

JOIN US FOR AN 8-WEEK STUDY OF HTPC'S

First Principles

A decorative flourish consisting of a horizontal line with a central dot and two pointed ends extending outwards.

SUNDAYS

5:45 - 7:00 PM

SEPTEMBER 13 - NOVEMBER 8

in the fellowship hall

To Christ The Lord

1. To Christ the Lord let every tongue Its noblest tribute bring
When He's the subject of the song Who can refuse to sing?
Survey the beauties of His face And on His glories dwell
Think of the wonder of His grace And all His triumphs tell

To Christ The Lord

2. Majestic sweetness sits enthroned Upon His awful brow
His head with radiant glories crowned His lips with grace overflow
No mortal can with Him compare Among the sons of men
Fairer He is than all the fair That fill the Heavenly train

To Christ The Lord

3. He saw me plunged in deep distress He fled to my relief
For me He bore the shameful cross And carried all my grief
His hand a thousand blessings pours Upon my guilty head
His presence gilds my darkest hours And guards my sleeping bed

To Christ The Lord

4. To Him I owe my life and breath And all the joys I have
He makes me triumph over death And saves me from the grave
To Heaven the place of His abode He brings my weary feet
Shows me the glories of my God And makes my joy complete

To Christ The Lord

5. Since from His bounty I receive Such proofs of love divine
Had I a thousand hearts to give Lord, they should all be Thine
A thousand men could not compose A worthy song to bring
Yet Your love is a melody Our hearts can't help but sing!

Biography of John Murray

- Born in 1898 in Scotland and brought up in a devotional home, his father was a Ruling Elder in the Presbyterian Church and was his beloved spiritual mentor
- Founding faculty member of Westminster Theology Seminary (WTS)
- Served in WWI where he lost an eye due to military shrapnel
- Known as “the conscience” of WTS faculty due to the humility and dignity that marked his Christian walk
- **Bachelor** until very late in his life — he wrote this essay prior to being married late in life; **high view of the Christian family** and the need to cultivate such an institution **if the church is to be true to her call**

Summary

- **Three Institutions: *Church. Family. State.***
- What does a recovery of a biblical view of these institutions look like?
- How do they relate to one another in our day and time?
- What might pursuit of consistent Christianity look like in our day?

What does he mean by the phrase “Christian World Order”

“I take it that what is meant is a world order that in **all** its aspects and spheres is **Christian**, an order **so conformed to** the principles of **Christianity** and **so pervaded** by the forces that are operative in Christianity that the **whole of life** will be **brought into *willing captivity*** to the obedience of **Christ.**”

The “Not Yet” Reality of a Christian World Order

Is this a practical conception towards which we should strive? “Should we not descend from the clouds and deal with more practical and sensible matters?”

- Of course, **not ultimately attainable** on this side of Christ’s return since this would mean the complete elimination of sin and its effects

“To whatever school of eschatological persuasion we belong, we cannot believe that such an order will antedate the advent of the Lord.”

“A Christian world order, if the word "**Christian**" is applied **with consistency**, means an order in which the **principle of redemption and restoration** is brought to **its complete and all-pervasive expression and fruition.**”

So “...is there any sense in speaking of a Christian world order except as an eschatological hope? Particularly and most **practically**, is there good sense in working towards the establishment of a Christian order when we know that, in the completeness of its conception, it is **not attainable** in what we generally call this life?”

The “Now” Call of a Christian World Order

“We must be bold to say that **the Christian revelation** [the Bible] does not allow us to do **anything less** than to formulate **and work towards** a Christian world order in the life that we **now** live. It is not difficult to demonstrate the validity **and even necessity** of this thesis.”

“[It is] impossible for us to evade **the obligation** to strive with all our heart and soul and strength and mind for the establishment of **an order that will bring to realization all the demands of God's** majesty, authority, supremacy and kingship. And this, in a word, is simply the **full fruition of the kingdom of God** wherever we are and in the whole compass of thought, word and action.”

A Christian World Order Inaugurated In CHRIST

“But, **since we have fallen** and since the only way now whereby the claims of the divine sovereignty can even begin to be realized within the compass of our responsibilities is **through the redemptive and mediatorial work of Christ**, then there rests upon us, with like universal and unrelaxed stringency, **the obligation** to bring to bear upon the whole compass of life **the supernatural and redemptive forces** that are inherent in the Christian redemption and revelation. **And this is just saying** that the ideal and goal imposed upon us **by the kingship and kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ** is **nothing less than Christian world order**. To recede from this conception and aim is to abandon what is implied in the prayer Christ taught His disciples to pray, **‘Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven’** (Matt. 6:10). And it is to renounce what is overtly expressed in the words of the apostle, **‘For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:** (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but **mighty through God** to the pulling down of strongholds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ’ (2 Cor. 10:3-5).”

