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

**26. THE VALLEY OF VISION by JOHN H. JOWET**

*"The valley of vision."*

*Isaiah 22:5*

That is a very strange conjunction. We could have understood the phrase had it been "The hill of vision." It is the mountain summit which is usually associated with outlook. One remembers "The high hill, called Clear," where Christian and Hopeful could dimly see the gates and also some of the glory of the celestial city. But here it is the valley which is the home of vision. The outlook is given in seeming imprisonment. We are shut in by surrounding hills, and our sight attains finer perception and range. The limitation becomes the minister of expansion. The big wonder is born in a narrow place. I remember my surprise when I paid my first visit to the Tower of London. At one point we were taken along a narrow, dingy passage which opened into the gloomy chamber where the Crown jewels were kept. One was almost startled to see those flashing jewels in such confined and grey surroundings; but a similar wonder often startles the saint when, in some gloomy valley experiences, there flash upon him the unsearchable riches of Christ.

And now take this word from the spiritual experience of Horace Bushnell: "I have learned more of experimental religion since my little boy died than in all my life before.'' Bushnell had had many rare experiences on the mountain-top, but they were nothing to the visions that were unveiled to him in the valley. The darker school gave him the finer sight. And may we not reverently remember the word which is spoken of our Lord, that "He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.'' That mysterious enrichment came to Him in the valley. And indeed, we may be perfectly sure that millions of God's children have found enlargement in the valley. They have begun to see, or they have strengthened their sight, in the very season when they were blinded with tears. It is in the valley that we see into the heart of God. There are narrow roads in the valley in which we share "the fellowship of His sufferings," and in that sacred communion we begin to see a little way into the dark mysteries of His Cross. It is because, in our own degree, we are like Him, that we see Him a little "as He is."

So that when we are led into sombre valleys, let us humbly and expectantly assume that we are in the place of vision. Maybe the Lord is going to anoint our eyes with eye-salve, and He will impart unto us one of His secrets. Perhaps it was needful that we should be led into the valley in order that we might receive our sight. And thus life's valleys will be found to be the abodes of the divine mercy as well as those breezy heights which catch the first beams of the rising sun. Even in the valley we may see the King in His beauty, and the land that is very far off.