

## CONDUCT.

### CHAPTER 10.

The problems of Religion then all centre round conduct. Whether you are thinking of this world or the next, today's answers centre round how you behave, how you should treat other people. Even if you go back to St. Paul's "justification by faith" (as opposed to works), which was the cornerstone of Luther's Reformation, faith must still manifest itself in "works" or action, otherwise faith becomes hypocrisy. So conduct is what matters; how then should one behave, both as regards God, if you believe in Him, and as regards the State, which you must obey unless you want to get involved with the criminal law? This involves considering men's frames of mind, because these influence, and largely control, conduct.

To a dispassionate person, it might seem insane that men should hate each other, and kill each other, because they have different frames of mind, and hold different things sacred. But the trouble is that a man's predominant frame of mind influences all his conduct, and dictates a good deal of it. At first sight it might not seem to matter that Science sees the Cosmos as a whole; but we all view our planet quite differently since Yuri Gargarin circled the earth in his sputnik. Similarly at first sight it might not seem to matter if I regard space as absolute, filled with a three-dimensional grid reference like an ordinance survey map, and the sun at the centre of it. But if modern science tells me that this does not conform to reality, because it is meaningless to think of anything being at rest in space, it undermines my certainty of life. It becomes tempting to say, "Everything is relative". And indeed today in the C.of E. anything goes; but it was not always so. People used to think that religion provided certainty, but no longer. The uncertainty is compounded when I remember that in Jenkins and White, the standard student's textbook on light, there was a footnote that somebody had performed the Michelson-Morley experiment more accurately, and discovered we were travelling through space with an absolute velocity of thousands of mile per second, much more than the experimental error. So Einstein may have to be revised; but for the moment he holds the field. On what, or on whom then, can we rely?

Some people will find the very small things of science more disturbing, than the very large. The little electron is indistinguishable from any other electron, and curiously has exactly the same charge as every other electron. Were it not so, the elementary bonding between atoms would not be possible; and complicated structures like human beings would literally fall apart, into a heap of atomic dust. Are not humans, in the modern world, rather like electrons; each one virtually a replica of every other one, and none having lasting significance, at least not in their own eyes? Do not many people nowadays get lost in the

## CONDUCT.

fashion of consumerism, because it is the only way they feel they can give momentary significance to their lives? Now that social hierarchy has gone, and insignificant people are made Lords and Ladies, are we not all regarded as equal social units, regardless of creed or ethnic background? Have not most businesses gone mad with “growth” featuring in every company’s Annual Report, not for a purpose but as an end in itself? A child could see that “growth” cannot continue for ever, but must come to an end sometime. Having disposed of any reverence for God and the fear of life after death, have we not reduced the value of everything until money is made the measure of all things? And “growth” worshipped?

Yet there is nothing to prevent us pulling ourselves together. There is much in modern life that is wholly admirable. For example the best in modern advocacy paints a picture with the facts, in such a way that when people hear the advocate’s description they say to themselves, “Why did I not see the events in that way before?” In other words, once seen in that particular way, it is so obviously a true picture that it is impossible to see the facts in any other way, [unless a better advocate paints a better picture]. You do not argue that your picture is right; it is obviously right. You argue about what the proper conclusions are to draw from the picture you have painted. The truth of your picture is self-evident, once you have painted it. In the same way, it is self-evident that the scientific way of looking at the universe is true, once you have seen things that way. Not the whole truth, but true so far as it goes. It is a waste of time saying it is wrong; if you say that, the proper conclusion is that YOU are wrong. Science has not only filled our world with gadgets, it has changed the way we think, probably for the better. The only sensible comment to make is that it is not the complete picture. Science is no longer the prerogative of the West, but it was undoubtedly the creation of the West. So why should not the West be the first to see clearly its true impact on religion?

