

“THE SECRET OF THE LORD”

(Discourse below by the Pastor, given June 29, 1911, Portland, Oregon Convention; starting on page 113.)

I rejoice this morning, dear friends, to find myself with you. I remember very well my previous visit to your city. From the *Watch Tower* list I know that the numbers here are increasing, and from other sources I have reason to believe that you are not only increasing in numbers, but also in spirituality; this is the real desire of our hearts. What would numbers amount to if we did not have the spirit of the Lord? What is the object of this long selection that God is making during the present time, except to take out a people for his name, people that are to be heart-loyal to him. We are all aware that we have imperfections of the flesh, that there is none righteous, no, not one, but we are glad to know that God looketh not on the outward appearance, but on the heart, and we are glad to believe that in heart we are growing more and more in the likeness of our dear Saviour, the likeness therefore of our heavenly Father, because he was the express image of the Father's person in every sense of the word.

The text which we have for consideration this morning is one that I think is very precious —“The secret of the Lord is with them that reverence him, and he will show them his covenant.” And who are those that reverence the Lord, and how may we show the Lord our reverence? The Lord answers the question by telling that if we do the Father's will, that will be the evidence that we are his disciples. If you love me you will keep my commandments—my directions; and the apostle says that we have an additional command, in that we not only keep the Lord's commandments, but they are not grievous to us; for, as our Lord said, “Father, I delight to do thy will.” It is one thing to not wish to do God's will at all, and to wish to do our own will; and it makes quite a step when we surrender out our own wills and accept the will of the Lord; and even then sometimes after accepting the Lord's will there is quite a battle with many as to how they shall surrender themselves and keep the surrender before the Lord so they do not take back anything they have consecrated to him; it is quite a fight many have along that very line. When we not only have made a consecration of our wills, but when we find ourselves so in sympathy with God and his wonderful arrangement, his divine plan, and the purposes revealed in his Word, and the elements of divine character—justice, wisdom, love, power—made known to us in the Word of God—when we are in harmony with this, then we are close to the Lord; then we delight to do his will—not merely will do it, and say, “Lord it is very hard; I am sorry you asked me to do anything so hard;” but, on the contrary, to say, “Heavenly Father, here is your will, I am glad to know it; I did not know it before, but now that I do know it, I am so pleased that I may do your will.” That is the attitude of heart we all wish to attain more and more.

It is not an attitude of heart that we could expect to reach at once; but it is a mark before us. So that starting in, and having great battles with ourselves, and hard work to keep ourselves submissive, and saying "amen" to the divine propositions as they come to us, we gradually get to looking to see what is God's will and to prefer God's will to anything of our own, or anything that anybody else could give us. That is the real attainment. It is that class that is referred to in our text "The secret of the Lord is with them that reverence him," that love him, that love his will and his way more than anybody else's will, more than anybody else's way, and more than their own will, and more than their own way. He will show them his secret. You have found it so, and I have found it so, that the Lord makes known his secrets in proportion as we get in that right attitude of heart where we can properly appreciate them and enjoy them. Now the other, the worldly class, do not understand God's secrets; he does not wish them to understand; they are not in a condition to understand. Even some who have taken the name of the Lord and have made even an outward consecration to him, are not in position to understand the secrets of the Lord. Why? They would not make proper use of them if they did know them; they would do themselves further injury if they did know the Lord's secrets; they might seek to oppose him, which would be a terrible condition. And so, the Scriptures tell us that none of the wicked will understand. How glad we are that the wicked cannot understand God's plan! If they did, it would be injurious to themselves, and would interfere with God's plan, in a measure; therefore, God wisely and lovingly keeps his plan hid except from the proper class. "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" said Jesus, but to all outsiders, these things are spoken in parables and dark sayings, that, hearing, they may hear and not understand, and seeing, they might see and not believe. Is not that wonderful, dear friends? It is God's way. His ways are always marvelous to us; the more we get to understand them, the more wonderful they appear. Who would have been God's counselor, to have told him how to do this matter? The apostle was certainly right in suggesting that not a creature could ever have suggested to our heavenly Father how to carry on his great and wonderful plan that he has arranged. He needs no counsellor; he is the all-wise one. We are children of his, taught in the school of Christ, our elder Brother, who has gone before, who has trodden the pathway in advance, and who is now our instructor, that he may bring many sons to glory, honor, immortality, joint-heirship, with him in the kingdom. How glad we are!

