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

**02. THE BLESSING OF A CURSE by JOHN H. JOWET**

*"Cursed is the ground for thy sake."*

*Genesis 3:17*

"Cursed is the ground!" Yes, but who has not realised the blessing which is hidden in the curse? God laid restrictions upon the land in order that, by the means of the restriction, man might be helped to recover his freedom. Man had fallen by disobedience. His relationship with God was perverted. He was afflicted with spiritual crookedness. How to recover his straightness, his rectitude -- that was the problem. It could only be done by the wonderful ministry of the boundless grace of God. And yet that grace not only works upon the soul in direct and immediate constraints; it also works in-directly and mediately in a thousand different appointments. For one thing it curses the ground, so that the ground holds its harvests in bonds until they are released by human toil. And so labour becomes imperative, and man has to work for his living, and his labour is the medium of divine grace. The ground is cursed so that the man may be blessed. His very toil is purposed to be the helpmeet of his salvation. When he works for a living his work is to aid him in the recovery of a life. And who has not tasted this blessing, which was thus enshrined in a curse? Honest labour is the antagonist of many a vile foe, and it drains away many a bad humour from the soul. "What a blessing it was I had some work to do!" That is the thankful utterance of millions of people, and they are finding their blessing in an original curse. The ground was cursed for their sake.

And how is it with the sorrows which sometimes leap upon us like lions from the thicket? We are dazed by the attack. Our united life was so sweet and simple; it was fragrant and lovely as a garden. And then death swooped down upon us, and the garden became an open grave. Nay, the entire world seemed to be smiten with the gloom of the tomb, and all our ways were darkened. But grace broke through the gloom. The Lord was in the stricken garden. Angel presences whispered of resurrection. Yes, and there was another helper when everything seemed to be shaking. We had our work. "I don't know what I should have done if I had had nothing to do!" No, poor soul! but thy labour was a means of grace, and it steadied thy powers in days and nights of confusion. Yes, thy very toil was a sort of angel presence, and it was purposed to brace and hearten the pilgrim of the night. And so it is, we find our blessing in the primary curse. Our harvest rises in the wilderness. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake.''

And all this is a revelation of the wonderful love of God. The clouds we so much dread are big with blessing. "Out of the eater comes forth meat, and out of the strong comes forth sweetness." God laid upon us the burden of toil lest we should be corrupted by indolence into deeper degradation. For it is true indeed that Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do. Idleness befriends disobedience. It relaxes all our powers by swathing the soul in a soft and softening atmosphere of enervation. That is why men who retire too early from business speedily go to pieces. They have lost something vital. They have dismissed one of life's angels, and the tonic has gone from their roads.

Let us thank God for the blessing of labour. Let us praise Him for all restrictions which demand our toil. Let us be grateful for the ground that was cursed. In working to release the energies of the earth we help our own emancipation.