ROY CIMAGALA

THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPT
OF MAN AND ITS
IMPACT ON WESTERN
CULTURE IN
CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

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The doctoral dissertation, of which the present article is an excerpt, tries to gather in some systematized form the thoughts of Christopher Dawson regarding the impact of the Christian idea of man on Western culture. It is a central topic in all of Dawson’s works. He assumes that Western culture is in crisis, and if such crisis has to be resolved, Western culture has to return to its religious foundation.

Dawson’s abiding belief is that the Christian concept of man precisely provides the content of Western culture’s religious foundation. He has articulated this belief in its socio-historical development, framing it within the principles of Christian philosophy and theology.

This article focuses on how Western cultural institutions and traditions —namely, those of marriage and the family, the educational and scientific tradition, as well as the political tradition— bore the imprint of Christian anthropology in their development and growth. Respect for such tenets, their affirmation and defense are shown by Dawson to be crucial if Western culture wants to retain its vitality and sense of purpose. I wish to acknowledge the help given me by Professor Juan Luis Lorda of the School of Theology of the University of Navarre.
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**PART TWO**

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ABREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations correspond only to the books of Christopher Dawson, in their editions indicated in the Bibliography of this study. They are the ones used in the footnotes.

AG The Age of the Gods
BP Beyond Politics
CNA Christianity and the New Age
DC The Dividing of Christendom
DWH The Dynamics of World History
ERC Enquiries into Religion and Culture
HR The Historic Reality of Christianity
JN The Judgment of the Nations
MD The Modern Dilemma
ME Medieval Essays
MR Medieval Religion
MWR Movement of World Religion
PR Progress and Religion
RA The Revolt of Asia
RC Religion and Culture
RMS Religion and the Modern State
RWC Religion and the Rise of Western Culture
TM The Making of Europe
UE Understanding Europe
A man disturbed yet most hopeful

Of him, a good number of things are already known.

Christopher Dawson represents a 20th-century thinker who sharply felt the intellectual and spiritual concerns of his age, and whose consuming passion was precisely to resolve them. He proposed nothing less than a return to the spiritual and Christian foundation of Western culture. He, therefore, offers a good testimony of his times and part of ours.

This, we believe, should be considered the mother statement in describing Dawson, because it casts a lot of light on the tone and character of his work. One finds there a very personal, almost unique, aura, marked by fervent and sometimes stirring language, massive research and a religious sense of interpreting and presenting things. It also explains the kind of reactions it provoked.

Pained to find Europe in deep crisis, and the world with it, he stopped not at lamenting, but pursued a pioneering, lonely and unrelenting task that penetrated deep down to his innermost convictions. Due to this decision, he converted to Catholicism, he thoroughly reviewed European history, he got more convinced about the workings of spiritual principles not only in an individual’s life but also in society’s. The itinerary he took led him to gather and make use of the contributions of the vast heritage of intellectual and scientific achievements, to trace the intricate relationship between religion and culture, and finally to work actively for the revitalization of a moribund Western culture—and hopefully with it, also the world’s. His interest and curiosity
became not only a matter of objective investigation, taken to their last consequences, but also of personal, subjective transformation, indeed, a vocation.  

«Every living culture must possess some spiritual dynamic which provides the energy necessary for that sustained effort which is civilization,» was one of his fundamental Springboards. Consistent to it, he underlined the inescapable and crucial role of religion in life. He was deeply convinced that religion plays a very vital part in the formation and character of a given culture. The latter needs to be informed with a certain sense of its origin and of its destiny, which the former provides. To him, therefore, the study of culture, while involving history, sociology and all other social sciences, necessarily employs philosophy and theology which directly study the content of culture’s dynamic principle, religion.

This is the reason for the integrated, synthetic, if pioneering character of his work. He complained strongly at the trend to overspecialize, which gathered currency in the different branches of science.

It is imperative to take this element in mind when studying Dawson’s work. The varying mixtures he concocted of the different social and philosophico-theological sciences may defy easy classification and offer new, unexpected, if original insights. Still Dawson maintains a tightly logical presentation and amply supported argumentation that never fail to lend strong credibility to his work. Even while it has been criticized as religiously biased, and unclear about the field it is treading, his critics recognize the tremendous amount of scholarship put into it, and thus it always merits respect and consideration.

INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIAN TRADITION OF HUMAN SEXUALITY, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY OF WESTERN CULTURE

Dawson’s views regarding how Christian anthropology influenced Western culture’s formation of its tradition on marriage, family and human sexuality may be directly gathered from the chapter Christianity and Sex (ERC, pp. 259-291), although other relevant ideas can be collected from his other works. It cannot be
doubted that the Western tradition and institution on marriage and family is a significant element in Western culture.

**The natural importance of marriage and the family**

This is because the family always carries out a big role in giving the character of a given culture. «A society can undergo a considerable transformation of its economic conditions and yet preserve its vital continuity,» Dawson affirms. «but if a fundamental social unit like the family loses its coherence and takes a new form, this continuity is destroyed and a new social organism comes into existence.»

That is why, the family, being a primary social unit that is at the same time a natural biological aggrupation, possesses a fundamental right to the strongest moral and religious sanctions, since society would be heavily, if not mortally, handicapped if its basic constituent element fails to play its role properly. It serves as a crucial link between man’s personal and social aspect of his life; it is a fundamental vehicle in which man’s spiritual nature can be expressed properly in society. Without the family, there will be an unbridgeable gap between one’s individual and social life. In short, marriage and the family gather together principles that reflect man’s spiritual, biological and sociological character all at once.

It is for this reason that Christianity, and concretely, the Christian conception of man, gives great importance to this aspect in the lives of men and of society. Dawson speaks of a Christian reconstitution of the Western tradition on marriage and the family through the centuries, to recover their pristine nature and their supernatural orientation.

**Their religious foundation**

As can be expected of him, Dawson first underlines the religious foundations of marriage and the family. «All the institutions of family and marriage... have a religious background, and have been maintained and are still maintained by formidable religious sanctions».
This is mainly due to the fact that man has always felt the religious significance of sex. «Primitive religion regarded it as the supreme cosmic mystery, the source of life and fruitfulness of the earth; while the higher religions also made it the basis of their view of life whether in a pessimistic sense, as in Buddhism, or, as in China, in the metaphysical idea of a rhythmic order of pervading the life of the universe».

Dawson maintains that Christianity, precisely because of the spiritual nature of man, went a step farther than the other religions by attributing a positive spiritual significance to human sexuality, marriage and the family. This Christian view gave and continues to give Western culture a higher ideal of love and marriage than any other culture has known.

In concrete terms the Christian influence on the Western tradition on marriage and the family is expressed in the fact that European society is founded on monogamous and indissoluble marriage, and that according to European law, there can be no marriage without the intention of a permanent union, for only a marriage of this kind can render the family possible as a permanent social unit. «It has rendered possible an achievement which could never have been equalled under the laxer conditions of polygamous... societies», Dawson says.

*Origins of the Western tradition on marriage and family*

The Western tradition on marriage and the family is based on the Christian doctrine that has been consistently held since Patristic times. It is derived not so much on Christian ideals of asceticism, nor even on its theological dogmas, but on broad grounds of natural law and the social function of human sexuality as enlightened and explained in Christian anthropology.

St. Augustine, considered by modern thinkers to have developed an ascetic and anti-natural type of Christian ethics to its extreme conclusions, formulated his fundamental attitude to sex, considered to be the foundation of Western and Christian tradition on marriage and the family, in an extraordinarily rational and even scientific way. This Christian attitude as formulated by
St. Augustine represents one of the early synthesizing efforts of Christian anthropology with respect to the general historical view of Western men on the subject.

«What food is to the conservation of the individual,» St. Augustine writes, «sexual intercourse is to the conservation of the race» Hence, the view spread since his times that in so far as the sexual appetite is directed to its end, it is as healthy and good as the desire for food. But, on the other hand, any attempt on the part of the individual to separate the pleasure which he derives from the satisfaction of his sexual appetite from its social purpose is essentially immoral.

Thus the purpose of sex was taught as preeminently social, and as such it requires an appropriate social organ for its fulfillment. The roles of marriage and the family therefore came into view, as the appropriate organs, since they constitute the natural union of man and wife together with their siblings. They constitute the first natural bond of human society.

St. Augustine went further than this. He taught that the institution of marriage does not rest solely on its fulfillment of its primary purpose, that is, the procreation of children since there would be no permanence in a childless marriage. He taught that marriage has a «second good,» which is the power of friendship that springs from the essentially social character of human nature. He taught that the union of male and female is necessary not only for the procreation of children, but also for mutual help, «so that when the warmth of youth has passed away, there yet lives in full vigor the order of charity between husband and wife».

This latter «second good» of marriage directly reflects the spiritual character of man, and thus throws light on the essential character of marriage and human sexuality as being based on spiritual as well as a physical foundation. Taken as a whole, the tenets of Christian anthropology as taught and expressed by St. Augustine, to mention one Church Father who dedicated a substantial treatise on the subject, put together the requirements of the spiritual, biological and sociological dimensions of man to generate the origin of sexual morality and the Western tradition on marriage and the family.
Christian reconstitution of Western tradition of marriage and family

Western civilization underwent a process of reconstitution due to the reestablishment of the family on the basis of a new understanding of human nature. «Though the Christian ideal of the family owes much to the patriarchal tradition which finds such a complete expression in the Old Testament, it was in several respects a new creation that differed essentially from anything that had previously existed»

Dawson affirms. The immediately observable differences between the two can be enumerated, thus:

1. While the patriarchal family in its original form was an aristocratic institution which was the privilege of a ruling race or a patrician class, the Christian family was common to every class, even to slaves;

2. The Hellenistic patriarchal society favored more the man than the woman, while the Christian tradition insisted, for the first time, on the mutual and bilateral character of sexual obligations. The husband belonged to the wife as exclusively as the wife to the husband, rendering marriage a more personal and individual relation than it had been under the patriarchal system.

Human sexuality’s need to transcend from its material or corporeal system. But the Christian reconstitution of the Western tradition of marriage and sexual morality went further than this. Man’s—and woman’s—spiritual character was emphasized to such an extent that the family for all its importance in Western culture does not control the whole existence of its members. The spiritual side of man is upheld in the sense that it can transcend sexual relation through the ideal of virginity. To Dawson, this ideal of virginity serves as an effective counterbalance to the patriarchal ideal which can degenerate into a certain kind of patriarchalism. Dawson mentions the Puritan type—where the family is made the religions as well as the social basis of society, thus killing the patriarchal tradition’s communal and public character as it makes the family a purely private and domestic affair, prone to the caprices of individuals. This is especially the case of the Reforma-
tion started by Luther when religiosity was focused on the family and on the active fulfillment of man’s earthly calling.

The effect of the abandonment of the ideal of virginity, complicated by the destruction of monasticism and of the independent authority of the Church as happened at the time of the Reformation, was the excessive accentuation on the masculine element of the family which, while unleashing a great impulse of dynamism, undermines the spiritual aspect of the family. It spawned the development of industrialism but also threatened to destroy the family itself.

Still, the process of Christian reconstitution of Western family and sexual tradition balanced the social aspect of the family and sexual morality again by bringing it to bear on the objective reality of the spirit. «Men will never regulate their sexual life entirely by consideration of social utility or the common good. Sexual passion is too strong for that» says Dawson. Thus, the sexual life of men and women has to relate itself intimately with the demands of the spiritual life, that puts the whole of man in contact with the reality of God, his Creator, Master and Teacher.

Human sexuality’s need for Spiritualization. The Christian doctrine on man teaches that while it is true that natural sexuality is good, and that it is the highest and the most religious activity of which the animal is capable, in man this natural purity of sex is no longer possible, since it is inevitably contaminated by egotism and conscious emotion. The same Christian doctrine maintains that human sexuality goes beyond its natural function and becomes an outlet for all the unsatisfied cravings of the psychic life that can absorb the whole man. In short, Christian doctrine identifies and recognizes fully the existence of concupiscence, its origin as well as its workings and effects on men.

It, however, distances itself from the Manichean view which holds all sex to be inhuman, and thus, man to be wholly corrupted. It simply recognizes a fact confirmed in common experience and perhaps exaggeratedly affirmed by Freud and his disciples who identify the sexual impulse as the chief source of psychic suffering and disorder in man. But in variance with the latter, the Christian view holds that human sexuality can only find its proper function when spiritualized.
The Christian position does not believe in the view that human sexuality is ultimately only a matter of will and reason. Dawson cites the sentiments of English writer D.H. Lawrence, notorious for his views on human sexuality, who poignantly expresses the futility of such attitude toward human sexuality. This Christian position derives from the belief that man finds in religion a force which is capable of taking possession of the will no less completely than physical passion, for the spiritual reality is not simply an ideal or a metaphysical abstraction but is a living Being.

Dawson asserts that even those who refuse the objective validity of this belief cannot deny its tremendous psychological potency, since experience shows that it is stronger than self-interest and sensuality, and that it is capable of transforming human nature an altering the course of history. "The real danger of religion is not that it is too weak or too abstract to affect human conduct, but rather that it is so absolute and uncompromising that nature may become crushed and overwhelmed," Dawson says.

Thus, the historical indications of Christianity’s ideals of virginity and martyrdom, especially during the early years when the asceticism of the monks of the desert appears to be purely negative and hostile to life, should be counterbalanced by the fact that it was only by a complete break with the old world steeped in the degradation and vulgarization of sex and marriage—by going out into the wilderness and making a fresh start—that it was possible to realize the independence and autonomy of Christian ideals.

The Christian doctrine of man stood for the existence of absolute spiritual values in a disillusioned and hopeless world, and consequently it had to assert these values by the sacrifice of every lesser good, not only the good of marriage, but the good of life also. It was only when the struggle with the pagan world was over that the essentially positive character of the Christian ideal could only be completely realized. To Dawson, the lives of saints such as Francis of Assisi and Philip Neri give full expression of Christian asceticism that is fundamentally humane and friendly to life, involving an heroic sacrifice of the natural life of sex and of the family to the service of God and the Christian people, but in no sense a denial of the values that it has transcended.
Marriage as a sacrament. Besides, Christian doctrine is not content simply to accept marriage as a natural good. Since its early years, Christianity has held marriage as possessing a positive spiritual value and significance—a means of supernatural grace. This is seen in the teaching of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians (5, 23-33) which compares the union of man and woman in marriage to the union of Christ and the Church.

