

Hills from the Fountains of Israel.

THE WORD HID IN THE HEART.—BY THE REV. C. RIDGES, M.A.

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."—Psalm 119, 11.

What an aggregate of guilt and misery is comprehended in this short word "sin," the greatest curse that ever entered the universe of God, and the parent of every other curse. Its guilt is aggravated beyond the conception of thought. Injury to a superior—a father—a sovereign! Its power is misery, wherever it extends—in the heart, in the family, in the world. In eternity its power is unrestrained. Sometimes the death-bed scene casts a fearful gleam of light upon "the worm that never dieth, and the fire that never shall be quenched;" but experience only can develop its full grown horrors. How supremely important therefore is the object of our preservation from sin! and how wisely adapted are the means to the end! That word—which the man of God had just before mentioned as the guide to the *cleansing of his way*—he *hides within his heart*—not for concealment, but for security, that it may be ready for constant use. It is not therefore a mere acquaintance with the word, that will avail us. There must be a cordial assent—a sound digestion—a constant respect. It must be to us the rule that we would not transgress—the treasure that we are afraid to lose. Often indeed, Satan shuts out its entrance. He "catches away that which was sown." Too often, again, it is withered or choked in the soil. But the honest and good heart *hides it*, keeps it, and brings forth fruit with patience unto perfection. Here it "dwells richly in all wisdom," the storehouse as occasion requires; a principle of holiness; a covering from sin. In this view it is recommended by one, who had well acquainted himself with its valuable uses,—*"My son let them not (the divine precepts) depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion. So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble."* David also gives us the same experience—"by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." And it was probably this recollection, combined with a sense of continual danger, that suggested the prayer—"Order my steps in thy word; and let not any iniquity have dominion over me."

The value of the word is inestimable, as our means of walking with God in the hurry, business and temptation of the day. The Psalms furnish precious materials for ejaculatory prayer; the promises food for comfort; the rules such light in perplexity; the instruction such solid matter for godly conference—all operating for one end—a preservation from sin. Being from the word,—a manifestation of the Saviour's love,—what a keeping of the heart! what a quickening motive! How seasonable in worldly temptation is the warning of the word *hid* in the heart. "No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God!" So in the spiritual conflict let this word—"Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out"—be *hid in the heart*—what a preservative is it against unbelief! Take the word to the unbelieving believer, (if the expression may be allowed,) alarmed by ridicule or persecution—"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." Fearing that he shall never hold out unto the end; I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Trembling, lest his sins should rise up to his condemnation—and "The blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God cleanseth from all sin." And then as to duties: let his Saviour's word rebuke his indolence and unwatchfulness, what! could ye not watch one hour?—"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Hide in the heart the sorrowful story of his agony in the garden, and his death on the cross, that sin may appear yet more exceedingly sinful? But how is the word to gain entrance into hearts like ours? How shall it be *hid* in so unkindly a soil? No power of man could surely plant it there. The Holy Spirit's almighty agency must be diligently sought; for in proportion as we are filled with his gracious influences, shall he be armed, as was our Master, for the effectual resistance of our spiritual temptations.