

SPIRITICITY August 1955

GOD IS OUR DEFENSE AND REFUGE

By Robert Applegate

The truth that God is an ever present protection is reiterated throughout the Bible - the truth that was expressed by the Psalmist when he wrote: "I will sing of Thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of Thy mercy in the morning: for Thou hast been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble."

The word defense suggests that which fends off, or fends away, the undesirable; that which keeps at a distance the situation that we do not want. Often we are not aware of that from which we are defended; for when we trust in God, the unpleasantness that was threatening us does not even enter our consciousness. Refuge is from the Latin *re* -meaning "back" and *fugio*, "to flee." A refuge is that into which we flee back when trouble presents itself. It is safety and security. This refuge is always present, is always at hand. Wherever we are, we always have with us a fortress into which we can withdraw. The writer of Proverbs realized this and wrote: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." We, too, have discovered that the Name of God, which is Jesus Christ, is an ever present protection.

When we say, "God is our defense and refuge," what, precisely, do we mean? Defense from what? Surely, many people say, God will not keep us from the ordinary dangers and vexations of life. Certainly we must take precautions; surely we must be careful; certainly we must foresee what may happen and take measures to forestall it. God does not want us to be irresponsible. Those who say such things are they who affirm God with their lips and deny Him in their hearts. They acknowledge God, but they look for their good in the outer realm. They take upon themselves a responsibility that is not theirs and which they cannot meet. They flatter themselves in the assumption of this responsibility, and they burden themselves and others. The only question to be answered is "What do you want protection from?" There is no limit on God's part. The only limitation to His protection is the one that we place upon it.

What do you want defense from: lack? sickness? pain? failure? embarrassment? obloquy? unhappiness? loneliness? from the machinations of others? from violence? from accidents? There is one rule for all. It is "Trust God." Whatever the concern is, turn to the Father, like a child, and say, "Father, this matter is in Your Hands." There is no gainsaying that truth; and if a matter is in His Hands, you cannot be anxious about it. If you trust God in the small matters that you meet every day, you will soon trust Him in the largest; and you will be free of the burden of anxiety.

In this day, it seems that we want protection primarily from other people. We are all faced with two major problems: our relation to the material world and our relation to other persons. The idea of defense would seem to have to do with the latter, for we have advanced beyond the stage where we need protection from physical nature. If there is a drought, we are not faced with the prospect of starvation. We do not need protection from the elements. In fact, we scarcely meet them any more. But we do seem to want protection from other people - both from the ordinary vexations and irritations of everyday living and also from violence, as in the threat of war, crime, and accidents. But, as Paul said, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Who, really, do we fear? Do

we need to fear what anyone will say about us? Do we need to fear what anyone can do to us? "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. . . . And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." If all things work together for good to those who love God, what do we have to fear - if we love Him - except our Good?

You know the expression, "He is his own worst enemy." That is true of everyone. Each person is not only his own worst enemy; each one is his only enemy. The only person that can hurt you is you yourself. You are your only enemy; I am my only enemy. Therefore the only person each one has to fear is his own self. And the only thing anyone needs defense from is himself. There is a clear illustration of this in the case of automobile accidents. Many are concerned about how to protect people on the highways. But those who have investigated automobile accidents have discovered that, whenever there was an accident, there was anger present. The person involved had just had a fight - usually with his wife or his employer. Accidents do not just happen; they are caused by anger. Therefore what each person needs in driving is not protection from the other fools on the road but protection from his own temper: that is, from himself. This is true of everything that seems to threaten us. Whatever strikes at us from without is brought about by something within us. It is wise to recognize this, for this recognition dispenses with ninety percent of our fears.

The only thing anyone needs to fear is his own emotions: his anger, fear, cupidity, etc., which are not real, which come to the surface only to be healed. The defense of the Lord is adequate to these seemingly destructive emotions. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." My enemies are within me, but they have no power over me, if I trust in the Lord. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear."