It teaches that the physical union of bodies is not merely a blind compulsion of instinctive desire nor an abstract moral union of wills, but is an expression and an incarnation of a spiritual union in which the sexual act has become the vehicle of a higher creative purpose. In other words, marriage is regarded as a type and a sacramental participation of the central mystery of the Faith—the marriage of God and man in the Incarnation. Marriage and human sexuality therefore carry profound Christian anthropological dimensions\(^16\). «As humanity is saved and deified by Christ, so the natural functions of sex and reproduction are spiritualized by the sacrament of marriage».

In conclusion, the consideration of the Christian conception of man has radically expanded the significance of marriage and human sexuality. The religious significance of sex has always been felt by man. Primitive religion regarded it as the supreme cosmic mystery, the source of the life and fruitfulness of the earth. The higher religions made it the basis of their view of life whether in a pessimistic sense, as in Buddhism, or, as in China, in the metaphysical idea of a rhythmic order pervading the life of the universe. The Christian doctrine went a step farther by attributing a positive spiritual significance to sex, and thus gave to Western culture a higher ideal of love and marriage than any other culture has known\(^17\).

This Spiritualization of sex, to which all human efforts through the centuries have to be oriented, is not to idealize the emotions and to hide physical appetite under a cloud of sentiment. It is rather to bring the sexual life into relation with a more universal reality. This is done when a man accepts marriage as something greater than himself, a sacred obligation to which he must conform himself, that he is able to realize all its spiritual and social possibilities. And this requires faith which vivifies love and makes it to participate in the mystery of creation. Otherwise,
marriage and sex can only be a means of moral disorder and suffer­ing, leading to loss of social vitality and decay of physical life.

THE WESTERN EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC TRADITION

The whole issue of Western education is tackled by Dawson in his book, *The Crisis of Western Education* (first published in 1961), which can be considered as a product of his more mature and concluding period of his professional life.

Dawson’s basic ideas on Western educational and scientific tradition

Dawson invests a great importance in the educational tradition of a given culture, to the extent that the survival of a civilization is dependent on it, because at bottom the education done in a given culture presupposes the most important task of embodying and transmitting man’s and a peoples’s concept of reality. To support this view, he dedicates a chapter in *Enquiries into Religion and Culture*, entitled *Cycles of Civilization* (ERC, pp. 67-94), where he traces how the general great stages of world culture came as a result of the changes in man’s vision of reality. In short, Dawson sees the task of education as that of «a nervous system of a society, by which the whole organism is guided and kept in union with the spirit. It should be in touch on the one hand with the actual daily life of every citizen, and on the other with the higher ideals which are the end and justification of every civilization».

The underlying thesis developed by Dawson in his views regarding Western education is that the formation of the Western educational and scientific tradition bears the imprint of the Christian vision of reality—especially that of man—which has imbued it with one crucial element. This element is responsible for securing the fruits of the new knowledge of nature without sacrificing the achievements of the previous stage of culture; for reconciling the sovereignty of universal cosmic order, the eternal divine law, with man’s detailed knowledge of himself and the powers and the processes of nature. Thus Dawson gives the Christian and Western
educational tradition an objective importance, quite unaffected by the passing attitudes towards it through the ages.

Concretely his thesis may be spelled out, thus\(^20\):

The history of Western culture has been the story of the progressive «civilization» of the barbaric energy of Western man and the progressive subordination of nature to human purpose under the twofold influence of Christian ethics and scientific reason.

That is why Dawson, in spite of heavy objections and tremendous attacks from the educational sector mainly in the United States, consistently vatted for the study of Christian culture-in its several forms-for, as he says, such study would make Western civilization more intelligible, since it would uncover the sources of the moral values of Western culture, as well as the sources of the intellectual traditions that have determined the course of Western education.

Reinforcing this view, he affirms that,\(^21\)

...the activity of the Western mind, which manifested itself alike in scientific and technical invention as well as in geographical discovery, was not the natural inheritance of a particular biological type; it was the result of a long process of education which gradually changed the orientation of human thought and enlarged the possibilities of social action. In this process the vital factor was not the aggressive power of conquerors and capitalists, but the widening of the capacity of human intelligence and the development of new types of creative genius and ability.

This «development of new types of creative genius and ability», Dawson precisely attributes to the dynamic character of Christianity. He maintains that Christian culture sustained and continues to sustain Western culture,\(^22\) in spite of the debilitating secularized atmosphere. Studying Christian culture, therefore, involves studying the culture-process that casts great light on the formation and character of Western culture: tracing Western culture’s spiritual and theological roots, through its organic historical growth to its cultural fruits.
It is with such study that the Western educational tradition, as influenced by Christian anthropology, would be shown to have been conceived not so much as learning a lesson but as an introduction into a new life, or still more, as an initiation into a mystery. It was «something that could not be conveyed by words alone, but which involved a discipline of the whole man.»

Speaking of the Western scientific ideal, which is a significant component of the Western educational tradition, Dawson maintains that the leaders and initiators of this scientific ideal were inspired by something higher than the idea of utility—they looked at science as an instrument of a moral purpose, the means by which the physical world is brought into relation with spiritual values. Such vision derives from the tenets of Christian anthropology that stresses the spiritual dimension of man in a material world. As Dawson says it, «the ideal of science is that of a changing world of knowledge in which truth never ceases to grow and to remain true to itself. And thus scientific truth cannot be hostile to spiritual truth. Both of them are elements of one reality indeed, science is nothing else but the spiritual power of intelligence illuminating and ordering the multiplicity and confusion of the world of sense.»

Reacting, therefore, to the secularized state of affairs obtaining in modern Western culture's scientific ideal, Dawson calls for the recovery of spiritual unity at least by reconciling the scientific ideal with its moral end, and this largely is the task of education. He assumes an optimistic attitude toward this issue. He believes that there is a natural affinity between the scientific ideal of the organization and rationalization of the material world by human intelligence, and the religious ideal of the ordering of human life to a spiritual end by a higher law which has its source in the Divine Reason. «It is almost an historical accident that man’s achievement of control over his material environment by science should have coincided with his abandonment of the principle of spiritual order, so that man’s new powers have been made the servants of economic acquisitiveness and political passion» he says.

**Historical Survey of Western Educational Tradition**

Dawson starts off his historical survey of Western educational and scientific tradition by affirming that in the past educa-
tion was an exceptional privilege which was confined to the ruling elements of society, especially the priesthood, contrary to the trend obtaining in the past two centuries when education was made to extend to the whole society. This last statement makes allusion to the origin of a big part of the educational crisis in modern Western culture—the universalization of education springing from a faulty sense of democracy and equality that dilutes the true essence of education.

The pre-Socratic tradition started as attempts to explain the nature of the unity of the cosmic process of which men were already conscious religiously. These attempts created the religious conception of a sacred order that gave rise to various esoteric teachings concerning the true nature of the cosmic process. The situation then already occasioned conflicts between priests and philosophers, to speak of a distinction arising from whether one is more prophetic or more rationalistic in his utterances, although Dawson maintains that everyone was moved by a religious sense of discovering the truth about the cosmic process. Thus pre-Socratic thinking, which concentrated on the order of nature rather than on the nature of the soul, is essentially a Natural Theology, in the sense of giving a doctrine of the divine order of nature. The educational tradition it promoted inevitably attracted the philosophers and priests.

The Hellenistic «liberal education»

The system of classical studies or «humane letters» had its origins some twenty-four centuries ago in ancient Athens and was handed down intact from the Greek sophists to the Latin rhetoricians and grammarians and from these to the monks and clerks of the Middle Ages. These in turn handed it on to the humanists and school-masters of the Renaissance from whom it finally passed to the schools and universities of modern Europe and America.

The unique character of this Western educational tradition arises from the fact that it was not confined to a priestly cast or to the study of a sacred tradition, as characterized the educational tradition of the great Oriental cultures. It was an integral part of the community.
It may be described as essentially a «liberal education» since it trained the free man in those «liberal arts» which were essential for the exercise of his proper function. These arts meant the art of speech and persuasion, the exact knowledge of the value of words and an understanding of the laws of thought and the rules of logic.

To avert the danger of using this Western «liberal education» solely for utilitarian ends, the greatest minds of the Hellenic world devoted themselves to an inquiry into the true nature of education and into the ultimate philosophical issues that lie behind these problems. Plato represents the apex of this Greek preoccupation on the theory of education. He revolutionized Greek education, not so much by what he actually accomplished as an educator as by the way in which he raised and widened the whole range of the discussion and introduced a new spiritual dimension of Greek culture. After him, «liberal education» meant going farther than acquiring those arts of a purely civic character; it meant higher education which was to guide the mind by science and philosophy towards its final spiritual goal.

The Roman influence of the Hellenistic educational tradition; how it gave an opening to Christianity

But the Hellenistic «liberal education» was not transmitted totally to the Latin West. Rome readily accepted the older tradition of civic education through the liberal arts, but she did not assimilate the philosophical ideals. What made the situation worse was that with the loss of the autonomous life of the Greek city state, this Hellenistic «liberal education» in the Roman world became divorced from social reality. What is more, the world expansion of Greek culture failed to realize the higher aims that had been conceived by the great educationalists of the 4th century B.C.

Christian influence on Western education

What Christianity did to the Hellenistic philosophical search on the theory of education and the accompanying religious ethos of such search was, together with the creation of a new spiritual
community which superseded, or at least limited, the old civic community, to give it a new religious doctrine and a new religious literature. The Christian influence brought to the Graeco-Roman world a literature more ancient than that of classical Hellenism, unknown to the Greeks and still more to the Romans. It developed a Christian culture that was built on a double foundation: the old classical education, on the one hand, and a specifically Christian learning which was biblical and theological, on the other.  

Dawson traces the transition of Western educational tradition from its Greek to Christian aspects in the following manner. In the East, the Cappadocian Fathers, St. Basil and the two Gregorys, studied at Athens with the leading pagan rhetoricians of their age, and their thought was influenced not only in the form of classical scholarship but in its content by Greek philosophy. In the West, St. Augustine had been a professional rhetorician before his conversion and always retained his interest in educational problems. More than this, he was an original thinker who left a profound influence on the development of Western philosophy in every age.

In the fifth century, a synthesis had already been achieved between the two elements of the emerging Western educational tradition: the old classical education and the specifically Christian learning. This marked the Byzantine culture in the East which was essentially Greek and essentially Christian. It studied Homer and Plato as well as the Bible and the Fathers. It maintained the tradition of an educated lay class throughout the «Dark Ages», for the Palace School which was founded at Constantinople at 425 by Theodosius II was a regular state university which persisted, in spite of interruptions, for a thousand years.  

In the West, the picture is essentially different. Since the fall of the Roman Empire, the Church was left as the only surviving representative and guardian of Roman culture and Christian education. While the liberal arts were preserved in the Byzantine territory, these liberal arts were somehow set aside in the new barbarian kingdoms, since the Church had to perform a far greater educational task than in the Byzantine world. New peoples who were strangers to the life of the city and the higher civilization of the ancient world had to be reeducated. Their moral ideals
were still derived from the primitive heroic ethics of tribal society. Thus the main effort of the Church in the West had to be directed towards moral education, to the establishment of a new order resting on a faith in divine providence and on the spiritual and moral responsibility of the human soul towards God.

Thus the transmission of the intellectual heritage of the ancient world, as embodied in the traditional forms of liberal education, was of secondary importance, although the Church preserved this educational tradition if only to avoid becoming absorbed by its barbarian environment. The Church had a direct utilitarian interest in the maintenance of the educational tradition.

The centers in which this process of preserving the educational tradition took place were the monasteries which almost from the beginning were schools of Christian learning as well as schools of the Christian way of life. They diffused the idea of using the old liberal classical education in the service of the Church and ecclesiastical learning, reaching Ireland by the sixth century and inspiring the new Christian culture of Anglo-Saxon England in the seventh. Such idea also became the main source of the Carolingian revival of learning. Dawson describes this period as a flowering of a new Latin Christian culture on barbarian soil, showing how «the combination of the old tradition of liberal education with the dynamic moral energy of Christianity was not an archaic survival of a dead culture but a vital process which was capable of giving birth to the new forms of culture».

These new forms of culture refer to a new art and a new vernacular Christian literature that arose in the native barbarian society.

General character of Middle Ages Western education

Throughout the early Middle Ages, Western education followed the lines that had been laid down in the last period of the Roman Empire. It was therefore a specifically clerical education which was normally confined to the monastic and cathedral schools.

Meanwhile, the new ideal of a vernacular Christian education for all free men, laymen as well as clerics, began to be promoted by such rulers as King Alfred of Wessex. He put a little
library of Christian classics in English and encouraged everyone to know how to read English writing. His selection suggests a conception of a liberal education based on history and natural theology, rather than on grammar and rhetoric.31

Still the monasteries remained the main motor of education in the Middle Ages. King Alfred’s initiative was the isolated effort of an original mind which had little influence on future developments. The continuity of culture was maintained chiefly by the great monasteries, like those of Germany, Fulda, Corvey, Reichenau and St. Gall. This development culminated in the 12th century in a great revival of studies which had a revolutionary effect on the history of Western education. Dawson says that such period has often been described as «the Renaissance of the twelfth Century» and resembles the later Italian Renaissance in its passionate devotion to the cause of learning and its boundless veneration for the thought of the ancient classical world.

However, in contrast to the Italian Renaissance, the 12th century renaissance centered its interest in Greek philosophy and science rather than in literature. This came as a result of the recovery of the works of Aristotle and a galaxy of Greek and Arabic philosophers and scientists and mathematicians through the medium of Arabic thought and the translations made by the school of Toledo.

This situation brought about the problem of how this knowledge was to be reconciled with the religious tradition of Western Christendom and the educational traditions of monastic schools. The dangers surrounding this situation were manifested in the first half of the twelfth century when St. Bernard attacked the new dialectical theology of Abelard. The problem worsened when in the following decades there was a wholesale importation of Graeco-Arabic works which had no roots in the Christian past and which seemed irreconcilable with Catholic dogma.

To tackle the situation, the intellectual and spiritual forces of Christian culture unleashed an intense creative activity which saw the rise of the communes, the foundation of the new religious orders, the building of the great Gothic cathedrals and the creation of a new poetry. This led not only to the transformation of the curriculum of studies, but also to the creation of
new intellectual organs and new social institutions which have had a lasting influence on the development of Western education.

In this milieu arose the medieval university. Though it developed from the traditional institution of the cathedral school, it was essentially a free, self-governing guild of scholars which possessed a charter of privilege and its own organs of government. It was a place of study that was not merely local but open to students from the other cities and countries.

As a result, higher education enjoyed a degree of prestige and social influence that it had not possessed since the Hellenistic age. The great schools, like Paris and Bologna, possessed an international position, for they recruited students from all over Western Europe and gave them a common sense of intellectual values and of their own corporate strength. They formed an intellectual elite. They produced an intellectual discipline that moulded the Western mind, evidenced by the fact that one of the three great powers that ruled the Christian world in the Middle Ages was Studium or Learning, the other two being Empire and Priesthood.