Similarly with my Theory of Consciousness; once properly understood, I hope it is only in the light of its understanding that it is possible to form a credible picture of truth and appearance; that is until a better theory of consciousness comes along. After all, once a theory of consciousness has been created, it means that it is possible to create one, however many errors there may be in mine. So there is no going back to the time before a theory of consciousness existed; just as no physics experiment was much regarded in the Cavendish, unless you calculated the likely degree of error, so now any rigorous argument must take account of the likelihood of error in its basic assumptions. If I am right that any mental picture whatever, which you actually think about, must be created in an attitude of mind, then this attitude of mind must rest on certain unspoken assumptions, just as science rests on its basic assumptions and mathematics rests on its axioms. There is no difference. No one attitude of

## CONDUCT.

mind is the correct one to have; indeed it may be better to view a phenomenon from several points of view, or from several attitudes, to start with. In other words, the way you look at a problem cannot be the whole truth about it; at best it is only largely true. It will look differently depending on which frame of mind is finally chosen. And whichever frame of mind is chosen, if you allow logic and reason to take you to extremes, you will end up with absurdity. Logic or reason is a tool, not a god; and it will only tell you what conclusions are sound, if certain given assumptions are sound. Only false assumptions suggest Achilles never overtook the tortoise. So one must never allow oneself to be divorced from experience; or you end up with myriad frames of mind which are sheer and utter fantasy, delightful in their way, but having no connection with reality. It is always possible to misinterpret experience; and further experience usually corrects this. But there is nothing to correct fantasy worlds, except final catastrophe! So mental disciplines, like philosophy, are cut down to size and made to rest on experience; and in England it is safest to look at things from an English point of view. The Iraqi point of view may be better in the Middle East; but not here.

Furthermore when one comes to religion, the thoughts in any attitude of mind are seen to be man's thoughts. However much they were inspired by a God in whom one believes, His voice will have been masked by some distortion, just as His will always tends to be seen through a glass darkly. Theological propositions are not immortal truth, whatever your religion; they are man's interpretation of what he believes he was inspired to think. Therefore they are very much linked with time; and must evolve or become meaningless, and die. To deny that they evolve is to slip into the error of thinking one's consciousness is reliable, when most emphatically it is not. It is to misunderstand the processes of the human mind. If I am right, only the perfectly relaxed consciousness is reliable; but you never know for sure whether your own consciousness is perfectly relaxed. And anyway thought is not possible in that frame of mind. To think, your frame of mind must be under tension. All experience can be misinterpreted; and religious knowledge is experienced like any other sort of knowledge. Even if you think God is talking to you, that is experience; and you may have misheard Him, particularly if you were hoping to hear something different from what He was trying to tell you. If when the Christian God says, "Love your enemies"; the Muslim Allah is heard to say, "Kill the infidels!" it is difficult to think it is the same voice speaking. Or alternatively someone has misheard Him.

It becomes very difficult in these circumstances to take seriously any sect or religion which says they alone have the prerogative of absolute truth; except when they threaten to kill you! Several sects of the Christian Church say they alone have the truth, Muslims say the

## CONDUCT.

same, and atheists say the same. The early Church was intolerant, like most religions. And it may be that the early Church only survived, because it was intolerant. But one might have expected religious sects to grow up a little with the increasing knowledge of the natural world. There are disadvantages in taking yourself and your creed too seriously, because the harsh yardstick for any faith is its fruit, that is how its adherents behave. Nowadays we tend to think of anyone who claims to be in possession of the whole truth, as demented; it is so obviously untrue. Unless some mathematical physicist thinks of a theory of all things, we have to accept that hitherto every scientific hypothesis has in due time been replaced by another one, which approximated more closely to the truth than the first one did. And it is difficult to see why it should be any different in the religious world, unless science is rejected, because in science it is not fashionable to claim that “your truth” is final. So either you need a split mind, which keeps religion and science in separate compartments, or you reject science and embrace a desire to return to the credulity of the Middle Ages. Neither alternative is an attractive proposition for someone with intelligence. And since I think that religious experience is indistinguishable from any other sort of experience, my opinion is that the same holds good for religions as for science, which is after all a religion for some people. If you think God speaks to you, that is an experience like any other.

But even if a group does not claim omniscience, but only that it possesses the one and only key to heaven, it is difficult to take their pretensions seriously. This is so, whether their key is in Biblical fundamentalism, or in the claim that evolution is limited to natural selection and survival of the fittest. Both claims seem to me absolutely absurd. I may be wrong; yet I would no more set about trying to prove that they were wrong, than I would claim that my theory of consciousness will never be overturned. Naturally I hope that further work will tend to confirm there is some truth in my theory; but that is as far as I would wish to go. Similarly with claims to hold the one key to heaven, I refuse to take them seriously. Those who claim to have the only key to heaven, in my opinion, are in effect making the mistake Antigone made in the old Greek play. It is a mistake that leads down the road to catastrophe. You cannot avoid the need to make judgements. You have to find out what works for you.

