

# Church of God, The Eternal

P.O. Box 775  
Eugene, Oregon 97440

## The Two Facets of Divine Revelation—Part I Introduction: Knowledge

January 1980

Dear Brethren:

Another very warm and convivial greetings. Our love is expressed by our efforts in the tapes, literature, etc. Yours is manifested in faithful obedience to God's initial call and revelation. Your love toward God includes that which is directed toward those ministers who continue to proclaim the true way. May we express our deep affection, regard, and thanks for that love and act of faith.

Time marches on inexorably toward the ultimate end. Of course, none of us knows the day or the hour. God has not revealed the specific time. The setting of dates and proclaiming of *specific* applications of *specific* prophecies is most foolish. But, we can understand the general times in which we live. The apostasy of the true Church of God from the priceless truth given should remove all doubts relative to those general times of the end. The wry bitterness and inconsistency of those who have departed from the Truth—their organizational affiliation or desertion notwithstanding—is a further substantiation of the times. Events and conditions of the world are further evidence. Surely, anyone who understands the times in which we live cannot deny intelligently the general application of prophecy to our day.

Economically, we are afloat in a badly damaged boat—a boat imperiled by the gigantic waves of uncertainty, financial manipulations, and other weaknesses.

The threat of World War III hangs like a blackened pall over the face of the earth. Will we actually become involved in some sectionalized war which can soon escalate into a full-fledged war? The threat, so frequently heard, may not be an idle one!

Socially, we have just about hit the bottom. Those responsible for today's mal-behavior are more candid in admitting the reasons, by far, than are those who intelligently should know better. Indeed, we must keep close to God in faith, prayer, and fasting.

Religion, *by design*, is fast becoming a farce. It has little more than an outward show. Where is the power and inherent purpose?

From here on, brethren, Romans 13:11–14 must become our *applied* objective. Let us truly redeem the time, for the days are vicious and evil.

By way of introduction to this month's letter, let me emphasize its imperative nature. Failure to grasp the cardinal significance of this subject is the *root cause* of all the world's ills. Please study and meditate upon the contents. In time, the meaning and significance will emerge.

Because the *Monthly Letters* must now be kept briefer than they have been, I am attempting to hold the length to a maximum of 15 pages. This limitation will require that longer subjects be handled serially—perhaps in even greater number than past ones.

What is the overall subject content to be covered in this series? The *two* facets of divine revelation. Because of a general belief that the Bible—as the inspired Word of God in codified form—is the revelation of God and can be understood by anyone who elects to read it, this series of articles will show conclusively the imperative need for a "second revelation." Though the words of God have been codified and preserved, it is quite impossible for just "any human being" to read and understand the Bible.

In presenting a series, it is absolutely necessary to begin with a broad sketch of the total subject. This synopsis, given below in the form of an outline, will enable the reader to reorient and understand individual components as they are explained on a month-by-month basis.

## Series Outline

I. *General Introduction.* A brief survey of the subject, indicating its imperative nature—the underlying, as well as the current, philosophical reasons which mandate a study of this subject.

II. *Two Kinds of Knowledge.* There is a vast difference between physical (letter, carnal) and spiritual knowledge. Either the inability or the refusal to comprehend this difference is the cause for major intellectual darkness and rampant rebellion, with its attendant humanism, so manifest in the world today. Also, it is essential to understand that spiritual knowledge can be manifested—reduced to the human plane—yet not comprehended at all.

III. *Truth Is Spiritual—Eternal!* Physical facts, although true, do *NOT* necessarily comprise a part of *the Truth*. For, *the Truth* is unalterable, absolute, eternal. More important, the Truth has to do with the *purpose* of man—time, conditions, and circumstances cannot change it. And codified spiritual knowledge, as a manifestation, is always in agreement with its spiritual counterpart. But physical knowledge is generally relative—while it may be true, it is not necessarily absolute.

IV. *What Is the Word of God?* Though codified in tangible form (The Holy Bible), God's Word is inherently and innately spiritual. It is absolute and indestructible. Because it was given in codified form to Israel of old, it is neither limited to the physical nor restricted to a specific people. It is the eternal Word of God—absolute and irrevocable for *all* humankind—given in God's own time.

V. *What Is Man?* Created by God, yes indeed. But was he made subject to God's way—to God's own, eternal Word? What is his nature? What is flesh? Why does man behave as he does? Can he trust his own mind?

