

## Chapter 24

### THE HIDDEN MYSTERY

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*“The image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.”—Col. 1:15*

Nothing is so fascinating as the mysterious, and for this reason the mind of man is ever striving to get away from the commonplace. All progress is the result of reading out beyond the known to the unknown, for we instinctively feel that the known is only a small fraction of the unknown presented to our senses. When Newton observed an apple fall to the ground, the mystery of gravitation was on the eve of being solved. He might have treated the incident as had countless millions of the earth's inhabitants before his birth, but he did not, and hence we not only know that apples fall, but we know why they fall.

The appearance and disappearance of the stars was a mystery, so long as men believed they were stuck like pins in a pin-cushion in a solid body of blue sky, but the mystery vanished when it was learned that the stars were like our earth, revolving in space, and supported as is our planet, not upon pillars like the floor of a building, but upon the ample breast of ether on which all natural things rest in motion. The stars do not go away in the morning to some remote corner of the universe and come back in the evening, as children suppose. The mystery then is, why do we not see them? And the answer is, we do not see them in the daytime because of the stronger light of the sun.

The world is full of mysteries, but God has furnished man with a certain sense of divine curiosity which will not let him rest under the delusion that the mysterious must ever remain so. There are those who declare it presumptuous to attempt to solve the mysteries of the spiritual world, and yet Jesus says, “Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.” It is certain that we shall never know anything concerning the kingdom of God unless we inquire, and if we can believe the statistics of Bible Societies and the statements of those who sell books which serve as keys to the inspired writings, the number of inquiries is steadily on the increase. From reliable sources we gather the information that never before was there a time when so much spiritual literature was in healthy circulation.

There is a hunger and a thirst after spiritual knowledge which indicate the unsatisfied longings of the soul of the world. Realms of mind are being more generally explored than ever before in the endeavor to solve the mystery of the Christ, and in some measure we feel that this mystery is being opened in a way which is leading to a new and firmer grasp on the things which count. Paul declares that he reckoned all things of trifling importance by comparison with a knowledge of Christ, but by Christ Paul meant not *one* special man, but the Life-Principle which governs *all* men. The word Christ is loosely used, so much so that it suggests almost universally the idea of a particular personage in human history. We think it is the name for the *particular* man Jesus when, as a matter of fact, it is the title for what has been called “The divine *Collective* man.” It is significant when an ecclesiastic signs himself, “Yours in Christ” and not “Yours in Jesus,” for it signifies a unity in the spirit, rather than a oneness in the flesh.

The hidden mystery of the Christ is not an incommunicable secret, nor an incomprehensible question, nor an unascertainable *Truth*. It is simply a condition which is not generally understood, but wherever it *is* understood, it is the power which makes for right thinking and healthy living. If the mystery of Christ *in*

man was not revealed until Jesus came, it was not because it could not have been revealed, but because of a crafty priesthood which refrained from communicating it. Then, as now, there were those who believed that the most precious Truths of God were for what were called the “elect.” They were like those secrets of secret societies which are made known only to those who have reached certain degrees of initiation, and who are bound under pain of oath not to divulge them.

The mystery of the Christ in the individual was, to the ancients, like the discovery of a rich mine from which only a few were to derive benefits, and not like the revelation of a great Truth to which all men are entitled and through which all men have a right to expect emancipation. The mystery of the Christ in the individual was, to the initiates of old, like some secret formula in chemistry, kept hidden in order to enrich the few at the expense of the many. The plea that there are some truths which, like some combustibles, are not safe in the hands of the ignorant, sounds very plausible until you realize that it is only as Truth is explained to the ignorant that they rise above their thralldom.

There is a considerable difference between dynamite and divinity. In the case of the one there may be a possibility of injury, but in the case of the explained divinity of the individual there can be no greater commotion than a moral uprising and a bodily rejuvenation. If there is any danger connected with the explanation of the hidden mystery of every man’s place in the divine order, it is the danger of making the universal which a few men would like to consider private property. It is an almost common temptation for us to derive some comfort and take some pride in the thought that *we* possess some information which is not generally *known*. If we speak of it in hushed tones, and with the admonition to those to whom we confide not to divulge it.

Whether it is a choice bit of gossip about our neighbors, or a New Thought about God, we communicate it as a confidence which we “do not wish to go any farther.” It has been said that the real offense of Jesus, and the one for which he suffered most, was the act of taking what was supposed to be known only to the priests and making it the common property of all mankind. We may doubt that there are minds base enough to keep secret that which would lessen human suffering and increase human joy, but the history of some of the most helpful discoveries in the medical world is that they were used first to enrich their discoverer, after which they were handed down to the discoverer’s family. To the credit of the medical profession it is only fair to state that this practice is contrary to its highest ethics, and we refer to it only to show that, even in the most dignified professions, the tendency to preserve the mystery of things is not rare.

