fact that God set such a value on that nature, that for its salvation he willed to become man. And so, by the fact that God became man, he gave us the hope that even a man might achieve this destiny, namely, to be united to God in a blessed enjoyment of him" (*Contra errores Graec.*, c. 5).

It was the historical fact of the Incarnation that certified the eternal hope, somehow native to the human soul, of becoming like to God.

Secondly, the Incarnation answered that other spiritual desire, that in spite of thwartings, man has always cherished, namely, the dream of becoming master of the world of nature, and master too of the dark powers of evil whose presence in the world he has never ceased to feel.

Again St. Thomas: "The knowledge of his own dignity, deriving from the fact that God assumed a human nature, has this value, too, for man; it persuades him that he should not bow down in voluntary subjection to any created thing, neither by the idolatrous worship of demons, or creatures of any kind, nor by the enslavement of himself to material things, by a disordered attachment to them. For it is unworthy of a man, who is of such value in the eyes of God, and so close to him that God should will to become man,—it is unworthy of man that he should subject himself to things that are lower than God; that is to violate the order of things" (*Ibid.*)²⁸

Thus through the Incarnation, which teaches man his proper dignity, comes to him his long-sought enfranchisement from all earthly servitudes. Now there is divinity in man; how shall he serve what is beneath him?

Do you see emerging now the portrait of a Christian, the man who believes in God made man?²⁹

The first of his features is a noble Christian pride, born of his likeness to God and God's likeness to him; born too of his position as master of material things, in that he is one with God, who has all creatures beneath his feet. In the power of this Christian pride man puts forth his noblest effort, to make himself master of creatures in fact, as he is their master in right; to control them, to order his love for them, to free himself from the seduction of their charms, to make them serve the cause of humanity.

And in the power of this Christian pride man, too, joyously makes his own submission, to the Only Lord, "King of Ages, immortal, invisible," God, blessed forever.

It was this Christian pride that the great Leo taught his flock: "Realize, O Christian, your dignity; you have been made to share in the divine nature; then betray not your nobility, by conduct unbecoming to it; go not back to your former baseness."

So too, in the name of this pride, Gregory Nazianzen sent his people into battle with their fiercest enemy, against whose dominion they must always struggle: "Trusting in the seal set upon you, say (to the devil): I also am the image of God; I have not yet, like you, been thrust down from

²⁸Murray wrote here: "Christian mind: instinct for *ordo*".

²⁹Murray crossed out here: "From the theology of the Incarnation, there emerges the true portrait of a Christian, the man who believes in God made man, and who consequently believes in himself made god."

the glory of heaven because of pride; I have put on Christ; by baptism I have claimed him for my own: do thou adore me!" (*Orat.* 40,10).

There are the authentic accents of a Christian man, commanding adoration from the devil himself, an adoration due him of right, because he is clothed with Christ.

Beside those ringing words, how cheap and vacuous sound the voice of the modern liberal humanitarian, shouting of his freedom and his individual dignity. The Christian man has a reason in history to believe in his dignity and his spiritual freedom. And I very much fear that unless the liberal humanitarian leaves off shouting long enough to think out for himself a reason for it, his shouts will soon be drowned out by the clankings of the chains he is forging for himself.

One last point, that has been shown to man in the theology of the Incarnation. It is this: that now man, since he is capable of divinity, is capable also, and for the first time, of full humanity. Old Aristotle saw truly: a man cannot and will not be perfectly human unless somehow he becomes divine.

Now however that the "*semen Dei*", as St. John calls it, the germ of divinity has entered his nature, man is free to develop all the hidden potentialities of his nature, in fact, to shatter its limitations, and make himself over in the image of Christ, "perfect in humanity".

Hence that powerful expansion of humanness that has characterized the Christian era. Man has asserted his freedom to love and to use all things human, because all things human have been sanctified for him in Christ, in whom, as the Council of Florence teaches, "nothing of God is separated from man, and nothing of man is separated from God" (D 708).

Out of this complete sanctification of our entire nature, that was the favorite theme of Cyril of Alexandria, Christian humanism has developed. Upon it is based Augustine's "*Intellectum valde ama*", his exhortation to a passionate love of the human intellect. Upon it is based the Christian cult of beauty, in nature and in art, the conviction that one does not stay one's flight to God by pausing in admiration before the lilies of the field. Upon it, too, is based the clear-souled joy of the unspoiled Italian peasant in sunlight and music, in the embrace of his wife and the laughter of his children. And upon it, to come down to the last homely detail, is based the hearty enjoyment that a Christian soul like Chesterton's could find in a creamy glass of ale.

It is to the Word of God made Flesh that humanity owes its pride in being human, and its joy in human life, and its dreams of ever fuller humanity.

But notice: this pride and joy and aspiration have within themselves that which protects them from excess and consequent self-destruction. They are tempered by an inner austerity. For the Christian, conscious of his own dignity as a man, is no eighteenth-century naturalist, proud and self-sufficient, convinced that he has within his own nature the full equipment for the conquest of the world. Rather, the pride of the Christian is not simply in his humanity, but in his humanity as taken up into union with the divine.

For he knows that the perfection of the humanity of Christ was not due to itself in isolation, but to its union with the Person of the Word, which lit up that humanity from within, by its own splendor, and energized it anew by its own life. The humanity of Christ, perfect as a nature, had no personality of its own; its very existence, as Thomist theology explains the dogma, was given it by the existence of the Word, of which it was the instrument--a living, conscious, thinking, willing,

feeling instrument, all trembling with interior spontaneity, but for all that an instrument, that apart from its union with the Person of the Word, would have fallen awkwardly into nothingness.

The theology of the Incarnation does indeed inspire the Christian with a deep sense of his dignity as a man; but no less strongly does it wake in him the consciousness of his nothingness were he merely a man, apart from God who makes him all he is. Consequently, the dignity of the Christian is the most noble of all human dignities, being the dignity of a profound humility.

Here, then, is the second feature in the portrait of a Christian: his lowliness before God, his utter dependence upon God. That trait was given its proper expression by Him who was "perfect in humanity", and who nevertheless said, "Why do you call me good? There is One who is Good, God" (Lk 18:20).

And He too drew its last consequence: "I am in the midst of you as one who serves" (Lk 22:27).

I must be content with having set before you thus briefly these two essential characteristics of the Christian soul, stamped upon it by its belief in God-made-Man. They may be expressed in paradox. The first is a pride in human nature that is willing to serve the lowliest of humanity; the second is a humility that exalts itself in a refusal to serve aught that is not God. He who is thus lofty and thus lowly can truly call himself a man, a Christian man, for he reflects the image of the perfect Man, Christ Jesus.

Briefly to sum up. I said that our first effort toward the construction of a Christian culture in America must be to rescue from its debasement the essential idea upon which a democratic culture must be erected, the idea of the dignity of human nature, and of man's spiritual freedom. That idea has been sentimentalized into a dangerous caricature of itself; it has become a mere instinct, a thing "felt", a visceral stirring, not an intellectual conviction. Instead of being a spiritual force at once inspiring and controlling, a humanizing, ordering force, it has become the servant of selfish impulse, the all-sufficient excuse for lawless economic life. In a word it has become materialized, and in the process it has lost its proper power to create a personal and social life that might justly be termed human, and Christian.

We must, I say, rescue that idea, spiritualize it, by bringing it once more into contact with its sources in Christian history and Christian truth. Only he who believes in the fact of God made Man will have a true spiritual idea of man's essential dignity and freedom. Only he will be effective in redeeming our culture from its soulless mechanism, and transforming it into a way of life authentically human. Only he will be able to eradicate from the face of American culture the ugly features of the economic man, and to imprint upon it the gentle, noble, divinely-human features of the Man, Christ Jesus.

Conclusion: Charles' story....

II. PERSONALITY AND THE COMMUNITY

Today we shall direct our attention to the second major cultural problem that confronts us today in America, as it confronts the whole world. It is, in fact, the most acute of all contemporary problems. I call it that of personality and the community.

In its more superficial, political form, it is termed the conflict between Democracy and Statism, between the theory that asserts the right of the individual to rule his own life, and the opposing theory that asserts the right of the State to rule it for him.

The democratic theory advances the claims of the individual: his autonomy and liberty. The statist theory advances the claims of society: order and obedience to authority.¹

In the concrete, these claims would seem to be antagonistic, and as a matter of fact, they do conflict.

We know the solution, political and cultural, that their conflict has received in Europe. Our problem is to decide what solution it will receive here in America.

Now, that decision is not easily arrived at. If it were merely a political problem--Shall we embrace democracy or statism as political system?--the answer would be easy. We do embrace democracy, and we repudiate and execrate statism with all the power of our American and Christian souls. I take that answer as self-evident.

