

11528

## ELIJAH THE TISHBITE

Speaker: John Martin

The Triumph on Mt. Carmel

Reading: 1 Kings 16:1-29

My Dear Beloved Brethren and Sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Last evening, brethren and sisters, we left Elijah the prophet, in company with the widow of Zarephath in the region of Zidon. And in the 24th verse of the 17th chapter, we finished the talk by quoting this verse, and showing how that the woman came to a full realization of the truth as it was in the God of Israel, and she said, 'By this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of Yahweh in thy mouth is truth'.

And we open up the 18th chapter with the words, 'And it came to pass after many days, that the word of Yahweh came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab', and do you know, brethren and sisters, oft times we read through the scriptures quickly, without sort of meditating upon the time periods that they suggest. And you can well and truly imagine that when the woman had confessed her faith in the things of the kingdom, as it was embodied in the truths of the Lord God of Israel, that it came to pass after many days. Elijah had spent many days with that widow, and one can only contemplate with joy the associations they had together at Zarephath. This wild man from Gilead and this widow woman, this Gentile woman on the western coast of Palestine. And they spent many days together, brethren and sisters, and you can imagine the wonderful fellowship and communion which they had with each other. Two people from, shall we say, widely diverging aspects of life, completely different, in their characters, in their makeup, every way in their background, you couldn't imagine two more diverse people than Elijah the Gileadite, and the widow of Zarephath; but they're both in the truth and spending many pleasant days, profitable days as they must have been, in that place. I think it does us good, brethren and sisters, that as we study the Word of God, with all the technicalities of it, it does us good also, to meditate oft times, on some of the things like that, and you can see, can't you, that there was a softness about Elijah's character that perhaps we didn't realize was there? And it must have been fostered, and I think he would have profited just as much as perhaps the widow of Zarephath, by the conversations that they would have had together. And he would have learned the dependence upon God as he was fed by that widow's hand, and as they both in turn, were fed by God, communing upon the things of the truth.

And now he has to go and show himself unto Ahab, and I know well and can truly

imagine that this message which came to Elijah, was a very, very unwelcome one indeed. 'Go show thyself unto Ahab', and I can imagine Elijah saying, 'Ah, gosh, why do I have to go back there?' when he just brought this woman into the truth, and he's got this wonderful communion, and at last he's finding peace. Now, he's got to go back, and he's got to face this man again. He's got to go back in the midst of the turmoil, brethren and sisters, in the midst of the apostasy. Things which broke his heart, and you know, when you come to consider this man's life, and you remember the things that he'd done, you think about it! Calling down fire from heaven, and triumphing on Mt. Carmel, racing before the chariot of Ahab, and so on, and yet there wouldn't have been a more profitable work in his life, than at Zarephath, brethren and sisters, where he found respite from what he was talking about. But with all the wonders which God showed him, and showed Israel through him, he did not get the response from the nation. And now he's got to go and show himself unto Ahab.

And the language to me is striking in verse 1. 'It came to pass after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year', now there's a suggestion here, of course, if we take it literally 'in the third year', that's from the time he left Ahab, well, then we wouldn't have a 3 ½ year period, would we, for the drought? I would say, brethren and sisters, this was probably the third year from the time he spent with the widow of Zarephath. And when you look at the record, although you can't prove this, it would seem to suggest that it would be most likely, that he would have spent about 12 months at Tiraz and perhaps 2 ½ years with the widow of Zarephath. So it would be in the third year, from the time he spent with the widow of Zarephath, that he goes back to appear before Ahab. For we know that it was 3 ½ years from the beginning of the drought, and now this drought is going to be broken.

So, in the third year, God says to him, and I want you to note this language; now you note the language in which this is couched. 'Go show thyself unto Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth'; now you look at that, brethren and sisters, the Word of scripture is not wasted. Rain is bound up with the reappearance of Elijah; 'you go and show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth'. Now I think that's wonderful! because here you have, God and the prophet locked together, identified in the work which God had to do with him, and as far as God was concerned, the coming of Elijah into that dry and parched land, was just like the coming of the refreshing showers of God's blessing. It's marvellous, brethren and sisters, to contemplate this fact; it wasn't simply that Elijah was the one to announce that the rain would come. I believe Elijah was the rain; he was better than rain; he could do more for the people than all the rain, because he could bring what the rain could not bring.

