

## **CHAPTER XII - THE FALL OF CHIVALRY**

On the back of this book is the name of the New Jerusalem and on the first page of it a phrase about the necessity of going back to the old even to find the new, as a man retraces his steps to a sign-post. The common sense of that process is indeed most mysteriously misunderstood. Any suggestion that progress has at any time taken the wrong turning is always answered by the argument that men idealise the past, and make a myth of the Age of Gold. If my progressive guide has led me into a morass or a man-trap by turning to the left by the red pillar-box, instead of to the right by the blue palings of the inn called the Rising Sun, my progressive guide always proceeds to soothe me by talking about the myth of an Age of Gold. He says I am idealising the right turning. He says the blue palings are not so blue as they are painted. He says they are only blue with distance. He assures me there are spots on the sun, even on the rising sun. Sometimes he tells me I am wrong in my fixed conviction that the blue was of solid sapphires, or the sun of solid gold. In short he assures me I am wrong in supposing that the right turning was right in every possible respect; as if I had ever supposed anything of the sort. I want to go back to that particular place, not because it was all my fancy paints it, or because it was the best place my fancy can paint; but because it was a many thousand times better place than the man-trap in which he and his like have landed me. But above all I want to go back to it, not because I know it was the right place but because I think it was the right turning. And the right turning might possibly have led me to the right place; whereas the progressive guide has quite certainly led me to the wrong one.

Now it is quite true that there is less general human testimony to the notion of a New Jerusalem in the future than to the notion of a Golden Age in the past. But neither of those ideas, whether or no they are illusions, are any answer to the question of a plain man in the plain position of this parable; a man who has to find some guidance in the past if he is to get any good in the future. What he positively knows, in any case, is the complete collapse of the present. Now that is the exact truth about the thing so often rebuked as a romantic and unreal return of modern men to medieval things. They suppose they have taken the wrong turning, because they know they are in the wrong place. To know that, it is necessary not to idealise the medieval world, but merely to realise the modern world. It is not so much that they suppose the medieval world was above the average as that they feel sure the modern world is below the average. They do not start either with the idea that man is meant to live in a New Jerusalem of pearl and sapphire in the future, or that a man was meant to live in a picturesque and richly-painted tavern of the past; but with a strong inward and personal persuasion that a man was not meant to live in a man-trap.

For there is and will be more and more a turn of total change in all our talk and writing about history. Everything in the past was praised if it had led up to the present, and blamed if it would have led up to anything else. In short everybody has been searching the past for the secret of our success. Very soon everybody may be searching the past for the secret of our failure. They may be talking in such terms as they use after a motor smash or a bankruptcy; where was the blunder? They may be writing such books as generals write after a military defeat; whose was the fault? The failure will be assumed even in being explained.

For industrialism is no longer a vulgar success. On the contrary, it is now too tragic even to be vulgar. Under the cloud of doom the modern city has taken on something of the dignity of Babel or Babylon. Whether we call it the nemesis of Capitalism or the nightmare of Bolshevism makes no difference; the rich grumble as much as the poor; every one is discontented, and none more than those who are chiefly discontented with the discontent. About that discord we are in perfect harmony; about that disease we all think alike, whatever we think of the diagnosis or the cure. By whatever process in the past we might have come to the right place, practical facts in the present and future will prove more and more that we have come to the wrong place. And for many a premonition will grow more and more of a probability; that we may or may not await another century or another world to see the New Jerusalem rebuilt and shining on our fields; but in the flesh we shall see Babylon fall.

But there is another way in which that metaphor of the forked road will make the position plain. Medieval society was not the right place; it was only the right turning. It was only the right road; or perhaps only the beginning of the right road. The medieval age was very far from being the age in which everything went right. It would be nearer the truth I mean to call it the age in which everything went wrong. It was the moment when things might have developed well, and did develop badly. Or rather, to be yet more exact, it was the moment when they were developing well, and yet they were driven to develop badly. This was the history of all the medieval states and of none more than medieval Jerusalem; indeed there were signs of some serious idea of making it the model medieval state. Of this notion of Jerusalem as the New Jerusalem, of the Utopian aspect of the adventure of the Latin Kingdom, something may be said in a moment. But meanwhile there was a more important part played by Jerusalem, I think, in all that great progress and reaction which has left us the problem of modern Europe. And the suggestion of it is bound up with the former suggestion, about the difference between the goal and the right road that might have led to it. It is bound up with that quality of the civilisation in question, that it was potential rather than perfect; and there is no need to idealise it in order to regret it. This peculiar part played by Jerusalem I mention merely as a suggestion; I might

almost say a suspicion. Anyhow, it is something of a guess; but I for one have found it a guide.

