

Sunday School Lesson

May 11, 1947

A. D. Cann

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST BAALISM

Lesson: I Kings 18: 20-21; 30-39

Golden Text: Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. I Kings 18:37.

Our lesson today concerns the northern kingdom of Israel during the reign of Ahab, the wicked king. What made wickedness so deeply seated in Israel at this time was the foolish marriage of Ahab with the wicked heathen princess, Jezebel, who was an ardent Baal worshipper.

BAALISM DEFINED

The Hebrew people first contacted Baalism in their associations with the Canaanites. Regardless of where it originated, it was a terrible curse. Not only was it a false religion, but it also promoted gross immorality. Because of this fact it was very fascinating. When the Israelites were in Moab on their way to Canaan, through the wicked advice of Balaam, they were allured by the daughters of Moab to the immoral worship of Baal. This brought terrible consequences to Israel and, also brought upon them the fierce anger of God. Numbers 25:1-4. Baalism was godless, not only was it shaped to meet the popular demand, but was a substitute for real spiritual worship. It was in relation to Bible religion what modernism is today to vital salvation.

BAALISM TESTED

"And Elijah came to all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word." This was a crisis hour. King Ahab held Elijah responsible for the lack of rain and all the attendant evils. There was only one thing for Elijah to do and that was to show to the people that Ahab and his idolatrous house was the cause of God's anger. This accounts for the test on Mount Carmel. Ahab sends through Israel and gets all the representatives of the Baal worship. An altar is arranged and the worshippers of Baal assemble themselves and call on the name of Baal from morning till evening. In spite of all their efforts no fire was sent to confirm their worship. When the time of the evening sacrifice occurred, Elijah said unto the people—"come near unto me." The people did so and Elijah repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. Everything was put in order with the sacrifice on top and the water underneath in the trench. Immediately Elijah began to lift his heart in prayer. The fire of the Lord fell and began to consume the sacrifice. It is significant to note that the fire first consumed the parts of the ox that were on the summit of the altar and then proceeded downward until everything was consumed. This proved the supernatural nature of the fire, confirmed Elijah as the prophet of God and condemned Ahab in his worship of Baal.

BAALISM AND THE SUBSEQUENT STRUGGLE

"When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, 'The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God.'" The people recognized the fire as the symbol of the Divine Presence. The prophets of Baal were slain by the brook Kishon. Next comes the rain and the full assurance "that the hand of the Lord was on Elijah." So far so good. When Jezebel, the Queen, is informed of the death of the prophets of Baal, she pledges to take the life of Elijah. In this she was unsuccessful and later both she and her husband suffer ignominious deaths. The result of the destruction of Baal worship is found in 2 Kings 10:18-28. The public dance and the modern theatre are not unlike the sensualism of Baal worship.

May 18, 1947

THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Lesson: Amos 5:6-15; 21-24

Golden Text: Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live. Amos 5:14

Amos is one of the first of the writing prophets and was a contemporary of Isaiah. His home was in the southern kingdom, but his message was for northern Israel. His prophecy was during the reign of Jeroboam II. in Israel and Uzziah in Judah.

INJUSTICE CONDEMNED

"Forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them." Amos was a champion of righteousness and social justice. God proclaims through him his judgments upon Israel by (1) Famine. Three months before harvest God withholds rain, yet Israel failed to repent of her sin and turn to the Lord. (2) Pestilence. "I have smitten you with blasting and mildew . . . yet have ye not turned unto me saith the Lord" (Amos 4:9). (3) Death of the Youth. "Four young men have I slain with the sword" . . . Yet have ye not returned unto me saith the Lord." (Amos 4:10) It seems that there are some who will neither respond to God's love or his judgments.

