[2] He conceals (*Abscondit*)

God conceals, the devil conceals, and man conceals.

In the first place, thus God conceals his power by predicting death and misery for himself and his own. Just as the power of the root in winter sends forth naked branches, but it comes back to life toward summer, Isai. 53[:3]: “His look was as it were hidden and despised.”

Second, he conceals his wisdom about the sins of the wicked, as if he may not see them, by dissembling. Thus, the sun is concealed for a time by a cloud, Deut. 31[:17]: “I will hide my face from them.”

Third, he hides his love from his friends to the extent that he does not show that love. Just as the father does not always show his every affection, lest perhaps the son would become bolder and worse from this, Job 13[:24]: “Why do you hide your face?” But in repayment of his heredity these affections are shown, Psal. [30:20]: “O how great is the multitude of your sweetness, O Lord, which you have hidden for them that fear you!

If the devil hides from God, there is a triple disadvantage of sin, namely, a divine offense under a mound of mercy, such as a hook under the meat,[[1]](#endnote-1) a poison in the wine,[[2]](#endnote-2) Prov. 10[:18]: “Lying lips hide hatred,” that is, the sin which God hates.

Second, he hides an internal blemish under the sweet flesh, just as a corpse is concealed under a beautiful sepulcher, a snare under the grain, Psal. [141:4]: “In this way wherein I walked, they have hidden a snare for me.”

Third, he hides the required penalty under the hope of repentance, just as a trap is hidden under the leaf, Job 18[:10]: “A gin is hidden for him in the earth.” If the sinner sees this trap, perhaps he would not sin, Luke 19[:42]: “If you also had known.” Perhaps you would weep as I weep now over you. Now however these matters are hidden.

¶ In the third place, man hides, the sinner as well as the just man both. The sinner hides his sin, either because of love or sweetness, which he has for that sin. Thus, the magpie and the raven hide their found objects, Job 20[:12]: “For when evil shall be sweet in his mouth, he will hide it under his tongue.” Thus, he hides the theft, concealing the matter by a suspension of guilt. Joshua 7[:21-26]: Achan hiding the golden rule was stoned to death. Thus, the sheaf hardly covers the finial of the sword, Job 31[:33]: “If as a man I have hid my sin.” Sometimes the sinner hides his evil because of shame, as the one mutilated conceals his defect. So, Rachel “hid her father’s idols under the camel’s furniture,” Gen. 31[:34]. Prov. 28[:13]: “He who hides his sins, shall not prosper; but he who shall confess, and forsake them, shall obtain mercy.”

Wherefore, Boethius, *De consolatione,* book 1, prose 4,[[3]](#endnote-3) confess lest you hide anything. If you look for the work of a surgeon, it is necessary that you uncover your wound. For while a brother is hidden, he cannot be healed in his wound. This was evident in our first parents who, because they hid their sin as much as possible, they made their evil worse, Gen. 3[:8]. Wherefore Chrysostom, *Super Mattheum* 63,[[4]](#endnote-4) some evil people hide their deeds blushing more for men than fearing God, but he who fears God does not blush for men, but sin cannot be hidden because it is revealed to him.

Again, there is fire, Prov. 6[:27]: “Can a man hide fire in his bosom, and his garments not burn?” But sin is a fire, Job 31[:12]: “It is a fire that devours even to destruction.” Therefore, what is not hidden, at length will be revealed, Luc. 8[:17]: “For there is nothing secret that shall not be made manifest, nor hidden, that shall not be known.”

Again, minerals while they lie in the earth, so a sin is hidden here, [1] Cor. 3[:13]: “For the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire.” And [1] Tim. 5[:25]: “Good deeds are manifest; and they that are otherwise, cannot be hid.”

Again, what happens in secret between a lover and his mistress, afterwards it is revealed when it will arrive at birth, Eccli. 39[:24]: “The works of all flesh are before him, and there is nothing hid from his eyes.” And Eccli. 42[:20]: “No thought escapes him, and no word can hide itself from him.” Jer. 49[:10]: “I have made him bare, I have revealed his secrets.” But these things shall be uncovered with the sun revealing in his judgment, 1 Cor. 4[:5]: “Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.”

Wherefore, so also you see that a nest made in a tree during the summer is hidden by the foliage, but after the fall of the leaves in winter it is revealed to any traveler going by the way. Thus, when the devil builds his nest in the heart of man[[5]](#endnote-5) flourishing under the heat of lewdness, afterwards in the winter of death those things will appear to all men which before were believed hidden, Luke 12[:2]: “For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; nor hidden, that shall not be known.” There are example and figure for this, 2 Kings 12[:9], David believed he had hidden his sin with Bathsheba, but Nathan the prophet approaching said openly to David, “You have done that hidden thing; I will make it open before the sun of this one, that is, of the entire world.”

Again, the just man hides. He hides the evils of others through charity lest they be known, lest neighbors be brought to disrepute; for charity “shall cover a multitude of sins,” James [5:20]. For an example, see Dist. 96, c. [*In scripturis*],[[6]](#endnote-6) concerning the emperor Constantine who said, “If I would see with my own eyes a monk in sin, whereupon, I would despoil my cloak and cover him, lest he be seen by another.” Wherefore, Gen. 9[:22], Cham was cursed by his father because he did not cover his father’s nakedness, but he showed it to the mockery of others. However, the sons who covered him were blessed in the figure of the dead fathers of those sons. Whence the verse: Cham laughed when he saw the naked members of his paternity; the Jews laugh at the penalty of the patient God.

Again, the men of Rabies were blessed by God because they buried and hid the bones of Saul lest they appear to confusion and derision, [2 Reg. 21:12-14].

Again, Rachel hid the idols of her father in which he was accustomed to sin by idolizing, Gen. 31[:34]. In this she was commended.