Medievalism died, but it died young. It was at once energetic and incomplete when it died, or very shortly before it died. This is not a matter of sympathy or antipathy, but of appreciation of an interesting historic comparison with other historic cases. When the Roman Empire finally failed we cannot of course say that it had done all it was meant to do, for that is dogmatism. We cannot even say it had done all that it might have done, for that is guesswork. But we can say that it had done certain definite things and was conscious of having done them; that it had long and even literally rested on its laurels. But suppose that Rome had fallen when she had only half defeated Carthage, or when she had only half conquered Gaul, or even when the city was Christian but most of the provinces still heathen. Then we should have said, not merely that Rome had not done what she might have done, but that she had not done what she was actually doing. And that is very much the truth in the matter of the medieval civilisation. It was not merely that the medievals left undone what they might have done, but they left undone what they were doing. This potential promise is proved not only in their successes but in their failures. It is shown, for instance, in the very defects of their art. All the crafts of which Gothic architecture formed the framework were developed, not only less than they should have been, but less than they would have been. There is no sort of reason why their sculpture should not have become as perfect as their architecture; there is no sort of reason why their sense of form should not have been as finished as their sense of colour. A statue like the St. George of Donatello would have stood more appropriately under a Gothic than under a Classic arch. The niches were already made for the statues. The same thing is true, of course, not only about the state of the crafts but about the status of the craftsman. The best proof that the system of the guilds had an undeveloped good in it is that the most advanced modern men are now going back five hundred years to get the good out of it. The best proof that a rich house was brought to ruin is that our very pioneers are now digging in the ruins to find the riches. That the new guildsmen add a great deal that never belonged to the old guildsmen is not only a truth, but is part of the truth I maintain here. The new guildsmen add what the old guildsmen would have added if they had not died young. When we renew a frustrated thing we do not renew the frustration. But if there are some things in the new that were not in the old, there were certainly some things in the old that are not yet visible in the new; such as individual humour in the handiwork. The point here, however, is not merely that the worker worked well but that he was working better; not merely that his mind was free but that it was growing freer. All this popular power and humour was increasing everywhere, when something touched it and it withered away. The frost had struck it in the spring.

Some people complain that the working man of our own day does not show an individual interest in his work. But it will be well to realise that they would be much more annoyed with him if he did. The medieval workman took so individual an interest in his work that he would call up devils entirely on his own account, carving them in corners according to his own taste and fancy. He would even reproduce the priests who were his patrons and make them as ugly as devils; carving anti-clerical caricatures on the very seats and stalls of the clerics. If a modern householder, on entering his own bathroom, found that the plumber had twisted the taps into the images of two horned and grinning fiends, he would be faintly surprised. If the householder, on returning at evening to his house, found the door-knocker distorted into a repulsive likeness of himself, his surprise might even be tinged with disapproval. It may be just as well that builders and bricklayers do not gratuitously attach gargoyles to our smaller residential villas. But well or ill, it is certainly true that this feature of a flexible popular fancy has never reappeared in any school of architecture or any state of society since the medieval decline. The great classical buildings of the Renaissance were swept as bare of it as any villa in Balham. But those who best appreciate this loss to popular art will be the first to agree that at its best it retained a touch of the barbaric as well as the popular. While we can admire these matters of the grotesque, we can admit that their work was sometimes unintentionally as well as intentionally grotesque. Some of the carving did remain so rude that the angels were almost as ugly as the devils. But this is the very point upon which I would here insist; the mystery of why men who were so obviously only beginning should have so suddenly stopped.

