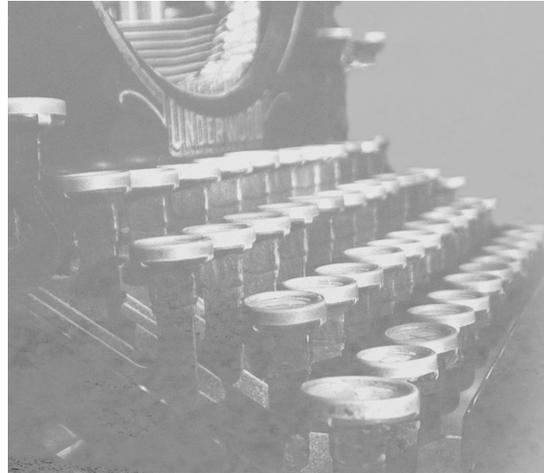


CHAPTER 9: MIRIAM

A FORERUNNER OF THE PROPHETESSES OF THE SALVATION ARMY

1. THERE WERE PROPHETESSES IN THOSE DAY – GOD called Miriam to this honour and endued her with His Spirit, and Moses recognised that call and gave her the opportunity for its exercise, which is more than we can say for every Moses of our acquaintance who has the privilege of having a Miriam in his congregation. So Miriam was one of the chosen ambassadors who came direct from the Divine presence with the sacred message on her lips, "Thus saith the Lord:" And, thank God, He has not left Himself without ambassadors, apostles, ministers, and prophets, known by whatever name those officers may be, in Our time, and He has prophetesses, Miriams, also, When the prophetesses disappear you may look out and tremble, for the prophets will be in great danger of going as well. But God, by the mouth of His servant the prophet Joel, said, that in this very dispensation, our daughters should prophesy, and Peter confirmed the prophecy by declaring its fulfillment; and, indeed, and of a truth, we are the people whose own eyes have seen, and whose own ears have heard the full verification of the same. We see them with our eyes, hear the word at their lips, and God confirms it as the Word of the Lord with signs and wonders following. We accept the gift, open wide the door for its fullest exercise, and bless the Giver.

II. IN THOSE DAYS THE PROPHETESSES LED THE PEOPLE IN OPEN-AIR PROCESSIONS. Miriam did, and no doubt it was quite a common thing for her to do so. On this occasion the people were evidently in good practice, falling in at the word of command, and all ready for the time, and the tune, and the song. Our prophetesses do the same. Why not? If processions are right, and lawful, and scriptural, and useful – as who in their senses can truthfully deny? – then why not the prophetesses to the front? People have objected, and do object, but, then, what is there that they won't object to, specially in practical godliness of any shape or form? They will let women sell in public, sing in public, dance in public – anything in public, out door or in, save and except, in a straightforward manner, discharge the Divine mission of a prophetess, and carry the message of mercy from the lips of Jehovah to dying men, or lead the Lord's elect to battle and victory.



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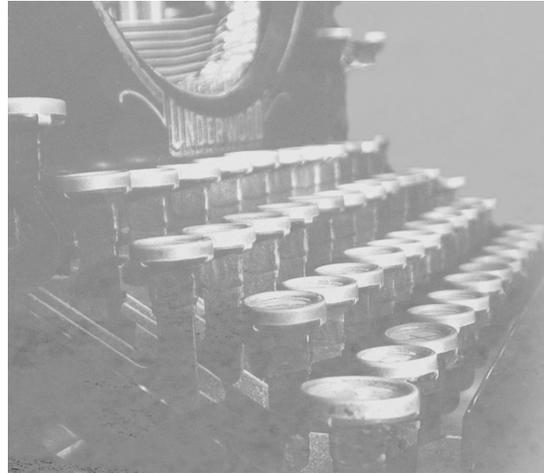
SALVATION SOLDIERY

But hold on, ye Miriams – ye precious, faithful, Heaven-sent women of our Israel. Fear not. God is with you, and we are on your side. If the Gentiles ask, "Is it in good taste?" we will answer, "Excellent! it is just to our liking." We would to God all the Lord's women were prophetesses. If the Gentiles ask, "Is it usage? is it the custom?" we will answer, " Alas, no! so much more the pity." But we will change the usage, and we will make another, a better, a more scriptural fashion. If the Gentiles ask, "Is this religion?" we will answer, "Yes! it is God's religion, the old-fashioned religion – a religion as old as the Battle of the Red Sea – and a religion which all Egypt respected when they learned the story of their own defeat and the triumph of those who, only the other day, had been their slaves.