But the deeper, cultural problem is not answered simply by a dedication of ourselves to the political ideals of democracy. We cannot afford to forget that the Germany of the Weimar Republic dedicated itself to democracy, and then witnessed a dictator rise to power by the use of the democratic processes, the right of free speech and the ballot. Similarly the Italy of [*sic*] was dedicated to democracy, when Mussolini and his Black Shirts made their march on Rome. The dictatorships of Europe did not leap full-armed into existence, like Athene from the head of Zeus; they were conceived in the womb of decadent democracies, and born in the travail of social chaos. Strictly speaking, the dedication of Germany and Italy in the 20's was not to democracy, but to liberal individualism, and hence they were really a dedication to future dictatorship. For dictatorship, as history abundantly proves, is the natural and inevitable way out of the disorder that is engendered by a regime of undisciplined individual liberty.²

It is but one step from a regime of liberty that recognizes no law that is not its own creation, to a regime of law that recognizes no liberty that is not its own concession. Contemporary totalitarianism is the logical outcome of individualism as the modern man has understood it.

¹Murray scratched out the following two paragraphs: "In the concrete these claims have clashed, and their clash has convulsed the European world. On the Continent, the democratic theory, weakened internally by the excesses of liberalism, has collapsed, and statism has triumphed, and has subordinated the individual absolutely to the totality, which pretends to be the norm of all rights and the last end of all efforts.

"Moreover, in the so-called democracies of Europe, as a result of the war, democratic practice has been almost entirely suspended, and statism is in fact, if not in theory, the order of the day, and is very likely to be the order of the future."

²Here Murray crossed out: "It is but one step from a liberty that knows no law, to a law that knows no liberty; both excesses have a common root: the neglect of spiritual order. The refusal to admit that the dignity of man is not solely in his liberty, regarded as an absolute, but in his liberty, his freedom to be himself, but in his freedom to be a member of society."

Hence if our dedication of ourselves to democracy means nothing but a rededication of ourselves to the ideals of individualism, as conceived in a system of naturalistic and materialistic philosophy, then we are dedicating ourselves to ruin. We are completely misconceiving the problem that confronts us; we are closing our ears to the lessons of history, and covering our eyes before the realities of the present moment.³

For the fact is, and we cannot be too deeply conscious of it, that we stand today at a turning point in history.⁴

"There are times", says Mr. Christopher Dawson, in his *Modern Dilemma* (p. 100), "when the whole spirit of civilization becomes transformed and the stream of history seems to change its course and flow in a new direction. One such moment occurred sixteen hundred years ago, when the ancient world became Christian. Another occurred with the coming of the Renaissance and the Reformation, which brought the medieval world to an end and inaugurated a new age. And the forces of transformation that are at work in the world today seem to betoken the coming of another such change in the character of civilization, which is perhaps even more fundamental than that of the sixteenth century."⁵

The change--not merely a change in political institutions, but in mentality, in the view of human life, a cultural change that has resulted in political upheaval--may be briefly characterized thus: the age of individualism⁶ has ended, and the age of collectivism has begun.⁷

When I say that the age of individualism has ended, I mean that age which was dominated by a false theory of personality, whose essential tenets have been these. It makes the sovereign liberty of the individual the source from which all things flow: truth, religion, morality, the family, society. It reduces to a vanishing point all dependence of the individual upon those who share his human nature, and upon God who is the author of human nature. It teaches that the development of personality requires that the individual free himself from all constraints upon his liberty, that he refuse to recognize any law that he does not impose upon himself. Its ideal of personality is the completely self-made, self-sufficient individual, seated in splendid isolation, "high on throne of royal state", the creator and judge of all values.⁸

Its concept of society and of humanity has been of a mass of individuals, mathematically equal in their rights, whose mutual relations are established simply in terms of contracts, entered into

³Murray crossed out: "Let me explain."

⁴Murray wrote in left margin: "Latest to remind us of it is H.G. Wells".

⁵See Christopher Dawson, *The Modern Dilemma: The Problem of European Unity* (Essays in Order, No. 8; London and New York: Sheed & Ward, 1933) 100.

⁶Murray crossed out here: "*à outrance*".

⁷In the margin here Murray wrote in the following citation: "Il faut maintenant nous rendre à l'évidence que l'humanité vient d'entrer dans ce qui est probablement la plus grande période de transformation qu'elle ait jamais connue.... Quelque chose se passe dans la structure générale de la conscience humaine. C'est une autre espèce de vie qui commence." The words are taken from the first page of an article by Teilhard de Chardin, "La crise présente: Réflexions d'un naturaliste," *Etudes* 222 (October 20, 1937) 145-65.

⁸"High on a throne of royal state" are the first words of Book II of Milton's *Paradise Lost*; they describe Satan.

with sovereign freedom, and to be dissolved with sovereign freedom, whenever they become distasteful, or cease to serve self-interest.⁹

Hence its essential denial has been that humanity is one, one in nature, antecedent to any contractual unities: one in its common origin, one in its common destiny, one in the obedience it owes to a common truth and law of life, one in its responsibility to a common Master, God.

This individualism is on its deathbed, its vitality exhausted, near its end. I shall neither describe the circumstances of its last illness, nor give a funeral oration.¹⁰ Let me simply register the fact.

Now, when I say that the age of collectivism has begun, I am also registering a fact. For the 20th century has made one cataclysmic discovery: that mankind is one, and that the individual man lives in the collective life of humanity, he is what he is in dependence upon the totality of man, he is not an isolated phenomenon, but a social being, the termination of a human genealogy, the product of a family, a race, a soil, whose life is maintained by exchanges with his fellows, and whose mind and character are formed by tradition and environment; the individual is what he is, in what is most essential to him, only by being the very same that his fellows are: a man among men.

In a word, we are witnessing today a resurgence of human nature, and of the individual's consciousness of his dependence on his species, and his vital need for unity with his fellows. And the vital problem of the day is not merely that of individual rights, but of human unity; cf. *Hibbert Journal*, 57 (1940) 179-80.¹¹

The causes of this new sense of human unity are many. Most prominent is the fact that the economic life of man has become one: a whole country cooperates in sustaining the life of its citizens, the whole universe in sustaining the life of a country. So much so that the economic blockade has become the most powerful instrument of warfare.

Secondly, the natural barriers between man and man, space and time, have been annihilated: the airplane has made distant continents next-door neighbors, the world is a geographical unit.

Again, the cultural life of mankind is very much one, in the sense that the means of communicating ideas and sentiments have been perfected. My newspaper brings the whole world before me, and puts me in communication with the entire human race. Distant events have an impact on my mind and emotions. I feel myself involved in them. I am called upon to judge them.¹² In the past, what happened in Ireland or India or South Africa was of no concern to a world, ignorant of it; what happens today in Poland or Finland is the world's concern, and mine.

And what the newspaper began, radio has carried farther. Day and night the air is alive with voices, human voices, explaining, arguing, pleading, soliciting. The entire human race is in converse with itself, and I can give ear to what it is saying. I can turn a knob and journey through the world, come in vital contact with its varied loves and hates, and feel my own soul tremble with anger or

⁹Murray wrote here: "Liberal in seeking liberation from social responsibility".

¹⁰Murray crossed out here: "Perhaps I might suggest an epitaph, a Scriptural one: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning." [Is 14:12]

¹¹This was a reference to Paul van Schilfgaarde, "The Pathway to World Unity," *Hibbert Journal* 38 (1939/40) 174-86.

¹²Murray crossed out: "sympathize or condemn".

with sympathy, for everywhere what I hear is a human soul, and I know that my soul, too, is human, joined in oneness with my distant fellowman.

Truly, today no man is alone; there is such a thing as humanity; it exists, it is real, it is one, each one of us is but a trifling part of it. Such is the discovery of our times. It has profoundly affected the mentality of men; it has caused the major preoccupation of today to be, not the life of the individual, but the collective life of humanity. It has created a new will in man, the will to unite with that which he recognizes as himself, and more than himself: humanity. It has given birth to a new spirit, that of human solidarity.

And inevitably it is introducing accidental, but profound changes in human institutions, in the structure of human society, and in the organisation of the State. For society and State only express and make incarnate the ideas and the ideals already existent in the souls of men. And when a new idea seizes upon the mind of man, what wonder that there is unrest in the world, and that radical changes take place.

True it is that the most obvious manifestations of this new spirit are bizarre, outrageous, extreme, even inhuman: Bolshevism, Nazism, Fascism, nationalisms of all sorts, plans for collective security, dreams of international federations of states.¹³ But withal their fundamental significance is that they are signs of the times, that betray the powerful leaven at work in the soul of humanity; they are all forms of social organization, of social regeneration; they are all attempts at a new order, based on humanity's new experience: that it is one, that the individual was not made for isolation, but for community, that it is not good for man to be alone, for alone he perishes, and if he would live, he must insert himself into the life of his fellow man. Only in union with humanity can he save himself.¹⁴

Now I grant you that this sense of human solidarity has been experienced much more deeply in Europe than in America, and that the movements towards a collectivist culture are much stronger over there. Nevertheless, the experience has touched us, and the movement toward collectivism is already a fact.

