

REFLECTIONS ON THE SOLUTION OF THE BOGLE/CHANDLER MYSTERY

*Do not adultery commit;
Advantage rarely comes of it.*

Arthur Hugh Clough

It was the scandal of the decade—perhaps of the century—in Australia. Nothing but the Chamberlain case (involving the dingo and the baby) seventeen years later approached it for the interest provoked. How did Dr Gilbert Bogle and Mrs Margaret Chandler, bent on an act of adultery on a bank of Sydney's Lane Cove River in the early hours of New Year's Day 1963, come to meet their deaths in so violent and insidious a manner. Detectives and forensic scientists were unable to provide an answer. Clearly some sort of poison was involved and speculation raged over the type, the method of administration and possible suspects. The New South Wales Police were diligent in their efforts to find a murderer but every possible suspect had an alibi which was unshakeable.

The controversy was fueled by a voracious media whose interest lay more in selling copy than in reporting the truth, lending publicity to every theory advanced, no matter how outlandish it might be. Their intrusiveness in the lives of those with even the remotest connection with the drama verged on the scandalous. As the reader will discover, it was fear of the attacks they could precipitate which kept silent a number of those who might have spoken.

The deaths had immense consequences on the lives of each of the players in the drama, as of the couple who had hosted the New Year's Eve party Dr Bogle and Mrs Chandler attended at nearby Chatswood. They affected the detectives and forensic specialists involved. There were, too of course, long lasting consequences for the spouses and children of the pair, for parents and grandparents.

The mystery was solved, almost fifty years later, by the investigative filmmaker, Peter Butt. Those who wish to discover how he explained, adequately and beyond any reasonable doubt, how the effects in the victims were produced by the cause he identified should read his *Dr Bogle & Mrs Chandler; The Confession* (Sydney, 2016). I will not spoil their efforts by exposing the culprit here save to mention that the view of Vivian Mahoney, the Government Analyst's Chief Toxicologist at the time, proved to be correct: what killed Dr Bogle also killed Mrs Chandler. In the course of his research Butt managed to elicit a raft of responses from members of the public, including a second hand report of an eye witness of the activities of the two in the moments prior to death.

Yet the ultimate tragedy, hidden by the atheistic spirit which was growing then and is now in full flower, was the eternal loss of two human souls. The dramatic irony could hardly have been greater. In the very moment when intense, if illicit, pleasure,

the normal accompaniment of the act in which life is transmitted, was within their grasp the two were overtaken by violent and sudden death; and with death, there followed judgement and eternal loss.

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This is a speculative opinion grounded in God's revelation in *Genesis* and in Christ's teaching in the Gospels. Speculative, for no one can say of another soul that he or she is damned forever. No one can circumscribe the mercy of God. But, contrary to what many would like to believe, God's mercy does not gainsay His justice.

Even the most outspoken of atheists understands what Christ meant by Hell, damnation forever; the eternal loss of one's soul. No one attending a performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* has difficulty accepting the drama of the final scene where its eponymous anti-hero goes to his damnation. Similarly, no one reading or attending a performance of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* misunderstands the malice in Hamlet's resolve to kill his uncle before he has a chance to purge his soul of the sin of murder by confession and contrition, his intent—

[To] trip him that his heels may kick at heaven,
And that his soul may be as damned and black
As Hell whereto it goes... (Act III, sc. 3, l. 93)

Regrettably, the majority of men fall in with the common opinion that no one can be certain of life after death. This suits the general apathy about morality. If there is no God, no one to whom we must give a precise accounting for the way in which we have conducted our lives, there will be no condign penalty visited upon us for our failures to adhere to the rule of morals. Why worry then? After this life there is only oblivion. Let's eat, drink and be merry.

In the discussion Christ had with the Samaritan woman reported in *John* chapter 4, as in his address to the woman caught in adultery mentioned in chapter 8 of the same Gospel, he urges repentance and abstention from all sin thereafter. His message was clear: he who commits sin is a slave. It was the heresiarch Martin Luther who encouraged men to sin more vehemently. The Lutheran delusion, that plank of Protestantism, has brought the world to its present pass where men give themselves excuses for killing the innocent, for indulging in sexual perversion, for mocking their Creator and Redeemer to His face.

He who created us knows the weakness and duplicity in our make-up. He revealed it to us as, for instance, in Psalm 9—

The wicked man boasts of his heart's desires;
The covetous blasphemes and spurns the Lord.
In his pride the wicked man says: 'He will not punish.
There is no God.'...

Is it safe to ignore Christ's teachings and admonitions? The common opinion seems to be that He was a good man—even a great one—but not God. Whatever Christ was, he was not simply a good man. Why? *Because he claimed to be God.* Either he

was God, then, or he was a liar, and good men do not lie. And if he was God—the God who created all men, who gave himself up to death that they might gain heaven for all eternity—it is utter folly to ignore him and his teachings.

God provides us with the necessary graces to embrace the good and to spurn evil. No man condemned to hell fire will be able to blame God for his own choices. It is salutary to study a report related by Professor Robert de Mattei in a recent paper of a revelation given privately to a religious by a young friend of the course of his sudden death and damnation.

“[I]n the instant of my passage I came out brusquely from the dark. I saw myself flooded by a blinding light precisely in the place where my dead body lay. It happened as in the theatre when the lights are switched off and the curtain is raised on an unexpected scene, tremendously bright – the scene of my life. As if in a mirror I saw my soul, I saw the graces trampled upon, starting from my youth until that last “no”. I felt like a murderer who had been shown his victim; “Repent? Never! – Be ashamed? Never! Yet, I could not resist the gaze of that God Whom I had rejected. I was left with only one thing to do: flee. As Cain fled Abel so my soul was driven far away from the sight of that horror. It was my particular judgment. The invisible Judge said: “Be gone from me!” Then my soul, like a yellow shadow of sulphur, plunged into the eternal torment.”¹

The ancient philosophers used to say “It is matter that impedes knowledge”. When the matter of the body is removed from his soul at the moment of death there is no where for a man to hide; no where to hide from the truth about himself.

Michael Baker

6th December 2018— *St Nicholas of Myra*

¹ *Monsignor Viganò and The Hour of Judgment*, Roberto de Mattei, *Corrispondenza Romana*, October 24, 2018. Cf. <https://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2018/10/de-mattei-monsignor-vigano-and-hour-of.html#more>