**THE EAGLE LIFE - STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT BY JOHN H. JOWETT**

**15. LARGENESS OF HEART by JOHN H. JOWET**

*"God gave Solomon largeness of heart."*

*1 Kings 4:29*

Largeness of heart is the great primary gift in which all other moral and spiritual gifts become possible. Littleness of heart makes all big things impossible. The little heart has no capacity for noble entertainment. Only petty things can get in. Indeed, meanness is an imperative condition of entrance. A large heart is precious, first of all, just because of its roominess. It has marvellous powers of expansion. It always has room for something more.

Think of some of the big things that dwell with easy naturalness in the large heart. There is roomy communion with God. The prayers have a rich and inclusive fulness. The spiritual expectations are of a wealthy order. The praises go forth like well-laden argosies carrying exports from a rich and bountiful land. The joys are big, quiet satisfactions, and not small merriments that empty themselves in an hour. And, with all these, the large heart has a roomy receptiveness. When God comes to it He finds abundant room wherein to bestow His goods. In such lives the good Lord always finds room in the inn. And while the large heart sustains a roomy fellowship with God it also cultivates a roomy fellowship with men. It is magnanimous in all its judgments. Its sympathies are like brimming springs, and they flow freely on every side. It is given to hospitality. It has the twin graces of the open house and the open hand.

Now here is a strange discovery of experience. A large heart cannot entertain a small thought or a mean mood. Littleness cannot breathe in an atmosphere of largeness. Lord Morley says of Herbert Spencer: "He was not one of those large minds in which small outward things have no place.'' That is a word which almost defines a law of human life. A large mind is immune from small invasions. And therefore our first and finest security against the petty enemies, which carry such a deadly poison, is to grow a bigger soul.

"No man, by being anxious, can add a cubit unto Ms stature." But in the realm of the spirit we can, by reasonable thought and consecration, put ourselves into such relationship to the Lord that we can surely obtain spiritual enlargement. The enlargement may not come to us solely through the ministry of supplication. It may come by our supplications co-operating with God in the control of apparently unfriendly circumstances. Our present lot may seem very unfavourable to spiritual growth, and yet the very antagonism may be appointed minister of our enlargement. "In my distress Thou hast enlarged me!" That is the divine paradox. We are shut up in straits, and we come out bigger men! Perhaps we entered our imprisonment as pilgrims who were only endowed with feet; we came out as birds of God, equipped with wings! But however the enlargement may come to us, and whatever be the manner of our circumstances, our growth is absolutely sure if we reverently relate ourselves to our God in faith and prayer, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord.