

WHAT WOULD JESUS HAVE DONE?

CHAPTER 22.

If theory never matches reality, what then is the point of theory? Why not act according to the light of pure reason? Because theory provides a framework in which to think and marshal one's thoughts, before judgement and instinct decide whether the particular occasion is one in which to follow conventional theory, or to disregard it. And because trained instinct and experience are far better guides than reason, which is never "pure" but always conditioned by the frame of mind which you happen to adopt.

There are of course rules in advocacy; for example, "never tell a jury what verdict they ought to reach". And the corollary of that rule is that it is sometimes shrewd to leave the jury to complete the last link in the chain of an argument, because they will then find the argument so much the more convincing, and be more willing to act upon it. But rules like these ought to be second nature; you ought not to have to think about them. More in the conscious mind should be the rule, that it is unwise to say too much beforehand about how you intend to cross-examine a witness; because you may find that any inspiration about how to conduct the cross-examination has then gone. Much better to keep what inspiration you have for the moment when you cross-examine. It is as though it is a work of art, and your creativeness can only be expressed once. Even after it is all over, you may not fully appreciate what you have done, but you have got your result. This is particularly so, if much of the cross-examination is improvisation. No plan is likely to last beyond the first significant answer; but if you have planned thoroughly you are able to improvise with relative safety.

Whether the mechanism of genetic evolution is cumulative selection, or not, is of no relevance to this situation. Some knowledge of how the mind works, a slight instinct for the witness's sticking points, his vanities, his unwillingness to lose face, might be helpful. But to conclude from the discovery that the world of genetic change is virtually mechanical, that there is no Deity, is to ignore everything that lies in between; the world of morale which Napoleon considered crucial in War, human endurance and a sense of duty, courage or cowardice, strength of character or the lack of it, whether in the depths of his soul a man is an optimist or pessimist, are all bypassed, as though they did not exist. Only if you proved that all these are illusions, and that the whole world of the mind and spirit is mechanical, would you be entitled to conclude that there might not be a God; but then your argument itself would be mechanical, like a child repeating something parrot-wise, and you yourself would have no judgement to decide whether it was a good argument, or a bad one. All you would be able to do is goggle at a meaningless ritual; and what would be the point of doing that?

WHAT WOULD JESUS HAVE DONE?

If on the other hand all these things have meaning, and the human mind can have judgement to decide between a good argument and a bad one, if human subtlety can persuade a fellowman to tell stupid obvious lies, which turn a jury's stomach, if it is possible to outwit your opponents in battle, then thought can influence matter. And that means that in the animal and human kingdoms thought is likely to influence genetic change to some extent, and with humans to control and guide evolution to some extent too. Why is it that highly intelligent people cannot see this? Or is it that they can see it, and will not, or cannot admit it? Anyway, whatever the answer, it is a crowning mercy that there are men like Marshall Foch, skilled in their profession, highly regarded by almost everyone, who can still be obsessed by an absurd professional idea. But then it is difficult to see things through the eyes of others.

In Chapter 35 of "Man's Relationship with God", in order to encourage the reader to try to look at things through the eyes of a creator, I wrote, "If you sat down to manufacture creation, I suppose you would begin...". So in order to tell the reader that the actual creation must have been unimaginably different from anything he or I could conceive; I used the absurd notions of sitting down, and manufacturing, to indicate how limited my conceptions were. The writer of Genesis, who most assuredly believed that God existed, had the Creator speaking a word, and matter coming into being. Speaking another word, and matter organizing itself. Why should the Creator bother himself about details? Why not, if you are all powerful, simply tell matter to organize itself, and it does so? Why not tell matter that it must grope towards greater consciousness, and leave it to matter to work out a mechanical system that was good enough to cope, until man's thought was able to take a hand in it too? It is a great mistake for people who have never created anything to imagine that they know what it must be like to do so, and what the limitations are. It is a bit like people before Copernicus insisting the sun went round the earth, and dismissing the hypothesis of Heraclitus that actually it was the other way round. The Universe is a more wonderful place than any of us realizes, probably more than any of us can realize. Try as we will, we cannot take it in; so we invent theories to describe this bit or that bit, but actually our theories never measure up to reality as we find it in Nature or in Life. Just as Clausewitz says that in War, your theories never match the reality of war as experienced by the soldier.

