

# THE GOD-WORLD-I TRIANGLE.

## CHAPTER 6.

### A WHITSUN MEDITATION.

Jesus most certainly had a resurrection in the minds of his disciples. Unless the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles are complete fantasies, they were absolutely convinced that he rose from the dead, despite the fact that he was changed, and seemed at times to be almost unrecognisable. And actually one would not want him to have had any other sort of resurrection. Religion is about belief; not cold intellectual scientific belief, but passionate belief in the mind and heart, passed on from one person to another.

So what is the significance of his resurrection for us? Not I hope that Jesus saved us from our fallen nature; because if Evolution has any truth in it, the birth of Man with language, tools and reflective thought was a triumphant success; and the doctrine of original sin is ripe for the waste paper basket. And if Atonement is necessary, perhaps it should be the Church's atonement for having preached an incomplete or inadequate Gospel? Now the great proportion of educated people do believe in Evolution, in the sense that they accept that star-dust evolved into US somehow or another. There was no Fall: no golden age in the past from which we have been expelled. Death may at times be the wages of sin, but first and foremost it is an evolutionary necessity; there could have been no Evolution without death. So that lovely story of Adam and Eve can be regarded as an unscientific society's attempt to explain the uncomfortable reality of death. But we know better now. And unless we want to bury our hearts and minds in the untenable myths of antiquity, we have to accept modern knowledge, and the world we live in so far as it reflects that knowledge. And the great fact of our experience is that Evolution has been a triumphant success, so far. It has produced man, civilised society without tyranny, and modest comfort for most in that society. The Church would be mad to turn its back on all this. But sadly the Church does regard an emotional attachment to Jesus as sufficient; and is content to leave the task of maintaining a decent just society to others. Apart from the hypocrisy of that attitude; it never made a bigger mistake.

One comment that two world wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century invite is that there was nobody to condemn the exultation of naked power, because the Churches did not concern themselves with the God-World side of the Triangle, but only with the God-I side. Bismarck had modified Clausewitz's dogma that "War is the continuation of political intercourse by other means", as follows, "War can be used as an alternative to attempting political intercourse". So perhaps one should modify Edmund Burke as follows: nothing more is necessary for

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ensuring the arrival of complete hell on earth, than that the Churches should fail to preach an adequate Gospel, and concern themselves with only part of life.

A better symbolism for Jesus' coming than the expulsion from the Garden of Eden is, I think, Plato's imagery of the man who had the courage to escape from the cave of shadows into the sunlight outside; and who returned into the cave to try to free his fellow-men from their delusion that shadows were reality. You could say that Jesus tried to lead men out of the created world, in which god or the gods were anthropomorphic, into the sunlight, where the spiritual world came alive in the human heart, and in which it might be possible to bring a corner of the kingdom of heaven down to earth.

So science can be a great help in our attempts to avoid falling into error. It was cruel and demented for the Roman Catholic Church to burn Giordano Bruno in 1600, for espousing Copernicus's hypothesis amongst other things. The Church thought that the earth was the centre of the Universe, and the Church was the centre of the earth. Unfortunately when Galileo with his telescope discovered that Jupiter had four moons, it became perfectly obvious that Copernicus was right. The earth was not the centre of the Universe, but a tiny planet that circled round a medium sized star. Similarly in our day, we should not think our galaxy the Milky Way is the biggest, because our nearest neighbour the Andromeda galaxy is considerably bigger. We should accept that there are probably two billion stars in our galaxy, and two billion galaxies each with comparable numbers of stars; and although planetary systems are rare, that there are hundreds, thousands, or even millions of them in the Universe. Similarly it may be rare for a planetary system to have a planet that supports life, but it is surely unwise to assume that our earth is the only planet in the Universe that supports life? It is like assuming that the earth was the centre of the Universe in 1600. It may be that at present we do not know, and that any messages would take a long time to travel between two life-supporting planets, because they would only travel with the velocity of light. But it would be rash to say we will never know if there is another planet that supports life. Nowadays we accept experience; we do not dogmatise on what experience is possible, and what is not.

