

God's Hidden Ones

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that God's hidden ones are those whom God protects, comforts, and preserves in secret, often misunderstood and unseen by the world, yet deeply cherished and safeguarded by Him.

Scripture: Psalm 83:3, John 10:28-29, Psalm 91:1, Genesis 6:18, Job 1:10, Colossians 3:3

Topics: "Divine Protection", "Christian Identity", "Spiritual Comfort"

Description

In this devotional sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the profound meaning behind the term "God's hidden ones," emphasizing God's protective care, the peace granted amid trials, and the often misunderstood nature of true believers. He encourages Christians to recognize the honor and blessing of being hidden by God and to extend love and fellowship to those who may be unnoticed or obscure in the church community. Through vivid illustrations and biblical references, Spurgeon offers comfort and assurance to all who trust in God's preserving hand.

Transcript

"Your hidden ones." Psalm 83:3.

IT was the desire of Asaph to obtain for his nation help from God. Israel was exposed to great danger—ten confederate nations had conspired, with desperate hate, to assail the chosen people. They were determined to root out the very name of Israel from among the nations! They joined together in a wicked league for this purpose and they came from all quarters—north, south, east and west—in order to utterly devour the little insignificant people whom God had called His own. It was the Psalmist's desire to bring God into this quarrel, to stir Him up to take the part of Israel and he, therefore cried, "Keep not Your silence, O God: hold not Your peace, and be not still, O God. For, lo, Your enemies make a tumult: and they that hate You have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted against Your hidden ones."

Nothing stirs a man more than when his children are assailed. The most quiet and inoffensive individual grows angry if his little one is touched. The blood flies to his cheeks and all his manhood is awakened to defend his child. So the Psalmist pleads with God that this nation was His own and that, therefore, He must protect it. And he describes the people by this singular but instructive title, "Your hidden ones." I am going to enquire what may be meant by this term, "Your hidden ones," in the desire that some of God's hidden ones may be discovered, and that the Lord's blessing may rest upon them. First, I shall ask, Why are they called God's hidden ones? Secondly, What is their special honor? They are God's hidden ones,

they belong to Him and, thirdly, What then?

I. First, then, Why are they called God's hidden ones?

I think, in the connection in which these words occur, the phrase means that they were hidden by God with a view to safety. The 10 heathen nations conspired against Israel, but they could not really harm the chosen people, for God, Himself had hidden them as a hen hides her chickens under her wings when a hawk hovers overhead, or as one who has found a treasure hides it away from the hands of the thief. As the most precious things are put into cases and kept concealed for safety, so does God hide away His people and preserve them. God puts His saints where the enemy cannot find them, or, if he finds them so as to see where they are, God places them where the enemy cannot reach them. Sometimes He puts them in the secret places of His pavilion—yes, in the secret places of His tabernacle does He hide them. As well might the devil think to destroy an angel as to destroy a child of God! That same power that protects the perfect ones before the Throne of God protects believing ones who are on the way there. "Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations," and such a dwelling place that we have been hidden away in You so that no evil has been able to reach us!

You remember when Athaliah sought to kill all the seed royal that Jehoiada, the High Priest, took Joash, who was then a child, and hid him for six years in the house of the Lord, and there He was safe? Thus does God take each one of His children and make a Joash of him, and preserves him from the assault of the enemy so that he cannot be destroyed. God said to Noah, "Come, you and all your house, into the ark," and he and his household went into the ark and the Lord shut them in. They were hidden in that ark of safety from the floods which rose from beneath and the rain which fell from above—and thus they outlived the Deluge. So, if you believe in Jesus, God will hide you away from all the rage of earth and Hell. He will preserve you, you shall be one of His hidden ones, of whom Christ said, "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me; is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." They are God's hidden ones. As the king takes care of his royal diadem and

crown jewels, so does God watch over those who have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice. "They shall be Mine, says the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels." What a privilege is yours and mine, dear Hearers, if, indeed, we have so believed in Christ that we are hidden away in Him! "You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Rightly do we sing—

"How blest are they who still abide Close sheltered in Your bleeding side! Who life and strength from there derive, And by You move, and in You live."

I think this is the first reason why the Israelites were called God's hidden ones, because He had put them out of the reach of their adversaries and concealed them in a place of safety.

