

BOLDNESS.

PART III, AN ANALYSIS OF VALOUR.

CHAPTER 20.

Clausewitz distinguishes two types of boldness; straightforward bravery and a more intelligent and reflective courage, which knows what it is doing. Both are necessary. He says in Book Three of On War, that a soldier, whether a drummer boy or general, can possess no nobler quality than boldness; but higher up the chain of command, the greater the need for boldness to be supported by a reflective mind. The reason is that command becomes progressively less a matter of personal sacrifice, and more a matter of concern for the safety of others and for the common policy. Yet a distinguished commander without boldness is unthinkable; though how much of this quality remains after he has attained senior rank, is another question. When it is retained, and there is boldness and a reflective mind present in the same person, he says they amount to genius. He adds that the actions of Alexander fascinate because of their extreme boldness, those of Frederick may be more satisfying to the intellect, because they were dictated by inner necessity. Valour, to my mind, sums up both types of boldness; colloquially both physical and moral courage.

There is no physical danger in asking questions in Court; yet it is a bold thing to break free of convention, and pursue a new line of questioning, with your opponent and the judge prepared to tear into you if the line of questioning goes wrong. And until you have had one or two successes, you cannot possibly know whether it is going to go wrong. And if it does go wrong, no more work from that prosecution office, or from those defence solicitors! So you begin in a small way, and develop your ideas slowly. In Chapter 2 of Man's Relationship with God, I give two examples of my success. The first was a prosecution for being in charge of a motor vehicle, when unfit to drive through drink; not it will be noted driving whilst unfit. Most people listening would have thought it a trivial case in an East Riding Quarter Sessions, that hardly mattered. To me it was a pearl beyond price; one of the few cases that gives me unspoiled memories. It taught me that I knew what I was doing; and that what I was doing was right. The second was a case in which I persuaded the two accused to convict each other. I persuaded them to develop their stories in such a way that they were incompatible with each others', and incompatible with the fact that the Police had interviewed both of them. It was the zenith of my craftsmanship; and for the next 18 years it was variations on the theme. Only in the last case I did as an advocate did I take things a stage further. It was a re-trial, which is usually a ritual performance. But I had an unexpected piece of luck, and I was able to take

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advantage of it, and exploit it to bring the whole defence down like a house of cards. I only had the 5 or 10 minutes of a witness's evidence-in-chief; and in that time I had to plan the destruction, and of course the cross-examination of that witness, which was vital to success.

The difference from 18 years before was that I had read the Rommel Papers, edited by Liddell Hart; and in particular about the way at Gazala in June 1942, Rommel with his back to a minefield was nevertheless able to break out, and defeat superior forces. Of course my case bore no resemblance to the desert battle; it was the inspiration of Rommel's actions that prompted me to think that on an utterly different kind of battlefield, I might be able to do something similar. And so it proved. Inspiration is vital; and I have always found that it was provided by other people. So I come to the heart of the matter. My attempt to invoke the Divine creativeness to try to reconcile symbolically England and Germany after the War, was, of course, inspired by the handful of people immediately involved. Their civilized cosmopolitan outlook, knowledge of Germany, their practical down-to-earth worldliness, was coupled with my idealism. You act in the circumstances in which you find yourself; we are all creatures of the world in which we grow up. And audacity must always be controlled and curbed by reflection, in anyone who seeks to behave responsibly.

I have a limited sympathy for those who claim that Jesus is King, and seek to extend his kingdom by distributing pamphlets. But to my mind, a better way to extend his kingdom is to introduce into the acceptable spectrum of human behaviour something that depends entirely on his Ministry, Passion, and Resurrection for its inspiration. I could never conceivably have attempted what I did in the atmosphere of the Old Testament. People just did not behave like that in those days. It only became possible to contemplate it, after his passion. Expressing it differently; whether prayer is speaking to the Divine Spirit, or talking into the blankets, any friendship which envisages the sharing of prayer is so intimate, that unless it is curbed by a most reflective and disciplined spirit, it risks the destruction of human character. Yet unless someone has the audacity to take these risks, you end up with the situation of the C.of E. today; and that is terminal decline. There comes a time when the inner necessity of the situation compels you to take the risk, even if it appears fearsome. If on reflection it appears that doing nothing will only lead to the terminal decline of the Church, then the boldest course of action may be the prudent one to take.

Much of this is reflection after the event; but that is always the way. Too great a self-consciousness of what you are doing, and your effectiveness is destroyed. Yet I was always aware of the transcendent relationship, as well as the personal one; and I doubt if she was. And I was always aware that compromise in this instant would be disastrous; although I

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would normally favour it. And, as I wrote in “Man’s Relationship with God”, if I had been successful I would have enjoyed my success; I would not have contemplated writing a book about it. Only failure was going to prompt me to write!

The awful mystery which is reality may be inside us, as well as outside us. And it is only human sometimes to be afraid to face it; which is why I think it is better to face the mystery-without in the presence of other people, either as a member of a Church or as a citizen of the State. It is a terrible thing to have to face the Divine Unfathomable Mystery always alone; which simply repeats the old-fashioned view that it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the Living God.