

## **DIVINE SECRETS REVEALED.**

"The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his Covenant." – Psa. 25:14.

IS THERE any secret in connection with the divine plan? Are not all of God's arrangements so plain that "a wayfaring man, tho unlearned, need not err therein?" Are not all of the steps of the plan of salvation so simple that even a child may understand them?

Oh no! very evidently not; for everywhere we find the utmost diversity of opinion respecting the divine plan. Not only is there a great variety of heathen theories utterly false, but the various theories which obtain amongst Christian people are in violent antagonism the one to the other. Even amongst the worldly-wise of Christendom how various are the conceptions of God's intention and method respecting his creatures? These differences are represented in the various theologies of all the various sects. His plan is claimed to be one of "Free Grace" in which he gives an *equal opportunity* to all his creatures to share; yet, looking about us we see most evidently that all are not alike privileged, not alike informed and not alike circumstanced. On the other hand, there is the claim of an "Election" which denies that grace is free to all, and holds that it is restricted to the favored few. Besides these, we have various other conflicting theories in Christendom, and the most obtuse thinker must admit that where so many theologians, college professors and doctors of divinity are in dispute, the unlearned "wayfaring man" has many chances to err in his endeavor to grasp the divine plan.

Observation therefore sustains, as most literally true, the statement of our text that the Lord's plan is a secret: and it is in agreement with the statement of other Scriptures respecting the "mystery of God," "hidden from past ages and dispensations." In harmony with this is the fact that all the prophets have spoken more or

less obscurely and in parables, not excepting the Great Prophet, our Lord Jesus, of whom it is written, that "he taught the people in parables and dark sayings" – "and without a parable spake he not unto the people." He promised, nevertheless, that in due time the holy spirit would be granted as a guide and instructor to his true disciples: "He will guide you into all truth" and "show you things to come." (Jno. 16:13.) Some of the mysteries of God were due to be understood at once, and some more gradually down through the age, but the great unfolding of the divine mystery we are expressly told was reserved until the close of the Gospel age, when "the mystery of God should be finished," which he hath kept secret from the foundation of the world. – Rev. 10:7.

Even so much of the divine plan as was due to be revealed by the spirit and to be understood step by step during this Gospel age, was intended only for a special class, and not for the world in general. The Apostle Paul emphasized this when he declared, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." "But God hath revealed them unto *us* by his spirit; for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep [hidden, obscure] things of God." – 1 Cor. 2:14,10.

This same thought is before us in our text, "The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." As this has been true all the way down throughout this age, it is still true, and the finishing of "the mystery of God" in the close of this Gospel age must therefore **[R2208 : page 256]** be expected to be understood and appreciated only by this special class of the Lord's people, – those who fear or reverence him. We are to make a distinction between those who fear or reverence the Lord and those who fear or reverence man and the work of man, sectarian systems, creeds, etc. "The fear of man [and of man's churches] bringeth a snare," and hinders growth both in grace and in knowledge; – hinders an appreciation of the "Secret of the Lord." "But the fear [reverence] of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and this wisdom, if continued, leads to fuller knowledge of God, to greater confidence

in him, and to that degree of intimate friendship and sonship which is the key to the understanding of the "Secret of the Lord."

Abraham was called the "friend of God;" because he had the divine confidence, so that God made known to him certain things that he did not make known to others: "The Secret of the Lord" was with Abraham, so far as that Secret could be communicated to any one at that time. For instance, in the matter of the destruction of Sodom, the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham [my friend] that thing which I do?" And it was because Abraham was the friend of God that he also made known to him something of the divine plan for human salvation: as the Apostle declares, God "preached beforehand the gospel to Abraham, saying: 'In thee shall all the nations be blessed.'" – Gal. 3:8.

While it was not possible for Abraham or any one else than God to fully comprehend this statement, or to understand therefrom the lengths and the breadths of the divine plan of salvation, yet it contained the whole gospel, in the same sense that an acorn contains a great oak tree. So likewise our Lord at the first advent spoke in parables to the nominal house of Israel, that "Seeing they might see and not believe, and hearing they might hear and not understand;" yet, a certain few, full of faith and obedience and consecration to the Lord, were not thus treated; but, on the contrary, were treated as "friends" and had much explained to them. Thus our Lord said to the disciples when they inquired concerning the significance of a parable, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God; but to them that are without, these things are spoken in parables." And again he said to the same devoted disciples, I have not called you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called *you friends*, because whatsoever I hear of the Father I have made known unto you. – John 15:15.

