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

**24. A MISSING HAND by JOHN H. JOWET**

*"Who will go for me?"*

*Isaiah 6:8*

Here is the Almighty waiting for a human instrument. The mere statement of such a possibility touches the soul with awe. The Father of our spirits has imposed upon Himself a limitation which makes Him dependent upon his children. There is divine work which tarries until the appointed soul arrives. We are exalted to be fellow labourers with God. What sublime dignity is hidden in the fellowship! What a coronal glory it confers upon the common life! The seemingly tiny inlet is related to the immeasurable seas. God's holy purposes lay hold of human ministries, and the insignificant inch is glorified by the Infinite.

And so it is that we men and women are to be standing at attention, waiting to receive our commissions. We are to have our loins girt and our lamps burning. We are to be "shod with the readiness of the gospel of peace." For we never know when some purpose of the Lord is ripening, when a human instrument will be wanted and a new commission given. "At such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." And therefore it is our wisdom to be always ready, listening for the ennobling summons of the Lord. "How soon can you be ready for the Soudan?" Gordon was asked. "I am ready now," he answered. "As much as in me is," said the Apostle Paul, "I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are in Rome also."

And what are our commissions likely to be? For the vast majority of us they are likely to be quite ordinary errands. The essential things in human life are spiritual vitalities, and these are carried in the simplest ministries. Apparently commonplace fidelities are laden with heaven's grace. The crying needs of the world are elemental, and they are to be met by the elemental satisfaction of faith, and hope, and love. To be the minister of these graces is to be the fellow labourer of God. I remember an incident in "Aurora Leigh." Lucy Gresham, the poor seamstress, lay dying in an attic. Marian Erie, also a poor seamstress, was in the work-room with the other girls when she heard the news. Laying down her work at once, she hastened away to the sufferer that she might be God's minister in the hour of need. " 'Why, God,' thought Marian, 'has a missing hand this moment; Lucy wants a drink perhaps. Let others miss me! Never miss me, God!' " That willingness to be the missing hand is the secret and the genius of a consecrated life.