

Mysteries of Religion and Science [Part II]

by
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Chapter IV The Mystery of Evil

THERE is no mystery connected with that which is good and right, as we are enabled without any effort or, obscurity to trace the good, and the true, and the right directly to their source. God is essential goodness, and truth, and righteousness, and from him as an exhaustless fountain these qualities flow out into the infinite space which he occupies, as necessarily and spontaneously as light from the sun. Nor yet is the fact of the existence of evil so much a mystery, as its origin. If God is the Creator of all things, if his presence fills all space, his wisdom and holiness pervades all eternity past, all time present, and all eternity to come, and his omnipotence upholds and governs all worlds, whence came evil ? As we contemplate the mysterious problem and attempt its solution, an indefinable sense of bewilderment steals like the shadows of evening upon the mind, deepening and lengthening as we pursue the thought, until midnight darkness settles upon it and we are lost in the gloom.

Revelation tells us, that away back in a remote period of eternity, beyond the chronology of man, evil took its rise and dates its origin. It informs us that beings of a nature pure and seraphic, inhabiting heaven and shining in its brightness, conceived sin, and by an infraction of the laws of their being and blessedness, lost their glorious possession and were "cast down to hell, where they are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, to the judgment of the great day." The allusions to this event are almost as mysterious and obscure as the event itself. We have the simple record of the fact, but the history of the transaction as relating to the motives which led to the sin of the angels is not given. Concerning the cause or causes of what theologians call original sin, revelation is silent, and what little it has given us on the subject, only leaves us darkly to infer the origin of evil. For a period of four thousand years, during which patriarch and prophet walked and talked with God, nothing was communicated on the subject either as it regarded the fall of angels itself, or the nature of that fall; at least no record, bearing however remotely upon the subject, is found in the Jewish Scriptures, and if we accept the declaration of Christ as bearing upon the subject, in which he speaks of having seen Satan fall like lightning from heaven, there is but one other distinct allusion found in the second Epistle of Peter, Jude having evidently quoted his language from that writer, and both having been regarded as spurious by the Church to the fourth century. We repeat it, revelation records the fact of the introduction of evil in heaven among the angels, and the sad consequences growing out of it; but the cause of its origin and the permission which allowed it, are beyond the scrutiny of man.

Revelation discloses the existence of beings emanating from the Great first cause, possessing all the attributes of their divine original, of the same type in regard to the quality of their nature, differing only in degree, allied to God in the scale of existence and forming the connecting link in the chain of causes from the first causeless, dateless existence, down through all the inferior existences to the end of time and through eternity. First in the order of this divine emanation or creation, were the Cherubim through whom the divine glory was manifested, and whether in the language of revelation Jehovah was described as at rest or in motion, as seated on a throne or riding upon the wings of the wind, they were essential to that description. The next in the order of creation were the Seraphim or fiery celestial beings, who are represented as standing around the throne of Jehovah, having a human form furnished with wings, executing his will and praising him with their voices. Belonging to the hierarchy of heaven are other orders, all of which, however, come under the common designation of angels or messengers of Jehovah. These form the connecting link between man and the Creator, and are next in the series of creation to the Seraphim, and their agency is represented as being principally employed in the guidance of human destiny.

In the midst of, and reflecting the all surrounding glory of the High and Holy One who inhabits eternity, the four-faced and four-winged Cherubim are ceaselessly poised; surrounding these as the mighty officers and guard of the throne, are the human formed six-winged Seraphim clothed with fire, and executing the will of the mighty sovereign; still beyond, and encompassing all, are the angels ten thousand times ten thousand in number, and sent forth on ministries to earth and man. It was among these myriad hosts sin began. Here the sad defection rose, and treachery and insurrection sprang up in heaven., Among this sinless, radiant host, sin effected an entrance. All before was perfect obedience, harmony and happiness. Throughout the vast expanse of heaven there was no thought, emotion or volition that did not accord with and vibrate in unison to the touches of heavenly love. All the affections like a sea of love itself, ebbed and flowed at the divine command, and the highest, fullest tide of happiness consisted in obedience to the will of heaven. The largest capacity was satisfied with an inflow of knowledge, and the largest desire with the fullness of bliss. Above, around, beneath, everywhere, all was perfect fruition and joy. No interdict frowned across the path of the most free and enlarged inquiry after knowledge, and no position presented itself to ambition, the attainment of which could by any possibility enhance the bliss. We know that the poet has indulged in a license as unwarrantable as it is untrue, representing the angels as aspiring to the place of God, and asserting this as the cause of their fall. According to the poetic conception the revolt, however, was not confined to angels, but extended up to Seraphim and Cherubim, until many of the higher as well as lower order were involved in the crusade against Omnipotence, and the wild clarion shout of war rang through the vaulted heaven. That depravity should rebel against holiness and goodness, presents no psychological difficulty, and would not be considered as remarkable ; but that purity and love, the very

element of angelic existence, should engender corruption and hate, is a mystery beyond expression inscrutable.