The medieval university produced as an intellectual substance the school of thought now known as Scholasticism. The latter may be roughly described as a Christian-Aristotelian synthesis, making use of Aristotle’s idea of science and scientific method, and more importantly, his science of nature and man which was the gateway to a whole world of knowledge and for the metaphysical ideal of a super-science which provided a rational basis for theology. The classical expression of this Christian-Aristotelian synthesis was the work of St. Thomas Aquinas.

It was further reinforced by the new international teachers orders, above all the Dominicans and the Franciscans, which renewed and raised to the intellectual plane the old monastic ideal of the consecration of learning to the Christian way of life. In this way, Dawson maintains, the medieval mind was always conscious of man’s final end and the goal of his intellectual and moral Pilgrimage.

A side-effect of this highly philosophical and scientific culture of the Middle Ages was the decline in the general literary standards of Western education. Dawson maintains that a large part of the blame fell on what he terms as «clerical utilitarians»
who were intent on using education as a means of getting on in the world. This humanistic, literary tradition, based on the Latin classics, took refuge in the vernacular literatures which were being created at the same period that saw the rise of the universities.

This humanistic tradition was quite distinct from that of the universities and the monastic schools. It had its center in the life of the feudal courts which were so numerous in the Middle Ages. It produced a new moral and social ideal, a courtly culture that incorporated a number of different elements which came together in Western Europe in the age of the Crusades. On the one hand there were the old traditions of the heroic age of the North which still lived on in the Anglo-Saxon epic and the northern sagas. On the other, there was the new poetry and music which came up from the South at the time of the Crusades, the art of the troubadours who created an elaborate code of manners and morals which became the standard of "chivalry" and "courtesy." Finally there was the influence of Latin and classical culture which brought Ovid into the world of the troubadours and Alexander and Aeneas into the world of Charlemagne and Arthur.

In effect, the education of Medieval Ages assumed a dual character: the higher clerical education transformed by Aristotle and the universities, and the lay education which transformed the barbarian feudal warrior into the medieval knight. The latter aspect affected every form of vernacular literature from the eleventh to the sixteenth century, even on the most popular levels. It had a profound influence on religion, so that from St. Francis onwards the poetry and spiritual experiences of mystics were colored by the imagery and ideology of the courtly culture. It spread through a hundred different channels into every part of Europe and affected all classes of the population, even exercising a civilizing and educative influence on the ruling classes who regarded learning as the business of the clerks. It brought the code of honor from the battlefield into the details of social life and taught the knight to appreciate poetry and music and the art of the spoken and written word.

Dawson maintains that this vernacular tradition, though embodying considerable non-Christian elements, shows how the native tradition of the semi-barbaric West had become modified and transformed in the course of centuries by the influence of
Christian culture. The subsequent development of Western culture and Western education, in particular, was conditioned by the coming together of these two traditions. And this synthesis, together with the recovery of Greek literature, explains, in the mind of Dawsons, the origins of the Italian Renaissance. The condition that made such occurrence feasible was the rise of the city states in medieval Italy which created a society in which nobles and clerks and bourgeois met on almost equal terms.

Thus Dawson maintains that while there was a strong current of rationalist and unorthodox ideas in the fourteenth century Italy, the chief representatives of this tendency were to be found not among the humanists but among the philosophers and the scientists, above all the Averroists of Padua. The humanists, like Petrarch, advocated a return to antiquity which also meant a return to Christian antiquity and to the traditional alliance of classical and patristic studies. The division obtaining in Western culture at that period was no longer one between a vernacular courtly tradition and a Latin ecclesiastical one, but rather between the humanists and the scientists, both of whom claimed to stand to the cause of true learning and Christian truth. What marked that period in Europe was a trend of thought associated with the via modernorum of William of Ockham and his disciples.

This new school of thought of Ockham did not create any great metaphysical synthesis. It concerned itself rather with questions of method and with the criticism of traditional ideas, stressing the importance of direct intuitive knowledge (the knowledge of the singular), the use of the inductive method, and the principle of economy, all of which were to become the principles of the new science of nature. Its criticism of Aristotelian physics and their conception of the experimental method sowed the seeds of a big revolution in Western thinking, made worse because it was accompanied in the 14th century by the dissolution of the alliance between the Papacy and the monastic reformers, the rise of the Conciliar movement which, by asserting the supremacy of the Studium as the supreme arbiter of the Christian world, failed to recover the lost unity of Medieval Christendom. As a result, the leadership of Western culture passed from the North to Italy, and from the schoolmen to the humanists. The age of the Renaissance had arrived.
The scientific tradition in the Middle Ages

It is interesting to note how an essential component of Western educational tradition—the scientific tradition—surged and developed in the later Middle Ages and influenced the succeeding ages, for it shows how the Christian conception of man, reacting to various historical and sociological elements, influenced the formation and character of this scientific tradition, and Western education, in general.

Dawson claims that the Middle Ages witnessed a great decline in scientific knowledge from the standards already attained in the Greek world. Contrary to claims of some quarters that Christianity was the cause or at least aided this decline, Dawson attributes it to the fact that when Christianity conquered the ancient civilization, there already was a decline of ancient science—a mixture of astrology, occultism and magic—and that the focus of the Church’s attention at the time was more on moral re-education than scientific development. Besides, Western Europe at the time was plagued with economic and social backwardness, and the secular culture of the Roman Empire made no serious attempt to assimilate Greek scientific culture or to use the golden opportunities afforded by the cosmopolitan conditions of the age for the transmission of Greek science to the Latin-speaking world.

Things changed in the later Middle Ages, however, as the supremacy of oriental and eastern Mediterranean culture passed to the West. This medieval renaissance was made possible through the recovery of the works of Aristotle and a whole galaxy of Greek and Arabic philosophers and scientists and mathematicians. The men of the West suddenly realized the existence of a world of thought which had been unknown to them and the power of human reason to explore these new fields of knowledge.

Aristotelian science offered a key to this new development, since in spite of the tendency towards determinism which characterizes science, the Aristotelian science included in its thorough-going system of determinism, spirit as well as matter in the working of its mechanism. «The logical completeness and consistency of this system made it almost impossible to accept any part of it without assenting to the whole, to separate its physical from its metaphysical elements or to accept its explanation of
natural phenomena while rejecting its theory of spiritual beings," Dawson affirms. In short, Aristotelian science with its spiritual component provided a natural basis for its use and development by Christian anthropology.

Thus the task of reconciling this new Aristotelian scientific knowledge with the religious tradition of Western Christendom and the educational traditions of the monastic schools began. The situation created an opportunity to bring the intellectual and spiritual forces of Christian culture to bear on the challenge, unleashing an intense creative activity which saw the rise of the communes, the foundation of the new religious orders, the building of the great Gothic cathedrals and the creation of a new poetry. Thus sprang also the medieval phenomenon of the medieval university.

The process of reconciliation reflected the considerations of Christian anthropology in determining which part of the new science is acceptable and which not.

The general attitude was one of indifference with respect to the cosmological theories of the neo-Aristotelians. But when it came to anthropological questions, the attitude was one of extreme care and scrutiny. When the Arabs, following the traditions of later Greek thought, taught that mankind no less than the celestial spheres derived its activity from a spiritual principle, that is, from an active intelligence where reason was not a faculty of the human soul but a cosmic principle, and that man attained to rational activity only in so far as his passive and mortal intelligence became temporarily actuated by this immortal and impersonal power, the doctrine struck at the very heart of religious faith and was considered to be a deadly heresy which should be rooted out.

A point of interest that figured in the delicate task of reconciling the Aristotelian science with Christian faith, showing the influence of Christian anthropology, was the intervention of the so-called Augustinians of the thirteenth century.

These Augustinians differed from the disciples of Aristotle especially in their theory of knowledge. To them, sensible experience only gives a knowledge of sensible things, but the higher knowledge springs from the illumination of the mind by divine truth. In other words, the higher knowledge is intuitive and
spiritual. Thus the true source of knowledge is not to be found in things, but in the divine ideas, the rationes aeternae, that are the ultimate foundation of reality.

This Platonic streak of the Augustinians, view of knowledge naturally leads to the Platonic, as opposed to the Aristotelian, theory of science. That is to say that though the Augustinians did not go so far as Plato as to deny the possibility of any science of sensible things, they did tend to exalt the deductive over the inductive methods, and to prefer mathematics and its derivative sciences to the nonmathematical Aristotelian sciences like biology.

As representative figure of this tendency was Robert Grosseteste, whose faith in mathematical reasoning, influenced the direction of studies at the new University of Oxford. Throughout the thirteenth century and the first half of the fourteenth, Oxford maintained the tradition of Augustinian philosophy and of "mathematical" scenes.40

Another point of conflict between the imported Hellenic science and the Christian belief at the time was the former's challenge to the latter's fundamental doctrines of creation, personal immortality, and the belief in a personal Deity who governed the world by His Providence and the free exercise of His omnipotent will.

To the Greeks the mind is the one principle of movement and order in the world, without which the universe would be an inert mass and a shapeless chaos. And it is in the eternal and regular movements of the stars that the presence of divine intelligence is most clearly shown, that is, the more regular the movement the more intelligent must be the mover.

The leading thinkers of the medieval age broke this Greek belief of a single indivisible unity of spirit and matter that held God as an abstract intelligence. To them, God was the Heavenly Father, the Creator and Savior of Mankind, and the cosmic process was no eternal cycle, but a spiritual drama with a beginning, and an end, and the earth, instead of being the passive recipient of the planetary influences, the slave of fate and necessity, was a battleground on which supreme spiritual issues involving man were decided41.
St. Thomas and Roger Bacon as symbols of medieval scientific tradition

Dawson completes the picture of the educational and scientific tradition of Western culture in the Middle Ages by highlighting the contributions of two leading figures: St. Thomas Aquinas and Roger Bacon.

Of St. Thomas, Dawson maintains that he was far less representative of medieval thought than is usually supposed. His philosophy is not the mature fruit of the old medieval tradition, but the first fruits of the new scientific thought. He was a bold innovator, who, as Etienne Gilson has said, always chose the line of greatest resistance and made a decisive break in the continuity of the medieval tradition. His work launched the Western mind on a new path: to vindicate the autonomous rights of reason and to create a scientific philosophy which rested on purely rational foundations and was not, like the earlier scholasticism, a philosophic superstructure superimposed on a basis of Christian dogma. Thus Dawson maintains that St. Thomas looks forward to the Renaissance rather than back to the Middle Ages, and it was not until the sixteenth century that he was recognized as the official doctor of the Church, freeing scholasticism from the sophistry and barbarism of the later medieval schoolmen.

The significance of St. Thomas in the area of the influence of Christian anthropology in Western education and science lies in the fact that he ended the oriental and Byzantine absorption of the human mind in the absolute and the transcendent. He taught that human reason has autonomous rights and can carry out a scientific activity unencumbered by the absolutism of a purely theological ideal of knowledge. He also taught that human nature and natural morality has rights against the exclusive domination of the ascetic ideal. Thus he opened the way for humanism in the larger sense of the word, and for an autonomous and disinterested scientific activity.

Of Roger Bacon (1210-1292), Dawson maintains that he is a profoundly original mind who stands apart from the main current of scholastic philosophical study. He belongs to the tradition of the men of science, who were responsible for the introduction of Arabic science into the West. He considers Arabic science as the
main channel by which Christendom could recover the wisdom of the ancient world. To him, the unity of science is a purely theological unity. He is prepared to subordinate all human knowledge to the divine wisdom that is contained in the scriptures. He regards all knowledge as springing ultimately from revelation. But science can progress, because there is no finality in this life, and knowledge must continue to increase with the growing experience of mankind. Thus his experimental science is not the verification of hypothesis by experiment, the inductive method of Aristotle, but is rather the realization of science in practical results. He looks at experimental science in a utilitarian way, that is, as an instrument to secure the triumph of Christendom over the infidel. In a sense, he is no devotee to pure science, but regards it as an instrument of world conquest and exploitation.

Further describing the role of Roger Bacon in his book, *Medieval Essays*, Dawson says that Bacon embodied the original Western scientific ideal, a genuine precursor and prophet of Western science, for in spite of its fantastic claims, his experimental science is not magic but applied since, and his scientist is not a magician but an expert.

In the thirteenth century Western Christendom had already acquired a considerable knowledge of both Greek and Arabic science, but it knew them as it were from outside, since neither the Greek nor the Arabic ideal of science answered to the needs of Western culture or could be fully assimilated by the Western mind. The Greek ideal of science was essentially intellectualist, while the Arabic ideal was associated with magic and mystery. And Bacon stood somewhere in between.

Dawson pictures Bacon, to wit:

(as realizing) both the limitless possibilities of scientific knowledge, and also its potential dangers, and his desire to confine experimental science to a class of chosen initiates was due not to occultism, but to his fear of the new knowledge being pervened to antisocial ends... His idea was no less theocratic than that of his contemporaries; but whereas they conceived this ideal primarily as the subordination of the temporal to the spiritual power, Bacon believed that it could only be realized by the cooperation of science. As philosophy was the hand-
maid of theology, so experimental science was the handmaid of philosophy, and it was the divinely ordained instrument by which the Church could fulfill its mission towards mankind and bring about the kingdom of God on earth...

To Bacon, therefore, there is some kind of spiritual unity between the scientific and philosophical points of view, with science considered as an instrument of a moral purpose, the means by which the physical world is brought into relation with spiritual values. He inspired that scientific ideal which with science considered as an instrument of a moral purpose, the means by which the physical world is brought into relation with spiritual values. He inspired that scientific ideal which ought to be pursued not solely for utilitarian purposes, and which considers nature not as a slave to be mastered, but as a mistress to be served in a spirit of almost religious reverence. He represents a Western scientific ideal thoroughly inspired by Christianity.

Describing the formation of the European scientific tradition through the contributions of St. Thomas and Roger Bacon, Dawson affirms:

Both of these elements contributed to the formation of the European scientific tradition. The pragmatic experimentation of the Baconian ideal could have borne no fruit apart from the intellectual training and discipline which were provided by Aristotelian scholasticism. And the latter might have smothered the initiative of scientific thought had it not been for the independent criticism of Bacon and the experimentalists. St. Thomas had vindicated the autonomous rights of reason and scientific enquiry against the theological absolutism of the early Middle Ages. Bacon in turn intervened to safeguard the independence of science from metaphysical absolutism of the philosophers.

It is clear that such state of affairs demands the art of striking and maintaining a healthy balance between what we may term as the Baconian and Thomistic elements, as spoken above to be faithfull to a scientific ideal that is Christian.
Factors influencing Renaissance education. Dawson identifies three significant factors that influence the formation of Western educational tradition during the Renaissance period. They are the rise of humanism, the rise of the scientific movement, and that of nationalism.