And when you go to the Word of God, brethren and sisters, what do you find out about rain? 'My doctrine', says God, 'shall drop as the rain, and my speech shall distil like the dew'. Deuteronomy 32 and verse 2, 'My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew', or as the prophet Isaiah put it, 'My thoughts are not your thoughts; for as the heavens are high above the earth, so are my thoughts higher than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down and watereth the earth, to give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my Word be. It shall not return unto Me void; but it shall accomplish that whereunto I send it.' (Isaiah 55:9-11). And so there in those two

wonderful references, brethren and sisters, we have the likening of God's Word to the 'showers of blessing'. But notice what Deuteronomy says; 'My doctrine shall drop as the rain, and my speech shall distil as the dew'; now there are two ways in which the Word of God comes to us. It comes sometimes, brethren and sisters, like a torrent of rain, and when we get a torrent of rain, driven by the wind, what happens? It sometimes causes erosion, it sometimes is destructive in its aspects; it sometimes causes those riverlets of water to carry away the soil, and it can do a lot of damage. The Word of God is quick and powerful, but when God's Word, brethren and sisters, comes down and distils as the dew, or as Samuel puts it, 'like the tender grass springing out of the earth, in a day of clear shining after rain'. There is the Word of God in its most revitalizing effects, like a gentle dew, gently distilling upon the grass, destroying nothing, but growing everything. And this was the purpose of Elijah's life; he was coming now, as a shower of blessing; he would indeed cause the drought to finish, but the first rain, brethren and sisters, is going to be a destructive one! and they're going to feel the wrath of God at this prophet's hands. And it wasn't until he was taken right near to Horeb that he'd come back, and allow God's word to distil as the dew in that nation, that it might produce something and destroy nothing. But it was really wonderful, I think it is, to read, 'Go show thyself unto Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth', and do you know, we know the coming of Christ is like that, don't we? we know, brethren and sisters, when Christ comes, great blessings will come upon this earth. But it's not simply that when Christ comes it's going to happen; it's this! It's going to happen because Christ will come. It's not simply that God will send Him to do it, it's because He will do it when He gets here, because you see, by looking at it that way, we see that He is the embodiment of God's Word. Without Him we've got nothing; with Him we've got everything. HE SHALL COME DOWN UPON THE MOWN GRASS, LIKE SHOWERS THAT WATER THE EARTH, says Psalm 72:6. He shall come down like the showers that water the earth, and to me it was absolutely marvellous that Elijah should be addressed in language like that, and how thrilled he would have been, to think to himself, 'Look, here I am walking into a dry, parched land and without me, no rain', and he would have known it and understood, brethren and sisters. Not being filled up with pride, but thrilled in his heart to know that God had chosen him, that he might represent to Israel, the refreshing shower of the Word of God. And so he came back into that land!

And you know, if you've got an imaginative mind, you can picture the scene. One of the beauties of studying the Word of God, I believe, is to translate those words into pictures. And I can see Elijah, making his way back from Zarephath, and I feel, when you put the evidence together, that he perhaps met Ahab and Obadiah, on the plain of Esdraelon here in the region of Carmel and Jezreel, I think it's logical to assume that he would have met them in this region, coming down from Zarephath. And we read in that 18th chapter of the Kings, brethren and sisters, that Obadiah and Ahab were searching throughout the land that they might find some form of sustenance for the royal animals of Ahab, that they might preserve them alive. And it's remarkable that you've got three men, and they're converging on each other to the plain of Esdraelon, where all the grandeur of this drama was to be enacted, and which later on we're going to thrill to, as we turn up the prophecy of Hosea, and he's going to tell us all about, that when they met here at Jezreel (or Esdraelon as the Greek word has it, whatever you like to call it);