This "mystery" of the divine plan, hidden in parables, in figures, and in symbols from the world, and from the nominal Christian, – hidden from all except the fully consecrated children of God – is most

beautifully symbolized in the Book of Revelation. As therein recounted, John was shown in a vision a symbolic panorama, illustrative of the subject. The heavenly glories were symbolized and the Father shown seated upon the throne of his glory, holding in his right hand a scroll sealed with seven seals. This was the *Mystery*, the *Secret* of the Lord, unknown to any one but himself – his plan for the salvation of the world. John in the symbol hears the proclamation, "Who is worthy to open the Book and to loose the seals?" – who is worthy to have committed to his care, *the execution* of the great divine plan, wonderful for its wisdom and love, and its lengths and breadths and depths and heights past human comprehension – that he may open it and execute it? A silence followed; and John fearing that this signified that none would be found worthy, and that hence the divine plan would never be fully revealed, and therefore could not be fully executed, wept much. But in the symbol the angel again touched him and said, "Weep not! for the Lion of the tribe of Judah,' the 'Root of David,' hath prevailed to open the Book, and to loose the seven seals thereon."

Ah yes! this was one significance of the severe trials and sufferings of our dear Redeemer; – in humbling himself, leaving the glory with the Father, becoming a man and ultimately giving his life a ransom for all, he was doing two works: not only (1) redeeming us with his own precious blood, but (2) additionally by this obedience he was commending himself to the Father, and proving himself worthy to be the Father's agent and representative in carrying out all the great "mystery of God" hidden from previous ages and dispensations. – Eph. 3:3-5.

The interim of thirty odd years, in which our Lord's humiliation and subsequent exaltation took place, is all passed over in the vision, and the symbol merely shows in the midst of the throne "a lamb, as it had been slain:" how forceful the illustration to those whose eyes are anointed that they may discern its meaning. And now the symbolical panorama proceeds, and shows us the Lamb approaching Jehovah and

receiving from him "the mystery of his will," the great plan of the ages, as mapped out in the divine purpose from before the foundation of the world. As soon as the "mystery of God" was committed to "the Lamb of God;" who had already fulfilled an important part of that plan by redeeming the world with his own precious blood, he [R2209 : page 256] receives homage, as it is written: "Him hath God highly exalted, and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven and things on earth," and "that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father."

Then came the opening of the seals: the disclosing of one after another of the various features connected [R2209 : page 257] with the divine purpose. Each seal as it was loosed permitted the scroll as a whole to open a little wider, and a little wider, thus permitting "the mystery of God" to be a little more clearly discerned. And so God's people down through this Gospel age have been privileged to know something of the "Secret of the Lord;" – the divine plan. But not until the last seal was broken, did the scroll fly wide open, permitting the "Mystery of God" to be fully disclosed; as it is written: "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the *Mystery of God should be finished*, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." – Rev. 5:1; 10:7.

This same thought, that God's consecrated people will have intelligence respecting his plans far different from any the world will have, is everywhere kept prominently before us in the Scriptures, and must therefore be considered a very important indication with all who profess to be God's people; – distinguishing whether they are merely his "*servants*," or whether they are still more intimately connected and have received the spirit of adoption as serving "*sons*," and are being treated as sons; – made acquainted with the Heavenly Father's plan.

Our text speaks merely of the fear (reverence) of the Lord, but, as we have seen, this reverence *continued* leads into the very deepest

work of grace obtainable; – to a fullness of consecration to the Father's will and service. It is of this class who fear (reverence) the Lord that we read, – "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared [reverenced] the Lord, and that thought upon his word [esteeming his Name, his Honor, his Will above any earthly, sectarian name or work]. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them [they "shall be accounted worthy to escape" the severity of the great time of trouble with which this age shall end], as a man spareth *his own son* that serveth him." These who reverence the Lord, in this full and Scriptural sense, are surely the Lord's "elect," "the body of Christ," the "overcomers," the "little flock," the "royal priesthood," who shall reign with Christ, and with him bless all the families of the earth in due time.

