

## Elijah's Mantle

By Judson A. Sanders

Yes, it had been a full day — very full and satisfying. The sun had set and the stars were out. In silence Elisha sat under an olive tree on the hillside. Behind him in a small hut, loaned them by the shepherds, lay Elijah, just fallen asleep. He had said, "Come in, my son, and take your rest". But Elisha had replied, "Not so, Master, I doubt that I shall sleep at all tonight. This day has been too wonderful for that". Yes, the day just sped had held that breath-taking, astounding moment when Elijah had flung his mantle over Elisha as he plowed with the twelfth yoke of oxen. So intense was his realization of the terrific import of this act, that he stood immobilized, rooted to the spot, and gazed motionless, as Elijah without turning, walked swiftly on, with that tireless swinging stride, unlike that of any man Elisha had ever seen, the erect stalwart walk of one who communed with God upon the hills. The aura of a terrific inner power, not of this world, seemed to radiate from Elijah's very way of walking. Here was a man of few words, who had frequent moods of sitting in moveless silence, sensing and practising the presence of God; and to whom the very voice of God would speak out of the silence.

Then, again Elisha savored, as a sweet morsel on his tongue that strange question, "What have I done unto thee?" which came to him when he requested that he might return and kiss his father and mother farewell, and then he would come and follow him, and minister unto him. Elijah had appointed him to be, some day, his successor.

Elijah's mantle, "What have I done unto thee? Why attach such importance to what I have done?" Yes, why? Elisha realized full well. Many a time, especially of late, had Elisha rejected his evening meal with the other eleven plowmen, and sat outside, under the stars, between the fig tree and the grape vine, sick at heart with envy of the young men, the sons of the Prophets, in the Prophets' school on the hill. Day by day they could sit at the feet of the man with the robe and the long white beard, and hear him read from the parchments, and comment thereon. Sometimes Elisha felt his whole heart was just one big ache to learn about God.

Elijah's mantle had been flung on to his shoulders. "What have I done unto thee?" Oh, thou man of God, dost thou not know that my heart has wellnigh burst with joy at the calling to be thy daily companion. Thou art the man who didst say to the King of Israel, 'as the Lord liveth, before whom I stand; there shall not be rain nor dew upon the earth these years, except at my word'. What great faith! To shut up heaven, and to smite a nation with the inexorable rod of famine! And then to unlock the gates of heaven and unbar the treasures of rain through importunate prevailing prayer! And also to call fire down from heaven.

These were wonders, but dwarf in comparison with the first part of this remarkable utterance—"As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand." Here was a man, not who talked about God, but who lived so near to Him, that at any time, he might touch Him, as it were, with the finger tips.

In the long ago, Moses had climbed a mountain and, at the top, groping in the thick darkness, that surrounded God's presence, had

spoken to Him, face to face. Yes, and there had offered that short and broken, but mighty prayer that had turned aside the hot wrath of an angry God, so that He refrained from consuming a whole nation in a moment.

What was it like to live in God's presence, all longing satisfied, by times to weep violently, to shake like a leaf at the sense of God's bare presence, or to merely sit there, with eyes glowing like coals of fire, and the breath coming and going slow and deep. And in another mood, face lifted and glowing with an inner ecstasy that must be beyond the power of words to describe. And when the mood of concentrated intensity is past, a kindly man of few words, yet of like passions such as we are. A holy man, his temples disciplined and subdued in this world, but not of it, his heart swept and wrought upon by the passion and compassion of Almighty God, a heart wrung with anguish at the slow fettering tide of idolatry and declension of the people of Jehovah.

At last the sky pales and the dawn breaks. Elisha stands and stretches his cramped muscles, Elijah's mantle! Yea but the lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places. Yea, I have a goodly heritage. "What have I done unto thee?" Oh thou man of God, how long, how long shall it be before I am as thou art, and all this mysterious, compelling, longing satisfied? It is enough. I will gather sticks. I will prepare the morning and evening meal. I will pour water on the hands of Elijah. I will minister unto him. He is a man who walks this earth, who sleeps and eats and drinks, and yet who stands in one of Heaven's Gates, and sits in heavenly places by the Throne of God."