But, next, I think there is another meaning which some of us have, at times, realized. They are God's hidden ones because He gives them quiet and peace, even in the midst of turmoil and sorrow. The Psalmist seems to say, "Your enemies make a tumult, but Your hidden ones are quiet." Do you not know what this experience means? Have you ever felt it? That trouble you dreaded so much, of which you said, "I am sure it will crush me," would have crushed you if you had been left to yourself! But when it came, you were strangely upheld and kept so calm and placid that you did not know yourself! When you saw your husband die and those little children were all around you, and you knew that you were a widow, how was it that then you were still so trustful? Or, dear Husband, when you saw your wife, at last, expire, and the light

of your home was quenched, how was it that you still said and meant it, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord"? Why, it was because the Lord had made you one of His hidden ones! He said, "Come home, dear child, come and rest with Me"—and He shut you away from all the trial and enabled you to find peace in Him.

Do you remember that wonderful poem by Miss Havergal, in which she speaks of the peculiar calm which prevails at the very center of a cyclone? The gifted poetess writes—

"They say there is a hollow, safe and still,

A point of coolness and repose

Within the center of a flame where life might dwell

Unharméd and unconsumed, as in a luminous shell

Which the bright walls of fire enclose

In breathless splendor, barrier that no foes

Could pass at will.

There is a point of rest

At the great center of the cyclone's force,

A silence at its secret source.

A little child might slumber undistracted,

Without the ruffle of one fairy curl,

In that strange central calm amid the mighty whirl." Well now, some of us have, at times, known the experience which is typified in those lines. Troubles of every sort and size come upon us. We are vexed with every form of calamity and yet during all that time we are serenely quiet and perfectly happy. I should think that an eagle, high aloft, when he sees the sportsman coming with his gun, however far the bullet may carry, if he knows himself to be quite out of range, would poise himself upon the wing and look down upon the sportsman with a merry heart! Let him send his bullet up into the air as far as it can rise, but the eagle is high above it all—and God gives His children, at times, such mounting faith that they rise up as upon the wings of eagles—and the bullets of trouble cannot reach halfway to them! There, in the clear blue Heaven of fellowship with God, they look down on the tops of the clouds, and defy all the assaults of man! Happy are they who have thus become God's hidden ones!

There are green meadows and there are still waters, but I believe they are mostly to be found in the places where trials most abound! There, consolations are most plentiful. I hardly think that a man knows the depths of the serenity of God unless he has been greatly tried. There are wonderful sights that none shall see but those who are hidden away by the Lord in the time of storm and trouble. Oh, the strife of tongues, the endless babbling of slander! What a blessing not to hear it, or to hear it as a deaf man that hears not. Oh, the noise of misrepresentation! Oh, the wave upon wave of actual trouble that may come to you in business or in the domestic circle! What joy it is to be kept out of it all, as I said before,

like Noah in the ark—all the world drowned, but you shut up in safety! And remember that the deeper the floods became, the higher Noah rose toward Heaven! And so shall it be with you. The more of trial you have to endure, the more of communion you shall have to enjoy! This is the happy, happy case of a tried child of God.

There are two meanings, then, of this expression—hidden away for safety and hidden away for quiet.

But, next, God's people may be hidden away because they are not understood. The true Christian is a marvel to other men. He is a stranger and a foreigner among them. He is a plant that never would have grown on earthly mold unless God had planted it there. The Christian is a man wondered at! If you are understood, you are in the wrong. If you are a genuine Christian and are right, you will be misunderstood by the world—it has not the faculty of understanding the saints. He who has been made to live unto God lives a life that is quite incomprehensible to ordinary men. No, let me put it very plainly—the spiritual life which God gives to those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is altogether beyond the discernment of the carnal mind! "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" and cannot rise to an understanding of that which is born of the Spirit, which, alone, is spirit! Your life is a secret between God and yourself.

So, too, the motive of your life will not be understood by other men. They feel sure that there is something at the back of it. If you were to tell them that you lived only for God's Glory, they would laugh at you! God's Glory—what is that to them? They think, no doubt, that you make a good thing out of your religion, and herein they prove themselves to have learned their lesson in the school of the devil, for he said, "Does Job fear God for naught? Have not You made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he has, on every side?" The desire to live so as to please God belongs to every man who walks with God, but it will not be understood by other men. God's people are, in this sense, His hidden ones.

