

The Secret of the Lord

by J.C. Philpot

The secret of the Lord is a spiritual and supernatural character that is revealed to those who fear him, and it includes inward teachings, leadings, and dealings of God the Spirit.

Scripture: Psalm 25:14, Psalm 33:18, Psalm 34:9, Psalm 89:30, Psalm 111:10 - 112:1, Psalm 145:19, Proverbs 14:26, Acts 9:31, Hebrews 11:6

Topics: "Fear Of God", "Divine Providence"

Description

J.C. Philpot preaches about the secret of the Lord being with those who fear Him, emphasizing the spiritual and supernatural nature of true religion. He distinguishes between servile fear and filial fear, highlighting the blessings and effects of the fear of the Lord in the believer's life. Philpot delves into the various aspects of the secret of the Lord, including the existence of God, providential dealings, a sense of His presence, and communion with Him. He concludes by discussing the promise of God showing His covenant to those who fear Him, underscoring the stability, grace, and eternal nature of this covenant for the believer.

Transcript

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"The secret of the Lord is with those who fear him; and he will show them his covenant." Psalm 25:14

There is no truth more offensive to the carnal mind, nor one more sweet to those taught of God than this--that true religion is of a spiritual and supernatural character. That God should dwell in man; that the blessed Spirit should condescend to be our teacher; that we know nothing except through this divine tuition; that all saving faith stands wholly and solely in the power of God; and that there is no true religion independent of the inward work and witness of God the Spirit in the conscience--such a creed as this may well raise up all the scorn of the natural mind. But take away the Spirit's work, and what is left? Nothing but a dead carcass of forms. There can be but two kinds of religion--the one external, and the other internal; the one natural, and the other spiritual; one that stands in forms and ceremonies, and the other that stands in the communications of mercy, grace, and truth out of the fullness of Jesus. So that if a man denies the inward teachings of the Spirit of God to be the sum and substance of religion, he has no other refuge but Popery; and, to be thoroughly consistent, he should declare himself a Papist at once; for there is no real

stopping-place between vital religion wrought in the heart and conscience by the power of God the Spirit, and that which stands in external forms, rites, and ceremonies.

But it is the especial privilege of God's people, and when enjoyed it is the very comfort of their souls, that all vital godliness is wrought in their hearts by the power of God. They are well convinced that they have no more religion, and no less religion, than is brought into their conscience with divine power. To have a measure of this heavenly teaching, and to live under the enjoyment of it, constitutes all the happiness that a child of God can really feel here below. He learns this, not only from the presence of it when divinely communicated, but also from its absence when these blessed communications are withdrawn and suspended.

In the text we find the Holy Spirit speaking of "a secret." We need not wonder, therefore, that vital godliness is known but to a few. If it is "a secret," it is evident it is not understood and known by all; the very essence of a secret being that it is confined to a few. And if there be a secret in religion (and such the Holy Spirit declares there is), it shows that vital godliness is confined to those only to whom the secret is made known by the power of God.

But if we look at the text, we shall see there are certain characters spoken of to whom this secret is discovered, and a promise also is made to those characters with whom the secret is. Thus, if God enables, we may take up the text in three leading divisions, and show who the characters are that "fear the Lord"--how "the secret is with them"--and what a promise the Lord has made to such, "he will show them his covenant."

I. Who the characters are that "fear the Lord." How much fear is spoken of in the word of God! But in order to understand what the Holy Spirit means by the term, which he so frequently employs, "the fear of God," we must bear in mind that there are two distinct kinds of fear. There is a SERVILE fear which dwells in the carnal mind, and which devils, reprobates, and hypocrites may experience; as we read, "the devils also believe and tremble." (James 2:19.) Thus "Felix trembled," when Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." (Acts 24:25.) And the mariners on board with Jonah "feared the Lord exceedingly" (Jonah 1:16), so that they offered sacrifices, and made vows. This is the fear of which we read, 1 John 4:18; "Perfect love casts out fear, because fear has torment; he who fears is not made perfect in love." And it is the same fear which the Apostle Paul speaks of Rom. 8:15; "For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear." This then is a servile fear, that has its dwelling in the carnal mind; and was manifested in Adam, when he hid himself from the presence of the Lord among the trees of the garden; in Cain, when his countenance fell as being the murderer of his brother Abel; and which discovered itself also in Saul, in Ahab, in Herod, and in other characters of whom we read in the word of God.

