THE INSIDE OF THE CUP

WINSTON CHURCHILL

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BY

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CHAPTER I

THE WARING PROBLEMS

I

WITH few exceptions, the incidents recorded in these pages take place in one of the largest cities of the United States of America, and of that portion called the Middle West, — a city once conservative and provincial, and rather proud of these qualities; but now outgrown them, and linked by lightning limited trains to other teeming centers of the modern world: a city overtaken, in recent years, by the plague which has swept our country from the Atlantic to the Pacific — Prosperity. Before its advent, the Goodriches and Gores, the Warings, the Prestons and the Atterburys lived leisurely lives in a sleepy quarter of shade trees and spacious yards and muddy macadam streets, now passed away forever. Existence was decorous, marriage an irrevocable step, wives were wives, and the Authorized Version of the Bible was true from cover to cover. So Dr. Gilman preached, and so they believed.

Sunday was then a day essentially different from other days — you could tell it without looking at the calendar. The sun knew it, and changed the quality of his light: the very animals, dogs and cats and horses, knew it: and most of all the children knew it, by Sunday school, by Dr. Gilman's sermon, by a dizzy afternoon connected in some of their minds with ceramics and a lack of exercise,

by a cold tea, and by church bells. You were not allowed to forget it for one instant. The city suddenly became full of churches, as though they had magically been let down from heaven during Saturday night. They must have been there on week days, but few persons ever thought of them.

Among the many church bells that rang on those bygone Sundays was that of St. John's, of which Dr. Gilman, of beloved memory, was rector. Dr. Gilman was a saint, and if you had had the good luck to be baptized or married or buried by him, you were probably fortunate in an earthly as well as heavenly sense. One has to be careful not to deal exclusively in superlatives, and yet it is not an exaggeration to say that St. John's was the most beautiful and churchly edifice in the city, thanks chiefly to several gentlemen of sense, and one gentleman, at least, of taste — Mr. Horace Bentley. The vicissitudes of civil war interrupted its building; but when, in 1868, it stood completed, its stone unsoiled as yet by factory smoke, its spire delicately pointing to untainted skies, its rose window glowing above the porch, citizens on Tower Street often stopped to gaze at it diagonally across the vacant lot set in order by Mr. Thurston Gore, with the intent that the view might be unobstructed.

Little did the Goodriches and Gores, the Warings and Prestons and Atterburys and other prominent people foresee the havoc that prosperity and smoke were to play with their residential plans! One by one, sooty commerce drove them out, westward, conservative though they were, from the paradise they had created; blacker and blacker grew the gothic façade of St. John's; Thurston Gore departed, but leased his corner first for a goodly sum, his ancestors being from Connecticut; leased also the vacant lot he had beautified, where stores arose and hid the spire from Tower Street. Cable cars moved serenely up the long hill where a panting third horse had been necessary, cable cars resounded in Burton Street, between the new factory and the church where Dr. Gilman still preached of peace and the delights of the New Jerusalem. And

before you could draw your breath, the cable cars had become electric. Gray hairs began to appear in the heads of the people Dr. Gilman had married in the '60's and their children were going East to College.

II

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Asa Waring still clung to the imposing, early Victorian mansion in Hamilton Street. It presented an uncompromising and rather scornful front to the sister mansions with which it had hitherto been on intimate terms, now fast degenerating into a shabby gentility, seeking covertly to catch the eye of boarders, but as yet refraining from open solicitation. Their lawns were growing a little ragged, their stone steps and copings revealing cracks.

Asa Waring looked with a stern distaste upon certain aspects of modern life. And though he possessed the means to follow his friends and erstwhile neighbours into the newer paradise five miles westward, he had successfully resisted for several years a formidable campaign to uproot him. His three married daughters lived in that clean and verdant district surrounding the Park (spelled with a capital), while Evelyn and Rex spent most of their time in the West End or at the Country Clubs. Even Mrs. Waring, who resembled a Roman matron, with her wavy white hair parted in the middle and her gentle yet classic features, sighed secretly at times at the unyielding attitude of her husband, although admiring him for it. The grandchildren drew her.

On the occasion of Sunday dinner, when they surrounded her, her heart was filled to overflowing.