But can my sort of religion hold its own against the vehement, and even violent, faith or bigotry of others? Does “faith like a grain of mustard seed” remove mountains? No, in my experience it does not. And if it is objected that I probably did not have enough faith to remove any mountains, may I point out the whole point of the original exhortation was to suggest that you did not need very much faith. It may be true for some people; but not for me. And I am bound to add, that I do not know anybody for whom it is literally true; although I

## CONDUCT.

firmly believe that healing occurs from time to time in every age and in every community. So even if this saying was true for Jesus: that faith literally removes mountains; it is unlikely to be true for anybody today. I do not think you can expect God in his Heaven to intervene on your behalf. My hope is that the Almighty will condescend to accept my companionship, and guide me in the right way; but I do not expect any red carpets to be rolled out for me.

It is a different matter if you think that the spirit of God lurks in the depths of the psyche. Does he ever intervene then on your behalf? I think here we are on more secure ground. Winston Churchill's defiance of Hitler in June 1940 was one of the most superbly courageous acts in modern history. It was a situation where the spirit within inspired supreme courage in action. It is one of the few actions in the world of affairs which I am sure was right. I refuse to say that as a Christian country we should have practised the meek gospel of Christ, turned the other cheek, and capitulated. For 12 months from June 1940 until June 1941, when Hitler invaded Russia, Britain kept the torch of freedom burning, apparently against hopeless odds. This raises, perhaps for the first time in history in such stark and glaring terms, the problem of Christianity's relationship to conduct in the secular world. This I believe is why we in Britain still go on about the War, those of us who can remember it; because it was so obviously right to fight it, yet how can this be reconciled with a religion whose founder preached non-violence? And who said his kingdom was not of this world?

When you read the Bible, you find to the consternation of your liberal upbringing that War was the foundation of Christianity too. And probably it is the precondition for any monotheistic religion. If Joshua had not conquered "the promised land", there would have been no country for the Jewish tribes to settle in after they left Egypt; without a country, there would have been no nation; without a nation, no prophetic tradition; without a prophetic tradition, no Messiah and no Jesus! Whether Jesus realized it, or not, his Gospel depended entirely on Joshua and his successors conquering Canaan by force of arms. So it is not going too far to say that in considering the apparent conflict between the rightness of Britain's war-effort, and the ethos of Christianity which rightly emphasises peace, we are going back to first principles.

As usual the C.of E. in its desire to be all things to all men has got itself into a mess. In my limited experience it failed to support the War whole-heartedly; and after it was over, failed to think things through, and work out its implications. This is illustrated by the outrage that greeted the service of reconciliation after the Falklands War, which seemed to the public to strike exactly the wrong note. And is even more graphically illustrated by some clergymen preaching at the approach to the Iraq War that, "War is never an option. I don't know what

## CONDUCT.

the answer is, but War is never an option". Now there are certainly two views on the wisdom of the Iraq War; in retrospect it looks as if it may have been wrong, even folly. But that is not the point. The point is that being willing to go to war is an essential option, if civilized society is to survive. Germany became a rogue state in 1917/18, and the Treaty of Versailles did nothing to put this matter right. It did nothing to help law-abiding Germans regain their ascendancy in the community in the inter-war years. Very much the same process is taking place in our own country today, under the smoke-screen of political correctness; and the sects of the Church are still concerned to get us into heaven, just as 1600 years ago the Church was more concerned with the Pelagian heresy, than what was happening next door in Gaul.

There is no incompatibility between the Christian God and Jung's idea of the Spirit lurking in the depths of the psyche, with the corollary that if you fall out with the spirit within you have mental problems, and if you break with the spirit you develop schizophrenia. You may be able to ignore him with relative immunity; but not fall out with him. And of course it depends on the nature of the spirit within. Christianity differs from all other religions, in that it believes that the Deity welcomes the companionship and cooperation of men and women; of course you have to accept His conditions, and there may not be any general agreement on what those conditions are. But as far as I am aware, no other religion even contemplates this degree of intimacy; and I was bold enough, or rash enough, to think that the same degree of intimacy might exist between a man and a woman too.

