

Elijah and the Prophets of Baal—1 Kings 18: 10-40.

Commentary.—I. Elijah meets Ahab (vs. 10-20). The time came when the Lord would put an end to the drought which had brought great distress to Israel. Ahab and his servant Obadiah had started out in different directions in search of pasturage to save the flocks and herds from starvation. Elijah met Obadiah on the way and announced that he would meet Ahab. Obadiah knew that the king had sought for the prophet and feared that, if he told Ahab where he was, he would disappear and still further elude his search. Elijah assured Obadiah that he would meet Ahab, and Obadiah told the king, who at once went to meet the prophet. Upon meeting him he accused Elijah of bringing the drought and the accompanying distress upon Israel. The prophet boldly told the king that his sins and those of his father's house had brought the trouble on the nation. Elijah immediately became the master of the situation and told Ahab to summon the prophets of Baal and those of Asherah, the female deity corresponding to Baal, to Mount Carmel, and Ahab gathered the prophets there. The place of meeting was on the eastern part of Mount Carmel, from which point the Mediterranean Sea can be seen to the west, and the beautiful plain of Esdraelon to the east. Jezreel, Ahab's capital, was in plain sight, as also the scene of several of Israel's historic battles.

II. A test proposed (vs. 21-24). Not only had the prophets assembled at Mount Carmel, but also the people came. Elijah called upon the people to cease halting, or limping and staggering about between the worship of Jehovah and that of Baal. It was to be definitely determined which was the true God. He was the only representative of the true religion, and the prophets of Baal were many, but he proposed the test of an answer by fire to show the people the truth. No one but an Elijah could put forth such a challenge, and he did it in the fear of the Lord and in faith in him. The people could only declare the test to be a fair one. The followers of Baal claimed to be the power of their deity. He was the sun-god, and consequently was in touch with the powerful agency, fire; hence he would be expected to respond to Elijah's challenge and send fire to consume the sacrifice.

III. Baal proved powerless (vs. 25-29). Elijah called upon the prophets to choose their bullock for a sacrifice and prepare it, and then call upon their gods for an answer by fire. He thought best to caution them to put no fire under the sacrifice, for he doubted the trickery to which the followers of false gods sometimes resorted. He gave them the first chance to show what their deity, Baal, the sun-god, could do. There was no lack of earnestness on the part of the worshippers of Baal. They called loudly, and exercised themselves violently in the hope that fire might fall to consume the sacrifice. There is a tradition that a man was concealed under the altar that he might kindle the fire at the proper time, but he was smothered before he lighted it. This is only a tradition and cannot be depended on. With all the frantic efforts of the Baal worshippers no fire fell. Elijah held them up to ridicule in the taunts which he hurled at them, and this spurred them on to cry more loudly and to leap more frantically. They even cut their flesh with knives until the blood flowed. They tried from morning until the time of the evening sacrifice, or 3 o'clock, to get an answer, but their efforts were all in vain. There was certain that this would be the outcome, but the priests of Baal had exerted themselves to the utmost with the hope that he would apply fire to their sacrifice. They had called upon their god with loud voices. They had inflicted pain upon themselves. There was nothing more that they could do. They had stagnally failed. It was deeply humiliating to them to acknowledge that Baal was either unstable or unwilling to do what they most earnestly desired. Their only hope, after his failure to answer, was that Elijah's efforts would be equally unsuccessful. It would then appear that the God whom Elijah served was no more powerful than was Baal.

IV. The answer by fire (vs. 30-40). Come near.—There was a calmness in the prophet's manner that was in sharp contrast to the frenzy of the Baal-worshippers. The people were invited to witness all that was to be done. Repaired the altar.—Not the altar of Baal but an altar of Jehovah had been used long before this. 31. Twelve stones.—It is noticeable that Elijah recognized Israel, not as a kingdom, but as composed of tribes. See Josh. 4:5 Israel shall name—Israel means "prince of peace" was the name given to Peniel (Gen. 32:28). 32. In the name of the Lord.—This expression is all of Elijah's acts. It is the honor of Jehovah that the priests were called to meet. A trench.—To catch what was to be poured upon the altar. Two measures.—The "seah," containing the half to three gallons, the depth of which was the height of a cubit. 33. Put the fire.—Thus for the preceding similar to those of the Phil four bars such as were used and contained gallsions each. No occasion for hidden fire.—False religion is a deception to the superstitious. It is made clear that