VI. *What Things Can Man Comprehend?* Can he comprehend all things? Is acquisition of all the knowledge available in the whole creation of God—regardless of type of knowledge—merely a matter of intellect?

Man considers himself capable of achieving *anything* he sets his mind to do! Can man determine to KNOW the fullness of God? By nature, what is the true status of man?

VII. *The Carnal Cannot Comprehend the Spiritual!* The carnal mind possesses almost unbelievable capacity. Yet, viewed from another perspective, man's *limitations* are phenomenal. He is limited to the physical. The vast, limitless spiritual knowledge is not available to him. Few, in this specific period of time, will understand much of that avenue of knowledge.

VIII. *Times When the Spiritual Was Codified or Manifested.* Spiritual things cannot be seen, handled, or touched. Yet, at specific times and for specific purposes, the spiritual Word was manifested. It was codified in a book. It was made available to flesh and was animated here on earth. It became a constitutional law to a chosen physical nation. It was later manifested in a physical being who set a perfect example of obedience. It has reappeared occasionally in the lives of specific human beings.

IX. *The Spiritual, Though Codified, Cannot Be Understood or Obeyed by Man—of Himself.* Physical manifestation of the spiritual Word does not guarantee man's acceptable spiritual obedience. Man is blind to the spiritual intent of God's Word, even though the Bible is preserved in written (codified) form. Because of the disparity between the spiritual intent and the letter-of-the-law intent, the real meaning has been hidden. Man's mind is woefully inadequate to search out God or His ways. He is limited to his assigned domain of knowledge—a domain oftentimes abused due to unproven theories, human arrogance, lust, and personal bias.

X. *A Second Revelation Necessary.* The eternal, spiritual Word of God was *codified as a constitution* for the promised nation of Israel. Yet, as a physical people, the Israelites were incapable of obeying that Word. The *same* Word was made flesh in the person of the Son of man—Jesus Christ. Yet, no one by personal choice could know, understand, or obey Him. The real, spiritual intent and purpose of God could not be understood until a second revelation was given.

XI. *To Whom Is That Second Revelation Made?* Divine revelation is absolutely necessary. But, to whom is that initial revelation made? Does God deal directly in *all* respects—revelation of Truth, correction, instruction, as well as blessings and other acts of intervention—with all individuals? Just how does God make His will and way known?

XII. *How Do the People Generally Hear and Respond to Truth?* Many years ago the people of Israel, out of fear, requested an indirect means of hearing the Truth. They promised God their faithful obedience to Him, regardless of the human instrument through whom the Truth would come. But today, that agreement is assailed viciously by many once called to a knowledge of His way. The assumption now is that man can change revealed truth—even years later—and that God is required to alter His system, ways, promises, and assurances. The one cardinal failure of human beings is their refusal to recognize the *unchanging nature of God*.

XIII. *A Change in Man Is Required.* The world's entire problem is man—his arrogance and vacillating nature. Real conversion is the recognition of this defect—while coming to recognize, respect, and admire the unchanging, consistent, loyal, unalterable nature of God. This is, indeed, a major change for man.

XIV. *Once Truth Is Revealed, What Is Required for Continuous Belief?* God has chosen and commissioned His servant. The Gospel Truth has been proclaimed. By that proclamation God has called His chosen servants. Yet, in spite of that, failure is possible. We must understand what is required for faithfulness to the revealed and expressed will of God. For, failure to sustain that strong resolve—regardless of trials and physical circumstances—inevitably will produce self-destruction.

XV. *What Is Each Individual's Part in This Act of Faith?* A dead faith is not sufficient. Action is requisite. The called servant has his visible part. Failure to act results in discouragement, doubt, confusion, and uncertainty. Enduring to the end requires strong action on the part of each called servant.

XVI. *Rejection of That Faith Is a Rejection of What or Whom?* Faith is a spiritual ingredient. Truth is delivered to each called servant exactly *once*. After God's call and gift of faith, growth is mandatory for each individual. Failure to grow and develop is the consequence of physical diversion. The truth which God reveals can be kept strong only by the continuous application of a *viable* faith. To reject the initial revelation is to reject the initial faith. The next step is the inevitable rejection of the Word of God—Jesus Christ.

