**BROOKS BY THE TRAVELLER'S WAY - ADDRESSES BY JOHN H. JOWETT**

**02. THINGS CONCEALED by JOHN H. JOWETT**

*"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing."*

*Proverbs 25:2*

The Lord conceals that He may the more abundantly reveal. He hides a thing in order that we may have the refining discipline of seeking for it, and enjoy the keen delights of discovery. Things which are come at easily are esteemed lightly. The pebble that lies upon the common way is beneath regard. The pearl that lies buried in ocean depths is a treasure of rare price. The pain of getting intensifies the joy of possessing. If everything could be picked up from the surface, life would become exceedingly superficial. But the best things are concealed. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid in a field." We have to dig for our wealth. We are called to a life of toil and discipline and research. Things are concealed in order that life may be a perpetual inquest. The only healthy life is the life of ardent inquisitiveness. "Ask." "Seek." "Knock."

But where shall I make my search? I never know where the wealth may be concealed. The patch of ground which appears to be the most unpromising may be the hiding place of the finest gold. Therefore I will interrogate the commonplace, I will search into the humdrum ways of life; I will pierce into the heart of tame and sober duties; I will look for treasure even in the dark cloud. I will assume that there is a dowry of grace even in the ministry of pain. I will search for the wealth of poverty, the advantage of apparent disadvantage, the jewels that may be in the heaviest grief. I will look for the hidden treasure, for "it is the glory of God to conceal a thing."

**1. It is the glory of God to conceal His teaching in the hard and toilsome ways of experience.**

I come to know when I have begun to do. The doctrine is hidden in the obedience. "If any man will to do, he shall know." Illumination breaks out in the ways of consecration. The Bible expresses this teaching in a great variety of forms. Here is a beautiful image from the lips of the Psalmist. "Light is sown for the righteous." I can so arrange the sowing of seed that my garden is never without flowers. They succeed one another in appropriate succession, and each month is adorned with its own distinctive loveliness. I think of next March, with its bleak and chilly east winds. I imagine its prevailing desolations. But the bulbs are sown which, when the chilly month comes, will have emerged into beautiful flower. Now hidden, they are sown for March, and at the appointed time they will appear in their radiant robes. And there are chilly March months which I anticipate in the round of my life, the season of cold disappointment, of heavy perplexity, of dark bereavement; but "the light is sown," and when the chilly month comes, the light will be manifested in counsel and glory. Now it is hidden; when it is needed it will be found. But where shall I find it? "Light is sown for the righteous." Only along that particular way has the seed been sown. No light has been sown in the ways of revolt, and if I journey in these paths of transgression, the March season will find me bereft of the illumination of a clear and cheery light. Only as I toil along the way of obedience, the way of righteousness, shall I have gracious surprises of light which the loving Lord has sown and concealed for my benediction.

Here is another word from the old book suggestive of the same teaching. "To him that overcometh will I give of the hidden manna." There is hidden manna. God has concealed heavenly food, nourishing and sustaining vision. Where has He concealed it? Just beyond the fight. "To Him that overcometh will I give." The fight is followed by the feast. Every conquest leads to the discovery of hidden manna. You fight and overcome the devil, and immediately you are conscious of a sweet joy, a sense of satisfaction, a wondrous perception of the fellowship and favour of God. It is the hidden manna. "Angels came and ministered unto Him." This gift of illumination, and this feast of fat things do not come to us before we have traversed the way of obedience. These are favours that are hidden in the very midst of the toilsome way, for it is "the glory of God to conceal a thing."

**2. It is the glory of God to conceal His fortune in apparent misfortune.**

We often find that the "valley of the shadow" gives rest to eyes which had become wearied with the "green pastures," and tired with the gleaming of the "still waters." It is sometimes the shadow that "restoreth our soul." The darkness often brings the healing medicament. In the apparent misfortune the Lord has hidden a fortune. God has concealed His riches in the night. The overcast sky is frequently our best friend.

"The clouds ye so much dread

Are big with mercy, and shall break

In blessings on your head."

What a calamity it appeared when the Apostle Paul was checked in his missionary career, and imprisoned in custody at Rome. It appeared as though an irrigating river had been dammed up, and had become a localised lake. His evangel appeared to be confined, and his activities paralysed. But it was "the glory of God to conceal a thing." The misfortune was only the shrine of a larger fortune. The Apostle cries with great jubilation--"The things that happened unto me have turned out rather for the furtherance of the Gospel." Out of his activity there came glorious letters which have guided and cheered the pilgrimage of a countless host.

Pain comes to be my guest. My powers are wasted, and I am burdened with the dark companionship. I call it a calamity, or I regard it as a sore misfortune; but how often it has turned out that the calamity was only the dark vesture of benediction. In my suffering I gained a wider sympathy. My responsiveness was enriched. "Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress."

Disappointment flings a barrier across my path. My purposes are thwarted. My ambitions are checked. There comes an imperative "halt" in my life. I regard it as an ill day, and yet how often the apparently ill thing contains a jewel. Disappointment makes me think. I take a wider view of things. Through my thoughtfulness I attain to a finer discernment. Such is the gracious nutriment that is often hidden in a prickly burr. The dark misfortune was only "the shadow of the Almighty."

**3. It is the glory of the Lord to conceal His power in apparently contemptible agents.**

We never know where the Lord is preparing His instruments. Their emergence is usually creative of surprise. God hides His preparations in such strange places. He wants a missionary for the New Hebrides, and He fashions him in a peasant's cottage at Dumfries. Three of the most stalwart and fruitful labourers in modern Methodism were reared in a labourer's hut. God so frequently deserts conspicuous spheres, and nourishes His great ones in the obscure corners of the world. Perhaps the mightiest spiritual ministry, now being exerted in our country, is proceeding from the life of some unknown and unrecognised woman, living a strong and beautiful life in cramped and abject material conditions. "Things that are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things that are not." He makes the nobodies and the nothings into kings and queens.