

THE GOD-WORLD-I TRIANGLE.

CHAPTER 3.

FINDING THE PROBLEM YOU NEED TO SOLVE.

I am a great admirer of John Locke (1632-1704), who in many ways is a similar figure to Confucius. He has been described as the apostle of the Revolution of 1688, the most moderate and the most successful of all revolutions. His thought represents a moderate and tolerant liberalism; and he was perhaps lucky that he wrote when the politicians of the day were exactly of the same opinion. The country was sick of the tyranny of the Stuart kings, and of intolerant religious sects having undue influence; and the politicians of the day knew it. But I think it helps if someone is able to articulate the public mood. I am sure it helps the “doers” of this world, to do what they know instinctively has to be done, if they know there is a theoretical justification for it. So it is one thing to proclaim correctly what is wrong. It is another to proclaim what the remedy is, and articulate what it is that has to be done.

In his excellent appreciation of Dr. Jung, the famous Swiss psychologist, Laurens van der Post in his last Chapter makes a withering attack on the failure of the modern Christian Churches to command the allegiance of ordinary people today. When Churches talk about “the Soul” and psychologists talk about “the Psyche”, they are talking about the same entity. Even if you dispute that people have souls; they are at least talking about the same “concept”. And Laurens van der Post criticizes the Churches for turning their backs on science, yet again. It would be invidious to quote him, because I think he himself is repeating the opinions Jung expressed to him. But many people would agree that there had been a time when the creeds and dogma of the Church had fulfilled, so far as words can, the aspirations of the Western Spirit. That was why great painting and art at that time had a religious motive. Probably this began to fade when the Puritans first raised their heads in Elizabethan England; and ceased to be true within a generation or so of Cromwell’s Commonwealth. But that was 300 years ago. Yet the clergy went on preaching, and do today, as if a restating of the message of the cross, and a reminder of the healings and parables of Jesus is enough. But you do not need to read Jung’s book, *Modern Man in search of a Soul*, to realize how starved and empty the modern soul has become. You see it in the inability of people to leave their iPads alone for more than a few minutes together. The Church has virtually given up trying to persuade people to want to become complete human beings. The Clergy of all churches are tied to the Council of Nicea in 325, and cannot or will not to look at what modern medicine has to tell them about the nature of the human soul. Their attitude is similar to the Jesuit

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bigots who refused to look down Galileo's telescope to see the moons of Jupiter, because, "they knew better; they knew there were no moons, so there was no point in looking". This was because the existence of moons round any planet upset their theoretical cosmology, and their view of Man's place in the Universe. Rather than risk that, they refused to look. Very few clergymen are prepared to contemplate the possibility that there may be intelligent life somewhere else in the Universe. Even less the question, whether, if it contains creatures like men, will they too need to have someone like Jesus to lead them out of Plato's cave of shadows into the bright sunlight outside? If they do need a "Saviour", will they not think of him as "the only begotten Son of God"? What happens then to the Doctrine of the Trinity? So vested interests are firmly in favour of refusing to consider whether modern psychology casts doubt on the sacred doctrines of the Churches. Too much is at stake; the fear of the Churches is that doctrine would not just need to be modified, it would need to be recast entirely.

But Laurens van der Post does not say what he believes is the solution to the failure of the Churches to fulfil their function, save by implication that the clergy should educate themselves out of their gothic intellectual sleep. My opinion, right or wrong, is that the solution is for the public of this country to see this world as created by God, because at this stage of the world's history when everything is in the melting pot, it is the only way to re-establish the kind of community that people are thrilled to join. For any community to be a thriving one, it is essential that many people should be willing to work for it in a public-spirited disinterested way. Enlightened self-interest is all very well, but surely it is not enough. It is true that with many people, the most you can expect of them is that they will act with enlightened self-interest; and you have to accept that. But for a community to thrive for any length of time you need others, who will put the community before themselves. The notion of "Empire" worked for a time. And it is a great credit to Macaulay and the Council of the Governor-General at the time that English education was introduced into India in the 19th Century, which meant that there were enough able educated Indians to take over the proper administration of the country, from the British when the time came.

Anyway the Empire has gone, for better or worse; and with it the incentive in Britain to work for the benefit of the commonwealth. The "Big Society" is just a flabby alternative. Conquest is like a death-wish, with the presence everywhere of atomic weapons. So the only motivation left is the religious desire to work for the common-good, which was presumably the thought in the mind of the Creator from the very beginning: namely that when everything else had failed, Mankind would be driven back onto Himself! The alternative is for countries, one by one, to become failed-states as each in turn falls victim to senseless terrorism.

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Napoleon Bonaparte wrote, I think to a friend, “I l n’y a que deux puissance dans ce monde, le sabre et l’Esprit. A la longue le sabre est toujours battu par l’Esprit”; that there are two only powers in this world, the sword and the spirit; and in the long term, the sword is always beaten by the spirit. And he ought to have known! So what you need to defeat religious terrorism is a better religion. Bullets are very useful in the short term. But in the long term, they are no solution. The terrorist will win, if he can endure. But provide a better religion, and you cut the ground from under him. But how exactly do you provide a better religion?

My solution is to try to revive the idea of a world created by God, and within it a state invigorated by the optimism of true religion, in which we all have a part to play. But the clergy are now so divorced in public perception from the idea that they should make religion a sensible, practical guide through ordinary life, that the last thing you want is their assistance. There are always exceptions; but as a body their failure to preach a Gospel credible to the modern world is so complete, and they are so discredited in public opinion, that to invite their assistance is almost to invite failure. Instead you have to convince people that science, triumphant today, is essentially a religious subject. And you can only do this convincingly by showing that the simplest explanation of Evolution, which is the heart of science as we know it, is a religious one. This I attempt to do in my books, particularly in my *Religious View of Nature & the Universe*, in this website “Religion Rewritten”. I attempt to re-create the vision of a world created by God, in which we all have a part to play. What I do not say in any of my books is the nature of the real problem that I am attempting to solve. That is what I am trying to do now.

How can anyone hope to revive the public’s interest in religious ideas, when over the last few centuries the clergy, by their ineptitude, have virtually destroyed it? Are we not in the long run the doomed victims of fanaticism, however much we may arouse ourselves in the short term to fire millions of bullets at the fanatics? Will not the spirit, in the end, always prevail? Will not materialism always prove itself bankrupt?

Of course it will! So I see no other course to proceed upon, in the time that remains, than to seek to revive the public’s interest in the spiritual things in life, however forlorn the prospect of success may appear to be now. In other words, painstakingly to rebuild, what has been so needlessly destroyed.