I mention it as a fact in order to clarify the cultural problem that confronts us, and that demands a solution. It is the problem of reconciling the new collectivism with the old individualism, in such a way that we shall lose none of the genuine human values in each.

Hence two solutions are immediately out. First, it is no good of us fighting the advance of collectivism as the Bourbons fought the advance of political democracy, with unintelligent obstinacy. We would be doomed beforehand to defeat; for one cannot stop a movement of humanity, nor extinguish a spirit that is born of a vital human need, nor kill an idea that has its roots in human

¹³In the margin Murray wrote: "Clarence Streit, 'Union Now'; H.G. Wells, 'The New World Order' system of nationalist individualism and uncoordinated enterprise must go' - end of an era". H.G. Wells published *The New World Order* in 1939 (it is available on the web at www.prisonplanet.com/hg_wells_the_new_world_order.html). The other reference is to Clarence K. Streit, *Union Now: A Proposal for a Federal Union of the Democracies of the North Atlantic* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1940). The copy of this book in the Woodstock College Library is the 15th edition of a book first published in the U.S. on March 2, 1939.

¹⁴In the bottom margin, Murray wrote the following: "If we study social conditions today, it is perfectly obvious that political activity is directed to rectifying the results of non-reciprocity citizenship"--Dr. H. Crighton-Miller"; the reference is to the article, "The Child's Approach to Philosophy," *Hibbert Journal* 36 (April 1938) 416-26, at p. 425.

nature. Hence for us to cling to the outworn creed of liberalistic individualism, that of Rousseau, Kant and the Romantics, would be to invite the same destruction that has overcome Europe.

On the other hand, we cannot surrender to the collectivist tendency in its extreme political and social expressions, Communism or Nazism; for that way, too, lies destruction, the destruction of the sacred character of man, upon which our culture is built--his inalienable rights, his dignity as a man, and as the father of a family, as a free social and economic force.

In a word, we must reject the worship of the idol of the past, the individual man, who set himself apart from the human community, and the idol of the present, the collective man who sets himself over the individual.

And we must seek the solution of our problem by regarding man as he has been made in the image of God, a personality, living in community.

Hence, neither liberalistic individualism nor pagan totalitarianism, but Christian personalism. To the development of this idea of Christian personalism, I must now turn.

My thesis: as the traditional theology of the Incarnation must be the first creative principle of our Christian culture in that it gives us the Christian idea of the dignity of human nature and its native superiority to the material world, so the traditional theology of the Trinity must be the second creative principle, for it gives us the Christian idea of personality, and its relations to the community.

Is not that natural? It is precisely this vision of God as a Trinity in Unity that is of the very essence of Christianity, and it consequently must inspire all our efforts at the construction of a Christian culture.¹⁵

Said Basil of Caesarea: "Doubtless there are many differences which separate Christianity from the madness of the pagan and the blindness of the Jew; but the most important of all is the capital dogma of belief in the Father and the Son [and the Spirit] contained in the gospel of salvation. What place can we find among us for a man who holds that the Father is not really Father, or who considers the name Son an empty title? Under what sect must such a man be classified? Is he a Jew? Is he a pagan? Certainly a man who denies that wherein lies the whole force of our religion, that which gives our adoration its distinctive character, has no status among Christians" (*Adv. Eunom.*, 2,22; PG 29, 620).

The Jew is he who begins his prayers with the verse of Deuteronomy (6:4): "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is One Lord"; it summed up for him his belief in God, the One Lord, beside whom there is no other. Hence it summed up, too, his belief in himself: a member of the one race beside which there is no other, for it alone is the chosen child of God.

The Christian is he who begins his prayers: "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"; for that formula sums up his belief in God, a Trinity of Persons in a Unity of Nature. Hence it sums up, too, his belief in himself, a human person, in a unity of nature with all men, whom he calls his brothers, every one, for that they are all the sons of God, in Christ Jesus.¹⁶

¹⁵Murray crossed out: "must set its mark upon the Christian life."

¹⁶Murray crossed out here: "I do not know how the modern pagan begins his prayers, or whether he says any; hence what his creed is, I cannot say...."

The parallelism is perfect: it is a man's vision of God that gives him his vision of himself, and illumines for him the whole of life. And if the modern pagan is bewildered by himself and his world, it is because he has forgotten how to assume the posture that brings clarity to the soul: [?] of his knee.

¹⁷"God no man hath seen at any time", says St. John, "the only-begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him to us."

This was the chief part of his doctrinal mission to earth, to lift a little the impenetrable veil that hides from man the Face of God, and answer a little the fascinating question with which man has always been tormented: What is God? What is his life? What is the secret of his being? How is man his image?

And his answer was simply this: that God is truly a Father, who has a Son, and a Spirit, too, who is also the Spirit of his Son. On this answer our Blessed Lord looked back at the Last Supper, when in his High-priestly prayer he summed up his work: "I have made thee known upon earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do.... I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world" (Jn 17:4,6). Nor was it the name of God as Creator that he revealed, nor as the Father in a metaphorical sense, i.e., of men, whose designs on them are loving. The Jew in the Old Testament had called God by the names of Lord and Father. The new name of God, that makes the newness of the New Testament, was the name of Father in its proper, metaphysical sense: the Eternal Father of an Eternal Son, who is, as the Council of Nicea declared, "of his very substance, true God of true God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father." And the revelation of Father and Son was completed by the third Name, the Holy Spirit, "who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and with them is glorified and adored."

It is this vision of God, given us, not in a philosophic speculation, but in a living Person, the Incarnate Word of God, that is formulated theologically in that great "war-song of faith", as Cardinal Newman called it,¹⁸ the creed "*Quicumque*": "This is the Catholic faith: one God in a Trinity, and a Trinity in Unity do we venerate; neither confusing the persons, nor dividing the substance; for other is the person of the Father than the person of the Son, and other still is the person of the Holy Spirit; yet Father and Son and Holy Spirit are one divinity, in glory they are equal, in majesty coeternal."

This Christian vision of God is dark indeed with mystery, yet luminous in its darkness. For it sheds light upon the problem that so vexed the mind of the pagan philosopher, the problem of a solitary God, lofty, lonely, majestic but loveless. It was a feeling for this problem that made the Indian philosopher put in the mouth of the One Absolute he worshipped: "Ah, if I were Many!"

Nor did the Fathers of the Church have any more respect for a "solitary" God than they did for a god who was but a member of a Pantheon. Both were false gods, idols, with no power to save.

¹⁷Murray crossed out here: "The Christian vision of God was given to man in Christ:"

¹⁸ "It is not a mere collection of notions, however momentous. It is a psalm or hymn of praise, of confession, and of profound, self-prostrating homage, parallel to the canticles of the elect in the Apocalypse. It appeals to the imagination quite as much as to the intellect. It is the war-song of faith, with which we warn, first ourselves, then each other, and then all those who are within its hearing, and the hearing of the Truth, who our God is, and how we must worship Him, and how vast our responsibility will be, if we know what to believe, and yet believe not"; John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1906) 133.

The unique and joyous Christian certainty was voiced for them all by Hilary of Poitiers: "God is not solitary.... This the Church understands; this the Synagogue does not believe; this philosophy did not dream of" (*De Trin.*, 1.9, n. 52; PL 10, 275).¹⁹

And herein precisely lies the cultural significance of the Christian vision of God. When the Christian raises his eyes to God, he sees not a solitary, separated individual, but a Community. He sees a triplicity of distinct persons, each with his own distinctive and characteristic personality, yet whose life is utterly and ineffably one: for these three, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, have but one nature, one mind, one will. Such is by definition a community, a unity of life amid a diversity of personalities.²⁰

The nature of God is infinitely One; yet at the very interior of his unity, as at once its fruit and its consecration, arises a mysterious plurality, three distinct Personalities, perfect as personalities, and perfect, too, in their community. Such is the mystery of God's infinitely perfect spirituality.

I do not say that human reason can comprehend this mystery.²¹ My point is that faith here can touch, though it cannot see, the profound truth that is verified also in human life, and that constitutes the basic paradox: personality is achieved in community, it is in union with others that one finds oneself.²²

Traditional Christian theology teaches that the whole personality of the Father is simply his Fatherhood, as the whole personality of the Son is his Sonship. That is, each of the divine persons is but a subsistent relation to the other: each is turned wholly to the other. And it is precisely by perfectly "relating" himself to the others that each is constituted a person. Their mutual relations oppose them to each other, and thus distinguish them from each other, with a distinction that is real. But, just as unity is not confusion, so distinction is not separation: the relation that distinguishes the Father from the Son also binds them together with a living link, and situates each at the interior of the other. A relative demands its correlative.

