

# THE LIVING GOD

AND A

# LIVING FAITH.

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2 CHRONICLES XX.

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THE LIVING GOD

BY J. H. W. B. B. B.

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AND

## A LIVING FAITH.

THERE is one great substantial fact standing prominently forth on every page of the volume of God, and illustrated in every stage of the history of God's people—a fact of immense weight and moral power at all times, but specially in seasons of darkness, difficulty, and discouragement, occasioned by the low condition of things among those who profess to be on the Lord's side. The fact is this, *That faith can always count on God, and God will always answer faith.*

Such is our fact, such our thesis ; and if the reader will turn with us, for a few moments, to 2 Chronicles xx., he will find a very beautiful and a very striking illustration.

This chapter shews us the good king Jehoshaphat under very heavy pressure indeed—it records a dark moment in his history. “It came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle. Then [for people are ever quick to run with evil tidings] there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea, on

this side Syria." Here was a difficulty of no ordinary nature. This invading host was made up of the descendants of Lot and of Esau; and this fact might give rise to a thousand conflicting thoughts and distracting questions in the mind of Jehoshaphat. They were not Egyptians or Assyrians, concerning whom there could be no question whatever; but both Esau and Lot stood in certain relations to Israel, and a question might suggest itself as to how far such relations were to be recognised.

Nor this only. The practical state of the entire nation of Israel—the actual condition of God's people, was such as to give rise to the most serious misgivings. Israel no longer presented an unbroken front to the invading foe. Their visible unity was gone. A grievous breach had been made in their battlements. The ten tribes and the two were rent asunder, the one from the other. The condition of the former was terrible: and that of the latter, shaky enough.

Thus the circumstances of king Jehoshaphat were dark and discouraging in the extreme; and, even as regards himself and his practical course, he was but just emerging from the consequences of a very humiliating fall, so that his reminiscences would be quite as cheerless as his surroundings.

But it is just here that our grand substantial fact presents itself to the vision of faith, and flings a mantle of light over the whole scene. Things looked gloomy, no doubt; but God was to be counted upon by faith, and faith could count upon Him. God is a never failing resource—a great reality, at all times, and under all circumstances. "God is our refuge and

strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved : God shall help her, and that right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved : he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us ; the God of Jacob is our refuge." (Ps. xlvi. 1-7.)

Here, then, was Jehoshaphat's resource, in the day of his trouble ; and to it he, at once, betook himself, in that earnest faith which never fails to draw down power and blessing, from the living and true God, to meet every exigency of the way. "And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord ; even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord. And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, and said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven ? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen ? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee ? Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to *the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever ?*"

These are the fine breathings of a lively faith—a faith that always enables the soul to take the very highest possible ground. It mattered not in the smallest degree, what unsettled questions there might be between Esau and Jacob; there were none between Abraham and the Almighty God. Now, God had given the land to Abraham His friend. For how long? *For ever*. This was enough. “The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” God will never cancel His call, or take back a gift. This is a fixed foundation-principle; and on this faith always takes its stand with firm decision. The enemy might throw in a thousand suggestions; and the poor heart might throw up a thousand reasonings. It might seem like presumption and empty conceit, on the part of Jehoshaphat, to plant his foot on such lofty ground. It was all well enough in the days of David, or of Solomon, or of Joshua, when the unity of the nation was unbroken, and the banner of Jehovah floated in triumph over the twelve tribes of Israel. But things were sadly changed; and it ill became one in Jehoshaphat’s circumstances to use such lofty language or assume to occupy such a high position.

What is faith’s reply to all this? A very simple, but a very powerful one—God never changes. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Had He not made Abraham a present of the land of Canaan? Had He not bestowed it upon his seed for ever? Had He not ratified the gift by His word and His oath—these two immutable things in which it was impossible for Him to lie? Unquestionably. But **then** what of the law? Did not that make some

difference? None whatever, as regards God's gift and promise. Four centuries previous to the giving of the law, was the great transaction settled and established between the Almighty God and Abraham His friend—and settled and established for ever. Hence nothing could possibly touch this. There were no legal conditions proposed to Abraham. All was pure and absolute grace. God gave the land to Abraham by promise, and not by law, in any shape or form.

