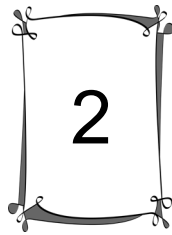


The background image shows a winding asphalt road and a railway track curving through a valley. The trees are in autumn, with yellow and orange leaves. In the distance, there are mountains under a cloudy sky. The entire scene is framed by a green border with decorative cutouts at the corners.

# Sermons of Robert Murray M'Cheyne

## **2. Christ the Only Refuge**

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of  
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Christ the Only  
Refuge

***“Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast” Isaiah 26:20.***

This passage is a word in season to God’s people in every time of impending calamity. The form of expression is evidently taken from that dreadful night when God passed through the land of Egypt to smite all the firstborn of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat upon the throne to the firstborn of the captive that sat in the dungeon. “And Pharaoh arose in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead.” But God had commanded his own Israel to kill the paschal lamb, the type of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, and to take the bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood: “And none of you (said he) shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.” As if he had said: “Come, my people, enter into thy chambers, and shut thy blood-sprinkled doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.”

It may be difficult to determine what time of indignation the prophet here refers to. The prophecy was given in the beginning of Hezekiah’s reign, when many a destruction was yet to come upon the land of Israel. The invasion by Sennacherib the Assyrian was just at hand, and may be primarily referred to. The invasion by Nebuchadnezzar, and seventy years’ captivity was also coming; and this also may be referred to. And the invasion by the Romans, in which Jerusalem was destroyed, and the Jews finally dispersed over the world, may also be referred to. And in all these coming indignations, God’s word to his people was, to hide in their chambers; in the refuge which he had appointed them, till the indignation should be overpast.

But most of all does this prophecy refer to the great storm of indignation which God is yet going to bring upon the world, before the end come; when the Lord Jesus shall come a second time, without sin unto salvation; when he shall come again, no

more a poor man, clothed in a seamless garment, but glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength; “when he shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.” In that day of awful tribulation, in which, except it were shortened, no flesh should be saved, God will gather his own as it were into chambers, and keep them hid till the storm passes over.

As in the flood, he brought his little flock into the ark, and it is written: “God shut them in,” he shut the doors about them, till the deluge of his wrath was past, as in the destruction of Jericho, the family of Rahab were gathered all within doors, and saved from the wrath that came on all besides; as in the destruction of the firstborn in Egypt, God kept his own Israel safely hid in their dwellings; so, in the last storm that shall fall on this poor perishing world, God will gather his elect safe under the hollow of his hand, saying: “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee, hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.”

The doctrine to be learned from this passage is a very plain one, namely, that in every time of calamity God bids us and our families find refuge in Christ. There is no safety anywhere else.

**Christ is a complete refuge in every storm.** In other parts of the Bible Christ is compared to “a hiding-place from the wind, a covert from the storm, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land;” he is compared to “a fortress, or high tower, into which we may flee and be safe,” he is compared to “an apple tree amid the trees of the wood, under whose shadow we may sit down, and his fruit be sweet to our taste.” But the comparison here is quite different; he is here compared to our own chamber, with the door shut: “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee.”

Now Christ is like our own chamber with the door shut in many respects:

**Because their is safety in him.** There is no place in all the world to which we look oftener in an hour of danger, as a refuge and place of safety, than our own home, the inner chamber, with the door made fast. Brethren, just such is Christ. There is safety in him: “There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.”

**Because there is quietness and rest in him.** In the world we look for the bustle and harassment of business; but when we enter into our chamber, and shut the door behind us, we shut out the bustling, noisy world, all is tranquillity and peace. Brethren, just such is Christ. In him the “weary are at rest.” We are “without carefulness,” we have “quietness and assurance for ever.”