But whence came the evil? What was the mysterious spirit alchemy that changed an angel of light, and holiness, and love, the very type and image of God, into a fiend of darkness, corruption and hate? What power changed a friend and an ally into a foe and adversary of the King of heaven? If evil was not to be found in God, the great fountain of being and blessedness, nor yet in Cherub, or Seraph, or angel, all endowed with the same nature and moral attributes, and basking in the same light and glory, from whence-we repeat it-drank in the pure, ethereal, stainless spirit, the deep, dark, damning draught which blighted his nature, blackened his spirit, and changed him from a holy, obedient and benevolent creature, into a depraved, rebellious and malicious fiend? We may adopt any conception, hypothesis or exegesis of poets, philosophers or theologians, in regard to the nature of the sin of the rebel angels, but the deep, dark, solemn mystery remains. Sin and ruin sprang up in heaven, in the immediate presence of God, and we come back to the question, whence came this sin? Where did it originate? And how did it originate? Was it ab extra or ab intra from without, or from within? If from without, from what quarter did it come? If from within, in what department of the soul did it take its rise? Was it in the perceptions, reflections, emotions or volitions, or was it in all? Did the perception of God and the reflection of his greatness and glory awaken emotions, (not to be like him, for they were already like him,) to mount his throne and wrest his sceptre, and were the desires followed by volitions and acts corresponding thereto? Whence these acts of the mind? What cause or motion produced them? The effect was evil, only and everlastingly evil, what then could have been the cause? Like causes we are told produce like effects in like circumstances. Whether this be a truth of universal application and to which there can be no exceptions, we know not, but we are authorized in affirming that a good moral cause is invariably attended with good moral effects. He who was himself "the truth," asserted that a good fountain can not send forth bitter waters, any more than a corrupt fountain can send forth sweet waters. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, any more than a bad tree can bring forth good fruit. The effect will partake of the nature of the cause, and can not by any possibility, if allowed legitimately to operate, be otherwise. So the same divine teacher affirmed, that a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and that an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil things. An evil mind can not conceive holy thoughts, and is not capable of holy emotions and volitions; nor on the other hand, is a pure and sinless mind capable of sinful emotions or acts. The pure fountain, the good tree, and the holy mind, alike must be changed in their nature, radically and essentially, before bitterness and badness and sin can proceed from them.

If these assertions be true, where, whence, how came sin into the pure, bright, ineffable regions of the heavenly world. All questions about God willing it on the one hand, or his permitting it on the other, are foreign and evasive, and touch not the great and awful mystery in regard to the origin of evil. In the order of events every effect must have a cause. Properly speaking there are no casualties or accidents. All miracles have their final as well as formal causes, and it may be that what we regard as contrary to the laws of nature, or a suspension of those laws, is in perfect conformity with laws to us unknown. Nothing causeless can come. Whatever things we see, or hear, or feel, or know, or do, are connected with causes proximate or remote, and in the endless chain, link after link may be traced to the last, Just so sin may be traced to its origin, though it may take an infinite mind to discover it. To find its origin the mind has labored for centuries. Tomes of controversy have been written about it, endless speculations' have been indulged in regard to it, and some have lost the healthy balance of their religious belief in reasoning upon it, but the whole volume of revelation is silent as the grave in relation to the nature of its origin; and hidden in the mysterious depths of the omniscient mind, which no hand can unseal, it will remain unknown until that which is perfect has come, and the arcana of heaven shall be opened to the study of man. And the mind is as much at a loss and bewildered in its efforts to ascertain the date of its origin, as the origin itself. It is perfectly evident from revelation as well as from the nature of the thing, that angels have existed from an indefinite period anterior to the creation of the material universe. We know that at the laying of the foundations of the earth, "the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy." They witnessed the creation of the material out of which the earth was composed. They saw the chaotic mass when it was enveloped in darkness, and " without form and void." They beheld it when it started on its first revolution around its axis, and saw it assume a spherical form. They saw the gathering of its waters, the rising of its mountains, the opening of its vallies, the unfolding of its plains, and the coursing of its rivers. They saw the light first darting from its sun and shedding its genial beams upon its trees, and plants, and flowers. And what they saw in the wonderful formation of the earth, they also doubtless saw in the formation of all the planets of the solar system, and the other planetary systems of the universe. What to us is history gathered from the successive layers of rocks, as so many leaves folded over the earth's surface, and which in fossil language describes the first organic formation, to them is personal knowledge. The period when sin entered among the angels, and discord was first heard in heaven, is beyond the ken of mortals. It may have been before a single orb was created to display the material glory of the infinite one, when in all the vast expanse of space nothing but Jehovah and his angels existed. Or, their "first estate and habitation" may have been abandoned for a residence on some distant orb, which they beheld rolling away from the Creator's hand in brightness and beauty to its destined sphere.