But "the fear" to which so many blessings are annexed, and which is spoken of in the text, is the FILIAL fear that dwells in the new man of grace raised up by the Spirit of God, and is the sole privilege, the alone portion of those whom God has chosen in Christ, and made to be heirs of his glory. This filial fear is a new covenant blessing; as we read, "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." (Jer. 32:40.) It is also a grace of the Spirit. "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." (Heb. 12:28.) And it is the beginning of wisdom. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Ps. 111:10.) It being the first grace in point of exercise that the Spirit of God draws forth in the conscience.

How many blessings are promised to and connected with this filial fear! For instance, we read, "The eye of the Lord is upon those who fear him." (Ps. 33:18.) "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him." (Ps. 34:9.) "Blessed is the man who fears the Lord." (Ps. 112:1.) "The Lord will fulfill the desire of those who fear him." (Ps. 145:19.) In fact, you can scarcely find any blessing of the highest nature, which is not more or less connected with the fear of God.

And so far from this filial fear of the Lord being checked, much less cast out by divine manifestations, and by the shedding abroad of the love of God, it is only heightened thereby. The "fear of the Lord," that begins at the quickening of the soul into divine life, deepens with every fresh teaching, and is increased by every fresh communication. Being a member of the new man, it is nurtured by the food with which the new man is fed; and thus, as we make progress in the divine life, so far from this fear being weakened, it becomes more deepened and strengthened. Thus it is not only compatible with, but ever accompanies consolation and enjoyment; as we read, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, were multiplied." (Acts 9:31.) How these two things are brought together--"the fear of the Lord, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit;" and it is spoken of as the highest attainment of the church, when she is blessed with these two graces at the same time in lively exercise.

No, more, however high in filial confidence the soul may rise, fear will always rise with it. True confidence is strengthened just as filial fear is deepened; for we read, "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence." (Prov. 14:26.) So that so far from confidence, assurance, and enjoyment weakening fear, they only strengthen it. Let the soul rise to the highest point of divine consolation, fear will rise equally, I might say, increasingly with it. For the more we spiritually know of the character of God, the more will godly fear of his great majesty be experienced in the soul. Wherever, then, you find in yourself, or others, confidence, or what is called assurance, and do not see the fear of God accompanying it, be sure that such confidence does not spring from the inward teaching of God the Spirit in the soul. For the fear of God, so far from being weakened, much less annihilated or cast out by true confidence and the genuine consolations of God the Spirit, is only deepened and heightened thereby. Apply this test when you hear people speaking of their assurance; it will unmask a good many.

But this "fear of God" must have its foundation in some spiritual and experimental discovery of God. We cannot fear God until we know him; and we cannot know God until in some measure he reveals himself with power to our conscience. This, then, is the beginning of all true religion; this is the foundation of all vital godliness; this is the starting-place from which every living soul begins to run the race set before him--an inward discovery of the character of God by the revelation of the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures. This makes a deep, solid, abiding, eternal impression on the soul; for until the Spirit of God shows unto us and gives us to know something of the holy, spiritual, pure character of God, we cannot have any knowledge of him; and if we know him not, it is impossible for us to fear him.

But wherever the fear of the Lord is in the conscience, there will be fruits flowing out of it. We judge of a tree by the fruits it brings forth; and we judge of the extent of spiritual teaching by the effects manifested. If, then, the fear of the Lord be in our hearts, there will be certain effects and fruits flowing out of that fear. There will be, as this fear is in exercise, an abhorrence of evil, deadness to the world, separation in heart and spirit from those who are immersed in it--a desire to please God, and a fear to offend him; a living as under his immediate eye; there will be the workings of a tender conscience in our bosom; a sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin; a flowing out of godly simplicity and sincerity, and an earnest desire to live and die under the immediate teachings and testimony of God in our conscience.

There are indeed many of the people of God who cannot rise in strong faith, nor feel an assurance that all their sins are pardoned; they cannot cry, "Abba Father," with an inward spirit of adoption; and yet know something spiritually and experimentally of the fear of God working in their conscience. This is quite distinct from the servile fear that they had in the days of their flesh, and quite distinct from the ebbings and flowings of natural conscience, and the workings of that slavish spirit which drove them in times past from the sins they committed into some faint and short-lived repentance. Those confessions and amendments were the mere ebbings and flowings of nature; hence there were no abidings in them. But where the fear of the Lord is, it is "a treasure;" (Isa. 32:6), therefore not easily spent; something abiding in the heart, like a fountain, which is perpetually casting out its waters in living streams.

