

Chapter 1 : Conventional Lies of our Civilization - Wikisource, the free online library

*Liberality and Civilization [Gilbert Murray] on blog.quintoapp.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. Hardback.*

Had the people of Israel believed in that beautiful Countenance, they would have girded themselves to serve and obey Him heart and soul, and through the quickening fragrance of His Spirit they would have regained their lost vitality and gone on to new victories. Alas, of what avail was it; they turned away and opposed Him. They rose up and tormented that Source of Divine knowledge, that Point where the Revelation had come down—“all except for a handful who, turning their faces toward God, were cleansed of the stain of this world and found their way to the heights of the placeless Realm. They inflicted every agony on that Wellspring of grace until it became impossible for Him to live in the towns, and still He lifted up the flag of salvation and solidly established the fundamentals of human righteousness, that essential basis of true civilization. In the fifth chapter of Matthew beginning with the thirty-seventh verse He counsels: For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? Jesus, then, founded the sacred Law on a basis of moral character and complete spirituality, and for those who believed in Him He delineated a special way of life which constitutes the highest type of action on earth. And while those emblems of redemption were to outward seeming abandoned to the malevolence and persecution of their tormentors, in reality they had been delivered out of the hopeless darkness which encompassed the Jews and they shone forth in everlasting glory at the dawn of that new day. That mighty Jewish nation toppled and crumbled away, but those few souls who sought shelter beneath the Messianic Tree transformed all human life. At that time the peoples of the world were utterly ignorant, fanatical and idolatrous. Only a small group of Jews professed belief in the oneness of God and they were wretched outcasts. These holy Christian souls now stood up to promulgate a Cause which was diametrically opposed and repugnant to the beliefs of the entire human race. Consider whether there exists anywhere in creation a principle mightier in every sense than religion, or whether any conceivable power is more pervasive than the various Divine Faiths, or whether any agency can bring about real love and fellowship and union among all peoples as can belief in an almighty and all-knowing God, or whether except for the laws of God there has been any evidence of an instrumentality for educating all mankind in every phase of righteousness. Those qualities which the philosophers attained when they had reached the very heights of their wisdom, those noble human attributes which characterized them at the peak of their perfection, would be exemplified by the believers as soon as they accepted the Faith. A literal translation of his words is as follows: For this reason they stand in need of symbols and parables telling of rewards and punishments in the next world. A confirmatory evidence of this is that today we observe a people called Christians, who believe devoutly in rewards and punishments in a future state. This group show forth excellent actions, similar to the actions of an individual who is a true philosopher. For example, we all see with our own eyes that they have no fear of death, and their passion for justice and fair-dealing is so great that they should be considered true philosophers. Consider then how the enlightening and spiritualizing power of divine religions impels the believers to such heights of perfection that a philosopher like Galen, not himself a Christian, offers such testimony. One demonstration of the excellent character of the Christians in those days was their dedication to charity and good works, and the fact that they founded hospitals and philanthropic institutions. For example, the first person to establish public clinics throughout the Roman Empire where the poor, the injured and the helpless received medical care, was the Emperor Constantine. This great king was the first Roman ruler to champion the Cause of Christ. He spared no efforts, dedicating his life to the promotion of the principles of the Gospel, and he solidly established the Roman government, which in reality had been nothing but a system of unrelieved oppression, on moderation and justice. What a firm foundation of excellent character was laid down in those days, thanks to the training of holy souls who arose to promote the teachings of the Gospel. How many primary schools, colleges, hospitals, were established, and institutions where fatherless and indigent children received their education. Those heavenly breezes, soft-flowing from the regions of Divine grace, died away, and the laws of the great Evangel, the rock-foundation on which the civilization of the world was based, turned barren of results, this out of misuse and because of the conduct of