Am I saying that Jesus led a unique life, and that he gives little guidance to us as to how to behave? Not at all. I am saying we must try to understand what he was attempting to achieve, or attempting to teach us; and then consider how much we can do, in the very different social conditions in which we find ourselves. So first, what did he try to achieve?

I am sufficiently orthodox to say that I believe Jesus tried to give us himself; it is in this sense that I interpret his use of the somewhat gruesome symbolism of the corn and wine gods of antiquity when he inaugurated the ceremony of the Last Supper.

In my "Reconciliation with Science and War" I discussed the possibility that Jesus did indeed consider himself as immortal here in this world. But I was not saying that Jesus was immortal in this world; nor am I saying it now. I am assuming that he confidently believed, rightly or wrongly, that he was immortal in the here and now, and that he wanted to do whatever was necessary to share that immortality with his contemporaries. And I am asking if in those circumstances he would have behaved any differently to the way he is reported to have behaved? If the answer is, No; that is strong evidence that he did indeed believe he was immortal, and did indeed want to share his immortality (if he had it) with mankind. My own

## CONDUCT.

opinion is that he would have behaved in exactly the way he did; but since I have no experience of immortality here and now, that opinion is little more than instinct.

I do not feel it is for me to comment on the chances of his being right, or of his being wrong. It is sufficient that the myth he left behind recorded him leading such an unusual life, that his disciples a generation after his death turned him into a God, and gave him equal status with the Creator. Whether they were right to do so, again is hardly for me to say; but the miracles described, in the Fourth Gospel in particular, leave no doubt that the Gospel writers were claiming unambiguously that he was the Messiah.

My view is that if indeed he was the Messiah, then we should be able in appropriate circumstances to reproduce all the miracles he performed. But maybe the circumstances today are not appropriate. Otherwise I cannot see that he saved us from very much. After all, he is supposed to have said that anything we asked he would do for us, anything at all, provided only we asked in his name. Again I view this exhortation rather as an encouragement to attempt as much as we dare, rather than a promise to be taken as the literal truth. But the Church has taken a different view throughout the ages; it assumes that none of us can remotely imitate his life, and preaches that it does not matter very much, because Christ on the cross paid the price of our inadequacy. I leave it to the reader to decide which view Jesus himself would probably have preferred? But then if Jesus had reappeared on earth in the Middle Ages without supernatural power, he would have been burned for heresy; at least that is the opinion of Dean Inge, the gloomy Dean. A gloomy opinion, but realistic?

However, there is not the remotest chance of our imitating Jesus and reproducing his miracles in the immediate future; even if it were possible to do so eventually, a long period of apprenticeship would be needed first. So in the meantime the secular State must be kept going; and that means the relentless prosecution, and adequate punishment, of criminal acts within the State, in order to maintain the Rule of Law; and it means an Army to defend the State from its external enemies, so as to enable the State to continue its existence. The Second Coming of Christ may be fairly soon, or it may be deferred for rather a long time, or as Jews prefer to say the true Messiah may make his appearance sooner, or later; but until this happens, the State and secular society must be kept going. It is unlikely that this apocalyptic event, however one describes it, will be facilitated by allowing society to degenerate into chaos in the meantime. And this means that religion must reconcile itself to the demands of the secular State, at least for the time being, however disagreeable this may be to the clerical establishment. And however much religion deplores the secular State, if it refuses to help the State to continue, it is like someone sawing off the branch on which they are sitting; and then

## CONDUCT.

wondering why Western Christendom descended into the Dark Ages when the branch was finally sawn through? Theology may be a most interesting mental discipline; but if it does not evolve, and the glory claimed for it is that it stays the same for ever and ever, then it is not going to be all that relevant to the predicament in which the Church or society finds itself today. To become relevant, the clergy need to become as adaptable as the Creator is Himself, or as Evolution appears to be when you study the morphology of creatures from the very distant past. Or again as the elder von Moltke said the army commander should be, when he modifies his original plan of operations after the first serious encounter with enemy forces!