II. But we pass on to consider--for this is the main drift of the text--What "the secret of the Lord" is, which is said "to be with those who fear him." What do we understand by the expression "secret!" It something not revealed, nor made known to everybody; something locked up and concealed from the majority, and discovered only to a favored few. All the inward teachings, leadings, guidings, and dealings of God the Spirit upon the conscience, are therefore included in the word, "the secret of the Lord;" for all these inward leadings and teachings are "hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes." So that, with all their profession, they know nothing of the secret operation of God the Spirit in the conscience; their religion stands in forms and ceremonies, in rites and observances; it does not stand in the inward teachings of God the Spirit.

1. One part of "the secret of the Lord" is to show the very existence of a God. "He who comes to God," we read, "must believe that he is." (Heb. 11:6.) We cannot believe in the very being of a God, (at least such a God as the Scripture represents--a holy Jehovah, who compasses our path and our lying down, and is acquainted with all our ways,) until it is shown to us by the Spirit's teaching. So that all men in a state of nature are Atheists; no, all professors, devoid of the Spirit are the same. I do not say they are so doctrinally, but they are so practically; for until the Lord does in some measure spiritually make himself known to the conscience, all men actually live without God in the world.

But when the Lord does shine into the conscience, (for the "entrance of his words gives light,") we begin to feel that there is a God; that we are in his hand; that his eye searches all our ways; that go where we will he still accompanies us; that we cannot hide ourselves from his all-searching eye--and that he is such a God as the scriptures represent, who "will not clear the guilty," but is just, righteous, and pure, and hates sin with an absolute abhorrence.

It is a great thing to have this spiritual knowledge wrought in the conscience. O how much sin would this keep a man from! What a check to a light and frivolous disposition! What a bridle to a gossiping tongue! What a principle to bring out of the world! What a power to overcome the spirit of covetousness! What a whack upon the head of pride! What a turning out of doors of that base hypocrisy that our hearts are so full of! To carry about with us an abiding, inward feeling, "God sees me!" and feel ourselves living under his eye, looking down unto us, searching out our heart, and continually spying out all our ways, what a fountain of spiritual uprightness!

2. The Lord's providential dealings with us is a part also of "the secret" which is "with those who fear him." What a mercy it is to see the Lord's hand stretched out for us in a way of providence! Some people affect to despise the providential dealings of God. But, as some one has justly observed, such as see him only as the God of grace see but the half of his countenance. We must see and feel him as a God of providence also to see the full face of Jehovah. How sweet it is to trace the Lord's hand in providence; to

look back on the chequered path that he has led us by; to see how his hand has been with us for good; what difficulties he has brought us through; in what straits he has appeared; how in things most trying he has wrought deliverance; and how he has sustained us to the present hour. Thus to trace out his dealings with us, is a main part of "the secret of the Lord" which is "with those who fear him."

Some people may laugh and jeer at the Lord's dealings in providence; but all this is little else than the mere spawn of a man's atheistical, infidel heart, that is continually denying him to be the God of providence as well as the God of grace. How sweet are providential favors when they come stamped with this inscription, "This is from the Lord!" How precious every temporal mercy becomes--our very food, lodging, and clothing! How sweet is the least thing when it comes down to us as from God's hands! A man cannot know the sweetness of his daily bread until he sees that God gives it to him; nor the blessedness of any providential dealing until he can say, "God has done this for me, and given that to me." When a man sees the providence of God stamped on every action of life, it casts a glory, beauty, and sweetness over every day of his life. Thus to see the Lord's hand is indeed a main part of "the secret of the Lord which is with those who fear him."

3. A sense of the Lord's presence. O this is indeed a part of the secret which is with those who fear his name. The Lord's presence! Who but the Lord's people know anything of that solemn feeling which that presence creates, and which Jacob expressed, when he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. How awesome is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" (Gen. 28:16, 17.) What solemn feelings are produced in the mind under a sense of God's presence! How the Lord's presence turns night into day, makes every crooked thing straight, and every rough place plain! How it banishes all the gloom, melancholy, and despondency which hang over the soul! How it clears up every difficulty; and like the shining sun it drives away the damps and darkness of the night. If there is one thing to be coveted more than another, it is, that the Lord's presence might be more felt in our hearts; for it is "the secret of the Lord which is with those who fear him" to show to them and make them to feel his blessed presence.

