**THE SILVER LINING - MESSAGES OF HOPE AND CHEER BY JOHN H. JOWETT**

**10. OUR BRILLIANT MOMENTS by JOHN H. JOWETT**

*"While ye have light believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light."*

*John 12:36*

"WHILE ye have light." Take advantage of the sun while it shines. The vivid illumination is not constant. Life's visions do not shine and glow like brilliant and continuous noons. The lucid seasons are rare and infrequent. They come and they go, bright intervals in the wastes of grey twilight and darker night. There is an illumination for a moment; in that moment we have a glimpse of reality, and the colours and outlines of things are clearly revealed. "While ye have light believe in the light."

A little while ago, on a dark and stormy night, I wandered along a winding road on a bleak hillside. Things in the distance were hidden from my view, and the things which were near were revealed in weird and portentous guise. Then the clouds divided, and the full moon swept into the rift, and in the blaze of light the road stood out like a white ribbon across the hill, and the whole countryside emerged into view, river and hedgerow and tree. And the rift closed again, the door was shut and again the darkness reigned. But I had taken my bearings, and I could proceed with assured tread. If the enveloping clouds or the mists of the night roll themselves back for a moment, and disclose the stars, by that twinkle of a moment man can adjust and correct his course. Sometimes the illuminant in nature is not the soft light of moon or star. Sometimes the ministry of vision is severe and terrific lightning, bringing hidden things to view with fearful and startling intensity. The flash of a moment can unveil a secret and buried world. "While ye have light believe in the light."

As it is in the realm of nature so it is in the finer region of the soul. We have our brilliant moments. In those moments the near view opens out into the distant prospect and we see things clearly. We are privileged to have "heavenly visions." We have the light! In these bright, lucid seasons we gain some clearer apprehension of God, we look more deeply into the mystery of life, we can behold our ideal possibilities and gaze upon our purified and exalted selves. We see in the winsomeness of duty the repulsiveness of sin, and the charm and fascination of unselfish service. These are the brilliant moments in life, when the clear light is shining upon our changing way. We can never be sure when the revelation may come. We never know when the concealing cloud will divide, and the radiant light will throw her kindly ministry upon our dusky way. We never know just when the veil of the temple will be rent in twain, and our wondering eyes will gaze into the secrets of the holy place.

Sometimes the brilliant moment comes to us when we are contemplating a scene of superlative beauty. Who has not read that wonderful passage in one of Kingsley's letters wherein he describes how the trout stream on Dartmoor, and all its immediate surroundings, opened out into an apocalypse of the unseen? The temporal divided, and he saw God! I heard a man a little while ago describing his experiences amid the unspeakable wonders of the Alps, and his story culminated in a never-to-be-forgotten morning when, away up on the solitary heights, he declared there was "only a film between him and the Lord." I heard another man tell a little company that there had been five or six distinct moments in his life, and perhaps the most commanding of them was a season of sunset in the Austrian Tyrol, when his soul literally trembled in the unfolding glory. Yes, these are brilliant moments, when the heavenly light breaks upon our wondering eyes.

Sometimes the brilliant moment comes in a season of calm and lonely meditation. Everybody else is at rest. The house is quiet. The last book has been put away. And suddenly our surroundings fade away, or are eclipsed, and life's possibilities shine before us in dazzling summits of ambition, pure as Alpine heights. Range upon range of surpassing loveliness breaks upon our spiritual vision, and we behold what we might be in the Lord. It is one of the moments of the Son of Man, a brilliant moment, and we have the light.

Or perhaps the brilliant moment comes to us in the rending ministry of sorrow. It is amazing how far we can see through the tiniest niche and crevice. And when our imprisoning and commonplace environment has been shaken and convulsed in some season of upheaval and trouble, through the very rifts of the disaster we often obtain a clear glimpse of a forgotten or neglected world. "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord." The vision came in a bewildering season of night. Our tears frequently give lucidity and range to our views. "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now ... !" The light had come in the midnight. The brilliant moment had come in the time of the shadow.