How does German “War Guilt” fit in with all this? I’m not sure that it does. Some people say that Nazi Germany was a phenomenon quite unlike any other, in which criminals became the policemen, and the respectable law-abiding bourgeois became the criminals. But I am not sure this is right. How does the increasing chaos within Germany as the Nazis obtained power differ from the increasing chaos at the break-up of the Roman Empire, except that the enemy were within, rather than without? And what use is a religion if it promises to get you into heaven, but fails to lift a finger or make an effective protest, when evil starts to be accepted as “good”, and good starts to be labelled “evil”? Not much! As far as I am aware no Christian sect comes out of Hitler’s Germany with credit except the Jehovah’s Witnesses; and what was the point of dealing with the Pelagian heresy, when the German hordes began to carry fire and slaughter throughout the length and breadth of Gaul in 406AD? It seems to me we have seen it all before, except that the principal enemy is now within, rather than without. And Germany’s war guilt was primarily letting the gangsters get on top!

In an “ideal war”, each side would credit the other with a just cause, in order to leave open the door to negotiation should both sides begin to realize that the cost was beginning to far-exceed any possible gain. But this presupposes that both sides to the conflict have some sense of responsibility, and can be relied on to keep the conflict within the confines of political control. Now suppose one side behaves so badly, that its enemies are unwilling in any circumstances to seek to negotiate terms with them? Suppose it becomes known that the behaviour of one side in Belsen, Buchenwald and the Death Camps is so inhuman that none of their opponents will admit a willingness to trust their word; then the moment it looks as if the opponents are set to win, will they not openly rule out any question of negotiations with them? If so, War will then take its course, unfettered by any restraint of political expediency. Those who suggest there is anything to apologise for in the fire-storms of Hamburg and Dresden fail to understand the nature of War. Or expressing the same thought in Anglo-Saxon idiom, they have failed to understand that “There are no Rules in War; if you make



## CONDUCT.

Rules you lose!” Fire-bombing Hamburg and Dresden was in no sense revenge for the blitz on London and Coventry; it was the prosecution of War to its conclusion, once the policy of “Unconditional Surrender” had been agreed. The way to avoid the fire-bombing of Dresden was to have behaved, so that the Western Allies would always have wanted to keep open the door to possible negotiations. Then it would have been politically inexpedient for them to have gone too far. To the Anglo-Saxon mind, Germans who accept these unpalatable truths have expiated their war guilt, by recognising that they started it all, they opened Pandora’s box. Those who haven’t accepted these truths, remain deluded. The only mistake the Western Allies may have made was to agree the slogan “Unconditional Surrender”, which suited Joseph Stalin.

Let us consider a little more deeply how German war guilt may be expiated in reconciliation? Let us not limit ourselves to the Anglo-Saxon point of view. The horror of war, and the slaughter of war, is so awful, that for two people, one English and one German, to find their own happiness in the aftermath of it all is of course a kind of reconciliation; but hardly one where you could say, “Good has come out of evil”. To be able to say that, one must be able to rise above what has happened, to transcend the situation; and then one may be able to say that the “good” which is achieved is something which it was hardly practicable and maybe impossible to have achieved before the conflict. This raises the question of what the Second World War was really about, what it was that had to be expiated, and whether the Allied policy of “unconditional surrender” was politically wise, or politically foolish? Though I have misgivings about it, I think this policy probably was right. Germany had plunged Europe into world war twice in a generation, wars which between them destroyed Western civilization as it existed pre-1914, and in their first chapter launched communism on the world, destroyed the ailing Turkish Empire and destabilized the Middle East, and awakened Islam to the folly of so-called Christian culture. In their second chapter, Germany in a war of revenge sought world conquest, and very nearly extinguished freedom in Europe, perhaps for the duration of a 1000 year Reich. Incidentally in the two wars about 100 million people were killed.