Divine power was to be displayed in a remarkable way. To explain the source of the supply of water during the drought, Tristram says, "Close by the place of sacrifice, shaded by a noble olive tree, is a large natural cistern of sweet water, which the people say is never exhausted." The river Kishon flows by the base of the mountain and water might have been procured from there if it had been possible. The cistern was empty. It is reasonable to suppose that water had been carried to the place of sacrifice before Elijah was ready to use it.

35. Come near.—In calm and trustful boldness. Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.—Elijah's address to God would doubt to whom he was appealing. Let it be known.—The prophet wished to show that he was confident that there was a God in Israel, and second, that he was God's servant. 37. Hear me, O Lord.—Elijah's confidence in God finds most pronounced expression in the words of this brief prayer. The answer was not delayed. Turned their heart back again.—The great desire was that the people should turn from idolatry to God. 38. The fire of the Lord fell.—There was no mistaking its direction nor its force. It came from above and burned downward, commencing with the sacrifice and ending with the water in the trench. 39. Fell on their faces.—They were not only convinced that it was the work of God, but fell down before him in an act of worship. He is the God.—The test had declared the existence and power of Jehovah, and the victory of Elijah over the prophets of Baal were taken down to the river Kishon and slain. This was in accordance with God's law that idolatry were to be put to death. The vindication of Jehovah's worship, and that the followers of Baal were either deceived or themselves deceivers.

Questions.—To whom was Elijah king toward Elijah? Who arranged for the assembly at Mount Carmel? What test was to be made? Who represented the true God, and who represented the false gods? Describe the efforts of the priests of Baal. Describe the priests of Baal. Describe the results of the test. What was remarkable about the prayer? What truths does the lesson teach?

PRactical SURVEY. Topic.—The claims of deity. I. Revealed the cause of calamity. II. Demanded the devotion of Israel. III. Required the overthrow of idolatry. I. Revealed the cause of calamity. Our lesson takes up the controversy between Ahab and Elijah, as to the cause of the trouble which had come upon Israel. The alternative lay between Jehovah and Baal, and the object of a national gathering was to decide which was to be Israel's God. Elijah insisted upon the distinction between the worship of Jehovah, Baal, and the worship of Jehovah. It was not a matter of argument, but of demonstration. The ordeal proposed was a peculiarly appropriate and marvellous occasion. Jehovah had answered by fire. Baal, who was the sun-god, could do no more. The test which proved Israel's God, the claims of deity must be established in deeds that only God could perform. Elijah would have the decision of the people spring from real convictions, based on sufficient proof. He would end the diabolism of everywhere visible in Israel. Ahab had not passed to ask what moved God should send it. Elijah charged Ahab with the ruin of his country. He said of Jeroboam, which had plunged the chosen nation into deepest degradation. With a clear insight Elijah touched the secret of the nation's sorrow. The root of the menacing peril, the desolating misfortune, lay in the broken altar.

II. Demanded the devotion of Israel. Elijah stood alone, undaunted, a witness for Jehovah appealing to the multitudes to cease their unworthy services. Israel's inconsistency lay in an attempt to blend the claims of Jehovah and Baal, in wavering between them, an attempt to accomplish an impossibility, an insult to the authority and character of God. The reconstruction of spiritual life in Israel must begin at the point of its incipient overthrow. The drought and famine had prepared their stubborn hearts for Elijah's appeal and disposed them to consider.