4. The favor, the goodness, and the graciousness of the Lord brought with power into the conscience, is another part of "the secret which is with those who fear him." It is a secret, because it is only known to a few. It is a secret, because it is carried on in private between God and the soul. It is a secret, because never known until God the Spirit unfolds the mystery. It is this which makes the secret so mysterious and peculiar, that God's grace and favor should be given to such vile, filthy, polluted, unworthy, and unclean wretches, as every child of God knows and feels himself to be. It may indeed well astonish such, that favor should be shown them, that mercy should ever reach them, and that there should be any communication of it to visit and water their souls.

5. Communion with the Lord, so as to be able to talk to him, and find some access to his presence, is another part of "the secret which is with those who fear the Lord." What a different thing this is from mere wordy prayers! A man may fall upon his knees, utter words and sound words too, and be engaged for a long time in his devotions, and yet have no communion with God. On the other hand, he may be lying on his bed, sitting in his chair, or engaged in his daily occupation, and in a moment his heart may be caught up into communion with the Lord. But one five minute (or shall I say one minute, for these seasons do not last very long) communion with the Lord is better than being on our knees the whole day, supposing we could kneel so long, merely uttering words without a sense of inward fellowship with the Lord of life and glory. It is through this communion with the Lord that heavenly blessings are bestowed.

By communion with the Lord we--drink into his Spirit, learn his mind, know his will, taste his goodness, and receive from his fullness. And only so far as we are brought into communion with the Lord is there any communication of spiritual blessings to the soul. Sometimes it is with us as though a wall were built up between us and the Lord--we pray, but the voice never seems to reach the heavenly ear; there is no answer communicated; there is no seeing him, no getting near him, no pouring out of the heart before him; still less is there a receiving any communication from him. But when the soul is brought near to the Lord, these barriers are broken down, these walls fall, a measure of communion with him is enjoyed; and then there is a receiving out of his fullness, a communication out of him who fills all in all; a divine reception of his truth into the heart. So that by five minutes' communion with the Lord, we learn more, know more, receive more, feel more, and experience more than by a thousand years of merely studying the Scriptures, or praying to the Lord without his teaching and testimony. But this is a secret known only to those who fear God; and they at times are privileged and indulged with it.

6. The power of truth made known in the conscience is a part also of the secret which is with those who fear the Lord. What a powerful thing truth is, when it drops into the soul! The mere utterance of it is nothing. The most solemn truths are no more to me than the mere blowing of such a storm as we had last night, unless it is dropped with divine power into the heart and conscience. But truth, when it is accompanied with a divine power, fills the heart, enriches the soul, drives out all error and falsehood, and lifts up the soul Godwards. This is a secret which those know only who fear God. There is a great talk about religion in our day--well near every one is religious. But as to the inward operations and teachings of God the Spirit, whereby light, life, and power, are brought out of Christ's fullness into the heart, this still remains a secret. This cannot be got at by human exertions; this cannot be attained so easily as a nominal profession; this is still confined to those who fear God, and they sometimes feel so blessed a power in the truth as it is in Jesus, that they can live by it and die by it.

7. Communications from Christ--such as faith, hope, love, meekness, patience--every good gift and every perfect gift--to receive them into a soft heart; to know their working through a divine operation on the soul, this, too, is a branch of that secret which is known only to those who fear God. They know they cannot produce these things themselves, and yet they know the power of vital godliness consists in them. But to their astonishment the Lord does sometimes work in them that which they could not possibly work in themselves; and thus they find that a life of faith is a secret which they could not get at until the Lord himself was pleased to reveal it, and seal it with divine power in their conscience.

8. But just so far as we are led into an acquaintance with this secret, will it have a powerful effect upon us; and one will be, to bring us into union with those who are taught the same divine lessons, and bring us out from those who are not so taught. If any with whom this secret is, are wrapped up in dead churches, there will be an aching void felt; they will want to have the secret which they feel traced out from the pulpit; but there is no word to meet their case. They want to trace something of it, too, in the members of the church of which they form a part; but they do not find that in their case, "as in water face answers to face, so the heart of man to man." This inward want, sooner or later, brings them out of dead churches, from under dead ministers, and away from dead professors; and brings them into personal union and communion with the people who are taught by the Spirit of God.

