**VOLUME 9; CHAPTER 12 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**JEHOVAH OF HOSTS - THE GOD OF JACOB by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*Jehovah of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.*

*Psalm 46:7 ( & 11)*

IN THE HISTORY OF THE HUMAN RACE NOTHING HAS EVER BEEN done for its help or uplifting save through the principle of faith. Doubt is always destructive. Faith is forever constructive. That is to state the principle in the widest and broadest possible way. I am not now speaking only of the faith of the Christian, though, of course, it is to that I am proposing to come. It is true in every walk of life and every department of thought that the man of faith builds. The man who lacks faith breaks down.

This being granted, I submit that the particular quality of faith which has done most for the uplifting of humanity is that of faith in the living and eternal God. Faith that believes in the existence of God, and believes, moreover, in the Divine interest in human affairs, is the faith which has most helped the race.

The fact of God as the foundation of faith is our theme. I am speaking to Christian workers, to those upon whom the burden and the toil that makes His Kingdom come is resting, to those who sometimes amid the conflict are weary and almost discouraged. I am perfectly sure that it is the occasional experience of anyone doing real work for God. If we know what it is to get underneath even the edge of the world's agony with the imperial, lonely Christ, then we know what it is to have days of darkness, hours of questionings, problems, trials, temptation, and difficulties in Christian service.

Yet notwithstanding all such hours, and occasions, and questionings, an undercurrent of conviction exists in the heart of every member of the Christian community; it is one of unswerving and unabated confidence in God. He is the rock foundation upon which we build - the strong rock upon which faith fastens while we toil and suffer and serve all the while confident of the ultimate victory.

If I remind you of these things, it is because I think sometimes amid the toil we should stop and be conscious of the rock. The rock is always there, but perhaps the consciousness of some trembling child of God will be stronger for pausing to think of it.

These old Hebrew singers and seers had a very keen consciousness of the fact, though, perchance, they did not understand the nature and character of God as we do. They had to wait for the full shining of light in the Person of Jesus. This Psalm begins with the announcement in a single word of all the truth that it afterwards unfolded. God - and the psalmist has said everything when he has said God.

Yet, essential light is always such that we cannot look at it. We have not yet been able to gaze upon pure light. Light must be analyzed to enable us to appreciate it, to understand it. The pure light is the final fact, but the light must be broken up in order that we may apprehend it. After the psalmist has uttered the word which is all conclusive, he proceeds to say things about it until he comes to the seventh verse in the heart of the Psalm, until he comes to the closing sentences of the Psalm, and in these two verses he breaks up for us the essential light. "Jehovah of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." All I want to do is to consider this breaking up of the essential truth concerning God upon which our faith has fastened and must fasten if we are to continue to be workers together with Him and for Him.

Will you follow me, then, along two lines of meditation? First, a consideration of the twofold truth about God which my text suggests, and second, the twofold statement the psalmist makes based upon the twofold fact. The twofold fact concerning God - He is Jehovah of hosts, He is the God of Jacob. The twofold declaration he makes about this God; first, "He is with us"; second, He is "our refuge."

First, then, the twofold declaration concerning God: "The Lord of hosts ... the God of Jacob."

"The Lord of hosts," or, as the American Revision has given it to us, "Jehovah of Hosts." The name by which he knew the Deity as self-existent and eternal. Other names of God which have come to us from the Hebrew people are preceded by qualifying words but never so with Jehovah. The Hebrew never wrote this name fully. It was the unpronounceable name, the incommunicable name, the name that stood lonely in majesty as the sign and symbol of the infinite things of God which no man could perfectly comprehend and therefore no man perfectly explain. Jehovah was the name which most forcefully gave expression to the facts concerning God which were beyond human comprehension - His absoluteness, without beginning, without end, without counsel taken, without forethought - for there was no thought before him - Jevoah.

