

economic, political and military life in America has come from qualities that were brought to this country by the immigrant groups from diverse cultures and by the intermingling of the cultures and the intermingling of the stocks. Take the case of the Protestants. The "Protestant ethic" in the sense of the Calvinist tradition of salvation by "vocation" or calling--what you choose to do with your life as shown by the proofs or witness of your life--this Protestant ethic is integral to American culture. In the sense of self-discipline, in the dignity of work, in the role it has played in the building of the structure of business enterprise, the Protestant ethic has become a part of the spirit of American institutions. It has recently been suggested that we have lost the basic characteristics of the Protestant ethic. I think this may be so. Hence, one of the themes in my own writing is that the most valuable elements of this ethic must be recaptured.

I feel deeply, for example, that we have lost our sense of the meaning of work. We now talk and think in terms of the "job." The job is something you try to get as much for as you can, to give as little to as you can, to get away from as soon as you are through. That is the job. Work is something very different. Work is something you do because you could no more help doing it than you could help breathing. It is something that fulfills you, something for which you do not keep a time clock, something to which you have a commitment. Work had this meaning once in the Protestant ethic, and we lost it. We need to find it again.

The great creativeness of the Catholics in America has been the human warmth that some of the Catholic groups--the Italians, the Irish and others--have brought with them, as against the dourness of the Calvinist strain. It includes political skills they brought with them, the sense of continuity they have in their religious tradition, their sense of the family as a web and of society as a web. These are very valuable in the whole American tradition.

The creativeness of the Jews in turn is interesting. Thorstein Veblen from whom I learned a good deal, has an essay called "The Intellectual Pre-eminence of the Jews in Western Europe," in which he asks a rather interesting question:

Why is it that a people whose numbers are so small, in terms of the total numbers, and who have been driven around the world so persistently by persecution, have achieved positions of intellectual pre-eminence in Western Europe?