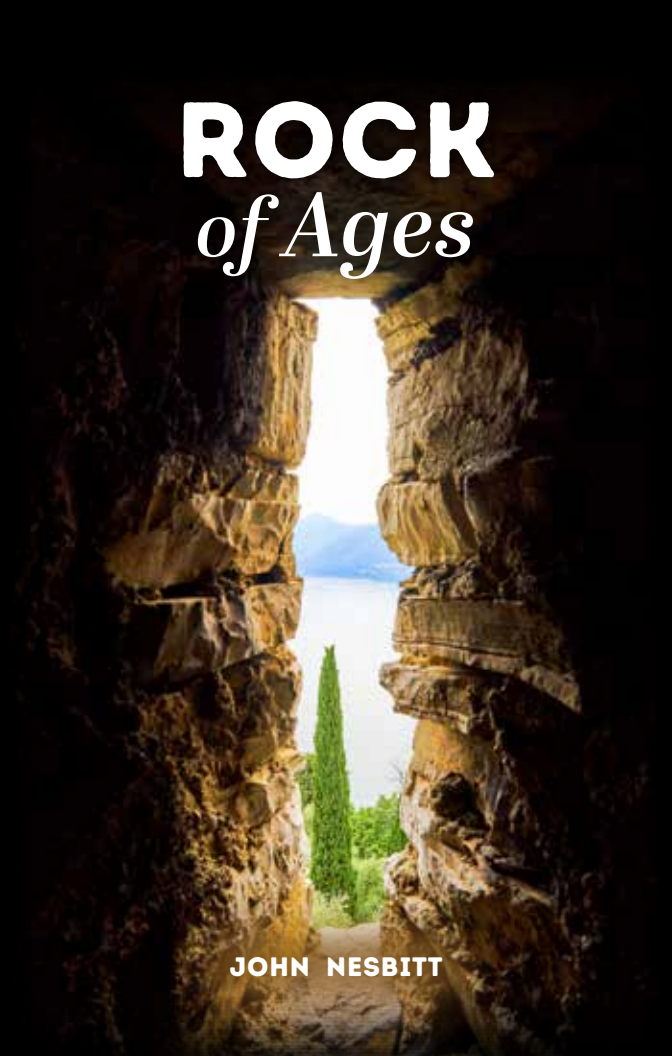
ROCK *of Ages*



JOHN NESBITT

Augustus Toplady was born on November 14, 1740, in Surrey, England. His father was an officer in the British Army who, very sadly, passed away when his baby boy was only a few months old. Toplady then grew up under the care of his mother.

At age 16, then living in Dublin, Ireland, Augustus Toplady was out walking with his mother when they heard people singing in a distant barn. Curious, they moved closer, paused to listen, and heard the preacher quote Ephesians 2:13 from the Bible: **"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."** That same night, young Augustus was saved, understanding that he had been brought near to God **"by the blood of Christ"**—and nothing more!

Sometime later, Toplady, by this time a minister, found himself in hard times and decided to move to London, England. With desire to share the message of salvation with others, friends helped him to secure the use of a chapel in London, where he would preach the gospel to thousands over the next two years.

Toplady recounts that while out and about one day, he was surprised by a massive storm—

unprepared and without shelter or protection from its power. Looking up, he saw a huge rock, standing some 200 feet tall, and noticed a fissure running through its center. He moved quickly into that opening, finding safety and refuge from the fury of the storm raging around him. Sheltered safely in the rock, his thoughts turned to the spiritual refuge a sinner can find in the Lord Jesus Christ. Reflecting on his experience, the words of this precious hymn flowed from his heart to his pen:

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee:
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from its guilt and power.

The Bible warns us of the storm Toplady thought about that day—the storm on the horizon on account of our sins. The Lord Jesus explained, **"Whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock"**

(MATTHEW 7:24-25). He tells also of *"***a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall"** (MATTHEW 7:26-27). The storm to come is the judgment of God against our sin, and we must not be caught unprepared, without shelter or protection!

Jesus Christ Himself is the Rock of Ages, the only Refuge from that storm. On the cross, He willingly received the fury of God's holy judgment against our sins, (1 CORINTHIANS 15:3) and so became our Shelter from the storm to come. His blood was shed to bring us near to God (EPHESIANS 2:13) and to deliver us from the wrath to come (1 THESSALONIANS 1:10).

ARE YOU PREPARED FOR THE COMING STORM?

All Bible quotations are from the New King James Version.

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