Now, it was on this original ground that Jehoshaphat took his stand; and he was right. It was the only thing for him to do. He had not one hair's breadth of solid standing ground, short of these golden words, "Thou gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever." It was either this or nothing. *A living faith always lays hold on the living God.* It cannot stop short of Him. It looks not at men or their circumstances. It takes no account of the changes and chances of this mortal life. It lives and moves and has its being in the immediate presence of the living God; it rejoices in the cloudless sunlight of His blessed countenance. It carries on all its artless reasonings in the sanctuary and draws all its happy conclusions from the facts discovered there. It does not lower the standard according to the condition of things around, but boldly and decidedly takes up its position on the very highest ground.

Now, these actings of faith are always most grateful to the heart of God. The living God delights in a living faith. We may be quite sure that the bolder the grasp of faith, the more welcome it is to God.

We need never suppose that the blessed One is either gratified or glorified by the workings of a legal mind. No, no; He delights to be trusted without a shadow of reserve or misgiving. He delights to be fully counted upon and largely used; and the deeper the need, and the darker the surrounding gloom, the more is He glorified by the faith that draws upon Him.

Hence, we may assert with perfect confidence, that the attitude and the utterances of Jehoshaphat, in the scene before us, were in full accordance with the mind of God. There is something perfectly beautiful to see him, as it were, opening the original lease, and laying his finger on that clause in virtue of which Israel held as tenants for ever under God. Nothing could cancel that clause or break that lease. No flaw there. All was ordered and sure. "Thou *gavest* it to the seed of Abraham thy friend, *for ever.*"

This was solid ground—the ground of God—the ground of faith, which no power of the enemy can ever shake. True, the enemy might remind Jehoshaphat of sin and folly, failure and unfaithfulness. Nay, he might suggest to him that the very fact of the threatened invasion proved that Israel had fallen, for had they not done so, there would be neither enemy nor evil. But for this, too, grace had provided an answer—an answer which faith knew well how to appropriate. Jehoshaphat reminds Jehovah of the house which Solomon had built to His name. "They have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, If, when evil cometh upon us, as a sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before

this house, and in thy presence (for thy name is in this house), and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help. And now, behold, the children of Ammon, and Moab, and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not. Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of *thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit*. O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but *our eyes are upon thee.*" (Vers. 8-12.)

Here, truly, is a living faith dealing with the living God. It is no mere empty profession—no lifeless creed—no cold uninfluential theory. It is not a man "saying he has faith." Such things will never stand in the day of battle. They may do well enough when all is calm, smooth, and bright: but when difficulties have to be grappled with—when the enemy has to be met face to face, all merely nominal faith, all mere lip profession, will prove like autumn leaves before the blast. Nothing will stand the test of actual conflict but a living personal faith in a living personal Saviour-God. This is what is needed. It is this which alone can sustain the heart, come what may. Faith brings God into the scene, and all is strength, victory, and perfect peace.

Thus it was with the king of Judah, in the days of 2 Chronicles xx. "We have no might; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee." This is the way to occupy God's ground, even with the eyes

fixed on God Himself. This is the true secret of stability and peace. The devil will leave no stone unturned to drive us off the true ground which, as Christians, we ought to occupy in these last days ; and we, in ourselves, have no might whatever against him. Our only resource is in the living God. If our eyes are upon Him, nothing can harm us. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

Reader, art thou on God's ground? Canst thou give a "Thus saith the Lord" for the position which thou occupiest, at this moment? Art thou consciously standing on the solid ground of holy scripture? Is there anything questionable in thy surroundings and associations? We beseech thee to weigh these questions solemnly as in the divine presence. Be assured they are of moment just now. We are passing through critical moments. Men are taking sides; principles are working and coming to a head. Never was it more needful to be thoroughly and unmistakably on the Lord's side. Jehoshaphat never could have met the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites, had he not been persuaded that his feet were on the very ground which God had given to Abraham. If the enemy could have shaken his confidence as to this, he would have had an easy victory. But Jehoshaphat knew where he was; he knew his ground. He understood his bearings; and therefore he could fix his eyes with confidence upon the living God. He had no misgivings as to his position. He did not say, as so many do, now-a-days, "I am not quite sure. I hope I am; but sometimes clouds come over my

soul, and make me hesitate as to whether I am really on divine ground." Ah! no, reader, the king of Judah would not have understood such language at all. All was clear to him. His eye rested on the original grant. He felt sure he was on the true ground of the Israel of God; and albeit all Israel were not there with him, yet God was with him, and that was enough. His was a living faith in the living God—the only thing that will stand in the day of trial.