The privilege of this "royal priesthood" to know "the Secret of the Lord," to comprehend "the deep things of God" hidden from others, was beautifully symbolized and typified in the privileges of the Jewish priesthood. When the Tabernacle was set up, with its beautiful golden furniture, lamp stand, table of shew bread, golden altar, etc., all symbolizing spiritual things, they were covered over, hidden, not only from the ordinary Israelite, but even from the Levitical "servants" of the Tabernacle, who were not even permitted to *look therein*. The privilege of seeing those typical secret things, reserved exclusively for the priests, thus typified "the royal priesthood" and their exclusive privilege of understanding the mysteries of God, his Secret.

### **"HE WILL SHOW THEM HIS COVENANT."**

But our text adds, "He will show *them* his covenant." This is stated as tho it were a very important matter to see or clearly understand God's Covenant: and it is an important matter, for God's Covenant is really the key to the entire divine plan. What God promised to Abraham in the Covenant, "In thee and in thy seed shall

all the families of the earth be blessed," included directly and indirectly all the riches of divine grace. Yet, how few see this. We do not say how few of the world see this, for we should not expect any appreciation of the divine Covenant on the part of "them that are without." But we say, How few of those who have named the name of Christ, and nominally stand related to spiritual Israel – how few of these know or care anything whatever about the divine Covenant.

Alas, that Satan should so grossly blind the eyes of so many, that they should have no interest in the divine Covenant and not even know that there is a divine Secret or Mystery! Satan has gotten them thoroughly imbued with the delusion that God's plan is, – that every poor human creature born in sin, shapen in iniquity and schooled more or less in vice and superstition, shall have a few years of very imperfect opportunity to hear one or the other of the many conflicting creeds and theories of Christendom (or a jargon of them all), to thoroughly reform his life and become *a copy of God's dear Son*; and that if he does not succeed in doing these things, with the thousand chances to one against him, he shall be relegated to an eternity of torture. Alas! we say, that Christians should ever conclude that this is the plan of God. Truly, it was an enemy of God (Satan) who put before the people so monstrous, so God-dishonoring a doctrine as this: and persuaded them that this is the length and the breadth, the height and the depth of divine wisdom, and love, and provision for poor fallen humanity.

But with our eyes anointed, and our hearts fully consecrated to the Lord and fully desirous to know just what is his will and his way, we look at the Great Covenant, and behold, it opens gloriously before us into three parts: (1) All the families of the earth – every member of the human family is to receive a blessing. (2) The Seed of Abraham is to be the *channel* of these divine blessing to every creature. (3) This Seed in [R2209 : page 258] its primary sense we find meant our Lord Jesus Christ; but in its secondary sense it includes the "bride the lamb's wife," his jointheir in this Covenant and in all of the divine mercies.

This is clearly set before us by the Apostle in his letter to the Galatians.  
– 3:16,29.

With this thought in view we realize at once that none of the spiritual blessings of this Covenant were possible until Christ Jesus, the Head of the Seed had finished his course and been glorified; and we see that the Lord's work since that time has been the gathering of the "elect" Church to be the "bride," the "body of Christ." We see also that the work of blessing cannot begin in its proper sense until this entire "Seed" is *complete* and glorified: and that with this glorification of the Church with her Lord, in the end or "harvest" of this Gospel age, will come the time mentioned by the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans (8:18,23), when the "groaning creation" shall be blessed by the "manifestation of the *sons* of God," in the glory of the Kingdom. This spiritual Seed of Abraham (Christ and the elect Church) has indeed been the salt of the earth, throughout the Gospel age, and has helped to preserve the world from utter deterioration; but this is but a small part of the great blessing which God designs to send through the Church to the world. The "light" of truth as it has been dimly shining during this night, is properly compared to a candle or lamp, but the "light" of the Church glorified in the Kingdom during the Millennium is properly represented as "the Sun of righteousness, which shall arise with healing in its beams."

The Covenant then shows us our privilege of the present time, of becoming "heirs of God and jointheirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." And it shows us the object of this trial, the object of this election, the object of the glorification of the Church, to be a work of mercy, blessing, helpfulness, toward the remainder of mankind. The Covenant is broad: it does not promise, merely, that all the families of the earth who will be so fortunate as to be living at the time when the Seed is complete will receive a blessing; neither does it merely say that all the families proceeding from Abraham, dead and living, will receive a blessing; but comprehensively it promises a blessing to "all



the families of the earth," – those who have fallen asleep in death as well as those who will be alive at the time of the establishment of Christ's Kingdom.