Therefore, the comfort that reigns in a Christian's heart is a thing which he cannot impart to others. If others were to hear the reason of the Believer's happiness, they would say, "Well, that would not make me happy! There is nothing in it that would sustain me." And there isn't. The food on which angels live is not such as common flesh and blood could feed upon. And the inward comforts of the child of God are such as the world cannot give because it cannot even understand them.

So your hopes and the lamps that light up your life, the world knows nothing about! Perhaps some of your own brothers and sisters do not understand your hopes. And when you talk about death with pleasure, and about the eternal state with delight, they think that you are half insane! It is because they are altogether insane that they think so. But if you are one of God's hidden ones, in all these points you will be a stranger to your own mother's children—you will be one who cannot be understood! Do not expect to be understood—settle this in your mind and it will save you a great deal of heartache and disappointment.

There is a third sense, then, in which God's children may be called hidden ones, because they are not understood.

But there are some of them who are hidden in another sense—they are very obscure. Some of God's best children have not anything that can bring them to the light here on earth. Perhaps they may be living among rich people and, as they are very poor, nobody notices them. There is a directory containing the names and addresses of the great people who live in the town, but they have not put poor Mary's name in that book—and as to John, well, the highest degree he ever had was that he was a cobbler—and his name, of course, is not in the book, either. The Lord has many of those hidden ones who are not known among the great because they are so little in Israel.

Some of God's hidden ones are not known because they are ill. It is now several months that poor Mary has been lying on a bed. It is years since William has gone out of the house, at all, and very few ever come to see these hidden ones. But I bear my witness that some of the best things I have ever learned from mortal lips, I have learned from bedridden saints! There are some who wickedly teach that bodily afflictions are caused by sin. It is a cruel—I was going to say, an infernal supposition—for some of the holiest people I have known have been bedridden for ten, twelve, or 15 years, and if I were to say that I thought they were sinners above others, I should belie my convictions, for in sitting down to talk with some of them I have found them to be saints above others!

I shall never forget going some miles, years ago, to see a woman who had been bedridden for, I think, 20 or 25 years. I went up a ladder to the room where she was. She was rendered comfortable by the kindness of those who came to see her. She sat up in bed as best she could and, oh, I wish that I could preach such sermons as she preached to me when she spoke about the goodness of the Lord to her, and told me how that poor chamber was made to glow in the middle of the

night with the delightful Presence of her Lord! She was one of God's hidden ones—and He has many such! Now, just think of that a minute, and pray God to bless His dear hidden sick ones at this moment, and ask Him to cheer and comfort their hearts.

Perhaps there are some hidden ones who come into our places of worship and have no one to speak to them. I do not think that many such persons come to the Tabernacle—I hope there never will be. There is a Brother who was a member, here, and who will be a member, again. He has gone to live in the suburbs and he attends a very respectable place of worship. They are very good people but, you know, our friends in the suburbs are so much more respectable than we are and they know it, too! And there, in the outer ring of London, it is perfectly amazing what great people they are—you would not believe it. When they come into the City to business, they are nothing very particular, but as soon as they get out to the suburbs, they are wonderful people! This Brother says, "I have been in and out of the chapel for months and nobody ever speaks to me." The fact is, I expect, that he keeps a grocer's shop and some of these people deal with him, so they do not know him on Sunday, of course, because he is only a grocer!

I hope that you will never get such abominable notions into your heads! This wretched caste that divides us up into little sets, reminds me of the Hindus. Keep it up in the world if you are foolish enough to do so, but do not bring the evil into the Church of Christ! Here, at any rate, we are Brothers and Sisters. Let us feel that we are one in Christ and put away from us all that stiffness which would make us keep our petty nobodies to ourselves! If there is a man who is a really great man, I always notice that he is the most condescending and gentle man that there is. But it is your nobody who always makes himself appear somebody! Now, dear Friend, if you have come in and out of this place and you have not been noticed by anybody, I pray you to begin to notice somebody, yourself! And if you have come in and out of any place of worship and nobody has spoken to you, remember that the Lord has His hidden ones and you may be one of them. It may be that quite from inadvertence, not from unkindness, you have not been spoken to, so begin to break the ice, yourself, by speaking to someone else and may God bless you so that you may, in that sense, be no more a hidden one!