The autumn sunlight, reddened somewhat by the slight haze of smoke, poured in at the high windows of the dining-room, glinted on the silver, and was split into bewildering colors by the prisms of the chandelier. Many precious extra leaves were inserted under the white cloth, and Mrs. Waring's eyes were often dimmed with happiness as she glanced along the ranks on either side until they rested on

the man with whom she had chosen to pass her life. Her admiration for him had gradually grown into hero-worship. His anger, sometimes roused, had a terrible moral quality that never failed to thrill her, and the Loyal Legion button on his black frock coat seemed to her an epitome of his character. He sat for the most part silent, his remarkable, penetrating eyes, lighting under his grizzled brows, smiling at her, at the children, at the grandchildren. And sometimes he would go to the corner table, where the four littlest sat, and fetch one back to perch on his knee and pull at his white, military mustache.

It was the children's day. Uproar greeted the huge white cylinder of ice-cream borne by Katie, the senior of the elderly maids; uproar greeted the cake; and finally there was a rush for the chocolates, little tablets wrapped in tinfoil and tied with red and blue ribbon. After that, the pandemonium left the dining-room, to spread itself over the spacious house from the basement to the great playroom in the attic, where the dolls and blocks and hobby-horses of the parental generation stoically awaited the new.

Sometimes a visitor was admitted to this sacramental feast, the dearest old gentleman in the world, with a great, high-bridged nose, a slight stoop, a kindling look, and snow-white hair, though the top of his head was bald. He sat on Mrs. Waring's right, and was treated with the greatest deference by the elders, and with none at all by the children, who besieged him. The bigger ones knew that he had had what is called a history; that he had been rich once, with a great mansion of his own, but now he lived on Dalton Street, almost in the slums, and worked among the poor. His name was Mr. Bentley.

He was not there on the particular Sunday when this story opens, otherwise the conversation about to be recorded would not have taken place. For St. John's Church was not often mentioned in Mr. Bentley's presence.

"Well, grandmother," said Phil Goodrich, who was the favourite son-in-law, "how was the new rector to-day?"

"Mr. Hodder is a remarkable young man, Phil," Mrs. Waring declared, "and delivered such a good sermon. I

couldn't help wishing that you and Rex and Evelyn and George had been in church."

"Phil couldn't go," explained the unmarried and sunburned Evelyn, "he had a match on of eighteen holes with me."

Mrs. Waring sighed.

"I can't think what's got into the younger people these days that they seem so indifferent to religion. Your father's a vestryman, Phil, and I believe it has always been his hope that you would succeed him. I'm afraid Rex won't succeed *his* father," she added, with a touch of regret and a glance of pride at her husband. "You never go to church, Rex. Phil does."

"I got enough church at boarding-school to last me a lifetime, mother," her son replied. He was slightly older than Evelyn, and just out of college. "Besides, any heathen can get on the vestry — it's a financial board, and they're due to put Phil on some day. They're always putting him on boards."

His mother looked a little distressed."

"Rex, I wish you wouldn't talk that way about the Church ——"

"I'm sorry, mother," he said, with quick penitence. "Mr. Langmaid's a vestryman, you know, and they've only got him there because he's the best corporation lawyer in the city. He isn't exactly what you'd call orthodox. He never goes."

"We are indebted to Mr. Langmaid for Mr. Hodder." This was one of Mr. Waring's rare remarks.

Eleanor Goodrich caught her husband's eye, and smiled.

"I wonder why it is," she said, "that we are so luke warm about church in these days? I don't mean you, Lucy, or Laureston," she added to her sister, Mrs. Grey. "You're both exemplary." Lucy bowed ironically. "But most people of our ages with whom we associate. Martha Preston, for instance. We were all brought up like the children of Jonathan Edwards. Do you remember that awful round-and-round feeling on Sunday afternoons, Sally, and only the wabbly Noah's Ark elephant to play

with, right in this house? instead of *that!*" There was a bump in the hall without, and shrieks of laughter. "I'll never forget the first time it occurred to me — when I was reading Darwin — that if the ark were as large as Barnum's Circus and the Natural History Museum put together, it couldn't have held a thousandth of the species on earth. It was a blow."

"I don't know what we're coming to," exclaimed Mrs. Waring gently.