We now turn from the contemplation of the introduction of evil among the inhabitants of heaven, and direct our attention to its origin on earth. Man, as we have already intimated, was created next in order to the angels, in the language of inspiration, only "a little lower, crowned with glory and honor," created "in righteousness and true holiness" and reflecting the image of his Maker. Thus formed and fashioned he was placed in a region of perfect loveliness and perpetual bloom. No imagination can conceive of the exalted bliss enjoyed by the one man Adam, the lord of the creation around him. The sun rose in peerless splendor over the far off summits of the blue mountains, and its glittering beams were reflected from the mirror-like surface of the lakes of Eden, around whose margin flowers of the most gorgeous hue and delicate perfume grew in wild yet graceful luxuriance. Lofty trees cast their grateful shade upon the soft green carpet of the earth. Birds of brightest plumage and sweetest song, filled the air with enchanting music. For him all were made and in perfect rest and bliss amid the bowers, and by the streams he walked and talked with nature and her God. As if to enhance, if possible, his bliss, for him was created, and to him was given, a form like unto his own. Revelation informs us that on awaking from a deep, undisturbed slumber, he beheld before him a being like unto himself, of unsurpassing loveliness. Possessing the same nature physically and intellectually, but cast in a somewhat finer mould, she was not above him or below him, and to her conjointly with himself was given authority over the earth and all its animate and inanimate objects. The two were one in every conceivable adaptation of mind and heart and form. A mysterious influence like the attraction of the spheres bound them together, producing an intercommunion of soul with soul that could only be interrupted by the destruction, of their nature. The love they bore to each other was little less than that which unitedly they bore to God their Creator.

Such was Eden and such was man. We now approach the mystery of the introduction of sin into this pure and peaceful abode, and the equally wonderful mystery connected with its consequences. Sacred history tells us that one of the fallen angels attracted by the bliss of Eden sought its ruin, and that assuming the form of a serpent, he wound his scaly folds around "the tree of knowledge of good and evil." Of the fruit of all the other trees of the garden, Adam and Eve were permitted to eat, but the fruit of this tree was interdicted by divine command, and death was the penalty of its violation. The wisdom and cunning of the demonized serpent proved too great for the virtue of the woman. Sense and reason were alike invaded. The fruit forbidden was beautiful to the eye and pleasant to the taste, and above all it imparted a knowledge above that of mortals. Those who ate it should be like God himself, knowing good and evil. The fatal: fascination prevailed, and the pure and taintless hand, obedient to the will, plucked the fruit. The deed was done. The act, however, did not involve her companion in guilt. Sin had not yet entered his sinless soul, and he might have retained his purity and immortality until now, for anything his unhappy spouse had done. The fatal spell was on her, and with an art obtained from the dark spirit of evil, she

was not long in persuading him to become a partner in her guilt. The first act of the dreadful tragedy was now finished, and the thunder of Jehovah announced the fall of a midnight curtain over Eden. Next came the malediction of heaven. The serpent was cursed above all cattle and creeping things, the woman was cursed with perpetual sorrow and subjection to her husband, the ground was cursed for man's sake, and in toil and sorrow he was to eat of its fruit all the days of his life. They were driven from Eden, and Cherubim with swords of fire were sent to guard the way of the tree of life in the midst of the garden.

Some have called in question the truthfulness of this narrative of the fall, and have denominated it an oriental allegory, but whatever may be the opinions or speculations of men about the theory of the introduction of sin into the world, the fact of its existence is apparent, and the sad history of our race demonstrates that sin abounds. It has also been affirmed that because the prohibition in regard to the eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge was made to Adam, that therefore in all probability the curse would not have come upon Eve, if she had not tempted Adam and effected his ruin. All such speculations are fruitless, and touch not the dreadful mystery of the fact of the existence of evil in the world.

But we are not done with the mystery of Adam's sin. It extends further, and like a bitter stream grows deeper and darker, and more bitter as we pursue it. Theology informs us that the consequences of Adam's sin not only involved the death of the body, but the infliction of endless pain and misery upon the soul of every descendent down to the last of his posterity; that in the sin of Adam our nature, which was originally holy, became depraved and unholy, and that this depravity is inborn, so that being inclined to evil only and continually, it is as natural for a human being to sin when his mind begins to act emotionally and volitionally, as it is for him to breathe or move, or as it is for trees to grow, or the water to seek a level, or the atmosphere an equilibrium. We think some theologians have erred in the discussion of the subject of depravity. After stating the doctrine of innate depravity or inborn sin, as it is found in the systems of theology, and essays, and sermons, which have been written upon it, the writers :almost invariably start out upon elaborate discussions on the actual depravity which exists in the world. This is all superfluous because conceded by every right mind, and besides, the existence of universal depravity does not touch the question of innate depravity, inasmuch as there was nothing whatever in the condition and circumstances of Adam, when in a state of perfect holiness, which prevented him from transgressing the command of God, and that in the most wilful and deliberate manner. In his holy state it was as natural for him to obey God and work righteousness, as it is for the unholy to sin. Hence, all mankind, may, like Adam, have fallen by their own deliberate choice and act, and a universal depravity overspread the earth. The question relates to man's native condition, or in other words, to the natural state in which he was born. We are taught from childhood that "in Adam's fall we sinned all," and that as the representative of our race all who have descended from him

are alike in nature, and as the streams partake of the nature of the fountain, be that fountain bitter or sweet, and as the fruit partakes of the nature of the tree, be that fruit good or bad, so human nature as to its quality is nothing more and nothing less than its origin.

