

Bible Mysteries

Their Literal and Spiritual Interpretation

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THE BIBLE is one of the most profound books in literature. It is mystical and occult throughout, embracing the deepest of all subjects, dealing as it does with God and man and the relation between them. Its mysteries are expressed in allegories, which can be understood only through spiritual enlightenment. Bible truths adjust themselves to all classes according to their ability to receive them. To those who wish to see only the letter of truth, only the letter appears; but to those who are able to penetrate below the surface and grasp the spirit of the word it is a strong, nourishing, spiritual food which builds up their understanding and enables them to comprehend the deep things of life.

God

The deepest of all Bible mysteries is God, but like all mysteries it may be interpreted either literally or spiritually. Those who hold the orthodox view think of God as a personality dwelling somewhere in space, detached from His creatures and His creation. He is thought of as directing and controlling man from the outside as parents control their children. To this extraneous God they render their homage, which often fails to spiritualize them, lifting them no higher than the ethical plane. From this Deity they ask favors as a child might ask favors of its parents.

Esoteric students hold views regarding God that are diametrically opposed to the above. They hold with Paul that God is the Universal Spirit filling all space, "in whom we live and move and have our being." They think of Him as the Universal Principle of being, comprising within Himself all that is. They declare that each individual is a god in the making, and that evolution will trans-

form man's latent possibilities into dynamic powers.

The Trinity

The doctrine of the Trinity is another of the great mysteries of the Bible, and among theologians there is much confusion of thought regarding it. According to the occult conception, God, the Creator of our solar system, manifests in a threefold way, using His powers of will, wisdom, and activity in the evolutionary processes. These three powers are frequently called the first, second and third aspects of the Triune God. In the work of evolving His solar system and the various kingdoms of nature He must have agents to do His will. He delegates to certain great Beings the task of directing the evolution of the lower orders of life.

To the great Being spoken of in the Bible as the Father has been given the work connected with the Will aspect of God; Christ the Son works with the Wisdom or Love aspect: and Jehovah the Holy Spirit has charge of all the creative processes of nature which employ the Activity aspect. These three Beings are called in the Christian religion the three Persons of the Trinity. They are not coequal as the literalists think; the Father is greater than the Son, and the Son is greater than the Holy Spirit, who is Jehovah of the Old Testament. Jehovah is a tribal god; Christ is the god of the whole human race. Each of the three Beings of the trinity began His evolution during a previous cycle of manifestation. The Father was the highest Initiate of the first or Saturn period; the Son reached a corresponding development during the second or Sun Period, which makes Him lower than the Father; and Jehovah, the Holy Spirit, reached a

similar stage of development during the third or Moon Period, which makes him lower than the Christ.

Man

Orthodox theologians think of man as human only. They contend that all there is of him originated at the time of his birth. They think that within him there is nothing immortal of itself, but that immortality is the "gift of God," just as one might give a present to a friend. Immortality, as they see it, consists in the perpetuation of the human soul by means of the atonement made by the crucified Christ.

Students of the occult think of man as "a spark of Divinity," possessing latent within him all the possibilities of his divine Father, and that therefore he is and always has been immortal. Being a child of the heavenly Father he is eligible to attain to all that the Father has, reaching that high estate through the evolutionary processes, which will in time fan each individual human spark into a divine Flame.

The Creation of the Solar System

Fundamentalists literalize the cosmic creative processes. They think our solar system was created by a Deity extraneous to the system, and that all came suddenly into being in six days.

Occultists know that the process of creating a solar system works from *within* outward, as in all gestative processes. It is expressed in the Genesis account of creation, where it is said, "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters; and God said, Let there be light; and there was light." The "waters", over which the Elohim moved, refer to the root-substance of space out of which all that is has been created. "Light" refers to the stage that was reached when the dark root-substance became luminous.

The Creation of Man

The Bible statement with regard to the creation of man is found in Genesis, 1:26-27: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;

and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

This passage is used by fundamentalists as their chief proof-text in opposing the doctrine of evolution, but in reality it fully confirms the latter. They declare that this passage means that God created man "out of hand." It is their belief that God first made a human form out of the dust of the ground and breathed into its nostrils the breath of life, whereupon this dust-man was immediately transformed into a living soul. In literalizing this passage the real meaning is lost.