(To be continued)

### KIND WORDS

Pascal has said, "Kind words never blister the tongue or lips. And we never heard of any mental trouble arising from this quarter. Though they do not cost much, yet they accomplish much. They help one's own good nature and good will. Soft words soften our own soul. Angry words add fuel to the flame of wrath and make it blaze more fiercely.

"Kind words make other people good-natured. Cold words freeze people, hot words scorch them, bitter words make them bitter, and wrathful words make them wrathful. There is such a rush of all kinds of words in our day that it seems desirable to give kind words a chance among them. There are vain words and idle words, and hasty words, and spiteful words, and silly words, and empty words, and profane words, and boisterous words and war-like words. Kind words also produce their own image in men's souls. And a beautiful image it is. They soothe and quiet and comfort the hearer. They shame him out of his sour, morose, unkind feelings. We have not yet begun to use kind words in such abundance as they ought to be used."—Sel.

### "STUDY TO BE QUIET"

The great lack of our life and the great poverty of our life is that we make inadequate provision for quietness. We are often out in the open, but how seldom we are in the secret retreats with God. Study—make it your concern, to be quiet. "Oh, how precious are the lessons which I learn at Jesus' side." An experience to aim for.—Dr. John MacBeath.

## "A PAGE FROM THE PSALMS"

B. H. Pearson

"One day," said my sixty-five year old companion who has the 'gift of visiting' and uses it for the glory of the Lord, "when my wife was a girl at home, before we were married, her brother came from the store with some soap wrapped up in a piece of printed paper. She looked at it and began reading.

"This is important," she said. "It is something religious. It must be the Bible." As a matter of fact it was a page from the Psalms in which the storekeeper had wrapped up the soap.

"Later when I went, as was Brazilian custom, with three witnesses to ask the hand of this young lady for my wife, there was much discussion, for the entire family was Catholic and I was a Protestant. But because she liked that page out of the 'Protestant Book,' she was able to persuade them to let us be married.

"Before long she was converted."

Now, some forty years later, blessed by long years of service in the work of the Lord, he has been pensioned, and they are spending their "sunrise" days and hours in the service of the Master.

Through one page of a Bible, carelessly used to wrap soap, God brought to pass the establishment of this Christian home, later the salvation of the wife, and all the blessings that have resulted from their clear, joyful testimony.

What about the millions waiting for their first page of the Precious Book?

How much longer will they have to wait?

—Missionary Standard

### ROMAN CATHOLIC CONVERTS

The Public Relation Officers of the Roman Church are well known as statistical propagandists, and they periodically tell the world how Roman Catholics are increasing numerically. They count the population of Roman Catholic countries, assuming the people are all practicing church members. Such a method stands in glaring contrast to the Protestant custom of furnishing statistics of those members who have made a personal decision of faith in Christ. Nor do we learn of Roman Catholic losses! In the April issue of Christian Herald, an American Protestant magazine with high reputation, there is published the result of an inquiry addressed to 25,000 Protestant ministers, who report that during the last ten years 4,144,366 Roman Catholics were converted to Protestantism. But there are 181,000 Protestant ministers in America; and if they reported conversions in the same proportion as the 25,000 did, the total losses of the Roman Church must be enormous. The editor also inquired of Protestant conversions to Roman Catholicism, and the figure given was 1,071,897. The reason advanced for Romanist conversions to Protestantism were "intellectual differences with Roman Catholic dogma, the need for greater freedom of personal belief and interpretation \* \* \* and the desire in mixed marriages of one spouse to change" to Protestantism. Here is a significant comment on the decree *Ne Temere* of Pius X—"contrary to widespread public opinion, the report revealed that it is the Catholic rather than the Protestant who adopts the faith of his mate and is converted to Protestantism."—The Christian (England).