Now I ask you to think, for a minute, of another way in which some of God's people are hidden ones. I mean this— do you suppose that God has none of His people in churches and communities that are steeped in error? If you think so, I do not! It is always a comfort to my heart to believe that in the great Romish Church there are hundreds of thousands who have found the Savior and are resting in His atoning

Sacrifice—they are God's hidden ones. I have, here and there, stumbled upon some of these, myself. And when we have come to speak about the Cross and the wounds of Christ and His precious blood—all that rubbish about the Virgin and the saints has been forgotten—and I have found myself much nearer akin to those hidden ones than I had thought I might have been!

And there are many books that have been written by persons who are members of that church which, nevertheless, are full of such a savor of Grace and holy fellowship with God that we cannot but believe that the authors of them are God's hidden ones. Yes, and it is a very curious thing that you will find that just the very persons you would have least thought would possess the Light of God have, nevertheless, received it. Have I not been, sometimes, in a place where I thought the Gospel of Christ had never come and yet I have found clear proofs that it was there? Not long ago it was so with me. As I passed a certain spot, I noticed a kind of glitter in the eye of a person who looked at me. It was a servant in a place where I could not have thought I should find a friend. And when I came back that way, his greeting to me, was, "God bless you, Sir! You don't know me, but I take in the sermons every week and I have found the Savior." Where least I expected it, I stumbled on a friend and a disciple who was fed on the Word of God that I have preached! Does it not do your heart good, sometimes, after you have thought, "Well, I shall never find anybody here with whom I can sympathize," to meet with just one of the very persons with whom you have had the best of fellowship for many a day and many a year to come?

God has His hidden ones, also, in the midst of ungodly families. Do not you, who have to visit those who are joining the Church, sometimes find yourselves in houses where everything betokens drunkenness and all that is bad—and yet there is a dear child who has been converted, or perhaps it is the wife whom God, in Sovereign Grace, has looked upon and saved? There are many such hidden ones in London. There are some of them who cannot get out to worship—they are not permitted to come—and yet they are God's own dear ones, hidden away in ungodly homes. Breathe a prayer for them, now! Say, "Lord, help Your hidden ones in such cases as these!" God has a people—I was going to say, up to the

very gates of Hell—He has an elect people, chosen by His Grace, who know Him, trust Him and love Him although they are not known to the rest of their Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

Once more, however, all God's people are His hidden ones because all the saints are, at present, unrevealed. "It does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear," that is, the hidden and veiled Christ, when He shall be manifested, "we shall be like He," we shall be manifested, too! There is a great future for you, my Brother! There is a grand future for you, my Sister. Hardly can you hold your own, today, against the contentions of the adversary, but be firm, be true, cry to God for help and you shall not always be hidden as you now are, in the midst of the dust, strife and conflict—you shall come out as when the sun shines in his strength! Therefore, be of good cheer, you who are hidden ones, today—you shall, in due time, shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of your Father.

II. I must not say more upon the first point, but must turn to the second question. WHAT IS THEIR SPECIAL HONOR? They are God's hidden ones. Their peculiar honor is that they are the Lord's.

Will each one of you do himself the favor to put to himself the question, "Am I the Lord's?" Never mind about the friend sitting next to you, but let each of you say, "Am I the Lord's?" If so, the Lord knows you, for, "the Lord knows them that are His." He knows whom He chose and redeemed. He knows whom He has called. He knows whom He has justified. He has not done any of those things in the dark. He has a familiar acquaintance with all that His Grace has done for you.

Remember, also, that though you are hidden, you are not hidden from the Lord. You are hidden by Him, but you are not hidden from Him. He can read your thoughts. He sees that hot tear that is beginning to lift the eyelid. He knows the troubles that are yet to come as well as those that have come—He reads you as I read the pages of this Bible.

