

Elijah Discouraged

by C.I. Scofield

C.I. Scofield's sermon on Elijah emphasizes God's compassionate response to discouragement and the importance of rest and restoration for His servants.

Scripture: Psalm 127:2

Topics: "Divine Comfort", "Spiritual Renewal"

Description

C.I. Scofield preaches on the touching story of Elijah's despondency after years of intense service, highlighting the tenderness and compassion of God towards His weary servant. Despite Elijah's feelings of failure and weakness, God responds with acts of restoration and comfort, providing him with sleep, food, and ultimately a glorious future beyond death. The true lesson lies in God's loving care for His servants in times of despair, offering hope and renewal even in the darkest moments.

Transcript

(1 Kings xix:1-8.)

I. The Analysis.

This touching story does not yield to rigid analysis. In the heart of the lesson (see below) its central spiritual theme is discussed.

II. The Heart of the Lesson.

The lesson for to-day, like Peter's denial, and Jacob's subterfuge, and David's sin, furnished a theme for endless sermonic moralizings, mostly of the self-complacent sort. One would fain raise a voice of protest against this misuse of great names by small men. But it would be useless! The dealers in pious platitudes find the occasions too tempting.

The old Puritan preachers, who certainly had brains for better things, especially delighted to set up their pulpits beside Elijah's juniper tree. "Aha!" begins one of them. "And is this our bold denouncer of king's vices? Come out, come out, Elijah! Art thou afraid of a huzzy?"

All this is contemptible enough, and might be passed over without remark, if it had not become in a sense the settled attitude of the Christian mind toward this episode in the life of Elijah--an attitude which completely misses the true meaning, and blinds us to one of the sweetest lessons in the book of God.

The despondency of Elijah was natural enough. It was the reaction from the intense nervous tension of nearly four years of tremendous service; and the heart of the lesson must be found in the Lord's attitude towards His overwrought servant.

It certainly is noteworthy that Jehovah did not say any of the things which so monotonously recur in commentaries and sermons. And when Elijah said that he had been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts, he said no more than the truth. When Paul writes at the end of his life, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith," we do not accuse him of self-righteousness. And when Elijah said, "1, even I only, am left," he said what appeared to be the truth. Mr. Moody used to say that he would rather have been Elijah's little finger than all of the seven thousand secret disciples.

No, what Jehovah did was very tender and very beautiful. He first of all gave Elijah what a man suffering from nervous reaction most needs--sleep. "He giveth His beloved sleep"; and a beautiful gift it is. And then He sent an angel to cook Elijah's breakfast. In verse 7 it is "The angel of the Lord," and many understand that expression as always referring to the second Person of the Trinity. If so, then it means that Jehovah-Jesus Himself prepared food for His servant, as afterward by the lake in Galilee, He laid bread and fish on the coals for another company of discouraged disciples.

And then He gave the prophet sleep again, and when he awoke, once more gave him food. What tenderness, what motherliness fills the heart of God for His weary, overwrought, disheartened servants on earth! Again and again, in the sense of their failure and weakness they say: "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers"--forgetting that the divine love and compassion will not respond by judgment, but by tenderest acts of restoration and of comfort. Elijah's God had a better thing for him than death under a juniper tree in the wilderness. God knew, what Elijah did not, that one coming day He would lead His aged servant dry-shod across Jordan, and there meet him with "The chariot of the Lord and the horsemen thereof," thus to take him untouched of death, into the glory above.

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