Let me put it in human language, very defective: the Father, in order to be what he is, Father, "needs" the Son. It is in the Son that the Father "finds" himself. And he "finds" himself precisely to [*sic*] giving to the Son all he has, the one divine nature, in an eternal act of love, called generation. The Eternal Father is but an eternal generosity toward his Eternal Son, and by this generosity he is both one with the Son in nature and distinct from him in personality.

And the whole mystery is summed up in the classic phrase of Hilary: "*Unum sunt qui invicem sunt*"²³: They are one who are wholly for each other. It is the paradox of personality and the community realized in the plane of infinity: each of the divine persons is himself by being wholly

¹⁹This text was cited in de Lubac's *Catholicism*, 332n.

²⁰Murray crossed out here: "And such is the mystery of God."

²¹Murray wrote in the margin: "*akatalyptos ho theos*. [the incomprehensible God] demands not understanding but obedience."

²²Murray crossed out here: "For that union is a spiritual one, that perfects the spirit. For union with others perfects the spirit, and personality is a spiritual thing". [Indecipherable scribble here.]

²³ Hilary, *De Trinitate*, 1. 7, 32; PL 10, 227A.

"for" the others, and each of the divine persons is one "with" the others because wholly "for" the others.

You see the consequence: the perfection of personality and the perfection of community are achieved by one and the same movement, an active self-giving of each to the other. This active self-giving has the name of love; and hence the mystery of God, as St. John saw, is a mystery of love: perfect personalities in perfect community.

Now, all this may seem very rarefied and abstract. Let me then give it some concreteness by drawing out its cultural consequences.

The first is this: that both liberal individualism and totalitarianism are a sin against the Christian God, as revealed to us in Christ. Liberal individualism sins against his Unity, and totalitarianism against his Trinity. For individualism would shatter the community in the name of the individual, and totalitarianism would suppress the individual in the name of the community.

Consequently both are blasphemies: As Christians we are forbidden to destroy personalities in the name of unity, or disrupt community in the name of personality. Both of these opposing cultures, then, is [*sic*] based on a theological error; neither is capable of offering man a full human life.²⁴

For a full human life is made in the image of God's life: a life of full selfhood, that is found in community with others.

And the way to it is clear to the Christian soul that has penetrated into the revelation of personality given it in the mystery of the Trinity, and learned the difference between individualism and personalism.

Latin theology imaginatively represents the Trinity as an equilateral triangle, the enclosed space indicating the unity of God's nature, the equal angles and equal sides representing the three Persons in their equal possession of the one nature. Each of the persons is an angle. And what is an angle? An openness to the other angles, that is, paradoxically, closed by its very openness.

And there is the image of personality, in its distinction from individuality: individuality is a closed thing (like a circle); personality is an openness, like an angle.

Man is an individual by that part of him which is material, "this flesh, these bones", in St. Thomas' phrase. They divine[**divide?**] me off from other men, close me in myself, limit me to being merely Me (O tragedy!). More than that, this material part of me bars me from myself, keeps me from reaching that in myself which is most myself, my spirit. Matter everywhere bars man from man, and man from himself.²⁵

But a man is a person, fundamentally, by that part of him which is spiritual, his soul, endowed with the divine powers of intelligence and will. These two powers personalise him; he has the power to possess himself, and the power to give himself away. By intelligence man can reflect upon himself, and thus take possession of himself, assume responsibility for himself; by will, by his

²⁴Murray crossed out here: "a life of full selfhood, and of full union with others. For theology is no abstract science, to be cultivated by idle dreamers in an ivory tower; it is charged with the destinies of humanity, and humanity, to live, must respect it."

²⁵Murray wrote here: "*C'est mon étrange solitude, ce du corps!* (Blondel)".

power of love, man can direct himself outward to a destiny that is greater than he, and give himself into communion with the larger whole, humanity, of which he is a part, God, of whom he is the creature.

If individuality as such is simply itself and nothing more, personality is not only itself, it is a limitless desire to be more than itself. Your individual is but the cow in the pasture, seated placidly in the midst of the herd, but immeasurably alone, contentedly closed in her private self, wholly absorbed in her individual cud. But your person is the man on the windswept hill of earth, conscious of his spiritual self, and its absolute value, yet restless within himself, looking up into heaven and longing to give himself into communion with the Infinite Truth and Good for which his restless heart was made, and looking out, too, over the world, and longing to give himself into communion with all that shares with him a human spirit.

Personality is all openness. What counts for the person is not its "self", but the "other", for it is in the other that it finds itself. The psychologists have established the fact: the infant wakes to the consciousness of self through experiencing the otherness of things around it. "The you is earlier than the I."

And the child [*sic*] personality grows as it becomes increasingly conscious of itself--itself, that is, not in isolation, nor as the center around which all things revolve, but itself as a member of a larger whole, the family whose life it shares and to which it has duties. By a process of intelligent discipline, the child must be taught to be not an individual, a circle, closed in itself; it is that closure in self that is the source of all neuroticism, the typically American disease of personality. Rather the child must be taught that it is a person, an angle, that is worthy of respect, indeed, but that must be open to others. It must be taught that it is free, indeed, but that the highest use it can make of its freedom is willingly to serve, gladly to obey.

That is the point that the individualist, that wilful child who has wrecked the world, and shattered himself to pieces, never understood, that the dignity of personality is not in its freedom, but in its obedience, in its free submission to the demands of objective order, religious, moral, social.

The individualist never understood the meaning of person. In the original Latin it meant one who played a rôle, who was cast in a part: one of the "*dramatis personae*". And that meaning still holds: to be a person is to be entrusted with a role in the great drama being played out on the stage of earth: humanity's search for union with itself, and with God. And when the curtain is rung down, we shall each be rewarded, not according to the brilliance of our ad-libbing, but according to our fidelity to our role and the support we lent to the other members of the cast.

The individualist, in a word, never understood the profound solution given once for all to the problem of personality by Him who knew the heart of man as no one else has known it: "He that tries to find his soul, shall lose it, and he that loses his soul for my sake, shall find it" (Mt 10:39; cf. Lk 17:33: "Whosoever shall seek to secure his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose it shall preserve it").

A man must lose his individual self, which is limited, isolated, immersed in the material, in order to find his true self, which is spiritual, large and wide and free, because it is lived, as God lives his life, in a community of spirit with others.

Curious paradox: the more united you are to others, the more completely you are yourself; the more you give to others, the more you have yourself; you possess yourself only by giving yourself away; you find yourself by losing yourself.

Curious paradox, but one that may not be spurned with impunity; for its converse also holds true. If you refuse to lose yourself, if you seek yourself alone, in isolation from others, then you will indeed find yourself alone, in isolation from others. But that is, by very definition, what both God and man mean by Hell, whether in this world or in the next: the place where your soul is isolated.

To save man from that, from isolation from his fellow man in this world, and from isolation from God in the next, Christ lost his life. He died, says St. John, "that he might gather into one the scattered children of God" (Jn 11:52). Scattered indeed they were, and are, at war with themselves, at war with each other. It was not so in the beginning, when God "planted a garden eastward in Eden". Adam, says St. Augustine, "enjoyed peace with himself"; his personality was perfectly one, untorn by that interior dualism of spirit and flesh that is our torment; with his divinely given helpmate, too, he was one: no dissension marked the perfection of their community life; and all this, because they were one with God by the gratuitous gift of God's own Spirit of Love in their souls. He who is the "bond of the Trinity" was the bond of their personalities.

But sin shattered that mystery of human unity, split the personality of man and disrupted his community with man, left him a prey to all the forces that make for disunity: error, ignorance, weakness, egoism in all its forms; and left him too destined for death, which is the triumph of the forces of dissolution.

Moreover, what man had shattered he could not remake. He had no power to summon from heaven the Spirit of Love, God's organizing Spirit, whose work is to create order out of chaos.

Yet God, whose name is mercy, who once saw that it is not good for man to be alone, saw again that fundamental human fact. And by a new and wholly gratuitous condescension of love he willed to reform the shattered human community, and make it over again in his own image.

So out of his divine community he sent his Son, born of woman, and caused to rest upon him the fullness of His Spirit, that he might be the new principle of unity in a disrupted world.

Through the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ, the Spirit of Love and Unity, and the Spirit too of Personality has been given back to the world, to dwell in man, and through his alliance with man to renew the face of the earth. It is the Spirit of Christ, indwelling in man, that gives meaning and direction to the whole historical process, making it the progressive realization of the prayer of Christ, made on the eve of his death: "that they, the men for whom I am about to die, may all be one, as thou, Father, in me and I in thee, that they may be one in us" (Jn 17:21).

