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Sermon Preached at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
by Mr J.K. Popham on Wednesday Evening
24th July 1929

Text: Isaiah 26 verses 20 & 21

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. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

These are the words of the Holy Ghost, which He inspired Isaiah to write. They tell the Church of danger, of righteous wrath, about to be poured out upon the wicked, among whom they live, in the nations of the earth. Righteous indignation that they themselves fear, because of their sense of sin, and because they are very much mixed up with the world, yet distinct from, and different to it. In the world yet not of it, and now they are to be kept, in a marked way from that evil which is not only in the world, but is coming upon the world. "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Peter 1 verse 5). The evil of punishment, is richly deserved but not expected, and to these gracious, helpless people, their great and gracious God, sends to them in holy scripture this gracious invitation. An invitation which contains a description of the place of safety. The place into which they are invited to come, for they are to enter into that place and shut their doors about them. Because God's anger is to fall upon the wicked, and the earth is to disclose all the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, and no more to cover it.

This invitation belongs to every child of God upon the earth, and will belong to each one when the moment comes, for this wrath to be poured out. But it extends to all times, as one may say, when in danger or difficulty. Any single enemy can come against the world, and against the Church, but God here has made ample and wonderful provision for them. Come My people, Oh to belong to God in this way, who can express the infinite mercy that is in such an application as this. Come My people, I have loved thee, I have bought you with my blood, I have made you My people by My Spirit. I have created you and formed you for my glory. "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise." (Isaiah 43 verse 21). Such people are in the covenant of grace, by purchase and regeneration, and are dear to Christ. Therefore because the wicked are about to be punished, come into this place of safety.

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." (Psalm 91 verse 1). Come into this your habitation where no evil shall find you, no arrow shall pierce you, and no pestilence slay you. Come my people, Oh children of God, what has He done for you and me. This sound is enough to make any sinner rejoice who hears it, it is a joyful sound, and more than his fears. It brings, and for the moment maintains, the peace of God in his conscience, and no evil shall overtake him. Who is he that shall harm you, if you are enabled to obey this great word. Come, come away from the place you are in, from the dangers you apprehend, from the weakness you feel, from the fears that torment you, from the temptations that distress and threaten you. Come away from the lions den and from the mountain of leopards. "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lion's dens, from the mountains of the leopards. (Song of Solomon 4 verse 8). Come to the place I have provided for your safety, for your pleasure and comfort.

I have provided this wonderful place, what a mercy it is to belong to God, no pedigree that men can boast of here can match with this, to belong to God. This relationship has its foundation in the very heart and love of God, it has its rise in the Person of Christ. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." (Hebrews 2 verse 14). It has its sweetness to every soul thus spoken to, by the grace of the Spirit. May we never leave out the Trinity when we speak of salvation, no one Person in the Trinity can be dispensed with.

Invitations may reach a fearing heart, or may reach a sinner, who perhaps is enabled in some degree to read the signs of the times, and who may say, I am afraid because I am weak and apt to fall and backslide. I have no strength to resist the temptation, and this word comes into the heart by the Holy Ghost. Come My people, come to Me, and faith hearing this word obeys. You will always find that the obedience of faith is when the word of God comes in power. It was so with the Thessalonians, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake." (1 Thessalonians 1 verse 5). "And how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." (verse 9 & 10).

May we hear this word, "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God." (John 13 verse 3). Jesus uttered it in the days of His sojourn here when His disciples were before Him. And He also told them that, He therefore had sovereign universal rule over all things. He said "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11 verse 28). Come to Me, I am able to do what I promise, men may promise and fail for want perhaps, not so much of will as of power, to fulfil their word. But He speaks as one, "That is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." (Ephesians 3 verse 20). Oh think of the omnipotence in Jesus Christ, He restrains men, He rules devils, He manages the world, He upholds it by the word of His power. "Ah Lord God ! behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for Thee." (Jeremiah 32 verse 17).

This Almighty Saviour looks upon people exposed to dangers, and says to them, Come, I have provided for you, I am sufficient for you, "Come my people enter Thou into thy chambers." Oh but says one, I am a sinner, but the gospel is for sinners, Christ was born for sinners, He was made sin for sinners, obeyed the law for sinners, He died for sinners. And we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; And having a High Priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." (Hebrews 1 verse 19-22).

