

GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTIST
 Sermon preached by Mr. L.S.B. Hyde of Redhill, at Jireh Chapel,
 Tenterden, on Lord's Day afternoon, 15th March, 1987.

Text: "I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love. Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in Thy word". Ps.119, 113/114.

Now this morning we looked a little at this first verse, "I hate vain thoughts, but Thy law do I love". We certainly did not exhaust the subject and all that might have been said about it. But it seems to me the right thing this afternoon, by the Spirit of God, that we should now look at the second verse: "Thou art my hiding place, and my shield". Christ as a person that is talked about is a very different Christ to the One that is needful. We can speak about Christ; we could even speak about Christ as a Hiding Place, and yet never enter into it.

Now then, if God has began that good work of grace in our hearts, which we can already discover because, contrary to our former thoughts and feelings, we hate vain thoughts and have been drawn to the law of God however much it may condemn. Then we shall say that God is just. Well, one thing I am thankful about is that He has told me the truth and that furthermore having told me the truth about myself, and spoken to me about my lost condition, spoken to me about my filthy condition, He now takes of the things of Jesus and shows them unto me in such a way that Christ is no longer just a figure in history, just a person that is mentioned in the Scriptures, but He is now presented to me in such a way that I am able to say "Thou art my Hiding Place and my Shield."

Now, of course, we can never make such a statement as this, and lay such a claim as this unless Christ Himself has been our Hiding Place, and has been our Shield. We should not have to prove that point because you have only to think upon it to realise that first in the light of these words, without having had some experience and proof of the words in their own soul will be nothing else but a hypocrite. Now then, how is the Psalmist brought to this wonderful declaration of truth. Yes, but also truth experienced, of truth felt, of truth acknowledged, of truth rejoiced in: "Thou art my Hiding Place and my Shield".

In the 32nd chapter of Isaiah we read: "A man shall be a hiding place"(v.2). Now we can link that up with another precious word: "This man receiveth sinners" (Luke 15.2). If we need a hiding place, we need one to whom we can run. In the Proverbs we read that "the name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe" (Pro.18.10). The righteous runs to a strong tower, but also to a Hiding Place, a place wherein they cannot be touched. In the Old Testament days there was appointed by God seven places of refuge strategically placed, and if there should be one who inadvertantly had killed another, then as the manslayer was chasing him to kill him he was able to run to the place of refuge, and there he was safe. One of our hymns puts it like this:

"Other refuge have I none,
 Hangs my helpless soul on thee;
 Leave, ah! leave me not alone;
 Still support and comfort me. " (Gadsbys 303)

An experience like that must surely result in a humble and simple testimony concerning the preciousness of Christ "Thou art my Hiding Place and my Shield".

We find there are several places in the Scripture where some of God's people were hidden in the most remarkable way. They did not in a way flee, but God, so to speak, encircled them that they could not be found. One of them, of course, was Elijah. Many searches had been made for Elijah so that he might be caught and destroyed. But when Elijah met Obadiah and Elijah said that he would see the king, Ahab, that day, Obadiah immediately could only think of one thing, that was destruction, he would lose his head. Why? Because the Lord had been to Elijah, even in a natural, providential way, a hiding place. When Obadiah told him that as he went to search for him, so the Lord takes him away "As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found him not. But now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold Elijah is here. And it shall come to pass, as soon as I

am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come to tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me, but I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth". (I Kings 18.10/12). In that sense the prophet Elijah was surrounded by a hiding place.

Now the first point we would look at, "Thou art my Hiding Place" is this, that is that the hiding place on many occasions will come to you rather than you having to flee to the hiding place. There is a sense in which we flee to the hiding place, but "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. When shall I come and appear before God", says the Psalmist (Ps. 42 1/2). Did he succeed, or did he not succeed, or did he succeed only because the refuge was brought to him? There are a very nice few lines in one of Berridge's hymns, which refers to pressing forward to Jesus:

"If unto Jesus thou art bound,
A crowd about him will be found,
Attending day and night " (and so on)

And it finishes up like this:

"And when through fear I only creep,
Or dare not move a single step,
Yet thou canst come to me." (Gadsbys 302)

Now that is wonderful, friends, to be able to speak of a hiding place. If you cannot get to it, it can come to you.

Now this is Jesus Christ, the Lord, "Thou art my Hiding Place", as it says in the chapter that we read "A man shall be as an hiding place from the wind" (Is. 32.2). When we think about this point, there is a passage in the New Testament which speaks of being "carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Eph.4.14). Most people come into this place at some time or ~~xxx~~ other.