To this end our Lord Jesus became Master or "Lord of the *dead*:" he bought *all* with his own precious blood: "He is the propitiation for our sins [the Church's sins] and not for ours only, but also *for the sins of the whole world*." And as we have received a blessing as the result of his ransom, so in God's due time "all the families of the earth" will also receive a blessing because of the *ransom*. It is from this standpoint that the Church is called the "first fruits unto God of his creatures," – not the entire harvest. The first-fruits are to be used of the Lord as his instruments for blessing the remainder.

And in the coming blessing, to the families of the earth, the natural seed of Abraham are to be given a place or preference, a priority over others; – "To the Jew first." As the spiritual blessings were offered to them first, so the earthly favors are to be offered to them first. They shall obtain mercy "through your [the Church's] mercy." (Rom. 11:31.) And after Israel shall have obtained mercy, a blessing through the glorified Spiritual Israel, then in turn natural Israel shall let the light shine upon others – "all the families of the earth;" until in due time the promise shall be fulfilled that Christ as the true light shall enlighten "*every man that cometh into the world*." (Jno. 1:9.) Oh glorious covenant! luminous with divine Love and Wisdom. – Rom. 11:33. [R2210 : page 258]

### **THE COVENANT SURE AND EVERLASTING.**

And is this Covenant sure? It is sure; as the great Apostle points out, God took special care to so state this Covenant repeatedly to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and to repeat it through the prophets; thus giving us most absolutely his word on this subject. But lest this should not be thought conclusive enough on a subject of so great importance, lest some should fear that there might be a contingency involved, by

which that covenant might be vitiated, the Apostle points out that God not only gave his word but also his oath, that its engagements should be strictly fulfilled and in no wise miscarry. He says, –

*"God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor to the soul." – Heb. 6:13-19.*

### **"HE IS FAITHFUL WHO HATH PROMISED."**

Those who have the "Secret of the Lord," and to whom he has not shown the significance of his Covenant should forthwith examine themselves, to see whether or not the fault be unfaithfulness on God's part or failure on their part to come up to God's conditions. They should strictly inquire within whether or not they have been sufficiently and properly reverencing God, or whether their reverence and worship has to any degree been to man and to human institutions, churches, etc. – whether they ever became "servants" [R2210 : page 259] of God and, if so, whether they progressed and became servant *sons*.

And those to whom the Lord has disclosed his Secret, and the significance of his Covenant, should see to it that these divine favors lead their hearts to still greater reverence for the Lord. For we may be assured that if the reverence is lost the Secret will slip from us, and the Covenant become more and more dim. And here we perceive God has placed a great test: He has permitted the great adversary to malign his character, and to traduce his plan, and to misrepresent the teachings of his Word to such an extent that the majority of those who name the name of Christ are at first influenced to turn to the Lord chiefly from fear of eternal torment. Their activities in mission work and in their general Christian course are actuated chiefly by fear and sympathy – sympathy for those whom they esteem to be in danger of eternal

torture at the hands of a loveless and unjust God, and fear for themselves, lest they should not be spared a similar fate. Love to God finds no room under such conditions. In fact, it would be impossible for any one to truly love a God of such merciless character. But, amongst those who outgrow their creeds and fears are some who, in opposition to their false instructions, learn to think better of their Creator, and by faith grasp sufficient from his Word to beget a love for him which produces a fullness of consecration to his service; and thus they become sons of God: and then, by entering into divine fellowship through Christ, these have committed to them the "Secret of the Lord" and are shown something of his Covenant.

This fullness, however, does not come all at once; it is a gradual development, step by step. If the truth is rightly received it leads onward into more of the truth, and into more of its grace; but if wrongly received, it may lead outward, away from the Lord and his Word, away from his Secret, away from his grace, into utter darkness with the world. Nor is it infrequently the case that those who lose their abnormal fears lose practically all their reverence for the Lord, and become careless with reference to his Word, and with reference to their conduct. Such "receive the grace of God in vain;" in some respects, indeed, it does them injury, instead of bringing them blessings.

In our fallen condition we need some strong impellent motive, to enable us to live righteously, soberly, godly in this present evil world. And if the abnormal fear and superstitious dread be removed before a love for God, for righteousness and for truth has been implanted, the probabilities are that the knowledge of God's grace in such will fall upon stony ground. But where the spirit of the Lord has been implanted, where the spirit of the truth, the holy spirit of Love, has begotten to newness of life, where love to the Lord and appreciation of his goodness is the ruling and controlling element of life, there the increase of knowledge of the divine Secret and Covenant will bring increasing blessings of heart, of mind and of daily life. (Compare Isa.

