

HIDDEN THINGS

"I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them." Isaiah 48:6.

The immediate occasion for a statement like this was the terribly backslidden condition of the nation of Israel. God's heart was aching for His children, who had given themselves over to idolatry and who had placed their trust in their dumb idols and were attributing to them certain merits. He yearned for the return of His people to Himself in full and unbroken fellowship.

The Word of God is full of "hidden things." I want to mention some of them for our edification and blessing, to the end that we might have occasion to walk in closer fellowship with Him.

I. The Hidden Sinner.

Adam and Eve "heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden." It was strange behavior for those who had been created in the image and likeness of God. Why should they hide themselves? Were they afraid? Were they not fitted for communion with God? Was there any occasion to run away from Him?

The answer to these questions is found in the fact of their disobedience to God. Had they obeyed Him there would have been no difficulty, but sin cannot stand the light of His presence, and the only course left was to get as far from Him as possible. What is God teaching us in this account? It is the truth that there is no quest for God in fallen man. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. Since man has become a fallen creature, he does not naturally turn to God and seek Him out. God has to seek out man and to manifest the initiative in his salvation. John reminds us how we love Him because He first loved us. This is God's picture of fallen humanity in its dire extremity, running away and hiding from God.

This story in Genesis does not sound much like the teaching we hear so often today of the dignity of human nature. Sin never dignified anything; it only debases and brings condemnation. God is after the sinner and seeking his deliverance. The only way of escape for the sinner is for him to take refuge in the bosom of His grace and mercy.

II. The Hidden Servant.

In I Kings 17:3 we find the story of a man who served his God in utter devotion. God said to him, "Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan." In humble obedience and as hard as it was, Elijah went and hid himself for three years. Did not the nation need the ministry of such a prophet as this? There come times when God's people feel they can be the least spared, yet it becomes necessary for them to hide themselves. This hiding process is often very difficult. We want to live in the brilliance and attraction of the spotlight. In the place of obscurity we might miss something and we do not want that to happen. God would not have called His servant to go into the wilderness unless there had been a sufficient reason for it. After three years of separation from the life of the nation, Elijah was prepared to hear the command of God. What was it? "Go, show thyself." God made a shut-in of him that He might send him out into a great and victorious ministry.

Have you taken time out to hide yourself and to get alone with God? To be one of God's shut-ins is to assure victory on the field of conflict. Time spent away from the crowd and alone with God is time saved. Let us be numbered among the hidden servants.

III. The Hidden Scriptures.

We have boasted about an open Bible, and we have rejoiced that the Word of God was not bound by any limitation of man, nor hidden in some obscure place from man's enjoyment. Then what do we mean when we talk about the hidden Scriptures? There is a legitimate and profitable hiding of the Word. But where shall it be hidden? "Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee." Psalm 119:11. The truths of divine revelation should be hidden in the mind and heart. Moody made this observation: --

1. A great possession -- "Thy Word."
2. A great place -- "mine heart."
3. A great purpose -- "That I might not sin against Thee."

Have you hidden God's Word in your heart? If not, you have suffered defeat and brought the cause of our Lord into disrepute. The Bible does something to us and for us.

IV. The Hidden Substance.

What do you do with your substance? Perhaps you will say you have laid it away in the bank, or that you have invested it in gilt-edged securities that cannot possibly fail. You are mistaken. Such securities have failed in the past, and man has never been able to devise a scheme by which he can be absolutely certain that he will always have available what he thinks are tangible assets. God has a lock-box in the bank of heaven reserved for you, where you may put all your wealth and be sure that it will be in safe-keeping. Jesus said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." This is the only place where our earthly possessions will not be affected by earthly conditions. Some of us say we believe this passage, and yet go right on putting our possessions just where the Lord tells us we will lose them.

V. The Hidden Sin.

Down deep in the human heart there is a hiding place for sin. Paul warned of this by saying, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God." I Corinthians 4:5. And, again, he states that we "have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Do not these passages indicate that there are "hidden things" of corruption lurking in the hearts of God's people?

There are sins which need to be brought into the light even now and confessed to God. If we fail to do it now in this life, it will be done hereafter when we come to that hour and place of accountability. It is hidden sin that hinders our prayers; it is hidden sin that nullifies our testimony; it is hidden sin that throttles the power of God in us; it is hidden sin that grieves the Holy Spirit of God; it is hidden sin that cuts down the size of our reward; it is hidden sin which takes away the wondrous joy of salvation which God has given us for a blessed heritage. Let us root it out and bring it into the light of God's truth, confessing it before Him and seeking the blessedness of His cleansing blood.

"For 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 up upon a rock." Psalm 27:5.