The introduction of evil into the moral universe was a much profounder mystery than the introduction of evil upon earth. The sin of a higher order of intelligences argues at least the possibility of sin in a lower order, and the sin of man, though not necessary, is a sequence in the great chain of disastrous events brought about by the first transgression in heaven. The great mystery connected with the sin of Adam does not consist in the fact of his transgression and fall, but in the nature and effects of that transgression. The sin of the first transgressing angel did not affect the nature or destiny necessarily of any other angel. When he violated the divine law, whatever that violation may have been, the penalty was due to him alone. If others had not with the same deliberateness joined in the transgression, they would be still in the enjoyment of their first estate. Not so, however, with the sin of Adam. We are informed that his sin involved the entire race in ruin, and that all the millions of his posterity by his act were made sinners, and come into the world under the same condemnation which rested upon his guilty head. That the sin of Adam was transferred to his posterity in the sense that his act was their act, or in other words, that all his descendents sinned in him, and thus like him fell under the wrath and curse of God, becoming inheritors of "all the pains and miseries of this life, to death itself, and all the pangs of hell forever." At such a mystery human reason staggers ; nor is the difficulty under which the mind labors in its endeavors to understand the rationale, obviated by the admission of the probability that all men would have followed the first in the way of transgression, and thus would have become personally guilty, and hence deserving of hell, because there is really no valid ground for such a supposition. Indeed, we have reason to infer the contrary from the case of that portion of the angels who did not sin with Satan, nor have they sinned since, but have "kept their first estate and are denominated on that account "the elect angels," confirmed in holiness and happiness forever.

In consequence of Adam's sin we are told that "every man naturally engendered of his offspring is corrupt and inclined to evil only and continually." Sin be must, as soon as he begins to act, and that as necessarily as he breathes, because he is born into a state of sin, and in sin itself.

"Soon as he draws his infant breath
The seeds of sin grow up for death,
The law demands a perfect heart,
But he is defiled in every part"

And for this sinful state which he has inherited by birth and over which he could have no control, and for all the acts growing out of it he is held personally accountable.

"Cursed be the man, forever cursed, Who doth one wilful sin commit, Death and damnation for the first Without relief and infinite."

How terribly gloomy are the mysteries which gather around this subject. But there is another side to this cloud. Though all is dark, and not a single line of light relieves its margin, yet the sun shines on the other side, and all is light and glorious there. Though religion has mysteries dolorous, she has also mysteries glorious, but these we shall reserve for another chapter.

Chapter V **Mystery of Redemption**

HAVING discussed the mystery of evil as it regards its origin and consequences, we propose in this chapter to discuss the equally profound mystery of redemption. Man, as we have seen, having revolted from obedience to his Maker, in acting contrary to his express and positive commands, placed himself necessarily at variance and war. A state of rebellion had sprung up in his soul. The healthy harmony which reigned in all his faculties was interrupted, and a sad conflict began in his mental and moral nature, which nothing but omnipotence could arrest. A derangement existed in his being which could only be rectified and cured by the author of that being. But how was this to be effected ? The creature and the creator were at variance, the sin of man had broken off his connexion with and had separated him from his God. There was no remove on the part of God, nor was there any act on his part which severed a connexion on which depended animal and spiritual life-it was solely the act of the creature and the necessary consequence synchronical thereto ; not only destroyed all conformity with the divine mind, but destroyed all disposition to act in harmony therewith. But more than all this, it destroyed all ability to act in harmony with God, had it even left the disposition, converting the very nature of man into that of opposition, thus making the hostility not only one of relation, but one of state.

What is perhaps as great a mystery as any connected with the human mind in its fallen condition, is the fact that it hates the object against which it is at war, and this hatred is in proportion to the injury inflicted by that mind ; so far as human experience goes, it is invariably the case that we hate those whom we have injured. This strange fact looms up in the experience of all, so that no matter what may have been the cause of the injury done to an individual, especially where personal wrong is considered, the mind invariably harmonizes with the thought, or word, or act by which that opposition is expressed, and a feeling of hatred or contempt springs up. We repeat it, this is a mystery. But when we come to contemplate the state of the mind in relation to God, the mystery grows deeper and darker. He is essential goodness ; never has done wrong, and never can do wrong , has always sought our happiness as the creatures of his everlasting love. He is the

eternal fountain of love itself, and no bitter waters of hatred can ever flow therefrom - yet man has turned away from this fountain of perpetual blessedness, and has hewn out to himself cisterns, broken cisterns; has dug stagnant pools, and sought to quench his thirst for happiness in their polluted waters. Such strange and unnatural conduct on the part of man has caused the Almighty to exclaim, "Hear, O, Heavens, and give ear, O, Earth; I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against me. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, let him return unto the Lord, who will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