Do the thing you are afraid of; for that is the quickest way to get rid of fear; and when fear is gone you will find that nothing can hurt you. "There shall not an hair of your head perish."

"Do not be anxious," Jesus said. "Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. Pray then like this: 'Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done.'" Do not be anxious, but "watch and pray always."

The world has lost sight of the truth that God is a defense and refuge. That is why there is such a great hunger in the world for material security. Several years ago, a group of school children in New York wrote essays on what they wanted in life. Every essay contained the word security, and not one contained the word opportunity. Yet the men and women who settled this country were not looking for security. If they had been, they would never have come. They had security, for they had trust in God; and so they looked for a greater gift - freedom.

Organized religion has forgotten the truth that God is protection. Many ministers explained after the last war that the boys returning from overseas should not expect to find in the churches the God whom they had found in the foxholes. They intimated that the God who had protected the boys when they needed protection was not a real God; but that their own emasculated, theological God was the one who should be worshipped. Religion glorifies death,

and it nourishes fear. It praises its martyrs and those who have died foolishly and needlessly. It preaches the anger of God and the inevitability of failure in all human undertakings. And this is true not only of our own churches but of all organized religion in all ages. It is thus that science - or rather rationalistic philosophy based on "science" - has more than once appeared as the deliverer of men from the bondage to fear produced by religion. Religion preaches life after death with punishments for the imperfect, and thus it produces and nourishes the fear of death. Rationalism preaches that the world is material; that death is dissolution. To those bound by religious superstitions this teaching has frequently appeared as the deliverer of men's minds.

Yet the human heart hungers for Truth, and it cannot be satisfied for long either with religious lies or with materialistic philosophy. No religion and no philosophy can long endure that does not proclaim God as "a very present help in trouble." For this is Truth, and the human heart cannot be satisfied for long with anything less than Truth.

Many deny that the promises of God are to be taken literally. Yet can you point to anyone who has been true to God who has ever been hurt? Jesus Christ? He said that He could call upon His Father, and His Father would send more than twelve legions of angels to deliver Him. But He knew what He had to go through, and He went through it "for the joy that was set before Him." Paul? He was imprisoned, beaten, shipwrecked; yet he said that "all things work together for good." Evidently he needed those experiences for his own good, and he found them good for him. The other disciples? All but one were martyred, but they went to their deaths with paeans of praise. Were they hurt? We, as a race, are so materially-minded that we limit our view to man's visible life. But man is immortal. One lifetime is but a breath in man's life. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal (i.e., temporary); but the things which are not seen are eternal." Who knows what joy Paul is experiencing? And Jesus Christ? He is one with God - wholly, completely, eternally. Is that failure? Is not that what we are seeking?

Since organized religion has lost sight of the fact that God is protection, which is central to the Truth of God, there must arise a new religion which will fearlessly proclaim the Lord as "a very present help," as a strong tower and refuge. For men are hungry for this truth. This new religion (which will not be "new" in the sense of being a new discovery of Truth, but will be a new statement of Christianity and a new practice of it) will point with insistence to two facts that abnegate all fear and all compromise: (1) Life is eternal and (2) God is Love and is ever present. This new teaching will repeat and repeat that which Paul wrote:

"I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, not depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

SPIRITICITY August 1955

THE WORD OF GOD

By Alden Truesdell

The Truth of Being has been partially known since the beginning of time; but It was not fully revealed until Jesus Christ took upon Himself the task of proving the Principle of Life in actual practice - not partial practice, but complete practice. Many had practiced Truth in part, and had performed many miracles as the results of their knowing of the Principle; but no one had so surrendered himself to Truth as to become the Embodiment of It, as Jesus Christ did. Accordingly, every other doctrine leaves something to be desired; but the Doctrine of Jesus Christ is complete in all respects and contains the fulfillment of the aspirations of every individual among mankind.