The spiritual unity of all men with each, with the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit: that is the goal of history. In the collective destiny of humanity, each human person has a share, and toward it each individual, and each nation has a responsibility. The realization of that universal human unity is the proper role of personality.

Final point: in the material unification of the world that is the achievement of the 20th century, in the creation of a unified economic life, no nation has had a greater share than America.²⁶

²⁶ Murray crossed out here: "But economics, dealing as it does with the material, will never unite the world."

And we were, I think, whether we knew it or not, cooperating with the Spirit of God, as were Roman engineers when they built the roads on which Christianity travelled throughout the Empire.

But we as a nation, and each one of us a human person, will miss our rendezvous with destiny,²⁷ if we do not strive to complete our work by consecrating ourselves to the spiritual unification of mankind. For economics will never unite men permanently nor solidly. Their principle of unity must be spiritual; it must be the attachment of all men and nations to a common source of life, that may express itself uniquely in each. And that source of life is Christ; he alone is the life of the world. And only by his Spirit, the Spirit of Love, dwelling in them and leading them, shall men be both united into one, and personalised.

Our duty, and our vocation, then, is clear: we must use our liberty to teach the world how to obey; we must put forth that Christian effort to lose ourselves that we may find ourselves. The lot of each of us is linked to all that bears the name of man; and we shall only save ourselves by helping to gather into one the scattered children of God.

²⁷ “Rendezvous with destiny” is a phrase used by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1936 in his speech accepting his renomination.

III. THE HUMANISM OF THE CROSS

These lectures have been inspired by one conviction, namely that as Christian truth is the guardian of human life, so a return to the full Christian truth is the only remedy for the inhumanities of the present world. A Christian culture can only be erected on the basis of Christian theology.

That conviction has its ground, of course, in the words of our Blessed Lord himself, who, with serene emphasis, contrasted himself with the "thieves" who scale the walls of the sheepfold that is humanity, only in order to "rob, murder and destroy"; whereas, he said, "I am come that they may have life, and have it in its fullness" (Jn 10:10).

If it needed any other ground, it could find it in the history of our modern world. For three centuries men have chipped away at Christian truth, doubting, denying, destroying, rebelling. But the hoped-for result has not come about:¹ the liberation of man, his achievement of full humanity. Every thoughtful writer today is agreed that the age of "humanism" has dehumanized man, the age of individualism has depersonalized him, the age of liberalism has enslaved him.

Hence my first premise is that we have definitely reached a time to stop denying and affirm, to stop destroying and construct, to stop murdering ourselves and others, and begin to live.

And the first step toward this new life, a genuinely human life, of personal freedom, and of national and international unity, must be to go to the truth with our whole souls. That was Plato's philosophical program, made doubly valid by our Blessed Lord. He is not just another philosopher teaching a way of life. He is the Life, as he is the Truth which is the Way to life. And he forever makes, in the face of human stupidity or malice, one only complaint: "You are not willing to come to me, that you may have life" (Jn 5:40).

Proceeding from this premise, I recalled the two primary truths upon which historical Christianity is built, and endeavored to indicate their cultural significance, their power, even in the sphere of terrestrial life, to save a dehumanized, depersonalized, disordered humanity.

The first truth was that in Christ God Himself appeared in person on this earth, made man; his mission was to reveal God to man, and in consequence to reveal man to himself, to let him see into the depths of his own nature, and be certain of what he had only vaguely suspected: that man is made in the image of God, and that consequently each man, when he utters the pronoun "I", utters something absolute, definitive, holy, inviolable, belonging to God.

In Christ man emerged from the universe as a being untouched by its determinism; the human spirit became definitively conscious of its spirituality; the human individual knew himself to be a person. And all the world began anew. Truly, the flowering of the rod of Jesse was the first bloom in the springtime of humanity. Through Christ the world became a "watered garden" (Is 58:11), for through him was fulfilled God's promise to give his own Divine Spirit to man, as a "fountain of water springing up into eternal life" (Jn 4:14): "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and streams upon the dry ground; I will pour out my spirit upon thy seed and my blessing upon thy offspring; and they shall spring up among the grass, like willows by the watercourses" (Is 44:3-4).

My point, in the first lecture, was that man must be led back to this fountain of living waters; he must forsake the wells of humanitarian sentiment, whose taste is already brackish in his mouth, and whose muddy flow can never make the world bloom with healthy, human life. To leave the

¹Murray crossed out here: "Every thoughtful writer today is agreed that".

metaphor, he must cease to live on an emotionalised caricature of the idea of human dignity and freedom, and base his life on the pure spiritual idea itself, as revealed in the historical fact of God's assumption of that nature into unity with himself.

The second great Christian truth, creative of a genuinely human culture, was the mystery of God's inner life, revealed to us in Christ; a mystery of unity amid distinction. God, we learned, is a Community: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who are ineffably One in nature and life, and distinctly three in Personality.

²Cultural significance: 1) revelation of personality, as an openness;
 2) revelation of highest function of personal liberty, i.e., self-dedication to cause of spiritual unity of mankind.
 and "freedom in Christ" is freedom from isolation (error, ignorance, weakness) and freedom to be one with others.³

Today we come to what is undoubtedly the crucial cultural problem confronting us. I use the word crucial in its original sense, since I mean the problem of the Cross. We must make the momentous decision as to whether or not we shall admit as a creative principle of our culture the Christian dogma that historically man has been redeemed by the Passion, Death and Resurrection of our Blessed Lord, and that apart from sharing in that redeeming death there is for him no redemption. Let me first of all, then, explain the problem.

Any culture obviously professes to be a humanism, that is, a development of man into full humanity, the expansion of his human energies, and the creation by them of patterns of life that will satisfy man's vital needs, above all, his vital need for the happiness to be found in personal, free, creative effort.

But a Christian culture professes a technique for the humanizing of man that has always been found a stumbling-block. It proposes the development of man by self-denial, the expansion of his energies by self-discipline, the satisfaction of his vital need for happiness by self-oblivious service of others. And all this because a Christian culture would humanize man in this world by teaching him resolutely to look beyond its horizons into the perspectives of eternal life in the next world.

A Christian culture is, in fact, wholly dominated by the idea of another world, to which this world is wholly relative; and consequently it is dominated by the idea that self-renouncement, a certain withdrawal of self from the things of sense and time, is the indispensable instrument of true human perfection.

The Christian hierarchy of cultural values is erected in obedience to the principle: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things, the things necessary for an adequately human life in this world, will be added unto you" (Mt 6:33).

And the humanizing efforts of Christian humanism are controlled by the paradox: "He who loveth his life shall lose it; and he who hates his life in this world (that is, he who prefers to it the higher life beyond the grave) shall keep it unto life everlasting" (Jn 12:25).

²The following outline is handwritten.

³The previous paragraphs are numbered "III-1 and III-2"; but Murray began a new pagination with the following paragraphs, perhaps indicating that he had decided not to begin with a summary of his first two talks.

You see, then, why I termed Christian culture a humanism of the Cross. For the Passion, Death of our Blessed [Lord] were, as I shall later explain, his obedience to the truth that God is the Master of human life, and it was, consequently, his perfecting as man, through the discipline of suffering.

It is likewise evident why Christian humanism has always earned the opposition and even the contempt of all other cultures, of a purely earthly stamp. It has been accused of losing sight of immediate realities and of the pressing needs of man by its incessant insistence on another life. In the days of Nero, as Tacitus relates, the Christians were charged with the crime of "hatred of the human race" (Kirsch, n. 34; cf. Tertullian, n. 178, 172). And in our days von Ludendorff, his doubtfully charming wife and a host of others have renewed that charge.⁴ The Christian otherworldly creed and its acceptance of discipline by authority, they say, must necessarily diminish man, ruin his freedom, inevitably restrict his energies, narrow his life, inculcate in him a distrust and a contempt for this splendid world of ours.

And consequently in the name of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, this otherworldly culture has been rejected. Man has chosen to center his interests on this life, to seek first a kingdom of earth and its material joys, and to use, as his technique for achieving a full human life, the systematic rejection of self-renouncement, particularly as expressed in obedience to divine and ecclesiastical authority.

It might be interesting, and instructive, to see what the results have been.

But first of all, with regard to the fact. It is undoubtedly true to say, with Jacques Chevalier (*La vie morale et l'au-delà*, p. 12⁵), that the dominant principle of modern culture (I mean throughout the whole Western world) has been: "*Tout en cette vie*". Everything in this life, for everybody, all at once.

Since the 18th century belief in the reality of another life has progressively declined; and the surviving measure of belief has been almost totally inoperative as a cultural force. Man has increasingly regarded himself as self-sufficient, an absolute, unrelated to any transcendent God; and he has regarded his temporal life as self-contained, an absolute, unrelated to another life beyond the grave.

