

## JESUS A DAILY COMPANION.

### CHAPTER 7.

Having a vision of the Universe and man's place in Nature, not only gives life in the community a sense of purpose, it also helps to avoid going down evolutionary cul-de-sacs. But more is needed than the ability to see creation as a whole; a desire and an enthusiasm for life are necessary to cope with the present. Admittedly too great an enthusiasm for the present can spill over into an entanglement with the parochial passions and barbarities of the past, to which we are all heir; too small an enthusiasm, and your community withers. A balance is needed. Your enthusiasm for life must be disciplined by a clear vision of where society is going; and unless you see creation as a whole, your society is likely to be going down an evolutionary cul-de-sac, even if you do not recognise what is happening! It would be a pity if that were the fate of Islam; but that is for Muslims to decide. However it remains true both for them and us, that a desire for life must be paramount, or your community falls apart.

The prophet Isaiah saw this clearly; and the way he expressed it was to say that three symptoms showed that the end of the world was near; when children ruled (and we have nearly got there, when it is made impossible to discipline them), when women grew bald (in other words become indistinguishable from men), and when desire shall fail. The last symptom shows the prophet at his most perceptive; because the moment it ceases to be a thrill to serve the community to which one belongs, the community starts to fail, because one says, "What is the point of taking trouble?" In all the professions, morale is paramount; it is more important even than skill. And every thorough "shake-up" of a profession by politicians lowers its morale for a time at least; and too many "shake-ups" leave a profession disorientated. How would Members of Parliament like it, if every year they had to play musical chairs, and be elected by a different constituency?

But how does one retain this balance, for instance in Court? When you are cross-examining a witness, you need to concentrate almost entirely on him; whether he is honest or dishonest, how much he will concede in a straightforward way, and how much you have to try to manipulate him. It is no good thinking about being in the forefront of man's evolution. Yet it is no good either getting lost in the detail of day to day living, and relegating the forefront of evolution into the realm of academic thought. You need the tension between the two extremes to preserve a balanced judgement, even a balanced judgement in everyday affairs. And it is as well to remember that Jesus seemed to preserve this balance without difficulty. Whether you think he saved the world, or was deluded, it makes no difference; he went his way with composure and never lost his common touch. If he had got lost in an

## JESUS A DAILY COMPANION.

apocalyptic world of salvation and damnation, he would have been dismissed as a madman. It was because the Authorities feared the whole world would go after him, and bring Roman disapproval down on their heads, that they determined to destroy him. Yet how do we maintain this balance? I think the answer can best be illustrated by the concept, which Christians often have, that the risen Jesus is their daily companion.

This device or conception bridges the gap between the human individual world, and the world of man's future destiny - for them. The first question one asks is how can He be the companion of millions, or tens of millions at the same time? The answer is that nobody has the faintest idea. The next question is whether it is truth, or fantasy? I suspect the answer is a bit of both. Let me make one thing clear. Some of the best and nicest people I have known have subscribed to this belief or myth. Yet sensibility demands that one does not attempt to discuss it with them. If one tried, there would be an eruption of protest; 'It is my sheet-anchor in life, I'm not prepared to compromise it, or even discuss it'. But they are not alone; I think many other people have sheet-anchors in life; and it is best to see this belief or myth about the companionship of Jesus as an example of a much wider phenomenon.

One can have a perfectly proper pride in school, regiment, and university college. These institutions often stand for a great deal that is good, and public spirited; and there is nothing wrong whatever in a man or woman wanting to live up to the standards which they enshrine. When Marcus Aurelius exhorted himself in his Meditations to, "Remember you are a Roman", and "Remember you are immortal", he was telling himself to live up to the standards which these concepts personified for him. It was a slightly more austere version of thinking or believing that Jesus is your daily companion. It represents a slight hardening of the consciousness, so as to liberate the discipline that these concepts embody; very similar to the hardening of the consciousness necessary for the professional approach to life, but nothing like so tense or continuous. The professional lawyer may make his sheet-anchor an unwillingness ever to lose face. He may be prepared to betray his client, his colleagues, even his clerk, provided he himself is never asked to lose face. I think that most men who have to do things in the machiavellian world of affairs need something to give them a sense of direction, something to stiffen their backbone, in order to avoid losing their sense of purpose. Someone who has no "principles", soon finds that in the world of affairs he has to be prepared to say anything that is expedient to stay the course. So the problem is fairly universal; although I do not suppose everyone solves it in this way. And this belief or myth that one has a spirit companion of some sort, even regimental spirit, is both an inspiration for daily action, and also can provide a sticking point, beyond which one refuses to go.