but the plain of Jezreel, when they met there, brethren and sisters, there was to be enacted that grand drama which would culminate in Elijah racing before the chariot of Ahab into Jezreel. And when you take it all together, you have a beautiful picture! And it's all so typical of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ; you see, like Elijah the Lord Jesus Christ came to Israel. He was from God, Elijah was from God and so was the Lord Jesus Christ in a far greater sense. He came with a message of condemnation to Israel, so did the Lord Jesus Christ. He came at a time of great drought, the Lord came at a time of a great spiritual drought, and when all Israel languished under the drought, what was Elijah doing? Preaching the gospel to the poor, and that's what the Lord Jesus Christ was doing. When the scribes and Pharisees were parched and dry from the Word of God, the Lord was helping widows, and people who needed to be helped in Israel. And now at the end of that period of time, Elijah is coming back, brethren and sisters, and so is the Lord Jesus Christ. They're coming back to finish that work, and who do you think it is that Elijah meets first on his return? Not Ahab, but a man called Obadiah, and how significant it is, because Obadiah is a name which means 'the servant of Yahweh'. That's what his name means, and who's the Lord Jesus Christ coming back to meet, brethren and sisters, first of all? The servants of Yahweh! And before this world is going to feel the refreshing effects of God's rain and dew upon it, He's going to come to us. And we're going to be caught up in clouds with Him, not literally of course, but in clouds of witnesses, in the political heavens, that we might go with Him across the dry and parched land, to shower God's blessings upon the nations. What a remarkable testimony that we have in the story of Elijah. And when Elijah brought down fire from heaven, and proved that the prophets of Baal were false, he slaughtered all the prophets then raced before the chariot of Ahab into Jezreel, which means, 'God sows'. That's what 'Jezreel' means 'God sows' and I'm going to have you turn up references later on to show the importance of that name, Jezreel. And Hosea speaks, brethren and sisters, 'that great will be the day of Jezreel'; great will be the day of Jezreel, when God will sow this earth with righteousness, following on the great rains that will come upon the earth. It isn't any good sowing anything until the rains come. The farmers all know that! It's no good putting seed into a dry ground. There's only one seed that ever grew in a dry ground, and that's the one the Isaiah 53 speaks about; 'He shall grow up as a root out of a dry ground' because it was a miraculous seed! But it's no good putting seed into a dry ground, and until the refreshing showers of God's Word comes, it never can be the day of Jezreel! But the day of Jezreel is coming, when the king of Israel shall ride into that city, into the city of God. God will sow the earth in righteousness, and isn't it typical that Elijah should be the forerunner of that King, as he streaked down the plain of Jezreel. And we know, brethren and sisters, of course, that it all finished in tragedy for Elijah; and it was meant to do that, because the work is not complete. The work isn't finished; Elijah's work is far from finished, and he's yet to come back and complete that work and to be a forerunner for the Lord Jesus Christ to the ten tribes of Israel. There isn't any doubt about that.

And this is the great story that we're told in these stories of the first of Kings chapter 18. Now, it's interesting to consider this character, Obadiah. A remarkable character, brethren and sisters. It was him that Elijah came across. Now, in verse 3 we learn about him. We learn for example, that Ahab called Obadiah, which means 'the servant

of Yahweh', and he was governor of the house. Now, here's a remarkable character; here's a man who's name means the 'servant of Yahweh' and lo and behold, he's the governor of Ahab's house. Now how do you think this man survived in a house like that? Jezebel was in that house, and so was Ahab, and do you know, here again, brethren and sisters, here's just another one of those numerous indications in the scripture, that Ahab knew better. Here again is another indication that Ahab knew what was truth, an indication, brethren and sisters, that he was prepared to put his trust and confidence in the time of great crisis, in no other man than Obadiah. And to me, it's illuminating as to the character of Ahab. Ahab was not a man who was intrinsically evil; he was a man who was weak, and not prepared to put into practice what his conscience told him was right. And the very fact that Obadiah could survive through the purge of Jezebel, and still maintain his office as governor in that house, is a testimony to some of the better feelings that Ahab must have had; and also a remarkable testimony to the diligence of that man, Obadiah.