persons who, seemingly fair, were yet inwardly foul. The noted historians of Europe, in describing the conditions, manners, politics, learning and culture, in all their aspects, of early, medieval and modern times, unanimously record that during the ten centuries constituting the Middle Ages, from the beginning of the sixth century of the Christian era till the close of the fifteenth, Europe was in every respect and to an extreme degree, barbaric and dark. The principal cause of this was that the monks, referred to by European peoples as spiritual and religious leaders, had given up the abiding glory that comes from obedience to the sacred commandments and heavenly teachings of the Gospel, and had joined forces with the presumptuous and tyrannical rulers of the temporal governments of those times. They had turned their eyes away from everlasting glory, and were devoting all their efforts to the furtherance of their mutual worldly interests and passing and perishable advantages. Ultimately things reached a point where the masses were hopeless prisoners in the hands of these two groups, and all this 87 brought down in ruins the whole structure of the religion, culture, welfare and civilization of the peoples of Europe. When the unworthy acts and thoughts and the discreditable purposes of the leaders had stilled the sweet savors of the Spirit of God Jesus and they ceased to stream across the world, and the darkness of ignorance and bigotry and of actions that were displeasing to God, encompassed the earth, then the dawn of hope shone out and the Divine spring drew on; a cloud of mercy overspread the world, and out of the regions of grace the fecund winds began to blow. The old world turned new again, and its dead body rose into abundant life. Then tyranny and ignorance were overthrown, and towering palaces of knowledge and justice were reared in their place. A sea of enlightenment thundered, and science cast down its rays. In all the histories, their depraved and vicious practices, their ferocity and their constant feuds, are a matter of record. In those days the civilized peoples of 88 the world did not even consider the Arab tribes of Mecca and Medina as human beings. And yet, after the Light of the World rose over them, they wereâ€”because of the education bestowed on them by that Mine of perfections, that Focal Center of Revelation, and the blessings vouchsafed by the Divine Lawâ€”within a brief interval gathered into the shelter of the principle of Divine oneness. This brutish people then attained such a high degree of human perfection and civilization that all their contemporaries marveled at them. Those very peoples who had always mocked the Arabs and held them up to ridicule as a breed devoid of judgment, now eagerly sought them out, visiting their countries to acquire enlightenment and culture, technical skills, statecraft, arts and sciences. Observe the influence on material situations of that training which is inculcated by the true Educator. The Arabs then excelled all the peoples of the world in science and the arts, in industry and invention, in philosophy, government and moral character. Today, numerous copies of the works of Muslim scholars which are not to be found in Islamic countries, are available in the libraries of Europe. Furthermore, the laws and principles current in all European countries are derived to a considerable degree and indeed virtually in their entirety from the works on jurisprudence and the legal decision of Muslim theologians. Were it not for the fear of unduly lengthening the present text, We would cite these borrowings one by one. The particulars were these: His impassioned outcry waxed so loud that all the countries of Europe responded, and crusading kings at the head of innumerable hosts passed over the Sea of Marmara and made their way to the continent of Asia. Briefly, the kings of the West with their unnumbered armies fell upon Syria and Egypt, and there was continuous warfare between the Syrian rulers and those of Europe for a period of two hundred and three years. Finally Saladin, in the year A. Hopelessly beaten, they went back to Europe. In the course of these wars of the Crusades, millions of human beings perished. To sum up, from A. The civilization of Europe dates from that time. O people of Persia! How long will your torpor and lethargy last? You were once the lords of the whole earth; the world was at your beck and call. How is it that your glory has lapsed and you have fallen from favor now, and crept away into some corner of oblivion? You were the fountainhead of learning, the unfailing spring of light for all the earth, how is it that you are withered now, and quenched, and faint of heart? You who once lit the world, how is it that you lurk, inert, bemused, in darkness now? Rise up and struggle, seek education, seek enlightenment. Is it meet that a foreign people should receive from your own forbears its culture and its knowledge, and that you, their blood, their rightful heirs, should go without? How does it seem, when your neighbors 92 are at work by day and night with their whole hearts, providing for their advancement, their honor and prosperity, that you, in your ignorant fanaticism, are busy only with your quarrels and antipathies,

your indulgences and appetites and empty dreams? Is it commendable that you should waste and fritter away in apathy the brilliance that is your birthright, your native competence, your inborn understanding? Again, We have digressed from Our theme. His account is exhaustive, and a translation here would unduly lengthen out the present work and would indeed be irrelevant to Our purpose. If further details are desired the reader may refer to that text. He even records that a European named Gerbert came to the West and enrolled at the University of Cordova in Arab territory, studied arts and sciences there, and after his return to Europe achieved such prominence that ultimately he was elevated to the leadership of the Catholic Church and became the Pope. The purpose of these references is to establish the fact that the religions of God are the true source of the spiritual and material perfections of man, and the fountainhead for all mankind of enlightenment and beneficial knowledge. If one observes the matter justly it will be found that all the laws of politics are contained in these few and holy words: These are of the righteous. These are they with whom it shall be well. He warneth you that haply ye may be mindful. God loveth the doers of good. By the Lord God, and there is no God but He, even the minutest details of civilized life derive from the grace of the Prophets of God. What thing of value to mankind has ever come into being which was not first set forth either directly or by implication in the Holy Scriptures? Alas, of what avail is it. When, in the same way, a far-from-perfect priesthood acquire control of affairs, they come down like a massive curtain between the people and the light of Faith. Sincerity is the foundation-stone of faith. That is, a religious individual must disregard his personal desires and seek in whatever way he can wholeheartedly to serve the public interest; and it is impossible for a human being to turn aside from his own selfish advantages and sacrifice his own good for the good of the community except through true religious faith. For self-love is kneaded into the very clay of man, and it is not possible that, without any hope of a substantial reward, he should neglect his own present material good. That individual, however, who puts his faith in God and believes in the words of God "because he is promised and certain of a plentiful reward in the next life, and because worldly benefits as compared to the abiding joy and glory of future planes of existence are nothing to him" will for the sake of God abandon his own peace and profit and will freely consecrate his heart and soul to the common good. That is, that an individual who is characterized with natural intelligence, high resolve, and a driving zeal, will, without any consideration for the severe punishments consequent on evil acts, or for the great rewards of righteousness, instinctively refrain from inflicting harm on his fellow men and will hunger and thirst to do good. And yet, if we ponder the lessons of history it will become evident that this very sense of honor and dignity is itself one of the bounties deriving from the instructions of the Prophets of God. It is therefore clear that the emergence of this natural sense of human dignity and honor is the result of education. An assumption of this sort cannot be validated by mere words, it must be supported by the facts. Let us see what power in creation impels the masses toward righteous aims and deeds! Aside from this, if that rare individual who does exemplify such a faculty should also become an embodiment of the fear of God, it is certain that his strivings toward righteousness would be strongly reinforced. Universal benefits derive from the grace of the Divine religions, for they lead their true followers to sincerity of intent, to high purpose, to purity and spotless honor, to surpassing kindness and compassion, to the keeping of their covenants when they have covenanted, to concern for the rights of others, to liberality, to justice in every aspect of life, to humanity and philanthropy, to valor and to unflagging efforts in the service of mankind. It is religion, to sum up, which produces all human virtues, and it is these virtues which are the bright candles of civilization. The purpose of these statements is to make it abundantly clear that the Divine religions, the holy precepts, the heavenly teachings, are the unassailable basis of human happiness, and that the peoples of the world can hope for no real relief or deliverance without this one great remedy. Whoever expresses himself to the contrary has never drunk of the nectar of knowledge and is astray in his own ignorance, groping after the mirage of his desires. If they mean the establishment of parliaments, these are enjoined by the very text of the holy verse: The great advantages of consultation can be established by logical arguments as well. Can they say that it would be contrary to the laws of God to make a death sentence conditional on the most careful investigations, on the sanction of numerous bodies, on legal proof and the royal order? The King James Bible reads:

Chapter 2 : Bah' - Reference Library - The Secret of Divine Civilization, Pages

First published in , these lectures argue that liberality is the foundation of civilization. According to Gilbert Murray, civilization provides the surplus of security, leisure and wealth that makes liberality possible; a failure of liberality is the surest test of the failure of a civilization.

The diversity of liberalism can be gleaned from the numerous adjectives that liberal thinkers and movements have attached to the very term "liberalism", including classical , egalitarian , economic , social , welfare state , ethical , humanist , deontological , perfectionist , democratic and institutional , to name a few. At its very root, liberalism is a philosophy about the meaning of humanity and society. Political philosopher John Gray identified the common strands in liberal thought as being individualist, egalitarian, meliorist and universalist. The individualist element avers the ethical primacy of the human being against the pressures of social collectivism , the egalitarian element assigns the same moral worth and status to all individuals, the meliorist element asserts that successive generations can improve their sociopolitical arrangements and the universalist element affirms the moral unity of the human species and marginalises local cultural differences. The moral and political suppositions of liberalism have been based on traditions such as natural rights and utilitarian theory , although sometimes liberals even requested support from scientific and religious circles. These ideas were first drawn together and systematized as a distinct ideology by the English philosopher John Locke , generally regarded as the father of modern liberalism. Employing the idea of a state of nature—a hypothetical war-like scenario prior to the state—he constructed the idea of a social contract that individuals enter into to guarantee their security and in so doing form the State, concluding that only an absolute sovereign would be fully able to sustain such a peace. Hobbes had developed the concept of the social contract, according to which individuals in the anarchic and brutal state of nature came together and voluntarily ceded some of their individual rights to an established state authority, which would create laws to regulate social interactions. Whereas Hobbes advocated a strong monarchical authority the Leviathan , Locke developed the then radical notion that government acquires consent from the governed which has to be constantly present for the government to remain legitimate. He concluded that the people have a right to overthrow a tyrant. By placing life, liberty and property as the supreme value of law and authority, Locke formulated the basis of liberalism based on social contract theory. To these early enlightenment thinkers, securing the most essential amenities of life—liberty and private property among them—required the formation of a "sovereign" authority with universal jurisdiction. Once humans moved out of their natural state and formed societies, Locke argued as follows: And this is that, and that only, which did or could give beginning to any lawful government in the world". One political scientist described this new thinking as follows: In the First Treatise, Locke aimed his guns first and foremost at one of the doyens of 17th century English conservative philosophy: Reinforcing his respect for consensus, Locke argued that "conjugal society is made up by a voluntary compact between men and women". For Locke, this created a natural right in the liberty of conscience, which he argued must therefore remain protected from any government authority. Three arguments are central: His central argument was that the individual is capable of using reason to distinguish right from wrong. To be able to exercise this right, everyone must have unlimited access to the ideas of his fellow men in " a free and open encounter " and this will allow the good arguments to prevail. In a natural state of affairs, liberals argued, humans were driven by the instincts of survival and self-preservation and the only way to escape from such a dangerous existence was to form a common and supreme power capable of arbitrating between competing human desires. Modern liberals claim that formal or official guarantees of individual rights are irrelevant when individuals lack the material means to benefit from those rights and call for a greater role for government in the administration of economic affairs. As heirs of the Enlightenment, liberals believed that any given social and political order emanated from human interactions , not from divine will. From the 17th century until the 19th century, liberals from Adam Smith to John Stuart Mill conceptualised liberty as the absence of interference from government and from other individuals, claiming that all people should have the freedom to develop their own unique abilities and capacities without being sabotaged by others. Classical liberals were committed to individualism,