29:13; 1 John 4:18.) It was for this that the Apostle prayed for the early Church, saying, – "That ye might be *able to comprehend* with all saints [the Secret of the Lord] the lengths and the breadths, the heights and depths of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." – Eph. 3:17-19.

### **THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT.**

As we have just seen, the divine blessings are all hidden in the Abrahamic Covenant, – to which were added because of sin the Mosaic (typical) Covenant and its antitype the Covenant in Christ, the New Covenant sealed with his blood.

The Bible is the great Book of these Covenants. And it like every other feature is considerably hidden, obscured, to the natural man; and its deeper and grander presentations can be seen only through the vail of types and shadows, parables and symbols. And the privilege to look beyond this vail, and to grasp the spirit of the truth, is reserved in large degree for the class mentioned in our text foregoing: – "The Secret of the Lord is with them that reverence him, and he will show them his Covenant."

To this class – them that fear the Lord and have his Secret and know his Covenant – the Bible becomes a Chart of the Ages, which shows not only the coast lines and rocks and sand bars of the six thousand years of evil, but also the blessed port then to be reached, and the glorious land of blessing and righteousness and divine favor – the thousand years of Christ's Millennial reign.

To this same class the Bible is a Compass also, which, in connection with the Chart, indicates to them the divinely directed route, by which they are to *escape* certain troubles coming upon the world, and by which they are to *obtain* certain trials and experiences which will be valuable to them in fitting and preparing them to be jointheirs with Christ in the Kingdom. Without this Compass they might indeed be able to judge in clear weather of some portions of the

route, but never satisfactorily: and in times of storm and darkness, sun, moon and stars obscured, these, like the world, would be left to the mercy of their own imperfect judgments as to which way to steer, and would feel all the trepidation and uncertainty which so many others feel, were it not for their Compass. But the Compass can be seen, and its directions followed, however dark or obscure the natural light; and following its directions the **[R2210 : page 260]** Lord's people are to attain unto their high calling – make their calling and election sure.

The Lord's Word, in the hands of this same class, may be compared to a Telescope, whose properly adjusted lenses represent the bringing into harmony of the human will with the divine will, in Christ. Careful adjustment is required that we may get a proper focus; but when this condition is obtained, wonderful things through the Bible we see. The far off and indistinct promises are brought nigh, made clear and plain. Hitherto unseen features of the divine character and plan are made manifest; and by the aid of this Telescope the lengths and breadths, the heights and the depths of divine Wisdom and Love and Power may be much more closely approximated by our finite minds.

To this same class the Bible is also a Microscope. The proper adjustment of its lenses – the complete consecration of the human will to the divine – brings to bear upon all the *little* affairs of life a power which magnifies them, and shows us their importance as never seen by us before, and as cannot be seen by the world in general. Through the Bible as a Microscope, we can see that all the trifling affairs of the present life are potentialities, which, under divine direction, are working together for good to "the called ones according to his purpose." It *magnifies* the Law of God, shows us how grand, how sublimely perfect and altogether reasonable, is every requirement of God. It shows us that the weaknesses and imperfections which hinder us from measuring up to the standard of that perfect Law are inherited from father Adam. It shows us that the blemish of sin has affected not only our physical systems, but also our mental and moral faculties; and

thus it points out to us that our own reasoning on every subject requires to be re-adjusted and harmonized with the spirit of the divine Law; and thus it enables us by such mental and moral adjustment to obtain what the Apostle calls "the spirit of a sound mind." It not only shows us what we could not see before of our own shortcomings, but graciously it indicates also how after coming into Christ and being covered with his robe of righteousness by faith, we may to some extent make up for these deficiencies by adding to our faith fortitude, and to fortitude knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control patience, and to patience piety, and to piety brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness Love, which things, as they more and more abound, will incite us to cultivate fruitfulness, in the use of the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. – 2 Pet. 1:5-8.

In view of the blessings attached let us strive more and more to retain and to cultivate that true *reverence* for the Lord, which is not only the beginning of wisdom but also its end; that through it we may have the **[R2211 : page 260]** benefit and helpful assistance of all the gracious provisions which God has made for the progress of those who love him, in knowledge and in character; that in due time, if we faint not, we may inherit the promises and share the glories of our Father and our Lord.

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