XVII. *Who, Alone, Can Understand?* Spiritual things cannot be seen or understood by man. Man's nature is the exact opposite of the spiritual. The spiritual things reside with God alone. What He does with them is entirely dependent upon His will and purpose. Assumptions or demands of human beings will not alter His purpose. Who, then, will understand?

The above will aid you in comprehending pertinent material as it is covered, subtopic by subtopic, in this series of letters. Of necessity, you will want to retain this and each subsequent part for reference and review. A new, interesting, and encouraging picture will emerge when all parts of the series are completed. May you commence a most interesting study.

Let us begin.

### **General Introduction: Why Man—of Himself—Cannot Come to *Know* Whatever He Wills**

Humankind was created by God. Man was created with mental power—intelligence—enabling him to observe, explore, experiment, rationalize, evaluate,

test, and deduce. But does he have unlimited power? Is he capable of ascertaining all things? Or, is there some knowledge—factors or data—beyond his physical ability? If so, what is it? Why can he *not* now ascertain and *know* whatever he wills to understand?

First, it is imperative to know what man *is*! The Psalmist David was inspired to ask, "What is man . . . ?" Why should the awesome God of the universe be mindful of him? (Psalm 8:4).

The obvious implication is that there is some awesome difference between God and man. Could it be that this difference is manifested in both character and knowledge?

What is man? In a single sentence, David makes this difference known. He states: ". . . thou [God] hast made him [man] a little lower than the angels . . ." (Ps. 8:5). Except by revelation from God to David, we could not have known that fact. But, as we shall see later, the natural mind of man does not accept the superiority of God. All his actions and beliefs demonstrate this fact. It shall amply be proven, later, that men—while calling upon the name of God—have created *many gods in their own image* and on the basis of *their own "acquired" knowledge*.

In creating man, God made him subject to his own nature. That is, man can do only what comes to him naturally. Animals, birds, and all other creatures instinctively do what they were designed to do. And man, even though he does not act and react in accord with a built-in instinct, cannot lift himself out of the mold designed by God. What is that mold—what are the limits of that dominion called "human"? We must answer this question before we can begin to grasp the basic elements of the subject at hand—revelation and its implied object, knowledge.

Second, it is equally imperative for those NOW *called* and spiritually oriented to understand that which lies beyond their natural capability. And why they are permitted to understand that which others do not comprehend—that which others in fact ridicule, deride, twist, pervert, and finally reject. Understanding of spiritual things is predicated upon two fundamental facts: 1) an initial revelation—the codification of God's Word—and 2) a *subsequent call and revelation* to individuals, making possible the spiritual obedience required of them.

Let us get to the specifics. There are *two facets of divine revelation*! With an understanding of this subject, the chosen of God—those spiritually oriented—can comprehend the *TOTAL* limitations of men.

Why do the majority today live in ignorance and superstition? Why have so many fabricated an individual religion by which they live? Why have some who once knew the Truth lost faith, sinking into mental and physical debauchery? Why have the latter become worse than spiritual Gentiles—people who have never known the real Truth?

## Two Kinds of Knowledge

What is knowledge? Of course, there is nothing mysterious about knowledge *of the mundane*. This knowledge includes the acquisition of facts, figures, and other data obtained by experimentation, observation, comparison, evaluation, and other channels of deduction. Such knowledge is physical in nature and is *always relative*. That is, it is accurate on the basis of time, conditions, and circumstances. Granted, some knowledge may *appear* to be absolute and unchanging. But such appearance is from the vantage point of *man*. There is no greater truism than the fact that an object changes, oftentimes dramatically, by a mere change of one's observation point. So, with respect to knowledge, man's observation is from a carnal perspective. As a flesh-and-blood creature, he is limited to that perspective. Of himself he cannot change that fact.

The laws of physics, chemistry, and other sciences of the physical realm are "absolute" only in relation to the established universe. When conditions and circumstances change—and they will—the laws will be altered accordingly. What is imperative to understand is this: Physical laws are *not* eternal—they are relative. But, the use of the qualifying term "physical" implies emphatically there is *another* realm—a realm which is eternal. More about that later.

So, within the sphere of knowledge are two basic considerations. One is the realm of scientific data, from which comes the *mundane* knowledge mentioned above. The other consists of the *spiritual*, eternal truths reduced to letter-of-the-law codification or manifestation. For example, Christ was the manifestation of the Word of God—the knowledge which is eternal, indestructible, and unalterable.