Wherever man lives, there will the Word of Christ come to him and minister to him on his own ground, according to his own comprehension. So complete is this ministry of the Doctrine of Jesus Christ that everyone who has succumbed to it has the same report to make: "This is 'the desire of all nations.' This is the 'pearl of great price.'" Some, in their enthusiasm for the Doctrine, have become dogmatic; some, fanatic. But even the most rational have expressed admiration for the entirely gratifying aspect of the teaching.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we must measure up to the responsibility to practice a righteousness exceeding "the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees." We are told, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." To do this, we must become still, and must dissociate ourselves from all human communications. We must repent of these and turn our attention in and up until we rediscover our original, vital contact with the Creator of all and with the Word by which all things are made. We must return to the place of genesis, where God is reported as saying, "Let there be"; and this place will be found at the center of consciousness. As we near this sacred spot, we sense the reverence experienced by Moses when he was told to remove his shoes, for the place whereon he was standing was holy ground.

In the inner sanctuary, where we find the timeless, eternal Word, we stand, as it were, with hat in hand, with bowed head, with eyes closed - humble, helpless, at the mercy of the beneficent Presence. But we learn that we need not cringe. This Presence requires no sacrificial lambs, no martyrs. This Holy Word in this holy place seeks only acceptance.

The Word seems to come stealthily or "as a thief in the night." It comes when least expected, "in an hour when ye think not." But It always comes when a conscious being gives an invitation and hospitable reception.

In the early teaching of spiritual doctrine, much stress was placed upon the "silence," and many formulas were given for the practice of that state. But, for the most part, the silence is the pause between contemplation and conversation. When the attention is withdrawn from one object and placed on another, there is a time when it is on neither; it rests a moment between assignments. This could be likened to the silence.

When a subject of conversation is changed, if a reply to a question is anticipated, there is a pause. Similarly when we are diligently praying and plodding Godward - practicing all our tricks for attracting God's attention - -

suddenly we run but of words and are speechless. We are listening to an unaccustomed stillness, for some unknown communication. The actual audition may be preceded by a sound as of mighty winds. "Thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." Sometimes something like a whisper is heard, and the whole being stands at rapt attention, awaiting a revelation. This has been called the "still small voice," and such it is to those who have ears to hear. It is the Original Word, resounding down through the ages and eternally intoned in Its creation.

The instruction, "Hearken unto Me," follows obedience to the edict, "Look unto Me." And those who have the eye to see are given the ear to hear - to hear the Wisdom of the Word.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

This Word is at the beginning of every person, and It remains at his center. Just to the degree that It is permitted to regulate his life, to that degree is that life radiant and vital.

The distillation of the Word of Christ into consciousness reports as wisdom, peace, and love. It is invigoration to all departments, and functions as James describes: "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

Many of us struggle in an effort to grasp the Word of Christ. We try too hard to be diligent in Its pursuit. We even try too hard to be good. In so doing, we are apt to find ourselves depleted when we do become still enough and receptive enough to receive the Word of God. There must be this time of reception, just as there is a time of expression. A constant, violent activity discourages healing and generates tension.

"The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword." The Word is Life; it is Spirit; It accomplishes that whereunto It is sent. And who is there to argue with It? Who shall gainsay or resist? The Word is at once motivator, generator, formulator, and operator. It maintains Its own structure and builds Its own ideals into expression.

If a good friend, in whom you have confidence, would say, "I give you my word regarding this matter," you would expect that particular business to be completed according to that friend's word. "A man is as good as his word" is a common saying. And if this is true, consider how much more dependable must be the Word of God which created the universe and man in the universe. Consider the advantage of keeping the Word of Christ, which finds its most perfect outer expression in the words of Jesus as recorded in our Gospels. In these words, often printed in red letters, is a fabulous treasure. They will lead us to conscious communication with the eternally changeless Word that is Christ.

"If a man love Me, he will keep My Words: and my Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him."

