

CREATION : A SCIENCE FANTASY.

CHAPTER 4.

PUBLIC SPIRIT.

In Britain we have lived in a Christian culture for 1400 years, ever since the Canterbury St. Augustine in the South, and Aidan and Cuthbert in the North, came here in about 600 AD. Of the 150 years before that, we know nothing; the history books are a blank. That is when our culture was born. But a culture is no more immortal than is an individual. If it has a birth, it may also have a death. It has not only to be kept going; it has to be renewed, if it is not to die. And just at the moment, our Christian culture is not being renewed; it is disintegrating fast due to the presence of so many barbarians in our midst, and also, in my opinion, by the Church's failure to come to terms with the modern mind at its best. What a pleasure it is to read a Chapter of Lord Dampier's History of Science, and to read again how the men of science prized open the Medieval Church's stranglehold on the freedom of thought. It was a struggle in which the Church usually, but not always, opposed freedom of thought fiercely. Roger Bacon published his great work with the encouragement of a sympathetic Pope, but his works were burned and he spent long years in prison after that Pope died.

How has the Church failed to come to terms with the modern mind? The Church failed to deal with the bogey of materialistic determinism that followed the publication of Newton's Gravitation, on the whole opposed Darwin's The Origin of Species, failed to understand Einstein's Relativity and the significance of modern discoveries in astronomy, and it ducked learning about modern psychology. Is it any wonder that Teilhard de Chardin said that modern science had shaken all the ancient religions to the core? And if the real difference between science and religion lies in the difference between the attitude of mind of the scientist and that of the religious person, is it any wonder that those who accept science, and better still know a little science, are a bit disdainful of those who appear unable to talk in any language but their own. The modern mind,

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engendered by science, is in the best possible position to examine the doctrines of the Church, and separate the wheat from the chaff. And if the Church finds this a somewhat demeaning situation, she has no-one to blame but herself. Religion, after all, is too important to be left to priests.

Ordinary people are often much better company than Church people; and if one influences them, it should surely be by example and not by persuasion? So one does not go around thinking, and still less saying, that all one's friends and acquaintances are idolaters. They may however have the odd obsession. In sport one finds more and more that those who regard a sport as just a hobby, are increasingly left far behind. When I was young, it was possible for me to think that I could be led up some of the hardest climbs then being climbed in Britain. I could not possibly have led them; but I might have been able to follow, when fit and in practice. If I were young now, it would be unthinkable. The highest standard is set by those who live for climbing, and do little else. Many do not have a proper job; their job is to provide money for them to live to climb. And the things they get up are fantastic. It all seems to me a bit mad, and a far cry from being public spirited in public service; but I expect that is what many people thought about me sixty years ago. All sport seems to have gone the same way; and when somebody wins or scores a goal, they put on an orang-utan expression, which signifies I suppose that they think something extraordinary has been achieved. But has it?

In the world of the mind too, more and more intolerant do many people seem to be becoming of opinions contrary to those held by the self-appointed guardians of public opinion. There is not only no meeting of minds with them; there is no willingness to have a meeting of minds. Those holding contrary opinions are not to be allowed to speak at all. In short, our Christian heritage is crumbling, and barbarism is replacing it.

The great sin now is discrimination. It may on occasions be a crime, when you say something that another finds offensive and hurtful. The fact that

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you did not mean to be offensive, and the fact that the victim of discrimination has a skin as thin and sensitive as a baby, is neither here nor there. Babies rule! So we are now entering a world in which there is no right and wrong; only what is acceptable, and what is not. No wonder the Muslim Caliphate has a certain appeal. They must regard this world of ours, where there is no right or wrong anymore, as obscene. And so it is. For Muslims same-sex-marriages are not a rung on the ladder to perfection! I hate intolerance, but the Caliphate may none-the-less bring us to our senses, because in the long term you will only defeat it here in England with a religion, that appeals more to hearts and minds. Atheists would rely on repression alone to defeat the Caliphate, and that always fails.

So it has to be a monotheistic religion, if it is to woo converts from Islam; there are only two candidates Judaism and Christianity. Christianity began as an off-shoot of Judaism, but the Pharisees, who were Jesus' contemporaries, could not change even to make theirs a world religion. I doubt if it is different now. So there is only one candidate. But how does one revive the C.of E?