The history of the past is but a continuous record of man's hostility to God, and the experience of the present but verifies and confirms the sad and terrible truth. A chasm was opened in Eden separating man from God, which has been growing wider and deeper for six thousand years ; the Creator and the creature at variance, the latter in open rebellion. In this state of things how can a reconcilliation be effected, how can an atonement be brought about, so that Jehovah and his creatures may be one again. To whom does it belong to make the conditions of peace ? From whence shall come the overtures, from the offended or the offending, from the guiltless or the guilty, from God or man ? Evidently where the offence began, there must begin the reparation, where injustice and wrong has originated, there must commence the restitution. If man is the offender, if human nature has transgressed the divine law, human nature must suffer the penalty, unless the claims of that law be set aside ; but these claims cannot be set aside ; they must be executed, or Jehovah must give up his throne, relinquish his government, and yield the universe to anarchy. The demands of a violated law must be met.

Every step we take in the investigation of this subject, from the starting point of man's rebellion against God, only increases the difficulties connected with reconcilliation and atonement. The law given to man as a rule of action required perfect and perpetual obedience ; the moment it was violated, the fulfillment of its requirements on the part of man was utterly impossible, and as we have seen, had it left man in possession of an ability to comply with its demands without leaving a disposition and willingness to do so, the impossibility would have been equally as great.

The event of the fall and all its consequences was of course known to God from all eternity, and as no provision was made against it, so as to prevent it, the presumption is that a plan was devised for man's restoration, which in due time would be made known to the race. How much of this was made known to the first transgressors, and how clearly it was revealed, we are not able to determine. Sacrifices were offered at an early period in the world's history, and the death of the animal victim seemed to shadow forth the medium of satisfaction for sin, but what connexion there could be between the death of an ox or an heifer, a goat, a ram or a lamb, and the satisfaction to justice for the sin of a human soul was, and is, a mystery beyond the

power of man to comprehend. How the sprinkling of the blood of these animals upon the altar and the mercy seat, and upon the person, could communicate purification and pardon, none but omniscience who ordained the rite could explain. The whole history of redemption from first to last is full of mystery. In order that we may be able to trace this mystery, though incapable of comprehending it, as a subject in which we are all more deeply interested than any other that can occupy the mind of man, it will be necessary to refer to revelation. Our space will not allow us to enter into detail on this subject, and we can only touch upon certain points in the development of the great plan as they are brought to view in the sacred scriptures. In the dealings of God with mankind, we shall be able to ascertain the state of the Divine mind towards our race. .

The first intimation given in revelation on this subject of redemption or restoration to divine favor is darkly hinted in that obscure passage which after the fall announces that " the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." From woman, through whose agency the ruin of the race was effected, we learn, was thus to come its redemption. Though man was ejected from Eden and forbidden access to the tree of life, he was not entirely separated from his Maker. Jehovah manifested himself under a new form, not as the Creator, but as the Savior. The race increased, and multiplied upon the earth, and in proportion to its increase it became corrupt, until, as sacred history informs us, the whole earth was filled with violence and . blood. So perfect was the anarchy that reigned, that the entire race, with the exception of one family, was destroyed. Revelation informs us, that in view of this destruction it repented Jehovah, that he had made man, yet he declared for his sake he would not again destroy the earth by water, and as a sign of its perpetual preservation from such a calamity, he set the rainbow in the heavens. Again the earth was peopled, but with no purer race. Wherever men existed, wickedness was found, and especially where they congregated in large cities, scenes of pollution and excess perpetually and invariably greeted the eye ; judgment from heaven fell in fire storms on devoted cities ; armies met each other on ensanguined fields ; nations were extinguished and cities destroyed. A Chaldean is called from his star worship, and listening to the mysterious voice he hears, which assures him that in him and his descendants all the nations of the earth are to receive a distinguished blessing. After many years of disappointment, and when old age had come to him and his spouse, at length he is blest with a child. Through this child the promised blessing was to come. But before he had reached his majority, the same mysterious voice commanded the father to take him to a certain mountain, which should be divinely designated, and there offer him up as a burnt sacrifice to Jehovah. He obeyed the command, and just as he was about to plunge the fatal knife unto his son's heart, the same voice which commanded the sacrifice told him to stay his hand, as the command was but a test of his faith and obedience. The promise was then renewed, but Abraham slept in Macpelah before it was fulfilled. To Isaac, the child of promise, is born a son, who in the line of the same divine power is blest with a numerous progeny. One of his sons particularly was designated as the