Come, but what are these chambers ? are they not all contained in One, even in Him who is a little sanctuary in the wilderness. "Thus saith the Lord God; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come." (Ezekiel 11 verse 16). Who is a hiding place from all evil, who is a strong tower. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." (Proverbs 18 verse 10). Are they not all set out in that word in the Psalm ? "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about His people from henceforth even for ever." (Psalm 125 verse 2). He is about them that fear Him, a bleeding Jesus is the security, and the safety of His people. And it may be said, that the perfections of God, as they are now in all their eternal fulness of glory in Christ, can be likened, without any fancifullness to these chambers.

Take the eternal love of God to sinners, Oh what a wonderful hiding place this is. One of the greatest texts in the Bible is found in the gospel as recorded by John. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3 verse 16). This does not belong to the Arminians at all, it belongs to the saints, not to the world at large, but to those mentioned in our text, "Come My people." They are the true believers. When Jesus came into the world, He had a divine object, it answers to His name. "And thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1 verse 21). And this coming of Jesus, this sending of Him, was by the eternal love of God. The Apostle Paul rejoices in this, and through the Spirit speaks of God. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." (Ephesians 1 verses 3-5). Love divine in all the blessed folds of it, so to express it, embraces and covers, protects and comforts, blesses and secures, all the favoured objects of it. Further we read in God's word, "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. Jeremiah 31 verse 3). And the prayer of Christ the Intercessor separates the saints from the world, we read, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John 17 verse 16). And at the day of vengeance these people may, in their own apprehension be exposed to evils, but blessed be God, they are not exposed in the judgement and purpose of God to the plagues which will come upon Babylon. "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Revelation 18 verse 4). Come enter into this chamber, into my love, and the entrance is by faith, precious faith, God given faith, and the sinner with such faith comes to the God of love, asking Him to hide him. Oh what a rest it is, what safety is in it, what can harm you if you are under the eye of God's great love in Christ? What arrow sent by the devil can enter your heart, covered with this love?

Enter into the chamber of God's wonderful mediation, "For there is one God, (A most awful truth to the wicked, and a most blessed truth to the righteous) and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 2 verse 5). One God against whom we have sinned, who has a just quarrel against us.

But who has been raised up, sent forth and revealed, this blessed Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ. Job desired a days-man or mediator in his day, he says, "For He is not a man, as I am, that I should answer Him, and we should come together in judgement. Neither is there any daysman (mediator) betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both." Job 9 verses 32 & 33). That is the offender and the one offended, and when you are apprehensive knowing that you deserve punishment you fear. You are apprehensive of the plagues that are threatened against Babylon, because you are very much in Babylon, in your own fear. To what place can you go with your fears and with your guilt ? To whom do you send a heart felt cry ? To whom do you fly by faith ? Why you say, to the Mediator only. He is my only hope, my only refuge, my only confidence for the present and the future, for time with all its vicissitudes and dangers, and for eternity in its unchangeable condition. To Him, the Mediator, to Him alone do I look for protection, and there is no rejection here. He does not say the case is too complex, He does not say I cannot undertake it as it is too weighty for Me. "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."(Hebrews 7 verse 25). Will that do ? Oh yes that is enough, secured there what harm can reach you. Dwelling there, no death or pestilence, no arrow or destruction, nor destroyer can enter or hurt you. Come my people enter into the Mediator, the blessed Mediator Jesus Christ. Look to His mediation, put your bad case into His good hand, put your weakness before Him, and rely on His power. Be like the spouse in the Song of Solomon leaning on His arm, "Who is his that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved." (Song of Solomon 8 verse 5).

Enter into His atonement, Christ's atonement is ample, and is eternally sufficient, and more than all your sin. It appeased offended justice, and it is a sweet smelling savour to God. It meets the claims of a conscience that is under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and the claims of a conscience that says, I can never have peace with God but by that full atonement. Conscience is wonderful in this, that it never will, being under the gracious teaching of the Spirit allow a sinner to rest in anything, any place, any name, any virtue save this atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. All else is but dung and dross, all else is vanity and death, but this is life, this is safety, this is peace and reconciliation to God. But the knowledge of this will always be apprehensive, never comprehensive. You will never get hold of it all, but a little comprehended by faith of the atonement is sufficient, it is as broad as the law of God, as pure as the light of God, it is commensurate with all the claims of the Deity, with all he needs of the sinner, the atonement is indeed a chamber for safety.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee." (Isaiah 26 verse 3). Enter into the Covenant made with Christ, the covenant of grace. The "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure." (2 Samuel 23 verse 5). Leaving out nothing that a sinner could need, and nothing that would glorify God. Two immutable things are in it, "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." (Hebrews 6 verse 18). These two things are, the promise of God, and the ratification of the promise with an oath, which assures every man who receives them. All disputes are settled by these two things, the promise and the oath concerning the promise which ratifies it. How much more will all the controversy, disputes and fears respecting providence and grace be settled, and removed out of the way, when a sinner by faith apprehends this covenant. Takes himself to it by faith and prayer, calling upon the name of God. Come my people, I have made a covenant with my chosen. "I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people." (Psalm 89 verse 19). Come then with your weakness, your fears, and your enemies, and all things that you apprehend to be dangerous to you, they are fully met within this covenant.