There is something in the attitude and utterance of the king of Judah, on that memorable occasion, well worthy of the reader's profound attention. His feet were firmly fixed on God's ground, and his eyes as firmly fixed on God Himself; and in addition to this, there was the deep sense of his own thorough nothingness. He had not so much as a shadow of a doubt as to the fact of his being in possession of the very inheritance which God had given him. He knew that he was in his right place. He did not *hope* it; still less did he doubt it; no, he knew it. He could say, "I believe and am sure." This is all-important. It is impossible to stand against the enemy, if there is anything equivocal in our position. If there be any secret misgiving as to our being in our right place—if we cannot give a "Thus saith the Lord" for the position which we occupy, the path we tread, the associations in which we stand, the work in which we are engaged, there will, most assuredly, be weakness in the hour of conflict. Satan is sure to avail himself of the smallest misgiving in the soul. All must be settled as to our positive standing, if we would make any headway against the enemy. There

must be an unclouded confidence as to our real position before God, else the foe will have an easy victory.

Now, it is precisely here that there is so much weakness apparent among the children of God. Very few, comparatively, are clear, sound, and settled as to their foundation—very few are able, without any reserve, to take the blessed ground of being washed in the blood of Jesus, and sealed with the Holy Spirit. At times they hope it. When things go well with them; when they have had a good time in the closet; when they have enjoyed nearness to God in prayer, or over the word; while they are sitting under a clear, fervent, forcible ministry—at such moments, perhaps, they can venture to speak hopefully about themselves. But, very soon, dark clouds gather; they feel the workings of indwelling sin; they are afflicted with wandering thoughts; or it may be, they have been betrayed into some levity of spirit, or irritability of temper; then they begin to *reason* about themselves, and to question whether they are, in reality, the children of God. And from reasonings and questionings, they very speedily slip into positive unbelief, and then plunge into the thick gloom of a despondency bordering on despair. All this is most sad. It is, at once, dishonouring to God, and destructive to the soul's peace; and as to progress, in such a condition, it is wholly out of the question. How can any one run a race, if he has not cleared the starting post? How can he erect a building, if he has not laid the foundation? And, on the same principle, how can a soul grow in the divine life, if he is always liable to doubt whether he has that life or not?

But it may be that some of our readers are disposed to put such a question as the following, "How can I be sure that I am on God's ground?—that I am washed in the blood of Jesus and sealed with the Holy Spirit?" We reply, How do you know that you are a lost sinner? Is it because you feel it? Is mere feeling the ground of your faith? If so, it is not a divine faith at all. True faith rests *only* on the testimony of holy scripture. No doubt, it is by the gracious energy of the Holy Ghost that any one can exercise this living faith; but we are speaking now of the true ground of faith—the authority—the basis on which it rests, and that is simply the holy scriptures which, as the inspired apostle tells us, are able to make us wise unto salvation, and which even a child could know, without the aid of the church, the clergy, the fathers, the doctors, the councils, the colleges, or any other human intervention whatsoever.

"Abraham believed God." Here was divine faith. It was not a question of feeling. Indeed, if Abraham had been influenced by his feelings, he would have been a doubter instead of a believer. For what had he to build upon in himself? "His own body now dead." A poor ground surely on which to build his faith in the promise of an innumerable seed. But, we are told, "He considered not his own body now dead." (Rom. iv.) What, then, did he consider? He considered the word of the living God, and on that he rested. Now this is faith. And mark what the apostle says: "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief (for unbelief is always a staggerer), but was strong in faith, giving glory to

God : and being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And *therefore* it was imputed to him for righteousness."

