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

**19. THE NOBLEST CONQUEST by JOHN H. JOWET**

*"He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city."*

*Proverbs 16:32*

The first of all kingdoms is the kingdom of the soul. No other kingdom can be truly prosperous if this is a scene of insurrection and discord. The resultant worth of other kingdoms is determined by the order and harmony in this. Well-regulated spirits are the first essential to the might and federacy of an empire. But the wise rulership of the spirit does not find its analogy in the crushing tyranny of the despot, but in the firm and illumined control of an orchestra. We do not rule the spirit by suppression or mutilation, but rather by a wise balancing of all powers, every faculty being permitted to exercise itself in its appointed place and order. Our control is perfected when "all that is within us" -- every instrument in the orchestra -- praises and blesses God's holy name. The welcome issue of all strong rulership in the spirit is not servitude, but music.

The enemy who succeeds in debasing my spirit is more triumphant than if he had conquered my cities. The damage is more deadly. If his hatred for me kindles a similar hatred for him he is terribly victorious, even though I lay him in the dust. If his violence inflames my judgment, if he incites me to rashness and folly, he is winning a bigger victory than he dreams. If he goads me with the policy of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'' he has sacked and squandered my richest treasury. But if I keep my spirit whole, if I hold it in the mood of sanity and serenity, if I preserve it from all incendiary fires, I have won my greatest victory, and other triumphs will follow in the issue.

But to rule the spirit, to keep all its powers harmonious when tempted to panic and riot, to maintain chivalry in all my warfare, to keep the holy lights burning on the most tempestuous night, demands great resources of strength. And the need has been anticipated, and we can find our resources in Christ. "Be strengthened in the grace which is in Jesus Christ." That initial strength is not a human achievement, it is a divine equipment. It is not the creation of a will, it is the gift of grace. It is an enduement, the enduement of the Holy Ghost. A man is able to rule his spirit when he himself is kept by God.