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

**32. LIKE THE WAVES by JOHN H. JOWET**

*"O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! ... then had thy righteousness been like the waves of the sea."*

*Isaiah 48:18*

So that is what our rectitude is to be like; it is to possess an irresistible energy which will make it like the waves of the sea. I am writing these words in mid-Atlantic, and I have just been watching one gigantic wave which has hurled itself against our boat with terrific force and made it tremble from bow to stern. But we need not be a thousand miles away on the Atlantic to experience the power of the waves. We have watched the common breakers as they emptied their floods upon the shore, smashing up every impediment, and carrying every opposing thing before them as they raced along the beach. They toss heavy beams about like shuttlecocks, and they take up boulders and throw them hither and thither as a very little thing. And our righteousness is to be like that, tremendous and inevitable.

But our righteousness is too often like a tiny runlet which has scarcely outlasted the drought. There are streamlets which just creep along in indolence as though at any moment they might lose themselves in the sands. A little child can turn them aside. Make a little channel with your foot and the water takes the new course. You can lead them where you please; they have no power, no imperative trend, no uncompromising destiny. And the righteousness in some lives is just like these faint and easily diverted streams. It is a mere rill of loyalty, and anything and anybody can change its goings. An opposing difficulty arises, and the feeble conviction seeks an easier way. If Vanity Fair interposes, or the mysterious enticements of the Enchanted Ground, this anaemic righteousness is entirely lost. It has no force, no inherent and unbribable energy; there is nothing imperative about it, nothing glorious and irresistible.

It is God's will that our righteousness should be like the waves of the sea. Think of our moral energy advancing against temptations with the power of an advancing tide! Think of our encountering moral obstacles and "impossibles" with the mighty strength of racing waves! And think of the co-operative strength of the righteousness of the Church of Christ attacking social evils with all the tremendous assault of a great sea! Too often we only tickle evils, we do not smash them! We flow lazily around them, we do not sweep them away!

"O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments,'' then this mighty wave of power would have been ours. But this "hearkening" implies divine communion. It is the listening of reverence, it is the mood of reception. This sort of hearkening makes the soul hospitable to the divine, and the great God enters in. And it is the God within us Who makes our righteousness like the waves of the sea. "I can do all things in Christ Who strengtheneth me." With God within we are irresistible.