No-one has ever made a tree, or a plant, or a flower; you can grow them, but not make them, not yet anyway. Up to date the nearest we get to creation, is in the world of the mind and imagination. In art, in architecture, in music, even in advocacy, you create. But not in science, which is all mechanical? Or is Dampier Whetham right that it is the greatest creation of the mind of man? In a sense art is illusion; painting tries to reproduce on a flat surface

WHAT WOULD JESUS HAVE DONE?

what the eye sees as solid. But illusion or not, art offers about the only chance a man has of imitating the Creator, other than in raising a family. And what do you do with your ability to create little things? Do you use your ability to praise the Creator, or to insult Him? You can hardly insult Him more than by saying He does not exist? And if you insult Him, what is going to happen when you die?

If the world of the mind and spirit is real, and the mind can create up to a point; if in any subject, theory never measures up to reality as experienced by men; if Clausewitz is right that this is particularly so in War, where due to the friction of war, everything falls short of your expectations, and it requires enormous determination in a commander to get his plans executed; it follows as night follows day that there probably is a world after death. This world of unending struggle and suffering only makes sense if it is worthwhile to sacrifice yourself for others. Worth dying that others may live. In a mechanical world that is meaningless. And it is a more credible speculation that this world we all know, has meaning, rather than it does not. So what will it be like, this world after death? Ironically the suicide bomber, murderous thug though he is to many, must surely ask himself this question? If he does, why do not we?

The moment you admit that two minds can interpenetrate, that you can see things through the eyes of others if you have enough sympathy, then the world of the spirit becomes just another world to explore, like the world we all see, feel and hear. And if the intangible world is as real to you as the tangible, then it is elementary to ask where death fits into the picture. It ceases to be something you get morbid about. This is not to deny that the moment of death of a loved one, is a moment of bereavement. The spirit which was there a moment before, however frail and helpless, has gone. Gone perhaps to a world of light, but we are left lingering here, and have to make the best of it. And nobody around nowadays knows very much about the next world. Events do cast a shadow in front of them. I knew whether a prosecution was likely to succeed; and generally I was right, provided I worked hard at it. Animals know when they are going to die; small pets retreat to a corner of the garden to be alone. They know. Sometimes events cast a more dramatic shadow; and you know something will happen shortly which is fraught with danger. Jesus must have known pretty well what was to take place, before he took his disciples up the mountain for the transfiguration. But there is no-one around nowadays who knows much about the world beyond death. And I myself prefer not to speculate, when the subject is obviously beyond my competence.

I can point out that Socrates and Jesus were firmly agreed that your fate in the next world was likely to be decided by your choices in this; but hardly comment on their opinion. So what am I saying? Simply that we must all now view life as a whole, now that we have the

WHAT WOULD JESUS HAVE DONE?

ability to do so. It is not necessary to have much knowledge of astro-physics, nor of atomic-physics and the quantum-mechanics, nor of molecular biology and the cumulative-selection of genes; it is sufficient that we have a smattering, and know such subjects exist. The important thing is to view life as a whole, however much we have to specialize in a tiny part of it ourselves. And life as a whole, includes death and the world beyond death. If you disregard that part of life, you are just parochial nowadays. Long ago, when infant mortality was so common, death was familiar to most people. Now people tend to disregard it, only to be appalled when it comes along uninvited. But if terrorists are not firmly dealt with as enemies of the State, death may become a familiar feature of life for many people; because terrorism is a call to civil-war, and once civil-war starts, death is round the corner for everyone. So it is time people woke up, and started to think in terms of the community as a whole; because if there is one attitude of mind that is guaranteed to alight on the wrong solution to every problem, it is the mind that will not, or cannot see the problem as a whole. For example, it is absurd and hypocritical for the State to allow the Police to “shoot to kill” suspected suicide bombers, while the State lacks the guts to make terrorism a capital offence. Either the State should re-introduce capital punishment, or the Police should be refused permission to shoot to kill. It is hypocrisy for the State to pretend to be humane and refuse to kill, while it orders its junior servants to do its dirty work for it; and then like a pack of cowards blames them if things go wrong. But then “integrity” is a word which politicians have long since ceased to understand.

However terrorism apart, it is time Christians realized that it is their duty is to behave like responsible citizens; and the time ended long ago when they could be an obnoxious sect within the State, preening their consciences but actually undermining the viability of the State and doing their best to bring about its collapse. Bertrand Russell laments that the last men of intellectual eminence before the dark ages, in particular Augustine, were concerned, not with saving civilization or expelling the barbarians, but with preaching the virtues of virginity and the unfortunate damnation of unbaptized infants. Since these were their preoccupations, it is not surprising that the following age was one of gross cruelty and superstition. So we have seen it all before; and the Christian Church seems to have learned little about seeing problems as a whole in the last 16 hundred years. It is time it learned to do so – fast.