"Ah! but," the anxious reader may say, "what has all this to say to my case? I am not an Abraham—I cannot expect a special revelation from God. How am I to know that God has spoken to me? How can I possess this precious faith?" Well, dear friend, mark the apostle's further statement. "Now," he adds, "it was not written for his [Abraham's] sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if"—if what?—if we feel, realise, or experience aught in ourselves? Nay, but "if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

All this is full of solid comfort and richest consolation. It assures the anxious inquirer that he has the selfsame ground and authority to rest upon that Abraham had, with an immensely higher measure of light thrown on that ground, inasmuch as Abraham was called to believe in a promise, whereas we are privileged to believe in an accomplished fact. He was called to look forward to something which was to be done; we look back at something that is done, even an accomplished redemption, attested by the fact of a risen and glorified Saviour, at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

But as to the ground or authority on which we are called to rest our souls, it is the same in our case as in Abraham's and all true believers in all ages—it is the word of God—the holy scriptures. There is no other

foundation of faith but this ; and the faith that rests on any other is not true faith at all. A faith resting on human tradition—on the authority of the church—on the authority of so-called general councils—on the clergy—or on learned men, is not divine faith, but mere superstition : it is a faith which “stands in the wisdom of men,” and “not in the power of God.” (1 Cor. ii. 5.)

Now, it is utterly impossible for any human pen or mortal tongue to overstate the value or importance of this grand principle—this principle of a living faith. Its value at the present moment is positively unspeakable. We believe it to be the divine antidote against most, if not all, the leading errors, evils, and hostile influences of the day in which our lot is cast. There is a tremendous shaking going on around us. Minds are agitated. Disturbing forces are abroad. There is a loosening of the foundations. Old institutions, to which the human mind clings, as the ivy to the oak, are tottering on every side ; and many are actually fallen : and thousands of souls that have been finding shelter in them are dislodged and scared, and know not whither to turn. Some are saying, “The bricks are thrown down, but we will build with hewn stone.” Many are at their wits’ end, and most are ill at ease.

Nor is this all ; there is a numerous class, for the most part, of those who are not so much concerned about the condition and destiny of religious institutions and ecclesiastical systems, as about the condition and destiny of their own precious souls—of those who are not so much agitated by questions about “Broad

Church," "High Church," "Low Church," "State Church," or "Free Church," as about this one great question, "What must I do to be saved?" What have we to say to these latter? What is the real want of their souls? Simply this, "A living faith in the living God." This is what is needed for all who are disturbed by what they *see* without, or feel within. Our un-failing resource is in the living God and in His Son Jesus Christ, as revealed by the eternal Spirit in the holy scriptures.

Here is the true resting-place of faith, and to this we do, most earnestly, most urgently and solemnly, invite the anxious reader. In one word, we entreat him to stay his whole soul on the word of God—the holy scriptures. Here we have authority for all that we need to know, to believe, and to do.

Is it a question of anxiety about my eternal salvation? Hear the following words, "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion *for a foundation*, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, *a sure foundation*: he that believeth shall not make haste." (Is. xxviii. 16.) These precious words, so pregnant with tranquillising power, are quoted by the inspired apostle, in the New Testament scripture: "Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and *he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.*" (1 Peter ii. 6.)

What solid comfort—what deep and settled repose for the anxious soul is here! God has laid the foundation, and that foundation is nothing less than His own eternal and co-equal Son, the Son who had

dwelt from all eternity in His bosom. This foundation is, in every respect, adequate to sustain the whole weight of the counsels and purposes of the eternal THREE IN ONE—to meet all the claims of the nature, the character, and the throne of God.

Being all this, it must needs be fully adequate to meet all the need of the anxious soul, of what kind soever that need may be. If Christ is enough for God, He must, of necessity, be enough for man—for any man—for the reader; and that He is enough is proved by the very passage just quoted. He is God's own foundation, laid by His own hand, the foundation and centre of that glorious system of royal and victorious grace set forth in the word "Zion." (See Heb. xii. 22-24.) He is God's own precious, tried, chief corner stone—that blessed One who went down into death's dark waters—bore the heavy judgment and wrath of God against sin—robbed death of its sting, and the grave of its victory—destroyed him that had the power of death—wrested from the enemy's grasp that terrible weapon with which sin had armed him, and made it the very instrument of his eternal defeat and confusion. Having done all this, He was received up into glory, and seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

