

## Things Hidden and Revealed

The apostle Paul described the inability of the carnally minded to perceive spiritual things:

“... the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ...” (1 Cor. 2:14).

This fact is amply demonstrated in the attitude of the Jewish leaders to the preaching of Messiah:

“Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God” (Jno. 8:46-47).

Only those who are “of God” can receive the wisdom of His Words. But the question arises: How can a natural man become spiritual in order to be capable of receiving the Word of God? The simple answer is that he must have a change of mindset, to develop a good and honest heart in order to receive the seed of the Word. So Paul has it:

“be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:2).

In order to receive the things of the Spirit of God then, a person has to have his mind transformed, and renewed. Rather than to seek conformity with men of the flesh, he must instead seek to hear, and conform to the image of Christ – and that is also a function of the Word. So the Apostle describes: “... faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Notice that here, the phrasing is not “and hearing the word of God”, but that hearing itself comes “by the Word of God”. The more a person applies themselves to the Scriptures, the greater is their influence upon his thinking. So it is written: “the hearing ear, and the seeing eye, Yahweh hath made even both of them” (Prov. 20:12). Here is the beauty of the Divine scheme of salvation, Yahweh is the first cause in every respect, even to enabling a man to hear the spirit-words that give life.

In Luke chapter 10, our New Testament reading for today, we read of things being hidden and revealed:

“In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast **hid** these things from the wise and prudent, and hast **revealed** them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight” (Lu. 10:21).

### **THINGS HIDDEN**

The Apostle Paul describes the dissemination of Divine Light:

“if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them” (2 Cor. 4:3-4).

Again, he describes his preaching of the previously hidden mystery:

“but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world for our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory ... but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit ...” (1 Cor. 2:8, 10).

In a way not dissimilar to the revelation of God to Nebuchadnezzar back in Daniel chapter 2, the princes of this world are ignorant of the mystery revealed. It was rather made known to a despised minority, those who were considered “as the filth of the world, and [who] are the offscouring of all things” (1 Cor. 4:13). To these humble men, the revelation of God came, to be preached throughout the world:

“not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence” (1 Cor. 1:26-29).

It is according to the Wisdom of God, that the mystery of the Gospel is not revealed to the wise of this world: “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21). The Proverbs describe it in terms of hidden treasure which must be sought after:

“Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou sleekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of Yahweh, and find the knowledge of God” (Prov. 2:3-5).

Men will go to extraordinary lengths to obtain the riches of this life, yet are sadly negligent when it comes to Divine things. It never ceases to surprise us that students can attend universities and colleges, and learn all kinds of complicated things, yet when it comes to studying Scripture, they say it is too hard for them, and it is neglected! But this only illustrates the point that men imbued with the wisdom of man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ echoed the sentiments of this Proverb in his parable: “the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field” (Mat. 13:44). And the Apostle speaks of Christ “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3). If men were to exert the same efforts that others use to obtain wealth to find out the wisdom of God, there would be far more who would become “wise unto salvation” – yet sadly, it is not so, and the Truthholders remain a small and despised minority.

### **THINGS REVEALED**

By contrast to the natural man, those who fear the God of Israel are indeed able to discern the mystery: “The secret of Yahweh is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant” (Psa. 25:14). Again, “the froward is abomination to Yahweh, but his secret is with the righteous” (Prov. 3:32). God, it is declared, “will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servant the prophets” (Amos 3:7). What a great condescension that is on the part of the Almighty – to reveal His secret to

mortal men! Yet how many take the trouble to become acquainted with those prophets and their message? So the words of Messiah to his disciples hold true: “it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given” (Mat. 13:11). Only those who show due diligence (Heb. 11:6) in seeking after God’s ways, will have them revealed to them.

Again, by further contrast to the aggrandisement of the natural man, those to whom the Gospel is given humble themselves to become like little children. To return to our reading in Luke chapter 10 (cited above), the Master prayed:

“I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast **revealed them unto babes**: even so, Father; for it seemed good in thy sight” (Lu. 10:21).

Again, he taught:

“Except ye be converted, and become **as little children**, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Mat. 18:3).

Children are curious and eager to learn, and that is the disposition of the true disciple of Christ. Indeed, it is an essential quality, as Jesus taught Nicodemus:

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again ...” (Jno. 3:7).

There is a dual rebirth that a man must undergo in order to enter into God’s Kingdom: baptism in water – a new moral beginning in mortal life – and being born of the Spirit – a new beginning physically. Only the Lord Jesus Christ has been so born of the Spirit: he is “the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence” (Col. 1:18). But being the “firstborn” by definition, implies that others will follow – hence the hope of his brethren to be similarly raised, and have their bodies fashioned to become like his (Phil. 3:21).

Being “born of water” is a process. It is the emergence of a new spiritual life in the hearts of willing hearers, and is also described by the Spirit through Peter, as a kind of begettal:

“being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass; and all the glory of man is as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word by which the gospel is preached unto you” (1Pet 1:23).

The seed sown is incorruptible – but yet it is sown into that which withers and fades – the fleshy tables of man’s hearts. But this is the point; the lives of men are transient and failing; that which will abide and pass into immortality is not the natural man; but the New man, born from the Incorruptible Word, that “new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph 4:24). Whether or not a man receives salvation at the last, is therefore utterly dependent upon how he has cared for the seed; whether he has permitted it to grow into something worth preserving or not. The Old man of

the flesh is to perish either way, and our salvation depends on us allowing the Creator to form a new life within us by the indwelling of His incorruptible Word.

The Apostle Peter also spoke of the spiritual rebirth that Messiah's brethren must undergo – and again, it is traceable directly back to the Word, and it's influence upon the mind:

“as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” (1 Pet. 2:2).

Like newborn babes require milk in order to develop, even so new disciples of Christ – being born of water – need the milk of the word. But they must be discriminate in what they feed upon. They must desire the “sincere milk” – the Greek for “sincere” meaning “*unadulterated*”. Only the best will do: the pure word of God, rather than the traditions of men which cannot save.

Brother Robert Roberts commented on the importance of having a “desire” to be nourished by the Word:

“Peter has said, “Desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby”. This we have learnt to do. Nothing short of the undiluted Bible will make us grow. Our system of daily reading enables us to get the full benefit and to realise the apostolic precept in the most effectual manner. Under this system, many, many features of the Divine Thought are brought under our notice that we should never notice, or noticing once, forget. Every time we read, we get something fresh – something we had not seen just in the same vivid light before; and when the “every time” is every day, we slowly get enriched in a way not possible with those who only look into the Bible occasionally”.

(The Christadelphian, Sept. 1908).

We need, then, to consider our own position in relation to the Word of God. Are we like Mary, sitting at the feet of Jesus, or are we like Martha, encumbered with the affairs of this life? Are we too distracted by the tenets of worldly learning to search out the hidden treasures of Wisdom? The Gospel-Mystery is hidden from the majority of men: “it is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter” (Prov 25:2). We who desire to be kings of the age to come (Rev 5:10) must give all due diligence to search the Scriptures daily, to find out it's treasures. Showing the same zeal as those who will go to great lengths to possess worldly treasures, we must search out the wisdom that gives life (which is far superior in every respect – (Eccl. 7:12)) – only then will we truly become “wise unto salvation” (2 Tim. 3:15) through faith in Christ Jesus.

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