III. THERE WERE PROPHETESSES THEN WHICH LED THEIR OPEN-AIR PROCESSIONS WITH MUSIC, AND DANCING, AND SONG. – No doubt this was an enthusiastic demonstration. Moses seems to have led one procession; perhaps he had the men, while Miriam had another with the women. Nobody was ashamed of God, or of being thought on His side on this occasion. No one thought it out of place. No Israelite in all the borders of the camp objected. The police did not object, and the Egyptians were all drowned, or they would have done; and the public-house business had not been started then, so they had it all their own way, and, headed by Miriam, they marched about, and played their music, and danced, and sang themselves hoarse, and all the people shouted and went wild in a general sort of way for very joy and gratitude, and praise and worship, to Almighty God for the wonderful things He had done for them.

And why should not our prophetesses lead their people with music and song under the bare heavens in processions of mercy? Why not play their music – if not timbrels, their violins, and cornets, and concertinas, and such other instruments as come to their hands. Do they dance? No, although it is evidently so scriptural, yet, in conformity with the dull leaden usages that prevail, our Miriams have not danced before the Lord, any way not with their feet, although they do lead their people with a heart dancing merry religion. They have led them, and that very often, with eyes filled with tears; and sometimes, as on this occasion, Miriam led her people on the banks of the Red Sea, with their mouths filled with laughter. Lead on!

IV. AND THESE PROPHETESSES LED THEIR PEOPLE IN THE TRIUMPHANT



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SALVATION SOLDIERY

CELEBRATION OF VICTORY. We cannot gather from the narrative what part Miriam played in securing the victory. Doubtless she had her full share, as certainly she took her full share in the celebration of it. And well she might. For the Lord had indeed triumphed gloriously, and instead of allowing the horse and his rider to trample upon her people, He had cast them together into the deep, deep sea. It was a wonderful victory, and Miriam helped to make for it a wonderful triumph.

And have not our Miriams led their people in triumph, nay, have they not led them in the battle, that has made the triumph possible? Have they not led their people, themselves redeemed from bondage only the other day? have they not led these slaves transformed into warriors to victory all over the land, from John O'Groat's to the Land's End in England, through the valleys and over the mountains of South Wales, in the winds and alleys of Glasgow, and other parts of Scotland, all over the North of Ireland? and is not a Miriam leading a noble regiment of uniformed soldiers through the streets of Adelaide, South Australia? Have not some of our Miriams, both English and American, led in the path of gloriously obedient freedom citizens of the nation that we were told would not submit to such authority? And did we not commend to the God of battles, the God of victory, the God of Salvation, a Miriam who has been a prophetess to us all? And having so commended her to Him, did we not send her forth? Has He not sent her to prophesy in Paris, the very heart of beautiful but godless France, and to raise up and drill a living army of saved and sanctified Frenchmen, who shall in their turn go forth on a mission of conquest, a conquest this time, which, while it covers the conquerors with imperishable glory, shall bring freedom, and glory, and everlasting life to those whom they shall conquer?

With what result has this Miriam gone? Let another – a visitor, who says he went prejudiced against the work, speak: – "I entered and found some hundred and fifty 'Soldats.' How they sang in their own language our well-known hymns! They appear, like the war horse, to smell the battle afar off, and enter the field like prancing steeds, and with a shout in the camp The brightness of the French nature shone out in this meeting with unusual splendour, though a few mothers seemed to be very serious and thoughtful. One bright young Frenchman, about twenty years old, told me he was converted, inside and out, three weeks ago. His was certainly a very good case. Another, who looked as though he would have been all there if there had been even



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the smell of communism, said one thing he could not forgive himself, standing up in public meetings denying and despising God! The Lord help him and all of them, and save, to the glory of His grace, millions of such characters in all cities and countries, is my earnest prayer."