Such is God's foundation, to which He graciously calls the attention of every one who really feels the need of something divinely solid on which to build, in view of the hollow and shadowy scenes of this world, and in prospect of the stern realities of eternity. Dear reader, you are now invited to build upon this foundation. Be assured it is for you as positively and

distinctively as though you heard a voice from heaven speaking to your own very self. The word of the living God is addressed "to every creature under heaven"—"Whosoever will" is invited to come. The inspired volume has been placed in your hand and laid open before your eyes; and for what think you? Is it to mock or to tantalise you by presenting before you what was never intended for you? Ah! no, reader; such is not God's way. Does He send His sunlight and His showers to mock and to tantalise, or to gladden and refresh? Do you ever think of calling in question your own very personal welcome to study the book of Creation? Never; and yet there might be some show of foundation of such a question, inasmuch as, since that wondrous volume was thrown open sin has entered and flung its dark blots over the pages thereof. But, spite of sin in all its forms and all its consequences, spite of Satan's power and malice, God has spoken. He has caused His voice to be heard in this dark and sinful world. And what has He said? "Behold, I lay in Zion a foundation." This is something entirely new. It is as though our blessed, loving, and ever gracious God had said to us, "Here, I have begun on the new. I have laid a foundation, on the ground of redemption, which nothing can ever touch, neither sin, nor Satan, nor aught else. I *lay* the foundation, and pledge my word that whosoever believes—whosoever commits himself, in child-like, unquestioning confidence, to my foundation—whosoever rests in my Christ—whosoever is satisfied with my precious, tried chief corner stone, shall never—no, never—no, never be confounded—

never be put to shame—never be disappointed—shall never perish, world without end.”

Beloved reader, dost thou still hesitate? We solemnly avow we cannot see even the shadow of a foundation of a reason why thou shouldst. If there were any question raised, or any condition proposed, or any barrier erected, reason would that thou mightest hesitate. If there were so much as a single preliminary to be settled by thee—if it were made a question of feeling or of experience, or of aught else that thou couldst do, or feel, or be, then verily thou mightest justly pause. But there is absolutely nothing of the sort. There is the Christ of God and the word of God, and—what then? “He that believeth shall not be confounded.” In short it is simply “A living faith in the living God.” It is taking God at His word. It is believing what He says because He says it. It is committing your soul to the word of Him who cannot lie. It is doing what Abraham did when he believed God and was counted righteous. It is doing what Jehoshaphat did when he planted his foot firmly on those immortal words, “Thou gavest it to the seed of Abraham, thy friend, for ever.” It is doing what the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, the saints in all ages have done, when they rested their souls for time and eternity upon that word which “is settled for ever in heaven,” and thus lived in peace and died in hope of a glorious resurrection. It is resting calmly and sweetly on the immovable rock of holy scripture, and thus proving the divine and sustaining virtue of that which has never failed any who trusted it, and never will, and never can.

Oh! the unspeakable blessedness of having such a foundation, in a world like this, where death, decay, and change are stamped upon all; where friendship's fondest links are snapped in the twinkling of an eye by death's rude hand; where all that seems, to nature's view, most stable, is liable to be swept away in a moment by the rushing tide of popular evolution; where there is absolutely nothing on which the heart can lean, and say, "I have now found permanent repose." What a mercy, in such a scene, to have "A living faith in the living God!"

"They shall not be ashamed that wait for me." Such is the veritable record of the living God—a record made good in the experience of all those who have been enabled, through grace, to exercise a living faith. But then we must remember how much is involved in those three words, "*wait for me.*" The waiting must be a real thing. It will not do to *say* we are waiting on God, when, in reality, our eye is askance upon some human prop or creature confidence. We must be absolutely "shut up" to God. We must be brought to the end of self, and to the bottom of circumstances, in order fully to prove what the life of faith is, and what God's resources are. God and the creature can never occupy the same platform. It must be God alone. "My soul, wait thou *only* upon God; for my expectation is from him. He *only* is my rock and my salvation." (Ps. lxii. 5, 6.)

Thus it was with Jehoshaphat, in that scene recorded in 2 Chronicles xx. He was wholly cast upon God. It was either God or nothing. "We have no might." But what then? "Our eyes are upon

thee." This was enough. It was well for Jehoshaphat not to have so much as a single atom of might—a single ray of knowledge. He was in the very best possible attitude and condition to prove what God was. It would have been an incalculable loss to him to have been possessed of the very smallest particle of creature strength or creature wisdom, inasmuch as it could only have proved a hindrance to him in leaning exclusively upon the arm and the counsel of the Almighty God. If the eye of faith rests upon the living God—if He fills the entire range of the soul's vision, then what do we want with might or knowledge of our own? Who would think of resting in that which is human when he can have that which is divine? Who would lean on an arm of flesh, when he can lean on the arm of the living God?