If we are wise, we stand with the Jew in the presence of the name and confess our ignorance while we bow in reverential worship. Jehovah speaks of the continuousness of God, the self-determining power of the Most High, and His inward sufficiency, so that there is nothing beyond His consciousness. It is the greatest of all the words into which the fact of God is compressed in such a way as to announce forevermore to men that it cannot be expressed so that the mind of finite man can ever understand it.

The psalmist comes very near qualifying the word, for he adds "of hosts." Not that the word "of hosts" really qualifies "Jehovah," for, rather, the word "Jehovah" qualifies the "of hosts."

"Hosts." How is that word used in the Bible? It is employed in the Old Testament Scriptures and in the New Testament in different ways. It is used first with regard to the stars. We read in Genesis, "And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them" (2:1). In the prophecy of Isaiah, "Lift up your eyes on high, and see Who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number; He calleth them all by name; by the greatness of His might, and for that He is strong in power, not one is lacking" (40:26).

The same term is also used of the angels. "… I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left" (I Kings 22: 19); and in the song that sounded o'er Bethlehem's plains after the angel's solo, it is recorded, "… there was … a multitude of the heavenly host praising God …" (Luke 2:13).

In the Book of Exodus the word is applied to the children of Israel. They are spoken of as the host of God. Thus it is used of the stars in the heavens, of the unfallen intelligences that people the world beyond our vision and knowledge, and of the companies of men that march across the earth and dwell upon its surface, of stars and seraphim and saints, host of stars, hosts of angels, hosts of saints. I believe in my text it is used of all these.

This phrase, "Jehovah of hosts," teaches us that Jehovah is absolute, sufficient, and superior. It declares to us that God is the Lord of the heavens and all their inhabitants. As one has beautifully expressed it, "The universe of matter and the world of mind were not only created, but are marshaled and ordered by God." We are now looking upon one side only of the Divine nature and being, thinking of Him as the One Who knows all hosts and marshals and controls them by His own power, and we are reminded of the wisdom of God and of the might and majesty of the Most High - "Jehovah of hosts. …"

Turn to the other half of the declaration concerning God. "The God of Jacob ..." If we were not so familiar with this text, we should be startled by the very daring of bringing together two such descriptions of God as we have within its compass. "Jehovah of hosts, …" and in a moment, by a rapid change of terms, we are given another revelation of God, which I do not hesitate to say is far more startling than the former, especially when considered in the light thereof. "The Lord of hosts, …" and then suddenly, "the God of Jacob …" "The Lord of hosts, …" and as the phrase passes our lips we are amid the eternal expanse, the unfallen intelligences, the vision of any one of which would blind us were it granted to us at this moment. And suddenly, almost without warning, we move from the stellar spaces on to the earth, The stars grow dim until they are seen but as flecks and points of glory upon the darkling brow of night; the angels pass from our vision; and we are on one small planet, amid the hosts of heaven, in one small country upon that planet, looking into the face of one lonely man - Jacob. The psalmist says that the God Who is the God of all the hosts is the God of that man as surely and positively interested in that one speck of thinking life as in all the unfallen intelligences of the upper spaces; as surely and as positively committed to that man as to all the order of the infinite universe.

We have not yet reached the height and the depth of the mystery. We have not yet reached the word that is most startling of all in this consideration. Notice carefully what the psalmist says: "The God of Jacob ..." I think we should not have been quite so startled if the psalmist had said the God of Israel. He says, "the God of Jacob …" I know only one man who is meaner than Jacob and that is Laban. The only comfort I ever got out of Jacob is that he was one too many for Laban. Of all men for astute, hard-driving meanness recommend me to Jacob. But God is "the God of Jacob …" Oh, my soul, here find thy comfort! I do not know whether it helps you, but it helps me. He is the God of Jacob, mean as Jacob was. This is the thing on which my faith fastens. "The Lord of hosts, …." yes; but "the God of Jacob! …" But was that man such a man as I? The longer I live the more astonished I am that God ever loved me at all. The longer I live the more astonished I am at that infinite grace which found me and loves me and keeps me. The meanness that lurks within, the possibilities of evil that I have discovered make me ask, "Will God look at me?" He is "the God of Jacob." He was his God and loved him notwithstanding all his meanness, enwrapped him with provision, led him, told him where to rest his head, and when he had laid that head upon the stone, linked heaven and earth with a symbolic ladder to teach him His care for him even while he was Jacob. Infinite in His majesty, "The Lord of hosts …"; infinite in His mercy, "the God of Jacob ..." Stupendous is His power, upholding all things by the word thereof, "the Lord of hosts ..."; sublime in His pity, "the God of Jacob …"