Now, you look at his character as it's portrayed to us in this chapter. You take verse 12, the latter part of that verse, Obadiah says, 'But I thy servant fear Yahweh from my youth', so from the time of boyhood, brethren and sisters, this boy had feared God from his youth. We learn in verse 6, that in the time of great crisis, that Ahab divided the land between them, (that is between him and Obadiah) and passed throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself', so that in a time of great crisis, this boy who'd feared Yahweh from his youth, and had now grown to manhood, was the only man that Ahab could trust in a crisis. And he divided the beasts between the two of them, and he put the jurisdiction of those under himself, Ahab, and Obadiah. He could trust nobody else. What a testimony to this Christadelphian! Not only that, brethren and sisters, but come back to verse 4, Obadiah says, 'For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of Yahweh, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water'. He took tremendous risks; he was prepared to risk his life for the truth; now look what he did. He took a hundred prophets and he hid them by fifty in a cave. Not two caves; in one cave, so they couldn't get a 100 men in there, which meant brethren and sisters, that he had to constantly shift the group around all the time, hiding 50 at a time, what a risk! when Jezebel was hunting for them. And if she had found them, that determined, ruthless woman would have them dead in no time. And he risked his life, not to be hiding 2 groups of 50, but one group of 100 divided into 2 groups, and putting them successfully in that cave, because he couldn't get them all in. What was he doing with the other 50 while that 50 was in there? He had to work that problem out for himself, and he had an enormous problem! He had a 100 men on his hands; he could only hide 50 at a time, and he had to shuffle them around like on a checker board to keep them away from Jezebel. What a risk! There's faith in action, and yet this man still got the rulership of Ahab's house. Not only that, brethren and sisters, but look at verse 3. We read that 'he feared Yahweh greatly'; now, we're told that he 'feared Yahweh from his youth, up at the height of persecution, at the height of the power of Ahab and Jezebel, the fear which he had as a boy, had expanded greatly, so says the record. There had been an expanse in fear, the word means 'diligently'; he feared Yahweh with diligence, he walked in the truth, brethren and sisters. He was not

one that gave lip service; he was not one of these fellows that can talk all about the bible and blind you with science, he was a fellow that walked in the truth, and his fear was one that was put into practice. And there he was shuffling around these two groups of 50, hiding them from Jezebel, risking his life, in a time of terrible persecution.

What a man then that Elijah should come to him and say, 'Here I am', and do you know, brethren and sisters, no sooner had Elijah shown himself to this man, than Obadiah identified himself with Elijah's cause immediately. He didn't hesitate; he addressed Elijah as 'my lord Elijah'. My lord Elijah, he made no mistake about that; he implored Elijah to remember him for what he had done for the prophets of Yahweh, that he knew he was on 'your side Elijah'. When Elijah told him to go and show himself unto Ahab and tell him that he was here, Obadiah was fearful that Elijah might disappear, nonetheless in verse 16, we read, 'Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah'. He immediately obeyed what Elijah had told him to do. That is the character of the servant of Yahweh, brethren and sisters, to whom the prophet first showed himself on his return back to Israel. And the Lord Jesus Christ is coming, brethren and sisters, He's coming! Make no mistake about that, and all these talks that we give, to the interested friends and to our brethren and sisters; we gather together here, and all that we've been talking about, will be an absolute reality, do you know that? We're going to see, very shortly we believe, we're going to see Him, brethren and sisters, and He's going to meet the servants of Yahweh first. And alas, we hope it will be said, perhaps not from our youth, but from the very beginning of our understanding of the truth, we fear Yahweh! That even in times of persecution, we fear Him greatly, that we're prepared to take risks, whereas people might look down upon us, and run us down; we're not worried about that, we're prepared to take risks for the truth, and we're going to identify ourselves with His cause immediately we see Him, and whatever He wills us to do, we will do. And that's the sort of people that the Lord Jesus Christ wants to meet when He comes back, and that's the person Elijah met first of all, brethren and sisters, before we went to the king of Israel. And let's bear that in mind. Judgment must begin at the house of God first, and if the righteous scarcely be saved, what will happen to the ungodly and the sinner?