III. Required the overthrow of idolatry. Elijah proved to be the man of the hour. To be zealous, and to religion to their former ruler when the altar was to be repaired, was a task more arduous and important. Nothing less than earnest consecration and strong courage to endure his task enabled him to endure his task at Mount Carmel. He gave precedence to his opponents at every point. He reduced his own resources to a minimum to show that truth was stronger than error. The people were all the more impressed by the final victory because of the marked inequality of the conflict. The priests of Baal exhibited passionate earnestness, furious, persistent prayer and agony of entreaty. Full opportunity was given to show the worth of their idols and superstitions. When evening came they gave up the contest in despair. Then Elijah called the people to the broken altar, a sad evidence of the wicked zeal of Jezabel and a significant sign of the times. The repair of the altar appeared intractable of their steps of disobedience until they stood at the point of their departure from the precincts of their Lord. Calamity and disaster had come as a result of national departure

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WHITE HONEY CRAP REPORT. The Crop Report Committee of the Ontario Beekeepers' Association met recently. Three hundred members reported from all parts of Ontario, showing an average of 35 pounds per colony. There is about an average crop, and the quality is excellent. The average, however, and it is likely that prices will range slightly lower than those recommended by the committee last year. In fact, some honey has already changed hands at prices recommended below.

Yield Well Up to Mark, and Much Greater Average. Wheat Will Total About 27,000,000 Bushels. Toronto Report.—The heavy rains in August resulted in one of the most trying harvest seasons yet experienced in this Province, according to an official statement from the Department of Agriculture of Ontario, based upon returns of correspondents under date of August 16. All grains as a rule were splendidly headed, and the loss through sprouting and shelling was considerable, yet the yield in most cases will be well up to the mark, acre for acre, while there has been a generous increase in the average planted in leading cereal crops. Straws is of good length, but because of exposure will not be up to the standard of quality. Hay has come out better than expected because of the delays in harvesting the yields given are more than ever following is the forecast of the yields:

Table with columns: Province, Pounds Average, White No. Founda, Honey Per Colony, Spg. Count. Rows include Alberta, Brant, Bruce, Carleton, etc.

A BULLETIN ON SWINE RAISING. The second edition of Bulletin No. 17 of the Federal live stock branch, entitled swine husbandry in Canada, has been issued, and may be had on application to the Publications Branch of the Department of Agriculture at Ottawa. The interest in swine raising, stimulated, no doubt, by the high values of pork products, made such a demand for information on this subject that the first edition printed last year was quickly exhausted. This edition brings up to date statistics and the trade in hog products. It is shown that the total exports for the year ending March 31, 1915, amounted to 166,048,519 lbs. as against 175,561,140 lbs. the previous year. The bulletin covers the whole field of swine raising, giving the results of official experiments as well as the practical experience of successful farmers. An interesting section describes the system of feeding hogs in Denmark, where combinations of food units in which one pound of grain—wheat, barley, peas, corn, etc.—constitutes one food unit, which is equal to 8 lbs. mangels, 4 lbs. boiled potatoes, 5 lbs. alfalfa, 6 lbs. skim milk or 12 lbs. whey. It is shown that the diet is varied in a definite way for pigs of different ages.

MILKING RECORDS. Nine years ago the live stock branch of the Federal Department of Agriculture, in co-operation with certain dairy associations representing breeders of dairy cattle, began to record the performance of pure bred milking cows. Each record association agreed upon a standard yield for cows of its respective breed to qualify for registration. The live stock commissioner formulated regulations under which the tests were to be carried out. At the end of each year a containing a list of the animals that qualified for registration during the year, their breed, age, ownership, fat, and such other information as might reasonably be looked for in an official report. Each year the work has increased until the seventh re-

GERMAN FOOD BUREAU. Berlin Cable, via London Cable.—The Reichstag has adopted a Socialistic resolution asking the Government to organize a bureau under the auspices of the Federal Council, with a view to take charge of the food problem. The bureau will have the right to confiscate food products in behalf of the people.

ARABIC CARRIED NO GOLD. Liverpool Cable.—The assertion in press despatches from Germany that the steamship Arabic carried gold on her last voyage called forth a day a reiterated denial from the White Star company. It is stated that the Arabic had on board no specie whatever.