The rise of humanism. Dawson starts his analysis of the rise of humanism by giving a general description of the educational tradition of Italian Renaissance which he considers to be the foundation of the higher culture of modern Europe and of America at present. It was a tradition, he says, that had its center not so much in the universities, which long retained their medieval character, but rather in the academies and the learned societies. It was a tradition that was forged mainly in Italy.

Italy and the Mediterranean world in the later Middle Ages constituted a new kind of society, radically different from the feudal-ecclesiastical society of the North which was the focus of medieval Christendom. It was society of cities and city states in which the political conception of citizenship took the place of the feudal relation of personal allegiance and loyalty. The Italian cities resembled the city states of ancient Greece in the intensity of their political life, the activity of their artistic impulse and the keenness of their intellectual interests. They reproduced the same conditions under which the Greek paideia had originally developed—the need for an education that would train the citizen in the «liberal arts» that would fit him for public life and the existence of a critical audience that could appreciate the art of the orator, the poet and the historian.

This state of affairs was brought about by the fact that the Italian cities had become the dominant power in the Eastern Mediterranean and were thus brought into immediate contact with the older traditions of the Byzantine Empire and of Greek culture. The Council of Florence in 1439 effected the reunion of the Easter and Western Churches which, while unpopular in the East and consequently failing to save the Byzantine Empire produced a rapprochement between the leading minds of the new Italian culture and the last representatives of Byzantine Hellenism.
Intellectual relations between East and West became increasingly frequent and intimate, and this phenomenon led to the revival of Platonic studies in Italy. The entrance of Plato into Italy was accompanied by the rediscovery of Greek poetry and drama and history. This produced an enormous change in the educational attitude of Italy. It brought back into higher education the aesthetic and moral elements which had been lost in the scientific disputations of the schoolmen, although they survived in the vernacular level in the courtly culture. From it, its champions, who are dubbed as humanists, learned that education was an art which should aim at the harmonious development of every side of human nature, physical, moral and intellectual. Thus these humanists gained an awareness of the unlimited possibilities of the enrichment of personal life by art and literature and social activity.

Dawson maintains that this humanist educational tradition, at least in its early form, was loyal to Christian tradition. The great humanist educators were themselves devout Christians who wished to unite the intellectual and aesthetic culture of Hellenism with the spiritual ideals of Christianity. The life and work of Marsilio Ficino and the group of scholars and men of culture who formed the Platonic Academy at Florence in the second half of the 15th century represent the most remarkable attempt to assert the essential agreement of Christianity and Hellenism, such that they left a significant mark in the field of culture and promoted what is termed as Christian Platonism that became the accepted philosophy of humanism for two centuries.

These humanists also created a new institution which became the chief organ of the new humanist culture, the academies, which were essentially a private association of scholars and amateurs who met to discuss scientific as well as literary questions. Throughout the next two centuries it was these associations which were the centers of the higher culture, while the universities remained the strongholds of medieval educational traditions and of intellectual vested interests.

The humanist influence spread to the North in Germany, France and England, whose leaders-Reuchline, Erasmus, Lefevre d'Etaples, Fisher and John Colet-still represented the medieval tradition of clerical learning and ecclesiastical society. Thus the
Christian aspect of humanism in the North was even more strongly accentuated than in the South. But it was precisely this aspect of humanism in the North that provoked harsh opposition from the representatives of the old order. The literary quarrels, numerous and often bitter, between the Italian scholars became ideological warfare in the North whose humanists were split between the conservatives and the modernists.

The situation in the North was so volatile that a public campaign was started against the corruptions and superstitions of the late medieval Church. In line with the latter purpose, Erasmus of Rotterdam began the propaganda for a return to Christian antiquity and to the pure evangelical Christianity of the New Testament. This gesture of the German humanists, however, ignited the pent-up cauldron of conflicting elements in Northern Europe that were most alien from the ideals of the humanist culture of the Mediterranean world. It led to Protestantism, as propounded and embodied by Martin Luther. Its inherent contradiction with humanism became manifest in the early years of the Reformation in the controversy between Luther and Erasmus on the Freedom of the Will.

The Reformation of Luther unleashed such a revolutionary effect on the medieval mentality that it destroyed the spiritual unity of medieval Christendom, the Roman Order and the Catholic hierarchy together with the institutions and beliefs on which medieval culture had been founded, above all, the monastic orders, for centuries the chief representatives of the higher culture and the teachers of the Christian people. The past and the traditions were considered highly suspect, and thus gravely undermined the educational system of the time which focused, more than on book learning, on liturgical and artistic channels. Protestantism only promoted the study of the Bible and the dogmatic theology of the new sects.

What saved Europe from the divisive force of the Reformation was the influence of the humanist education, for there were humanists in both camps, the Catholics and the Protestants. In spite of their theological opposition they remained in substantial agreement in their educational ideals and their concept of humane learning. Thus under the influence of humanism, Catholic and Protestant Europe shared a common type of culture. The educated
classes studied the same languages in the same way, read the same books and accepted the same ideal pattern of the «scholar and the gentleman» which had been laid down in the standard courtesy books of the Italian Renaissance. In spite of the religious divisions of Europe, the world of learning and literature and art remained an international community, so that even during the Wars of Religion, scholars and scientists corresponded with one another. Even the vernacular literatures showed the persistence of the unity of Western culture in spite of the disunity of Christendom. While reflecting the growing divergence of the new national state, this vernacular literature also embodied the same humanist culture. And it was through it that the humanist tradition reached down to the level of popular culture until it eventually reached every man who could read. The introduction of printing and the multiplication of books at this time fostered this phenomenon.

Dawson develops this point further by saying that under humanism, Christian culture continued to flower even on the arid soil of Puritanism, citing its insistence on the reading of the Bible in the vernacular as occasioning the growth of literacy among the Puritans. «The men of that age were more conscious than those of any other time that they were heirs of a double tradition and that they all in greater or lesser degrees were at home in two worlds—the world of classical antiquity and the Christian world. They had discovered a new world of knowledge without losing the old world of faith.... The Christian humanists represented the main tradition of Western culture, and their influence still dominated education and literature and art».

These observations of Dawson are significant in the sense that they point to that synthesizing property of the Christian conception of man. Humanism derives its synthesizing character from its inherently religious element, that is, from its fundamental dynamic force which Christianity, as a religious element more than as a theological matter, fosters. It is when Christianity is not made to sustain humanism—as when any other movement like that of science, technology and nationalism that also marked this age, is made to sustain it—that humanism loses this synthesizing character and becomes, in fact, a principle of division.

In this respect, the theological dimension of Christianity, while distinct from what may be termed as Christianity in its
vital and spiritual essence as a religion, ought to serve the latter, fostering it, clarifying and coordinating its many aspects, etc. Otherwise, a conflict of these dimensions of Christianity can lead to the disappearance of the Christian element in humanism. Such disappearance came later, in the age of the Enlightenment, which resulted in the loss of humanism’s vital element. «The new humanism of the enlightenment was lacking in the vitality and spiritual depth of the earlier type. The one-sided rationalism of the Encyclopaedists provoked the one-sided subjective emotionalism of Rousseau and the Romantics. And though both rationalism and romanticism were in a sense the heirs of the Renaissance tradition, neither of them was the true representative of the earlier humanism. Rationalism had lost its spiritual inspiration and romanticism lacked its intellectual order and its sense of form. Thus the disappearance of the Christian element in humanism has involved the loss of its vital quality» \(^{53}\), Dawson affirms.

This crucial role of Christianity in any cultural tradition and institution, its absence from which can spell a tremendous difference, is more clearly shown in Dawson’s views on the development of the movement of science and technology on Western education during the time of the Renaissance, where he focuses more on how Christianity precisely was not made to sustain it, and thus left it as a divisive principle.

*Influence of science and technology on Western education.* While the whole period from the fourth to the seventeenth century saw the Western educational tradition enjoying an extraordinary unity which, in Dawson’s analysis, was brought about by the two great traditions of Christianity and classical culture, outside the world of books, outside the school and the university, Europe was passing through an immense process of change and a new world was coming into existence. This new world was occasioned by the discoveries which began in the fifteenth century and which, by removing the fixed limits of the old *orbis terrarum*, plunged Western man to a bigger world of continents and oceans.

Such discoveries were a fruit of the efforts of craftsmen and tradesmen rather than of those of the scholars and scientists, though they depended on the latter for the astronomical element in the art of navigation. They generated and gave life to the
guilds of the craftsmen and the workshops of the artisans, and also became a vehicle to transmit Western educational tradition. Precisely because the conditions demanded the close relationship between the craftsmen and the artists, «for almost the first time in history we find a highly cultured and learned society in which manual skill, mechanical technique and scientific and artistic invention were all alike held in high esteem, so that the application of science to life by art and technique became a matter of common concern».

(1452-1519) as the supreme example of the new attitude obtaining in the age of the Renaissance toward science and technology. The greatest of Renaissance artists, the greatest master of technical invention and the most original thinker and scientist of his age, da Vinci owed little to formal education and even spoke contemptuously of the men of learning. He expressed this new attitude by saying that the only true knowledge is to be found in the study of nature and in the mathematical sciences which contain the truth and the real knowledge of things.

While he inherited a scientific tradition of Grosseteste and Roger Bacon who were profoundly religious and Christian and mystical, da Vinci, though far from being irreligious, was in no sense Christian. He was a naturalist and a pantheist who conceived Nature as a living whole governed by its own eternal laws and attaining its own perfection. He was influenced by the school of thought at the University of Padua which largely imbued the sceptical, naturalist and rationalist character of the scientific movement of the Renaissance.

In another place, Dawson traces the development of the Western scientific tradition from, the later Middle Ages to the Renaissance. The followers and heirs of Roger Bacon (William of Ockham, John Buridan, Albert of Saxony and Nicholas Oresme), he says, created the critical and scientific Nominalism which became the dominant force in the intellectual life of the fourteenth century. Their mentality was fruit of the conflict between the science of experience and the a priori rationalism of Averroes and the strict Aristotelian. They defended the validity of the Ptolemaic astronomy which was purely a science of observation, involving no philosophical presuppositions. The Aristotelian, on the other hand, claimed that science must explain the real nature
and cause of things, and consequently must be founded on the principles of physics. By this Aristotelian physics is meant that the movements of the heavenly bodies should be absolutely circular and uniform, and that they should revolve round a motionless center of gravity which could be no other than the Earth. The eventual superiority of the Ptolemaic system marked the end of the period of dependence upon the Arabs and the beginning of the independent development of Western science. In the schoolmen of the fourteenth century—William of Ockham, etc.—not only is there a critical reaction against the authority of the Aristotelian and Arabic tradition, but also a movement of original scientific research, fiercely jealous of its autonomy, which prepared the way for the coming of the new European science of the Renaissance.

This Renaissance scientific ideal was represented by such men as Copernicus (1473-1543), da Vinci, Kepler (1571-1630) and Galileo, whose achievements were based on the mathematical ideal of natural science, derived from the medieval tradition of the school of Oxford, and ultimately from Plato and Pythagoras rather than from Aristotle and Averroes, who embodied the Arabic scientific ideal of the Middle Ages. Such stress on mathematics made the Renaissance scientists more convinced of the value of the experimental method and of the need for exact methods, while losing their faith in the abstract speculations of the philosophers.

The bridge between the scientific mentality of the later Middle Ages and that of the Renaissance was, in Dawson’s views, Francis Bacon (1561-1626) who, without being a mathematician, asserted the cause of modern science and scientific research with unequalled eloquence and conviction. He was the first man to preach the gospel of the new philosophy of active science with authority and to assert the necessity of a complete reorganization of studies on this new foundation. He possessed a clear conception of the instrumental character of science and its power to transform the conditions of human life, and also like his namesake, Roger Bacon, he believed that there could be no conflict between science and religion, reason and revelation, since both tend to the same end—the service and glory of God. Thus the religious conflicts which had divided Western culture for nearly
two centuries passed into the background since Protestants and Catholics, under this climate effected by Francis Bacon, both shared the same faith in human nature, the same hope in scientific enlightenment and the same devotion to the cause of humanity and progress.

But Francis Bacon's distrust of metaphysics and mysticism caused him to draw an unnaturally sharp boundary between religion and science. It was a situation that lent itself easily to exploitation. And with the Cartesian revolution carried out by the more intellectualist and mathematical school of thought, the Baconian scientific ideal became diluted and ushered in a new scientific outlook that came with the Age of Enlightenment.

Thus in the eighteenth century there was a surge of scientific ideas spreading through every class of society and changing the whole climate of European culture. While the traditional forms of education remained unchanged and continued to be used in the universities and colleges of England and France, outside them everything was criticized and transformed. A new learning was propounded based on mathematics which replaced the scholastic logic and the classics as the fundamental subject. This eventually led to the destruction of the «threefold order of Christendom-Church and State and Study.» Dawson expresses the anthropological conception of the Western men of this age—their «sad situation»—in these terms:

Man was born to understand and enjoy Nature, but he was unable to do so as long as his natural instincts were thwarted and his intelligence was twisted and perverted by the unnatural system of education inflicted on him during the most susceptible years of his life therefore the first and most essential step in the liberation of humanity is to free the immature mind from the tyranny of priests and pedants.

To achieve this end, there arose a great public cooperative work, called the famous Encyclopaedia, which provided the educated world with a summa of the new learning, highlighting the role of science and industry as the two wings of the army of progress which were to be coordinated and united by a reformed system of rational education. In its wake, the Society of Jesus, the
greatest of the teaching orders and the chief organ of Catholic culture for two centuries, fell a victim to the propaganda of the rationalists, leading the way to a complete reorganization of the whole system of national education in France.

The situation, at least in France, lent itself to a transformation of the educational concept which Napoleon Bonaparte embodied. Education became fundamentally a sociological and political matter. Education became a prisoner of the forces of nationalism.

Dawson confronts modern educational issues. The development of the Western educational tradition has led to the weakening of the influence of the Christian concept of man, and therefore to its wild and divisive, albeit sometimes creative and intelligent, ways. Dawson spells out the problem in these terms:

One of the chief defects of modern education has been its failure to find an adequate method for the study of our own civilization... In the 19th century, this aristocratic and humanist ideal was gradually replaced by the democratic utilitarianism of compulsory state education, on the one hand, and by the ideal of scientific specialization, on the other. The result has been an intellectual anarchy imperfectly controlled by the crude methods of the examination system and of payment by results.