It all arose from Germany regarding War, not as an instrument of policy, but in the end as policy in itself. The Schlieffen-plan aimed to conquer France with the same expedition as in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870; and this plan had been carefully filed away years before 1914. It was not clobbered together at the last moment. It went wrong for a number of reasons; jealousy in the German High Command, stiffer resistance from the Belgians and the British Expeditionary Force than expected, the fact that the younger von Moltke was only the

## CONDUCT.

shadow of his uncle, and the audacity of Marshall Joffre in the valley of the Marne. Trench warfare quickly became established; and the bullet, the spade, and barbed wire between them crushed every offensive between October 1914 and March 1918. The British High Command failed to exploit the possibilities of tank-warfare and fighting with armoured divisions, which had been advocated as early as 1915; so in 1916/17 there was the distinct possibility of a negotiated peace. But by that time Hindenberg and Ludendorff made the decisions, the civilian government in Germany was reduced to impotence; and Ludendorff made two crucial decisions, which in retrospect appear insane. He allowed Lenin to travel in a sealed train from Switzerland to Russia, where Lenin successfully took control of the revolutionary movement; and Ludendorff also initiated unrestricted submarine warfare, which brought America in on the Allied side. All compromise then became impossible. His gamble on the March 1918 offensive nearly succeeded, but in fact failed; and within 18 months of Lenin's journey, revolutionary fervour was infecting German troops. What Ludendorff did was to turn winning the war into a policy, despite any political considerations suggesting it was unwise to attempt it by those means. If War was not a policy in 1914, it was by 1917.

This was to stand what Clausewitz had written in his treatise *On War* on its head. War for him was an instrument of political policy, and military operations must always remain firmly under political control. War must not become an end in itself. He was not a politician, and did not trespass into the political world in his treatise *On War*. Britain's situation in 1940 was different from Germany's in 1917. The political purpose was survival, as a nation, as a bastion of freedom, as a guarantor of freedom in Europe; and to achieve that political purpose victory was necessary, almost at any cost. This was not so for Germany in 1917.

Now when a nation uses War, not as an instrument of policy, but as policy itself, is it wise to contemplate a negotiated peace? No negotiations were possible with Hitler; he had broken his word too often in the past. What murky waters would Britain have entered if it had tried in 1943 to enter into negotiations with a provisional German government, which claimed to disclaim Hitler? A government possibly composed of people who had voted Hitler into power in 1933. Was it not wiser to say, "A plague on both your houses"; and insist on "unconditional surrender"? Being a lawyer, and not a politician, it is hardly for me to express a decided opinion.

Once the decision on "unconditional surrender" had been made at the Casablanca conference in January 1943, the rest followed. It undermined the opposition to Hitler within Germany, which might conceivably have overthrown him; it freed the war from the caution of political expediency; it led to the fire-storms of Hamburg and Dresden. They were not war-

## CONDUCT.

crimes; they were not revenge for the bombing of London and Coventry; they were part and parcel of the total war which Adolph Hitler had unleashed. Besides the worthy citizens of Dresden had allowed over 5000 fellow-Jews to be sent to the death-camps; but a few remained who expected to be executed the following morning. For them to see Dresden go up in flames meant life, and health, and freedom when the Americans came. Who is going to weigh in the balance their joy at seeing their would-be executioners being reduced to charcoal, with the anguish of the guilty city? Germans who complain about Dresden have not even read the first page of Clausewitz's *On War*, where he ridicules the idea that kind-hearted people might think that in war one uses minimum force. War is violence, and you use the maximum force that is politically expedient. Besides, if in the final months of Germany's defeat, the Western Allies were expected to become a little more kind-hearted and humane, one might have thought that Germans too would have become more lax about the order that men like Dietrich Bonhoeffer were not to survive the Third Reich. But no; he was dutifully executed in April 1945. Does the German mind absolutely preclude any interpenetration by an Anglo-Saxon mind? Was no mutual understanding between them possible while Hitler lived? And even years after he had gone, was there still the same impassable gulf between the English mind and the German mind? Perhaps I was lucky only to dream about something which was utterly impossible. The only thing that may have been unwise was to agree the slogan "unconditional surrender", which suited Joseph Stalin. The bombing of Dresden was a brutal act of war. The Russians asked for it to be bombed; and whether necessary or not, it will have helped to din into the minds of some people that if you unleash total war on others, others may unleash total war on you. For me the moral is simple; don't open Pandora's box unless there is no alternative. War was not necessary for Germany in 1939; and the bombing of Dresden was trivial compared with the invasion of Russia.