TO THE END. Russian Emperor Affirms His Country's Determination. Paris Cable.—An account of an audience granted him by Emperor Nicholas is telegraphed to the Mathin by Jean Cruppi, former French Minister of Foreign Affairs. "Peasants speak to me in affectionate terms and every day I receive from them several addresses saying, 'Hold firm for me and all behind thee,'" the Emperor is quoted as saying. "The monarch's voice was firm and clear," Cruppi says, as he told of the resolution of all Russians to carry the war to an end until the victory necessary to "free Europe" is assured. The Emperor added: "France can count on my immovable will to struggle until complete victory is achieved."

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MARKET REPORTS. TORONTO MARKETS. FARMERS' MARKET. Eggs, new-laid, doz. 0.30; Butter, choice, dairy, 0.20; Spring chickens, dressed, 0.20; Ducks, dressed, lb., 0.20; Turkeys, 0.20; Apples, Can., bkt., 0.20; Red currants, box, 0.05; Black currants, bkt., 0.40; Blueberries, bkt., 1.00; Gooseberries, bkt., 1.00; Cherries, 11-qt. bkt., 0.30; Peaches, 11-qt. bkt., 0.30; Do., ch. do., 11-qt. bkt., 0.30; Strawberries, 0.40; Peas, 11-qt. bkt., 1.00; Plums, 11-qt. bkt., 0.75; Potatoes, new, 0.25; Onions, 75 lb., 0.75; Tomatoes, bkt., 1.00; Cabbages, doz., 0.15; Cantaloupes, C. 11-qt. bkt., 0.20; Watermelons, each, 0.20; Cauliflowers, doz., 1.75; Corn, doz., 0.19; Cucumbers, bkt., 0.15.

MEATS—WHOLESALE. Beef, forequarters, cwt., 10.25; Do., hindquarters, cwt., 10.25; Do., choice steaks, 12.50; Do., ossama, cwt., 9.25; Veals, common, cwt., 7.00; Sheep hogs, 11-qt. bkt., 12.75; Spring lambs, 11-qt. bkt., 15.00; Mutton light, 11-qt. bkt., 15.00. SUGAR MARKET. Extra granulated, Redpath's, per cwt., 6.71; Do., 25-lb. bags, 6.71; Do., 50-lb. bags, 6.71; Dominion crystals, 6.71; Do., 25-lb. bags, 6.71; Lard, refined, 100's, 7.00; Do., 25-lb. cartons, 7.00; Do., 10-lb. cartons, 7.00; Do., 5-lb. tins, 7.00; Do., brilliant yellow, 6.81; St. Lawrence, No. 1 yellow, 6.81. LIVE STOCK. Export cattle, choice, 8.00; do. do. medium, 7.50; do. do. common, 6.50; Butcher cows, choice, 6.00; do. do. medium, 5.50; do. do. common, 5.00; do. do. canners, 4.25; do. hogs, 4.25; Feeding steers, 4.00; Stockers, choice, 6.00; do. light, 6.25; Milk cows, choice, each, 6.00; Springers, choice, each, 6.00; Sheep, ewes, 6.00; Bucks and culls, 4.25; Lambs, 8.15; Hogs, off cars, 9.40; Cows, f. o. b., 8.15; Calves, 5.00.

WINNIPEG GRAIN OPTIONS. Oct. 1915. No. 1 Northern, 1.12; No. 2 Northern, 1.12; No. 3 Northern, 1.12; No. 4 Northern, 1.12; No. 5 Northern, 1.12; No. 6 Northern, 1.12; No. 7 Northern, 1.12; No. 8 Northern, 1.12; No. 9 Northern, 1.12; No. 10 Northern, 1.12. DULUTH GRAIN MARKET. Duluth—Wheat, No. 1 hard, \$1.12; No. 2 hard, \$1.12; No. 3 hard, \$1.12; No. 4 hard, \$1.12; No. 5 hard, \$1.12; No. 6 hard, \$1.12; No. 7 hard, \$1.12; No. 8 hard, \$1.12; No. 9 hard, \$1.12; No. 10 hard, \$1.12.

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Advertisement for 'Redpath' featuring a woman's portrait and text: 'Redpath better than anything else for improving your skin. Get Clear Skin.' Includes a small illustration of a woman's face.