Or perhaps, again, the brilliant moment is experienced in the sanctuary and the ministries of public worship. In some part of the service we gain a wonderful detachment; the ordinary interests that imprison us lose their tyranny; we acquire a spiritual freedom; we soar and see! We gaze upon the Father, we behold our relationship to Him, we feel the greatness of our possible inheritance, and we thrill to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. It may be that the detachment and the exaltation spring from a hymn, or from some word from Holy Scripture, or from the leadings of another man's petitions, or from a strain of music. Perhaps it is some face in the congregation that reminds us of another face, and the reminiscence opens the heavens to us. But whatever may be the agent of the illumination, in that momentary vision, however created, we have a lucid revelation of the reality of things. We see! We have the light!

"Sometimes a light surprises

The Christian while he sings.

It is the Lord, who rises

With healing in His wings."

"While ye have light believe in the light." The brilliant moment passes. The ecstatic revelation comes to an end. The clouds close again. The grey and commonplace twilight returns. How, then, shall we regard and interpret ourselves? Which shall we trust--the revelation of the brilliant moment or the revelation of the familiar twilight? Shall we direct our way according to what we saw at our best, or what we saw in the mediocre season of our life? Here is the answer of our Lord: "Believe in the light" Believe what thou didst behold in thy brilliant moment. Just then, when thy highest powers were at their best, and the season was gracious and genial, take thy bearings. Do not mistrust thy highest, and give thine homage to thy lowest. What didst thou see of thy Lord in thy brilliant moment? What vision didst thou have of His power and His grace and His love? Take that for thy guide: "Believe in the light." What didst thou see of thyself in thy brilliant moment? What of thy present sin, thy possible holiness, thy capabilities of fellowship as a friend and companion of the Lord? "Believe in the light." What didst thou see of duty in thy brilliant moment? Which way did the road take? Over the steep hill or down the seductive vale? Did it reverse thy present purpose and reveal to thee another way? "Believe in the light." What didst thou see of brotherhood in thy brilliant moment? What of pale, beseeching need? What of the helpless and the careworn and the dying? Didst thou see thyself taking a towel and girding thyself? Such, then, is thy possibility, and such is the vision of thy best. "Believe in the light." Do not doubt thy brilliant moments doubt thy glooms, doubt the revelations of depression, the perverse and crooked creations of despair. The best is always the true. Nothing is too good to be true. It is rather true because it is the good, true because it is the best. "Believe in the light." Let the brilliant vision determine our goings when the ecstatic season is over. Let us act upon what we see at our best. Why? Because the only way to remember a vision is to act it. "Walk in the light lest darkness come upon thee." Aye, that is a terrible truth, and we all know it. How many of our brilliant moments are now things of the night! If we want to keep a brilliant vision we must enact it. Walk in the light of the lucid vision and the vision will endure. "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." Let us believe in our best moments, and life as a whole will rise to the plane of best.

And the principle is as applicable to people as to individuals. Let us believe in the revelation of our brilliant moments, in our national possibilities as seen by our nation at its best. Sometimes a man appears upon the grey and commonplace road of low policy and mean expedient and cowardly compromise, and he unfolds a vision of national ideals, and the common life is exalted and glorified. He calls to us, "My fellow men, look upon this," and we turn a reluctant eye, half in derision and half in unbelief. We answer him that his dreamy vision is impracticable. And so we leave the prophet, and we swear by the politician! Oh, the pity of it! "O Jerusalem, thou that stonest the prophets," the men with the seeing eyes, the men who bring the brilliant moments into the commonplace history of the people! We turn from the prophet because his vision is brilliant. Let us rather "believe in the light." If we will not believe, the prophet passes, the vision fades, and we wander in the confusion of bewildering guesswork instead of looking to the decisive leadership of the light Divine. How often would those leadings have been revealed unto us, "but now they are hidden from our eyes." For individuals and for peoples the brilliant moments are provided in order that we may take our bearings, and by their interpretation adjust the affairs of our ever-changing days.