

God's Hidden Ones

By Dr William S. Plummer

The same blessed volume which calls true believers Christ's 'little ones', styles them God's 'hidden ones' (Ps 83:3). In what sense are they hidden?

Not from the knowledge of God surely. The Lord knows them that are his. All things are naked and open unto him.

Nor are they hidden from the care of God. It is unbelief which suspects such a thing. 'Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?' (Is 40:27). Jehovah says, 'I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me' (Hos 5:3). Every heir of grace may sing: 'Lord, all my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid

from thee' (Ps 38:9). Saints are not hidden from the care of God.

Nor are they hidden from the watch of angels. They are a spectacle to angels. 'Their angels do always behold the face of God in heaven' (Matt 18:10); 'yea, they come forth and minister to all them who shall be the heirs of salvation' (Heb 1:14).

Nor are God's people hidden in the sense of being covert, guileful and cunning. Though they are not ostentatious, they are not deceitful. Nor do they make a secret of their love to Christ. They do not blush to own him.

Nor do they try to hide their iniquities from the eye of God. They have renounced the hidden things of

dishonesty, and do not walk in craftiness. Nor do they pass through the world without any mark upon them, by which they might be known. They are the light of the world. A city, set upon a hill, cannot be hid.

In none of these senses are God's people 'hidden ones'. How then are they hidden? They are hidden in God. Every perfection of the Almighty is a chamber of refuge to the humble. Thus David says: 'Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance' (Ps 32:7). Again: 'Thou art my hiding place and my shield; I hope in thy word' (Ps 119:114). And Solomon says: 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe' (Prov 18:10). Eternal wisdom, power, justice, love, mercy and faithfulness, in short all divine perfections, are towers of strength, where the chosen of the Lord find shelter. He hides 'them in the secret of his presence from the pride of man'; He keeps them 'in a pavilion from the strife of tongues' (Ps 31:20).

They are God's hidden ones also, inasmuch as they have meat to eat which the world knows not of. They feed upon the hidden manna. The kingdom of heaven in all their hearts is like unto leaven which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

They are hidden because their true character is not known to the world. Their Master was unknown and so are they. As his glory was veiled, so is theirs. The world sees their strictness, their zeal, their humility, their imperfections, but not their glory.

To the pious every ordinance of God is a hiding place. Thus says David: 'In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me upon a rock' (Ps 27:5). None but those who have felt it can tell the peace and comfort of a child of God, rejoicing in the ordinances of prayer, praise, preaching and the sacraments of God's house.

God's people are also hidden ones, as the book of life, where their names are entered, is kept in secret. It is in heaven. It is not exposed to the gaze of the curious and profane. The enrolment is made by God himself.

They are also (hidden) in the esteem of many (by being) often buried under the slanders and outcries of the wicked. The smoke of calumny often obscures their solid worth. Their best qualities are misnamed and their best acts misjudged. But let them not fear. God will bring forth their righteousness as the light, and their judgment as the noonday. Their motives and principles are not understood by the world; but the Lord is their Judge. He will wipe off from their names every foul

aspersion.

The highest excellency of being a hidden one is found in a union with Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. To the Colossians Paul says: 'Your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory' (Col 3:3,4). Thus is wondrously fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: 'A man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land' (Is 32:2). This hiding place has been sung and celebrated and resorted to by the saints ever since the days of righteous Abel, and shall be to all eternity.

God's people are also hidden by his providence. David prays: 'Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings' (Ps 17:8). All God's people are hidden by him. In vain does Pharaoh seek the death of the infant Moses, when God protects him. In vain do Jerahmeel and Seraiah and Shelemiah seek to destroy Baruch and Jeremiah when God hides them. His kingdom rules over all.

Strange to tell, though God's people are unknown, yet they are well known, and in due time their characters shall be fully revealed. 'The good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid' (1 Tim

5:25). The day will declare it. Blessed be God! He knows well the difference between chaff and wheat. He will manifest his hidden ones. Now but few discern the difference between the righteous and the wicked, but by and by the most dull shall perceive it. The day is not distant when shouts and alleluiahs from the righteous shall call forth groans, curses and screams from their enemies. The ungodly will soon be saying to the mountains and rocks: 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb' (Rev 6:16). But such a cry is desperate, and can bring no relief. For there is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves. The hail shall sweep away their refuges of lies, and the waters shall overflow their hiding places. But not so the righteous. They are safe, come what will. God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has blessed them with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. They are secured against all perils. They are sure of all mercies. Nothing shall ruin, nothing shall damage them. The everlasting God is their exceeding great reward and their unfailling portion.