Now this Man shall be a Hiding Place from the wind". And how wonderful when God looks upon a sinner that is blown about so that he or she does not know quite what to believe; the Christ Himself comes and envelops them and begins to teach them the present truth: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God". (Eph. 2.8.). There are many winds of doctrine that will endeavour to turn a person away from that stable doctrine, and if you have been along that way, you will know how desirable it is that you can find this hiding place when the wind blows.

Now the Psalmist evidently has been through these places, and it enabled him to say: "Thou art my Hiding Place". When the wind was blowing me hither and thither, yet there was my hiding place. We have these wonderful words in the 54th Isaiah where we read: "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones". (v 11/12). And all these things set before - stability.

"Thou art my Hiding Place". We do want to particularly notice as God may help us this afternoon, that Jesus Christ is the Hiding Place. Do you remember? - I am sure you do! - the Pharisees took an adulterous woman into the presence of the Lord, and they said 'This woman we found in the very act of adultery' (John 8.3.) Then they said, the law says that she should be stoned, but what sayest thou? And then the Lord subsequently said: "He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her" (John 8.7). They all went out one by one being convicted in their consciences. Now here was a woman surrounded by her adversaries, and here was the Lord. Was He there? Was He round about her? He was by her. But was He not a hiding place, so that these people could proceed no further with their accusations. "Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" She said, "No man, Lord". (John 8.10/11) whereupon He says "Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more". So there needs to be repentance, and there needs to be a turning and a change of life. This is so important in the Christian profession, a change of life. It does not matter what falls we may go through, but if there

is no change of life then we know that the whole matter is false.

"Thou art my Hiding Place". But then, when we come to consider that this Man receiveth sinners, and that they have a great debt to pay, they cannot hide it. You see you can attempt to hide small things, but when the law of God has condemned you so that you can see that in thought and word and deed there is sin, and you have no prospect of ever paying. If you have felt the wrath of God against sin, if you have felt anything of the terrors of the law, Oh, how unrelentless the law is in pursuing that person. Is there no hiding place?

David himself gives an experience which surely discovered to him a hiding place. In the 51st Psalm he begins by saying: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me". This is an important point!

I read quite recently from one of the well-known commentators, based on that subject: "For He hath put all their sins behind their back". And in this short commentary he says something like this: 'If we hide our sins behind our back, then they are still before God, and God will bring us to a day of reckoning. And you may think that you have gone some distance and hidden your sins behind your back. In a sense David did this, because who suspected the intrigue with David's adultery and subsequent murder of Uriah the Hittite. But God saw it, and David thought that he had covered it up very well and put it behind his back. But God hadn't. So you see He sent the prophet with a parable, and as this parable was expounded so David said 'This man shall surely die'. Then the prophet said "Thou art the man" (II Sam.12.7) and he had to bring the sin from behind his back because he suddenly became aware that God still saw it. And so he says here "But I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me". Now the commentator goes on to say this. He says if when by the grace of God we bring our sins from behind our back, and bring them before us, and confess them to God, then it is God will put them behind His back. Now this theme was a little bit of thought and meditation to me in this last week. Is that not true? We shall not find a hiding place as long as we are trying to hide our sins behind our back. Thus we have got to bring them before God and say:

"Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to thee for dress;
Helpless, look to thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly.
Wash me, Saviour, or I die." (Gadsbys 143)

To whom are we coming? We are coming into a hiding place.

Furthermore David eventually said "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." (Ps. 51.4) This brings forth a good prayer. He said: "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities". (v9) So it was not just a case of the Lord turning away so that he did not see the sins, but he wanted them blotted out, blotted out in His Name who is a Hiding Place from the wind and tempest. How can sins be blotted out, how can they be hidden from the sight of God? Well, David certainly knew something about this: "For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise". (v 16/17). So we see not a hardened sinner but a contrite sinner, not a sinner that is going to put his sins behind his back and try to brasen it out, but a sinner who has to bring everything before God and leave it there, and if God will not forgive sin, someone said, he will still be there at His feet with ~~his~~ ^{his} sins. But you see it cannot be. If you bring your sins to the feet of Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ, remember, has been brought to where you are; ~~if~~ ^{if} you remember one of the beautiful expressions in the parable of the good Samaritan ^{is} this, "He came where he was" (Luke 10.33) Where he was! It may be suggested

that that man that fell among thieves, he got there because of his own foolishness, because of his own weaknesses, because of his own temptations, 'but the Lord came where he was'. Can you say this afternoon that you are in your present situation because of your own foolishness, because you have not been watchful enough, because you have not been careful enough, because Satan has very craftily shut your ears to the truth and opened your ears to unrighteousness. And now you are in a right state.