Then, again, some of God's hidden ones are among the very choicest of His children. I think there are some who are so very dear to God that He keeps them to Himself. I have known some saints whom God has loved so much that He has taken away from them all that they loved, that He might have all their hearts. He loved their love so much that He would have it all Himself. "Oh!" you say, "perhaps that is the reason why I have been so tried and why I have so many graves in the cemetery." Well, it may be—and that you are one of the Lord's hidden ones whom He has hidden away in His own bosom from every other love—that you may be altogether His own.

Remember, too, that hidden as you are, He has engaged to keep you. His very hiding of you shows that He means to keep you in safety. You shall never perish for, "He keeps the feet of His saints." You shall not be overcome by the enemy, for you are the Lord's. If you belonged to somebody else, you might be deserted. But as you are the Lord's, you never shall be forsaken. Human masters sometimes leave their old servants to perish, but God never deserts His old servants! Even to hoar hairs and to the end of life He will be with you, and He will bear you until He brings you Home to Glory, above, to be with Him forever and ever!

III. I have spoken very briefly on the second point, but our time is nearly gone, so I must close with this third question. If the Lord has the hidden ones of whom we have spoken, WHAT THEN?

Well, the first thought that comes to my mind is this—let us rejoice that the Lord has more people than we know. He has His hidden ones. I know the tendency to say, as Elijah did, "I, even I, only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." It is not so—the Lord still has many thousands of knees that have not bowed to Baal. One of the wonders of Heaven will be to find so many people, there, that we never thought would get there. We shall say to ourselves, "We did not think that those people knew the Lord, yet they did!" The Grace of God can live where you and I could not. I know some people that I would not like to live with on earth, for they are very strange, yet I hope that they are God's people. Well, we shall live with them very well in Heaven—they will be changed before they get there. They will have had their hearts washed, their whole natures renewed and they will be right enough, then! The Lord has some very strange people among His chosen ones. If you had to deal with some of God's people that I know, you would give me credit for a little patience, at any rate, in dealing with them! You have need of patience with your own children and God's children are, in some respects, very much like our children. If you draw a parallel between them, you will find childish faults and infirmities in the children of God which have to be borne with, even as we have to bear with the faults and infirmities of our own children at home.

My next remark is—let us be on the look out for these hidden ones wherever we are. If you and I have to go and live where we do not wish to go—away from our dear acquaintances, here—let us believe, when we get to that distant place,

wherever it is, that God has some hidden ones there. You are going to Canada, are you? Or you are about to start for Australia? Or, in the Providence of God, you are to live in some village far away from the means of Grace. You say to yourself, "Whatever shall I do?" Do? Why, find the Lord's hidden ones and you shall have company! Though you may say, "Surely, there is no child of God there," you shall find that there is

someone living there whom you are sent to help—while he is placed there that he may help you! Wherever you go, do not say to yourself, "This place is wholly abandoned," but believe that there is a child of God living there.

I remember reading of a godly man who went into a village, some fifty years ago, and asked, "Is there a Christian person living in this place?" He enquired if there was anyone in the village who made a profession of religion. They shook their heads and said that they did not know of anybody. "Is there anyone here who fears God?" Then they laughed. However, after making a good many enquiries, one man said that there was a hypocritical canting Methodist woman who lived down a certain lane. He said, "That is the person I want to meet, depend upon it." He knew at once what they meant—there was one who was different from the rest and, therefore, she had undeservedly earned those titles! He went and found that she was a Christian woman walking in meekness and sorrow because she had no one at all to speak to.

When our missionary, Mr. Thomas, went to Calcutta at the end of the last century, it is said that he advertised for a Christian and could not find one. Advertise for a Christian? Well, thank God, we shall not have to do that! Even if you live in a place where there are very few Christians, still believe that there are some and look out for God's hidden ones!

In the next place, since God has hidden ones, let us take care never to act or speak so as to grieve them. Sometimes, when Christian men get conceited and proud—and think themselves very great—they speak in a hard, domineering way that grieves God's people. "No," you say, "I would not use such language if I knew that one of them was about." Well then, do not use it at all—because you do not know when they may not be about, for God has His hidden ones in places where it is least suspected! Speak as you would wish the very least of God's people to hear you and do not use vain and haughty language. If you get to be like the Prophet's bullocks that pushed with horn and shoulder and drove away the weak ones, God may deal roughly with you and make you to be as hateful in His sight as they were! Let the remembrance that God has His hidden ones be a check upon your tongue and upon your whole conduct.

