**THINGS THAT MATTER MOST - DEVOTIONAL PAPERS BY JOHN H. JOWETT**

**12. THE SONG OF MOSES AND THE LAMB by JOHN H. JOWETT**

IN the mystical and mysterious book of Revelation there is a strange and jubilant song sung by "them that have gotten the victory over the beast." I am not concerned to identify any particular beast over whom these singers had proved victorious. The beast may very well and justly stand as typical of all that is unspiritual, the general beastliness which man has to encounter as he struggles towards his crown. Tennyson gives me the suggestion I seek in his description of the four tiers of symbolic sculpture which adorned the walls of Merlin's Hall:

On the lowest beasts were slaying men;

On the second men were slaying beasts;

On the third were warriors, perfect men,

And on the fourth were men with growing wings.

The singers in the Seer's vision had attained to this glorious power of wing; they had gotten the victory over the beast.

And what was the burden of their song? First of all they sang the eternal righteousness of God. "Righteous and true are Thy ways." That is ever the main theme of psalmist, prophet, apostle, martyr, and saint; that is the ground-work of the heavenly music, the very stuff and substance of the song. The praise of the blest is not primarily concerned with the tender love of God or His infinite compassion; not first with the flowers of the earth, but with earth's enduring frame; not first with God's graces, but with His grace, His incorruptible holiness. For what love can there be without a basis of truth? And what is the worth of mercy without the solidity of rectitude? And so it is that when these singers break into song this is the theme of their music: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord!"

And, secondly, their music wanders among the wonders of God's progressive providence. "Great and marvellous are Thy works! "These works are not primarily the works of nature, but the works of grace. The singers are contemplating the truth in its conflict with falsehood. They are watching the wonders of holiness in its hallowing ministries among the children of men. They are recalling the romance of God's providence as they see it unrolled through the generations of their own troubled national history. And their doxology of providence and grace gathers about two names, the names of Moses and the Lamb. In their songful recital of providential deliverances these two names seem to crystallize and tell the story. And what is the significance of the names? Surely it is this: Moses signifies emancipation from social bondage; the Lamb signifies emancipation from spiritual bondage. Moses stands for deliverance from wrong. The Lamb stands for deliverance from sin. Moses delivers from the wrong which man may suffer from his brother. The Lamb delivers from the wrong which man may suffer from himself. Moses delivers from the Pharaoh outside man. The Lamb delivers from the devil within man. Moses delivers from the gall of oppression and pain. The Lamb delivers from the gall of guilt and sin. This is the song the singers sing, the "Song of Moses and the Lamb"--Thy marvellous works in Moses against all wrong; Thy marvellous works in the Lamb against all sin!

Let me still further emphasize the distinction here made. The song of Moses described a deliverance from the Egyptian house of bondage. It narrated an Exodus from oppression and servitude. The deliverance was the destruction of a galling yoke imposed by man on man. It was the overthrow of tyranny. And that deliverance is sung as a great and marvellous work of God; God is working through a human leader to human emancipation. And this deliverance by Moses is being continued to our own day. In every generation there is some new Exodus from servitude, led by men inspired by the Holy Spirit of God. The leader himself may not be conscious of his divine inspiration, but he is nevertheless the instrument of God's right hand. Wherever men have been fettered in physical servitude, wherever minds have been imprisoned in the darkness of ignorance, wherever hearts have been bruised and broken and a leader has appeared to set the captive free, that leader was a Moses, the champion of a new Exodus, and his crusade of freedom was inspired of the Lord.

Our own time has been singularly distinguished by such emancipations. I know not how many big and petty tyrannies have been fought within the compass even of one generation. In mine and factory, among women and children, on land and sea, among the labourers in the field, and among the sailors on the deep, yokes have been broken, prison doors have been opened, oppression has been righted, and captives have been led into the fair domain of freedom. To tell the story of freedom during the last fifty years would be to sing "a Song of Moses" worthy to be chanted with the song of Revelation sung by the victors at the crystal sea.

There are many more bondages yet to be broken; many more tyrants yet to be dethroned. Wrongs still stalk abroad unabashed and unashamed. There is many a chivalrous exodus yet to be won. And the heavenly allies are on the side of those who seek to do the work. The mystic horses and chariots are on the hill. The mystic ministers, with their golden censers and their golden vials, are still in active service. We are fellow-workers with the spirits of good men made perfect, and all heaven is enlisted on the side of those who seek "to set at liberty them that are oppressed."

But when the "Song of Moses" has been sung, what then? Lead your bondslaves out of Egypt. When you have lifted the tyranny, what about those who have been set free? When you have given the seaman the protection of the load-line he may still reel about the port. When you have lifted the tyranny from the factory operative he may delight to be a beast. When you have given the labourer a vote you have not given him either a conscience or a will. The fact of the matter is, when we have lifted a man out of Egypt we may yet leave him in hell. And let it be remembered that a man may remain in the bondage of Egypt, and yet be in heaven. There is many a servant living to-day in severe and unattractive social servitude who is yet in fellowship with a heaven their master or mistress has never known. Slaves sang their songs in the early Christian Church while they were still in their servitude, and we catch snatches of the music to-day. Yes, all that is true; the prison-house has been bright with the splendours of heaven. And this, too, I say, is true; that a man may gain a certain liberty and yet may enter into a deeper servitude. A man may be redeemed from Egypt and may become a more ignoble slave. The shackles may have been struck from his limbs but they are still on his soul. One tyrant is gone, but the greater tyrant remains. What, then, do we need? Moses can destroy the lesser tyranny, but he cannot touch the greater. We need another and a mightier exodus; we need another and a mightier Moses. The one can work the wonders of the Red Sea and smite and cleave the intercepting flood; we need one who can command and subdue the waters of passion and make its turbid waters clear and clean as the crystal sea. And so to the "Song of Moses" it is imperative that we add the "Song of the Lamb." We shall find at Calvary what can never be found at the Red Sea.

"Babylon is fallen." So do I hear again and again resounding in the Book of Revelation. It is the emancipating word of Moses, and we needs must sing and shout when the tyrant is vanquished, "The slave trade is fallen!" It is the emancipating word of Moses, and we needs must sing when the slave is free. But what has happened when we sing the "Song of the Lamb"? Another exodus has happened with deeper experiences, leading into a far more glorious freedom. "If the Son, therefore, shall make you free ye shall be free indeed." And how are His freed ones described? They are "clothed in white robes"; they have attained to purified habits and dispositions. They have "palms in their hands," the symbol of sovereignty, the emblem of a strong and graceful self-conquest and self-control. And they are singing; the discords of life have been subdued to sweetest harmony. Such is the free one in the Lord. Moses can never make him; he is the creation of the Lamb.

There is a very modern significance in all this. It is imperative that we remember that Moses can never do the work of the Lamb. We are living in a day when we are very much tempted to believe he can. The "Song of Moses" is prone to make us forget the "Song of the Lamb." We are busy, and wisely busy, legislating, emancipating, educating, co-operating. It is all good, and I will sing the song of thanksgiving, but it will never do. The Moses-ministry is pathetically insufficient. It may give us a little more ease, it will never give us a wealthy peace. It may make us more comfortable; it will never make us inherently good. "We are complete in Him," in Him alone, and in Him only, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."