"Thou art my Hiding Place". Well now, we would enlarge upon this point. You say, but how can my sins be hidden completely? You see, dear friends, it will do you no good for all your sins to be hidden for a time, they have got to be forgotten altogether. And sometimes, as you know, our sins come up before us and we may wonder. We have forgotten about God's mercy just for the moment, we have forgotten about God's power and we wonder whether some dreadful calamity will come upon us and show us up so that the secret sins of the past will be made public, especially when we remember that which is done in secret shall be spoken openly, and though that will be a misapplication to this present situation, yet you see Satan will use all kinds of Scriptures to try and force his point. It is not whether there is a right interpretation or whether he uses an interpretation connected with what he has in mind. That is beside the point with him because he is the father of lies.

"But Thou art my Hiding Place". A sinner covered with what, covered with the blood of Jesus Christ. It is the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanses from all sin, and the blood of Jesus Christ is certainly a Hiding Place. When the Lord Jesus was upon the cross at Calvary, you see there He endured "sufferings so intense, that angels have no perfect sense" (). He endured the hidings of His Father's face; He endured His own soul being made a sacrifice for sin." But what was He really doing? ~~He was being~~, He was being a Hiding Place, putting their sins behind His back, putting righteousness between those sins and His Father. But this wonderful transaction upon Calvary was not done in a corner; it was to be transmitted to individual souls, and if Christ has died for the ungodly, and He has died for you, then be assured if you are to find any comfort it will be when the Spirit of God says "All this was done for you" - all this!

The sufferings of Christ on the cross, the sufferings of Christ in His life, all this was done for you'. And when you come before God, then the Father looks upon me; He looks upon you not as you are outside of Christ, but as you are in Christ. And when He looks upon you in Christ:

"In Him the Father never saw
The least transgression of His law;
Perfection, then, in Him we view;
His saints in Him are perfect too." (Gadsbys 65)

and you have found a Hiding Place, a Hiding Place in the love of God the Father against your sin. And what is more in the Lord Jesus Christ there is a Hiding Place against all the assaults of Satan.

I sometimes think of a couplet that was made very precious to me in my early days of christian profession, and it is still precious to me now:

"I may my fierce accuser face,
And tell him thou hast died." (Gadsbys 388)

Now you see we shall sometimes want to have a hiding place from all the accusations of Satan. You will remember, perhaps, in the prophecy of Zechariah, and in the 3rd chapter, we have that about Joshua the High Priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. "And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel". (Zech. 3.2/3) Joshua, a High Priest, Joshua was cleansed, Joshua found a Hiding Place in the merits of Jesus alone. Joshua could stand there and Satan was non-plussed, he could not say another word.

You know the poet has a beautiful expression which will convey my meaning to you much better than I can. That is in the 106th hymn:

"Satan avaunt; stand off, ye foes;
 In vain ye rail, in vain oppose;
 Your cancelled claim no more intrude;
 He's mine; I bought him with My blood.

And then, and this is the way that we shall find a hiding place in this matter:
 He says:

"Sinner, thou standest in me complete;
 Though they accuse thee, I acquit;
 I bore for thee the avenging ire,
 And plucked thee burning from the fire." (Gadsbys 106)

A person with that experience will be able to testify to the honour and glory of God, "Thou art my Hiding Place", a hiding place from the law's condemnation, a hiding place from the wrath of God, a hiding place from Satan's accusations. Not just a dead hiding place, but a living hiding place, a hiding place that has been wrought out of the work of Jesus Christ in love to sinners for: "Sinners can say, and none but they,

How precious is the Saviour!" (Gadsbys 806)

"Thou art my Hiding Place" David could surely say, the Psalmist could surely say 'a precious hiding place is Christ to me'.

And then he goes on to say "and my Shield". Well, we may take this in connection with the last point of arrows - Satan's arrows! Oh, how wonderful where God is our Shield. You remember, many years before, the Lord said to Abraham "Fear not Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward". (Gen15. Also in Isaiah, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him". (59.19). How can God be a Shield? Certainly God was a shield to Abraham. God worked wonderfully ^{for} Abraham when his enemies rose against him.

"And my Shield". A shield is some part of the armour worn, but it is the part of the armour that is flexible, as if you could throw it about. In the 6th chapter of the Ephesians we read: "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the devil." (v 14) Above all! See friends, this will meet the fiery darts of the devil.