Suppose there is another planet somewhere that supports life, I cannot believe there is any hard and fast line between complicated chemicals like viruses, some of which can be crystallized, and the simplest living bacteria or cell. Nor can I see any hard and fast line between the most advanced primate and the most primitive example of homo-sapiens; I can see a huge difference in degree; but animals communicate, have emotions, sacrifice themselves and so on. So if there is another planet that supports life, my guess is that it did, or does, or will support intelligent life. Will that intelligent life not need their own Jesus, to lead

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them out of the cave of shadows? Will they be tempted to think of him as “The Only Begotten Son of God”? Would there then be two of them? And suppose there are many planets that support life? What then? Where does that leave the Doctrine of the Trinity?

But Jesus knew nothing of science, still less of Evolution; and if you had told the Historical Jesus that he had fulfilled Evolution, he would not have had the faintest idea of what you were talking about. That means that, if it is true that he fulfilled Evolution, you may find little or nothing in the Gospels that accurately describes that part of his achievement, or at least not describe it in a way that is readily intelligible to us today. Yet to us, who live in a world dominated by science & technology, it may be the most significant part of his achievement, other than just being himself. On the other hand, if Jesus played no part in the Evolution of the world, then his life may have no relevance to us today. It is not possible to separate one’s life into the subjective and the objective: the world within of belief, of affection, of religion as opposed to the world without of work, of science, of politics. They interrelate, even in modern science. So we could celebrate his life as a most wonderful memory, and as an example of what you can do if you have enough courage. You can create a new religion, that lasts for 2000 years, and does much good and also much harm. But one would then have to admit that the time had come to move on. Similarly if Jesus simply took us into the next stage of Evolution, then we would have to admit that Evolution did not stop with him. We would continue to revere him as a prophet, as Mohammed did, but agree with Mohammed that further revelation was necessary for mankind to progress to a different type of world from Palestine 2000 years ago. In both cases, Jesus would be left behind. Only if you say he Fulfilled evolution, can you say he is a continuing inspiration to us. Alternatively, you can split your mind into compartments, with science never entering the religious compartment, and religion never entering the scientific compartment. This was Max Plank’s attitude; but it is not a happy state of affairs.

So if we have to continue the Evolution which he fulfilled, then we are free to adapt the religion of Jesus to the modern world, without any disloyalty or presumption towards the God who created everything. Indeed we not only may, we must do it; we must reinterpret the Gospel in the light of modern knowledge, modern thought patterns and modern problems. King Alfred’s moment of deathless glory was to forgive his enemies after he had defeated them in battle, and not before he had defeated them. But you need first a vision of a society, where such forgiveness and reconciliation are worthwhile; and the creation of such a vision is the entire object of my books published on this website Religion Rewritten, particularly my Religious View of Nature & the Universe.

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In the past, of course, the Church turned its back on the modern knowledge of the age. It was a Christian bishop who burned one third of the library at Alexandria, one of the wonders of the ancient world, because it was “pagan learning”. The great Popes vied with the Holy Roman Emperor as to who was to be the supreme power in Europe, rather than concern themselves with the adequacy of their religion. In time the Church became the barbarian, with the introduction of the Inquisition to suppress heresy, leading to the wars of religion of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. And the price the Church is paying now is that most people regard it as irrelevant to life’s spiritual problems. Is it too late for us to redeem the Church’s failure?

The advantage of the **God-World-I Triangle** symbolism is firstly that it enables ordinary people to see the Church’s failure in true perspective. And if it helps them to do something about it, so much the better!

I have never criticised Jesus for tackling only the **God-I side** of the Triangle. I have always said that to do more was beyond him, or anyone else in his position. Jung regarded Jesus as Western Man’s greatest realization of the symbol of the self: in other words the person above all whom we should seek to imitate. That does not mean that I agree with everything he did or said; nor does it mean that I think an adequate imitation of him is a creeping in the Master’s footprints. But rather in a life lived in a spirit like his, and in which we are able to claim, and indeed must claim, the same freedom of judgement and discretion to face the problems of today, that he claimed in order to face the problems of his day..

The added advantage of the **God-World-I Triangle** symbolism is that it makes it easier for all of us to recognise and identify the particular problem that any one of us is being asked himself to solve.