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

**20. THE BLAST OF BURNING by JOHN H. JOWET**

*"The Lord shall purge the blood of Jerusalem by the blast of burning."*

*Isaiah 4:4*

Here is a case of foul blood, and when the blood is foul the entire body is infected with defilement. When the stream is poisoned the deadliness touches the entire country-side. When the postman has smallpox he leaves it at every house. The blood is the courier of the body. It is the vital current, and if the blood is polluted every fibre of the flesh will share its corruption. And the blood of Jerusalem was impure. Her life was not affected by a temporary fever, or by some transient spasm of irritability or fear. She was not troubled by a slight chill which had made her lukewarm, and which had robbed her of speed and nimbleness in the paths of obedience. She was the victim of bad blood. She had become bad at heart. Her soul was poisoned. There was something rotten at the very core of her being. It was not a passing indisposition, it was a deadly possession.

How is it to be dealt with? "By the blast of burning." The figure of speech may seem confusing, but the meaning is clear. Defilement has to be met by fire. Fire is the last and greatest resource in the ministry of cleansing. When water is powerless, fire is efficient. The plague in England in 1665 was burned away by the great fire in 1666. And so it is in the ministries of God. There are plagues and defilements in society which seem as though they can only be reached and removed by the fires of calamity and tragedy, and by the blasts of unutterable woe. There are fields which cannot be cleansed by means of ordinary culture, by the plough, or the spade, or the hoe, but only by the ministry of fire. And God's fire comes! The blast of burning visits cities, and countries, and races, and through much suffering they reach a cleaner, sweeter life. The severity may appear destructive, but the destruction is the instrument of a gracious culture, as it is also the gloomy pioneer of a more bountiful life. "The frost, which kills the harvest of a year, saves the harvest of a century by destroying the weevil or the locust." God's frosts are the ministries of coming harvests. God's fiery blasts are the fiery dawns of a better and larger day, Jerusalem is purged by the blast of burning. Our God is a consuming fire.