## JESUS A DAILY COMPANION.

Is this belief that Jesus is one's daily companion just a psychological device then? I very much doubt it. In any event, it is most unwise to be condescending about other people's beliefs. Jesus' precept, "Judge not, that ye be not judged", is sound psychological advice. Even if you think it is only a device, either for an individual or generally, it is better not to say so. You may be wrong; and if you are, and if there is a Deity, He is unlikely to forgive you in a hurry. And even if it is a device, it is a perfectly legitimate device.

If it is legitimate to regard Jesus as one's daily companion, then it is equally legitimate to regard another person, or indeed other people as one's daily companions, no matter whether they are present or absent, alive or dead. And before the reader throws up his hands in horror, and say that this means telepathy and dabbling in the occult, let me remind him that every soldier would agree that comradeship and morale is all, and regimental spirit is the basis of morale! And it was this knowledge that emboldened me to write that I believed the supreme reality is a sense of communion between two persons or two souls. Nine tenths of it may be fantasy and imagination, but the remaining tenth hidden under all the chaff is adamant spirit. Even if there is a good deal of fantasy in Christian communion; regimental morale is not fantasy. And it is important to try to discover where the truth lies.

At the beginning of one of Sir Basil Liddell Hart's books on military strategy there is a most eloquent passage on the need to pursue the truth in writing military history. Captain Liddell Hart was an infantry officer in the 1914/18 War; he was badly wounded, and invalided out of the Army in 1919, much against his will. However he went on to become a distinguished military historian; and he wrote that one must pursue the truth, in disregard of patriotism, in disregard of loyalty to regiment, in disregard of loyalty to friends alive or dead. Because if one does not, the history one writes is worthless. So I will try to pursue the truth, and be as delicate as I can.

In a "Reconciliation with Science and War" it is the philosophical aspect of my theory of consciousness that predominates, with the assertion that for us to think at all, we have to adopt an attitude of mind under tension, which rests on assumptions which for the most part are unconscious, and which almost certainly contain a degree of error. So error creeps into all our thinking from the start; with the well known experience that carrying an argument through to its logical conclusion often results in contradiction or absurdity. You need to have the discretion to know when to stop. Of course I insisted that all this took place in the world of relationships; but I did not explain how. In "Man's Relationship with God" it is practical experience that predominates, with the assertion that the only beliefs the mind really believes are the ones you put into practice every day; and intellectual beliefs to which the mind only

## JESUS A DAILY COMPANION.

pays lip-service are so pale and shadowy by comparison that they hardly merit the name “belief” at all. Of course I suggested every frame of mind depends on its assumptions, just as mathematics depends on its axioms, and science depends on its basic assumptions. But nowhere did I marry the two aspects of my theory; and I must try to do so now.

My opinion is that the next step in man’s evolution lies in the ability of two minds to interpenetrate, not simply in the world of military command but in the civilian world as well. But we all do confide in our friends to some extent; and we only stop when delicacy suggests it is not safe or wise to go further. In the Army it is different, because military discipline makes it safe; whereas there is no corresponding discipline in civilian life. Hence the apparent incongruity that what is possible in the Army, is not normally possible outside it. And the attraction of having the companionship of the risen Christ is that here was a man, who not only forgave rejection, but who after unspeakable humiliation was still willing to forgive those driving the nails into his hands and feet. So with him, it is safe to confide. But if a man has a vocation in the secular world, it is not legitimate for him to abandon that career in order to show forgiveness. If you are rejected, you have to accept it, and yes forgive; but there is no question of intimacy thereafter, unless it is in the unspoken world of the spirit. So maybe if two people asserted they dwelt in each other, it might be possible for them to emulate the forgiveness of Jesus, at any rate in the unspoken world of thought transference; but as long as one has to put on a brazen face and practise professional discipline in front of colleagues, it is not possible to go further in the everyday world of affairs.

