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

**28. THE MYSTERIOS SWORD by JOHN H. JOWET**

*"Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of man: and the sword, not of man, shall devour him."*

*Isaiah 31:8*

When we have counted the material arms upon the field we have not told the full tale of contending armaments. There is a devouring sword, not held in the grasp of man, and it is fearfully active in unseen but sure destruction. That invisible sword can slay invisible things. For instance, it can kill the vitality of a man's hope, and sink him in despondency and despair. It can cut the sinews of his courage in the very thick of the conflict, and make him shake with fear. It can pierce the strength of his judgment, and cause him to wander in self-deception and delusion. It can maim men who have received no wound, and it can make the materially mighty helpless as babes. "The sword, not of man, shall devour him."

This invisible sword is the ally of the truth, and it is the antagonist of iniquity. It is even so in the individual life. The soul that is leagued with iniquity is being devoured by the sword. Nay, it is the ordination of the holy Lord that evil itself becomes a sword and does deadly work in the soul. "Evil shall slay the wicked." And so it often happens that the apparent instrument of a man's prosperity is at the same time the instrument of a deeper ruin. The falsehood that built a fortune slew the angel in the soul. "The wages of sin is death." The evildoer cannot escape this sword of the Lord.

And this invisible sword is also active in the corporate life of States. When a nation enthrones iniquity, when it harbours injustice, when it exalts self-will into a crusade, when it makes material interests supreme, "a sword, not of man, shall devour it." The sword can no more be escaped than can God himself. The nation may remain for a time in apparent strength, as the beams of a house which have been hollowed out by the white ants may seem to be perfectly whole, but the coming day will reveal that its inner strength is hollow and dead. And what shall it profit a nation if it gain the whole world and lose its soul? Or what shall a nation give in exchange for its soul?