Without laboring over the differences between physically acquired knowledge (scientific or otherwise) and spiritual knowledge (that which was codified or manifested in the life of Christ), let us proceed to observe the characteristics of knowledge within that realm we call physical. Keep in mind that the natural man, not having spiritual perspective, does not recognize the two types of knowledge—he evaluates only on the basis of individual experiences, thoughts, and emotions. The carnal mind, with its defective human reasoning, generally can perceive neither the differences nor the agreement and uniformity between physical and spiritual knowledge.

## Physical—"Scientific"—Knowledge

What are the *characteristics* of physical knowledge—characteristics distinctively understood and respected by *the called of God only*? Physical knowledge concerns that which is *tangible* or *observable*. It is information of things which can be seen, handled, or sensed (for example, gravity and inertia). The nature of such things is further described by the Apostle Paul, who said: ". . . the things which are seen [observed, touched, refined, processed, or whatever] are *temporal* . . ." (2 Cor. 4:18). In other words, the things belonging to this world are transitory and short-lived, enduring for a *limited time*. And just as the natural, physical things of the flesh are related to and limited by time, so are the laws which govern their behavior. Therefore, physical knowledge is not eternal.

In his physical state, man has achieved a high degree of intelligence. He was created for that very purpose. His accumulation of knowledge—including facts relative to its judicious application or usage—is described Biblically as "the wisdom of men" or "the wisdom of this [finite, tangible] world." Paul speaks authoritatively in 1 Corinthians 2:4–5, where he states: ". . . my speech and my preaching was not with enticing [reassuring, persuasive, and convincing] words of man's wisdom [the physical], but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men [the physical], but in the power of God." In other words, the knowledge which Paul taught came not by any scholastic capability which he possessed—it came by the Spirit of God. Therefore, the conclusion is this: Physical capability (of the mind) has nothing to do with knowledge of the spiritual. The wisdom (knowledge and applied principles) of this world is not of God or of His Spirit. In some details this knowledge may be true or accurate, but it is not of the eternal spiritual domain.

How does man arrive, then, at some areas of unusual knowledge of the physical? Paul explains! "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" (1 Cor. 2:11). In man exists some unusual learning capability which makes him unique among all the physical creations. Yet, even with that intellectual capability, he cannot know God. Paul continues: ". . . even so the things of God knoweth *NO man*, but [by] the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:11). There is a vast chasm between the physical intellect of man and the spiritual knowledge of God. The phenomenal physical development of this world comes from the natural capability of man's mind—from the spirit of this world (1 Cor. 2:12). The embodiment of physical explanations and other forms of writing or expression are the length and breadth of man's wisdom. From this vast reservoir man draws the beliefs, concepts, and principles which he in turn teaches others (1 Cor. 2:13). He generally refuses to accept anything outside of his own physical domain (1 Cor. 2:14).

To man, his limitations (generally not admitted) merely represent untapped reservoirs for tomorrow. Setting his mind to the problems or the unknowns of today, he believes he will be able to answer all questions tomorrow. Little does he realize the enormity of the chasm which exists between the finite knowledge of man and the infinite knowledge of God—how incomprehensibly limited he is. Rather, in all these defects and limitations, he *assumes* all his ways are right (Prov. 16:2, 25). Seldom, if ever, does it dawn upon him that his whole premise—the whole basis for his knowledge acquisition—could be, and usually is, wrong.

What is askew in man's physical premise? Why does his quest for further knowledge or solutions yield increased problems, as well?

For one thing, he does not understand the inherent weakness of his own mind—or the fact that he can exercise little control outside of his own ability. Can a human, by his own volition and power, be what he is not? Of course not! He is carnal—flesh! Therefore, he *will* walk and think in the way of flesh. Of this, Paul was inspired to write: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations [thoughts, reasonings, conceptions], and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:3–5). It is *human reasoning* that is in diametric opposition to God. Physical knowledge, though much of it is fundamentally true, CANNOT lead one to God! Man can search, reason, and ponder, but alone he cannot come to the knowledge of God. Job's "friend" said: "Canst thou by searching [studying, thinking, reasoning, and applying any or all physical knowledge] find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" (Job 11:7.)