Men with medieval sympathies are sometimes accused, absurdly enough, of trying to prove that the medieval period was perfect. In truth the whole case for it is that it was imperfect. It was imperfect as an unripe fruit or a growing child is imperfect. Indeed it was imperfect in that very particular fashion which most modern thinkers generally praise, more than they ever praise maturity. It was something now much more popular than an age of perfection; it was an age of progress. It was perhaps the one real age of progress in all history. Men have seldom moved with such rapidity and such unity from barbarism to civilisation as they did from the end of the Dark Ages to the times of the universities and the parliaments, the cathedrals and the guilds. Up to a certain point we may say that everything, at whatever stage of improvement, was full of the promise of improvement. Then something began to go wrong, almost equally rapidly, and the glory of this great culture is not so much in what it did as in what it might have done. It recalls one of these typical medieval speculations, full of the very fantasy of free will, in which the schoolmen tried to fancy the fate of every herb or animal if Adam had not eaten the apple. It remains, in a cant historical phrase, one of the great might-have-beens of history.

I have said that it died young; but perhaps it would be truer to say that it suddenly grew old. Like Godfrey and many of its great champions in Jerusalem, it was overtaken in the prime of life by a mysterious malady. The more a man reads of history the less easy he will find it to explain that secret and rapid decay of medieval civilisation from within. Only a few generations separated the world that worshipped St. Francis from the world that burned Joan of Arc. One would think there might be no more than a date and a number between the white mystery of Louis the Ninth and the black mystery of Louis the Eleventh. This is the very real historical mystery; the more realistic is our study of medieval things, the more puzzled we shall be about the peculiar creeping paralysis which affected things so virile and so full of hope. There was a growth of moral morbidity as well as social inefficiency, especially in the governing classes; for even to the end the guildsmen and the peasants remained much more vigorous. How it ended we all know; personally I should say that they got the Reformation and deserved it. But it matters nothing to the truth here whether the Reformation was a just revolt and revenge or an unjust culmination and conquest. It is common ground to Catholics and Protestants of intelligence that evils preceded and produced the schism; and that evils were produced by it and have pursued it down to our own day. We know it if only in the one example, that the schism begat the Thirty Years' War, and the Thirty Years' War begat the Seven Years' War, and the Seven Years' War begat the Great War, which has passed like a pestilence through our own homes. After the schism Prussia could relapse into heathenry and erect an ethical system external to the whole culture of Christendom. But it can still be reasonably asked what begat the schism; and it can still be reasonably answered; something that went wrong with medievalism. But what was it that went wrong?

When I looked for the last time on the towers of Zion I had a fixed fancy that I knew what it was. It is a thing that cannot be proved or disproved; it must sound merely an ignorant guess. But I believe myself that it died of disappointment. I believe the whole medieval society failed, because the heart went out of it with the loss of Jerusalem. Let it be observed that I do not say the loss of the war, or even the Crusade. For the war against Islam was not lost. The Moslem was overthrown in the real battle-field, which was Spain; he was menaced in Africa; his imperial power was already stricken and beginning slowly to decline. I do not mean the political calculations about a Mediterranean war. I do not even mean the Papal conceptions about the Holy War. I mean the purely popular picture of the Holy City. For while the aristocratic thing was a view, the vulgar thing was a vision; something with which all stories stop, something where the rainbow ends, something over the hills and far away. In Spain they had been victorious; but their castle was not even a castle in Spain. It was a castle east of the sun and west of the moon, and the fairy prince could find it no more. Indeed that idle image out of the nursery books fits it very exactly. For its mystery was and is in standing in the middle, or as they said in the very centre of the earth. It is east of

the sun of Europe, which fills the world with a daylight of sanity, and ripens real and growing things. It is west of the moon of Asia, mysterious and archaic with its cold volcanoes, silver mirror for poets and a most fatal magnet for lunatics.