So to go further, if one insists on taking part in the secular world, it seems to be necessary to re-create with fellow man or woman, the same kind of relationship that is supposed to exist between God and the soul. For unless people are willing to dwell in each other, and internalise the disappointment and even agony of rejection, there is going to be no progress that it is possible to make. They will be stuck in a world in which it is not possible to communicate forgiveness fully, even if it is possible to forgive. Yet the number of people you meet in a lifetime whom it would be wise to admit to this degree of intimacy is incredibly small. Nevertheless with such a willingness, I see the fabric of society becoming woven more tightly; and without it, I see the fabric of society becoming unravelled.

So how are the two facets of my Theory of Consciousness integrated? They represent the pattern of thought that stems from two different types of indwelling. Clearly the philosophical and the practical aspects of my theory represent my view of it when viewed through two attitudes of mind; and I regard it as elementary that you cannot ever reconcile two different attitudes of mind, even when they occur in the same rational being. They are

## JESUS A DAILY COMPANION.

different, and are based on different unspoken assumptions. The two facets of my Theory of Consciousness are integrated when the unspoken assumptions are two different types of indwelling, ideally with the same person. So the basis is a living basis, not an analytical one; and the unspoken and usually unconscious assumptions are not verbal or conceptual, but are two facets of an indwelling with another person.

Let me take a simple example. Suppose one is rowing in a four, and is assigned to the bow-oar. One has to keep time with stroke, because he sets the time, among other things. But with practice, something happens; the crew starts to become a team. They row as a unity. You find exactly the same in the Army; a troop becomes a unity, both on the parade ground and in other training too. It is more drastic than rowing a boat; one might say that the steel has entered one's soul, as one has started to become a soldier. One may not know much about infantry tactics, nor how to concentrate the fire of guns, nor organize a rolling barrage; but one has started to become a soldier. In very much the same way that one can allow the steel to enter one's soul, and cooperate with the Army in becoming a soldier; so one can let another person enter one's soul, and once entered difficult or impossible to expel them. Once a soldier, always a soldier I suppose; it is difficult to put the clock back. Once you let someone into your soul, almost impossible to expel them.

So it is a dangerous thing to do; but the compensation is that the unspoken and usually unconscious assumptions that go to make up one's various attitudes of mind include the living assumptions of an indwelling, as well as the more mundane assumptions which other people habitually make. But a sense of communion with another need not go to these extreme lengths; and comradeship in the Army certainly doesn't. Yet even here, the unconscious assumptions behind one's conduct are living assumptions, not intellectual ones, because it is a closely knit coherent society in which one lives. There are many degrees of communion.

So to return to the belief or myth that the risen Christ is one's daily companion; it is easy to see how this bridges the gap between daily conduct and the hope we all need to feel, either for one's own future or the future of the world. It is, and must be, grossly depressing to have no hope either for oneself or others. And because those who claim the risen Christ is their daily companion may indeed have let his spirit into their souls, it is very dangerous to dismiss their claim as a psychological device. It may not be; it may be the most real thing in the world to them, justifiably. But at the same time, a belief in the indwelling spirit of Jesus, however valid, does nothing to inspire wise and competent conduct in the world of affairs, simply because he was not interested in it. You need inspiration from another source for that!

## JESUS A DAILY COMPANION.

And of course there may in fact be a fair amount of wishful thinking involved. To be “aware” of the companionship of Jesus, one needs to subject the body to that degree of nervous tension which will induce the frame of mind which appreciates his presence. This is so whether the “awareness” of his presence is fact or fantasy. Suppose it is fact; having induced this frame of mind once, of course the mind and body can do it again. So even if the first awareness of Jesus was true, the subsequent ones may be imagination. And the person concerned will find it difficult to distinguish the one from the other. So even a true companionship will have a good deal of imagination and fantasy mixed up with it; and actually it is none the worse for that. If the “awareness” of Jesus’ presence is fantasy, then it is no worse than day-dreaming, and should not prevent a return to reality. The two states to avoid are a degeneration into complete fantasy, especially religious mania, and one party becoming a slave to the other. Particularly where the sense of communion is between a man and a woman, you do not want one party to be wholly dominant, and the other to be wholly subservient. And it is remarkably easy to get into the situation where it is difficult, or even impossible, for one party to reproach the other with harsh or inconsiderate conduct. The same is true of the relationship of God to man, assuming this does truly exist. There is nothing wrong in a man crying out at the bitterness of Providence, “How can God do this to me?”; so long as he does not imitate Louis XIV in the aftermath of the battle of Ramillies and add, “Who have done so much for Him!”