What one does not do is to say piously, "We are all equal before God". Any proper pride in school, regiment, university college is the abomination of privilege. Any loyalty to village, city, county, country or ethnic origin is the abomination of discrimination. The worst criminal only has to repent to obtain, and even merit the Divine forgiveness. "We are all equal before Jesus"!

If we are all unique, it is likely we are all unequal before God! Is it to be supposed that the Creator regards Heinrich Himmler as on an equality with the Apostle Peter? Will Himmler be excused the abominations of the concentration camps and the death camps by apologising for any inconvenience? And what about Jesus, "Love Divine, all loves excelling.." as Charles Wesley wrote, is he any more forgiving? He said that the road was wide that led to perdition, and narrow the gate that led to salvation; and again that many were called, but few chosen. I do not necessarily agree; but that is what he said. It doesn't sound very promising for Heinrich Himmler. The Biblical Jesus was not for equality.

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It is a man-made shibboleth to repeat, “We are all equal in the sight of God”, designed to replace human judgement, as in the Greek play “Antigone”. It is the excuse for the multi-cultural society; a society that tolerates all cultures, and excites the loyalty of none of them, and which is the death of any society that embraces it. The old loyalties of Labour and Conservative would go, to be replaced by pressure groups, each demanding this or that. The country would become ungovernable. Only harsh tyranny would be able to maintain Law and Order; and government by consent, that Pym and Hampden fought for, and President Lincoln valued, would vanish into history. It is as senseless as the appeasers of the 1930s urging appeasement and disarmament, which made it impossible to stand firm at Munich, which made War inevitable, in which about 60 million people died. Not to mention the fact that Freedom was nearly extinguished in Europe for the duration of the so-called thousand-year-Reich. The only difference is that now the enemy is within; then it was without.

But the false prophets of equality would say, I expect, that they are not proclaiming the multicultural society, but something much more fundamental. They want a society in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female, neither bond nor free; the Kingdom of Heaven would descend, and that would arouse people’s loyalty. Well, the nearest attempt we have had to achieve that state of affairs was William Penn’s attempt to govern Pennsylvania in its early years on Quaker principles. It was called “The Holy Experiment”, and its declared purpose was to found the kingdom of God on earth. So they took themselves seriously. They were much criticised, by Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin as you might expect, but also by a respected Quaker elder in London, Dr. John Fothergill. He told the American Quakers, “You are unfit for government. You accept our public trust, which at the same time you acknowledge you cannot discharge. You owe the people protection, & yet withhold them from protecting themselves. Will not all the blood that is spilt lye at your door? And can we..sit still and see the province in danger of being given

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up to a merciless enemy without endeavouring a rescue?" Harsh words, but fully justified? A compromise was reached whereby a Deputy Governor was appointed, who was not a Quaker, but sympathetic to Quaker principles; his job was to hang the murderers and robbers, and do the dirty work, while the true Quakers kept their lily-white hands clean. Gradually the colony passed to government by non-Quakers; and The Holy Experiment came to an end. Compared with Pericles or Julius Caesar, they were a lot of ignorant clowns.

Exactly the same would happen today, if the false prophets of equality got their way. Criminals are more sophisticated today; and within months there would be chaos and terror. The human race has been through this debate before, in China five centuries before Jesus was born. The Analects of Confucius have an ethos strikingly similar to the Sermon on the Mount; a good example avoids the need for coercion. But along came the Legalists, who said that Confucius' principles was all very well for the few who were up to them, but the Governor had to consider the whole population, and as some people only understood the language of fear, coercion and war were both legitimate, provided the aim was to abolish them! It was a language we understand today. One should think carefully before trying to be wiser than the experience of mankind.

In summary, insofar as the Sermon on the Mount is a blueprint for men becoming whole, the companionship of the Deity is far better. As a blueprint for political action, it would lead to chaos within months. Re-creating a vision of a world created by God, based on science, is far better. In my Religion Rewritten, I recommend the one, and re-create the other.

What do we do about the present situation? I suggest we use the meaning Jesus achieved in his life and death as the point of departure, rather than follow slavishly in the Master's footsteps; set a good example oneself; cherish fiercely the freedoms and privileges we have won, since Edward I wisely respected the privileges won by Parliament in his day; and hope that the Divine Unfathomable Mystery which is the Creator will somehow revive His wretched Church.