



Union Baptist Church of Cincinnati
25 West Seventh Street
Cincinnati, OH 45203
(513) 381-3858
www.union-baptist.net
Rev. Dr. Orlando Yates, Pastor

ROCK OF AGES

Augustus M. Toplady, 1740-1778

“For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea....they all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them and that rock was Christ.” (1 Corinthians 10:1, 3, 4)

This fervent plea for Christ our eternal rock to grant salvation through His sacrifice and to be a place of refuge for the believer is one of the most popular hymns ever written. With strong emotional impact, it proclaims Christ’s atonement on the cross to be the only means of salvation, making man’s tears and efforts to justify himself of no avail. Also it urges us to find consolation and security in Christ our rock – even at the time of death.

Augustus Toplady’s strong and passionate lines were actually written to refute some of the teachings of John and Charles Wesley during a bitter controversy with them concerning Arminianism (which stresses man’s free will) versus John Calvin’s doctrine of election. “Rock of Ages” was the climax to an article that Toplady wrote in The Gospel Magazine in 1776, in which he supported the doctrine of election by arguing that just as England could never pay her national debt, so man through his own efforts could never satisfy the eternal justice of a holy God. Despite the belligerent intent of this text, God has preserved this hymn for more than 200 years to bring blessing to both Arminian and Calvinistic believers around the world.

At the age of 16, as he sat in a barn and listened to the preaching of an uneducated man, Toplady was dramatically converted. Later, he became a powerful and respected minister of the Anglican Church. While he was the busy pastor of several churches in England, Augustus Toplady wrote many hymn texts, but few have survived. “Rock of Ages” is the one for which he is known today.

- *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 wrath and make me pure.*
- *Could my tears forever flow, could my zeal no languor know, these for sin could not atone – Thou must save and Thou alone: In my hand no price I bring; simply to Thy cross I cling.*
- *While I draw this fleeting breath, when my eyes shall close in death, when I rise to worlds unknown and behold Thee on Thy throne, Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee.*

***Amazing Grace
366 Inspiring Hymns for Daily Devotions
Kenneth W. Osbeck***

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Matthew 28:18 –