"I didn't mean to be flippant, mother," said Eleanor penitently, "but I do believe the Christian religion has got to be presented in a different way, and a more vital way, to appeal to a new generation. I am merely looking facts in the face."

"What *is* the Christian religion?" asked Sally's husband, George Bridges, who held a chair of history in the local flourishing university. "I've been trying to find out all my life."

"You couldn't be expected to know, George," said his wife. "You were brought up an Unitarian, and went to Harvard."

"Never mind, professor," said Phil Goodrich, in a quizzical, affectionate tone. "Take the floor and tell us what it isn't."

George Bridges smiled. He was a striking contrast in type to his square-cut and vigorous brother-in-law; very thin, with slightly protruding eyes the color of the faded blue glaze of ancient pottery, and yet humorous.

"I've had my chance, at any rate. Sally made me go last Sunday and hear Mr. Hodder."

"I can't see why you didn't like him, George," Lucy cried. "I think he's splendid."

"Oh, I like him," said Mr. Bridges.

"That's just it!" exclaimed Eleanor. "I like him. I think he's sincere. And that first Sunday he came, when I saw him get up in the pulpit and wave that long arm of his, all I could think of was a modern Savonarola. He looks one. And then, when he began to preach, it was maddening. I felt all the time that he *could* say some-

thing helpful, if he only would. But he didn't. It was all about the sufficiency of grace, — whatever that may be. He didn't explain it. He didn't give me one notion as to how to cope a little better with the frightful complexities of the modern lives we live, or how to stop quarrelling with Phil when he stays at the office and is late for dinner."

"Eleanor, I think you're unjust to him," said Lucy, amid the laughter of the men of the family. "Most people in St. John's think he is a remarkable preacher."

"So were many of the Greek sophists," George Bridges observed.

"Now if it were only dear old Doctor Gilman," Eleanor continued, "I could sink back into a comfortable indifference. But every Sunday this new man stirs me up, not by what he says, but by what he *is*. I hoped we'd get a rector with modern ideas, who would be able to tell me what to teach my children. Little Phil and Harriet come back from Sunday school with all sorts of questions, and I feel like a hypocrite. At any rate, if Mr. Hodder hasn't done anything else, he's made me want to *know*."

"What do you mean by a man of modern ideas, Eleanor?" inquired Mr. Bridges, with evident relish.

Eleanor put down her coffee cup, looked at him helplessly, and smiled.

"Somebody who will present Christianity to me in such a manner that it will appeal to my reason, and enable me to assimilate it into my life."

"Good for you, Nell," said her husband, approvingly. "Come now, professor, you sit up in the University Club all Sunday morning and discuss recondite philosophy with other learned agnostics, tell us what *is* the matter with Mr. Hodder's theology. That is, if it will not shock grandmother too much."

"I'm afraid I've got used to being shocked, Phil," said Mrs. Waring, with her quiet smile.

"It's unfair," Mr. Bridges protested, "to ask a prejudiced pagan like me to pronounce judgment on an honest parson who is labouring according to his lights."

"Go on, George. You shan't get out of it that way."

"Well," said George, "the trouble is, from the theological point of view, that your parson is preaching what Auguste Sabatier would call a diminished and mitigated orthodoxy."

"Great heavens!" cried Phil. "What's that?"

"It's neither fish, flesh, nor fowl, nor good red herring," the professor declared. "If Mr. Hodder were cornered he couldn't maintain that he, as a priest, has full power to forgive sins, and yet he won't assert that he hasn't. The mediæval conception of the Church, before Luther's day, was consistent, at any rate, if you once grant the premises on which it was based."

"What premises?"

"That the Almighty had given it a charter, like an insurance company, of a monopoly of salvation on this portion of the Universe, and agreed to keep his hands off. Under this conception, the sale of indulgences, masses for the soul, and temporal power are perfectly logical — inevitable. Kings and princes derive their governments from the Church. But if we once begin to doubt the validity of this charter, as the Reformers did, the whole system flies to pieces, like sticking a pin into a soap bubble.

"That is the reason why — to change the figure — the so-called Protestant world has been gradually sliding down hill ever since the Reformation. The great majority of men are not willing to turn good, to renounce the material and sensual rewards under their hands without some definite and concrete guaranty that, if they do so, they are going to be rewarded hereafter. They demand some sort of infallibility. And when we let go of the infallibility of the Church, we began to slide toward what looked like a bottomless pit, and we clutched at the infallibility of the Bible. And now that has begun to roll.

