

## WHY THE LORD HIDES HIMSELF

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What if I told you that someone who loves you very much—far more deeply than you can possibly guess—is hiding nearby! What if I told you that there is someone who is very, very wise—someone who knows who you are and who you can become—knows you better than you know yourself and knows what is best for you. And this Person is hiding out in all the beauties of nature, in the fields and woods, and lakes and oceans—even up in outer space!

Would you know who I am talking about? Would you know where to look for Him? Do you know where He could be?

Of course, you do! We know that the Lord can be found in His Holy Word! We know the Lord can be seen in the world in the uses He performs—in growing things, in order and beauty.

The question is, *Why* does the Lord hide Himself? Why are His love and wisdom hidden in the Word? Why does He camouflage Himself so skillfully that some people mistakenly think He isn't there at all?

Why does the Lord not reveal Himself here on earth, as He does in heaven? There, angels see Him as a glorious spiritual sun. His light shines as truth in their minds. His heat fills them with love to be of use to others.

One reason the Lord hides Himself is because true love never forces itself on others. True love never seeks to *make* others love in return. For love that is forced stops being love and becomes slavery instead. We can't make others love us. Love must come from the heart—it must be free.

Pure wisdom also doesn't force itself on others. It doesn't have to shout to prove its points. It doesn't need a vote to make it true. It doesn't have to press itself on those who doubt or question it. True wisdom is self-evident. True wisdom, like the Lord spoke on earth, astonishes people. For reasons of deep love, the Lord hides both His love and His wisdom in the Word and in the world.

The Lord's love is so great, so radiant, so powerful, that He is pure love! If He showed how He really feels toward us, if there were no holding back of His love, no covering it over, He would overpower us. It would be like getting too close to the sun.

Have you ever seen little children with a kitten or baby bird? Sometimes, they love it so much, they might squeeze it too tight and hurt it. If the Lord did not hide Himself, we would be overpowered by Him—the very opposite of what His love wants!

If the Lord fully expressed His wisdom, as it is in itself, it would be so brilliant, so full of intelligence and insight, that it would be too much for us. It would be like looking directly at the sun. It would blind us—the very opposite of what wisdom wants to do.

And so the Lord is a God who hides Himself, *for our sake*. But we can receive His love and wisdom, little by little, and more and more fully as we grow. For the Lord leaves us free to discover the warmth of His love and the brilliance of His wisdom. We can learn of His Glory, a little at a time, to all eternity!

But we should never think that the Lord does not want to be discovered and loved in return. We should not imagine that the Lord does not want us to find Him and come to see, and to understand His love and wisdom. Far from it! For the Lord, more than anything else, wants for us to find Him in full freedom. For this reason, He makes it easy and rewarding for us, one step at a time. Slowly, we can come to see and feel His comfort in our lives.

Perhaps an easy way to understand why the Lord hides Himself is for us to remember one of the first games we ever played—hide-and-seek. Why is this game so much fun? Why do we play it from the time we are little babies? What does this game tell us about the Lord?

Hide-and-seek is a game of love. Mother hides her face behind a pillow. The baby gets concerned and reaches up to pull the pillow aside. Then mother reveals herself—“peek-a-boo”! And the baby breaks out in smiles. The person she loves is close by!

The Lord hides Himself. But more than anything else, He wants us to find Him. We know this from His Word where He says: “Seek the Lord while He may be found” (Isaiah 55:6). Learn of Me, Jesus said, “and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29).

The question each one of us should ask ourselves is, “Am I seeking the Lord?” The Heavenly Doctrine for the New Church promises us that insofar as we seek the Lord, we will surely find Him! Insofar as we open our ears, we will surely hear Him! And insofar as we turn our eyes to His Kingdom, we will surely see His glory!

Yes, the Lord hides Himself, but only so we can have the delight of finding Him. For He tells us that “there is no other God besides Me.... Look to Me and be saved”! (Isaiah 45:21,22).