This revelation moves me more than any other. The very distance of the other fact enables me to assume an erect posture in the presence of it. "The Lord of hosts …" - and I hear the music and rhythm of the eternal order amid stars and angels. "The God of Jacob …" - I thought He was far away, I hoped I might, perchance, see the glistening of His dazzling robe of glory among the everlasting spaces. But He is not far away, He is with Jacob! It is not only in immensity but in littleness that God is great. Mark the condescension of this figure of speech; note the beauty of it. Not- withstanding the failure and wreckage of this life, despite the fact that it is anything but what God meant it to be, that in its foolish attempts to create its own destiny and carve its own fortune it has led itself into the region where character is blighted and spoiled by the dwarfing influences of vain ambition, yet the inspiring word comes to me - "the God of Jacob …" He has created man, and man has broken all His laws; but He is his God still and broods over him tenderly, his folly notwithstanding.

Let us consider what the psalmist says concerning these facts. First, then, the declaration, "The Lord of hosts is with us…" May I make application of the truth by reminding you again what this phrase "of hosts" means? He is the God of the stars, the God of the angels, the God of men in multitudes and companies. The God of all these hosts is with us, and for our making, for the making of Jacob, He will press all hosts into service if necessary. "But," you say, "this is imagination. Do you mean to suggest that this God, Who is the God of the individual, of Jacob, will use the stars for our making?" I desire to tell you nothing that is not within the covers of the Bible. I have no commission to speculate or philosophize. I have a commission to preach the Word. Let me read some Old Testament words:

The kings came and fought,

Then fought the kings of Canaan,

In Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo;

They took no gain of money.

They fought from heaven,

The stars in their courses fought against Sisera.

The river Kishon swept them away,

That ancient river, the river Kishon….

And then we are not surprised that the writer of the historic fact in poetic language addresses his soul thus: "… Oh, my soul, march on with strength." "The Lord of hosts is with us …" The God of the stars is committed to me, and, if there be necessity for it, the very stars in their courses shall fight for me against the foes that hinder me as I climb upward toward the home of God. He will command the whole universe for the making of a soul. Do you doubt me there? Then let me remind you that for the purchase of my soul and yours, for its reconciliation and redemption, He gave in one supreme gift that which was infinitely superior to all the stars - the One by Whose word they were made, and in Whose might they have consisted through the ages. He gave Him for the remaking of my broken, maimed, spoiled life. The stars, the hosts of God if need be, will be pressed into the service of the making of the saint, and into the service of the saint as he goes forth in toil for God.

But what of angels? Need I tarry to say anything about angels? I fear I must. This is a very Sadducean age. I am never quite sure whether there are more Sadducees or Pharisees in the world today. I do not mean in the accidentals of past manifestations but in the essentials. The Pharisee was the ritualist in his age. The Sadducee was the rationalist, and if you want to know the essentials, you can find it in one brief description in your New Testament. "… the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit. ..." And there are a great many Sadducees abroad today. They smile and they say, "You do not really believe this story that angels help us." I believe angels help us. I still believe with the psalmist that "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him…." I still believe with the New Testament writer, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?" Poetry, do you say? I know it is poetic statement, but it is fact that makes the poetry. I believe that what Jesus said once was true. I do not quite understand it, but I am sure it is true. Jesus said, "See that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven." I tell you honestly that I do not perfectly understand it. But there are certain things in it I am sure of, "My Father in heaven," the "little ones," and "their angels." How the angel beholds the face of the Father, or how the beholding of the angel saves the child I do not quite know; but I am sure of the Father and sure of the children, and sure of the angels. And men and women, I beseech you, doubt this Sadducean age that questions the ministry of the spirit and the ministries of the angels, and believe me, if we could see things as they are now, the Lord of hosts has His hosts of angels guarding the children, watching our way, preparing as we go.

