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

**36. FIXEDNESS OF CHARACTER by JOHN H. JOWET**

*"I have made thee ... an iron pillar."*

*Jeremiah 1:18*

That great, divine word was spoken to a young prophet who was timidly shrinking from his stern commission. The odds seemed all against him. Principalities and powers were ranked in fierce antagonism. The priesthood was his foe. He had not even the support of the people. "Ah, Lord God, I am a child!" He felt like a broken twig in the fierce current of a river in flood. He felt like a desert-reed in a tempest. And it was just in that season, when his heart trembled before a tremendous task, that the Lord spake to him and said, "Be not dismayed; I have made thee an iron pillar!" The young prophet was divinely equipped for his divine commission. He was to be matched with the hour. His mind was to be established in the truth of God. His heart was to be confirmed in the purpose of God. His will was to be possessed by the holy strength of God. He was to confront all hostilities like an iron pillar -- not breaking, not bending, not yielding -- invincible, to the onslaught of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

In all great crises these divinely-fashioned pillars are the salvation of the State. The crises are not always times of war. They may be times of luxury, and apathy, and ease. The grave dangers, maybe, abound in Lotus-land, in heavy and slumbrous afternoons. There are subtle perils on the Enchanted Ground as well as in Vanity Fair. Indeed, a warrior may fight his way through Vanity Fair and collapse on the Enchanted Ground. And so we need stalwart Great-hearts who are invincible in every place and season. We need men and women of absolutely settled and vital convictions, who are "rooted and grounded,'' as the Apostle Paul says in his agricultural-architectural figure -- men and women who are able to stand against the enervating airs from the south and the fierce blasts from the icy north. It is the souls of this order, steady and determined at all times, who are the pillars of a people's hopes.

In his hero lecture on Cromwell, Thomas Carlyle has these words : "Perhaps of all the persons in that anti-Puritan struggle, from first to last, the single indispensable one was Cromwell. To see, and dare, and decide, to be a fixed pillar in a welter of uncertainty: a king among men, whether they called him so or not.'' And that is the purposed office and distinction of every soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ, and pre-eminently so in the times through which we are passing. We are to be as fixed pillars among folk who are shaking in uncertainty. We are to steady those who are trembling. We are to be strong enough for timid hearts to lean upon. And this glorious strength we are to receive from our Lord as the gift of His grace. He is the fashioner of this royal character, and in His hands the reed, which is shaken by the wind, is transformed into an iron pillar which cannot be moved.