In other walks of life the position is similar. The lawyer who cannot lose face induces into himself the frame of mind which regards losing face as intolerable. The frame of mind is his gyroscopic compass by which he navigates his way through life; “losing face” is merely the label attached to it. If you were to tease someone who had no great regard for appearances with the taunt that he did not want to lose face, he would regard it as good natured banter. Try it with someone whose “compass” was not losing face, and you would have an eruption you would not forget. Most of us have something in the mind that is non-negotiable; and naturally this will express itself as a favourite frame of mind, to which we revert at frequent intervals. It is a bad habit, in my opinion, to get locked into a favourite frame of mind like this. Better by far seek a sense of communion with God or man (or woman), because this is subject only to the danger of degenerating into fantasy; whereas your favourite frame of mind **is fantasy**. There is nothing permanent about it, apart from the fact that bad habits are difficult to get rid of. And it will always limit your ability to act, in situations where the bad habit is irrelevant.

Nevertheless one of the chief functions of any religion, from primitive forest gods to Jung’s spirit lurking in the depths of the psyche, is to provide a totem, a sheet anchor, a haven

of refuge, for the human soul who is lost in the unbelievable complexities of life. But I have no doubt that it is infinitely better to seek a relationship with other human beings, which the structure and discipline of a regiment makes second nature. And the magic of Christianity is that Jesus teaches us that it is permissible, with due decorum, to treat the Almighty, the Creator, as one would another human being, in order to fulfil His purposes. It is only necessary in order to act effectively to be prepared to translate the marriage of minds, which one finds in the army, into the self-discipline of civilian life, where alas one finds it all too seldom. The problem for the young is that to achieve all this, they would have to renounce “self”, at the very moment when the exuberance of youth urges them to exploit it.

Clausewitz in his treatise *On War*, does not prescribe Rules for fighting battles, nor Doctrines for planning campaigns, which in any event would have been out of date within a generation; he endeavours to understand the nature of war. And so teach those involved in war to understand what is happening to them, and be able the more readily to decide what to do. In other words, he seeks to train the soldier’s judgement. War is violence, and in ideal war the maximum violence is used to achieve the required objective.

He says at the very beginning of Chapter 1 of his treatise *On War*, that kind-hearted people might suppose that the minimum amount of force should be used, which is necessary to accomplish the objective which you hope to achieve, in the limited war in which you have decided to engage. In this way, the minimum suffering will be caused, particularly to the civilian population. But this is to misunderstand the nature of War, which is violence, even extreme violence; and he says the mistakes that come from such kindness are the very worst. It is to put the cart before the horse. Instead you should use the maximum force, which it is politically expedient to expend on the limited aim you hope to achieve. You can make no greater mistake than to misjudge the precise nature of the war, in which you have chosen to engage, or to imagine its nature is different from what it actually is. My only comment from litigation is that if you first misjudge the situation, once you are engaged in the conflict, you lose the ability to readjust to the situation in its true perspective, until you realize you have irrevocably failed to achieve your aim.

Similarly with Religion and the State; unless this world is an irrelevant dream or nightmare, and reality is entirely in a heaven or hell after death, for the citizen in the name of Religion to ignore his duty to the State is about as bad a misjudgement as it is possible for him to make. For him to imagine he can scramble into his kind of heaven, by invoking the Deity in his particular way, and expect others to maintain the Rule of Law and the safety of the State, is fantasy. It is a reversal of everything life in this world is about. It is to mistake

## JESUS A DAILY COMPANION.

tactics for strategy, and strategy for tactics; the means for the end, and the end for the means. In particular with the Christian God, anyone who thinks He is likely to welcome into His heaven a selfish little wretch, who thinks only of himself, has drunk so deeply of religion that he has lost all judgement. He has lost all judgement not only in the secular world, but in the heavenly world too; not only in the largely mechanical world of cumulative genetic selection, but in the world of the spirit and artistic creation too. He might as well busy himself rooting out the Pelagian heresy in Italy, while the German tribes are breathing fire and slaughter throughout the length and breadth of Gaul. And in the Day of Judgement, if he ever has a day of awakening, he is likely to find his God is not over-pleased!

And one of the advantages of having a vision of the Universe and man's place in Nature is that it makes it a great deal easier for the citizen to lead a normal life as a member of the community.