What Is the Christian Order?

(Paragraphs 10-11)

- **Begins** with the **backdrop of human sin and depravity**

“For Christian order is order that is Christian and, **if Christian**, it rests upon the supernatural and **redemptive** foundations of Christianity. Christian order is order brought into existence by the **deliverance from sin** [the Gospel!!] and evil wrought by redemption and regeneration...God's regenerative and sanctifying grace.”

“Any idealism or reconstruction that proceeds upon a program that is congenial to fallen human nature or that is **readily adjustable** to the **impulses and passions** and principles of fallen human nature has **denied the very genius** of Christian order.”

What Is the Christian Order? (cont.)

(Paragraphs 10-11)

“There is, therefore, **something drastic** about the transformation that Christian order effects. This is why **we are so reluctant to entertain a Christian program of procedure** in some of the most practical spheres such as those of **education and industry**. We are so often content to have a few amendments and corrections that give a **Christian veneer** to certain institutions. Without question these corrections may have, to a certain extent, a **salutary influence**, but these amendments **do not change the basically non-Christian character** of the principles and methods by which these institutions or orders operate. The Christian principle as applied to every order is **radical and revolutionary** in the true sense. of these words, radical and revolutionary because it is organically regenerative. It deals **not by half-measures** nor by indirection but by **honest, thoroughgoing effectiveness with the reality of human sin** and with **the all-pervasive corruption** it has brought in its train.

Three Institutions: Family, Church, and State

(Paragraph 12-13)

- **Plurality of individuals** that makes up **each** of these institutions

“The **individual** is the ultimate unit in **every** social organism and organization, and **Christianity never overlooks the individual person**...The kingdom of God begins its reconstruction with the individual.”

“...our Lord Himself said, ‘Except **a man** be born again, **he** cannot see the kingdom of God’” (John 3:3)

“Except **a man** be born of water and of the Spirit, **he** cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5)

“Except **ye** be converted, and become as little children, **ye** shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:3)

“**Christian world order** in its zeal to **renovate and reconstruct** the orders of society must ensure that the **needs of the individual** are fully met and his interests fully guarded and promoted.”

1. The Family

(Paragraphs 14-17)

- Creation: The family at **creation**; implanted in man's nature
- Fall: **Sin** has brought ruin into the family institution

“And perhaps no instinct has been more abused and no sanctity more desecrated than the instinct that is related to, and the sanctity that finds its basis in, that **ordinance of marriage** with which the family begins. The history of this world is strewn with the wrecks caused by the abuse and distortion of the sex impulse.”

“**When sin wreaks its havoc here**, when the sanctities, that guard and ennoble **family life** are desecrated and when family honor is laid in the dust, **then all social order is out of joint and degradation reigns supreme in every realm.**”

1. The Family (cont.)

(Paragraphs 14-17)

- “**Until the family**, the basic social institution, the institution through which also the individual as the **ultimate unit of society** is brought into being and through which he receives the heritage, the nurture and the training that will fit him for every social responsibility and function—**until the family is redeemed from its sin**, whether it be the sin of **coarse immorality** or the sin of **refined godlessness**, and until it is renewed and rehabilitated by the grace of God, it is a moral, psychological and social **impossibility** for Christian world order to be instituted.”
- Referring to Ephesians 5-6 commands to individual family members (husbands, wives, children, fathers):

“These [commands in Eph. 5-6] are the affections, instincts and principles that **must regulate** marital and family life, and **only then** can any Christian foundation be laid for that social organization that can be called Christian. **The Christian program is radical**, and we see **how grave the responsibility and colossal the task** when we face the dismal fact that **the rarity of the Christian family makes it as precious as diamonds.**”

2. The Church

(Paragraphs 18-23)

- We can all agree that renovation and reconstruction are necessary for the family and state — but what about for the church? MURRAY SAYS YES.

“The sad fact of our situation today is that **judgment must begin at the house of God** and the church must have applied to it the same radical, revolutionary and reconstructive principles and forces which we have already found to be indispensable to Christian world order.”

“Faith, testimony, worship, government—these four words sum up the function of the church.

It is **faith** absolutely faithful to the **Word of God**.

It is **worship** in accordance with the **prescriptions of His will**.

It is **government** directed by the ecclesiastical order instituted **by Christ** and His apostles.