In a word, his culture may be defined as an earthly idealism, the search for earthly felicity⁶, based on the belief in the indefinite perfectibility of human nature, and its assured power to control the world. Western man, in M. Maritain's words, has devoted himself to "a courageous and untiring effort to make human life yield its maximum earthly output."⁷ The boundaries of his efforts were the limits of this earth.

⁴ This seems to refer to General Erich von Ludendorff, one of whose quotes is: "I decline Christianity because it is Jewish, because it is international, and because, in cowardly fashion, it preaches Peace on Earth." According to *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, "he and his second wife, Mathilde, were proponents of a new "Aryan" racist religion. Ludendorff wrote pamphlets accusing the pope, the Jesuits, the Jews, and the Freemasons of a common plot against Aryans."

⁵ Paris: Flammarion, 1938.

⁶Murray crossed out here: "in the absence of all suffering".

⁷Maritain, "Religion and Culture," in *Essays in Order*, p. 14.

He has concentrated himself and all the resources of industrialism on the production of more and more material things, whose possession would spell happiness; his ideal of human perfection was the greatest possible freedom from suffering; he made himself the artisan of that ideal; he would himself become the savior of the world; he would lift the Cross from the shoulders of mankind, and create on earth a new Paradise.

You might take as symbolic of this earthly idealism the scene in the Cathedral of Notre Dame on June 8, 1794, when the passion for freedom and justice, for truth and humanity, that had been growing for a century reached its paroxysm, and Citizen Robespierre, with a bouquet in one hand and a torch in the other, inaugurated the new religion of humanity by lighting the conflagration that would purge the world of ignorance, vice, folly, oppression, suffering.

Such was the program. And the results are most interesting; we ourselves have witnessed them. Every religion must have a sacrifice, and the religion of humanity has proved no exception. Upon the battlefields of the last war the earthly idealist stood, as a priest at an altar, and while screams of pains formed antiphons to hymns of hate, he offered up in solemn sacrifice the finest blood in Europe. The savior of mankind made mankind his sacrificial victim.

A curious paradox: that a century and a half of prodigious effort to free the world from suffering and hasten the advent of earthly happiness, should have culminated in the most colossal debacle of human misery that the world had ever seen.

But notice where the tragedy lies. Not in the fact that the modern world was plunged into so much pain and death and economic waste, but in the fact that its sufferings and death brought it no redemption. There is no tragedy in suffering and death; there is only tragedy when men suffer and are not sanctified by it, when they die and find no resurrection.

In that respect the holocaust of the Great War was tragic; it had neither meaning nor value. In every religion sacrifice has been offered to free man from sin and from the powers of evil, and to bring him peace in union with his god. But the sacrifice offered in the religion of humanity did neither. The free, full human life--democracy, they called it--that it was designed to save, perished almost at its birth; and hardly a decade passed before the rumbling of guns, like the beating of drums from some Aztec temple, summoned man once man to offer human sacrifice,--this time, for what?

As a matter of fact, the self-sufficient modern man, who pretended that he could redeem himself from ignorance and evil and suffering, and create a Paradise, might have been well-advised to recall the brutal remark of Nietzsche, with its underlying intuition of the truth: "a genuine deity wants man to be sacrificed to it." It would perhaps have made him reflect that if he chose to be his own deity, he would have to pay himself in his own blood for that high privilege; he would have to sacrifice himself to himself, and adore himself by dying.

We are involved in paradox here. But undoubtedly the screaming paradox is that the earthly idealists, at the term of their quest for instruments wherewith to create for themselves a full and free human life, should have finally lit upon a strangely familiar one,--a cross. I mean the cross of total war, that lays the cross of suffering and death upon the shoulders of a whole people, and perhaps--who knows?--the whole world.

The paradox is wild enough to be satanical. For centuries man has dismissed as folly the saying of his Savior: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God..."; he has rejected as inimical to human liberty and happiness the way of life recommended him: "If any man will come after me, let him take

up his Cross daily and follow me". He has preferred to choose his own object of search and his own paths to it. And at the end he finds himself, not in Eden, as he had fondly hoped, but on Calvary, in the darkness of a "blackout", crucified by the three nails of war, driven into him from land and sea and air.

It would rather seem that Citizen Robespierre's bouquet is somewhat faded, and his torch has gone out.

The point that I am making is simply that on the evidence of history the program of earthly idealism has had a horridly realistic finish. One can hardly say that man has achieved liberty and full self-expression; rather he has become the slave of strange inhuman forces, that fill him with a sense of dismay and helplessness. "Certainly," said the best-informed and most profound observer of world conditions today, "even when Europe fraternized in the identical ideals that it received from the Christian Gospel, there was no lack of dissensions, of uprisings and desolating wars; but never perhaps has there been experienced to such an acute degree the discouragement, proper to our days, with regard to the possibility of putting an end to them" (Pius XII, "*Summi Pontificatus*").

I could enforce my point still farther, namely, the ultimate inhumanity of all programs of earthly idealism, the theory that limits man's vision to this world, and banishes the idea of another life as a directive principle of his temporal activity.

There are, in fact, two earthly idealisms today that are powerfully challenging the Christian traditions of the West, and they have in common the same denials.

"Heaven," said Karl Marx, "is the arch-enemy that prevents earth from being set right". Hence the Kingdom of Heaven must be denied, that man's kingdom of earth may be established; the idea of eternal life must be plucked from the heart of man that man may begin to live here below.

"Suffering," said Lenin, "is the spiritual intoxicant that debases man" (cf. *Lenin*, by Ralph Fox, p. 160). Hence suffering must be abolished in order that man may be perfected and made human.

Says Ernst Bergmann, prominent theologian of Nazism, "the invention of a transcendent world (*Jenseitsland*) 'marks a pathological phenomenon in historical man from which prehistoric man was still free. Only the schizophrenic mind doubles the world'. 'No brave man waits for another life'; lunacy of this kind is a symptom of degeneration.... We adore a Man-God instead of a God of a second world. 'Nordic men! Heroic men!.... Man is man's relish.'"⁸

Strangely these creeds fall on Christian ears; queer programs for the redemption of man do they propose: *Blutreinigung*⁹ and *Blitzkrieg*, Comintern and OGPU. And when one views these religions of earthly idealism, there come to mind the words of Chesterton in his "*Ballad of the White Horse*", wherein he describes the pagan invaders: "There gods were sadder than the sea, Gods of a wandering will, Who cried for blood like beasts at night, Sadly, from hill to hill."

⁸Aurel Kolnai, *The War against the West* (New York: Viking, 1938) 247.

⁹In the left margin is written: "blood redeems".

Europe today should indeed make us distrust the redemptive value of earthly idealism, and weigh the ultimate, inhuman consequences of banishing the idea of Heaven in our efforts to set the world right.¹⁰

And let us beware of the temptation to which the unthinking cede when viewing Europe from what we fondly hope is a safe distance. The temptation is to dismiss the problem presented with a variation of Pascal's famous remark: "*Vérité en deça des Pyrénées, erreur au delà*". There is truth on this side of the Atlantic, beyond it is error.

No. Right here among us is error, and basically the same error that has convulsed European civilization. I mean the error of earthly idealism. Would anyone be so venturesome as to assert that the modern principle, "Everything in this life", has not dominated American culture in its origins and development? Would anyone seriously challenge Mr. Christopher Dawson's statement, that "The Communists may have deified mechanism in theory, but it is the Americans who have realized it in practice"?¹¹ Would anyone undertake to prove that self-renouncement, [in margin: "respect for authority"] and the subordination of the body to the soul, are characteristic American virtues? Above all, would anyone presume to say that the doctrine of the soul's immortality is a vital, controlling factor in American life, and that the idea of a future life tempers and qualifies the ordinary American's devotion to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?

In this connection, I might recall a few facts. You may have read the editorial in "*Fortune*", entitled "War and Peace: The failure of the Church to teach absolute spiritual values will undermine Christian civilization",¹² in which the author condemns the Church (he graciously excepts the Catholic Church¹³) for a "failure of Absolutes", i.e., a failure to judge the contemporary scene, and notably the issue of War and Peace in the light of eternal, unchanging principles. I am not concerned with approving or disapproving the condemnation; I adduce it as a fact, and as symptomatic of American religious uncertainty.

Secondly, back in 1934 Paul Elmer More, in his address to the graduates of the General Theological Seminary¹⁴ felt called upon to protest against the identification of religion (I take it he meant Protestant religion, given his audience) with what he called "sentimental socialism",¹⁵ programs of humanitarian uplift, and to issue a plea for "the restoration in the individual soul of a sense of responsibility extending beyond the grave." "We must," he went on, "reawaken the minds of men to the fact that this earthly life is only a small segment of eternal life, that its significance lies

¹⁰Murray wrote in the bottom margin: "regarding physical suffering as man's ultimate [?]"