Anyhow the fall of Jerusalem, and in that sense the failure of the Crusades, had a widespread effect, as I should myself suggest, for the reason I have myself suggested. Because it had been a popular movement, it was a popular disappointment; and because it had been a popular movement, its ideal was an image; a particular picture in the imagination. For poor men are almost always particularists; and nobody has ever seen such a thing as a mob of pantheists. I have seen in some of that lost literature of the old guilds, which is now everywhere coming to light, a list of the stage properties required for some village play, one of those popular plays acted by the medieval trades unions, for which the guild of the shipwrights would build Noah's Ark or the guild of the barbers provide golden wigs for the haloes of the Twelve Apostles. The list of those crude pieces of stage furniture had a curious colour of poetry about it, like the impromptu apparatus of a nursery charade; a cloud, an idol with a club, and notably among the rest, the walls and towers of Jerusalem. I can imagine them patiently painted and gilded as a special feature, like the two tubs of Mr. Vincent Crummies. But I can also imagine that towards the end of the Middle Ages, the master of the revels might begin to look at those towers of wood and pasteboard with a sort of pain, and perhaps put them away in a corner, as a child will tire of a toy especially if it is associated with a disappointment or a dismal misunderstanding. There is noticeable in some of the later popular poems a disposition to sulk about the Crusades. But though the popular feeling had been largely poetical, the same thing did in its degree occur in the political realm that was purely practical. The Moslem had been checked, but he had not been checked enough. The whole story of what was called the Eastern Question, and three-quarters of the wars of the modern world, were due to the fact that he was not checked enough.

The only thing to do with unconquerable things is to conquer them. That alone will cure them of invincibility; or what is worse, their own vision of invincibility. That was the conviction of those of us who would not accept what we considered a premature peace with Prussia. That is why we would not listen either to the Tory Pro-Germanism of Lord Lansdowne or the Socialist Pro-Germanism of Mr. Macdonald. If a lunatic believes in his luck so fixedly as to feel sure he cannot be caught, he will not only believe in it still, but believe in it more and more, until the actual instant when he is caught. The longer the chase, the more certain he will be of escaping; the more narrow the escapes, the more certain will be the escape. And indeed if he does escape it will seem a miracle, and almost a divine intervention, not only to the pursued but to the pursuers. The evil thing will chiefly appear unconquerable to those who try to conquer it. It will seem after all

to have a secret of success; and those who failed against it will hide in their hearts a secret of failure. It was that secret of failure, I fancy, that slowly withered from within the high hopes of the Middle Ages. Christianity and chivalry had measured their force against Mahound, and Mahound had not fallen; the shadow of his horned helmet, the crest of the Crescent, still lay across their sunnier lands; the Horns of Hattin. The streams of life that flowed to guilds and schools and orders of knighthood and brotherhoods of friars were strangely changed and chilled. So, if the peace had left Prussianism secure even in Prussia, I believe that all the liberal ideals of the Latins, and all the liberties of the English, and the whole theory of a democratic experiment in America, would have begun to die of a deep and even subconscious despair. A vote, a jury, a newspaper, would not be as they are, things of which it is hard to make the right use, or any use; they would be things of which nobody would even try to make any use. A vote would actually look like a vassal's cry of "haro," a jury would look like a joust; many would no more read headlines than blazon heraldic coats. For these medieval things look dead and dusty because of a defeat, which was none the less a defeat because it was more than half a victory.

A curious cloud of confusion rests on the details of that defeat. The Christian captains who acted in it were certainly men on a different moral level from the good Duke Godfrey; their characters were by comparison mixed and even mysterious. Perhaps the two determining personalities were Raymond of Tripoli, a skilful soldier whom his enemies seemed to have accused of being much too skilful a diplomatist; and Renaud of Chatillon, a violent adventurer whom his enemies seem to have accused of being little better than a bandit. And it is the irony of the incident that Raymond got into trouble for making a dubious peace with the Saracens, while Renaud got into trouble by making an equally dubious war on the Saracens. Renaud exacted from Moslem travellers on a certain road what he regarded as a sort of feudal toll or tax, and they regarded as a brigand ransom; and when they did not pay he attacked them. This was regarded as a breach of the truce; but probably it would have been easier to regard Renaud as waging the war of a robber, if many had not regarded Raymond as having made the truce of a traitor. Probably Raymond was not a traitor, since the military advice he gave up to the very instant of catastrophe was entirely loyal and sound, and worthy of so wise a veteran. And very likely Renaud was not merely a robber, especially in his own eyes; and there seems to be a much better case for him than many modern writers allow. But the very fact of such charges being bandied among the factions shows a certain fall from the first days under the headship of the house of Bouillon. No slanderer ever suggested that Godfrey was a traitor; no enemy ever asserted that Godfrey was only a thief. It is fairly clear that there had been a degeneration; but most people hardly realise sufficiently that there had been a very great thing from which to degenerate.

