

CONFIDENCE IN GOD

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Psalm 46:1.

The author of this psalm is unknown, but the occasion, it is almost unanimously agreed, was the deliverance of Jerusalem from the army of Sennacherib. Since the days of King David the forty-sixth psalm has been a song of comfort for God's people. Christians in all ages have drawn encouragement and strength from its promises and triumphant declarations. Luther, in trouble, was accustomed to say to his friend Melancthon, "Come, Philip, let us sing the forty-sixth psalm." Then his face would brighten like the sky after a summer shower. It was also the song of the Christian martyrs of Europe, and of the persecuted Quakers of this country.

This text is rich in positive statements about the person and power of the God of this universe for every soul. It should give comfort to every heart and inspire courage and confidence in every living soul.

I. God's Protection Is Promised.

"God is our refuge." God is a refuge from all the attacks of Satan, the wicked desires of our hearts, the allurements of the sinful world and the smitings of a conviction conscience. God's children often need such a refuge. In bodily sickness and weakness, we need healing and an arm to lean on. In perplexity, we need a wise counsellor. In sorrow, we need sympathy and comfort. A bird pursued by a hawk took shelter in the bosom of a man, who said to it, "I will not kill thee nor betray thee to thine enemy, seeing thou hast fled to me for sanctuary." Christ came into this world that the soul hunted by the fierce hawks of temptation and sin might have a safe refuge.

In the loving care of God is the place of safety and security of every soul in danger, distress or doubt. The eternal God has promised to be with His own, to go before His own, to be behind His own, to be beneath His own, to support His own, and to be the refuge for His own. He upheld Joseph in the king's palace, protected Daniel in the den of lions, the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, and supported Paul in trials, troubles and perils of life during his fruitful ministry. He has been the refuge for His saints in all ages. He is our refuge today. He will protect His own from disease, danger and eternal death. Take refuge under the wings of the God of heaven. Accept His promise of protection.

II. God's Power Is Pledged.

"God is our strength." In God is all power in heaven and earth. God offers His power to His people. God gave Noah power to build the ark, and Joseph power to overcome evil, Moses power to deliver the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, David power to overcome the giant, Elijah the power of fire to burn the offering, the Hebrew children power to endure the fire of the furnace, Paul power to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and He will continue to give His people power to overcome evil and to accomplish every task before them for His glory. His power to save is all-sufficient. His wisdom is infinite. All that can happen is known to Him. His promises meet every emergency. His faithfulness is the immovable foundation on which we may build absolute trust. All the experiences of the past and all the hope of the future shed light on the dark present because He changes not. The power of the Lord is unlimited, and He will be the strength of His people.

III. God's Presence Is Proclaimed.

"A very present help in trouble." God is everywhere. His eye sees all things. He knows all things. The Lord is the all-sufficient, never-failing refuge of His children. He is a "very present" help which means that He is not far to seek, but nigh at hand. We do not have far to go to get to Him. On the basis of experience, we know that He is all we need. He will be with His people in all places and under all circumstances. He will never leave His own. He will never fail His own. He was with Peter and John and delivered them from prison. He was with Paul and delivered him from the sea in shipwreck. He was with John Bunyan and blessed him to begin a movement for freedom. He was with Livingstone in Africa, Judson in India, Yates in China, and will always be with the greatest and humblest of His servants and bless them. Deliverance may frequently be delayed to the last moment, but it will come, as it did in the case of Abraham offering Isaac.

This world, beautiful as it is, has dark and gloomy side. No one is exempt from trial. A motherless little girl was asked, "What do you do without a mother to whom to tell your troubles?" She replied, "My mother told me before she died to go to the Lord Jesus. She said that He had always been her friend, and that if I would go to Him He would always be my friend." "But," said the questioner, "He is a great way off, and has so much to do; He cannot attend to you." "I don't know how much He has to do," said the child, "but He has said He would take care of me, and I believe He will." Would that all of us had as much faith as that orphan child. "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name."