Enter into My omnipotence, we may apprehend omnipotence when joined with divine justice, to be against us. "We may be fearing Him, who "after He hath killed (the body), hath power to cast (the soul) into hell." (Luke 12 verse 5). We may greatly fear omnipotence in the exercise of it in providence, we may fear sometimes that whatever we think, whatever we fear, whatever we do, the providence of God is over us for evil. We may fear it, but omnipotence has a kind face to a sinner who by faith looks to the Lord Jesus. Oh it has a smile for a sinner, for Jesus, who is omnipotence said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11 verse 28). Omnipotence also said, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy." (Hebrews 4 verse 16). It holds out a helping hand, yea, a strong arm, and says to the weak one in the wilderness, lean on Me, give your case up to Me, I will manage it. Bring all your wants to Me, I will supply them, confess all your fears to Me, I will disperse them, and all your doubts, I will remove them. Omnipotence, Oh what a blessed, wonderful perfection this is in Jehovah. If you see it in Christ, in that blessed Person who came, "in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." (Romans 8 verse 3). Then you will say, what can I then fear ?

"Enter thou into thy chambers," enter into this, the eternal faithfulness of Jehovah. "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1 verse 6). It is a remarkable word concerning God's promises, "For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." (2 Corinthians 1 verse 20). Now take notice of that last word, to the glory of God by us, what does it mean ? it means this, that when God fulfils a promise to a sinner, His glory is thereby secured in that sinner, by that sinners experience. That the promise not to cast out, is made good to the glory of God when a sinner is received. "This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." (Luke 15 verse 2). Enter then into this chamber, what comfort and security is here.

"Come My people," let me say in a word, what I have said before, the perfections of God are the chambers in the text, but there are also chambers in a distinct way of experience. Christ said, "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." (Matthew 6 verse 5). When we enter by faith, into these chambers and seek the face, the favour, blessing and covering protection of God, it is like shutting a door. As if faith says in the heart, now leave the world and this care which corrodes your spirit, leave these things that you are afraid of, and shut the door upon them. I would fain be free from such things, and have no commerce with them, shut thy door about thee. You know what this means some of you, to say to your soul leave the world, leave all your cares, leave your troubles, and leave the friends you ought to visit, leave everything and everybody and just turn to the Lord. It is sweet to do this, there is a reality in it, every saint knows it, we know too well what it is to be unduly familiar with the earth, with life and the anxieties of life. "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat ? or, What shall we drink ? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed ? (Matthew 6 verse 31). To be unduly familiar with a feeling about the future, what about tomorrow ? what am I going to do ? what about my position, my situation, Oh many, many things come to open the door into your heart and mind, even to force it open sometimes, and you say, I cannot cast these things from me, I cannot cast my burden on the Lord, I am just carrying it and have no power against the burden. Some of you are very familiar with this no doubt, I hope not as familiar as I am. But there are moments when there is a change, a gracious change, and faith says to all these things, hinder me not, I must go to Himself and seek Him who my soul loveth. I desire His presence above all else, I am hungry for Him, I am thirsty for Him, and nothing can content my heart but Himself.

There is nothing fruitful to my soul but His grace, nothing can save me from sin but His mercy, therefore hinder me not. Oh trouble, Oh care, Oh devil, Oh world, Oh family, Oh business, hinder me not. Is not this so sometimes ? And is not this shutting the door ? Shut thy door about thee. "Hide thyself as it were for a little moment," hide thyself intimates there is something, or somebody from which, or from whom to hide. There is something, or somebody in respect of which, and whom you would fain hide yourself. You would hide yourself from yourself, this wicked self, you know this self, (if you have half the trouble that I have with myself, you will understand what I mean). You will know what I say, and what I hope I feel, when I lay stress and emphasis here upon this wicked self, this enemy to God and goodness, this enemy to the soul's peace, and to its progress in the way to heaven. This enemy to all growth in grace, this enemy to every tender feeling of godly fear, to all the motions of faith, and to all the motions of love, this wicked self. Lord hide me from its power, help me to hide myself from it, Hide me O my Saviour hide from this wretched and persistent enemy.