And, lastly, although God has His hidden ones, let not one of us hide himself more than is necessary. I speak to some of you who love the Lord, but who have never come out on His side. God has His hidden ones, but they ought to come forward and confess Christ. Remember that the Gospel message is, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." "If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." To the secret faith of the heart there ought to be joined the public profession of the lips! Why should you be ashamed of Jesus? Why should you be afraid to acknowledge that you belong to Him? Some whom I know, who love their Lord but have never confessed Him, are like the mice behind the wainscot. They come out of a night, when the cat is not there, to get some of the crumbs—and then they run back and hide in their holes. I shall not set a trap for you, but, at the same time I would like to stop up all the holes where you hide, so that you who are Christians would be obliged to come out and admit it! I leave the matter to your conscience, but I pray the Lord, Himself, to fetch you out if you are His hidden ones, for His dear name's sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: Psalm 83.

This is a Psalm that is not often read and very seldom expounded, I should think. According to the title, it is, "A Song or Psalm of Asaph." Asaph is one of a little group of poets who flourished side by side with David. This is a patriotic hymn. The nation was about to be attacked by many adversaries, so, like a true patriot, the poet desired that God would give the victory to His people, and deliver them. You may regard this Psalm as a prophecy—it reads like a prayer or wish of the writer and, no doubt it is, but it may also be read as a prophecy of what will happen to the enemies of God's people.

Verses 1, 2. Keep not Your silence, O God: hold not Your peace, and be not still, O God. For, lo, Your enemies make a tumult: and they that hate You have lifted up the head. God's enemies are making a noise and the Psalmist's prayer is that

the Lord, Himself, will speak and answer them. God's voice made the heavens and the earth—"He spoke and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast." A single word from Him will win the day! The poet's prayer is not, "Grant a leader bold and brave," but, "Lord, speak, speak!" "For, lo, Your enemies make a tumult." The enemies of Israel were the enemies of God. If they were our enemies, only, we might keep silent, but as they are also the enemies of God, our loyalty to the Lord compels us to cry unto Him to speak against them!

3. They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted against Your hidden ones. Craft goes with power in plotting against God's people. The seed of the serpent are like he from whom they came, and of him it is said, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." And the seed of the serpent are full of crafty counsel and subtlety. This, the Psalmist mentions in his prayer, and then he looks to God to frustrate their minds, to baffle their craft and, by His wisdom, to save His people.

4. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. So terrible was the anger of these nations against God's people that nothing would content them but the destruction of Israel—the blotting out of its very name from the memory of men! And I am sure that if the world could have its way, it would extinguish the Church of Christ. You notice, in these days of boasted liberality and pretended charity, that the charity is only for error—for the old Gospel there is no charity! The cry concerning it is, "Let it be cut to pieces! Let it be destroyed! It is an old nuisance, put it out of the way." This is how the enemies of God would have it, "that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance."

5. For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against You. There were many nations of heathens and they were agreed in nothing except in their hatred of Israel. There they were agreed, as Herod was the friend of Pilate while Christ was under examination, but not at any other time. The Psalmist mentions ten different nations which had banded themselves together against God's chosen people Israel. Ten against one is heavy odds, but then God was on the side of Israel! One man with God is in the majority, however many there may be on the other side, for God counts for more than all who can be against Him!

6. The tabernacles of Edom. These descendants of Esau, Jacob's twin brother, ought to have been the best friends of Israel, but they were the worst of their enemies. How often does it happen that kinship in blood makes no kinship in Grace! "A man's foes shall be they of his own household."

6. And the Ishmaelites. These, again, were near akin to the seed of Abraham and Isaac, but the Ishmaelites were always among the most bitter enemies of Israel.

6. Of Moab. Moab was descended from a daughter of Lot.

7. And the Hagarenes. Perhaps descended from Hagar by some other husband.

7. Gehal, and Ammon, and Amalek. All these were hereditary enemies of Israel—Amalek especially so, for God had determined that there should be war with Amalek throughout all generations.

7. The Philistines—These were the old enemies of Israel. Remember how Samson fought with them and what tugs of war David had with them?