The first Crusades had really had some notion of Jerusalem as a New Jerusalem. I mean they had really had a vision of the place being not only a promised land but a Utopia or even an Earthly Paradise. The outstanding fact and feature which is seldom seized is this: that the social experiment in Palestine was rather in advance of the social experiments in the rest of Christendom. Having to begin at the beginning, they really began with what they considered the best ideas of their time; like any group of Socialists founding an ideal Commonwealth in a modern colony. A specialist on this period, Colonel Conder of the Palestine Exploration, has written that the core of the Code was founded on the recommendations of Godfrey himself in his "Letters of the Sepulchre"; and he observes concerning it: "The basis of these laws was found in Justinian's code, and they presented features as yet quite unknown in Europe, especially in their careful provision of justice for the bourgeois and the peasant, and for the trading communes whose fleets were so necessary to the king. Not only were free men judged by juries of their equals, but the same applied to those who were technically serfs and actually aborigines." The original arrangements of the Native Court seem to me singularly liberal, even by modern standards of the treatment of natives. That in many such medieval codes citizens were still called serfs is no more final than the fact that in many modern capitalist newspapers serfs are still called citizens. The whole point about the villein was that he was a tenant at least as permanent as a peasant. He "went with the land"; and there are a good many hopeless tramps starving in streets, or sleeping in ditches, who might not be sorry if they could go with a little land. It would not be very much worse than homelessness and hunger to go with a good kitchen garden of which you could always eat most of the beans and turnips; or to go with a good cornfield of which you could take a considerable proportion of the corn. There has been many a modern man would have been none the worse for "going" about burdened with such a green island, or dragging the chains of such a tangle of green living things. As a fact, of course, this system throughout Christendom was already evolving rapidly into a pure peasant proprietorship; and it will be long before industrialism evolves by itself into anything so equal or so free. Above all, there appears notably that universal mark of the medieval movement; the voluntary liberation of slaves. But we may willingly allow that something of the earlier success of all this was due to the personal qualities of the first knights fresh from the West; and especially to the personal justice and moderation of Godfrey and some of his immediate kindred. Godfrey died young; his successors had mostly short periods of power, largely through the prevalence of malaria and the absence of medicine. Royal marriages with the more oriental tradition of the Armenian princes brought in new elements of luxury and cynicism; and by the time of the disputed truce of Raymond of Tripoli, the crown had descended to a man named Guy of Lusignan who seems to have been regarded as a somewhat unsatisfactory character. He had quarrelled with Raymond, who was ruler of Galilee, and a curious and rather incomprehensible concession made by the latter, that the Saracens should ride in



arms but in peace round his land, led to alleged Moslem insults to Nazareth, and the outbreak of the furious Templar, Gerard of Bideford, of which mention has been made already. But the most serious threat to them and their New Jerusalem was the emergence among the Moslems of a man of military genius, and the fact that all that land lay now under the shadow of the ambition and ardour of Saladin.

With the breach of the truce, or even the tale of it, the common danger of Christians was apparent; and Raymond of Tripoli repaired to the royal headquarters to consult with his late enemy the king; but he seems to have been almost openly treated as a traitor. Gerard of Bideford, the fanatic who was Grand Master of the Templars, forced the king's hand against the advice of the wiser soldier, who had pointed out the peril of perishing of thirst in the waterless wastes between them and the enemy. Into those wastes they advanced, and they were already weary and unfit for warfare by the time they came in sight of the strange hills that will be remembered for ever under the name of the Horns of Hattin. On those hills, a few hours later, the last knights of an army of which half had fallen gathered in a final defiance and despair round the relic they carried in their midst, a fragment of the True Cross. In that hour fell, as I have fancied, more hopes than they themselves could number, and the glory departed from the Middle Ages. There fell with them all that New Jerusalem which was the symbol of a new world, all those great and growing promises and possibilities of Christendom of which this vision was the centre, all that "justice for the bourgeois and the peasant, and for the trading communes," all the guilds that gained their charters by fighting for the Cross, all the hopes of a happier transformation of the Roman Law wedded to charity and to chivalry. There was the first slip and the great swerving of our fate; and in that wilderness we lost all the things we should have loved, and shall need so long a labour to find again.