All the physical knowledge of the universe, the brilliant mental orientation and studious application of all acquired knowledge, will not bring anyone to the knowledge of God. Man is physical. His knowledge is limited to the *physical realm*. And since God is spiritual, man cannot naturally comprehend Him. Something must happen first! A unique change must transpire!

Man's inherent weaknesses are because he is flesh. God says flesh is weak. The "awesome" capabilities of man—both mental and physical capabilities—are, in reality, ponderous weaknesses in comparison to the spiritual. Man's weaknesses are dual. He is limited in both *will* and *scope of knowledge*.

By nature, man is a pawn of Satan the Devil. Paul explains in his letter to the Ephesians: ". . . in time past ye [the Ephesians] walked according to the course of this world [man's orientation, philosophy, behavior, and pursuit], according to the prince of the power of the air [that is, respecting the influence of the god of this world, Satan the Devil], the spirit [not seen, yet an influence markedly manifested] that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation [conduct] in times past in the lusts [that which proceeds from heart and mind—Mark 7:18–21] of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the *mind*: and were by nature the children of wrath . . ." (Eph. 2:1–3).

Man's enemy is Satan—whose inclination is to appeal to our base, untested, unconverted nature (man's natural mind and flesh are contrary to his own best interests). Satan has no eternal, benevolent interest in man. He is the destroyer—and it is for the purpose of destruction that he adversely influences mankind. Also, the way of destruction is within man's nature—within his mental and physical inclinations (Rom. 3:10–18). Therefore Satan, man's archenemy, appeals to that physical way.

But God does the exact opposite. He reveals, to those He calls, what they are—and perfects them on the basis of their spiritual needs (Jer. 17:9–10). Note carefully: The very wickedness of man's natural, carnal self *must be revealed*. Thus, the knowledge of what he is exists *outside* of his own natural realm. Jeremiah emphatically stated: "The heart [carnal nature] is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who *can know* it?"

Satan *appeals* to the natural man—to human nature. Consequently *all* men—until God calls them to the Truth—are subject both to their own physical and mental weaknesses and to the lustful, natural appeal of the unseen enemy, Satan the Devil. Man cannot lift himself up by his own bootstraps. Of himself, he is helpless against his powerful natural enemy, Satan.

Isaiah amplifies! Regarding man's nature, he makes this dogmatic and unequivocal statement—as proceeding directly from the lips of God: ". . . my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are *my* ways higher than your ways, and *my* thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8–9). This is cardinal information, absolutely essential for proper mental orientation. And since it is not possible for *any* man to accomplish such orientation in his own right, some positive help from God is imperative. Physical (letter or carnal) knowledge will not save man. But by its very nature and appeal, along with the powerful adverse influence of Satan, such knowledge—unless comprehended in its proper perspective—can be a broad

avenue (Matt. 7:13–14) for very "real" deception. The world today is totally deceived. The Bible makes it very clear that only a tiny handful of called servants will understand and be faithful.

Those *of God* will discuss things which *proceed from God*. They will be *spiritually* oriented, possessing knowledge above the plane of the physical. But those of this world—the physical—will manifest physical orientation (1 John 4:5). There will be little or no communication of spiritual understanding between those of God and those of the world. Two opposite directions are involved. For, until God calls and reveals the Truth, man is devoid of that spiritual plane of knowledge. Paul wrote to Timothy: "[It is God] Who will have *all* men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). Spiritual knowledge is *Truth*. Man *of himself* is devoid of such knowledge. However, the will of God is that all will eventually come to that understanding—an understanding possible *only* by the call of God and by a special revelation.

Now, let us understand that realm of knowledge which is spiritual in nature. Following, we will summarize in comparative fashion.

## **Spiritual Knowledge**

As stated previously, things physical are transitory and visible. They are things which can be seen, handled, or comprehended with the carnal, fleshly mind. But spiritual things are another matter. They are unknown to natural man—he cannot see them or know of their influence in his life. And as Paul explained to the Corinthians, they are everlasting. He said: ". . . the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18).

What *is* the spiritual knowledge of God? Where does it originate?

God is spirit—not flesh or any physical substance (John 4:24). Those who truly go to the Father and worship Him must do so in the spirit.