Who guards the Guardians? How do you control the elected tyranny of the majority? The checks and balances of our present Constitution are not going to survive long against the ambitions of men bent on undisputed power. There was a time when the Church’s excommunication meant political death. Whereas today, if the Church excommunicated a

WHAT WOULD JESUS HAVE DONE?

politician, everyone would just laugh, so far has the Church sunk into degradation through its ineptitude. The last thing we want in this country is a return to any form of theocracy; but it might do a world of good if once again the Church's excommunication was something politicians dreaded. No-one wants the clergy to have power again, but can anyone think of a better voice than that of Religion to curb the overweening ambitions of unscrupulous men? And is there any chance of this being possible, unless Religion is once again honoured by the vast bulk of our citizens, so that they can make their voice heard?

Men and women who see Religion as the means of facilitating their entry into heaven, and who fail to see it as their best opportunity to curtail the encroachments of evil into the lives of others, richly deserve to forfeit heaven, and inherit hell instead. If you fancy yourself as living for others, then you have a duty to preserve the State, which is infinitely preferable, with all its shortcomings, to the chaos which would follow were the State to fail. If the State does not feature in your religion, at least think of the fate of others should the State fail.

Normally I would not ask the question, "What would Jesus have done?"; the conditions are so different. He took for granted the cohesiveness of the community; and Jews have retained their Jewish culture through 2000 years of persecution. Whereas with the luxury of modern conveniences, the cohesiveness and morale of our society is disintegrating before our eyes. So normally I would use my own initiative to make up my mind, on the basis of my trained instinct and experience so far as it exists, as best I could. But occasionally one should ask, "What would Jesus have done?" The answer is sometimes not in doubt. As regards mathematical physicists who dare not proclaim the freedom of the will, as to microbiologists who boast that cumulative genetic change explains everything and there is no room for further creative thought still less to honour the Creator, as to clergymen who drop consecrated wine on rice-paper wafers, as to the politically correct who are like the Pharisees of his own day, as to the zealots whose insanity would disarm our country whereas in his day with equal insanity they urged rebellion against Rome, as to the "do-gooders" who say we are all one big family and sin and crime do not matter anymore, he would have defied the lot! And gone his own way. So why should we not do the same?

Yet – we all know that the mystical language of Christendom is identical with the mysticism of Islam, Hindu India, and for that matter similar to that of the religions of Isis and Mithras long ago. They were fully conversant with the idea of an ecstatic union with the Supreme Being; it did not begin with Ignatius Loyola, though its amoral ruthlessness may have begun with him. And one is tempted to ask why Jesus was so careless as to get himself crucified, if the only differences between religions lay in their outward forms and

WHAT WOULD JESUS HAVE DONE?

ceremonies? I think the answer is that Jesus preached that the kingdom of heaven **had** come; whereas the prophets only preached that it would come; and the difference necessarily cost him his life. In the Protestant West this has been interpreted to mean that there is an obligation from time to time actually to do something; when Guderian's tanks are rumbling along the road outside, it is not enough to be reading the devotions of Thomas a Kempis or Bernard of Clairvaux. There is a duty to scrounge a Piat mortar from somewhere, because that is what was likely to be available, and take a pot-shot at the leading tank. More generally and realistically, there was a duty to fight and win the cataclysmic War with Nazi Germany, with its slave-labour, death-camps and gas-chambers; and if this meant sacrificial casualties among air-crews to flatten German towns, so be it. This at least kept the Luftwaffe at home, and facilitated military victory on other battle-fronts. If the Luftwaffe had been able to deploy its strength in Russia, Russia might have gone down. The price was terrific, but it had to be paid. The supreme betrayal would have been not to fight. Conduct matters; not mysticism.

Alas within a generation a cynical contempt for the sacrifices of the war-years, and a self-hatred of everything English in some people, enabled a militant secularism to raise its head, which now threatens to destroy everything that makes England worth while. So I too decided to go my own way, and begin the journey to make sense of it all. And the first lesson I learned was that "love" does not solve all problems; it may equally well be the road to ruin. This led ultimately to the construction of my Theory of Consciousness, which is as good a way as any for reconciling the various mental disciplines necessary to keep society going.

Or could I be wrong? Wrong in thinking that Jesus was just the person who "saved" us from the darkness of the past, and set our spirits free. Perhaps he **was** God, the Creator himself, come back to experience his creation, and find out how grateful mankind was for its existence and for countless other mercies as well; only with this necessity that his natural birth made him forget his true identity. And only in agony and bloody sweat could he once again remember whom he truly was. If so, then the day of judgement will be an awful reality. If there is a Deity, there must come a time when we are faced by omnipotent power, constrained by no rules of which we have any knowledge. Even with the Christian God, there is no guarantee that mercy would continue. He must in the end always reject imperfection.

