



HE that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. 3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. 4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. 5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; 6 Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. 7 A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. 8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. (Psalm 91:1-8)

Today's hymn is very ancient going back at least to 650 AD and is found in the Ambrosian Manuscript of that time. It is a common hymn for Evening Prayer as the light of day gradually fades behind the curtain of night. It gives peace to the troubled heart fretting from the challenges of the day.

The identity of the author of today's hymn is lost in antiquity, but we do know that it was translated from the Latin by John Mason Neale in 1851. The tune of choice in the 1940 Hymnal is *Te Lucis Ante Terminum – Before the Light is Gone*. The composer of this tune is also unknown. My favorite tune, appearing in other hymnals, is an earlier one entitled *REST* by William B. Bradford (1843).

To Thee Before the Close of Day

To Thee before the close of day,
Creator of the world, we pray
That, with Thy wonted favor, Thou
Wouldst be our Guard and Keeper now.

From all ill dreams defend our sight,
From fears and terrors of the night;
Withhold from us our ghostly foe,
That spot of sin we may not know.

O Father, that we ask be done,
Through Jesus Christ, Thine only Son,
Who, with the Holy Ghost and Thee,
Doth live and reign eternally.

To Thee before the close of day, Creator of the world, we pray That, with Thy wonted favor, Thou Wouldst be our Guard and Keeper now. When the heart is fixed upon God and the soul clings to Him as a life preserver on stormy seas, we will acknowledge Him not only at the dawning of the day, but at first light as well. This stanza reveals our seeming greater dependence upon God during our hours of sleepy solitude perhaps because we feel like we can defend and provide for ourselves during the daylight moments. But this is not so. We need the providence of God even more in our awakening hours than at the time of our sleep. Our sin mounts moment by moment when we are awake and are active in doing our pleasures and desires. But sleep is innocent. Surely, we need His over-watching care during the night; but how much more during the day! He is our Keeper and Watcher by night and by day.

From all ill dreams defend our sight, From fears and terrors of the night; Withhold from us our ghostly foe, That spot of sin we may not know. The visible sins of the day often trouble our sleep with invisible specters. Sound sleep is evidence of a good conscience. But also worries, that have not been turned over to the One who can satisfy them, may interfere with our rest at night. Do you need more sound rest in your sleep? 28 *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* 29 *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* 30 *For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.* (Matt 11:28-30)

We bear no burdens for the Lord – He bears OUR burdens! Is the Lord unable to bear the burden of the world – the Universe – the Heavens? What of the false prophets of our day, groomed and perfumed as in the brothel trade? What burden can THEY bear for the Lord? 33 *And when this people, or the prophet, or a priest, shall ask thee, saying, What is the burden of the Lord? thou shalt then say unto them, What burden? I will even forsake you, saith the Lord.* 34 *And as for the prophet, and the priest, and the people, that shall say, The burden of the Lord, I will even punish that man and his house.* 35 *Thus shall ye say every one to his neighbour, and every one to his brother, What hath the Lord answered? and, What hath the Lord spoken?* 36 *And the burden of the Lord shall ye mention no more: for every man's word shall be his burden; for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the Lord of hosts our God.* 37 *Thus shalt thou say to the prophet, What hath the Lord answered thee? and, What hath the Lord spoken?* 38 *But since ye say, The burden of the Lord; therefore thus saith the Lord; Because ye say this word, The burden of the Lord, and I have sent unto you, saying, Ye shall not say, The burden of the Lord;* 39 *Therefore, behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, and cast you out of my presence:* 40 *And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.* (Jer 23:33-40)

O Father, that we ask be done, Through Jesus Christ, Thine only Son, Who, with the Holy Ghost and Thee, Doth live and reign eternally. There are more and more prayers being offered in Church which are NOT asked in the Name of our Lord Jesus

Christ! Why not? Did He not bear your burdens at Calvary? Was He not buried for you? Did He not conquer death and Hell for YOU? Did He not rise again from the tomb for YOU? Does He not intercede moment-by-moment for YOU? In all things, we recognize the fullness of the God-Head in Trinity; however, the central figure of the Trinity for our fortune is our Lord Jesus Christ. Remember the event on the Mount of Transfiguration when Christ appeared with Moses and Elijah? What did Peter desire when he saw the three together? He wanted to worship the three of them by building tabernacles; but God gave a very different command:

1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. 3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. 4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. 5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; HEAR YE HIM. 6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. 7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. 8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. (Matt 17:1-8) The day is coming when each of us must come face-to-face with Jesus alone. We will see no man, save Jesus only. Will we see Him with the trappings of same, or with the White Robe of Righteousness that He purchased for us?

We relate to Jesus because He is our very brother – a blood brother in both the flesh and the Spirit. *He was made flesh and dwelt among us.* IT is HIS Voice we must hear and heed – not that of the false ministers and demons of the world.