It is **testimony** to the whole **counsel of God** to all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues.”

2. The Church (cont.)

(Paragraphs 18-23)

- Sphere sovereignty, yes, (it is not the role of the church to put Christian world order into effect) — **but** responsibility and accountability **within** HER OWN sphere to establish and promote Christian order

“O how crushing is the shame that rests upon the church! Christian world order is an **impossibility when the institution that is preeminently the instrument of testimony to Christ is itself the chamber of abominations**. It is surely mockery and hypocrisy for the church to point the way when she herself has committed **whoredom in the sanctuary of God.**”

THE HIGH CALLING OF THE CHURCH - “Judgment must begin at the house of God, judgment that will issue in **purification** of faith, of testimony, of worship, and of government. Purified and renewed, sound in faith, steadfast in testimony, pure in worship and faithful in government, **the church will become the channel of redeeming light and grace to a world lost and staggering in the confusion that the rejection of the counsel of the King of kings has brought upon it.** “O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea” (Isa. 48: 18). **When the church puts on her garments of glory and beauty**, then under the captaincy of Him who is Faithful and True, the King of kings and Lord of lords, she will go forth, fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners. Then it will be said again, “In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel. In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion. There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey” (Psalm 76:1-4). Humiliating indeed is our reproach. But by God's grace and Christ's power, **how glorious our vocation and responsibility!**”

3. The State

(Paragraphs 24-30)

- What about the state? Does it come in **any direct way** under the demands and influences of the Christian revelation? **Does it have religious obligations?**
- Bottom Line Question: **Is the Bible the rule of conduct for the civil magistrate** as it is for the individual, for the family and for the church???

Limits of civil authority:

- It must never trespass the sphere of the family or church
- It must guard the God-given rights of the individual

“It is also true that those in whom is vested the right of civil government must exercise that government in accordance with the laws of the commonwealth. If they are not able to do this in accordance with **conscience**, then they must abdicate their office or seek by the constitutional means provided by the commonwealth to change those laws. Especially is this the case with **believers who recognize that their supreme obligation is to God and to Christ.**”

3. The State (cont.)

(Paragraphs 24-30)

- **But** it is a **fatal error** to assume that “the Christian revelation, the **Bible**, does not come to the **civil authority with a demand for obedience** to its direction and precept as stringent and inescapable as it does to the individual, to the family and to the church.”
- Civil magistrate derives his authority **from God**
 - “Apart from divine institution and sanction, civil government has **no right** to exist.”
 - “The powers that be are ordained of God” (Rom. 13:1).
- **Therefore**, “the Word of God **bears upon civil authority** with all the stringency that belongs to God’s Word.”
- (paraphrase) The Word of God reveals **Christ’s Headship** over **all** things — civil magistrate is **under obligation to acknowledge** this and to conduct his affairs accordingly: not only in subjection to **sovereignty of God** but also in subjection to the **mediatorial sovereignty of Christ** and must therefore **obey** His will as it is revealed **for the discharge of that authority** which the civil magistrate exercises **in subjection to Christ**.
 - “Christian world order **embraces** the state. Otherwise there would be no Christian world order.”
 - (paraphrase) The obligation and task **arising from Christ’s kingship and headship** are that civil government, within its **own well-defined and restricted sphere**, must...**recognize** and **obey** the authority of God and of His Christ and **bring all of its functions and actions into accord** with the revealed **will of God** as contained in **His Word**.

Conclusion

(Paragraphs 31-33)

“The goal fixed for us by the Christian revelation is nothing less than a **Christian state** as well as **Christian individuals, Christian families** and a **Christian church.**”

“It is, of course, true that all of life is not exhausted by the family, the church and the state. These, however, are the basic divine institutes of society. A Christian world order will embrace every department of life- industry, agriculture, education, recreation. But since these institutions are basic, it is inevitable that **the Christianizing of every other department of life will proceed apace with the Christianizing of these basic institutions.**”

- The stupendous responsibility, our own insufficiency...

“**But** this overpowering sense of our weakness and inability is **no reason for faintheartedness.** It is rather the very condition of true faith and perseverance. The responsibility is ours: it is stupendously great. The insufficiency is ours: it is complete. But **the power is God's.** The **grace is of God.** The **promise is His.** "Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand. Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face" (Psalm 89:13-14).

(paraphrase) CHRIST is exalted NOW far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named not only in this world but also in that to come. We must honor him and the Holy Spirit who strengthens us — “and let us **in His strength** go forth to **claim every realm for Him** who must reign **until all His enemies shall have been made His footstool.**”