"And my Shield". How important it is to project Christ whenever Satan may come in like a flood, whenever he may say to you and me, Ah! perhaps God has forgotten that sin. It cannot be! Christ is from eternity and He knows how to meet everything. There are always sins which you will commit. Perhaps you think, how can He know that? It is only because He is the eternal Son of God. We do not know what sins we shall commit in the next half-hour, but God knows all of them. God knows what sins we shall commit to the end of our life. Is that important? It is absolutely essential that we should trust in the living God, that we should have a hiding place and a shield, that we should know He is so full of comprehension that knows all our sins, so that when Christ died upon Calvary He said "It is finished" (John 19.30). It was a finished work indeed. It was a work that had been perfected to cleanse the sins of the whole Church of God right down the ages until the end of time.

Sometimes we may be overcome and say 'I never thought that I should have done that. But if you were to speak to God like that - I would speak carefully - He would not be surprised; He knew exactly what we would do. He knew that Peter would deny his Lord. Peter could not conceive it possible. He was a Hiding Place, hidden under the prayer of God. We value, or, shall I say, we do not value so much always the prayers of our hearers. Many a young person will have a persuasion that they have been kept back under the prayers of their parents, or if they have fallen they have not despaired. But we read in the Scriptures of being under the hiding place and the shield of the prayer of Jesus Christ. Now is that not one? Thou art my hiding place in my prayers: "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not (Luke 22.32), that thy shield will not drop out of thy hand, so that when Satan comes and tries to completely destroy your peace in a disgraceful way, here is the shield: "I have prayed for you that you will never lose your shield.

"My hiding place and my shield". Now this brought about a stability - a stability in the heart of the Psalmist here, for he says: "I hope in Thy Word". He does not say I hope I hope. He does not say that at all, he says I hope in Thy Word because of the experience of hope that I have had, because, going back to the first point, I can see the beginning of God's work in my soul. It has caused me to hate vain thoughts when He caused me to love His law, when He changed my heart, when He changed my way of life and made me willing to suffer with the people of God rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (Heb 11). When He made Jesus Christ precious to my soul - not a suggestion or an idol, as it were, but a reality, a person to whom I had to go again and again that He might be my Hiding Place, that He might be my Shield.

"I hope in Thy Word" and therefore I believe in the Word of God and all that it says about Christ being the Saviour of sinners, the Hiding Place of sinners, the Preserver of sinners.

"Preserved in Jesus when
My feet made haste to hell;
And there should I have gone,
But thou dost all things well;
Thy love was great, Thy mercy free,
Which from the pit delivered me." (Gadsbys 732)

Do you think that verse has stopped? Do you think that once you are called by grace, then that was a thing of the past? "Preserved in Jesus when my feet made haste to hell" Do you realise, sinner, that your feet would still make haste to hell unless you are preserved in Jesus Christ and called. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift" (II Cor. 9.15) that when our were there, there is another way. The love, the mercy, the tenderness of the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son. The love of God constraineth us (II Cor 5.14) when you will certainly come into temptation. You will certainly come into those occasions when Satan will present something to you, and sometimes he presents it to a person like this 'There is no harm in it'. Now as soon as you hear that word, friends, you will know there is a temptation behind it and Satan is inviting you to see whether there is any harm in it. What does the Word of God say? "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thes. 5.22). That if we hear this word, and you can hear people speak about it, 'There's no harm in it'. Well, why do we have to say there is no harm in it? If we see a bottle and it has on it POISON, why do we have to have POISON on the outside? Because it will be disastrous if we took a dose of that, and why do people have to say 'there is no harm in it' if there is no harm.

But sometimes we fall, sometimes we are overcome, and then what are we going to do? O, to find that the Lord Jesus Christ is ever ready. He is such a High Priest who will have compassion on the ignorant and upon them that are out of the way. "Thou art my Hiding Place and my Shield, I hope in Thy Word", the unchangeable Word of God, the faithful Word of God, the straightforward Word of God. I hope in Thy Word and I believe that God always tells me the truth and always shows me the way out.

One of our ministers said to me once in connection with a certain matter. He said, if I have made a mistake I have asked the Lord that He will make an honourable way out. Not any way, but an honourable way out. It may be you wonder whether you have made a mistake, and if you have, that He will make an honourable way out. Then will you not bless God that He is your Hiding Place and your Shield when you hope in His Word.

We will leave these few remarks in the Hand of God, and may He glorify His name.

Amen