I remember one expression our dear Master made use of that seemed at one time a very peculiar expression. It must still seem very peculiar to all except those who know something about the divine plan of the ages, and that expression was this: He said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for thus it seemed good in thy sight." Now, it seems so strange we had the thought that anyone who could not see these things would go to eternal torment! It seems so strange that the dear Redeemer who came into the world to save sinners should say, "Father, I thank you that you have hidden these things from all the masses of mankind, so they cannot see them, and cannot understand

them.” Could Jesus want the mass of mankind to be kept in ignorance so they would not understand, and so, they would go to eternal torment? Oh, no, my dear friends, it is altogether different from that. He loved them all, and he has a gracious plan, the Father’s plan. But he knew the Father was selecting a special class, a little flock, to be joint-heirs in the kingdom, and he saw them and recognized them, and in prayer owned the Father’s wisdom in the method adopted, that these things should be obscured from the masses of mankind then and ever since.

So then, let us not boast ourselves of greatness, of wisdom, nor of the things that the world is boasting. If we boast, let our boasting be of the Lord, his wonderful love and grace toward us, that while we were yet sinners, God had compassion on us and provided a Redeemer; and then in his providence we were humbly born, or in some other way favored so that his grace has reached our ears, and so that our hearts were not so proud they would not receive the message, or not so hard that they would be opposed to the message, but it is by the grace we are what we are, that our ears heard and our hearts rejoiced, and we are going over, as our dear brother Read sang a little while ago, “Our Friends are Passing over.” Soon we will all have crossed over, and those before on the other shore are almost now in sight. Thank God for our wonderful privileges. I congratulate you all this morning on our having this opportunity of meeting again, and thinking of our heavenly Father’s plan; and we who have come from a distance are glad to meet you of Portland and vicinity, and you of Portland and vicinity, I am sure, are glad to meet all of those dear ones who have come a long journey, to see you, and so our hearts and prayers and hymns are ascending up—not in any merit of ourselves, but from the censer of our glorious Lord, the great High Priest; and they ascend as a sweet incense before our heavenly Father, and we have his blessing with us this morning, and this causes all our hearts to rejoice.

And while our hearts are rejoicing and blossoming in the desert places of the heart, we are becoming more and more glad, and are bringing forth, I trust, more and more fruitage to the great Master’s glory. I remind you and myself at the same time that we are now in a land which not a great while ago was a desert land, and here is the beginning, as it were, of some those glorious promises in Scripture which tell us that the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and that springs shall come forth, and wonderful blessing shall result. Now, in your land, as I know from previous visits, we are seeing a beginning of Millennial age blessings. As we passed the desert places we saw evidences of fruitfulness that will come from the application of water, and you are raising wonderful orchards of plums and apples, and they are famous now throughout the world; they are going to nearly all our eastern cities. Your prunes are to be had in our markets in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, and everywhere, and your apples are famed the world over. The Oregon apple is known in great Britain. Some of our Scotch friends who are with us have probably eaten Oregon apples in Scotland. And we have heard about the laws you have framed here—all, we believe, under providence. So what there is going on

today my dear friends, that you and I may not see something of God's overruling providence? Think of your wonderful law, specifying that your orchards must be almost up to the standard of Eden, not an apple that is specked or wormy shall be shipped from the State. So some of your Edenic fruits are going out, and are lessons the whole civilized world of what is best in the world. When some of us think of the poor, scrawny apples we sometimes ate, and the worm-holes we had to cut out and bite out, we are thankful that there are good laws in Oregon covering such matters, and bringing nature up to her best. Now, from the world's standpoint all of this they call evolution, and from our standpoint all of this we call merely the beginning of restitution, because God has declared that this Edenic condition which he gave a sample of to our first parents in Eden, is to become a world-wide condition, and that Messiah's glorious kingdom shall bring the whole earth into Edenic perfection, and all that was lost through sin and through death is to be brought back. If we see, then, the beginnings of restitution in the light, and intelligence, and in the wonderful inventions that are coming to the world in our day, and in the fruit, and in the control of the world, and in the knowledge of chemistry, which enables mankind to cope with the various difficulties of earth today—and remember that we are still under the curse—the thorns and the briars, and all the insect pests, are part of that curse—we look down to the future and say “What a glorious home God will have for mankind when Messiah's kingdom shall bring the earth to full perfection, and bring mankind up out of all this sin and degradation and meanness, back to all that was lost in the first man, and redeemed by the second man, our Lord.”

How glad we are, then, dear friends, to see that we are living in the very beginning of the glorious day to which the whole world has been looking forward! How it cheers us, how it comforts us; and while we are not expecting the blessings for ourselves, but are hoping to attain something still better—exceedingly abundantly more than we could have asked or thought—yet we are glad of these blessings for mankind, and we are glad to see these things come to pass in our day as further additional evidences that we are in the dawning of the new dispensation, and the time is at hand for God's blessing and the outflow of truth, which is symbolized by the water which is making your desert blossom as the rose.