

ELIJAH

And the Secret of
His Power

By F. B. Meyer

If we seek to think ourselves into Elijah's attitude of heart and mind, as he left the shelter of Zarephath, and began to pass through the incidents that culminated in Carmel, it seems to have been three-fold. And surely, it is of surpassing interest to learn how such a man felt as he approached the sublime crisis of his life.

I. HE WAS FILLED WITH A CONSUMING PASSION FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

"Let it be known that Thou art God in Israel." This prayer is the key to his heart. He neither knew nor cared to know what would become of himself; but his soul was on fire with a holy jealousy for the glory of God. He could not bear to think of those wrecked altars or martyred prophets. He could not bear to think how the Land of Promise was groaning beneath the obscene and deadly rites of Phoenician idolatry. He could not bear to think that his people were beginning to imagine that the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel had abdicated in favor of these false deities brought newly in. And when he was compelled to face these things, his spirit was stirred to its depths with indignation and sorrow.

Well would it be if each one of us were similarly inspired! We are very eager for the success of our work, our church, our sect. If these thrive, we are satisfied; if these languish, we are depressed. We are wholly occupied with the interests of our own tiny pools, oblivious of the great sea of Divine glory lying nearby, in perpetual sunshine. Is it wonderful that we have so small a measure of success? God will not give His glory to another, nor His praise to the graven images of our own conceit. But in this, also, God is willing to lift our daily experience to the level of our loftiest ideals. Only trust Him to do it; ask and expect Him to fill you with the fire of that zeal which burned in the heart of Elijah, consuming all that was base, corrupt, and selfish, and making the whole man a fit agent for God. This was no indigenous growth. It was not more natural to him than it is to any one of us. It was simply one of the fruits of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, who is equally promised to the most ignoble nature.

2. HE WAS PROFOUNDLY CONVINCED THAT HE WAS ONLY A SERVANT

"Let it be known that Thou art God in Israel; *and that I am Thy servant.*" It was not for the slave in olden times to originate, or scheme, or plan; but to be pliant to the least expression of the master's will - to be a tool in his hand, a chess-piece on the board for him to move just where he willed. And this was the

attitude of Elijah's spirit - surrendered, yielded, emptied; plastic to the hands that reach down out of heaven molding men.

This attitude is the true one for us all. Are we not too fond of doing things for God, instead of letting God do what He chooses through us? We say, "We will go yonder; we will do this and that; we will work for God thus." We do not consider that we should first inquire if this were God's will for us. We do not recognize His absolute ownership. We often miss doing what He sorely wants to do, because we insist on carrying out some little whim of our own. This is the blight on much of the activity of Christian people at the present time. They are not satisfied to be as the Apostle Paul was, "the slave of Jesus Christ" (Rom.1: 1, marg.).

3. ELIJAH WAS EAGERLY DESIRIOUS TO KNOW AND WORK OUT GOD'S PLAN

"Let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel; and that I am Thy servant; and that *I have done all these things according to Thy word.*" When once a man feels that he is working out God's plan, and that God is working out His plan through him, he is invincible. Men, circumstances, opposition, are of no more account than the chaff of the summer threshings. God's plan is His purpose; and God's purpose shall be accomplished, though heaven and earth pass away. And this was doubtless one element in Elijah's splendid strength.

This question as to our relation to God's plan is most important. Because the power and blessing of God are only to be enjoyed, in all their fullness, by those who are where He would have them be. God had the plan of the desert wanderings in His thought long before Israel left Egypt; and He worked out the plan by the movements of the cloud over the desert sands. The manna fell on any given morning, only where the cloud was brooding, shielding the host by its fleecy folds. To get manna and shade, the bold -redeemed, must be just where God's plan required them to be. This is a parable of our lives. Would we have Divine supplies? We must keep step with the Divine plan. The fire burns only when we erect the altar according to God's word. We must not be disobedient to the heavenly vision. We must not spend our years in daydreams, or seeking comfort; but must be incessant in uttering the cry, "What wilt Thou have me to do?"

It is a sublime spectacle-this yielded, surrendered man, awaiting on Carmel, in steadfast faith, the gathering of the people, and the unfolding of the purpose of God. He had no fear about the issue; and as the days rolled by, his soul rose in higher and higher joy. He expected soon to see a nation at the feet of God.

And he was all of this, not because he was of a different make to ourselves; but because he had got into the blessed habit of dealing with God at first hand, as a Living Reality, in whose presence it was his privilege and glory always to stand.