Dawson alludes to some specific details of this issue as he defines the challenges of a Catholic college today as, first, how to maintain the tradition of liberal education against the growing pressure of scientific specialization and utilitarian vocationalism; secondly, how to retain the unity of Western culture against the dissolvent forces of nationalism and racialism; and thirdly, how to preserve the tradition of Christian culture in the age of secularism.

To these issues Dawson proposes the systematic study of Christian culture. He sees in it the way to understand Western civilization from within outwards, that is, the study of the sources of the moral values of Western culture as well as the sources of the intellectual traditions that have determined the course of Western education. The reasons with which he supports this afir-
mation bear the marks of his fine respect for the tenets of the Christian concept of man and of how these formed, so to speak, the Western mind. «The activity of the Western mind, which manifested itself alike in scientific and technical invention as well as in geographical discovery, was not the natural inheritance of a particular biological type; it was the result of a long process of education which gradually changed the orientation of human thought and enlarged the possibilities of social action. In this process the vital factor was not the aggressive power of conquerors and capitalists, but the widening of the capacity of human intelligence and the development of new types of creative genius and ability» 60.

It is for these reasons also that Dawson reacts rather forcefully to those who regard his proposal as sectarian, bigoted, with clear tendencies toward narrowing and cramping effects on the mind of the students 61. The study of Christian culture «is eminently a liberal and liberalizing study, since it shows us how to relate our own contemporary social experience to the wider perspectives of universal history... the educated person cannot play his full part in modern life unless he has a clear sense of the nature and achievements of Christian culture: how Western civilization became Christian and how far it is Christian today and in what ways it has ceased to be Christian; in short, a knowledge of our Christian roots and of the abiding Christian elements in Western culture» 62.

Dawson precisely regards Christian culture as bearing the soul of Western culture, since it has defined the needs and purpose of Western man, with due consideration to his changeable and temporal conditions and circumstances. Thus the study of Christian culture as it affects Western culture involves at least three fields of study that Dawson spells out to be 63:

(1) the Christian way of life, which is the field of study that one shares with the theologian;

(2) the pre-existing or co-existing forms of human culture, which is the field which he shares with the anthropologist and the historian; and

(3) the interaction of the two which produces the concrete historical reality of Christendom or Christian culture, which is one's own specific field of study.
The whole issue clearly reflects Dawson's mind on how Christian culture affecting Western culture makes the latter a living organism, with a principle of unity, life and purpose that derives from the Christian concept of man. Reinforcing this view, he says: "Institutions that are common to the whole of Christendom... can only be understood as parts of a common international heritage of Christian culture. In the same way the spiritual archetypes which formed the character and inspired the life of Western man are of Christian origin, and however imperfectly they were realized in practice, it is impossible to understand his pattern of behavior unless we take account of them." 

Another reason Dawson puts forward to underline the importance of the Christian culture is his view with respect to the relation of Christian faith and culture. To him, while the two are not the same thing, it is, however, only through the medium of culture that the faith can penetrate civilization and transform the thought and ideology of modern society. A Christian culture, he says, is a culture which is orientated to supernatural ends and spiritual reality, just as a secularized culture is one which is orientated to material reality and to the satisfaction of man's material needs. Utilizing the Augustinian philosophy of history, he says that if the dynamic principle in a human society is the common will or the psychological drive, therefore the only dynamic principle in a society which is godless and self-centered is the will to self-satisfaction. What the study of Christian culture offers is to rectify this attitude as it shows a new dynamic principle enter the life of humanity and reorganize it round a new spiritual center and towards a new supernatural end, a principle both social as well as individual. Christian culture is not only a matter of the addition of a a new religious element in society; it is a process of recreation which transforms the whole character of the social and individual organism. It breaks down the closed, self-centered world of secularist culture and gives human society a new spiritual purpose which transcends the conflicting interests of individual and class and race. Thus it provides the psychological motive for the creation of a genuinely universal culture from which no class or race is excluded.

Thus he says that there are at least two ways in which Christian culture can be studied-externally, as an objective historical study
of Christendom as one of the four great world civilizations on which the modern world is founded, and from within, as the study of the history of the Christian people, a study of the ways in which Christianity has expressed itself in human thought and life and institutions through the ages. The study of Christian culture therefore involves the cooperative recourse to Christian philosophy, Christian literature and Christian history.

In the process, Dawson proposes how Christian education ought be reformed, so as to restore the internal unity of Christian culture. The first requirement is the restoration of a consciousness of the community of Christian culture as the basis of European history and the background of the different particular national and local traditions. Then there is the need to recover the traditional Christian conception of history. This involves, firstly, the doctrine of the transformation and recreation of humanity in the Incarnation; secondly, the traditional Christian theory of the successive world ages as progressive stages of revelation; thirdly, the ideal of the expansion of the Kingdom of God by the incorporation of the nations in the Kingdom and the enrichment of the Christian tradition by the various contributions of different national cultures and traditions; fourthly, in relation to this, the idea of a providential preparation through which all the positive elements in the pre-Christian and non-Christian world find their fulfillment in the Kingdom of God.

It may be objected that the study of Christian culture is unsuited to present-day needs because it will distract the minds of the students from the study of contemporary culture and tend to immerse them in the contemplation of the past, or worse still, in the idealization of limited sections of the past. Dawson reassures that the essence of the study of Christian culture is that it concerns itself with a dynamic process which does not belong to any single period, but is co-extensive with the history of Christianity and inseparable from it.

Dawson spells out this process as involving three successive phases: (1) the confrontation of Christianity—the Church and the Gospel—with a non-Christian secular or pagan environment; (2) the process of permeation of one by the other; (3) the eventual creation of new forms of culture and thought—art, literature, institutions, and so forth—from the process of interaction.
Dawson concludes this proposal by alluding to the Gospel parable of the sower and the seed, «for the development of Christian culture and Christianity’s progress in the individual soul are many ways parallel. The history of Christianity is essentially that of the extension of the Incarnation; and the study of culture shows the same process at work in history that may be seen in detail in the lives of men».

THE WESTERN POLITICAL TRADITION

Western culture has a distinctive political tradition. This Dawson clearly affirms in the book, *Modern Dilemma* (first published in 1933), where he identifies some fundamental traditions that went into the making of Western culture. He describes this political tradition as an inheritance from the Graeco-Roman classical conception of law, citizenship and political freedom, an inheritance which is making its influence felt in every part of the world.

But before describing this Western political tradition it is good to remember Dawson’s basic principle of religiosity as the determining factor that would give shape and impetus to the development of a political tradition. The religious element in the political tradition of a given culture arises from the fact that religion is not only present in any society, no matter how badly lived, but it also is a unifying element of a society, it is what gives society its consistency and character. It inescapably engenders some political forms by which a society is shaped, a culture horn and developed.

Dawson stresses this point when he affirms that in the past, every society always found its unifying principle in its religious beliefs, religion being the vital center of the whole social organism. «The whole history of culture shows that man has a natural tendency to seek a religious foundation for his social way of life and that when culture loses its spiritual basis it becomes unstable... Even thinkers who have lost their religious faith, like Comte and Renan and Matthew Arnold, have continued to recognize the sociological necessity of such a relation», he says.
This point Dawson supported by saying that the whole life of primitive society had a religious orientation. This state of affairs is because the material and spiritual aspects of primitive culture are intrinsically intermingled with one another such that the religious factor intervenes at every moment of its existence. Even the simplest material need of primitive man can only be satisfied by the favor of the cooperation of supernatural forces. He turns to religion not only to obtain spiritual goods such as knowledge or bravery, but also for success in the hunt, for health and fertility, for rain and for the fruits of the earth. The vital moments in the life of an individual—birth, puberty and death—are pre-eminently religious, always thinking that it is only by the help of religious rites that he can safely pass through the test. Even in normal times, primitive man feels the need of bringing his ordinary existence into contact with that other world of mysterious and sacred powers which are considered to be the ultimate and fundamental law of life. Thus, the most important figure in primitive society is the man who is supposed to be in contact with the other world and to possess supernatural powers.

Dawson disputes the claims that brute force was the law of primitive society. «All over the world, and especially among the most backward and primitive peoples, the men who are held to have undergone some supernatural experience are regarded as consecrated and set apart from their fellows»[^69], he says.

And if a given society did not already possess a common religious basis, it attempted to create one artificially, and Dawson cites as an example the imposed official Caesar worship to gird the unity of the Roman Empire. He further reinforces this point by saying that any given society which can no longer appeal to the old religious and moral principles of Christianity, for example, will be forced to create a new official faith and new moral principles which will be binding on its citizens. He cites the example of Communist Russia as an obvious illustration[^70].

**Origins of the Western Political Tradition**

As has been said, Dawson maintains that the Western political tradition has its roots from the Graeco-Roman classical conception of law, citizenship and political freedom. This political
tradition underwent metamorphosis through the ages and its modern dominant manifestation is expressed in what is now known as democracy which, to Dawson, is the culmination of the old European tradition. How this organic development of this political tradition from the Graeco-Roman world up to the modern times was shaped by Christian anthropological considerations is the object of this section of this study. The main thesis developed by Dawson in this regard is that this Western political tradition is closely bound up with the whole tradition of Christian culture—the tradition of social freedom and citizenship, on the one hand, and that of spiritual freedom and the infinite value of the individual human person, on the other.

That is why, in his book *Judgment of the Nations* (first published in 1943), Dawson opens it with stirring words describing the mortal threat Western political tradition is facing in the form of the spreading authoritarian and totalitarian ideologies and regimes. The latter he describes in no vague terms as «a spiritual catastrophe which strikes directly at the moral foundations of our society, and destroys not the outward form of civilization but the soul of man which is the beginning and end of all human cultures».

It is clear that Dawson traces this Western political tradition through the prism of the essential Christian element that leavened it, namely, the dynamism of Christian spiritual freedom in generating the socio-political forms and way of life in Western culture. It is worthwhile to reproduce here Dawson’s deep sentiments regarding this issue of the Christian moorings of the Western political tradition, to wit:

It is necessary, in the first place, to understand what we mean by democracy, and secondly, to distinguish between what is living and what is dead in the democratic tradition that we have inherited from the nineteenth century. By democracy we mean not merely self-government or popular government, but rather that particular form of self-government which was based on the ideal of personal liberty and which was embodied in the representative or parliamentary institutions. This particular form of democracy is peculiar to modern Western civilization and is especially associated with the three great political nations of the West, England, France and the United States, from whom it
spread in the course of the nineteenth century over almost the whole of the civilized world... Its roots lie deep in the soil of Western Christendom so that it is impossible to understand it a right apart from its religious and cultural background. Thus the Western ideal of liberty which is the inspiration of the whole democratic tradition is not a mere consequence of the new political institutions... Above all it derived its strength from the Christian belief in the absolute and unique value of the human soul which infinitely transcends all the wealth and the power and the glory of the world.

The Hellenic beginning

In the Hellenic world the inspiration of the political life was the search for freedom. The Hellenic world, the cradle of Western culture, was forged between the barbarism of what may be termed at present as continental Europe and the civilized despotisms of Asia. It was a new world of tiny city states which gave rise to a new way of living and new conceptions of law and citizenship. The sense of freedom that developed from this situation, therefore, was no lawless individualism like that of the barbarians, but was rather a fruit of an intensive effort of social discipline and organization. Thus, it was a sense of freedom that found support in the need for law and citizenship. When this sense of freedom was put to the test in the great war in which the free cities withstood the mass attack of Asiatic despotism and emerged triumphant, the Hellenic world proved for the first time and for all time what the human spirit was capable of when it was set free from the slavery to the rule of force. It solidified Europe’s emerging political sense.

For in the Asiatic societies against which the Hellenic world fought, the idea of public law and civic rights was almost absent. There was no idea of citizenship but rather despotism reigned supreme. The individual was held as nothing while the state was everything. The free man had no plate in them. These Asiatic societies were an impersonal power.

This is a basic point worth stressing, because as later changes in Western political tradition were added, this concept appears to be superseded by the value of equality. Dawson strongly
maintains that it is freedom more than equality that has been the inspiration of the Western political tradition. «The history of Western man has been a long quest for freedom» 76, he says.

His position on this matter is that the idea of equality is not necessarily or exclusively democratic. «Pure democracy leads to equality, but so does pure despotism. And as a matter of fact, it is easier to attain the negative ideal of a dead level of equality in equal servitude than to achieve the positive ideal of equality in freedom and fulness of life» 77, he says. The true democrat does not wish to attain equality by lowering the cultural standard of society by reducing everyone to a drab uniformity of existence. All that the democrat demands in the name of equality is that no man shall be debarred by economic or social privileges from developing his own genius or from enjoying the fruits of the genius of others.

A corollary to this is his affirmation that in any society, democratic or otherwise, an elite is always necessary, and the kind of society generates its own kind of elite. Thus in a despotic society, like the Communist countries, the elite are the picked servants of the state. In contrast to this, in a civic type of society, whether democracy or aristocracy, the elites are not bound to the service of the state, but are rather free men with their right to live their own life and develop their own personalities. The only difference between the aristocratic and democratic elites is that in the former it forms a hereditary class which tends-though not necessarily so-to monopolize political power and social privilege, while in the latter they are the leaders of their fellow citizens, who set the standard of culture for the rest of the community and use their opportunities for the enrichment of the common social life 78.

In all what is interesting to note is that an elite is a constant feature of any society and state, that it leads the way for the rest of the citizens, and that it somehow carries the general character of any given society.

*Its Christian beginning and content*

The human need for freedom, however, did not find complete fulfillment in the Graeco-Roman culture. The city state
declined, political freedom was lost. Dawson maintains that the Graeco-Roman world, the seedling of Western Culture, saved its soul by its conversion to Christianity. A new sense of freedom seeped into the mind of Western man, one that gave him faith in the existence of a spiritual city.

The loss of political freedom in the ancient world was in fact counterbalance by the revelation of a new spiritual freedom, so that when the earthly city was enslaved men acquired faith in the existence of a spiritual city «which is free and the mother of us all» 79. This is how Dawson describes the powerful appear that Christian freedom exercised on its first recipients, to wit 80:

By a spiritual law of compensation the external pressure of persecution and proscription strengthened the sense of interior liberation and spiritual freedom which was so characteristic of primitive Christianity. For freedom is not something exterior to religion-in a profound sense Christianity is freedom, and the words which have become canonized and set apart as the classical terms of Christian theology-redemption, salvation-possessed for their original hearers the simple and immediate sense of the delivery of a slave and the release of a captive.