Clausewitz aimed for perfection. A prolific writer, in his treatise *On War*, which he never finished, and of which he only revised the first Chapters, he sought to write a book which would last. Not like the textbook Marshall Jomini wrote on tactics and strategy, full of practical common sense, which might soon be out of date; but a book which would give the reader an understanding of the nature of War, so that if he were caught up in war he would

WHAT WOULD JESUS HAVE DONE?

find himself in familiar surroundings. In principle I am attempting something very similar. We both seek an understanding, both for ourselves and others, of a particular facet of the spiritual world; he explored the nature of War, and I seek to explore the interface between religion and everyday conduct, particularly professional conduct, in the secular world. And I start from the assumption that to say these two are incompatible is to reduce religion to an irrelevance; and this assumption is itself based on the belief that advocacy for me was a vocation, not a job.

A religion that fails to accommodate the whole of life, in my opinion, is nowadays utterly unsatisfying; and the man in the street knows it. But equally a religion that only accommodates the secular world, by an elaborate over-indulgence in ritual, and fails to grasp the yearning of the human spirit for perfection, even in conflict, is a travesty and even less satisfying. Only occasionally do you achieve perfection in the Law Courts; and I expect only occasionally do you achieve it in War; but you have to aim for it. It must be the same in every other trade and profession too.

It is the same in human relations. Any expression of egotism, whether it stems from love of country, or of family, or for personal safety or self-esteem, is inimical to the perfection of indwelling; just as Liddell Hart said that no love of country, or regiment, or friends, must be allowed to deviate the writer from the truth, or his military history was worthless. Without the desire or willingness to strive for perfection in human relations, society is condemned to second-best; that means misunderstanding, incompatibility, discord and divorce – in perpetuity. You may not often achieve perfection, but you must strive for it. This essentially was Jesus' message, I believe; although he recognised it had to be left to others to exploit and develop his ideas to embrace the whole of life, rather than just Judaic piety which was the religion of his brother James.

We all have to live by faith; the religious and the irreligious. Chance is inseparable from War; and as the elder von Moltke said no plan lasts longer than the first serious contact with the enemy. After that, you have to trust the initiative of your subordinates. So too is it inseparable from life in the secular world; and the cynic who tries to calculate everything, in the end loses his judgement in the everyday things of life, in which he prides himself on his astuteness. Napoleon, the greatest man of action since Julius Caesar, ended by making the greatest miscalculation of his career. He marched on Moscow. We all have to live by faith of one sort, or another.

Jesus was no exception. Whoever he was, it is inconceivable he should have known his true identity throughout his three years Ministry. It would have disabled him from doing

WHAT WOULD JESUS HAVE DONE?

what he did; and he might have ended up condemning the world, rather than saving it. Only on the cross was it permissible for him to grasp something of the whole truth, of which the Nicean Creed grasps perhaps a glimmer. Just as no theory of War measures up to the reality as experienced by the soldier, whether he be general or private; so no theory of religion measures up to reality as experienced by those who try to live by its faith. The irreligious mock because theory is so inadequate; but it is equally inadequate for the religious. Only those who live by the Rule Book find it adequate, by the gospel of Political Correctness, by the gospel of Health and Safety, grasping at anything that denies the human spirit its initiative and ability to mature. Jesus had quite a lot to say about them in Mathew chapter 23. He wanted people to have abundant life.

And surely society or the state should have abundant life too; and be a place in which people are honest, trust each other, give value for money, do a hard day's work? The state is not a collection of individuals; it is a loosely knit team. Indeed in my opinion, the state consists of the integration of the thoughts and beliefs of all the individuals of which it is composed; and these are all interrelated to some degree by the forces of public opinion. Even if power is concentrated in a relatively small minority, no dictator or oligarchy can defy for long the wishes of all the people, or in the end they get rid of them as power disintegrates. If this is correct, then the citizen's thoughts and beliefs, which must of course include his or her religious thoughts and beliefs, must reach an accommodation with the prevalent views of society, so as to keep alive the living traditions on which that society is based. Otherwise a sect or church which refuses to reach any accommodation with the views of society simply becomes a monastery or ghetto, sponging on the state but taking no part in its life. Nor is it any good being self-conscious about the living traditions of your society; they must be spontaneous and almost second nature. For this reason, political correctness cannot change society; it can only destroy part of society, to the detriment of the whole. So my conclusion is that it is no longer satisfying, if it ever was, to pursue salvation for the individual. You need salvation for society as well, because only in a coherent society can an individual achieve his own coherence. Even if it strips the ecclesiastical establishment of all their power, ultimately religion must reach an accommodation with the state, in the sense that religious truth, so far as it exists, must permeate the thinking of both the state and its institutions, like all truth.