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

**46. THE STRENGTH OF THE INSIGNIFICANT by JOHN H. JOWET**

*"Fear not, thou worm Jacob ... I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument with teeth."*

*Isaiah 41:14,15*

It would be scarcely possible to find two images in more violent contrast than these. On the one hand is a worm, which a harrow can tear in pieces. And on the other hand is an instrument with teeth, a thing which can break other things in pieces. That is the contrast -- a worm, soft, helpless and trodden on; and an instrument with teeth, firm, positive, impressive, ascendant! And the Lord God is to change the one into the other. The commanding word is spoken of a people, but the promise is equally and gloriously true as addressed to the individual. Our God can endow the weakling with strength and character, by which he shall be able to write his services in deep, clear letters upon the life of his generation. He can transform the worm, and possess it with a force by which it shall leave its mark upon the fellowship of the race.

The miracle has been witnessed ten thousand times. The life that appeared very weak and helpless has been marvellously converted into impressive strength. I suppose that if we could trace the influence of the slave Onesimus we should see that it had made deep marks on the life of his master Philemon. Many a noble lineament in the character of Philemon was probably due to the strong but unconscious pressure of his now transformed and consecrated slave. The splendid spiritual loyalty of the servant etched many a fine line in the countenance of the saint. And if we knew everything I wonder what we should see of the influence of the transformed John Mark upon the Apostle Paul. Mark had been a weakling, so weak indeed that Paul wished to discard him as unfitted for the high honours and tremendous tasks of the missionary of the Cross. But the Lord laid an invigorating hold on the worm, John Mark, and I am wondering what distinguishing lines he engraved upon the glorious character of the Apostle who was once willing to cast him away!

This transforming power is, in Christ Jesus, the promised and privileged possession of everybody. Thomas Carlyle wrote in one of his essays: "The genuine use of gun-powder I believe to be that it makes all men alike tall." Yes, gunpowder makes the little Japanese the height of the British grenadier! And the marvellous power of the Holy Spirit, which transformed mere worms into magnificent instruments of grace, makes wonderful work of small and commonplace folk. "Things that are not" are used to "bring to nought things that are!" Mere nothings are alive with omnipotence. The slenderest wire becomes the channel of the electric current. The humblest slave enters into the fellowship of Jesus Christ. "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you." That is the transforming Minister and He is every day engaged on His miraculous work. "I know not the man!" There 's the worm ! "When they saw the boldness of Peter!" There 's the threshing instrument with teeth! Pentecost had been!