The esoteric facts are that man started as a virgin spirit from the heavenly regions and entered upon a long period of involution, during which time he crystallized about himself vehicles of increasing density, of which the physical body is the densest. This process took millions of years. Man as a virgin spirit is a part of God, a spark of the divine Flame, and he is undergoing this crystallization into matter for the sake of developing his spiritual powers. We have now just begun the evolutionary part of the journey, during which we shall spiritualize the vehicles which we created for ourselves during the involutory period. After the evolutionary stage is finished, mankind will return to the heavenly regions from which they departed aeons ago, there to remain until the beginning of a new Evolutionary Day.

Adam's Rib

Orthodox theology literalizes the story of Eve being created out of a rib taken from the side of Adam. The esoteric information on this subject is that Eve merely represents the feminine side of man. The separation of the sexes occurred in ancient Lemuria, previous to which time mankind had been double-

sexed. The appearance of the feminine principle in a separate body is spoken of in the Bible as making woman out of a rib of a man. But this is only an allegorical way of stating it.

The Doctrine of the Fall

The Garden of Eden, the Tree of Life, the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, the tempting serpent, and Adam and Eve are all parts of an allegory. This does not mean that it is untrue; it contains profound truths couched in symbolical language.

Occultists look below the surface for the deep spiritual meaning. To them the Garden of Eden is the Etheric Region, where man lived in angelic innocence before the Fall. The tree of life is the vitalizing principle of nature which is in the midst of the garden; if a man eat the fruit of it, he will never die. The fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is the gratification of fleshly lust, which produces death. James says that lust when it has conceived is sin, and sin when it is finished produces death. The tempting serpent was a Lucifer spirit, who was lower than an angel but more advanced than a human being. The tempting Lucifer spirit was correct when it said that to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge would make man wise as the gods, for it opened man's eyes to the material world, where he came to know the difference between the good to be chosen and the evil to be shunned, thus starting the conflict between the carnal and the spiritual minds, which develops moral character. Before the Fall mankind lived in innocence, in which state there was no moral growth. But by conquering the carnal mind we are developing virtue, which will create the kingdom of God within us.

God's Sovereignty

Extreme literalists believe that God has chosen some of our race to be saved and some to be lost, claiming that He has a right to do as He pleases with His creatures, just as a potter has a right to save such vessels as suit him and to de-

stroy such as do not meet his approval. This was the idea of John Calvin, who based it upon Paul's doctrine of foreordination, which runs thus: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate."

This passage has been a stumbling block to Calvinists and a nightmare to anti-Calvinists, who not being able to interpret it according to God's justice and mercy have let it severely alone. Esotericists explain that Paul taught rebirth and also that God's election or foreordination was based upon the law of cause and effect, which he expressed thus: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Rebirth explains the underlying facts in the matter. One's conditions in any particular life depend to a large extent on the way he lived in earlier lives. Thus if one has been a spendthrift in one incarnation, he may find himself destitute in the next. But this will be his own fault; it will not be the arbitrary punishment of any foreordaining Deity.

Redemption

Redemption is another of the great Bible mysteries susceptible of both a literal and a spiritual interpretation. Literalists believe that Christ died a shameful and excruciating death on the cross to meet the demands of an offended Deity, whose laws sinning man had violated, and that in some mysterious way the blood shed by Him cleanses the believer's soul of all impurity, thereby fitting him for the heavenly kingdom.

The esoteric explanation regarding Christ and His mission is that He came to earth to help us in our evolution after we had reached the limit of our ability to progress in our own strength. At the crucifixion He entered the earth and became its indwelling Planetary Spirit, from which vantage point He radiates His spiritual vibrations outward through

the earth and through man, spiritualizing both, and enabling man to go forward in his evolution. He also purifies the psychic atmosphere of the earth, which makes it easier for man to do right than it was before.

Previous to the coming of Christ mankind was ruled by law, which could not save. But Christ, the embodiment of love, a Being who came from a higher evolution, gives a power to mankind which will enable them in time to rise above the selfishness engendered by the Lucifer spirits since the Fall, and thereby save themselves. This is a process of self-purification, whereby the animal nature is crucified. John says of this process of man's self-purification that "his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

Orthodoxy believes that it is not essential that one should attain to a perfect life in order to enter heaven. It thinks that whatever is lacking at the time of a person's death, the blood of Christ will supply as a passport to put him through the gates of heaven. Occult philosophy states that a certain stage of perfection is essential to an entrance into the heavenly kingdom, and that this is not attained at the time of one's death except by those who have reached sainthood. All others must pass through not only a purgatorial state to qualify them for the lowest heaven between lives, but also life after life must be lived until perfection shall have been reached. Heaven is a place for purified people, and if it were possible for any one to enter it unpurified, he would find himself isolated from its citizens and would soon wish to get out of their society.