**Because our home is a ready-made retreat, near and easy access.** When we seek our home, we have not to soar with the eagle to the top of the rugged rocks; nor like the dove that makes its nest in the hole’s mouth, neither have we to dig into the earth, that we may hide our head there. Our home is near unto us. Brethren, just such is Christ. He is a ready Saviour, at hand, and not afar off. We have not to ascend, to bring Christ down from above, neither have we to descend into the deep, to bring Christ again from the dead. But the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart. Oh, he is a near Saviour, he is not far from any one of us.

Now, this is the refuge which God bids his people flee into in every storm: “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee, hide thee as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.” And, oh, it is an all-sufficient refuge in every storm!

### **1. Christ is a complete refuge in a storm of conscience.**

The great mass of unconverted men are living quite securely in their sins, going about from day to day without the least anxiety, though they are abiding under wrath. The reason is, that the vials of wrath are held over their heads, but not yet poured out; the flames of hell are burning up to their very feet, but they are not yet

suffered to touch them. God is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish.

But when God awakens a soul to know his true condition, then there arises a storm of conscience within. O brethren, there is no more security to that soul! He does not feel the loathsomeness of sin as a child of God does; but he feels the terribleness of wrath. The Spirit has convinced him of sin. Every sin of his past life rises up behind him, and seems to cry for instant vengeance. All the sins of his hands, his taking things that were not his own, his handling unlawful things, and writing abominable and foolish things. The sins of his feet, swift to shed blood, swift to carry him to the haunts of sin. The sins of his eyes, full of adultery, and that could not cease from sin. The sins of his tongue, loving and making a lie, putting forth words of clamour and evil-speaking, backbiting and bitterness, speaking shameful words in the dark, things of which it is a shame so much as to speak. The sins of his heart, that it should always have been like a fountain, pouring out abominable desires and loathsome affections toward the creature, whilst the Creator was unloved, though the loveliest of all.

Oh, brethren, when a man really feels that the wrath of God is lying on him for a whole lifetime of sin, who can bear that storm? And, worst of all, when the Spirit convinces of sin, “because he believes not in Jesus?” When the sinner feels that Jesus hath been stretching out his hands all the day, and he hath not regarded; that the gentle Saviour has called, and he has refused, that he has trodden the offers of mercy under his feet, and done despite to the Spirit of grace, oh then does the storm of conscience rise into a whirlwind! The fears of wrath lie hard upon that soul, they are like waves and billows going over him. His wife and children cannot cheer him now. His sinful comrades cannot laugh him from his fears now.

O brethren, if ever you have seen the sad, dejected countenance of a sinner convinced by God, you will not soon forget it! He is not sure but his next step may be into hell. When he falls asleep, he does not know but he may wake up in hell.

Oh, if there be one soul here thus awakened, afflicted, tempest tossed, and not comforted, hear this word: “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.” True, this is a word chiefly to God’s people who have already hidden in Christ; but Christ is as free to you as to them. In him there is perfect safety. In him is quietness and rest. He is a near saviour. His arms are as open to receive you as is your own home. Come, poor sinners, enter into this chamber. Every one that is now in Christ was once as much tempest-tossed as you are. When a man is overtaken by nightfall on a bleak moor, when the frosty wind blows bitterly upon him and the wreathing snow retards his every footstep, where is it that he longs to be? What spot in all the world comes oftenest across his wishful fancy? It is his home, his inner chamber, with the door made fast. Oh, if he were only there, he would be safe! Oh, poor soul, just such are you, and just such a home is Christ, not afar off, but near! Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved. Hide in him, for he is a hiding-place from the wind.

## **2. Christ is a complete refuge in a storm of providence.**

When providences are all favourable, it is amazing to see how careless unconverted men grow of God and the things of eternity. When the glow of health has been long upon their cheek, they begin to live as if they were to live for ever, as if there were no death and no hell. When their business goes on prosperously from week to week, they begin to feel like lords of the universe, as if this world were their own, as if their houses, and lands, and money, were all their own, and they could never part company. And, oh, it is still more amazing to see how careless even the children of God will grow in such times of long-continued prosperity! How death and eternity, and to be with Christ, and to be like Christ, become less desirable things than once they were; how like they become to the world, in supposing that gain is godliness; how the poor, pitiful possessions of this world seem for

a time to come between and intercept the view of the inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; how the glare and glitter of this present evil world dazzle their eyes, and dim their sight for beholding the King in his beauty, and the land that is very far off.

