

493 High Vows and High Stakes

Since the recent Platinum Jubilee celebrations there is now notably more media talk as to what the future may hold for the British monarchy as and when the Queen “goes home to glory” in Christ.

In our past few Weekly Reflections concerning the British constitution and the monarchy, four central themes have emerged: first, Almighty God and His written Word remain entirely in place, whether honoured or not; second, godly leadership and godly conduct still matter; third, our Christian, Protestant constitution, is still in place; and fourth, this solid constitutional commitment to the Christian Faith has been downgraded by government policies over the decades, with the consequences of this folly now all around us.

As a result, we see in practice that “Secular Democracy” now proudly rules, and is constantly bumping up against what we can term the “Christian Establishment”. What is more, the constitutional threads which bind this nation to the Christian Faith and to the monarchy, such as the Coronation Service vows and the Church of England “by law established”, can be quite easily severed if public opinion is pushed that way by lobby groups, media campaigns and a governing party seeking a republic. Opinion poll results apparently suggest that such a republic is favoured by roughly 20% of the population.

That is the broad background as we seek prayerfully to look ahead now in the light of God’s Word. We do this as part of our duty to “wait, watch and pray” under the Lord (egs., Psalm 37.7 / Mark 13.33 / I Corinthians 16.13 / Colossians 4.2 / I Peter 4.7), while at the same time continuing to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” day by day (Matthew 6.33-34). Our Christian heads must be neither in the clouds nor in the sand.

God willing, a time will come when the detailed wording of the next coronation is being decided – ultimately by the politicians. This will clearly be a most crucial period in our national life, for if the anti-Christian Faith forces at large can significantly “de-Christianise” the coronation to a large extent, the effects will be profound.

Such forces have several things in their favour which we need to be fully aware of. First, we are frequently told that Britain is now a fine “multi-faith society”. As a result, “leaders of all Faiths and none” must surely be not only publicly present at the next coronation, but perhaps be given

readings and prayers of their own to utter? – but uttered to who or what we might ask? A reading allowed from the Qur'an for instance would show trendy tolerance, diversity and inclusivity of course, while implicitly upgrading the Qur'an, wholly unjustifiably, to equal status with the Holy Bible. Unfortunately such foolish, supposedly-Christian, generosity would be taken by many in the Muslim communities as a grand step towards the Islamisation of this country, a goal for which they make no secret.

Second, we have the well-known wish of the Prince of Wales to be Defender of Faith, rather than Defender of THE Faith, if and when he is King. To be frank, this wish is a double nonsense! Henry VIII was named "Defender of the Faith" by the then Pope, meaning of course the Roman Catholic Faith, from which Faith King Henry duly departed shortly afterwards. For centuries since, the "Fid Def" on British coinage has been "hijacked" to refer, no longer to the Roman Faith but to the Protestant Christian Faith - hence the grave significance of the Coronation Oath.

A second nonsense is that everyone on this planet inevitably has "faith" in something, someone or nothing: it is all faith, (and atheists have more faith than any of us). So the common phrase we often hear these days about those "of no faith" is meaningless. Thus Prince Charles pledging himself to "defend faith", whatever that faith happens to be, is simply naïve, and ignores whether or not that faith or Faith has solid credentials as to its truth, and whether or not it sits comfortably and loyally within British society. As we well know, one such imported Faith now growing fast in our midst, Islam, has threadbare truth-credentials and sits uncomfortably and often disloyally within British society. For a monarch who has taken the Coronation Oath then to regard Protestant Christianity and Islam as "interesting equals" would be sinful and foolish (eg., John 3.36). The stakes are as high as that.

The mood of the country is anti-privilege; Princess Diana still "looms large" in the national consciousness, with consequences for Charles and Camilla; the Cambriges are vulnerable and isolated, with great responsibilities yet to come; and the Sussexes remain a "loose cannon" overseas. Clearly, with the eventual passing of the Queen, the battle to uphold the constitutional Christian identity of the nation, and possibly the monarchy itself, will be fiercely fought. The next Coronation Service in Westminster Abbey will be most revealing, and until then, Ephesians 6.10-20 is as vital a passage as ever.