This position Dawson makes to counteract the claim of what he calls the school of Liberal historians who said that the light of classical civilization was extinguished in the night of the Dark Ages and was reborn miraculously at the Renaissance which was considered to be the starting point of the new period of progress and enlightenment 81. Dawson maintains that this classical sense of freedom gained more strength and vigor with the coming of Christianity and became an impulse of new life through the Dark Ages. The Christian sense of freedom revivified the dying civilization of the Roman Empire, which had lost the ideals of citizenship and political freedom and was rapidly becoming a vast servile state like those of the ancient East. Its effects can be gleaned from the fact that it gave the emerging Latin Christendom the power to incorporate the northern barbarians in the new synthesis of Western medieval civilization. It was this Christian sense of freedom that imbued Western culture during the medieval age with the sense that men possess rights even against the state and
that society is not a totalitarian political unity but a community made up of a complex variety of social organisms, each possessing an autonomous life and its own free institutions.\textsuperscript{82}

Dawson further claims that this Christian sense of freedom tended to assert itself within the social and political order by the modification of social types and institutions in a Christian manner. Thus just as Christian monarchy became a very different thing from the barbarian kingships from which it was historically descended, so Christian freedom combined and transformed the elements of barbaric freedom and classical citizenship into something new.\textsuperscript{83} In effect, Christian freedom inspired a social order although the latter may often had been extremely hierarchic and authoritarian. The principle of change had been a spiritual one and the development of Western civilization from the point of view of socio-political life had been intimately related to the ethos of Christian freedom, which had gradually made Western man conscious of his moral responsibility and his duty to change the world. It made Western man a dynamic social force, as it affected spheres of thought and action far removed from the direct influence of religion.\textsuperscript{84}

This social dimension of this Christian sense of freedom arises from the Christian idea of salvation. This idea is rooted in the Old Testament, in the conception of the People of God, and in the prophetic teaching of the spiritual restoration of Israel, and the progressive manifestation of divine purpose in history. This idea also appears in the Gospel as the good news of the coming of the Kingdom—a Kingdom not national nor political in the sense that the Jewish people conceived it, but universal and transcendent, a new spiritual order destined to transform the world and humanity. The Apostolic writings developed the anthropological implications of this belief, declaring the mystery of salvation, the mystery of the Incarnation, the birth of a new humanity through which man is incorporated into the organic unity of the Divine Body. This Christian doctrine of man’s nature and destiny clearly determines a Christian conception of history and social order. Nothing human is not affected by this doctrine.\textsuperscript{85} For it taught Western man that life is inevitably social, since it is a communion with men as well as with God.\textsuperscript{86}

Thus, Dawson maintains that the classical sense of freedom did not get lost during the Dark Ages only to be resurrected dur-
ing the Renaissance, as some Liberal historians, mentioned above, claim. Western democracy, the fruit of the Christian sense of freedom in political life, is not a creation of a secular culture, but is rather the result of centuries of this Christian sense of freedom which had ploughed the virgin soil of the West 87.

This Christian sense of freedom that inspired the Western political tradition is basically spiritual, though this truth has been historically perceived in different ways and degrees. It is based on the Christian belief in the absolute and unique value of the human soul which infinitely transcends all the wealth and the power and the glory of the world. «The deepest spiritual root of Western democracy is to be found neither in the blood brotherhood of warrior tribesmen nor in the civic privileges of the city state, but in the spiritual reversal of values which caused men to honor poverty and suffering and to see in the poor man the image of Christ himself» 88.

This Christian sense of freedom laid the foundation of a sense of spiritual community in the mind of the early Western Christian. Even before the common man acquired political rights, he possessed a real kind of spiritual citizenship as a member of the universal Christian Church. This was the fundamental citizenship in comparison with which a man’s membership of the state was a secondary and relative matter. And consequently, the state was not the absolute master of the destinies of the individual. It could not treat him merely as an instrument for the attainment of its ends. For every man, even the poorest and the weakest, only belonged in part to the state. His personality was free and possessed an absolute spiritual value which was incomparably higher than anything in the economic or the political order. The state existed for man and not man for the state 89.

Dawson also describes how this Christian sense of freedom took root in the mind of the early Western Christians. According to him, Christian freedom has its beginning and end in the creative act of redemption and reconciliation, which is not the creation of human power and will but rather the birthright of the Christian as child of God, reborn in Christ and vivified by the Spirit. This creative act of redemption is the turning-point in the history of humanity and inaugurates a vital process of liberation, destined to integrate man in a new spiritual solidarity. It was
from this total psychological point of view that the Christians of the first century conceived the idea of freedom. While the Roman Empire remained, its power and cohesion apparently undiminished, a new vital process began to work as men adhered to this new Christian principle of life to be freed from the immense and complicated burden of hereditary evil and sought a certain kind of rebirth. This new principle was something entirely independent of external circumstances, which the world powers could not limit or destroy. And it was also a power which created a new bond of community and overcame the physical and social barriers that stood in the way. Even fundamental differences of race and class and personal status were transcended and appeared insignificant.

It was a freedom entirely different from the civic freedom of the Greek city-state. It delivered men from real evils and servitudes and transformed men and society. It was essentially theocentric, God —given and in no way dependent on human rights or human powers. Yet it did not mean a withdrawal from social and physical reality like the Neoplatonic mysticism which was also conceived as a way of deliverance. It was essentially a world— transforming power, and it manifested this power from the beginning in the creation of a new community and new forms of social action.

The basic dual character of the Christian concept of freedom

The Christian sense of freedom led the early Western man to realize the importance of the Church. Dawson said that human nature needs a holy community. He explains this point in these terms: the vital and creative power behind every culture is a spiritual one. This does not necessarily mean that the material and spiritual aspects of life must become fused in a single political order which would have all the power and the rigidity of a theocentric state. It finds its appropriate organ not in a state, but in a Church, a society which is the embodiment of a purely spiritual tradition and which rests, not on a material power, but on the free adhesion of the individual mind. This was what happened when Christianity entered the fading Roman Empire.
The creation of a new community that resulted from the fermentation of this Christian sense of freedom in the mind and heart of early Western man—the emerging Church—brought to the surface the face that every Christian possessed a double tradition and a double citizenship. In spite of its mystical and transcendent aspects arising from the spiritual character of Christian freedom, the Church which taught and embodied Christian freedom was conceived as the continuation and fulfillment of the Jewish community, such that the Western man who started to uphold this Christian sense of freedom was aware of values that belong to the common inheritance of Israel and Christendom. The tradition of Israel with its consciousness of social continuity and separateness was combined with a sense of liberation from tradition which finds clear and revolutionary expression in St. Paul’s doctrine regarding the Law. To St. Paul, the Law was not merely the yoke that enslaves, it was also the barrier that divided the Jews from the rest of humanity.

The Jews, though under the Law, had their privileged position as the people of God. The Gentiles were free from the Law, but they were left without God and without spiritual hope. The redemption broke down this barrier and united the two peoples in the unity of spiritual freedom. Thus the Gentiles were no longer foreigners and exiles, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God.

The early Christians, Jews and Gentiles alike, therefore realized that they lived in two societies and therefore had a twofold citizenship. They were aware of two opposing orders: the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of the world; and also of essential duality of the historical process: the co-existence of two opposing principles, each of which works and finds concrete social expression in history. The Roman Empire was the society of the past, and the Church was the society of the future, and, though they met and mingled physically, there was no spiritual contact between them. The Christian’s loyalty to the state was purely external.

Another consistent corollary that Dawson draws from this analysis of how certain aspects of Christian anthropology inspired Western political tradition is that the Christian sense of freedom led to a view of citizenship and social life as essentially aristocratic.
and democratic. «One saint can do more than a thousand average men, however active and well organized they may be. In this respect Christianity is essentially aristocratic, since the quality of the individual is the only thing that matters. And yet, it is the most democratic of religions, for an uneducated beggar who is a saint counts for more than a thousand scholars or organizers».

In another place, he makes a similar observation, to wit, «Paradoxical as it may appear, the democratic ideal has its origin in the aristocratic principle. In fact, Western democracy is essentially aristocracy for all». These characteristics of the Western political tradition clearly flows from this Christian anthropological considerations of human freedom, viewed in its basic dual character. Thus he says:

Liberty is not the right of the mass to power, but the right of the individual and the group to achieve the highest possible degree of self-development. Hence liberty has always been an aristocratic ideal.

He proceeds to give an idea of the dynamic ingredients of such aristocratic freedom when he says that the principles of personal honor and individual responsibility, the life blood of freedom in the ancient world and in medieval and modern Europe, must be lived if democracy is to be a community of free men and not an inhuman anonymous servile state.

This is what Christianity contributed to the early Western man’s search for freedom and to his emerging sociopolitical tradition. How this tradition developed through the centuries up to the present is the subject of the next section.

A. Historical Summary of Western Man’s Sense of Christian Freedom and Political Tradition

As has been said, while the first epoch in the history of Western man’s search for freedom is marked by the rise of the free Greek cities and their struggle with Persia, the second is marked by the rise of the Christian Church and its struggle with the Roman Empire which had lost the ideals of citizenship and political freedom and was rapidly becoming a vast servile state. The heroes of this epoch were the martyrs who bore witness with their blood to truth and spiritual freedom.
In the succeeding period, the early Western man under the auspices of the Christian Church gained enough power to incorporate the northern barbarians, precisely attracted to the principle of freedom. It was during this period that Western man realized he had rights even against the state and that society is not a totalitarian political unit but a community made up of a complex variety of social organisms, each possessing an autonomous life and its own free institutions.  

*St. Augustine as Christian formulator of Western political tradition*

St. Augustine represents one of the early formulators of Western political tradition by bringing the teaching of Christian anthropology to bear on the situation he and his age found themselves. While Roman law possessed manifold blessings that brought about no small measure of peace and order in the Roman Empire, St. Augustine was convinced that such positive attributes of Roman law were only secured by an infinity of acts of injustice to individuals, such as torture of innocent witnesses and the condemnation of the guiltless. This consideration led him to reject the dominant political idealism of the philosophers and to dispute Cicero’s thesis that the state rests essentially on justice. If this were the case, he argued, Rome itself would be no state; and only the City of God would be the true state. He, however, avoided making this extreme conclusion, and so was forced to eliminate all moral elements in his definition of the state.

To him, a state or a human society finds its constituent principle in a common will—a will to life, a will to enjoyment, above all, a will to peace. By people, he meant a multitude of rational creatures associated in a common agreement as to the things which it loves. What it loves, so is the people; if the society is associated in a love of that which is good, it will be a good society; if the object of love is evil, it will be a bad society.

Thus the moral law of individual and social life is the same for St. Augustine. His sociology is based on the same psychological principle which pervaded his whole thought: the principle of the all-importance of the will and the sovereignty of love. The power of love is what governs man and society. As a
man's love moves him, so must he and society go. And though the desires of men appear to be infinite, they are in reality reducible to one: all men desire happiness, all seek after peace. The only essential difference consists in the nature of the peace and happiness desired. And because of his spiritual autonomy, man has the power to choose his own good: either to find his peace and happiness in subordinating his will to the divine order, or to refer all things to the satisfaction of his own desires and to make himself the center of his universe.

This is the root of the dualism in St. Augustine's anthropological and sociological system: the opposition between the «natural man» who lives for himself and desires only a material happiness and a temporal peace, and the spiritual man who lives for God and seeks a spiritual happiness and peace that is eternal. These two tendencies of will produce the two kinds of men and the two types of society. «Two loves built two cities the earthly, which is built up by the love of self to the contempt of God, and the heavenly, which is built up by the love of God to the contempt of self».

Yet St. Augustine does not suggest that the state belonged to a non-moral sphere and that men in their social relations might follow a different law to that which governed their moral life as individuals. On the contrary, St. Augustine frequently insists that it is Christianity which makes good citizens, and that the one remedy for the ills of society is to be found in the same power which heals the moral weakness of the individual soul.

St. Augustine never separates the moral from the social life. The dynamic force of both the individual and the society is found in the will, and the object of the will determines the moral character of their life. Thus, while the corruption of the will by original sin becomes a social evil by a hereditary transmission through the flesh which unites fallen humanity in the common slavery of concupiscence, the restoration of the will by grace is a social good which is transmitted sacramentally by the action of the Holy Spirit and gathers regenerate humanity in a free spiritual society under the law of charity.

This grace of Christ is only found in the «society of Christ.» Thus the Church is seen as the new humanity in process of formation, and its earthly stage is that part of the building of
the City of God that has its completion in eternity. Therefore, in spite of the deficiencies and imperfections of the Church on earth, in St. Augustine's mind, it is the most perfect society in this world, and is the only true society, since it is the only society which has its source in a spiritual will—it can only seek spiritual goods and a peace that is eternal.

Thus in the Augustinian conception the state occupies a very subordinate position. He views the state at its worst as a hostile power, the incarnation of injustice and self-will and at its best, as a perfectly legitimate and necessary society, but one which is limited to temporary and partial ends. What is more, it is bound to subordinate itself to the greater and more universal spiritual society in which even its own members find their real citizenship. In short, it fulfills a useful function and has a right to the loyalty of its members, but it can never claim to be the equal of the Church, the larger society, or to act as a substitute for it.

This is how early Western man came to view his socio-political life, one that was tremendously imbued by the tenets of Christian anthropology as expressed by St. Augustine. With it, the idea was broken that the state was a superhuman power against which the individual personality had no rights and the individual will no power, as happened under the Roman Empire and in the Oriental monarchies like in Persia. St. Augustine removed the aura of divinity of the state, and sought the principle of social order in the human will. St. Augustine's doctrine reposes the ideal of a social order upon the freedom of men and a common effort towards moral ends. Still, and in all, St. Augustine did not weaken the moral authority of the state or deprived ordinary social life of spiritual significance. Thus was formulated at the early stage of Western man's life the Western ideals of freedom and progress and social justice, since St. Augustine's teaching stressed the importance of moral freedom and responsibility.

Church-and-state relationship in the Medieval Ages and its anthropological implications on Western political tradition

In the early Middle Ages, the Church was not only a far more universal and far-reaching society than the medieval state, it
also possessed many of the functions that were essentially political. This was due to the fact that the state had neither the physical power nor the moral prestige to carry out its universal claims. It was beset with the problems of bare existence. Besides, it had to situate itself properly between two forces: the Church which possessed a monopoly of the higher culture, and the lesser territorial units which possessed so large a measure of local autonomy as to leave few political prerogatives in the hands of the state (albeit largely nominal) sovereigns.

Thus the distinction between Church and state was more formal than real. And this distinction was backed up by distinct cultural traditions and historical backgrounds. The Church preserved the tradition of Latin culture and of Roman order, while the medieval state was the heir of the barbarian conquerors and represented the social traditions and institutions of the German peoples. Thus medieval society had a twofold aspect. On the one hand, there was the ideal unity of Christendom which united all the baptized as a single people and family against pagan barbarians of the North and the civilized Moslem world to the South. On the other hand, there was the centrifugal tendency of national and local particularism which divided Western Europe into a confused mass of warring principalities. In all this, what appears clear regarding the medieval world was not the distinction between Church and state as two perfect and independent societies, but rather between two different authorities and hierarchies which respectively administered the spiritual and temporal affairs of the same society, since the unity was obtained by virtue of the Church, while its temporal organ was the state and the king was the divinely appointed guardian and defender.