chosen vessel through whom the promise was to flow. But Jacob died and his numerous descendants were reduced to slavery in Egypt, and years of affliction roll on. At length through the occasion of a cruel decree, one of the Israelites is introduced into the court of Pharaoh and adopted as a member of the royal family. When he came to years, "he espoused the cause of his down trodden brethren," and was obliged, because of slaying an Egyptian, to flee to Arabia. While there pursuing a pastoral life, he went one day to the summit of Sinai in pursuit of a wanderer from the sheep fold. He was startled at beholding a bush on fire, and his surprise was increased when he discovered that the flames which perfectly enveloped it did not consume it. As he drew near it, he heard a voice, as if coming out of the fire, calling upon him to take off his shoes, because he was standing on holy ground. The same voice declared that he who conversed with him was Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and in confirmation of the assertion converted the shepherd's crook which he held in his hand into a serpent, the moment he threw it upon the ground, and when he took it again it resumed its former state. In further confirmation, he was commanded to put his hand into his bosom, and on taking it out it was leprous, but by returning it again it was restored. The voice commanded him to go down to Egypt and command Pharaoh to let the Israelites go free, and if he refused, he would work miracles of power by his hand, which would liberate them.

Moses went into the presence of Pharaoh and communicated the divine command. The King refused to obey, and miracle after miracle was wrought, some of which the magicians imitated, but being entirely foiled in their attempts at others, they acknowledged the hand of God. Finally the Israelites were released after the first born in every house of the Egyptians was slain by the Passover angel. Thus liberated, they entered the desert, a bright cloud went before them for a guide, and spread over them like a pavillion. At night it became a pillar of fire. The wonderful rod smote the Red Sea, and its waters were divided so that three millions passed over dry shod. The Egyptian army attempting to follow, the waters closed upon them and they were drowned. The wants of the vast army were supplied in the desert by miracle. At Sinai a tabernacle was constructed by directions given to Moses, on the summit of the same mountain where he first heard the divine voice which commanded him to bring the people there to worship. Awful and glorious scenes were displayed on the summit of this mountain. At one time it was covered with a dark cloud, and from it issued lightnings and thunderings, and the sound of a trumpet. Moses was forty days with Jehovah on this mountain, and received the ten commandments on tablets of stone. The people enter into covenant with Jehovah after being sprinkled with the blood of a bullock offered in sacrifice upon an altar made after the pattern shown in the mount. The cloud of glory which rested on the mountain came down and filled the tabernacle, and a peculiar glory rested upon the Ark of the Covenant in which was placed the tablets of stone, the rod of Aaron, and the pot of manna. The encampment finally removed, and the different tribes took up the line of march. The order of the priesthood was established, and the high priest wore a mysterious breast-plate, composed of twelve precious

stones, bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. This was the urim and thummim, and as a divine oracle it could be consulted, and divine responses were always given.

But we can not dwell in detail upon all the incidents connected with the wandering of the Jews in the desert, and the mysterious nature of their worship. Moses died, and was mysteriously buried by angels. He was succeeded by Joshua. After forty years, during which time their clothes did not wear out, they entered Canaan, but no adult who left Egypt, except Caleb and Joshua, entered the promised land, the rest all perished in the wilderness. Miracles continued with them in Canaan. Wars succeeded to wars ; the Israelites became settled in Palestine, and rose to a great nation, were governed by a succession of Kings, some of whom were righteous and others wicked. The chosen and peculiar people became idolatrous, renounced allegiance, and were subject to various fortunes. Their magnificent temple was destroyed, and they carried away to captivity in Babylon. The glory; departed. They were at length allowed to return and rebuild their temple, yet they never recovered their former glory. During the existence of the latter temple, the Messiah so long promised was born, but he was despised and rejected and finally put to death as an imposter. Not long after, the temple and city of Jerusalem were destroyed by the Romans, and the Jews were scattered among the nations, where they exist denationalized to this day. The descendants of Ishmael, not Isaac, are the rulers of the promised land, and where stood the holy temple, now stands the temple of the false prophet.

We have thus given a rapid outline sketch of the history of that wonderful people, chosen of God as the medium through which redemption was to come to the world, and the race was to be restored from the ruins of the fall. Revelation informs us that the mystery of redemption was kept from ages and generations, and that this mystery was made known when God became incarnate. The great mystery of redemption was set forth when "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory." God before was manifest in the garden of Eden, on Sinai, in the tabernacle and temple, but now he assumes the form of humanity, and instead of a transient manifestation, takes up his abode among men. Revelation teaches expressly that he took not the form of an angel, but was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, that he might condemn sin in the flesh, and thus deliver man from its curse ; that in assuming human nature, "he became sin for us," and thus, substitutionally, satisfied all the claims of the violated law. Of all the mysteries which we have been contemplating, or which it is possible for man to contemplate, this is the greatest, transcending all the works of the visible creation, including that of the creation of angels, and all the vast systems of Jehovah's empire, the work of redemption, both in its inception and development, towers sublimely above all, and leaves the mind bewildered in the broadest, profoundest mystery ever brought to the contemplation of men or angels. It has been the theme of angelic study from its first