Angels? The prophet Elisha was shut up in the city, and his servant was terribly anxious, and he said to him, "Master, what shall we do?" And the prophet said to God, "Lord, … open his eyes. ..."

And lo! to faith's enlightened sight

All the mountain flamed with light.

Jesus faced His passion, and when a blundering disciple smote His enemy with an old sword, He said: "… Put up again thy sword …" Thinkest thou that I cannot beseech My Father, and He shall even now send Me more than twelve legions of angels?"

But what about the hosts of men? Is Jehovah indeed with hosts of men? Yes, and not only is He Jehovah of hosts concerning the companies of His saints; Jehovah is the Lord of all hosts and of all the hosts of men. He is the Lord of all the armies in the world. Let no man misunderstand me for a moment. Let me say to you bluntly what is in my deepest soul. I hate all war as I hate hell, and believe you can never justify it by Christian standards under any circumstances whatever. But if men will fight, God is the God of battles. He does not inspire the battle, but He governs its goings, and remember this, that no army ever marches across any path of this earth but in the check of His strong hand. It may be a little difficult sometimes to understand what God is doing. I suppose there have been moments in the lives of all of us who know anything of what it is to love and serve Him when we have grumbled with Carlyle, "Yes, God is in His heaven, but doing nothing." He is always doing something.

You say, "What has this to do with me?" He will compel the march of men to contribute to the making of men. He will press into the service of turning Jacob into Israel whole armies as they come and go. Hosts of stars, hosts of angels, hosts of men, and the Lord of all of them is with us.

Oh, take heart, my brothers, my sisters! Is the burden pressing heavily, is the toil almost too great to be borne? Do you stand upon the brink of great enterprises, afraid because of the vested interests, because of the hosts of wickedness? I bring you a message full of heart, hope, and courage. God, by His Spirit, sing it as an anthem in your heart. "The Lord of hosts is with us, …" and while its music thrills my soul I dare go back to battle and suffering and to the defeat of half an hour because I know at last the victory will be won, and the Lord of hosts cannot be defeated.

A final word about the other fact - "… the God of Jacob is our refuge." What did He do for Jacob? Think of his history. See at what infinite pains God was to make something out of him. Oh, the patience of God! oh, the waiting! oh, the forces pressed into the making of a man! oh, the opened heavens and the ascending and descending angels! oh, the glimpse of hosts He gave him one day! He called the name of one place Mahanaim which means the place of hosts. He said, "With my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two companies," Jacob, you have to learn that none of them are your own, that the Lord of hosts possesses every last skin of your cattle, and there are other hosts besides. There is Esau's host. He is coming to meet you with armed men. Jacob, you have yet to learn that a man may march against you with armed men all to no purpose if God is on your side; It was in that day that he saw God's host. What he saw, who shall tell? The host of God passed him, and he said, "Mahanaim," it is the place of hosts.

And he went down over the Jabbok, and God met with him and crippled him to make him. It was a wonderful night, only do not let us misinterpret it. I beseech you, do not talk as though Jacob wrestled with God and overcame Him. It is not true. Do not recite Jacob's words in the wrong tone. You know perfectly well that you may say correct words so that the tone gives a lie to the meaning of the words you recite. Do not imagine he said "… I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." If you want to know all go to the prophecy of Hosea. It is declared he was heard when with strong crying and tears, he said, "… I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." It was a voice choked with sorrow, the voice of a man being beaten, being crippled in the last agony of despair as he went down beneath the pressure of that mysterious hand. He won when he was beaten; he triumphed when he yielded; and God never let him alone until that night by crippling him He broke him.