Raymond of Tripoli had hewn his way through the enemy and ridden away to Tyre. The king, with a few of the remaining nobles, including Renaud de Chatillon, were brought before Saladin in his tent. There occurred a scene strangely typical of the mingled strains in the creed or the culture that triumphed on that day; the stately Eastern courtesy and hospitality; the wild Eastern hatred and self-will. Saladin welcomed the king and gracefully gave him a cup of sherbet, which he passed to Renaud. "It is thou and not I who hast given him to drink," said the Saracen, preserving the precise letter of the punctilio of hospitality. Then he suddenly flung himself raving and reviling upon Renaud de Chatillon, and killed the prisoner with his own hands. Outside, two hundred Hospitallers and Templars were beheaded on the field of battle; by one account I have read because Saladin disliked them, and by another because they were Christian priests.

There is a strong bias against the Christians and in favour of the Moslems and the Jews in most of the Victorian historical works, especially historical novels. And most people of modern, or rather of very recent times got all their notions of history from dipping into historical novels. In those romances the Jew is always the oppressed where in reality he was often the oppressor. In those romances the Arab is always credited with oriental dignity and courtesy and never with oriental crookedness and cruelty. The same injustice is introduced into history, which by means of selection and omission can be made as fictitious as any fiction. Twenty historians mention the way in which the maddened Christian mob murdered the Moslems after the capture of Jerusalem, for one who mentions that the Moslem commander commanded in cold blood the murder of some two hundred of his most famous and valiant enemies after the victory of Hattin. The former cannot be shown to have been the act of Tancred, while the latter was quite certainly the act of Saladin. Yet Tancred is described as at best a doubtful character, while Saladin is represented as a Bayard without fear or blame. Both of them doubtless were ordinary faulty fighting men, but they are not judged by an equal balance. It may seem a paradox that there should be this prejudice in Western history in favour of Eastern heroes. But the cause is clear enough; it is the remains of the revolt among many Europeans against their own old religious organisation, which naturally made them hunt through all ages for its crimes and its victims. It was natural that Voltaire should sympathise more with a Brahmin he had never seen than with a Jesuit with whom he was engaged in a violent controversy; and should similarly feel more dislike of a Catholic who was his enemy than of a Moslem who was the enemy of his enemy. In this atmosphere of natural and even pardonable prejudice arose the habit of contrasting the intolerance of the Crusaders with the toleration shown by the Moslems. Now as there are two sides to everything, it would undoubtedly be quite possible to tell the tale of the Crusades, correctly enough in detail, and in such a way as entirely to justify the Moslems and condemn the Crusaders. But any such real record of the Moslem case would have very little to do with any questions of tolerance or intolerance, or any modern ideas about religious liberty and equality. As the modern world does not know what it means itself by religious liberty and equality, as the moderns have not thought out any logical theory of toleration at all (for their vague generalisations can always be upset by twenty tests from Thugs to Christian Science) it would obviously be unreasonable to expect the moderns to understand the much clearer philosophy of the Moslems. But some rough suggestion of what was really involved may be found convenient in this case.

Islam was not originally a movement directed against Christianity at all. It did not face westwards, so to speak; it faced eastwards towards the idolatries of Asia. But Mahomet believed that these idols could be fought more successfully with a simpler kind of creed; one might almost say with a simpler kind of Christianity. For he included many things which we in the West commonly suppose not only to

be peculiar to Christianity but to be peculiar to Catholicism. Many things have been rejected by Protestantism that are not rejected by Mahometanism. Thus the Moslems believe in Purgatory, and they give at least a sort of dignity to the Mother of Christ. About such things as these they have little of the bitterness that rankles in the Jews and is said sometimes to become hideously vitriolic. While I was in Palestine a distinguished Moslem said to a Christian resident: "We also, as well as you, honour the Mother of Christ. Never do we speak of her but we call her the Lady Miriam. I dare not tell you what the Jews call her."