Again, the just man sometimes ought to conceal his own goods; at other times he ought to lay open things hidden. Against one’s glory, Job 36[:32]: “In his hands he hides the light.” For he who carries a candle in a swift wind [finds] it can be extinguished, unless it is covered. Here, he who goes about with the light of some grace in the wind of a storm, unless he quickly covers it, he will lose his safety from the effect of the wind to which it is subservient. The example and figure of this are in 4 Kings 20[:15], Ezechias, because he showed his riches to the messengers of the Babylonians as an ostentation of vain glory, lost everything.

Again, renowned women hide their face from the wind and from the heat so that they may please their husbands more, so ought souls do for love; Matt. 6[:3-4]: “But when you do alms (do them) in secret.” There is a figure for this, Exod. 2[:2], the mother of Moses “seeing him a goodly child hid him three months.” For otherwise he would have perished ... whoever has goodly grace ought to hide … Certainly, he who is plunged down, now lifted, now oppressed, and finally that one, who through vain glory perishes, is lifted for a time through pride, he is quickly brought down through affliction, and finally he vanishes.

¶ Again, the young hen, when she lays an egg, immediately cackles and thus loses it; and the peahen[[7]](#endnote-7) hides her egg lest the cock break it. Wherefore, Prov. 10[:14]: “Wise men lay-up knowledge,” etc. The prudent administrator in the curia does not show his plan until it is confirmed in glory.

Wherefore, Gregory says in a *Homily*,[[8]](#endnote-8) “it is not sufficient to guard the study of heavenly yearnings from evil spirits, one must hide this from human acclaim.” Here also note that the just man can expose his good words for the glory of God, and for the incitement of his neighbor to goodness, Matt. 5[:16]: “So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” Thus, Job said [29:15], for the edification of his neighbor, “I was an eye to the blind, and a foot to the lame,” and many other laudable sayings in this manner.

Sometimes if a man hides his graces out of malevolence, where it could be a benefit to his neighbor, he falls into malediction, Prov. 11[:26]: “He who hides up corn, shall be cursed among the people.” Such ones are like the peacocks, about which Pliny says in his *Naturalis Historia*,[[9]](#endnote-9) that they hide their droppings knowing that they are effective as a medicine. For, namely, according to Jerome, *Contra Jovinianum*,[[10]](#endnote-10) it is against the heat of gout. Thus, many hide their wisdom from others wishing to learn. Against which, Wis. 7[:13]: “Which I have learned without guile, and communicate without envy, and her riches I hide not.” In a figure of which the leprous have said, 4 Kings 7[:3-9]. The apostles who found Thomas after their astonishment, that if they hide these things and be quiet about them, they will more quickly be denounced, [John 20:25].

Wherefore also the servant who hid the talent of his lord was thrown into the darkness, Matt. 25[:25-30]. Wherefore Joshua 7[:21-25]: Achan who hid the golden rule was stoned to death. Thus, whoever hide knowledge, by which they ought to rule others, are worthy of stoning, Eccli. 20[:32]: “Wisdom that is hid, and treasure that is not seen, what profit is there in them both?” A key that is hidden and not used attracts rust and is less useful for opening, thus hidden grace is less likely to open the kingdom of heaven. There is the example of the servant hiding the talent, Matt. 25[:21-23], but of the servant multiplying the talents, it is said, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

1. Cf. Rupert of Deutz, *De Victoria Verbi Dei* 12.14 (PL 169:1474): quia si cognovisset Leviathan, sive cetus magnus, qui in mari est, hamum sub carne latuisse ferreum. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 3.31 (PL 71:264): de alio calice reges communicent, et de alio populus minor, venenum in calice illo posuit de quo mater communicatura erat. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae* 1, pr. 4 (PL 63:614): Si operam medicantis exspectas, oportet vulnus detegas. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Pseudo-Chrysostom, *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum* Homilia 52 ex cap. 25:1 (PG 56:929): Alii autem turpes actus suos usque ad mortem abscondunt, amplius homines erubescentes, quam Deum timentes, et semper sunt in vulnere, dum pro tempore nolunt apparere vulnerati. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Cf. Thomas of Jorz, *Commentarius Super Psalmos* 24:13 (Rome: Apud Euangelistam Deuchinum, 1611), (p. 298b): Sic est de Diabolo, qui in arbore, id est, in Corde hominis, non solum insidet, sed etiam nidificat, qui peccatum in consuetudinem ducit.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=QlEZtAEACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_atb#v=onepage&q&f=false> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. D. 96, c. 8: In scripturis narratur Constantinus imperator dixisse: Vere si propriis oculis vidissem sacerdotem Dei, aut aliquem eorum, qui monachico habitu circumamicti sunt, peccantem, chlamydem meam exspoliarem et cooperirem eum, ne ab aliquo videretur. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Cf. Hildegardis Bingensis, *Subtilitatum diversarum naturarum creaturum* 6.3 (PL 1288): Sed pavo, scilicet femina, cum ova sua ponit, ea abscondit ne masculus suus illa videat, quasi eam pudeat ova pertulisse et non nuda carne pullum generare, sed testa ovi opertum, et ideo ova odit et ea confringit si illa invenerit. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Gregory, *Homiliarum in Evangelia* 1.11 (PL 76.1115): quia studium coelestis desiderii a malignis spiritibus custodire non sufficit, qui hoc ab humanis laudibus non abscondit. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Pliny, *Natural History* 29.124 (LCL 418:262-263): qua in mentione significandum est pavones fimum suum resorbere tradi invidentes hominum utilitatibus.

while on the subject I must mention the tradition that peacocks swallow back their own dung, begrudging men its benefits. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum* 2.6 (PL 23:292): Pavi fimus podagrae fervorem mitigat. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)