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

**34. THE GAZE OF THE QUESTIONER by JOHN H. JOWET**

*"They shall inquire concerning Zion with their faces thitherwards."*

*Jeremiah 1:5*

The trouble is that so many people inquire about a thing while their faces are set upon something else. They ask about one way but they are looking another. They are interested in theology but not in religion. They will engage in ecclesiastical controversy, but they will not surrender themselves as vital members of the Church of Christ. They will discuss the psychology of conversion, but they will not turn their feet toward home and seek the Lord with all their minds and hearts. They will study the map, but they have no intention of making the journey. They will read the guide-book, but they are not like travellers whose faces are steadfastly set to go to Jerusalem. They inquire concerning Zion, but their faces do witness against them.

Now that kind of inquiring is fruitless. What is the good of asking questions in one direction while the soul is looking another? For one thing, such a soul does not bring the needful equipment for the apprehension of the truth. A merely curious spirit can never really know the secrets of the Lord. It is one of the conditions of spiritual discovery that the entire strength of mind and heart be brought to the exploration, and that we ask, and seek, and batter away at the closed doors until they open, and we pass from room to room in the ever-brightening rooms of the temple of truth, which is the home of our God. The secret of the Lord is not revealed to a mere debating society; it is unveiled in the holy place where we have built an altar and offered our entire being in holy sacrifice. The man who is only curious is turned empty away. The seriousness, or flippancy, of our questions will be seen in the fixed direction of our gaze. Are our faces thitherward?

Every minister is acquainted with the talking inquirers whose souls are looking another way. They will discuss the Atonement by the hour, but if we ask, "Do you desire to have your sins forgiven, and to become a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ?" we speedily find that their faces are not thitherward. They will question through a long night, even to the cock-crow, about the divinity of our Lord, but if we ask them if they are ready to cast their crowns at His feet, we see at a glance that their faces are not thitherward. And therefore all such questioning is a waste of time. Nay, it is worse than a waste of time, for it wastes the powers of the soul in a semblance of earnestness which is only an unreal and painted fire. If there is ever to be revelation and revolution, the asking must be packed by that eager and determined gazing which is the primary secret of triumphant prayer.