And the day broke, and the people over the Jabbok saw him coming back again. Let us go and meet him. "Jacob, where have you been?" "Do not call me Jacob. My name is not Jacob. I was Jacob, a mere supplanter; but I am Israel, God-governed. Do not call me Jacob any more." I think I would have said, "Man, tell me, what is the matter? When I saw you last night, dividing up those bands to mollify Esau, you were erect, but now you are lame." "That limp will follow me to the end. It is the patent of my nobility; it is evidence of the fact that God has won at last." "… the God of Jacob is our refuge."

Oh, man, conscious of your own weakness! oh, brother, conscious of the evil within you, which baffles, beats and spoils you, "… the God of Jacob is our refuge." When the only pillow we have is a stone - a hard, unkind, unsympathetic stone - then will He open His heaven, so that His hosts may teach us that they with us are more than they that be against us; and if the God of Jacob be our refuge He will put His hands upon us, and, it may be, wound us, but the wounding is only for the deeper healing; it may be, cripple us, but the crippling is only for the stronger work that lies beyond; it may be, shatter all our cherished dreams, smiting the light of the mirage into nothingness; but it is in order that He may light the truer light -and give to us the very nature of the sons of God.

I do not think any of us become Israels until we have been at the Jabbok. We never get to power until His hands have been upon us, and sometimes today as in the dim and distant past, God has to put the scar on the flesh and crippling on the life before He can do very much with us. Oh, dear heart, tried as by fire, sing while the fire burns, sing while the pain is hot. If you are trusting Him, He breaks to make, He cripples to crown. Then by God's grace we are going on; we are not thinking of resigning; we are not going to give this fight up, or anything up, except sin. "The Lord of hosts, …" marshaling all for our making, "… is with us; the God of Jacob, …" patient and strong and purposeful, "… is our refuge." We will follow, we will trust, we will fight - God helping us.

"… the God of Jacob is our refuge." Another word will convey the true meaning of this. The God of Jacob is "our high place"; "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, The righteous runneth into it and is set on high (and is safe)". Such is the real word: The God of Jacob is "our high place." What means it? We have come down from immensity to localized position, from hosts to individuality, from the magnificent outlook of the Divine movements to personal life. And what is the promise about the God of Jacob? That He will be our "high place"; that we may be set in Him above circumstances, above enemies, above self, and so we look to the future with all confidence and security, because "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

If this announcement engender within us confidence, rest, assurance, it must also produce consecration. If looking on at our work with its light and its possibilities of sorrow and joy, we are confident and glad and the tone of our voice has in it the ring of the triumphant hosanna, if we are confident by reason of these words, then let it be remembered they must also produce consecration.

How will the fact of the Divine presence be manifested to the world? By the effect it produces upon us. So, while we take our joy and comfort out of the blessed thought that "the Lord of hosts is with us, …" we must not forget that the eyes of men are fixed upon us to discover Him of Whom we speak, and they will not see Him in shining glory; but if "the Lord of hosts is with us," and "the God of Jacob is our refuge," in the quiet calm of our spirit, in the tenderness of our love, in the straightness of our dealings with each other, in all the growing beauty of our lives, men will see that the Lord of hosts - of order, of precision. and magnificence - and the God of Jacob - of love, of care, and sympathy - is with us. Ours is the blessing, but ours is also the responsibility. Let us remember that the effects produced will be in proportion to our realization of the Divine presence, and our realization of the Divine presence will be in proportion to our yielding of ourselves to the will that is known, to the word that is spoken, that doing the will we may know the doctrine and may pass from glory into glory, the light and beauty of the Divine shining evermore upon our faces, and in our lives, that others, too, may come to see the glory of the Lord of hosts, the patience of the God of Jacob.