Now, it is deeply interesting and deeply instructive to mark the panic which comes upon the face of society, when God makes a sudden change of providences, when all of a sudden the sky is overcast, the distant thunder begins to roll, and the storm of providence comes on. When those sudden crashes take place in the commercial world, when, like the avalanche of the snowy mountains, that comes down upon some hapless village, smothering whole families in the midst of their unthinking gaiety, when those overwhelming catastrophes come down, involving whole families in ruin and penury, oh it is strange to see how the world stand amazed, their wisdom is all dashed and confounded!

Or, when God sends a time of widespread sickness and death, when he seems to poison the very atmosphere, when we are visited by the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noon-day, when a thousand fall at our side, and ten thousand at our right hand, oh it is strange to see what a panic comes upon men, and paleness upon all faces! It is like when a set of fishing boats have set out upon an excursion when the wind was fair, and the sun shone happily, and the blue waves curled gently on every side, and all is joy and carelessness in every boat; when suddenly the sky is overcast, the whistling wind rises, a dreadful squall is at hand, and death stares every man in the face. Ah, then what panic seizes upon every boat's crew! What reefing of the sails! What grasping at the helm! How one seeks to run into the shore, another into the deep!

Such is the panic that comes over unconverted men in a time of widespread calamity. And oh, how religious they now become! How they look grave and forsake their jests and loose talking, and think that is religion? They are just like Israel of old: "When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned and inquired



early after God. And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.”

Now, brethren, in such a storm of providence, Christ is a complete refuge; and though the children of God in such times, even they, seem to be in doubt and jeopardy, they know not what to think, they know not where to flee. Yet they may hear the Word of God above the storm: “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.” Just as our own chamber, with the doors shut about us, is the place where we have quietness and rest; and the storm may rage without, but we shall not feel it; and the world may be crying aloud, yet we shall not hear it; so the Lord Jesus is a perfect refuge to the believer from all the storms of providence.

Men are apt to think that the only good of hiding in Christ is to save our souls, that when an awakened sinner hides in the Lord Jesus, he finds pardon of all sin and peace with God, but nothing more. But the whole Bible shows that there is much more in Christ; that when we hide in him, we are saved from all our distresses; from our troubles about health, about money, about the world. In the Thirty fourth Psalm, it is mentioned four times over, that when we come to Christ we are saved, not out of one trouble, but out of all our troubles: “I sought the Lord; he heard, and delivered me from all my fears”(verse 4). “This poor man cried, and the LORD heard, and saved him out of all his troubles” (verse 6). “The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles” (verse 17). “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, yet the LORD delivereth them out of them all” (verse 19). And the reason is plain, when we hide in Jesus, the God of providence becomes our God and Father, and we know he will make all things work together for our good. The Lord is our shepherd, we shall not want. Whatever temporal good may be

taken away, we know that our eternal good is secure: “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Timothy 1: 12).

Oh, my believing friends, why should you be discouraged in this time of widespread sickness and calamity? Why should you be cast down, as if God were covering you with a cloud in his anger? These clouds may be a few drops of God’s coming wrath upon the world; they may be like the first of the thunder-shower; but to you they speak in the language of love. God wishes you deeper hid in Christ, he wishes you more separate from the world: “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee.”

We never would know so well the blessing of a home, if there were no winter snows and winter winds to make us crowd round the happy hearth. Just so, believer, you would not know the blessing of such a chamber as Christ is, if there were no sicknesses and dark impending providences to make you live more in him. Come then, believer, let every drop of wrath that falls around you speak with new power to your soul, and give new life to that faith by which you cleave to Jesus. Let every sigh you hear, be as it were a voice from God, saying: “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers.”