It is astonishing that as soon as a mystery is explained we wonder why it *had* to be explained, why we should not have known it for ourselves.

The mystery of the Christ is solved when we take a more *impersonal* view of things. The highest thought of today is that God is not a distant ruler, but an Omnipresent Intelligence, and that just as the world is ruled by Mind, and not by matter, so this Omnipresent Intelligence is perpetually expressing Itself in endless variety. If we can think of the Great First Cause as the universal Divine Mind from which all creation springs, as light emanates from the sun or perfume emanates from flowers, it will help us to understand the place of the Christ in the scheme of orderly unfoldment. When we speak of the Christ as the first emanation of Divine Mind, we mean that It is the first exhibition of the Divine Will to project itself into manifestation, and not a mechanical efflux with no intelligent direction back of it.

It is when we think of our own minds and the way they express themselves that we have the best illustration of the Christ in us, for just as Thought is the first activity of our individual minds, so Idea is the first activity of the Universal Mind, and this Idea is the Christ. A simple explanation of The Blessed Trinity which does not involve us in the acceptance of three Persons in One Person is to explain the Trinity as, first, Creative Intelligence, or God; second, Creative Intelligence in action, or Christ; and third, Creative Intelligence in manifestation, or Jesus.

Through all the centuries of Christianity in its various forms the doctrine of the Trinity has given more or less trouble to the thoughtful mind because of the difficulty of accepting the idea of three persons in one. Those who do not wish to be bothered by thinking accept it as one of the mysteries of the Church and let it go at that; but when the Trinity is explained as Mind, Idea and Manifestation, the mystery disappears and the Trinity becomes a law of necessity which is transpiring under our very eyes. Speaking of the Christ as the universal Idea of God, and not as a particular person, Paul says it is "The image (Idea) of the invisible God (Mind), the first born of every creature, for in Him (Mind) were all things created (in Idea), in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and invisible (as ideas and then manifestations), whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers, all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."

In this text we have presented the orderly method of creation, for just as Thought is the firstborn of every material thing, so the firstborn of every man that cometh into the world is "the image of the invisible God," or the Idea in Divine Mind, without which he could not come into being or partake of immortality. Christ is the soul of man without which the body could not be. Christ is that Divinity in man which preceded his birth and will survive his death. Christ is that eternal reality of man which is never separated from the Father. It is that in man which never sins and never suffers. The mission of Jesus was to reveal this Christ in all men, even as he had discovered it in himself. He prayed, "That they all may be one; as Thou Father art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us."

The discovery of one's self in Christ is the greatest discovery of the ages. It is when we feel that we are not in the Christ, and the Christ is not in us, that we are sinful, sick, and unhappy; but when, through understanding, we connect ourselves with the firstborn of ourselves we become a new creature. When it is understood that Christ is not a person, but the living Idea back of every person, we shall understand what it means to be resurrected with Christ. When we learn that the Christ is the eternal son of God in every son of man, we shall judge man, not by the sight of our eyes, but according to Truth.

When Simon saw in Jesus the Divinity which animated and actuated him he said of that Divinity, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the Living God," and when Jesus saw in Simon the Divinity which perceived Itself mirrored in himself he said, "Henceforth thy name shall be called Peter." It was the mutual recognition of the "firstborn" in each. If we will but remember that Universal Mind is the Father, we shall have no difficulty in accepting the Christ as the Idea of *Universal* sonship, of which we are *individual* expressions. Like drops of the ocean, which possess all the qualities and properties of the ocean, each individual is a distinct manifestation of the Christ-Idea. The Christ-Idea may be likened to the hub of a mighty wheel through which runs the supporting axle, and out from which extend numberless spokes.

If we can think of the Universal Divine Mind, or God, as the supporting axle which underlies and carries all creation forward and the hub, or Christ, as that without which neither axle nor spokes could properly function, we shall be able to understand our own place in the creative plan. From the least unto the greatest, each of us is a spoke in the wheel of eternal progress, but until we realize this we are thinking of ourselves as that part of the spoke which is nearest the tire. At this outer extremity we feel the painful pressure of a too close contact with the earth. One day at this end of the spoke of ourselves we are looking up into the heavens and hoping for better things, the next we are ground in the dust again. It is a series of ups and downs with us always until we learn to think of ourselves as the end of the spoke which is firmly fixed in the hub.

This may be a poor analogy, but it conveys the idea that man's refuge from the discords and diseases on the circumference of life is in learning to find his Center in Christ, the hub of the universe, and resting in Christ as Christ rests on God, the supporting Axle of all creation. When we can do this we shall know what it means to be One with the Father. We shall no longer believe in two lives, a physical one which ends at death, and a spiritual one which can never end, for we shall know that, like the spoke in the hub, and the hub on the axle, our "life is hid with Christ in God," secure from all harm and unconquerable by death.