And though they may still have (as we know we all have had) great prejudices, and even at times strong enmity, working against the peculiar people; and perhaps have to make great sacrifices, so that they hardly know what to do or say; yet when they are brought into union and communion with the spiritual family, it so overpowers every adverse feeling, that it makes them willing to take up the cross, and endure

the shame, that they may live and die with the people of the living God. And thus we find the secret of spiritual communion with the people of God, and learn that the same secret is known to those who is known also to us; and thus there is a blessed fellowship and sweet participation in the consciousness of the same secret being with one another. What a union this creates, what love this kindles, what sweet emotions this produces in the bosom--to enjoy communion with Christ, and communion with the people of Christ! This is worth all the dead fellowship, all the vain esteem, and all the honors that the world can bestow--to be brought into a measure of divine communion with the Lord of life and glory, and into communion with the people of God--this secret is with those who fear God, and is worth a thousand worlds.

Now, you will observe that the text says, "The secret of the Lord IS with those who fear him." It speaks of it in the present tense, as something now known, felt, and enjoyed. It is not future, but present. So that if we have any evidence that we fear the Lord, we shall find something of this secret in our consciences. We may doubt and fear at times whether we know it aright; for our unbelieving heart ever breeds doubts and fears, and our desponding minds will ever put forth the spawn of despondency. Satan too will thrust in his fiery darts, and a thousand objections will shoot through the mind. But this does not destroy the reality of it; this will not throw down the Lord's building, nor injure the foundation. However the house may be rocked by the storm, or beaten by the winds, it stands fast forever, because it is founded upon a rock.

You who fear God, do you not find at times something of this secret? Would you go back to a dead profession in which perhaps you were wrapped up for years, when you tried to reform your habits, break off your bad practices, become religious; and yet all the time were unacquainted with the secret, and knew not the inward teachings of God the Spirit? Then there were no communications of light and life, no breathings and longings after the Lord, no desire to know Jesus and the power of his resurrection. You rested upon something external of your own to save your soul.

But when the Lord mercifully and graciously took you in hand, he battered down this proud natural religion, and laid it low in the dust, and by working powerfully in your conscience raised up his fear in your soul. Then you found something of which you were before completely ignorant; and since that time you have found spiritual religion, vital godliness, to consist in the inward teachings and leadings God the Spirit. You find now there is a secret in these things. If you speak of it to your relatives, they do not understand you; if you talk of it to those who are called "pious people," they cannot make you out; they think you are some mysterious being, whose religion they cannot fathom. But if you go into the company of God's people, and converse with them on spiritual matters, they know what you mean; and when you hear your experience described from the pulpit, and traced out in a hymn, or some experimental book, you feel a sweet going out of soul toward it; and you say, "If the man or book knew all that was passing in my heart, they could not describe my feelings more completely." This is to know something of the secret of the Lord--to have a secret and inward religion wrought with power in the conscience; and this is God's gift and God's work, and will shine when time shall be no more. If a man denies and scorns this, he had better go on to Rome; for if he has not those inward teachings and leadings of God the Spirit, he has no more true religion than if he were wedded to all the abominations of Popery.

III. But we find a PROMISE also in the text, and that you will observe runs in the future tense. "He will show them his covenant." The Holy Spirit has changed the tense here. "The secret of the Lord" (that is present possession) "IS with those who fear him; and he WILL show them" (that is something future), "his covenant." This shows, that while all the people of God, who fear his name, have the secret with them, that is, a measure of the secret, yet all the people of God have not the covenant revealed to them at the

same time with the secret. The "secret" is in the present tense; the "showing of the covenant" is in the future. It is very sweet to see how the Holy Spirit has discriminated between these blessings. If, for instance, it had run thus, "the secret of the Lord is with those who fear him, and he shows to them his covenant," some doubting, desponding child of God might say, "How can I be one of those who fear God? for it says, God shows to them his covenant, and he has not shown it to me yet." But being put in the future tense, "he will show to them his covenant," it takes the form of a promise, and so is just adapted and sweetly suited to their needs.

The more we see what is the language of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, the more we shall admire it. Men need not talk of improving the Scriptures; let them take what the Holy Spirit has delivered; for the more we are led into an experience of the truth, the more we shall admire the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in the way whereby he has revealed it.

But what is this COVENANT that the Lord will show those who fear him? It is the covenant that "stands fast for evermore;" the everlasting covenant of grace, which stands in the Person, love, blood, and work of the Son of God; the covenant made by a Triune Jehovah, on behalf of the elect, before the world was.