And the blood of Christ is a hiding place, the grace of Christ is a hiding place, and a place of security. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." (Romans 6 verse 14). It does not say, you are not under carelessness, but under watchfulness of yourself, and a determination not to give way. God does not speak like that with regard to the souls of His people. He says, you are under grace, the protection is grace, the life is grace, the victory is grace, the safety is grace, and nothing else. Grace is a charming sound, and still more charming, since when you first received it.

Grace ! 'tis a charming sound, and,
Grace all the work will crown, (Gadsby's 201)

Hide thyself, flee to the Saviour flee, as Joseph Hart says,

Fly, then, awakened sinners, fly;
Your case admits no stay; (Gadsby's 45 verse 5)

He is a good teacher, and you may feel sometimes that your own case is so urgent, that if you do not get help speedily you will be ruined, so the cry is, hide me Lord, "Lord, save us: (or I perish) we perish." (Matthew 8 verse 25). May we never loose a sense of this wicked self, he who does not feel this is in great danger of being overcome by it. Some may say, but it is a very legal thing, so to speak, well my friends, what I would say to that is this, I wish we all had ten times more legality than we have, it is not legal it is gracious.

There is a natural legal knowledge of sin that never alarms a sinner, or helps him in the way to Christ, but there is a gracious holy knowledge of sin that makes it hateful, and enables the sinner to fly to the throne of grace by prayer, to make all his wants and wishes known to the Lord.

And the next word is "hide thyself as it were for a little moment." from the plagues that are coming upon Babylon. If you have any sense of the signs of the times, you will fear concerning matters when the threatened famine, not of bread, and the thirst not of water, but of hearing the word of the living God, comes. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord:" (Amos 8 verse 11). When popery, modernism, and profanity are all sent by Him against whom they are an infinite offence, then the threatened plague shall begin to fall. What a day that shall be, may the Lord help us to fly to Him our only refuge, and obey Him by faith in this His gracious word.

"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." Until the time comes when a strong Angel shall descend and lay hold of the Devil and bind him with a strong and great chain for a thousand years. (see Revelation 20 verse 2). When the Lord shall come in His glory, that is send His holy gospel with infinite power, and cause the knowledge of God to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah 11 verse 9). Until that day hide yourself, "For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." (Isaiah 26 verse 21). The blood of the martyrs of Jesus, with which the great hoar of Babylon is drunk, shall be discovered lying under the altar, after the martyrs shall say, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Revelation 6 verse 10). And the day shall have come when God will take vengeance, Oh what a day awaits popery, when God comes to take vengeance on His enemies, as He anticipates that day He says to His people, now "enter into thy chambers." Go where there is safety, flee from the world, flee from Babylon, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Revelation 18 verse 4). "Enter thou into thy chambers,"

May the Holy Spirit in His great mercy speak such an invitation as this, to our hearts, and speak it mercifully, and distinctly.

That it may give a sacred and blessed sound in our heart, not by giving a sound without a clear distinction or life, but by a living word into a living heart giving a right exercise causing the soul to flee out of Babylon into Christ. To flee from all dangers and troubles to Himself. I hope that God will help us, as a Church to remember this, that this day is coming, for all God's word must and shall be fulfilled.

Look to his blessed hiding place, Oh for a tongue to extol it, look to these chambers and flee into them. Oh for a tongue to speak well of these chambers for they are God Himself in His perfections, in His love, in His wisdom, in His goodness, in His compassion, in His tenderness, and in all that He has promised in the Covenant of Grace. Look to these chambers and seek wisdom to flee into them, because there and there only is safety, there and there only is glory. Oh that the glory of Christ might rise upon this nation once more. It did shine once illustriously and brilliantly, when the blessed reformation was brought to us. It also shone during the great puritan period, but all is now dim and dark, what with infidelity in many state church pulpits, and popery in others, and the awful profanity of the nation, and surely we should speak of these things, and protest of, and deprecate these things before God. I say with these things, what may we expect? For all the kings that give their strength to Babylon will feel the indignation of God.

What will it be to escape them? It will be glory to escape, The Saviour says, "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them;" (John 17 verse 22). That is what it will be, to those written in the Lambs book of life. The glory of Christ's Person, the glory of His blood, the glory of His righteousness, the glory of His grace, and the glory of His presence,

May the Lord help us, very narrowly to regard this word, yea look at the whole of this chapter (26th Isaiah). It is full of goodness, full of great promises to the Church. And to belong to the Church to which such promises are made is. in its glory. May the Lord help us to believe it.

Amen