"What I mean by a mitigated orthodoxy is this: I am far from accusing Mr. Hodder of insincerity, but he preaches *as if* every word of the Bible were literally true, and had been dictated by God to the men who held the pen; *as if* he, as a priest, held some supernatural power

that could definitely be traced, through what is known as the Apostolic Succession, back to Peter."

"Do you mean to say, George," asked Mrs. Waring, with a note of pain in her voice, "that the Apostolic Succession cannot be historically proved?"

"My dear mother," said George, "I hope you will hold me innocent of beginning this discussion. As a harmless professor of history in our renowned University (of which we think so much that we do not send our sons to it) I have been compelled by the children whom you have brought up to sit in judgment on the theology of your rector."

"They will leave us nothing!" she sighed.

"Nothing, perhaps, that was invented by man to appeal to man's superstition and weakness. Of the remainder—who can say?"

"What," asked Mrs. Waring, "do they say about the Apostolic Succession?"

"Mother is as bad as the rest of us," said Eleanor. "Isn't she, grandfather?"

"If I had a house to rent," said Mr. Bridges, when the laughter had subsided, "I shouldn't advertise five bathrooms when there were only two, or electricity when there was only gas. I should be afraid my tenants might find it out, and lose a certain amount of confidence in me. But the orthodox churches are running just such a risk to-day, and if any person who contemplates entering these churches doesn't examine the premises first, he refrains at his own cost.

"The situation in the early Christian Church is now a matter of history, and he who runs may read. The first churches, like those of Corinth and Ephesus and Rome, were democracies: no such thing as a priestly line to carry on a hierarchy, an ecclesiastical dynasty, was dreamed of. It may be gathered from the gospels that such an idea was so far from the mind of Christ that his mission was to set at naught just such another hierarchy, which then existed in Israel. The Apostles were no more bishops than was John the Baptist, but preachers who travelled from place

to place, like Paul. The congregations, at Rome and elsewhere, elected their own *presbyteri*, *episcopoi* or overseers. It is, to say the least, doubtful, and it certainly cannot be proved historically, that Peter ever was in Rome."

"The professor ought to have a pulpit of his own," said Phil.

There was a silence. And then Evelyn, who had been eating quantities of hothouse grapes, spoke up.

"So far as I can see, the dilemma in which our generation finds itself is this, — we want to know what there is in Christianity that we can lay hold of. We should like to believe, but, as George says, all our education contradicts the doctrines that are most insisted upon. We don't know where to turn. We have the choice of going to people like George, who know a great deal and don't believe anything, or to clergymen like Mr. Hodder, who demand that we shall violate the reason in us which has been so carefully trained."

"Upon my word, I think you've put it rather well, Evelyn," said Eleanor, admiringly.

"In spite of personalities," added Mr. Bridges.

"I don't see the use of fussing about it," proclaimed Laureston Grey, who was the richest and sprucest of the three sons-in-law. "Why can't we let well enough alone?"

"Because it isn't well enough," Evelyn replied. "I want the real thing or nothing. I go to church once a month, to please mother. It doesn't do me any good. And I don't see what good it does you and Lucy to go every Sunday. You never think of it when you're out at dinners and dances during the week. And besides," she added, with the arrogance of modern youth, "you and Lucy are both intellectually lazy."

"I like that from *you*, Evelyn," her sister flared up. "You never read anything except the sporting columns and the annual rules of tennis and golf and polo."

"Must everything be reduced to terms?" Mrs. Waring gently lamented. "Why can't we, as Laury suggests, just continue to trust?"

"They are the more fortunate, perhaps, who can, mother," George Bridges answered, with more of feeling in his voice than he was wont to show. "Unhappily, truth does not come that way. If Roger Bacon and Galileo and Newton and Darwin and Harvey and the others had 'just trusted,' the world's knowledge would still remain as stationary as it was during the thousand-odd years the hierarchy of the Church was supreme, when theology was history, philosophy, and science rolled into one. If God had not meant man to know something of his origin differing from the account in Genesis, he would not have given us Darwin and his successors. Practically every great discovery since the Revival we owe to men who, by their very desire for truth, were forced into opposition to the tremendous power of the Church, which always insisted that people should 'just trust,' and take the mixture of cosmogony and Greek philosophy, tradition and fable, paganism, Judaic sacerdotalism, and temporal power wrongly called spiritual dealt out by this same Church as the last word on science, philosophy, history, metaphysics, and government."