Reader, art thou, at this moment, in any pressure, in any trial, need, or difficulty? If so, let us entreat thee to look simply and solely to the living God. Turn away thine eyes completely from the creature, "Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils." Let thy faith take hold now on the strength of God Himself. Put thy whole case into His omnipotent hand. Cast thy burden, whatever it is, upon Him. Let there be no reserve. He is as willing as He is able, and as able as He is willing, to bear all. Only trust Him fully. He loves to be trusted—loves to be used. It is His joy, blessed be His name, to yield a ready and a full response to the appeal of faith. It is worth having a burden, to know the blessedness of rolling it over upon Him. So the king of Judah found it in the day of his trial, and so shall the reader find

it now. God never fails a trusting heart. "They shall not be ashamed that wait for me." Precious words! Let us mark how they are illustrated in the narrative before us.

No sooner had Jehoshaphat cast himself completely upon the Lord, than the divine response fell, with clearness and power, upon his ear. "Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat: Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid or dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's . . . ye shall not need to fight in this battle. Set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to-morrow go out against them; for the Lord will be with you."

What an answer! "The battle is not yours, but God's." Only think of God's having a battle with people! Assuredly there could be little question as to the issue of such a battle. Jehoshaphat had put the whole matter into God's hands, and God took it up and made it entirely His own. It is always thus. Faith puts the difficulty, the trial, and the burden into God's hands, and leaves Him to act. This is enough. God never refuses to respond to the appeal of faith; nay, it is His delight to answer it. Jehoshaphat had made it a question between God and the enemy. He had said, "They have come to cast us out of *thy* possession, which thou hast given us to inherit." Nothing could be simpler. God had given Israel the land, and He could keep them in it, spite of ten thousand foes. Thus faith would reason. The

selfsame hand that had placed them in the land could keep them there. It was simply a question of divine power. "O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee."

It is a wonderful point in the history of any soul, to be brought to say, "I have no might." It is the sure precursor of divine deliverance. The moment a man is brought to the discovery of his utter powerlessness, the divine word is, "Stand still, and see the salvation of God." One does not want "might" to "stand still." It needs no effort to "see the salvation of God." This holds good in reference to the sinner in coming to Christ, at the first; and it holds equally good in reference to the Christian in his whole career from first to last. The great difficulty is to get to the end of our own strength. Once there, the whole thing is settled. There may be a vast amount of struggle and exercise ere we are brought to say "without strength!" But, the moment we take that ground, the word is, "Stand still, and see the salvation of God." Human effort, in every shape and form, can but raise a barrier between our souls and God's salvation. If God has undertaken for us, we may well be still. And has He not? Yes, blessed be His holy name, He has charged Himself with all that concerns us, for time and eternity; and hence we have only to let Him act for us, in all things. It is our happy privilege to let Him go before us, while we follow on "in wonder, love, and praise."

Thus it was in that interesting and instructive

scene on which we have been dwelling. "Jehoshaphat bowed his head, with his face to the ground : and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord, worshipping the Lord. And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high."

Here we have the true attitude and the proper occupation of the believer. Jehoshaphat withdrew his eyes from "that great company that had come against him," and fixed them upon the living God Jehovah had come right in and placed Himself between His people and the enemy, just as He had done in the day of the exodus, at the Red Sea, so that instead of looking at the difficulties, they might look at Him.

This, beloved reader, is the secret of victory, at all times, and under all circumstances. This it is which fills the heart with praise and thanksgiving, and bows the head in wondering worship. There is something perfectly beautiful in the entire bearing of Jehoshaphat and the congregation, on the occasion before us. They were evidently impressed with the thought that they had nothing to do but to praise God. And they were right. Had He not said to them, "Ye shall not need to fight"? What then had they to do? What remained for them? Nothing but praise. Jehovah was going out before them to fight; and they had but to follow after Him in adoring worship.

"And they rose early in the morning and went forth in the wilderness of Tekoa : and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah,

and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper." (2 Chron. xx. 20.)