FORMAL WORSHIP CONDEMNED

"Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts." In spite of the people's sins they continued to offer sacrifices to God. The burnt offerings represented consecration to God; the meat offerings represented gratitude to God and the peace offerings represented peaceful relations. These sacrifices were all an abomination to God, because the lives of the people did not confirm the significance of their sacrifices. In chapter 6 we have a woe pronounced upon them that are "at ease in Zion . . . they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph." Said he—"they lie upon beds of ivory . . . drink wine in bowls . . . anoint themselves with the chief ointments." Extravagance, intoxication, pride, etc., were their besetting sins. They were more concerned about their own pleasure, comfort and self-preservation than they were in honoring God. Such a spiritual slump brought havoc to every aspect of their religious and national life. There could be only one way out.

REPENTANCE AND REFORMATION URGED

Repentance is not being sorry that we are caught in our sins, but sorrow because we committed them. Bible repentance is a sorrow for sins that leads us to turn away from sin and turn unto God for forgiveness. "Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." Both the vocal and instrumental music that was made use of in connection with the shrine at Bethel was obnoxious to God. Our lives are bound to be coloured by the gods we worship. Therefore to properly represent God we must worship him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. If we desire the things of the world, it is because there is that yet within that corresponds with the world. The one way out is Bible repentance, that alone will match the depths of man's depravity. The product of such repentance is forgiveness for actual sins committed and cleansing from the sin principle.

WEDDINGS

Cameron—Chetwynd

At the Reformed Baptist Parsonage at Central Woods Harbour, N. S., on February 22nd, 1947, Rev. L. T. Sabine united in marriage Miss Eva Jeanette Chetwynd and Lockiel Cameron.

CONVERTED BY THE HEATHEN

"The American Bible Society tells of a group of seven American fliers, forced down on a Pacific isle, and converted by the natives. Long ago a missionary had left them a Bible. But they could not read the Book; the Americans must read and explain it to them.

"Each night for about three months while the fliers were marooned, the 200 natives brought their Bible, and around the camp-fire the fliers took turns reading what to them had been an almost unexplored book. Then they sang songs and had prayer. Today these seven Americans are professing Christians, interested in missions, and grateful to the islanders who asked them to read the Bible."

RECEIVING

Dr. F. B. Meyer told of an experience with a Christian woman in England. He had been speaking of receiving God's power by faith. She could not understand how to receive it. At tea with her one day he suddenly turned and said, "My dear madam, may I have a cup of tea?" She looked at his table and said, "Why, Dr. Meyer, you have a cup of tea." In a few moments he said again, "Will you give me a cup of tea? I am so tired, and I need it." Utterly bewildered, his hostess started to speak, then caught her breath. After a moment, she said: "Oh, Dr. Meyer, I see it now. What you mean is that the Lord's blessing and power is right here before me, and yet I am asking and asking for it instead of taking it and using it."—Unknown.

The image of Christ shall never be effaced. It shall be painted in the hearts of men.—John Huss, Bohemian reformer and martyr.

I find the name of Jesus Christ written on the top of every page of human history.—George Bancroft, historian.

If Christ be not divine, every impulse of the Christian world falls to a lower octave, and light and love and hope decline.—Rev. Henry Ward Beecher.

REGARDING THE MISSIONARY HOME

Dear Christain Friends:

We appreciate Brother Dunlop's letter in the last Highway relative to our proposed missionary home. Perhaps some are wondering about the location of the home, dimensions, style, etc. First, we are happy to relate that through the good providence of God we have a splendid location. It is on the main street in Hartland directly abreast of the Reformed Baptist parsonage, with only a driveway between. Frontage on the street was kindly given to us in exchange for some surplus property along the river at the rear of the parsonage. Entrance to the new home will be about six or seven steps from the pavement. A beautiful lawn will be in front. The house is expected to be 24 feet by 28 feet, and one and one-half storeys high. The ground floor will be finished for present use and the upper floor can be made available for future use when needed. The rooms will be arranged so that there will be plenty of room for two or more people. The property will be owned by the Reformed Baptist Alliance. This new home will be an asset to our work and we feel confident that the Lord will supply every need.

Yours and His,

A. D. CANN