"Stop!" cried Eleanor. "You make me dizzy."

"Nearly all the pioneers to whom we owe our age of comparative enlightenment were heretics," George persisted. "And if they could have been headed off, or burned, most of us would still be living in mud caves at the foot of the cliff on which stood the nobleman's castle; and kings would still be kings by divine decree, scientists — if there were any — workers in the black art, and every phenomenon we failed to understand, a miracle."

"I choose the United States of America," ejaculated Evelyn.

"I gather, George," said Phil Goodrich, "that you don't believe in miracles."

"Miracles are becoming suspiciously fewer and fewer. Once, an eclipse of the sun was enough to throw men on their knees because they thought it supernatural. If they were logical they'd kneel to-day because it has been found natural. Only the inexplicable phenomena are miracles;

and after a while — if the theologians will only permit us to finish the job — there won't be any inexplicable phenomena. Mystery, as I believe William James puts it, may be called the more-to-be-known."

"In taking that attitude, George, aren't you limiting the power of God?" said Mrs. Waring.

"How does it limit the power of God, mother," her son-in-law asked, "to discover that he chooses to work by laws? The most suicidal tendency in religious bodies today is their mediæval insistence on what they are pleased to call the supernatural. Which is the more marvellous — that God can stop the earth and make the sun appear to stand still, or that he can construct a universe of untold millions of suns with planets and satellites, each moving in its orbit, according to law; a universe wherein every atom is true to a sovereign conception? And yet this marvel of marvels — that makes God in the twentieth century infinitely greater than in the sixteenth — would never have been discovered if the champions of theology had had their way."

Mrs. Waring smiled a little.

"You are too strong for me, George," she said, "but you mustn't expect an old woman to change."

"Mother, dear," cried Eleanor, rising and laying her hand on Mrs. Waring's cheek, "we don't want you to change. It's ourselves we wish to change, we wish for a religious faith like yours, only the same teaching which gave it to you is powerless for us. That's *our* trouble. We have only to look at you," she added, a little wistfully, "to be sure there is something — something vital in Christianity, if we could only get at it, something that does not depend upon what we have been led to believe is indispensable. George, and men like him, can only show the weakness in the old supports. I don't mean that they aren't doing the world a service in revealing errors, but they cannot reconstruct."

"That is the clergyman's business," declared Mr. Bridges. "But he must first acknowledge that the old supports *are* worthless."

"Well," said Phil, "I like your rector, in spite of his anthropomorphism — perhaps, as George would say, because of it. There is something manly about him that appeals to me."

"There," cried Eleanor, triumphantly, "I've always said Mr. Hodder had a spiritual personality. You feel — you feel there is truth shut up inside of him which he cannot communicate. I'll tell you who impresses me in that way more strongly than any one else — Mr. Bentley. And he doesn't come to church any more."

"Mr. Bentley," said her mother, "is a saint. Your father tried to get him to dinner to-day, but he had promised those working girls of his, who live on the upper floors of his house, to dine with them. One of them told me so. Of course he will never speak of his kindnesses."

"Mr. Bentley doesn't bother his head about theology," said Sally. "He just lives."

"There's Eldon Parr," suggested George Bridges, mentioning the name of the city's famous financier; "I'm told he relieved Mr. Bentley of his property some twenty-five years ago. If Mr. Hodder should begin to preach the modern heresy which you desire, Mr. Parr might object. He's very orthodox, I'm told."

"And Mr. Parr," remarked the modern Evelyn, sententiously, "pays the bills at St. John's. Doesn't he, father?"

"I fear he pays a large proportion of them," Mr. Waring admitted, in a serious tone.

"In these days," said Evelyn, "the man who pays the bills is entitled to have his religion as he likes it."

"No matter how he got the money to pay them," added Phil.

"That suggests another little hitch in the modern church which will have to be straightened out," said George Bridges.

"'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.'"