The real mistake of the Moslems is something much more modern in its application than any particular or passing persecution of Christians as such. It lay in the very fact that they did think they had a simpler and saner sort of Christianity, as do many modern Christians. They thought it could be made universal merely by being made uninteresting. Now a man preaching what he thinks is a platitude is far more intolerant than a man preaching what he admits is a paradox. It was exactly because it seemed self-evident, to Moslems as to Bolsheviks, that their simple creed was suited to everybody, that they wished in that particular sweeping fashion to impose it on everybody. It was because Islam was broad that Moslems were narrow. And because it was not a hard religion it was a heavy rule. Because it was without a self-correcting complexity, it allowed of those simple and masculine but mostly rather dangerous appetites that show themselves in a chieftain or a lord. As it had the simplest sort of religion, monotheism, so it had the simplest sort of government, monarchy. There was exactly the same direct spirit in its despotism as in its deism. The Code, the Common Law, the give and take of charters and chivalric vows, did not grow in that golden desert. The great sun was in the sky and the great Saladin was in his tent, and he must be obeyed unless he were assassinated. Those who complain of our creeds as elaborate often forget that the elaborate Western creeds have produced the elaborate Western constitutions; and that they are elaborate because they are emancipated. And the real moral of the relations of the two great religions is something much more subtle and sincere than any mere atrocity tales against Turks. It is the same as the moral of the Christian refusal of a Pagan Pantheon in which Christ should rank with Ammon and Apollo. Twice the Christian Church refused what seemed like a handsome offer of a large latitudinarian sort; once to include Christ as a god and once to include him as a prophet; once by the admission of all idols and once by the abandonment of all idols. Twice the Church took the risk and twice the Church survived alone and succeeded alone, filling the world with her own children; and leaving her rivals in a desert, where the idols were dead and the iconoclasts were dying.

But all this history has been hidden by a prejudice more general than the particular case of Saracens and Crusaders. The modern, or rather the Victorian prejudice against Crusaders is positive and not relative; and it would still desire

to condemn Tancred if it could not acquit Saladin. Indeed it is a prejudice not so much against Crusaders as against Christians. It will not give to these heroes of religious war the fair measure it gives to the heroes of ordinary patriotic and imperial war. There never was a nobler hero than Nelson, or one more national or more normal. Yet Nelson quite certainly did do what Tancred almost certainly did not do; break his own word by giving up his own brave enemies to execution. If the cause of Nelson in other times comes to be treated as the creed of Tancred has often in recent times been treated, this incident alone will be held sufficient to prove not only that Nelson was a liar and a scoundrel, but that he did not love England at all, did not love Lady Hamilton at all, that he sailed in English ships only to pocket the prize money of French ships, and would as willingly have sailed in French ships for the prize money of English ships. That is the sort of dull dust of gold that has been shaken like the drifting dust of the desert over the swords and the relics, the crosses and the clasped hands of the men who marched to Jerusalem or died at Hattin. In these medieval pilgrims every inconsistency is a hypocrisy; while in the more modern patriots even an infamy is only an inconsistency. I have rounded off the story here with the ruin at Hattin because the whole reaction against the pilgrimage had its origin there; and because it was this at least that finally lost Jerusalem. Elsewhere in Palestine, to say nothing of Africa and Spain, splendid counter-strokes were still being delivered from the West, not the least being the splendid rescue by Richard of England. But I still think that with the mere name of that tiny town upon the hills the note of the whole human revolution had been struck, was changed and was silent. All the other names were only the names of Eastern towns; but that was nearer to a man than his neighbours; a village inside his village, a house inside his house.

There is a hill above Bethlehem of a strange shape, with a flat top which makes it look oddly like an island, habitable though uninhabited, when all Moab heaves about it and beyond it as with the curves and colours of a sea. Its stability suggests in some strange fashion what may often be felt in these lands with the longest record of culture; that there may be not only a civilisation but even a chivalry older than history. Perhaps the table-land with its round top has a romantic reminiscence of a round table. Perhaps it is only a fantastic effect of evening, for it is felt most when the low skies are swimming with the colours of sunset, and in the shadows the shattered rocks about its base take on the shapes of titanic paladins fighting and falling around it. I only know that the mere shape of the hill and vista of the landscape suggested such visions and it was only afterwards that I heard the local legend, which says it is here that some of the Christian knights made their last stand after they lost Jerusalem and which names this height The Mountain of the Latins.

