

Sunday 2 August 2020

Hebrews 1 vv 1–4 (New King James Version)

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

1 Timothy 3 v 16 (New King James Version)

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:

God was manifested in the flesh,
Justified in the Spirit,
Seen by angels,
Preached among the Gentiles,
Believed on in the world,
Received up in glory.

DEVOTION: The Mystery of Mysteries

DO YOU REMEMBER the pop song sung by Jane Morgan in the 1970s – ‘*Catch a falling star and put it in your pocket, keep for a rainy day*’? But stars don’t fall do they? It is a mystery to me how myriads of stars and planets don’t bump into one another or their light go out! The sun and moon too regulate our days and control the tides.

Curiosity or concerns are the ‘engines’ we use in our attempt to unlock mysteries. Man has travelled the globe and explored the expanse of

space (his latest close-up pictures of the sun were still 14 million miles away from it!). He has plunged the depths of the sea to search out the mystery of the Bermuda Triangle.

Many secrets have been revealed through discoveries of our natural world, yet the Creator is not recognised. The One who made everything and 'without Him nothing was made that was made' (John 1 v 3), and He keeps everything going 'by the word of His power' (Hebrews 1 v 3). He established the world by wisdom and stretched out the starry heavens by understanding; He calls all the stars all by name and not one of them is missing (see Isaiah 40 vv. 25–26).

Yet some things refuse to give up their secrets. Madeline McCann disappeared 13 years ago and despite extensive searching the mystery still remains. We face a world pandemic and our curiosity has now become concern as we seek to stop this mysterious epidemic.

When I was young I was always told 'if you want answers you went to the top'. Although God is the Creator and Sustainer of everything and He has made connection with us through His Son (Hebrews 1 vv. 1–4), enabling us to come to Him through faith, we still live with mysteries.

Nevertheless, three things are sure:

(1) God has revealed **a plan** to save humankind through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

(2) God has **a pathway**. He has promised to be with us through the pandemics of life. He said to His disciples 'Let us cross over to the other side' (Mark 4 v. 35); He is in control of the wind and the waves that buffet us, and He conquers death in His claim of being the resurrection and the life. In John 16 v. 33 He assures us that in Him we have peace, in the world we will have trouble but says 'be of good cheer' for He has overcome the world.

(3) God has **a purpose** to deliver us from death, destruction and despair. Faith gives hope and Jesus has promised that where He is (in Heaven) through faith we will be with Him too, sin banished and pandemic a memory.

William Cowper (1731–1800) lived in London for much of his life. He was a depressant and often felt he could not face another day. One cold and very foggy morning he ordered a horse-drawn cab to take him to London Bridge so he could throw himself into the Thames and end it all. The cab got lost in the thick fog after hours of going round and round in circles and he angrily got out of the cab and found himself outside his own front door! He went in and wrote the hymn ‘God moves in a mysterious way’ which has been a help to many.

God moves in a mysterious
way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the
sea,
and rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
of never-failing skill
He treasures up His bright
designs,
and works His sovereign will.

You fearful saints, fresh
courage take;
the clouds you so much dread
are big with mercy, and shall
break
in blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble
sense,
but trust Him for His grace;
behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
unfolding every hour;
the bud may have a bitter
taste,
but sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
and scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
and He will make it plain.

On reflection I would sooner trust God than man.

Jim Short

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