The Law (not just the Ten Commandments) is spiritual (Rom. 7:14). The words of God are spiritual (John 6:63). *The Truth* is spiritual (John 14:7). Spiritual knowledge alone relates to salvation. As we are *born into* the domain of flesh, so the spiritual domain is achieved by birth. The new birth is the *process* by which we are changed from the physical orientation to the added spiritual. It involves *spiritual knowledge*—not just the mundane knowledge of which natural man is aware.

As physical knowledge can be perverted, so also can spiritual knowledge. There are spirit powers who have willed to reject and rebel against God, the source of all knowledge. As a result of that overt rebellion and rejection of TRUTH, those angels who were involved have willed to deceive and delude human beings. They have perverted both *physical and spiritual* knowledge.

In its initial form, all knowledge is pure—having emanated from God, the Creator of all. But as stated earlier, physical knowledge is relative. Its accuracy is based on the tangibles which God created. All things which are seen eventually will change. On the other hand, spiritual knowledge is eternal. It will never change—it is permanent and absolute. It applies to that ultimate condition and domain in which God resides. It is the knowledge which points out the way into the Kingdom of God. It is the knowledge by which physical man can understand the transitional process from the physical to the spiritual.

Man's adversary, the Devil, resides within the spiritual realm. He is energetically at work to deceive, warp, and twist. As the god of this physical world (2 Cor. 4:4), he has deceived the entire world. He has perverted and twisted most, if not all, of the knowledge which has been advanced. And since man has little power of himself—that is, he cannot lift himself up by his own bootstraps and generally is incapable of resisting spiritual influences of the demon world—he has been subject to many erroneous philosophies, beliefs, and practices. Of course, man does not recognize this condition. If he were capable of understanding his plight, he could change. But we know man is subject to his own nature.

How, then, can man be freed from the bondage and servitude of self? By the transition which results from the giving of *spiritual knowledge*—the *knowledge of salvation*—to human beings. That process is the new birth (or, technically, the new conception). That birth embraces the whole of God's Word—the Law, statutes, judgments, and the sum of the Gospel. It involves spiritual knowledge which proceeds from the Father and comes to us through receipt of God's Holy Spirit (John 15:26; 14:17; 16:13). It is the comprehension of "the truth" (John 16:13).

The natural way of man is sin (Rom. 7:22). Sin, simply defined, is the way of flesh—man's natural course of behavior (Rom. 7:25). That natural way is animosity against God (Rom. 8:7). The Law of God exposes the natural behavior of man, for it is that instrument which defines sin as the basic nature of man (Rom. 3:19–20). No man can escape the error of his own natural way (Rom. 3:20). All the world stands guilty before God.

SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE IS UNDERSTANDING OF THE SPIRITUAL REALM AND CONTAINS INSTRUCTION WHICH REVEALS THE WAY INTO THAT DOMAIN. This knowledge, called the beginning of wisdom and understanding (Prov. 9:10), is the knowledge of God's will and purpose (Col. 1:9–10). It includes knowledge of the law and testimony—the light—of God (Isa. 8:20). It includes that power which we were promised (Gal. 3:14).

This spiritual knowledge, not being seen or observed by natural man, is referred to as a "mystery" which is hidden. Paul said to the Romans: ". . . my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the *mystery*, which was *kept secret since the world began* . . . now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God . . ." (Rom. 16:25–26). Spiritual knowledge is mysterious—unknown—until God wills to reveal it. Though the scriptures of the prophets were written many, many years before the time of Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul, they were not understood until their appointed time. SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE CANNOT BE ACQUIRED OR UNDERSTOOD BY ANY NATURAL MEANS—scholarship or otherwise. It cannot be comprehended by natural man. Therefore, it is not understood by the vast majority.

God inspired Moses to write: "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and our children for ever . . ." (Deut. 29:29). Since physical things are not mysterious or hidden, in the sense of requiring revelation from God—they can be seen and observed—the "secret things" mentioned by Moses belong to the spiritual realm. They remain hidden *until God wills to reveal them*.

Spiritual knowledge is not generally known by the world today, nor was it in the days of the Apostle Paul. He wrote: ". . . we speak wisdom [the spiritual] among them that are perfect [called of God, having received the revelation of His way]: yet not the wisdom of this world [that acquired naturally—of the natural mind], nor of the princes [leaders] of this world, that come to nought: But we [true ministers] speak the wisdom of God [knowledge of the spiritual] in a mystery [hidden until revealed], even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory [knowledge of His salvation]: Which none of the princes [leaders] of this world knew [not acquired by any natural means, scholarship or otherwise]: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:6–8). Even the physical manifestation of the spiritual could not be comprehended until revealed by God. Christ was *that way personified*, yet the world did not recognize Him.