Those, then, who cavil at this covenant, who deny there is such a thing, who abhor the doctrines that flow out of it, who resist and rebel against sovereign election, discriminating grace, particular redemption by the blood of Jesus, and justification by his imputed righteousness, cannot, we know very well, be among the people who fear God, for if they feared God he would show to them his covenant. And if the Lord showed to them this covenant, this everlasting covenant, they would not call it "everlasting nonsense." If ever they had been shown election, and had felt its weight and power, if they had ever known it as a blessed part of the covenant, they would not kick at it, nor call it a damnable doctrine. If ever they had seen Christ's righteousness, or the beauty and grandeur of those covenant engagements, whereby the church stood justified in Christ from all eternity, they would not call imputed righteousness "imputed nonsense." So that no man, kicking and rebelling against the everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure, which was all David's salvation and all his desire (and I am sure if God be our teacher, it will be all our salvation and all our desire)--no man kicking and rebelling against this covenant, we may be sure, can fear God; for if he did, God would show it to him; and I am sure if God ever showed it to him, he would convince him of its truth, reality, and blessedness.

This covenant God shows to his people. And how deeply they need it to be shown to them! For what are they? Always fluctuating and vacillating, ever ebbing and flowing, perpetually tossed up and down. We need something that will stand. If we look at the workings of our minds, they are scarcely ever the same; sometimes up, and sometimes down; sometimes cheered, and sometimes discouraged; sometimes tried, and sometimes comforted; sometimes tempted, and sometimes delivered; sometimes in the dark, and sometimes in the light. As far as we are concerned, we pass through perpetual changes. Thus we prove we fear God; those who fear him not, know no changes; but those who fear him, are like the tide of the Thames, perpetually ebbing and flowing, and going backwards and forwards. We need, then, something which shall not ebb and flow as we do; we need something permanent, on which our feet may stand, and be planted there for eternity.

The Lord, then, shows to those who fear him his covenant--he shows to them how stable it is; that it stands fast forever and ever; that it endures, like himself, unchanging, and unchangeable, because it stands in his own eternal counsels, and is founded upon the engagements, love, blood, and work of his dear Son. The Lord shows those who fear him, that this covenant stands for evermore, and that they have

an interest in it. What a suitable foundation for a poor tottering heart! The Lord in showing this covenant unto those who fear him, shows them that it is all of grace, and therefore meets all their unworthiness, and superabounds over all the aboundings of their sin; that it is more than a match for their aggravated iniquities, and will land them safe in glory, because God has determined to bring them there. Nothing but a covenant of grace can suit a poor exercised soul, who knows his helplessness and worthlessness; and the Lord shows this to those who fear him.

He shows them, also, that his covenant abides forever; that there is "no variableness, nor a shadow of turning" in it; that a vessel of mercy is not a child of God today, and a child of the devil tomorrow; and that whatever stripes he brings upon his back, whatever painful feelings he gets into by the Lord's chastening, these things do not cast him out of the covenant which stands sure. As we read Psalm 89:30-35, "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor allow my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David."

As the Lord the Spirit, then, shows them this covenant, and brings it with power into their hearts, it becomes all their salvation and all their desire. To live by it, and under the enjoyment of it; to have it more opened up, and to have fresh discoveries of it, to feel its sweetness, and live in the blessedness of it--this forms the leading desire of the soul. So that so far from rebelling against the covenant of peace, we want to have it more blessedly and powerfully revealed in the heart and conscience.

These, then, are the blessings which the Lord will show unto those who fear him. And what a mercy it is to be among those so taught and so led! But two characters will fight against these truths--those who know nothing beyond a servile fear, and those who know nothing but rash presumption and vain-confidence.

There are some in a profession of religion who have nothing beyond a servile fear; they have no divine teachings, but feel the workings of natural conscience, and the ebbings and flowings of fleshly conviction. But there is no promise for such; we know not what the Lord may do for them, but there is no promise for the workings of natural conviction, and the ebbings and flowings of servile fear. A man may have all the convictions of the damned, and yet be damned after all; he may have all the fears of Judas, and yet go where Judas is, unto "his own place."

Again. There is no promise made to those who are presumptuous and vain-confident, who rashly and recklessly rush into the solemn things of God. But the promise is to the poor, the needy, the exercised family of God, who by divine life, divine grace, divine leading and teaching, know something of spiritual fear, whose consciences have been made alive and tender before the Lord. To these it is promised, "The secret of the Lord is with those who fear him, and he will show them his covenant."

The Lord in mercy deepen this fear wherever it is implanted, and show us that where this fear is, there every mercy is connected with it; that those in whose hearts he has caused it to spring up, he will lead safely on, until at length he brings them to see him as he is, and to sit down with him in glory!

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