Well, Ahab was about to find that out very shortly! And let us remember, that it was to the household of God that Elijah came, and yet you know, brethren and sisters, even here, in the meaning of Obadiah, we have an indication of the weakness of Elijah's character. I don't want to over emphasize this, but nonetheless, I think it is instructive to look at this! You see, Elijah had his weaknesses, make no mistake about that, he was a man of like passions as we are. And he manifested a weakness here, I believe, meeting Obadiah, which had to be overcome later on, or he wasn't going to be in the way of the kingdom himself. He had to be corrected in his life, and that weakness in respect to Obadiah, was an intolerance of Obadiah, an intolerance of his brethren. He couldn't stand his brethren; Elijah got into a position where he thought that he was alone in Israel, brethren and sisters. This is what Paul tells us about him in Romans 11, Elijah had to learn that he had brethren and sisters, whom he had to tolerate, not because of the error they were practicing, because there was in them the same spirit. Perhaps not in the same measure, but the same spirit that moved him, and you know, he treated

Obadiah rather curtly. You look at verse 7, just follow the narrative and the discussion that came between the two of them. 'And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him': (Obadiah knew him) Now the very fact, that it says, 'and he knew him' I believe, indicates that he didn't really know him personally, that is, he didn't know Elijah all that well, because if he did, and Obadiah and Elijah had been acquaintances before, brethren and sisters, there would be no point in saying, 'and he knew him'. I believe he knew him by the very appearance of him. Couldn't mistake him; Obadiah saw him and said, 'Is it thy very self, my lord Elijah?' The AV says, 'Art thou that my lord Elijah?' but the Septuagint version, along with other versions says, 'Is it thy very self, my lord Elijah?' He couldn't mistake him; this man would stand out in any crowd, and so Obadiah saw him. 'Is it your very self', now look at Elijah's answer to him, 'And he answered him, *I*' (leave out the word in italics 'am' because they aren't part of the original). Notice the very curt way Elijah replies. He answered him, 'I; go tell thy lord, Behold Elijah'. That's all he said; he didn't say, 'behold Elijah, (you'll notice the words 'is here' is in italics). So you have Obadiah meeting him, seeing him straight away, oh, you can't mistake this man, you'd know him anywhere, 'Is it thy very self, my lord Elijah? I, go and tell thy lord, behold Elijah'. That's all he said, that's what he told Obadiah, go and tell thy lord. He associated Obadiah with Ahab, but Obadiah associated himself with Elijah! And then Obadiah replied, 'What, have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me?' As the LORD thy God liveth'; notice the terminology brethren and sisters. Obadiah never hesitated, 'As the LORD thy God liveth', straightaway he associates Elijah with Yahweh. And the LORD thy God, that's Elijah's name, 'my God is Yahweh', and he associated Elijah immediately, as everybody did, they couldn't help but do it. He associated that man with God, oh, brethren and sisters, would to God that people would do that with us! associate us immediately with the cause of our religion. Obadiah never hesitated, and he says, 'there's not a nation or kingdom whither my lord (Ahab) hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not'.

Look at the desperate situation that Ahab was in! He would go to the surrounding nations, I want you to tell me, 'Have you got Elijah?' NO; and he'd put that nation under oath; 'I'll put you under an oath, have you got Elijah? NO; Ah!. And he'd go to another nation, 'Have you got Elijah? NO, I'm putting you under an oath. 'Have you got Elijah? NO. Where is the man? And where was he? In Jezebel's home town! Goodness me! and as Obadiah said, there wasn't an nation or kingdom. There was a nation and kingdom but it never dawned on Ahab to look there, brethren and sisters. And do you know why it never dawned on him to look there? because when the two came together, they were two men that were opposites. And it would never had entered into the mind of Ahab that he was in Zidon. Why? because I believe that Ahab, on every occasion which he could find, would seek peace away from Jezebel. Honestly, you wait and see him in this record, whenever Jezebel walked into that man's presence, he is absolutely butter. It's colossal; I'm going to show you in a certain section of this story, brethren and sisters, where that man was not prepared to use language which he was prepared to use with other people, when he spoke to fellow Israelites about the truth; he used language that was reminiscent of the religion that he knew was right. And immediately he spoke to Jezebel, he took out all the words which had to do with his