For further substantiation or proof that the spiritual is hidden and revealed only in God's own time, please note the following. Paul wrote to the Ephesians that the ". . . mystery of Christ . . . in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed . . .

by the Spirit" (Eph. 3:4–5). It came through the Spirit of God because it was *spiritual knowledge*. Paul again refers to ". . . the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God . . ." (Eph. 3:9).

Daniel spoke of these last days and of hidden knowledge. He wrote: ". . . the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end" (Dan. 12:9). Yes, even the written record is insufficient to reveal the purpose of God. God's will remains hidden until *He wills to make it known!*

Finally, let us note Paul's statement to the Colossians. He wrote of, ". . . the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints . . ." (Col. 1:26).

Spiritual knowledge remains hidden—a mystery—until God elects to reveal it. It is God alone who chooses to whom that knowledge will be revealed.

This hidden aspect of true, spiritual knowledge has provided a very broad avenue for deception. Satan has woven a counterfeit spiritual web which has been palmed off on the world (Rev. 20:3; 12:9). And the world has accepted his counterfeit. Not being spiritually enlightened, the vast majority do not know how blindly deceived they really are.

The very fact that Truth—spiritual, unseen, or hidden knowledge—*is revealed only once* implies a serious note of responsibility. Once God makes that way known, it must be cherished, honored, and respected throughout one's total life. Bible examples make this principle quite clear.

Furthermore, we are told God's Word is tried and proven (Ps. 12:6–7; Prov. 30:5–6). We must not presume to add to or subtract from it (Prov. 30:5–6; Deut. 4:2). And it is imperative that we live up to all of it. For, man shall not live by what appeals to his likes and dislikes (selective obedience), but by the entirety of the Bible (Matt. 4:4; Deut. 8:1–3).

Man is a physical, mundane creature of this world. His life is transitory unless a change transpires—from the physical orientation to the spiritual. He cannot lift himself up by his own volition. How, then, is he able to effect this required transition—the very purpose for his human birth?

First, Jesus Christ—by His death—paid the penalty for mankind's sin. At the same time, He was the spiritual made flesh. He was the Word of God incarnate (John 1:1–3, 14; 1 John 1:1–3; John 11:25; John 14:6). Today, by the Spirit, Christ lives *in us* (Gal. 2:20; 1 John 5:11–12). And when Christ lives in us, the physical is dying and the spiritual is

being made alive. With Christ living in us, a change of mind occurs (Ph'p. 2:5 and Rom. 12:1–2). We are then on the path to ultimate glory (Col. 1:27).

Spiritual things are not seen by physical, carnal, temporal man—he sees only temporal things. But, once enlightened by God's Spirit, he can see that there is no disparity between true spiritual knowledge and physical knowledge. To such, the invisible (spiritual) can be seen clearly by the physical things which are made (Rom. 1:20).

For the unenlightened, a real problem lies in *perversion* of knowledge—called "the spirit of error" (1 John 4:6). Satan is responsible for all error because he abode not in Truth, the spiritual enlightenment of God (John 8:44). He rebelled and was separated from Truth. He subsequently became the author of perversion—perversion of both physical and spiritual knowledge.

Until God calls, all human beings walk in perversion and deception. Satan *is* the god of this world. But, once God calls and gives us the knowledge of the spiritual truth, we must continue to follow it in faith. This is because that priceless way will *NEVER* be revealed again. It must never, therefore, be counted as an unholy thing.

Knowledge is both physical and spiritual. True knowledge is essential to salvation. However, man's inability to comprehend knowledge has left the door wide open for perversion and deception. Out of this, God must call (Acts 26:18). Once called, we must not lose faith. To do so is to sink back into perversion and darkness.

So, be sure to evaluate the differences between physical and spiritual knowledge. This understanding is essential to a good comprehension of what is to follow.

In closing, let us convey our deep love, respect, and prayers to you all. Be stable, steadfast, and strong. Failure in any given area invites manifold difficulties. God loves the faithful and will protect them miraculously. May we commend you into that great love.

With deepest love and affection,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Raymond C. Cole". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'R'.

Raymond C. Cole