announcement. Prophets who communicated the tidings of this mystery in language veiled in imagery or clothed in bold and striking figures or in plain literal description, when they announced the rise of a star in the distant future, or spoke of a scepter and law giver, or the miraculous birth of a child to whom should be given the titles of "wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting father, the prince of peace," and "upon whose shoulders the government should rest," knew not the import of the words they uttered; that the Great Eternal I AM of the patriarchs, and the Jehovah of the Jews who appeared in the bush, was with them in their desert wanderings, whose awful glory made Sinai tremble with its burden, and who dwelt in the holy of holies, should veil that Godhead and glory in humanity, pass through the ordinary process of human generation so as to be born of a woman, under the law, pass through all the stages of life, from childhood to manhood, submitting to all the filial relations, and all the rites of the church, lead a life of suffering and sorrow, and die upon the cross the death of a criminal, makes a mystery overwhelmingly astounding. Nor is this all connected with the manifestation or appearance of God in human nature. He who created the earth, and to whom belonged all that it contains, became a wanderer upon its surface, a poor houseless, homeless stranger. He who created cherubim and seraphim, and whom all the hosts of heaven obey, and who declared that those who had "seen him, had seen the father," allowed himself to be insulted, blasphemed, spit upon, buffeted, scourged, nailed to the cross, and scornfully taunted with the declaration, "he saved others, himself he cannot save," and was challenged if he were equal with God to come down from the cross, and they would believe on him, is a mystery we wonder not that a Jew should stagger under, and claims a faith in all where reason must be kept in abeyance, and the simple truths of revelation must be credited without question. The declaration that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself," embraces the whole of the mystery of redemption. In this declaration there are no turns abstruse or speculative, every word is plain, and not above the comprehension of a child, and yet they announce a doctrine which a seraph never can, by the most intense application, comprehend, much less explain.

It may be asked why in the scheme of redemption was provision not made for fallen angels? Why pass them by in their chains and darkness without a provision of mercy or a space for repentance? This, like the mystery of redemption itself, must remain inscrutable. Jehovah assumed human nature that he might represent human nature. He tasted death for every man that, as in Adam its first representative, all became subject to death, as the penalty of transgression, so in him all might be restored to life, as the result of his obedience to death, and a full, perfect, sufficient satisfaction to the claims of the violated law be met; that as by the disobedience of Adam, judgment passed upon all men to condemnation, so by the obedience of Christ; justification passed upon all men. Human nature was assumed and human nature was redeemed, and thus as human nature only is included in the transaction, angelic nature, so far as the manifestation of God in the flesh is concerned, is not provided for.

The death of the Savior, who in the language of Revelation, "gave himself a ransom for us," and who was "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world," clears up the mystery connected with the sacrificial offerings under the law, so far as the design of those offerings was concerned ; but as it respects the reason in the divine mind why there could be " no remission of sin without the shedding of blood," eternity only can disclose. The death of Christ was the grand consummation of the scheme of human redemption. Here type and shadow were fulfilled and passed away. Here was the end of a priesthood ordained to prefigure the last great sacrifice when the high priest of the better dispensation would offer up himself once for all and forever. The last words of the expiring God-man, "it is finished," as they sounded out amid the darkened - heavens, announced the completion of the great work begun in Eden.

"Well might the sun in darkness hide
And shut his glories in, When Christ the
mighty Maker died For man, the creature's sin.

Chapter VI The Mystery of Man

WHAT we have said before in relation to man has been mostly of an objective character; we now propose to consider him in a subjective light. We design to enter upon an investigation of the mental organism of this "fearfully and wonderfully" constructed being. His material organization, embracing as it does every other organization in the whole animal economy to which he stands related as the head of a series, is full of mystery exciting our profoundest wonder. The wonder is of a two-fold character. This appears when we consider, that while he includes in his organism all that belongs to the various orders in the series down to the radiate - the lowest form of animal life - he also differs from all these in several important particulars. But we stop not to survey his wonderful external frame, that is but the casket which contains the jewel, or rather we should say, the temple which enshrines the God-like intellect. The soul, What is it? That perceiving, thinking, emotional and volitional essence or subsistence which constitutes intelligence. That which in an instant can dart its thoughts like lightning to the remotest bounds of the Universe, and embrace worlds upon worlds in the wide sweep of its vision. That which knows no weariness or decay, but keeps an incessant train of thought whether waking or sleeping, "whether in the body or out of the body," that which while it is conscious of its own processes, at the same time loses itself in the mysteriousness of its operations. What is this entity? Perceptions, associations, suggestions, compound, involved and inexplicable, occupied by two or three different and distinct subjects at the same time, and yet possessed and calm in the midst of the mental whirl and conflict, who can tell its mysterious power or who explain its nature? Truly is it the only type that represents God, the infinite mind.