Thus the distinction between Church and state increasingly got blurred, much like the problem of how to distinguish between the material and the spiritual dimensions of the same person. This problem expressed itself in the medieval phenomenon of a king who was not merely the representative officer in the Christian society, but also possessed a sacred and quasi-sacerdotal character. This religious conception of the state and of the king found its most complete expression in the Carolingian Empire, which had a vast influence on the subsequent development of medieval culture. It reproduced the likes of Caesaropapism of the
Byzantine Church, as the Emperor was regarded as the culminating point at which the ecclesiastical and civil hierarchies converged. All this at once tended towards the secularization of the Church and the clericalization of the state\textsuperscript{104}.

As efforts to resolve the problem, Dawson mentions a few figures and movements which had as purpose the liberation of the spiritual power from lay control and exploitation by a return to the traditional principles of canonical order\textsuperscript{105}. These efforts represent an important stage of the forging of Western political tradition, as the tangle between the spiritual and the material aspects of medieval society, parallel to those of an individual, started to be clarified. These efforts upheld the absolute transcendence and superiority of the spiritual power and demanded that the temporal power should be subordinated to the spiritual. In clearly anthropological terms, Dawson compares such efforts of subordinating the temporal to the spiritual with «the same way that the body is subordinated to the soul»\textsuperscript{106}.

These efforts were undertaken to a large measure of success thanks to the recourse to Roman law by both the ecclesiastical and civil men. The Papacy took the initiative when it applied the revived science of law to the task of government. The development of canon law on scientific principles by Gratian and his successors gave the whole system of ecclesiastical government a rational legal basis such as the medieval state did not as yet possess. While the latter was still groping after the basics of an administrative order, the Church already was constituted as an organized international society, complete with a centralized government, a written code of laws and an elaborate system of appellate jurisdiction and representative and legislative assemblies.

The result of this development was to make the Papacy an effective power in the public life of Europe and to give it an international prestige which far outweighed that of the empire or any of the feudal kingdoms. As can be clearly seen, the Church’s efforts to recover its spiritual and transcendent authority could not be attained without at the same time claiming a large measure of control and responsibility in regard to temporal power.

Thus while the Holy Roman Empire gradually lost its old position as the representative of the unity of Christendom and became an unwieldy and disorganized mass of feudal territories,
the Papacy became the head of Christendom in every sense of the word and exercised an effective superpolitical authority over the peoples of Western Europe.\footnote{107}

Dawson describes, in anthropological terms, the role of the Papacy at this time. Citing the pontificate of Innocent III, Dawson claims that the two aspects of the papal authority are not distinguished as different in kind or principle. Both of them are derived from the claim of the Pope to be Vicar of God on earth, and thus, in the world, «set in the midst between God and man, below God and above man.» To Dawson, this claim is already implicit in St. Bernard’s famous image of the two swords both of which belong by right to Peter though the use of the material sword is delegated to the state and exercised by it under the Church’s discretion. In words that reflect the Pope’s position between God and man, St. Bernard is quoted to have said: «Understand what I say. When power and wickedness go hand in hand we must claim something for you more than human Let your countenance be on them that do evil. Let him who fears not man nor dreads the sword, fear the bream of your anger. Let him think that he who incurs your wrath, incurs the wrath not of a Man but of God.»\footnote{108} Clearly, the Pope occupied a superhuman position, a fact which continues to defy human explanation short of the aid of faith, and from which events and further theological study have combined to reveal its content in terms more accessible to the human mind.

Thus when the need to defend the cause of the Papacy brought about continuous conflict, the rise of the new Christian philosophy of St. Thomas at last provided a solid intellectual foundation for the ideal of an autonomous state which does not transcend its proper sphere by theocratic claims.\footnote{109} St. Thomas clearly and exhaustively defined the idea of an autonomous natural order and a natural law. In anthropological terms, he said that «the divine right, which is of grace, does not destroy the human right which is of human reason. » (Summa Theologiae, II-II,10,10). This teaching left little room for confusion in comparison to the prevailing thought, identified as coming from Huguccio, the teacher of Innocent III, who taught that «both the power of the Pope and that of the Emperor is from God and neither is dependent on the other.» The latter doctrine did not prevent infinite
misunderstanding with regard to the proper functions and limits of the two powers. Since the law of nature is also the law of God, men tended to merge the sphere of natural right with that of Christian revelation, and thus to make the Church equally responsible for both.\textsuperscript{110}

St. Thomas' doctrine, therefore, represents an improvement in the understanding of the relationship between Church and state, though it was centuries before this principle was worked out in detail and made the basis of the classical Catholic doctrine of the two \textit{societates perfectae}. Still it was enough to give rise to some practical political corollaries, like the affirmation that «in matters of civil good, it is better to obey the secular power than the spiritual, unless perchance the secular power is conjoined with the spiritual as in the Pope who holds the summit of both the spiritual and secular power alike, by the ordering of Him who is both Priest and King.\textsuperscript{111}

Dawson then mentions the figure of Dante (1265-1321) whom he considers to be the bridge between the medieval and the Renaissance ways of expressing the Western political tradition. Dawson says that though Dante was profoundly Christian and Catholic it is no longer to the Church that he looks for his ideal of unity. It is humanity, and he considers the Roman Empire as humanity's divinely predestined servant and instrument. In this regard, Dawson cites the divergence of views that Dante has with St. Thomas.\textsuperscript{112}

Dawson claims that in Dante, Christian thought for the first time regards the earthly and temporal city as an autonomous order with its own supreme end, not subordinated to the Church; it is held as the realization of all the natural potentialities of human culture. The goal of civilization, Dante claims, can only be reached by a universal society which requires the political unification of humanity in a single world state.

Dawson affirms that while Dante's ideal of the universal state is derived from the medieval conception of Christendom and universal society and from the tradition of the Holy Roman Empire, Dante's sources are not exclusively Christian. He was influenced most powerfully by the political and ethical ideals of Greek humanism, represented above all by Aristotle's \textit{Ethics} and by the romantic idealization of the classical past and his devotion
to ancient Rome. He differed with St. Augustine in his view of the Roman Empire, regarding it not as the work of human pride and ambition but as a holy city especially created and ordained by God as the instrument of his divine purpose of the human race. He even went so far as to maintain that the citizens and statesmen of Rome were themselves holy, since they could not have achieved their purpose without a special infusion of divine grace.

In effect, Dante purged the image of the Roman Empire in the pervading mentality of its holding a ministerial office towards the spiritual power, the Church. The state, in Dante’s conception evolves from the Roman Empire and has not only an independent foundation in natural right but also has a providential mission towards the human race, analogous to the mission of the Church in the order of grace. Dante represents an interpretation which looks beyond the sacred Judaeo-Christian tradition and admits the independent value and significance of the secular tradition of culture. There are then two independent but parallel dispensations—the dispensation of grace, which is represented by the Church, and the natural dispensation by which humanity attains its rational end by the agency of the Roman Empire, which was ordained by nature and elected by God for universal empire.

This exaltation of the state as such, though as yet not having direct influence on the main current of medieval thought, is significant from the historical point of view, since it marks the transition from the medieval mind to the Renaissance ethos in socio-political terms. For this idealization of classical antiquity, developed still further with Petrarch and his contemporaries, influenced Renaissance men’s attitude to the contemporary state. The Italian city state and the kingdoms of Western Europe were no longer held as organic members of the Christian community, but as autonomous worlds which recognized no higher sanction than the will to power.

From the fifteenth century onwards the history of Europe has been increasingly the history of the development of a limited number of sovereign states as independent power centers and of the ceaseless rivalry and the conflict between them. Dawson claims that the ugly and rough edges of this development were somehow smoothed by the religious prestige which still surroun-
ded the person of the ruler. Thus the image of the state at this period took on a dual character: while the state was the creation and embodiment of the will to power, «a sub-moral monster which lived by the law of the jungle», it still was the bearer of the cultural values which had been created by the Christian past, in such a manner that to its subjects it still seemed a Christian state.

Western political vision from the Renaissance to modern times

The Renaissance ethos unleashed the centrifugal tendencies in the Western world and destroyed Western culture's spiritual unity. The Western mind turned away from the contemplation of the absolute and the eternal to the knowledge of the particular and the contingent. It made man the measure of all things and sought to emancipate human life from its dependence on the supernatural. Instead of the whole intellectual and social order being subordinated to spiritual principles, every activity declared its independence, and thus politics, economics, science and art organized themselves as autonomous kingdoms which owe no allegiance to any higher power.

In the political and social sphere, the revolt against the medieval principle of hierarchy and the reassertion of the rights of the secular power led to the absolutism of the modern national state. This was followed by a second revolt—the assertion of the rights of man against secular authority which culminated in the French Revolution. But this second revolt also led to disillusion, since it led, on the one hand, to the disintegration of the organic principle in society into an individualistic atomism, leaving the individual isolated and helpless before the new economic forces, and, on the other, to the growth of the new bureaucratic state, which exerts an irresistible and far-reaching control over the individual life.

This is the general view of Dawson with respect to the Western political vision from the Renaissance down to modern times. Nevertheless, he affirms that society as a whole in this period remained as completely dominated by religious ideas as it had been during the Middle Ages. In politics, religious interests
were everywhere the predominant ones and colored the whole mentality of the age. But unlike the religion of the Middle Ages, that of this period was a source of division and strife rather than the principle of social unity. The Christian ideal of spiritual freedom suffered an unstoppable drift of disfigurement and distortion. How this came about is explained by Dawson by way of two significant factors, namely the Protestant, and specifically Lutheran factor, and the Renaissance mentality as embodied by such statesmen and thinkers as Machiavelli.118

*The Protestant factor.* The Protestant and specifically Lutheran doctrine of the total depravity of Human nature and the dualistic view of life, that is, the contradiction of Nature and Grace such that Nature is left a helpless prey to the powers of evil until it is rescued by the violent irruption of divine grace, led to the divorce of moral law from religion in such a manner that moral law possesses a purely temporal value. As Luther put it, the law belongs to the earth, the Gospel belongs to heaven, and they are to be kept as far separate as possible. The net effect of this attitude is the pessimistic view of Nature as nothing but the kingdom of death and the Law of Nature as a law of wrath and punishment. Yet this did not kill the active character of the Lutheran view, for thanks to its hostility and violent reaction to monasticism and asceticism, it was infused with a burning sense of practical moral duty. It did not fall into moral apathy and fatalism as could have been imagined, given its denial of the possibility of human merit, and the insistence on the doctrine of predestination.119

From another viewpoint, while on one hand, the Lutheran doctrine upheld a posture of extreme supernaturalism, on the other, it prepared the way for detaching Nature from its supernatural foundations, thereby fuelling the process of secularization of the world and the abolition of objective standards. Sociopolitical life was left to defend itself. Its idea of redemption of humanity, whose social implications were derived from St. Augustine’s conception of two cities, constituted an isolated act which stands outside history and which involves on the part of humanity only the bare act of justifying faith.120 It innovated the Augustinian conception by identifying the Papal Rome with the Babylon of the Apocalypse, which became practically an article of
faith-and a very central one-in all the Reformed Churches. Thus instead of an opposition between the Church and the world, the socio-historical mentality of the age derived its pabulum or food for thought and action from the conflict between two forms of Christianity. Such innovative frame of mind, more emotionally derived than religiously founded, invited similar innovations from other sectors not quite brought up in religious environs.

The Renaissance factor. The revolt against Natural Law did not spring only from the other-worldliness of Luther and the Reformers. It found an even more powerful support in the worldliness of Renaissance statesmen and thinkers. Even before the Reformation, Machiavelli had produced his Intelligente Man’s Guide to Politics which studied the art of government as a non-moral technique for the acquisition and maintenance of power. It effectively deprived the state of its spiritual character as the temporal organ of divine justice and made the interests of the state the supreme law by which all political acts must be judged. This new mentality created the “new jurisprudence”, replacing the common law of Christendom and thereby undermining the moral foundations of Western civilization. In effect, it left no room for the consecration of the state to God so solemnly and sacramentally expressed by the traditional rite of the coronation of Christian kings. It led to the secularization of the state and the disrespect, even desecration, of law and authority. Dawson concludes this analysis saying, “By emancipating the prince from subordination to a higher order, it destroyed both the principle of order and the principle of freedom in the state itself.”

The influence of Rousseau, The French Revolution and the Jacobins. The trend unleashed by the Renaissance culminated in some form of a climax in Rousseau, the French Revolution and the Jacobins. Dawson maintains that pure democracy in the historic sense owed its origin to Rousseau and first entered European history with the French Revolution. It was a democracy based on the creed of the Jacobins which bore the following characteristic features: the dictatorship of a party in the name of the community, the use of propaganda and appeal to mass emotion, as well as of violence and terrorism, the conception of revolutionary justice as a social weapon, the regulation of economic life to realize revolutionary ideals, and above all the attempt to enforce
a uniform ideology on the whole people, and the proscription and persecution of every other form of political thought. Thus, this Jacobin democracy was not only the prototype of the totalitarian state, but it also originated the main types of modern totalitarian ideology, like the strict republican democratic tradition which influenced all the democratic movements of modern Europe, the democratic Nationalism and Socialism.

This type of democracy broke the relationship between Church and state, although its original intention was to unite both in one Community, absorbing the Church in the Community. It was a democracy with intense religious sentiments, since it was based on definite moral doctrines and expressed itself in an official civic cult. This democratic community became a counter Church that ruthlessly proscribed Catholicism and atheism. It is in this area that it differed quite significantly from the Liberal-inspired democracy. The founders of the 19th century Liberalism were so averse to the reality of mass dictatorship that they did all they could to diminish the power and prestige of the community in favor of the individual. Hence while they were hostile to the Church as an embodiment of social authority and to the principle of a religion of the state, they were highly sympathetic to the freedom of religious opinion and to Christianity insofar as it stood for the sovereignty of the individual conscience. Modern attempts to uphold Christian freedom in socio-political life. In spite of the new renditions of Christian freedom in socio-political terms by both the Protestant and Renaissance points of view, which may be considered to have the most explosive character in the person of Rousseau and the occurrence of the French Revolution and the Jacobin democracy, the germ of Christian freedom continued to influence Western man’s mind and his social life. The medieval idea that men possess rights even against the state and that society is not a totalitarian political unit but a community made up of a complex variety of social organisms, each possessing an autonomous life and its own free institutions, continued to draw loyalty from modern Western man.

