

While I was preparing my notes for this address I came across a lecture by Professor Jacques Maritain, who I understand is well known in this University. The lecture originally delivered in Paris in 1939 was published in an English version in 1942 and is entitled "The Twilight of Civilization".

In the original lecture Professor Maritain said that "each time that someone in any country cedes to some infiltration of the totalitarian spirit, under any form whatsoever, under any disguise, one battle for civilization has been lost".

Then in the foreword written in 1942, he used these words: "The defeat of Germany will not solve all the problems of freedom to be won, of civilization to be rescued and rebuilt. But it is a necessary condition if they are to be solved and the world freed from the slavery which today threatens each and everyone of us."

What all this means is that we have only begun the task of preserving civilization when we have provided security against the forces of barbarism from without. We must also provide security against the influences of barbarism we have found in the midst of our civilized communities. To preserve civilization, we have to nourish the spirit within.

Our Western world has accepted the doctrine that men and women have the right to choose - and to dismiss - their governments for themselves; and to order their affairs as they see fit. It is evident, therefore, that if we are to preserve civilization, we must keep alive in our populations an attachment to the values of civilization; and we must make sure that the benefits of civilization are available to the many and not reserved for the few.

We cannot neglect the less fortunate in our own midst, nor can we ignore the plight of nations less fortunate than our own. The preservation of civilization requires us to help those untold millions, most of them in Asia, to improve their standards of life and to achieve a situation they will feel it is worthwhile to defend. Despite our relatively small population, we have advantages here in Canada which fit us to contribute effectively to a combined effort to convince the less fortunate peoples that even on the material plane the free world has more to offer than Communism. It is not without significance that Canada should have furnished the first Director for the Technical Assistance Programme of the United Nations.

In addition to the material benefits there must however, be a fount of spiritual values in our free societies. We in the Western world have adopted the conception of good and evil from the Hebrew and Greek civilizations. This concept has been transformed and transmitted to us through our Christian traditions. It comprises a belief in the intrinsic value of every individual human being and a sense of obligation to our neighbour. Its very essence is freedom. And the nurture of this spirit of our free society is the primary function of the universities. It is even more important than the obligations to train men and women for scientific and professional pursuits.