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

**05. VISITING THEGREAT YESTERDAYS by JOHN H. JOWET**

*"Ask now of the days that are past."*

*Deuteronomy 4:32*

Yes, but what shall we ask about, and what kind of spoil shall we bring back from the treasures of the past? What have we in our purses or in our wallets when we return. In the "Life of Lord John Russell" I came upon a phrase which set me inquiring about my own habits. In a speech which he made in the House of Commons he said: "We talk too much, I think a great deal too much, of the wisdom of our ancestors. I wish we could imbibe the courage of our ancestors.''

It is a very suggestive word, and one which may justly lead us to overhaul our ways. For it too often happens that when we go seeking for the wisdom of the past we bring back its prudence and reluctance. We go for counsel and we return with caution. We seek advice on our own new outlook and then we stand in the "good old ways." Now suppose we take Lord John Russell's suggestion, and visit our ancestors in order that we may imbibe their courage, what sort of courage should we bring back to the new demands of our own time?

Well, first of all, I think we should have courage to make new trails over untrodden country. That was one of their most shining characteristics. They were not afraid to break new ground. They would even obey the grip of the dumb imperative, not seeing the distant scene. They went forth, "not knowing whither they went." They were not afraid to take risks with God. They were not afraid to be pioneers into more scrupulous rectitude and larger freedom. They marched out, with trumpets blowing, over the roadless moors, trusting to the guidance of the Lord they served. And we, too, are face to face with untraversed country. We have new ground to break. The wilderness is before us, but we think we hear the call of the garden in the very realm of the desert! Shall we venture? Let us imbibe the courage of our ancestors and dare to leave their ways behind as they left the ways of those who had gone before.

If we drink the valour of our ancestors we shall have courage to stand by the Truth even when the crowd has gone another way. We can go to the past and talk with Mr. Worldly-Wiseman, or we can have fellowship with Mr. Valiant-for-the-Truth. Mr. Worldly-Wiseman is always in favour of safe measures, and he would go with the majority in the hope of something turning up -- "you never know what!" His offered " wisdom" is always small prudence and compromise. But we need the courage of our great ancestors, courage to march with Truth in little companies, courage to "rejoice with the truth," in the absolute assurance that, in spite of all appearances, she marches to inevitable triumph. It is the courage which believes that Truth is God's leaven of the Kingdom, and therefore indestructible.

And we must imbibe the courage that sees the Captain, and is comparatively careless about everything else. Where is the Lord Jesus Christ in this business? There! Then forward into hardships, forward into light!