¹¹"Christianity and the New Age," in *Essays in Order*, I, p. 167.

¹²"War and Peace: The failure of the Church to teach absolute spiritual values will undermine Christian civilization," *Fortune* 21 (January, 1940) 26-27.

¹³The editorialist wrote: "It is pertinent to note that the Catholic Church, with its concept that there may be such a thing as a righteous war, escapes the inconsistency that gives rise to this charge of Failure of Absolutes (as do Christian pacifists). But no denomination in the U.S. escapes the second charge of Failure of Leadership;" p. 27.

¹⁴ Paul Elmer More, "Church and Politics," *The American Review* 3 (September, 1934) 417-31.

¹⁵More saw this evident in sermons giving the impression that "a vague ideal of equalitarian brotherhood, to be introduced by an equally vague humanitarian sympathy, has been very widely accepted by the Church as a modern equivalent for what Christ meant by the Kingdom of God and repentance;" p. 419.

hidden in the long reaches of the future, that somehow the results of what we do here and now will pursue the soul in her flight with a train of blessings or curses, that salvation and damnation are not empty words, but awful possibilities fraught with infinities of peace or despair."¹⁶

Bernard Iddings Bell, "More Dogma, Please", *Atlantic Monthly*, October, 1939. Quotes an English scholar, who had travelled observantly in America: "'Religious education' seems to be the art of imparting to others the moral and devotional implications of a dogmatic religion no longer existent. 'Social service' seems to be the advocated application to society at large of ethical principles the validity of which is not of necessity to be acknowledged in one's private life".¹⁷

Report of "The White House Conference on Children in a Democracy."¹⁸

Principle: "all forms of the democratic process depend upon a fundamental and consciously accepted sense of the meaning of life, and the spiritual values in life, and that this must be a definite part of all education in a democracy."¹⁹

And Secretary Perkins pertinently remarked: "If we mean God when we speak of 'spiritual values,' let's say God and not 'spiritual values.'"²⁰

Grave question as to whether "a merely secular code of ethics can carry this load," i.e. personal and social integrity.

"In scientific discovery, technology and material achievements there has been phenomenal progress, but in appreciation and achievement of values--in art, morals, and religion--there is a great cultural lag.... This contemporary historical situation is the more important since in the light of social psychology it is difficult, if not impossible, to assist growing children to achieve a convincing and impelling sense of values in a prevailing culture in which ends have become greatly obscured by the techniques of living."²¹

Significant figures, cited from the Department of Research of the International Council of Religious Education: "in 1926 of an estimated 30,000,000 children between the ages of 5 and 17, approximately 16,000,000 received no form of religious instruction."²² A percentage of more than half, conservative estimate, which may in some parts of the country be considerably higher.

"Historically it was never intended that the separation of Church and State should deprive children of the resources of religion."²³ Curious paradox: the zealous protection of religious freedom has resulted in freeing half the country from religion, by sedulously preserving them of [*sic*] knowledge of it....

¹⁶More, "Church and Politics," 431.

¹⁷Bernard Iddings Bell, "More Dogma, Please," *The Atlantic Monthly* 162 (October 1938) 510-15, at p. 514. Note that Murray got the year wrong.

¹⁸See "White House Conference Urges Greater Religious Training for U.S. Youth," *Catholic Educational Review* 38 (February, 1940) 114-21.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 115.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 116. Murray referred to Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 119.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 120.

²³*Ibid.*, 120.

The point: half of our future citizens growing up with earth-bound horizons, whose cultural principle will necessarily be: "Everything in this life". I wonder if we can safely entrust even this life to them?

Moreover, if we survey in general the results of America's earthly idealism, as pursued for several centuries, I doubt if anyone will be satisfied with them. Ours is a land of immense material comfort--so much so that the very word "comfort" is used in Italy and France to designate a peculiarly American thing, which they do not possess, nor even consider very desirable.

On the other hand, it is a land of immense suffering, of a peculiarly soul-destroying kind. Poverty in no country in the world, save perhaps England, which is as materialistic as we are, is so destructive to personality as it is among us. For in a land where money is the passport to happiness, the lack of it means a cramped and narrow life, generative of rebellion, or of apathy.

America has raised the standard of living to historically unknown heights; it is extremely doubtful if it has raised the quality of life to anything like a proportionate degree. We have multiplied our needs endlessly; and thereby multiplied our sorrows. We preach the abundant life for all; and in late years have imposed upon a growing number of people the worst kind of asceticism, that which they have no grace to support. We have sought first our kingdom of earth, and we begin to discover that in the process millions upon millions have been disinherited, from both the Kingdom of earth and the Kingdom of God.

And it is time for us to examine our earthly idealism, and see if it be really the way to our ideal, the full, free, human life. For we have no grounds for confidence that our national earthly idealism will be immune from the fate that has overtaken other brands.

A nation is not like an individual. An individual can somehow live without a faith or a spiritual purpose or a care for his immortal soul. For he can be a parasite on society, his life sustained by the spiritual powers it contains. But a nation that loses faith and purpose and soul is doomed. And our national faith is today the heritage of a diminishing number; soon there may be but an Isaian remnant left. And we must remember that "remnant of Israel" saved itself indeed, but it did not save Israel.

How, then, shall we be saved? How shall we assure ourselves and others of this full, free human life that is our natural aspiration?

First of all, by remembering that historically mankind has been saved. By his Passion, Death and Resurrection Christ accomplished the redemption of mankind. God did not leave the task to human powers, which were entirely inadequate to it; he descended in human form, and took it in hand himself. Nor did he do it by beautiful sermons, by proposing brilliant economic programs, or techniques of social adjustment. Rather, he did it by being obedient unto death, even unto the death of the Cross. Christian theology has attached the redemption of mankind to the Passion and Death of Christ; and it is this theology of redemption that must be made the third, and greatest creative principle of our Christian culture.

Obviously a total exposition of the theology of the Redemption is impossible here. I must omit its inner mystical meaning, the total dedication of mankind in sacrifice to God, by Christ, the Head of Humanity, who carried us all in himself. Let me merely select several aspects of the mystery, that have a cultural significance of the first order.

And first of all, let me recall that the mystery of Christ is primarily a mystery of resurrection, the definitive revelation to humanity that death is not an end, but a beginning; that the soul of man is immortal, and that no man has the power to slay it.

St. Matthew tells us that on the first Easter morning there was an earthquake, when through the unbroken seals of his tomb the Man who had been crucified came forth, gloriously alive, into the sweet light of dawn. Well there might have been an earthquake, for an idea burst upon the world in a new clarity. To Plato, the greatest mind of pagan antiquity, the immortality of the soul had been, as he called it, a "glorious risk": *kalos gar ho kindunos*. A costly risk, as he saw, for it entailed upon man the renouncement of the pleasures of the flesh, and the goods of the world, by the practice of temperance, justice, courage and love of the truth--virtues imposed on man by the hope of an eternal life, wherein virtue would have its recompense in a blessed beatitude.

But what to Plato had been only a glorious risk, an enchanting hope, became in Christ a thrilling certainty. The first Christians on the first Easter evening touched with their own hands the solid flesh of a Man who had been dead, and who rose again, never more to die. And by that touch they reached the certainty that the great mind of Plato had failed to achieve, that they, too, would rise again.²⁴

Augustine once said: "Even pagans believe that Christ died; but that he rose again from the dead, that is the faith of Christians". True. Belief in death is easy to man, even though he be a pagan; for he feels within himself the seeds of death. But to believe in life is not so easy to man's weak spirit; it required an earthquake and the touch of a Risen Man to wake him to the realization of the fact that he has within him something that can never die.²⁵ Man is eternal; I shall be myself forever; when earth shall have passed away, I shall still be I. That is the tremendous reality that the Resurrection of Christ impressed upon the human mind. Easter's empty tomb, a concrete fact, was mightier than all the reasoning of philosophers; it gave man courage to utter the glad cry that terminates the Christian Creed: I believe in life--everlasting.

And if you would realize the power of that belief in the heart of man, in whose soul had echoed the earthquake of Easter, read the Letter of Ignatius (Martyr) to the Romans, written on his way to Rome and martyrdom: "The kingdoms of this world will profit me nothing. It is better to die for Christ than to reign over the whole earth. I long for him who died and rose for me. The labor-pangs of a new birth are upon me. Do not prevent me from living, do not desire me to die. I would fain belong to God; do not bestow me on the world. Let me see the pure light. When I am come thither, I shall be truly a man. Permit me to imitate the passion of my God."²⁶

"When I am come thither, then I shall be truly a man." There is a Christian voice speaking; a man is not a man, nor is his life wholly human, until he has been "clothed over with immortality". That is the basic tenet of Christian humanism, that animates its this-worldly efforts. For the Christian humanist knows that death changes nothing; it merely fixes what is. And the man that one is at that moment is the man that one will be forever. The soul that has desired with Ignatius to see the pure light, then will see it; but those that "have loved darkness rather than the light" (Jn 3:19), because

²⁴Between the two paragraphs here Murray wrote: "divided world".

²⁵In the margin Murray wrote what appears to be: "responsibility of being man".

²⁶Ignatius, *Ad Romanos*, 6; Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, Part II, vol. 2, p. 217.

their works were evil, shall then have the darkness they loved. And when they have arrived thither, they shall despair eternally of being a man.

Such is the first cultural significance of the fact of man's redemption, inasmuch as it is a mystery of Resurrection. It carries the condemnation of all that I have called earthly idealism, the theory that a man can be a man, even though he does not live now in the light of a life to come.²⁷ It was from the error of earthly idealism that Christ redeemed man by rising from the dead: henceforth the risen Christ and his immortal life is man's ideal of manhood.

The second cultural significance of the dogma of redemption is this: that if the mystery of Christ is primarily a mystery of life and resurrection, it is also a mystery of crucifixion and death. The two mysteries are inseparably linked, and they both find expression in the same word: the *Pascha Domini*, the "passage of the Lord", from death to life, from total self-renouncement to total self-achievement, from self-loss to self-finding, from the darkness and isolation of Calvary to the light and reunion of Easter.

And Christ's redeeming passage has defined forever the law of man's redemption, the price he must pay for entrance into full humanity, the achievement of personal freedom and of union with his fellowman. Man, too, every man, and every nation, must make a passage, the passage of the Lord.

If you realize the meaning of this passage, you will see, I think, the concrete task that lies before you, individually and as a group, in the construction of a Christian culture.

The soul that would be redeemed and come into possession of its full personality, must make the passage from the exterior to the interior, from the material things of sense to the spiritual things of the soul. That is the first direction of movement: inward, to the soul, to the possession of self.

And this passage will be completed by another: from egoism and self-preoccupation to universal charity. That is the second movement: outward, to the souls of others, and to union with them.

In terms of this "passage" with its double movement, the redemption of self unto personal freedom will be accomplished, and the redemption of humanity unto union with itself.

Let me then, first, in the interests of Christian culture, make a plea for the interior life, for the primacy of reflective thought over that practical manipulation of matter that is so characteristic of America's use of human intelligence.

To enter into oneself, to seek the inner mansions of the soul, there to discover the treasure of one's own soul, to make an effort to belong to oneself, really to come to know oneself, attentively to listen to the voice of the interior master: that is our first human task, the first step in our search for humanism.

It should be easy; what is so close to ourselves than ourselves? Yet truly what is so far away? What is so characteristic of American life than that absence of the spirit from itself, its wanderings "*in regione dissimilitudinis*", as Augustine said: in the land of strangeness, alienated from all that should be its true life? If the American spirit had spent one tenth of the time and energy and intelligence in mastering the mystery of itself that it has spent in mastering the mysteries of nature

²⁷In the left margin Murray added: "and not of earth".

and physical science, what progress it would have made, and how different its life would be! For the life of man is but the outflowing of his inner self, and is the expression of its inmost loves.

"Each one is what his love is. Do you love the earth? Then you are earth. Do you love God? Then you are (shall I say it?) God."²⁸

And I think that Gregory's description of Adam after the Fall fits all too well the ordinary American: "Poured out of himself (upon the earth), he no longer could see the joys of his heavenly country, that once he had contemplated."²⁹

Our first duty, then, as Christians is to pour ourselves back into ourselves, rescue ourselves from immersion in sense and matter and the banalities of everyday life, and seek our true selves in ourselves. That is the way to true freedom of spirit and genuine personal life; and the failure to find it is perhaps the reason why in a land where there is so much emphasis on freedom and individuality, there is really so little interior peace and true personality.

But this effort at interiorisation is a painful one; it involves a program of asceticism, for it goes contrary to the whole spirit of our contemporary culture. Our modern civilization has become in fact an enormous distraction, whose primary effect has been to draw man out of himself, and pour him out onto the earth. There is so much to do, and apparently it has to be done in such a hurry; there are so many places to go, and feverish haste is necessary to get to them, in order that we may hurry back; there is no time to think. And all the air around us is filled with the roaring of wheels, with a multitude of inventions whose sole purpose seems to be to banish from the land all silence, solitude and peace, and to create a multitude of things to increase our slavery to things, and to give us new motives for discontent with what we have and what we are.³⁰

³¹Our modern life is in perpetual rebellion against the spirit; it is the very negation of the interior life. And the fact that it has destroyed not merely our leisure but our taste for a life within ourselves, is to a large degree the explanation of all our restlessness and misery. Said Pascal: "All the unhappiness of men comes from one single thing, namely, from not knowing how to stay in peace in a room."

Yet this pouring of ourselves back into ourselves is the very first condition of our redemption, our freedom.³² For only when we are present to ourselves, is God present to us, and only in his presence is the necessary prelude to "*sursum corda*": lift up your hearts. And only when the heart is lifted up to God, does it become truly the heart of a man. "Let me see the pure light. When I am come thither, then I shall be truly a man."

²⁸Augustine, *In Epist. Joh. ad Parth.*, II, 2,14; PL 35, 1997.

²⁹Gregory the Great, *Dialog.*, I. IV, c. 1; PL 77, 317.

³⁰In the left margin Murray wrote: "Cf. Chevalier [?] p. 106; Abbot M."—perhaps for Abbot Marmion.

³¹Handwritten in the left margin: "'For to raise oneself to God is to enter into intimacy with oneself. And to do that, to penetrate into the interior of one's soul, and find oneself the image of God, is truly to transcend oneself, and to lift oneself to God.'

"'It is in ourselves that we must seek God--we have not to scale the heavens; let us enter into ourselves, that is enough.' Thossa [**Theresa??**], *Vida*, c. 40."

³²Somewhere should go: "willingness to lose a few things outside".

And the final paradox is that when our hearts are lifted up to God in the desire of his pure light, then only are we truly in contact with the earth, and able to exert upon the earth a redemptive action. Only the heart that is lifted from the earth can give to life on earth a meaning and a value, and rescue it from the tragedy of so many lives, futility. Only when our dwelling is in the heavens, can we hope to fulfill our vocation on earth. Only when in the presence of God we possess ourselves, can we give ourselves away to others.

For the Christian is not to spend his life looking longingly up to heaven; that gesture has received a condemnation in the Gospel: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand you here looking up into heaven?" (Acts 1:11), said the angel to the apostles on the hill of the Ascension. Into your hearts the word of Christ has been put, not just for your own consolation, but that you may use it as the instrument for the redemption of the world. In your hearts Christ has come to dwell, not just to assure you of a place in heaven, all to yourself; but that in the power of his Spirit you may set your hand to the mighty work of making the world a place where man may live a human life. You have been redeemed--then redeem the world!

Look up into heaven, yes; for only in the vision of heaven can you understand the earth. Only when you have seen God, can you know that man is his image.

And if we do not understand the world and why it was made, what right have we to meddle with it? If we do not know that man is made in the image of God, how dare we live with him or attempt to fashion his life?

But the Christian humanist has a vantage point from which to view the world and understand his work in it. He stands on Calvary, the place where God met all mankind and blessed them as his children, bought with the blood of his Son. From Calvary one can truly see the earth in its full reality: beautiful, splendid, heroic, mean, sordid, ugly, thrilling, heart-breaking, back-breaking.³³

The place where the sweet Son of God once pitched his tent, to be warmed by its sun, and to pray beneath its blanket of stars; to eat its bread and to drink the fruit of its vines, to feel its affection, and the blast of its hate; to give it words of truth and life, and to be crucified by its raging injustice. A queer world indeed, but he loved it, and he still loves it, and on it he lavishes the gifts of his own Spirit of Love. For on it he sees stamped the image of his face.

Have you ever seen that image? tear-stained, blood-stained, defiled with spittle, whitened and drawn beneath the anguish of pain, injustice and loneliness--but a holy Face. For it is the face of the Son of Man, as it shall be until the end of time.

Perhaps if we withdrew into thoughtful prayer long enough, we could catch the vision of the Face of the suffering Son of Man reflected in the world.

And it would illuminate for us the highest and holiest task of the Christian humanist: to share something of the sufferings of the sons of men, to seek some measure of union with their age-long crucifixion, that thus made over into the image of the Son of Man crucified on Calvary, he may have some share in the world's redemption, Man's passage into the possession of God.....

³³ Murray crossed out here: "And from Calvary one can look into the face of humanity and see it truly: tearstained, bloodstained, defiled with spittle."