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

**31. THE EAGLE LIFE (see also 45) by JOHN H. JOWET**

*"They shall mount up with wings."*

*Isaiah 40:31*

"My religious organs have been ailing for a while past. I have lain a sheer hulk in consequence. But I got out my wings, and have taken a change of air!" That is just it, we forget or neglect our wings. We travel along our roads as mere pedestrians, and we are sorely overcome, for the hostility of our circumstances wearies us to the dust. Or we are engaged upon some exacting ministry which imprisons us in our particular place. Or maybe we are shut up in a chamber of sickness, either as the patient or in service upon the patient. In a hundred different ways we can be cribbed, cabined, and confined, and our religious organs are in danger of becoming sickly, and of losing their brightness both in mood and discernment.

And all the time those wings are waiting! And if we would we could soar into larger regions in an ampler air. In one of his most powerful poems Browning addresses an angel as '"thou bird of God!" And surely we are entitled to use the phrase of the soul. Perhaps we have held too much to the conception of the pilgrims, and even in our thinking we may have kept too close to the road. We are not only pilgrims of the night; quite as truly we are the birds of God, endowed with power to mount up with wings as eagles, to respond to the upward calling, and to breathe the lofty air of the heavenliness in Christ Jesus. But we forget our wings! We are like the Alpine insects of which Fabre tells us in his wonderful book on the grasshopper. "I do not know," he says, "why the insect deprives itself of wings and remains a plodding wayfarer, when its near kinsman, on the same Alpine swards, is excellently equipped for flight. It possesses the germs of wings and wing-case, but it does not think of developing them. It persists in hopping, with no further ambition; it is satisfied to go on foot." These words of the great naturalist are as true of multitudes of men and women as they are of the insects that hop about the lower slopes of the Alps. They walk; they never soar. They go along the road with heavy feet; they never rise in joyful exaltation. They are always on the earth. They never leave the earth and re- turn to it again with freshened spirits after a renewing flight in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. They have no upper air which they regard as part of their blessed inheritance.

Even the finest pilgrims are those who remember that they are also birds. The crusaders, who wage the noblest conflicts along the road, are just those who get out their wings and soar for a change of air. The man who takes occasional flights to the new Jerusalem is a more efficient labourer in the old Jerusalem. The man whose citizenship is in heaven is sure to be a very noble citizen of earth. They have the freshest eye, and the most hopeful vision, and the most inspiring mood, and all this just because they are the most inspired. They are "true to the kindred points of heaven and home.''

And how do we put on the wings? "They that wait upon the Lord . … shall mount up with wings!" In this realm communion is ascension. When we turn our hearts unto the Lord the power of wing is ours, and we can rise from our little prisons, or from our tiresome road, into the high heaven of spiritual rest and vision. In the Christian life rising is resting. When we have been on the wing we shall be able to walk and not faint. And those wings are waiting for us! But how we do forget them!