7. With the inhabitants of Tyre. What were they doing in warring against God's people? They were merchants, shippers. Yes, but it sometimes happens that when worldly craft is in danger, men of trade and commerce can be as bitter against true religion as anybody else!

8. Assur also is joined with them: they have helped the children of Lot. Selah. Here is a mention of the growing power of Assyria. What a host there was! What a band of enemies against God's people! Oh, dear Friends, I trust that none of us will have our names written in this black list! Be not enemies of God and of His Truth, for, if so, you will wage a losing battle! Let the gunnysack fight with the flame, or the dust with the wind—they will speedily be overcome—and woe be unto the man who contends with his Maker! What can he do? Let us, Brothers and Sisters, be on God's side. God grant, by His Grace, that we may never lift a hand against His cause! Now comes the prayer or prophecy of the poet.

9. 10. Do unto them as unto the Midianites; as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kishon: which perished at Endor: they became as dung for the earth. In those great battles, the enemies of the Lord and His people were utterly cut in pieces. Mighty men as they were, they left their corpses to manure the soil.

11. Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb: yes, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna. These were four princes who were slain by Gideon and his allies—two of them bore the names of wolf and raven—cruel names, but war is always a cruel thing. But what had they done, these men of arms, these mighty warriors? The Psalmist tells us—

12. Who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession. They were not content with their own houses—they wanted God's houses. And there are some men who can never rest unless when they are doing mischief to the cause and Cross of Christ! Woe unto them, for the fate of Oreb and Zeeb shall be theirs in due time!

13. O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind. Or rather, "You shall make them a wheel," never still. The real translation, I think, would be, "Make them like those light dry flowers which are blown by the wind across the plains." Mr. Thomson, in his *Land and the Book*, speaks of the branches of the wild artichoke which form a sphere or globe a foot or more in diameter, and he says that he has seen thousands of them come wheeling along. Isaiah calls them, "a rolling thing before the whirlwind." A puff of wind would come and take them in one direction and then a contrary wind would drive them in quite another direction! They are so light, downy, gossamer-like, that they never can rest.

Now this is just what happens to many men who set themselves against God and His Grace. They are like rolling things never at rest—believing nothing, knowing nothing, hoping nothing, comforted by nothing—they are like a wheel. Oh, that we may never know, by personal experience, what this means! "Make them like a wheel, as the stubble before the wind"! You know how that is—the stubble is blown up, down, to the right, to the left, whichever way the wind blows. Are any of you like that, tonight? Have you no

stability? Have you no good hope for the future? When you think about death and eternity, are you like the stubble before the wind? If so, God have mercy upon you, and bring you to the only place where you can obtain salvation and stability!

14. As the fire burns a forest and as the flame sets the mountains on fire. Travelers tell us that they have, sometimes, seen the sides of mountains all ablaze where the timber, growing old, and everything being dry in the heat of summer, a chance spark has set the whole on fire. This is what God will do with His enemies. He will as certainly and as readily destroy them as the forest is burnt with fire, or the mountain's side is consumed by the raging flames! Who will stand against God? Who will dare attempt it? Consider His great might and flee from His wrath!

15. So persecute them with Your tempest. Or, "You will so follow them up with Your tempest."

15, 16. And make them afraid with Your storms. Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek Your name, O LORD. That is the prayer which we might pray, tonight, for all those who are denying the Godhead of Christ and His great Sacrifice of the Cross—and for all who reject the Inspiration of Scripture and the blessed Doctrines of Grace. "O Lord, fill their faces with shame, that they may seek Your name!" Oh, that men did but know their own character! If they did but feel ashamed of their own sin, they might be led to seek the name of God.

17. Let them be confused and troubled forever. Or rather, "They shall be confused and troubled forever." That is an awful passage, "Confused and troubled forever."

17, 18. Yes, let them be put to shame and perish: that men may know that You, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, are the Most High over all the earth. You notice that when I read the Scriptures, wherever I find the word, LORD, in capital letters, I read it as Jehovah, for so it should be. I wish that the translators of the Revised Version had had the courage of their convictions and had so translated it, for we need that grand name back—Jah, Jehovah. Let me entreat You never to trifle, as some do, with that sacred word, Hallelujah, or, Hallelu-Jah—praise to Jehovah!

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