Tomes upon tomes have been written upon the nature of the soul and its operations, systems upon systems have been constructed, designed to classify its faculties and powers, and their modes of operation, and yet no nearer have metaphysicians arrived at the truth than the ancient philosophers, in regard to an analysis of its nature. The most that can be known with certainty is its existence, but the mode of that existence, its nature and duration are not inferable from any investigations ever made undirected by the superior light of revelation. In the research we will not deny that there has been an approximation to the truth. We are ready to admit that philosophy, positive and speculative, has thrown light upon the mystery of mind, just as chemistry has served to unfold the nature and properties of matter. The advance has been as great in the department of metaphysical as it has in natural philosophy. We look back to the past and trace step by step the progress made in natural philosophy when all matter resolved itself into four elements ; earth, air, fire and water, but as chemical science advanced and subsequent analysis was brought to bear upon these objects, it was ascertained that there was something beyond the mere external manifestation. There was a hidden nature which science only could reveal, an internal organism, so to speak, lying concealed beneath the surface, a world within whose vast and wonderful arcana only could be unlocked by the key of scientific research. The blow-pipe, the crucible, the retort and the solvent, as the agents of science, opened up new worlds in earth, air, fire and water, and resolved them into other elements, and now instead of four, there are fifty-four elements, exclusive of the imponderable forms of matter. Nor is the wonderful power of discovery exhausted. As the increase of magnifying power in the microscope brings to light and life hidden worlds of organic and inorganic structure, and as the power of the telescope brings upon the field of vision worlds upon worlds which have rolled on in silence and darkness for ages unknown to man, so may chemical analysis increase the number of elements and unfold greater wonders.

And thus it is with mind. As it regards its nature and properties it may be said of it as the Queen of Sheba said of the wisdom, wealth and glory of Solomon, "the half hath not been told" us. After all the metaphysical research which has been expended upon it by the profoundest philosophers who have entered its inner and most mysterious sanctuary, and have examined and studied its powers and faculties, and their various and complicated operations, how little is known. Like matter, it has been defined only by its properties. The knowledge is but inferential, the positive has not been reached. There is something in which mind inheres, some substratum or essence that the acutest intellect can not penetrate, just as there is something in matter which no chemical power has been able to reach. Investigations of matter have been pushed almost to the confines of spirit itself, so that no perceptible form or weight was left; but the end was not yet. Around the spirit of the chemist in his midnight laboratory, gathers an awful sense of mystery, profound as eternity. Effects so astounding which he is laboring to trace to their final cause, demonstrate the existence of that

cause, and he stands with bosom bare and hand on the altar of science, in the very presence of the Eternal.

The wonderful phenomena exhibited by mind in what is called its normal state is beyond the power of mind to conceive. Take but one single power of the mind, that of retaining ideas, facts, events and words, as the signs thereof. How inconceivably mysterious, that a long, abstruse train of reasoning, involving a multiplicity and often complexity of facts and events, can be retained in the mind and reproduced by the will on any occasion, that what occurred in childhood is present and vivid to the consciousness, with all its details and circumstances after the lapse of eighty or a hundred years? What is denominated association is equally wonderful. Ideas that seemed to have remained dormant for years, in consequence of some associated idea are waked at once to life. Even those ideas that pass through the mind in the hours of sleep, of which man has not at the time full consciousness are called up by association like spirits from the deep, and excite our wonder. We often visit places where we have no consciousness of ever having been before either in mind or body, and we are strangely impressed that the objects around us are familiar, and are startled with the impression. It is not that they resemble places with which we are familiar, but the very resemblance itself from association wakes up the dormant impression previously made upon the mind when in some of its ever wakeful, tireless moods it took an excursion away from the unconscious tabernacle and visited scenes afar.

If we consider mind in its abnormal state, we shall find still greater mysteries. When we look upon the power of the mind over the unconscious body, and see it when all the senses are locked up in sleep, raise the body from its couch and guide its motions as a pilot would a vessel, or rather as an engineer would a locomotive along a dangerous and difficult track safe and unharmed, we tremble while we gaze, and are lost in wonder at its mysterious power. We hear that mind employing the tongue to speak in a language unknown to it before, and to discourse fluently upon a subject never before discoursed by it, and we see it employing the hand to perform feats or to make music to which it was before an entire stranger. Facts like these are cognizant to the world, but the rationale of them are beyond the researches of man.

We repeat it, but little is known of the nature of mind and its wonderful powers. When connected with perfect material organs, there is no limit to its capacity, and yet when the organs through which it manifests itself are defective through decay or derangement, it is incapable of performing its functions, and exhibits feebleness or imbecility on the one hand, and wild incoherent ravings on the other. The brain, like a harp with shattered strings, or an instrument out of tune, though the skill of the musician remains, the attempt to play only makes discord. The mind is immaterial, and knows neither weariness or decay. Its organs may be deranged and destroyed, but derangement and dissolution can touch it never. Indeed, it may be affirmed of matter itself even in its grosser forms, that it cannot be destroyed. It may

be changed from solids to fluids, and from fluids to gases, and thus pass through endless modifications, but annihilated it cannot be. The spirit is eternal, separated from or in connection with matter, its duration is everlasting. Mind gives the strongest intimations of its ceaseless duration. The "breath of the Almighty" within, points out its immortality and intimates its eternity.

" A solemn murmur in the soul, Tells of a world to be, As
travelers hear. the billows roll, Before they reach the sea."

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