Dawson maintains that it was in England in the seventeenth century that the Christian ideal of spiritual freedom and the medieval tradition of political liberties came together to produce the new Liberal ideology which was the main inspiration of West-
ern civilization for more than two centuries and out of which political Liberalism in the strict sense finally developed. It, however, was an ideology that was greatly influenced by Protestant thinking. The Liberal interpretation of history is also dominated by the image of the two cities, but it is now the Church which embodies the «reactionary forces.» To the Liberal mind, the Church constituted the powers of darkness, while the children of the world—the apostles of free thought and the saints of rationalism—have become the children of light.

Dawson describes it as marking the end of the attempt to base society on a religious foundation and the beginning of the progressive secularization of the English state. This was expressed eloquently by the views of John Locke who said that the prime duty of a government is not to defend the Christian faith but to secure the rights of private property, for the sake of which men enter into society. Thus Dawson claims that Liberalism owes its origin in part to a religious ideal that was inspired by Christian moral values, though not by Christian faith. It derived its spiritual impetus from the Christian tradition that it attempted to replace, but when that tradition disappeared this spiritual impetus was lost, and Liberalism in its turn was replaced by the crudity and amoral ideology of the totalitarian state. It offered a compromise from the menace of the French Revolution and the Jacobin type of democracy and from the romantic ideal to restore the religious conception of the State and to return to medieval social ideals. It expressed itself in individual freedom in politics, in economics and in religion—freedom of opinion and freedom of trade, and faith in progress and moral idealism without metaphysical certainty or Christian dogma. It was responsible for the creation of the parliamentary instructions of government as against monarchy, of free trade and free competition as against protectionary policy and state-regulated economy, of free thought as against state religion.

The Liberal movement in the wider sense transformed the world by an immense liberation of human energies. But it failed in the course of the nineteenth century due to the failure of the Liberal parties to give adequate expression to the Liberal ideology and to the still deeper social tradition that lies behind it.

As evidence of this claim, Dawson distinguishes this Liberal ideology from the democracy that it inspired and that obtained in
many of the non-dictatorial states of his time. Liberalism, he says, stands for rights of the individual and the freedom of private opinion and private interests, while Liberal Democracy stands for the rights of the majority and the sovereignty of public opinion and the common interest. Democracy, in this case, has abandoned the unfriendly and suspicious attitude to the state characteristic of liberalism. It no longer attempts to guard jealously against state intervention in social and economic life. But there still remains one thing in which both Liberalism and Democracy agree: their opposition to any state intervention or interference in religion, except in a purely negative way. Religion is still treated as a purely private matter, left to the individual conscience.

This state of affairs obtaining in the modern democratic state is highly anomalous, according to Dawson, because it negates the spiritual primacy of the individual life, and unduly raises the social life.

This new type of religion precisely gave rise to or promoted Socialism and Nationalism which based their appeal on men's social conscience and expressed themselves clearly in the field of politics and economics. They arose in the Liberal age, in Dawson's words, «in the spiritual void that Liberalism had created by its secularization of social life» until they have not only destroyed Liberalism but have come to threaten Democracy itself, in so far as Democracy is to be identified with Parliamentarism and representative institutions.

Socialist criticism of Liberalism was at least in its early form a product of Liberal ideology. It was the extension to a wider class of the ideal which had been at first limited to the politically conscious minority. The fundamental appeal of Socialism lay in its assertion of real social rights against abstract political ones. Socialism extended the Liberal tradition from the sphere of law and politics to economics and culture.

But it is the anti-Liberal element in Socialism which has contributed more than any other single factor to the breakdown of freedom in the modern world. This element consists in the totalitarian challenge to freedom in the form of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, the use of power of the state as a weapon to destroy every social element which is opposed to the interests of the dominant class, the substitution of the mass for
the individual as the center of all cultural and moral values. All these traits of Socialism, according to Dawson, destroy freedom and sacrifice human life to the cult of mass power.\textsuperscript{131}

From many points of view, says Dawson, Socialism and Nationalism are opposed to Christian traditions and morals and beliefs. At the worst they are anti-Christian and godless; at best they assert the primacy of the temporal and set the interests of class or race or state above the needs of the human soul. They are secular religions—religions of the world. «They are even more religious than the religion of the average modern Christian. They refuse to divide life. They demand that the whole of life shall be devoted and dedicated to that social end which they regard as supremely valuable.\textsuperscript{132}

Further analyzing the characteristics of Socialism and Nationalisms Dawson makes the following argumentation:\textsuperscript{133}

The state in these ideologies becomes absorbed and transformed into a new kind of social organism which, in some respects, resembles a Church rather than a state, since it is based on a common faith and derives its power from organized emotion rather than from legal sovereignty. While in Democracy the life of the community was a reservoir of unconscious forces from which the juridical order of the state drew its power and energy—each class was a little closed world that followed its traditional pattern of life, and the statesmen and diplomats conducted the elaborate rationalized game of politics on the social surface—in Socialism and Nationalism the barriers of these separate worlds have been broken down and the forces that lay beneath the surface of the social consciousness have acquired control. They create a new civilization governed by mass emotion and inspired by mass idealism.

Dawson's views on how to restore Christian order. The foregoing considerations made, Dawson next tackles the question of how to restore Christian order.

The fundamental principle is that building a Christian order must be based on freedom, but not just freedom of economic materialism and individual selfishness, but rather a genuine Chris-
Christian freedom. He describes this Christian order as a social order directed to spiritual ends, in which every man has a chance to use his freedom for the service of God according to his own powers and gifts. This Christian freedom promotes liberties and rights which are to the human spirit what air and light are to the body—freedom to worship God, freedom of speech, freedom from want and freedom from fear. His attitude towards these liberties is so strong that "without these liberties man cannot be fully man, and the order that denies them is an inhuman order".

He qualifies his posture by saying that the effort to restore a Christian order does not involve fighting for any partial end or any party ideology, but rather preserving the values of the entire social and spiritual tradition against forces that threaten to destroy it. Thus he cautions on the use of the term Democracy as the definition of the cause of restoration, since it has a restricted political significance that covers not the whole field of values that has to be defended, that is, the tradition of social freedom and citizenship, on the one hand, and that of spiritual freedom and the infinite value of the individual person, on the other. While democracy may stand for these ideals and is the outcome of this tradition, in practice it often represents only a debased and secularized version of these ideals and in many respects prepares the way for the coming of a mass order which achieves political form in the totalitarian state.

Dawson describes the elements of social freedom necessary for this Christian social restructuring as (1) freedom of association, the principle which has always distinguished the free citizen community of classical antiquity and modern Europe from the servile state in which the individual is regarded merely as a subject; (2) freedom of vocation, which is the condition of personal responsibility.

Dawson's views of the interrelationship between these two freedoms are interesting. He says that the immense growth in the power of the administration characteristic of every modern state must be accompanied by a corresponding growth in the sense of personal responsibility on the part of the administrators, otherwise it will become an impersonal rule of slaves over slaves. "If the principle of freedom of vocation is preserved at this point, it will secure spiritual freedom at the key point, whereas if it is lost here, the whole of society will become mechanized and lifeless."
Elaborating on this point, he says that freedom of vocation without freedom of association is impossible or meaningless; that left to itself the principle of association may expend itself in an anarchic proliferation of rival and overlapping groups, or it may degenerate into an exploitation of group selfishness in which comradeship becomes an excuse for graft and corruption. «It is only when it is informed by the spirit of vocation and individual responsibility that freedom of association becomes capable of serving the higher order of culture and creating the conditions under which man’s freedom is spiritually fruitful, so that instead of a dead bureaucracy controlling a formless mass activity we have the organic form of a living community» 136.

Dawson affirms that the principle of freedom and vocation finds its fullest and most perfect development in the religious sphere. This was the inspiration of the Christian thinkers who employed the Pauline doctrine of vocation (cfr. 1 Cor 12, 4-27) where the organic life of the community and the principles of order and vocation and functional differentiation were applied to the state and the social order, producing the basis of Christian social ethics in the Middle Ages. Such set-up was viewed by St. Thomas as a cosmos of vocations in which every particular social and economic function found its place in the universal order of ends. Dawson is of the idea that this conception permeated Western culture so deeply that it was not entirely destroyed either by the Reformation or the individualism of the capital age, but retained its vitality and was finally reasserted in the social encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI 137.

Precisely on the subject of the Church’s social doctrine, Dawson enunciates its principles to be first of all the dependence of human life and human society on the Divine order: the idea of a Law of Nature by which all reasonable beings participate in the Eternal Reason, the source and bond of the whole cosmic order. It is a principle continually opposed by the theory which holds that natural law is a political act which merely expresses the will of the community or the state. In other words, the state’s will is law, and since the state wills its own self-preservation and its own advantage, the law is not based on «justice» but on the will to power and the will to live. «So we get another law of nature, a law which is non-moral because it is the expression of
the same irrational life force which makes the wild beasts devour one another and insects thrive on the suffering and destruction of higher organism» 138.

Dawson formulates the problematic aspect of this issue as whether «we believe in the existence of a spiritual order of which man is naturally conscious by his knowledge of good and evil, or whether the world runs blind, driven by irrational forces which man must serve if he is to survive.» He cites St. Thomas to buttress his claim on the natural consciousness of man of a spiritual order «there is in men a certain natural law, which is a participation of the eternal law by which men discern good and evil.» Thus although man’s moral consciousness is limited and conditioned by social factors it is never entirely extinguished. As every man by his reason has some knowledge of truth, so every man by nature has some knowledge of good and evil, which makes it possible for him to adhere to or deviate from the universal order.

Another relevant point raised by Dawson is the idea of Christendom, of which a number of misconceptions have arisen. He alludes to certain criticism of Natural Law hurled even by Christians who consider the Church’s social doctrine as insufficient and inadequate to the problems at hand. This is due to the fact that they miss the Church’s attitude toward the problems of Christian social life and the ideal of a Christian culture. The Church «considers civilization not as a static order based on the unchanging precepts of Natural Law, but as a concrete historical reality which derives its moral values and even its spiritual unity from its religious tradition» 139.

Thus the Church’s social doctrine, in referring to Europe and Western culture, in general, considers it as essentially a society of Christian peoples or nations a society which derives its unity not from race or economic interest but from spiritual community, and that it is only by a restoration of this spiritual foundation that European order can be restored.

In sum, Dawson underlines the need for a spiritual restoration of Western man to achieve the restoration of Christian order in the West.
4. PR, p. viii.
5. ERC, p. 261.
6. ERC, p. 50.
7. ERC, p. 290.
8. ERC, p. 276.
9. ERC, p. 266.
11. DWH, pp. 161-162.
12. DWH, pp. 164-166; MWR, 34.
13. ERC, p. 283.
14. ERC, pp. 284-285
15. ERC, pp. 287-288.
17. ERC, p. 291.
18. HR, p. 99; CWE. p. 3.
19. ERC, P. 61.
20. CWE, 124.
21. RWC, p. 10.
22. CWE, p. 136.
23. UE, p. 222.
24. MD, pp. 89-90.
27. Cfr. CWE, pp. 4-7.
28. CWE, p. 9.
29. CWE, p. 10.
30. CWE, p. 12.
32. CWE, p. 18.
33. CWE, p. 19.
34. CWE, p. 21.
35. CWE, pp. 22-23.
36. CWE, pp. 24-25.
37. ME, pp. 138-139.
41. ME, pp. 143-146.
43. ME, pp. 157-160.
44. ME, pp. 160-161.
45. MD, pp. 86-87.
48. CWE, pp. 27-29.
49. CWE, pp. 30-31.
50. CWE, pp. 32-33.
52. CWE, p. 42.
53. CNA, p. 97.
54. CWE, p. 45.
55. CWE, pp. 43-47.
57. CWE, p. 54.
58. CWE, p. 57. In this regard, Napoleon Bonaparte expressed his views, thus: «Of all political questions, education is perhaps the most important.»
59. CWE, p. 119.
60. RWC, p. 10.
62. CWE, p. 135.
63. CWE, p. 150.
64. CWE, p. 142.
65. CWE, pp. 178-179.
66. CWE, PP. 161-165
68. RC, p. 217.
69. PR, p. 99.
70. MD, pp. 94-95.
71. MD, p. 52; JN, p. 128.
72. JN, p. 9.
73. JN, pp. 13-14.
74. JN, pp. 42-43.
75. MD, pp. 53-55.
76. JN, p. 42.
77. MD, p. 58.
78. MD, pp. 59-60.
79. JN, p. 45.
81. JN, p. 44.
82. JN, p. 45.
84. JN, p. 15.
85. JN, p. 89.
86. ERC, p. 306.
87. JN, p. 16.
88. JN, p. 15.
89. MD, pp. 66-69.
91. BP, p. 131.
93. Cfr. ERC, p. 278.
94. ERC, pp. 297-298.
95. MD, p. 54.
96. BP, p. 47.
97. BP, p. 49.
98. JN, p. 45.
101. ERC, p. 257.
102. ERC, pp. 255-258.
103. ME, pp. 75-78.
104. ME, pp. 77-78.
105. ME, pp. 79-80.
106. MA, p. 80.
107. ME, pp. 81-85.
110. ME, p. 90.
111. ME, p. 91. To reinforce this point, Dawson mentions that St. Thomas' most eminent disciple in the following generation, Aegidius Romanus, is at the same time the most uncompromising advocate of the theocratic claims of the Papacy in their most totalitarian form.
112. Dawson points to Dante's prose works —the *Convivio* and the *De Monarchia*— and not to Dante's great poem to identify the source of difference between Dante and St. Thomas in socio-political area. (Cfr. DWH, p. 243).
113. ME, pp. 91-92.
115. ME, pp. 93-94; DWH, pp. 245-246. Dawson claims that the revolutionary character of Dante's conception was largely restrained by the fact that
Dante's political hopes were still fixed on the universal Empire of the past and not on the national monarchy of the future, Italy at the time still lacking the conditions for national self determination.

116. DWH, pp. 245-246.
117. CNA, pp. 16-18; 66-67.
118. JN, pp. 94-95.
119. PR, p. 181.
120. DWH, p. 365.
121. DWH, P. 355.
122. JN, p. 95.
123. BP, pp. 70-73.
124. BP, pp. 74-75.
125. JN, p. 97.
126. DWH, p. 355.
127. PR, p. 188.
128. DWH, 409-410.
129. BY, pp. 101-102.
131. JN, pp. 50-55.
132. BP, p. 104.
134. JN, p. 127.
135. JN, p. 135.
136. JN, p. 136.
137. JN, p. 139.
138. JN, p. 92.
139. JN, p. 96.
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