"If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death."

"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God."

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THE FOLLY OF REFUSAL

By Nell Truesdell

For eighteen years, three times a week, a set order of whole-wheat bread has been delivered to our door. However, in a certain instance late one Thursday afternoon, a new driver of the bakery truck stood before me and said apologetically, "Ma'am, I had your loaf of whole-wheat, but before I got here another lady wanted it, so I sold it to her." Then he hastily added, "But I have whole-wheat in the sandwich-loaf size." "How much is the sandwich size?" I asked.

"It's 22 cents." Then sensing my disappointment, he offered: "I'll run down to the store and get you a loaf right away." He stopped as I gestured with my hand. "The regular loaf is 17cts, isn't it?" He nodded. "Well," I continued, "we really don't need the sandwich size - we eat so little bread and if you have the time I'll appreciate your getting a regular loaf for me."

He went off whistling, glad that I had not complained, and soon after, he delivered the promised loaf. At breakfast the next morning we consumed eight slices; then that noon (which was Friday), we made sandwiches for lunch. At the evening meal, we consumed the last of our loaf. Now, on Saturday afternoon, our man delivers three loaves to carry us until Tuesday. As there was no bread for Saturday morning breakfast, the only thing to do was to go out and buy an extra loaf of bread for 17 cents.

When we returned, I had time to think, and this is what came to me: I had bought two loaves of whole-wheat bread, regular size, at 17 cents a loaf. If I had accepted the sandwich-size whole-wheat loaf which the driver offered to me, I would have spent only 22cts and would have had sufficient bread to carry us through to the next delivery. Thus, in refusing the 22cts loaf, I was out 12cts plus the need to drive to a night-stand, plus the imposition that I had placed on our delivery man, though he was most willing to serve.

"How many times," I reflected, "we turn gifts away from us. Someone comes bearing the gift that will exactly fit a situation not yet revealed (the sandwiches took up more bread than I had expected to use), and we refuse it. In the same thoughtless manner how often we refuse the gifts of God! He presses His bounty upon us; and because it does not suit our purpose of the moment or because we do not have time to receive, we casually shunt aside blessings that actually come from Heaven!"

As I turned this realization over in my mind, I saw how frequently I had been guilty of refusing some proffered gift - some opportunity to receive - by waving aside the very things that would have later met some unexpected need. Did not our Master say, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him." And how does God give to man except by man?

Alphabet Of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day of The Month

AUGUST 1955

1. They were ALL AMAZED at the mighty power of God.
2. BLESSED are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it.
3. CAUSE me to hear Thy lovingkindness.
4. I will DIRECT my prayer unto Thee, and will look up.
5. The light of the body is the EYE.
6. The FASHION of His Countenance was altered.
8. Thou shalt GUIDE me with Thy counsel.
9. HE HEALED them that had need of HEALING.
10. Greater IS He that IS IN you, than he that IS IN the world.
11. Wisdom is JUSTIFIED of her children.
12. Cause me to KNOW the way wherein I should walk.
13. LOOK up, and LIFT up your heads.
15. Ye know not what MANNER of spirit ye are of.
16. Your redemption draweth NIGH.
17. His righteousness hath He OPENLY showed.
16. PEACE be to this house.
19. QUICKEN me, O Lord, for Thy Name's sake.
20. The Lord is RIGHTEOUS.
22. When thine eye is SINGLE, thy whole body is full of light.
23. TEACH me to do THY Will; for THOU art my God.
24. Lead me into the land of UPRIGHTNESS.
25. My VOICE shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Lord.
26. I WAIT for the Lord, my soul doth WAIT.
27. Whom say YE that I am.
29. The Lord, that made heaven and earth, bless thee out of ZION. (peace)
30. Unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.
31. In a day of salvation have I helped thee.

"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."

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As electricity is the working power of the electrical principle,
SPIRITICITY is the working power of the Spiritual Principle.