The Immaculate Conception

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is accepted literally by Fundamentalists, who believe that in a supernatural way the overshadowing Spirit of God impregnated the virgin Mary, which caused the birth of Jesus. They also believe that Jesus and Christ were one and the same individual, which means that Christ was born of Mary.

Under the head of "The Trinity" we explained that Christ began His career during a former life cycle, and that during the Sun Period of the present cycle He reached the plane of a high Initiate. Jesus was born and brought up for the express purpose of supplying a physical body for the Christ when He should appear. Christ entered the body of Jesus at the baptism when as a dove He descended upon him. Christ entered the body, Jesus vacated it, and in spirit ascended to his reward. Jesus was a Jew, a citizen of a single race; Christ is the universal brother of humanity.

Nevertheless, Jesus was immaculately conceived and virgin born, but not in any supernatural way. Mary was his natural mother, Joseph was his natural father. Mary was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit as the Bible states, for the Holy Spirit is the creative principle in life, and without its influence no conception can take place. Jesus was immaculately conceived because Mary and Joseph were living the immaculate or regenerate life, which John calls the sinless life. Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians explains this condition as being necessary to produce immaculate children.

Hell

This is another Bible mystery that is interpreted both literally and spiritually. There are those who literalize it by thinking of it as a region which is forever on fire, forever being replenished with brimstone, a veritable Dante's inferno. They think that into this burning furnace the wicked are eventually cast in their physical bodies together with their souls, to remain forever as punishment for the sins of a single lifetime. The modernists, however, while discarding the hell of fire and brimstone, hold to a place of eternal punishment for the wicked.

Esotericists, on the contrary, while agreeing that there is a place or a state which may be called hell or purgatory, explain that it is a region where sinful souls go for a temporary stay to be

purged of their sins and to fit them for advancement into the heaven worlds. After the desire body has been purified in purgatory, the person rises into the heaven worlds, where he lives a life of intense activity for several hundred years before coming back to earth by re-birth.

The Doctrine of the Resurrection

Fundamentalists contend that Christ rose from the dead in His physical body, and in this body ascended into heaven; also that as He rose in His physical body, so will all mankind. To support this contention they cite the fact that He showed Thomas His wounded hands and side, and bade him put his finger into the wounds. Occultists know, however, that the vital body is so closely interwoven with the physical body that a wound made in the latter will appear in the former. They also know that the Christ had the power to draw into the atoms of His vital body sufficient dense material to make it visible to those around Him, which explains His reappearance among His disciples.

Orthodox believers contend that after the resurrection there was nothing to be found in the tomb but the grave clothes in which Christ had been buried. This theory ignores the fact that in proportion as one develops spirituality he spiritualizes his physical body. From the day that Christ entered the physical body of Jesus at the baptism to the day He was crucified, a period of three and one-half years, that body was constantly being spiritualized. As soon as it was laid in the tomb, its earthy material was resolved back to the original elements so that on the morning of the resurrection nothing was left of it.

Christ did not rise in His physical body, neither will mankind so rise. Like Christ they will rise in the soul body, an etheric vehicle.

The Final Judgment

Fundamentalists literalize the Judgment. They declare that Christ will be the judge of the quick and the dead, and that this judgment will occur during a

single day of twenty-four hours at the time of His reappearing. At that time He will judge each soul, assigning to His right hand the righteous and to His left hand the wicked.

The occultist explains the Judgment Day by saying that just as there are examinations held in our schools and colleges at certain periods of the year, so in the greater school of life examinations are also held. At certain stages in the evolutionary journey mankind must be tested, with the result, as the Bible says, that the sheep are separated from the goats. There have been examination days in the past and there will be more in the future. Occultists speak of the critical point in evolution that will be reached in the middle of the next cycle, at which time those who do not pass will be held over until another evolution is inaugurated. The work that the Christ is now doing will help humanity to prepare for the great examination or judgment day that will come at the end of the present cycle of manifestation.

There are many more Bible mysteries that might be mentioned showing the difference in the interpretation of the orthodox theologian and the occultist. But these will suffice to show that the literal text conceals in symbology the esoteric facts concerning man and the universe, which have thus been preserved until mankind became ready to make the proper use of them.

GOD

O Thou eternal One! whose presence
bright
All space doth occupy, all motion guide—
Unchanged through time's all-devastating
flight!
Thou only God—there is no God beside!
Being above all beings! Mighty one,
Whom none can comprehend, and none
explore,
Who fill'st existence with Thyself alone,
Embracing all, supporting, ruling
o'er,—
Being whom we call God, and know no
more! —*Derzhavin.*