They fell, and the ages rolled on them the rocks of scorn; they were buried in jests and buffooneries. As the Renaissance expanded into the rationalism of recent

centuries, nothing seemed so ridiculous as to butcher and bleed in a distant desert not only for a tomb, but an empty tomb. The last legend of them withered under the wit of Cervantes, though he himself had fought in the last Crusade at Lepanto. They were kicked about like dead donkeys by the cool vivacity of Voltaire; who went off, very symbolically, to dance attendance on the new drill-sergeant of the Prussians. They were dissected like strange beasts by the serene disgust of Gibbon, more serene than the similar horror with which he regarded the similar violence of the French Revolution. By our own time even the flippancy has become a platitude. They have long been the butt of every penny-a-liner who can talk of a helmet as a tin pot, of every caricaturist on a comic paper who can draw a fat man falling off a bucking horse; of every pushing professional politician who can talk about the superstitions of the Middle Ages. Great men and small have agreed to condemn them; they were renounced by their children and refuted by their biographers; they were exposed, they were exploded, they were ridiculed and they were right.

They were proved wrong, and they were right. They were judged finally and forgotten, and they were right. Centuries after their fall the full experience and development of political discovery has shown beyond question that they were right. For there is a very simple test of the truth; that the very thing which was dismissed, as a dream of the ages of faith, we have been forced to turn into a fact in the ages of fact. It is now more certain than it ever was before that Europe must rescue some lordship, or overlordship, of these old Roman provinces. Whether it is wise for England alone to claim Palestine, whether it would be better if the Entente could do so, I think a serious question. But in some form they are reverting for the Roman Empire. Every opportunity has been given for any other empire that could be its equal, and especially for the great dream of a mission for Imperial Islam. If ever a human being had a run for his money, it was the Sultan of the Moslems riding on his Arab steed. His empire expanded over and beyond the great Greek empire of Byzantium; a last charge of the chivalry of Poland barely stopped it at the very gates of Vienna. He was free to unfold everything that was in him, and he unfolded the death that was in him. He reigned and he could not rule; he was successful and he did not succeed. His baffled and retreating enemies left him standing, and he could not stand. He fell finally with that other half-heathen power in the North, with which he had made an alliance against the remains of Roman and Byzantine culture. He fell because barbarism cannot stand; because even when it succeeds it rather falls on its foes and crushes them. And after all these things, after all these ages, with a wearier philosophy, with a heavier heart, we have been forced to do again the very thing that the Crusaders were derided for doing. What Western men failed to do for the faith, other Western men have been forced to do even without the faith. The sons of Tancred are again in Tripoli. The heirs of Raymond are again in Syria. And men from the Midlands or the Northumbrian towns went again through a furnace

of thirst and fever and furious fighting, to gain the same water-courses and invest the same cities as of old. They trod the hills of Galilee and the Horns of Hattin threw no shadow on their souls; they crossed dark and disastrous fields whose fame had been hidden from them, and avenged the fathers they had forgotten. And the most cynical of modern diplomatists, making their settlement by the most sceptical of modern philosophies, can find no practical or even temporary solution for this sacred land, except to bring it again under the crown of Coeur de Lion and the cross of St. George.

There came in through the crooked entry beside the great gap in the wall a tall soldier, dismounting and walking and wearing only the dust-hued habit of modern war. There went no trumpet before him, neither did he enter by the Golden Gate; but the silence of the deserts was full of a phantom acclamation, as when from far away a wind brings in a whisper the cheering of many thousand men. For in that hour a long-lost cry found fulfilment, and something counted irrational returned in the reason of things. And at last even the wise understood, and at last even the learned were enlightened on a need truly and indeed international, which a mob in a darker age had known by the light of nature; something that could be denied and delayed and evaded, but not escaped for ever. *Id Deus vult.*