Now these are not matters which easily form subjects of convivial conversation, particularly not with a member of the defeated nation. So it follows that any reconciliation between England and Germany must either ignore these matters, or transcend them; I chose to transcend them. So my choice inevitably involved rejection by someone too young to recognise the necessity of choice. But the same excuse does not exculpate the clergy of the C.of E. They are perfectly intelligent, many of them highly so; and they are very far from being immature. If they lack the experience necessary to recognise the necessity of choice, is it unfair to conclude they chose not to have that experience? They chose not to consider adequately the nature of forgiveness, and the preconditions for reconciliation?

## CONDUCT.

And the precondition for reconciliation in these circumstances is to be able to point to something which can be redeemed from the horrors of war and its accompanying slaughter; some “good” which could not have been realized or anticipated beforehand. For example, a kind of relationship and a degree of intimacy and disciplined trust which simply could not have existed without the trauma of conflict. In Christian thinking, Jesus was in some way perfected through suffering. Nobody quite understands what this means, because Christians generally recognise that he was a pretty good example to us before his crucifixion. But somehow the crucifixion added an inner dimension to it all, which had not existed before. It is expressed in various grossly inadequate ways, by saying Jesus reconciled us to the Father, or atoned for our sins; but I think perfected through suffering is the best. So with the problem of England and Germany, in elevating a personal problem into a symbol of national reconciliation, it had to be possible to say, “good has come out of evil”. That was only possible if the relationship, which symbolised that reconciliation, could not have existed without the conflict; and one vivid but inadequate way of describing it all is to say that I tried to recreate between humans the same relationship or indwelling that is supposed to exist between God and the soul. I believe Mozart was correct in his opera *Così fan Tutte* to portray the emotions that grow naturally between people as ephemeral in this world, and always subject to the arrival of “the fresher faces” that Browning mentions in his poem “Any Wife to Any Husband”. For there to be any permanence, the Deity must be involved.

But how to involve the Deity? How better than by invoking His creativeness? But to create what? The fulfilment of our wishful thinking; to create a world of infinite variety and infinite absurdity? Or to help create a world after His own heart? And if the latter, does it not mean modelling our creativeness on His relationships with us? I understand, maybe incorrectly, that the fundamental difference between Christianity and Islam is that our God seeks man’s friendship, whereas most Muslims say Allah would demean himself by seeking his friendship. If this is correct, then Christians can invoke the creativeness of God, though few of them do; but is it not meaningless for Muslims to invoke a creativeness when they have no pattern to imitate or develop? If Muslims are content with this situation; well and good. But they may live to regret it. How can it be an advantage to cut yourself off from all that is most creative in yourself? And is it not a great evil to try to compel others to conform to your inadequacy, when we are all inadequate? Which is better: to create, or to stifle creativeness? To choose greater life, or lesser life? And is not the good the enemy of the best?

## CONDUCT.

Meister Eckhart says it better than anyone. Attractive mystic, hard-working scholar, profound psychologist six hundred years before the science of psychology had begun, Eckhart wrote as follows:-

..by this kingdom of God we understand the soul, for the soul is of like nature with the Godhead. Hence all that has been said there of the kingdom of God, how God himself is the kingdom, may be said with equal truth of the soul. St. John says, "All things were made by him." This is to be understood of the soul, for the soul is all things. The soul is all things because she is the image of God....So much..is God in the soul, that his whole divine nature depends on her. It is a higher state for God to be in the soul than for the soul to be in God. The soul is not blissful because she is in God, she is blissful because God is in her. Rely upon it, God himself is blissful in the soul."

So it was that I thought to welcome the soul of another into my soul; not to expel the spirit of God, but to dwell beside Him, in harmony. In that way I hoped to create an indwelling that mirrored the Divine indwelling, and also to make some sense of the holocaust of the Second World War, particularly of the campaign in communist Russia where it is said that 20 million people were killed. As Plotinus wrote, "The teaching is only of whither and how to go, the vision itself is the work of him who has willed to see".

Throughout all three of my books, "Man's Relationship with God", a "Reconciliation with Science and War", and a "View of Nature and the Universe", there is the underlying assumption that the whole point of religious theory, the whole point of trying to understand the complexity of evolution, the whole point of mastering some of the principles of conflict, is so that the conduct of a man or woman will be a sterling example of how to behave, to those round about. Not necessarily a comfortable example. Not necessarily successful; but demonstrating unequivocally that underneath the thick velvet glove, there has to be the mailed fist, otherwise society degenerates into chaos. The problems of religion all centre round conduct.