religion. He would never bring up religion to her; and it would never had dawned on that mind, that Elijah was in Zidon. So he said to every nation and kingdom except that one and now here he was, the man they looked everywhere for! And Obadiah's greatest concern was that the spirit of Yahweh which was impelling this prophet around the nation, like a chariot of fire, would in no time remove him; so that Obadiah would have said to Ahab, 'He's here': and he'd go back and he's not, and he'd have to start and search all over again, and how exasperating this must have been to the king and to his servant. And in verse 12, 'Obadiah says, it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of Yahweh shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear Yahweh from my youth'. In other words, 'Look, Elijah, I know full well that the Spirit of Yahweh is upon you as on no other man. I fully recognize your position; you are the man of God; I'm simply a servant. I recognize you as my lord, and I know Elijah, that there's no man in Israel today, that bears the Spirit of God like you; and it impels you around on a course of action which, wherever it directs you, you will go. And I'm afraid that the Spirit is directing you somewhere else. And I know you will obey it; and where do I stand in all this? But, remember Elijah, I'm on your side. I don't agree with Ahab; I'm on your side, Elijah; look, I feared Yahweh from my youth'.

Brethren and sisters, on that day Elijah stood on Carmel and said, 'I, I only remain a prophet of Yahweh'. He didn't believe Obadiah. He was intolerant of that man, Ahab! He says, 'you go and tell your lord this'; and I believe there's a weakness, I believe there was a big weakness. He stood on Carmel and said, 'I, I only remain' and he wasn't right. There were others, and if he had only realized that he could have been a help and comfort to him. And he was reminded that when he went down to Horeb, that there were 6,999 more like Obadiah; if only Elijah had have sought these brethren and sisters out, and tried to help them, instead of bringing fire upon others, he'd had been a lot better, and this is what God is trying to direct him to. And although Obadiah pleaded with him, 'Look, he says in verse 13, 'Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of Yahweh?' look at the appeal in those words. 'Elijah, hasn't somebody told you what I've done? Don't you know what I've done? Look at the risk I've taken?' Go tell thy lord, Elijah is here; he won't give in, he would not align himself with this man. And you can see what had happened, brethren and sisters, that in his seclusion, in his intolerance of evil, in his hatred of that which was wrong, Elijah's life at this stage was so mixed up and so overcome with the negatives of the truth, that he had overlooked the fact that the same spirit that dwelt in his heart, was dwelling in others. And you know, we do that; my word we do that! here, with all our so called strength, and so called understanding, we are sometimes brought up with a jolt, brethren and sisters, by the very actions of other people, that, low and behold, we are not the only Christadelphian in the world! That other people have the truth as well as us. And do you know, the Master at all times, remembered that, that the spirit which moves us, and we pray that it does us, not only moves other people but oft times, and I say oft times, moves them in a way which it never moves us. And we must stand in awe sometimes, of our brethren and sisters, and if the Spirit of God is directing all of us together, in various tasks in the truth, then I think we ought to draw on the inspiration that we can give each other, and we would not be a lonely man like Elijah, and he would never had



gone to Horeb like he did, on his own volition. He had no need to go to Horeb, he travelled 260 miles down there, and God sent him all the way back another 260 miles, so he went 520 miles for nothing! because he didn't understand, that the still small voice was moving other people as well as it was moving him. And here's a graphic illustration of a man who's appealing to him; 'wasn't it told you what I've done?' Go and tell your lord, Elijah is here. Never giving in, and we're going to see how that wonderful man, brethren and sisters, in the end, was educated! He learned his lesson, and he's coming again in spirit and power, vastly different than the spirit and power that's now moving him. Wonderful man that he was, this was a weakness in his character. No question!