It is of the very last importance that God's word should ever have its own supreme place in the heart of the Christian. God has spoken. He has given us His word; and it is for us to lean unshaken thereon. We want nothing more. The divine word is amply sufficient to give confidence, peace, and stability to the soul. We do not need evidences from man to prove the truth of God's word. That word carries its own powerful evidences with it. To suppose that we require human testimony to prove that God's word is true, is to imply that man's word is more valid, more trustworthy, more authoritative, than the word of God. If we need a human voice to interpret, to ratify, to make God's revelation available, then we are virtually deprived of that revelation altogether.

We call the special attention of the reader to this point. It concerns the integrity of holy scripture. The grand question is this, Is God's word sufficient or not? Do we really want man's authority to make us sure that God has spoken? Far be the thought! This would be placing man's word above God's word, and thus depriving us of the *only* solid ground on which our souls can lean. This is precisely what the devil has been aiming at from the very beginning, and it is what he is aiming at now. He wants to remove from beneath our feet the solid rock of divine revelation, and to give us instead the sandy foundation of human authority. Hence it is that we do so earnestly press upon our readers the urgent need of keeping

close to God's word, in simple unquestioning faith. It is really the true secret of stability and peace. If God's word be not enough for us, without man's interference, we are positively left without any sure basis of our soul's confidence; yea, we are cast adrift on the wild watery waste of scepticism, we are plunged in doubt and dark uncertainty: we are most miserable.

But, thanks and praise be to God, it is not so. "*Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established: believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.*" Here is the resting-place of faith in all ages. God's eternal word, which is settled for ever in heaven, which He has magnified above all His name; and which stands forth in its own divine dignity, fulness and sufficiency before the eye of faith. We must utterly reject the idea that aught in the way of human authority, human evidences, or human feelings, is needful to make the testimony of God full weight in the balances of the soul. Grant us but this, that God has spoken, and we argue with bold decision that nothing more is needed as a foundation for genuine faith. In a word, if we want to be established and to prosper, we have simply to "Believe in the Lord our God." It was this that enabled Jehoshaphat to bow his head in holy worship. It was this that enabled him to praise God for victory ere a single blow was struck. It was this that conducted him into "the valley of Berachah," and surrounded him with spoil more than he could carry away.

We shall close with the soul-stirring record.

"And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed *singers unto the Lord*, and that should praise

the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord : for his mercy endureth for ever." What a strange advance guard for an army ! A company of singers ! Such is faith's way of ordering the battle.

"And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah, and they were smitten." Only think of the Lord setting ambushments ! Think of His engaging in the business of military tactics ! How wonderful ! God will do anything that His people need, if only His people will confide in Him, and leave themselves and their affairs absolutely in His hand.

"And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped." Such was the end of "that great company"—that formidable host—that terrible foe. All vanished away before the presence of the God of Israel. Yes, and had they been a million times more numerous, and more formidable, the issue would have been the same, for circumstances are nothing to the living God, and nothing to a living faith. When God fills the vision of the soul, difficulties fade away, and songs of praise break forth from joyful lips.

"And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them [for that was all they had to do], they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away ; and they were three days in

gathering of the spoil, it was so much. And on the fourth day, they assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah [or 'blessing']; for there they blessed the Lord."

Such, beloved reader, must ever be the result of a living faith in the living God. More than two thousand five hundred years have rolled away since the occurrence of the event on which we have been dwelling; but the record is as fresh as ever. No change has come over the living God, or over that living faith which ever takes hold of His strength, and counts on His faithfulness. It is as true to-day as it was in the day of Jehoshaphat, that those who believe in the Lord our God shall be established, and shall prosper. They shall be endowed with strength, crowned with victory, clothed with spoils, and filled with songs of praise. May we then, through the gracious energy of the Holy Spirit, ever be enabled to exercise A LIVING FAITH IN THE LIVING GOD!

P.S.—Some of the Lord's people, through want of simple confidence, would lead us to think that the ground is gone from beneath our feet. To all such we say, Thank God, it is not so. Your feet may have got off the ground; but the ground remains as firm as the throne of God—not only the ground of individual salvation, but also the ground of gathering. The former is found in the words, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." And the latter is found in the words, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst." The one is as true, and as real, and as stable as the other.

The Lord be praised that it is so!