And you, poor Christless souls, all, where shall you run — poor sheep that have no shepherd — defenceless and lost in this world’s wilderness? You have no home. Enter into your securest room, and shut your door; still vengeance can reach you there. God is against you, his wrath is abiding on you. Oh, the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light to you! Wherever you go, you are a lost soul: “As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him.” Oh, brethren, ye are men, ye have reason, will ye not flee from the wrath to come? Will these wasting sicknesses not convince you that God is stronger than you — that you will be nothing in the hands of an angry God? Even to you, then, Christ,

the door of salvation, is still open, wide open. Come, poor sinner, enter into this chamber, and shut thy doors about thee. "Hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

There are just two remarks I would make in conclusion:

(1). *That this passage bids us hide in Christ, not singly, but in families.* In that deliverance which God wrought for Israel in Egypt he taught this very remarkably; for he did not gather Israel into some great tower where they might be safe, but bade each family remain within their own house, only sprinkling the doors with blood; and so in saving Noah — God saved not single souls, but a whole family; and so in saving Lot — God saved Lot and all that were his; and so in saving Rahab — she and all her household were gathered in and saved. My friends, God is still the God of families, and still does he wish whole families of you to be saved; and he says as much in the words before me: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers." Alas, my friends, we live in days when family religion is fallen to the ground. Men are too proud now to be like Abraham, and to command their children and their servants after them. Men nowadays take up the words of Cain, and say: "Am I my brother's keeper?" Ah, where are our Andrews now? "Andrew first findeth his own brother, Peter, and saith unto him, We have found the Christ; and he brought him to Jesus."

What! Is there one of you who thinks himself a child of God, who is yet ashamed to kneel down in the midst of his family, and pray? Alas, my friend, you may dream that you are a child of Abraham, but remember you do not the works of Abraham. All, brethren, whole families must be saved; for whole families are in danger of hell.

Oh, then, you that know the Lord, do not your bowels yearn over your perishing kindred? Can you not fall on some contrivance, think you, to win them to Christ? Will you not strengthen our hands, at least, by your words and prayers, and by opening the way for the minister of Christ into the bosom of your

unconverted families? Ah, in this time of trouble, will you not lay hands on them, as the angels did on Lot? Hark! The Lord invites you: “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.”

(2). *I observe that the dangers to which the believer is exposed are but for a time.* God says: “Hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.” It was so in that night, when God smote the firstborn in Egypt. It was but a night that they were to hide in their houses: “None of you shall go out of his house until the morning.” It was so in the destruction of Jericho — Rahab and her kindred hid themselves seven days till the danger was overpast. And just so the troubles of believers now are for a very short time: “These light afflictions are but for a moment.” And also the indignation which is coming on the world will be but for a little moment — it will soon be overpast.

(a). *Temporal troubles are but for a moment;* these sad sicknesses and wasting calamities will not last for ever. A short while, and this body will be past the power of pain to grieve it. I know that if any of you have tasted the sweetness of being in Christ, you could be content to hide in him for an eternity. Welcome an eternity of outward troubles, if I have such a hiding place. But you are not asked to do this: “Hide thyself as it were for a little moment.” Live but a few years more in faith, and thou shalt live the rest in glory: “If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.”

(b). *The indignation of the latter day will be but for a moment.* Days of wrath are coming such as the world has never known before. My friends, it is vain to conceal it. And if these days were not shortened, no flesh could be saved; but for the elect’s sake they shall be shortened they shall be made as a little moment. Whether these days of trouble shall be in our day I do not know; for we know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh. But this I do know, that there is no safety, no, not for another night, for any soul that is not hiding in the Saviour. I

repeat it, my friends, if you lie down in your bed this night out of Christ, the Son of Man may be come before the morning, and you be cut in sunder, and have your portion with the hypocrites where is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

But, O believer, hidden in the cleft Rock, abide in him. As the sky darkens around you, hide deeper in him. It is only for a short time — one dark, dark cloud, and eternal sunshine beyond; one wild wave of vengeance, and an unbounded ocean of glory.

Little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear ye may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming: “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.”

