

My Loved Ones:

God says in Psalm 94:22 - But the LORD is my defense; and my God is the Rock of my refuge.

Our hymn history today has music written by Ira Sankey. His family left Scotland when he was a wee lad, and Sankey grew up in Pennsylvania (with some homemade pumpkin pie. Just seeing if you're paying attention.). From the time he was in high school, Sankey had a beautiful baritone voice. He enlisted in the 12th Pennsylvania Regiment in 1860, and frequently led religious services for music while in the army, but he eventually ended up a clerk for the Internal Revenue Service. In 1870, Sankey went to a Y. M. C. A. convention in Indianapolis, IN and led the singing. It was there that he met D. L. Moody and Moody's piercing gaze. Moody said that Sankey would have to give up his government work and help him in his meetings. This Sankey did, too, composing over 80 songs and compiling over 10 hymnals all while leading the singing for Moody's meetings.

Storms often hit the north coast of England and bring distress to the small fishing vessels there. Our hymn today has long been a favorite song of many of the fisherman in this area, and some even sing it while approaching their harbor during a storm.

The words of the hymn say that we are safer during life's storms with Jesus in control than in the calm times without Him. We must be assured that no fears will alarm us and no foes scare us in the shelter of Jesus. Just as a baby bird would never fly if not pushed out of its nest, we would never develop spiritual strength if we did not learn to handle with confidence in God, the storms He allows to come our way.

The words of the hymn were written by Vernon J. Charlesworth, an English pastor who also served as headmaster of Charles Haddon Spurgeon's Stockwell Orphanage. Sankey discovered the words in a small London paper, and gave it a singable melody.

The Lord's our Rock, in Him we hide, secure whatever ill betide: a shelter in the time of storm.

Thank God for the storms in life that have helped you develop spiritual strength. Seek to encourage someone who may be floundering in a difficult situation. Also, loved ones, we need to get close to this Refuge (Jesus), and we won't have to worry.

We love you and are praying for you today.