**THIRSTING FOR THE SPRINGS - SERMONS BY JOHN H. JOWETT**

**23. A SONG IN THE NIGHT by JOHN H. JOWETT**

*"In the Lord put I my trust."*

*Psalm 11:1*

**I. -- A Song in the Night**

"In the Lord put I my trust." That is a jubilant bird-note, but the bird is singing, not on some fair dewy spring morning, but in a cloudy heaven, and in the very midst of a destructive tempest. A little while ago I listened to a concert of mingled thunder and bird-song. Between the crashing peals of thunder, I heard the clear thrilling note of the lark. The melody seemed to come out of the very heart of the tempest. The environment of this Psalm is stormy. The sun is down. The stars are hid. The waters are out. The roads are broken up, and in the very midst of the darkness and desolation one hears the triumphant cry of the Psalmist, "In the Lord put I my trust." The singer is a soul in difficulty. He is the victim of relentless antagonists. He is pursued by implacable foes. The fight would appear to be going against him. The enemies are over whelming, and, just at this point of seeming defeat and imminent disaster, there emerges this note of joyful confidence in God. "In the Lord put I my trust." It is a song in the night.

**II. -- Inadequate Resources**

"How say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?" The Psalmist now hears the voices of counsellors. They are urging him to get away from the exposed plains to the strongholds. They beseech him to fly to the mountains, and to seek security from his foes in the heights. Away in the mountain fastnesses he will be able to hide in perfect security, but to the Psalmist the suggested defences are inadequate. The enemy can reach him there. Evil has a long-range ministry. He will be discovered in his hiding place, and will be wounded and defeated even in the heights, "For lo, the wicked bend their bow; they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may shoot in darkness at the upright in heart." Against these imperfect defences the Psalmist proclaims his own confident boast, "In the Lord put I my trust."

Have we no similarly inadequate resources which are suggested to the driven soul to-day? The soul is assailed by fierce temptations. It becomes possessed by the feverishness of ambition. It lies exposed to the contagion of the leprosy of avarice. It is the target of the fiery darts of lust. Where may the soul find security? In what defence may a man rest in the strength of peaceful security? What protective ramparts are offered to the soul? The world is not slow to recommend its own fastnesses, its secure heights, its mountain air. I do not despise them, I am grateful for any defensive strength which they may offer to me, but, at the best, their resources are all insufficient. In the best of earth's health resorts one can catch disease. Even the most conspicuously healthy place has its published death-rate. There are little graveyards even among the Alps. And these mountain heights, which are recommended for the security of men who are persecuted by temptations, and exposed to the assaults of the devil, leave the soul vulnerable at a thousand points.

Look at two or three of these suggested refuges. "Flee as a bird to your mountain." "Take up literature!" No one can be more grateful than I for the magnificent defences offered by elevated literature. A healthy book is a strong defence. But if a man immerse himself in the very best literature, he is not necessarily out of the reach of the devil. "Lo, the wicked bend their bow." There are interstices in the most refined and finely-woven literature through which the forces of evil can pour like an atmospheric flood.

"Flee as a bird to your mountain." "Take up music!" How grateful we are for the gracious ministry of music. It gives expression to moods of the soul for which speech is altogether too coarse and imperfect a medium. Music refines the emotions, and helps to lighten and purify the desires. But are its defences adequate? Is the musician out of the range of the evil one? I should say that in this health-resort the death-rate is abnormally high. The jealousies and strifes, and petty envies of musicians, have become a common-place. The love of high-class music frequently cohabits with the lack of moral principle, fostering a dangerous sensationalism, which is often used in shameless lust.

"Flee as a bird to your mountain." "Take up science or art!" Here again one is grateful for the invigorating ministry. It is a rare benediction to be led into the wonder and beauty of nature, into the unveiling of her features, and the disclosure of her soul. I know of nothing more helpful, outside the realms of actual fellowship with Christ, than to go out into the country, and engage oneself with the unfolding marvels of the natural world. Such a habit affords a grand shield for the soul, but the armour is not complete. "The wicked can bend the bow," and discover the soul through many an exposed and unprotected place. The aesthetic cannot subdue the immoral, nor is science a safe-guard against irreverence and impurity. All these suggested strongholds are inadequate. Evil can invade these fastnesses. The air that blows on these heights is a breeder of the microbe of moral disease. "How say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?" "In the Lord put I my trust."

**III. -- The all-sufficient Security**

Upon what then shall the driven soul depend? "In the Lord put I my trust" In Him are the sure foundations of a mighty stronghold. In Him man's security is complete. In the remainder of the Psalm the Psalmist enumerates some of the foundations upon which his joyful confidence is built. I do not wonder that the inspection is accomplished to the accompaniment of a song. What are some of the stones of the grand foundation?

**The Lord's Immanence.** -- "The Lord is in His Holy Temple." That is the beginning of his confidence. Our God is not an absentee. "The Tabernacle of God is with man." God is very near. We can get at Him, and He can get at us; we can speak to Him, and He will speak to us.

**The Lord's Sovereignty.** -- "The Lord's throne is in the Heaven." We are not under the dominion of chance. Forces are not moving in blindness towards unknown destinies. The Lord governs the coming and going of the night. The clouds accomplish His bidding. He rides upon the storm. "God is in His heaven." That is the second great note in the Psalmist's faith.

**The Lord's Discernments.** -- "His eyes be hold, His eyelids try." Our God is a close observer. He is familiar with everything that is happening. Nothing gets the start of Him. He sees things in their germ. He sees conduct when it is only yet a wish. He sees the finished work when it is only yet a stammering prayer. Our Lord sees. All the secret movements of vice and virtue are known to Him. I need have no wonder as to whether He knows the forces that surround me. He knows them all -- their measure, their weight, and the power of my endurance. This is another element in the Psalmist's boast.

**The Lord's Repulsions.** -- "The wicked, and him that loveth violence, His soul hateth." The Lord is not passive, He does not stand aloof, and allow things to go by default. He hateth sin. Divine hatred means Divine antagonism. To know that the evil temptation that besets me has God for its antagonist strengthens the nerve and invigorates the will. Evil has God for its antagonist, and for its overthrow the Psalmist waits with fruitful certainty.

**The Lord's Purposes.** -- The wicked haste towards the night. "Upon the wicked He shall rain snares and fire of brimstone, and horrible tempest." I do not know the full import of these words, but I can catch their drift. The wicked are moving towards destruction! The righteous march towards the dawn! "The upright shall behold His face." They are moving on through tribulation and pain to a quiet and radiant morning. This is the design of God, and in this design the Psalmist builds his faith. Such are the foundations of the Psalmist's security. He will not be over whelmed. God is with him. The end of all things shall be to him, and to all the faithful, an unspeakably glorious dawn.