

The Defense Department

“A mighty fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing;
Our helper He amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing.

For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe -
His craft and pow’r are great,
And, armed with cruel hate,

On earth is not his equal.”

How many times we must have sung these words, but have you ever stopped and taken thought on what they mean to you?

Mighty Fortresses

Last year when we visited the lovely lands of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and England, we would often drive past the remains of a mighty stone fortress built many hundreds of years ago. We visited some of these huge castles in all four places. To mention a few, Birr and Bunratty Castles in Ireland; Stirling, Edinburgh, and Urquhart Castles in Scotland; Conwy Castle in Wales; and Warwick Castle in England. There were fascinating towers, elegant rooms, dark dungeons, and massive, foreboding gates. Each castle had its place in the unique history of the nations.



Sometimes there were smaller watchtowers standing in the middle of open farmlands. These silently spoke of unrest, war, and fear of another era of time.

Be on Guard

In our day, we don't build castles to retreat to in case of an enemy raid. Until the events of 9/11 we had lived in a sleepy, unguarded sunny time of peace. When our peaceful world was shaken on that day, we came to realize two things: one, we had an enemy whose attack we never expected; two, our nation would never be the same.

In our spiritual lives, we have the same type of enemy, one who makes plans for attack; one who lurks about as a roaring lion; one who whispers thoughts of fear and intimidation and inflicts feelings of hopelessness, depression, or despair.



The Enemy

Yes, the craft and power of our foe is great; and, yes, his intense hatred toward us is aflame with cruelty. As Martin Luther wrote in his hymn, there is no match for his evil craft or power on earth.

But, does our loving and faithful God desert and leave us defenseless, subjected to his vice-like grip, or turn us over to his torments?

Our Faith Still Holds

No doubt there have been times when our faith has been shaken to the core. I know that for many there were moments when the hopelessness and despair they felt in their souls seemed endless and as if it surely would snuff out the last flicker of life, leaving nothing but a puff of black smoke.

A Strong Tower of Safety

It is at moments like these that we must run into the safety of the mighty fortress God has prepared for us. God's Word shows us the truth of our provision in God. David proclaims, "For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy." Psalm 61:3. In the very next book of the Bible, David's son Solomon declares, "The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." Proverbs 18:10.

Are you running to the Lord for safety, yet feeling bombarded and overwhelmed? God gives us another promise in Isaiah 54:17: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD."

In these times, we must seek the Lord for His protection and peace... that means not only for physical protection, but also for emotional and spiritual protection from fear and intimidation.

Gain A Clear Conscience

We have a responsibility to make sure we have a clear conscience before God and that we are obeying and walking in His truth. While living a life separated from the ways of the world will make us a danger to our foe's evil plans and will, therefore, also place us on his "don't like" list; there are some others who need to consider their ways and turn back to God. As Proverbs 16:7 says, "When a man's ways please the LORD, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

-Holly Hageman; Copyright February 2002, September 2004

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