

CHAPTER 15.

If you think about it, the near-miracle of two people working as one, that is with full mutual cooperation, with a full understanding of the functions each is to perform, and with full harmony in their public performance, must have as its object the achievement of a common purpose. I have occasionally experienced this in the Law, both in teamwork with another barrister, and in cases of some complexity with the police officer in charge of the case. Lawyers often speak of the meeting of two minds, for instance, when two people agree on a contract which is intended to be legally binding. But you need much more than the meeting of two minds for successful cooperation between two members of a team. And it is appropriate to talk about the marriage of two minds, or the interpenetration of two minds; provided one remembers that there are many degrees of mutual trust. The C.of E. uses the word “communion” very freely; but again one wants to remember that there are many degrees of communion, ranging from a modest intimacy and a modest trust, to absolute mutual confidence. So with the interpenetration of two minds, there are many degrees; but of course the greater degree of harmony, the more their cooperation will resemble an oiled machine in its smooth operation, and the more likely it is to lead to a successful conclusion. This is because the smoother their cooperation, the more single-minded their sense of purpose is likely to be. Those who have to conciliate many and varied interests, in pursuit of their objective, have difficulty in maintaining any sense of purpose at all. When there is complete harmony of cooperation, concession may enter into their thinking, but hardly conciliation. But this kind of language is only appropriate when there is a definite objective in view.

It is quite inappropriate when considering a human family. You need much more than the interpenetration of two minds for a coherent family. You need emotional harmony as well; although again it is as well to remember that there is a wide range of harmony, from mere politeness and good manners to a deep sympathy for the other’s feelings, which are instinctively appreciated. But it is an emotional interpenetration to some degree. How is this achieved? A spiritual union, whether it is comparatively deep or comparatively superficial, whether emotional or purely mental, is achieved by a spiritual creation. It is not created by physical union. It may be celebrated by physical union; but a spiritual union is created by a spiritual creation. We all know the folly of thinking that fleeting sensations of pleasure will lead to a permanent and reliable loyalty. Fleeting sensations of pleasure, by themselves, lead to the desire for more fleeting sensations of pleasure; and that is about all there is to it. You ignore the spiritual side of human affection, at your peril. Only spirit begets spirit.

A MARRIAGE OF MINDS : THE BASIC RELIGIOUS UNIT.

Where does one find in the Gospels, thoughts such as these expressed in the antique language of 2000 years ago? Well one doesn't. There is a hint of it in John Ch.2, but the Gospels are not concerned with the Secular world; so naturally they are not concerned with the family, which is the fundamental building block of secular Society. They are concerned with the relationship of God to man, and man to God. So any Church which claims to champion family loyalty and stability, should surely have extended the Gospel message to link up the relationships in the family with the relationship between man or woman and God? This the C.of E. has manifestly failed to do, or there would have been no need for me to write my first book, "Man's Relationship with God"; alternatively, the clergy would have described it as something that everyone knew already, if any of them read it. That wasn't so. It was obvious that the thought was disconcertingly new to those who read it. They hated it. If a Church fails to link up these two relationships, then it effectively condemns its adherents to live in two worlds: the religious world of God on Sunday, and the secular world of the family on weekdays. In the secular world everyone is separated from God, and therefore forced to sin; but this does not matter, because on Sunday this sin is expiated by the general confession of sins, which we had no alternative but to commit. I find it difficult to understand how intelligent people can subscribe to such hypocrisy. Not only that; it is splitting the Psyche into compartments, which I would have thought put mental health seriously into jeopardy. The trouble is that Jung's precept that the Self must not fall out with the vastly bigger Psyche, or mental illness results, cuts right across the traditions of 2000 years. But then the Church is unlikely to be enamoured of Jung's dream about Strasbourg cathedral, whose obvious interpretation was that the Almighty was utterly sickened with His Church! Modern scientific thought does make it difficult to accept the Church's teaching, without considerable modification. But whose fault is that?

It is the same in psychology, as in geology, in fossil remains and the age of the earth, as in physics and the extent of the cosmos both in space and time, as in biology and a true understanding of the evolution of man, and above all in leadership and a true if limited understanding of the nature of War; you cannot opt out of modern knowledge. If you do, as Aristotle said, you preclude yourself from all community. And the "modern knowledge" that the Second World War has taught us with almost inhuman and cogent persuasiveness is that you need a marriage of minds nowadays for the proper and effective conduct of War. Those who dabble in War, and either from personal ambition or incurable dishonesty prefer to ignore this lesson, and try to strut about in the old-fashioned way, are likely to be out-manoeuvred by those willing to be more ruthless than themselves. It does not need much

A MARRIAGE OF MINDS : THE BASIC RELIGIOUS UNIT.

imagination to see that if this is the necessary attitude once War begins, the same attitude should permeate political life before War is decided on; because actually the war against terrorists has already been going on a long time, and will be with us for a long time yet.

In this situation, to cry, “Jesus is King!” is not a substitute in this dangerous modern world, for an understanding of these other disciplines, so as to be able to choose wise rulers to govern the State. Indeed to proclaim, “Jesus is King” or “Love solves all problems” is almost naively to guarantee that one’s conduct will help to precipitate a descent by the State into a new dark age, as happened in the Roman Empire so long ago. Besides confirming Gibbon’s opinion that Christianity is on the whole a subversive influence, and was a principal factor in the decline and fall of Rome. It is arguable that all the appeasers of the 1930s achieved was to make it impossible to stand firm at Munich, which made war inevitable, in which about 60 million people died. If we enter a new dark age, this time there may be no re-emergence; and we may see everything that makes life worthwhile degenerate into chaos. Islam too must put its house in order, or risk finding that its role in history is to accelerate a descent of Society into tribal hatreds and barbarism, a tendency to which it gives us vividly frequent demonstrations. If action is needed, teaching about the true workings of the human mind, and the limitations of any one-precept creed or religion, is as good a way of fighting fanaticism as any. Creon and Antigone chose one-precept creeds. Creon chose the State as his supreme good; and ended by treating men and women as agents of the State, and as less than human. Antigone chose family relations as her supreme good; and ended by failing to distinguish any longer between loyalty and treachery. Both found their one-precept creeds destroyed everything that made life worthwhile.

One-precept religions are a menace to humanity, and its whole future. Microbiologists point this out with glee, although they should beware of repeating in their own new religion the mistakes of the more traditional religions. But there is no need for Christianity to be caught; Christ’s exhortation to love one’s enemies provides a ready-made escape. It is human nature that so often chooses slavery, when it is offered freedom; mob violence and lynch-law rather than the Law Courts and negotiation. But most cultures think the pen is mightier than the sword; and I agree that it is in the long term, but not in the short. Napoleon wrote, “Il n’y a que deux puissances dans ce monde, le sabre et l’Esprit. A la longue le sabre est toujours battu par l’Esprit”. This surely translates as, “There are only two powers in this world, the sword and the spirit. In the long term the sword is always beaten by the spirit”. And he ought to have known!