

## A PERSONAL RECORD.

### CHAPTER 2.

#### CIVILISATION.

Civilization is a seamless garment. There is only one world in which we, human beings, are allowed to live. There are not four or five worlds; I mean the world of history, of politics, of conflict, of law and order, of science, of art, and finally the world of religion, and above all the relationship of man to his creator, which the clergy profess to understand profoundly. As St. Thomas Aquinas said they should all fit together because they were all created by the same God. That is the theory; but when one turns from theory to practice one finds that religion is despised by the bulk of the population in this country. It is hardly believable, until one meets a few clergy; then one understands. When one considers that they were entrusted with the safekeeping of the holiest aspirations of the human spirit, and we have a situation where religion is despised by the bulk of the population, the shame of the situation is comparable with the surrender of Singapore to the Japanese by General Percival in February 1942.

The reasons for this debacle are not hard to find. There was a time when the creeds and teachings of the Christian religion gave as good a description as possible of the aspirations of the Western spirit. But that time is now long past. Probably this was still true in 1648, the end of the Thirty Years War. It began to fade with the rise of science, from 1660 onwards. By the time of our Glorious Revolution of 1688, this country had had enough of religious enthusiasm. But the clergy did what they have always done, they turned their backs on modern knowledge, and went on preaching the same old stuff. In consequence they became more and more out of touch with life. If you reject experience, you cut yourself off from all community, as Aristotle said. You resemble Medieval monks drawing flowers, not from life, but from books of pictures of flowers.

Mathew's Gospel records the Risen Christ proclaiming that all power in heaven and earth had been committed to him. If it was, then I am sorry to say that either he has manifestly and hopelessly failed in 2000 years to bring the

## A PERSONAL RECORD.

Kingdom of Heaven down to earth, or that his followers have been remarkably inept. Yes, the Church has brought a tiny corner of it down here and there, for a brief time. But on the grand scale, the Sermon on the Mount, however splendid its rhetoric, if applied without careful thought or reflection is the recipe for terror and chaos, and not peace on earth. The Chinese understood this perfectly 500 years before Jesus was born; but unfortunately everything points to Jesus being ignorant of Confucius, and his disagreements with the Chinese legalists. Jesus' general knowledge will have been that of a well-informed carpenter in Galilee; and that certainly did not include any science, and I very much doubt if it included a study of comparative jurisprudence. So whilst we can all rejoice that "he showed us the Father"; we have to accept, unless we are completely irresponsible, either that Jesus gave no useful advice on running a community, or that any advice he did give was completely worthless. He foretold that his "Second Coming" would be comparatively soon, if not within the lifetime of some of those alive in his day. And that was complete fantasy. It is not fashionable among churchgoers to cut Jesus down to size; but when we live in a world imminently in danger of blowing itself to smithereens in an atomic war, it is irresponsible not to. And most churchgoers are irresponsible.

If proof is wanted that Jesus' Ministry was not the recipe for Law and Order, or for political harmony between Nations, the German Wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are as good a proof as one could want. When twice within thirty years a civilised, Christian, nation sets out to conquer the world, and manages in the process to destroy European civilisation, something is wrong. Jung was the first person to suggest that the 1914 War was not really about the lack of colonies or trade outlets; but was due to the Spirit of Wotan being brought to life again in the spirit of the Teutonic peoples. And this was achieved, though Jung did not say it, by Bismark in his three nice little wars, which created the German Empire, and which allowed Germans to think that War could solve all problems. Clausewitz had suggested that War was "political intercourse by other means";

## A PERSONAL RECORD.

Bismark practised War as the alternative to political intercourse, when it suited him to do so. What is the point of pacifism in this situation? It leads straight to capitulation. And it raises the question: who let Evil into the world anyway?

The only possible answer is that God created a world in which Evil was not only possible but necessary, because He chose to create Man through the Evolution of Nature, a process in which natural selection and survival of the fittest must have played a significant part. So killing and death were an inseparable part of life from the start; and when Man began to have some intimations of his relationship with his Creator, murder made its appearance as well. That lovely fairy-story of Adam and Eve recognised that God placed in Man's way the insuperable temptation of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and when Man inevitably fell, he was expelled from the garden. But to make sense of that story, we should bracket it with the story of the murder of Abel by Cain. They were not stories about the origin of Evil, which to the Jews was a mystery; they were stories to illustrate the great moral lesson: that if Man severs the bond with his Creator, murder follows. From ancient times men have recognised the nearness of the Creator. In the 30<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Deuteronomy, as Moses is described talking to the Children of Israel for the last time, he tells them that the word of God is not in some remote heaven, nor far away beyond the seas, but very close to them, in their lips and in their hearts. To their eternal credit, the Jews have for long recognised that God, if He exists at all, is very close to us indeed. The psalmist expressed it by saying, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. I cannot attain unto it". In the modern world, which worships Success but is not disposed to worship anything else, even the symbolism of arm-waving, which I regard as ridiculous, in evangelical churches is surely an intimation in the soul that the spirit of God is in our beings, not something outside ourselves? In psychological language, if you disagree with your inmost self, you develop mental problems; if you split with your inmost self, you develop psychosis. The religious person would say, "What did you expect?"