Do you know, Obadiah said, 'look, I'm afraid that when I go there, when I come back, you'll be gone'. Now, look at Elijah's reply in verse 15, 'Elijah said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him today', and there again, his word, his solemn word; not his words, brethren and sisters, but his word based upon the veracity of the truth which he held, and the integrity of the God by whom he swore. And Obadiah never hesitated; after that he went, but I want you to notice, and I want you to notice carefully, of the way in which Elijah uses the title of God in this occasion. Now when he came to Ahab in chapter 17 and verse 1, he said to Ahab, now this is one of the most beautiful points in the whole life of Elijah. He came to Ahab and he said, 'As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word'; now, in other words, when he came to Ahab with a controversy, and he used the title (now look, brethren and sisters, there's no question of this, that the titles of the scripture of the names and titles of Deity which are used in the scripture, there's no doubt about it, they are there for a purpose), and you've never had a more beautiful illustration of it, than in the lifetime of Elijah. Now look, he comes to Ahab and says, 'As the LORD God of Israel', now, Yahweh Elohim of Israel is the name of God, the title of God, which denotes His covenant. Yahweh Elohim is His covenant title, and the controversy that Elijah had with Ahab is over the covenant, because Ahab had broken the covenant. So he comes in the covenant name, but now he's coming back what for? For judgment, 'as the LORD of hosts liveth' ah, it's a different one now. The covenant has been broken; they have not repented, brethren and sisters, all that remains now is judgment, and so as the LORD of hosts, he comes back for judgment, and we're going to see that when he went to Mt. Horeb. Elijah used a title at Mt. Horeb that had never been used before on the lips of any other person, when he applied this to God. And he called Him at Mt. Horeb, the LORD God of hosts, and he combined the two of them, and he was mistaken in that, and God showed him he was mistaken. He was perfectly right in making it a controversy with Ahab, that there was the controversy with a covenant God. When he came back he was perfectly correct in showing that here was the God of judgment, but he was not right in putting the covenant God with the God of judgment and combining the titles, because what Elijah thought, brethren and sisters, was that Yahweh Elohim, the God of the covenant would enforce that covenant by power, and he made the biggest mistake of his life, because he learnt that God will not do that! But, for the moment, the title is used correctly; I'm coming in the name of the LORD of hosts, and look out!

So Obadiah goes, and he tells Ahab. 'I found him, I have; and it says, 'When Ahab saw Elijah' (you'd imagine him hurrying up, brethren and sisters, and I believe he would have been on the plain of Jezreel), you could imagine him hurrying up in this grand part of the land of Israel, which we hope God willing, to lay our eyes on! You can imagine him walking up that plain and saying, 'Aha, you troubler of Israel'; now this is a good question, he says, 'Art thou not he that troubleth Israel?'. That was a good question! and I can see those two men coming together, the man with his royal robes and the other fellow, with his disheveled hair, his rock garments, face like a lion and swift as the roe upon the mountain. 'Nay, No, I'm not troubling Israel here; you and your father's house'. Who was the troubler of Israel, brethren and sisters? Wasn't Elijah; And do you know, it's ever been like that. You know, sometimes it's been, thank God it's never happened in this city, but let's say in places where brethren have had to stand up, not because they want to be controversial but because they know that if people would continue in a manner of doctrine and practices that they did, it would destroy the Christadelphian community. And they had to stand up, (I've done that myself and I've found it my bond and duty to do so), when plain, wrong doctrine has been set before the brethren, and you stand up and you don't contend with the brother, you contend with the error. And people say that your troubling Israel, your upsetting everybody, but you're not! It's the other fellow that's upsetting everybody because he's bringing into that nation, things which will cause trouble. Now, I want to show you, brethren and sisters, in a most remarkable manner, who was the troubler of Israel!

Now, who was the troubler? No doubt about it, it was Ahab. But this is the remarkable way in which I think it is shown; you take that word 'troubler of Israel', the word of course is 'akar'. Now you remember a man by the name of 'Achan', in 1 Chronicles 2:7 we have a record of him. Now you might wonder what the connection is going to be between Achan and Ahab, but I'll show you the connection and you'll soon see who was the 'troubler' of Israel! In 1 Chronicles 2:7 we read about Achan, here he's called Achar, but it's the same man, 'And the sons of Carmi, Achar, the troubler of Israel, who transgressed in the thing accursed'. Now, 'Achan' means 'the troubler' and you remember what happened, don't you brethren and sisters? that when the children of Israel came into the promised land (you teach the children this story in the Sunday School) that they took Jericho, and Joshua charged the people, he charged the people that no man was to touch anything in Jericho because God had made that city a 'devoted sacrifice'. The word 'accursed' means to 'devote' something, and God had devoted that, not, of course, to Himself, but He had devoted it to destruction, and He said, 'nobody touch a thing of that city because it was absolutely polluted'. But Achan saw the Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold and the shekels of silver, and he saw and coveted and took' as the record says. He was overcome by the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, and 'he saw, he coveted and he took'. He took them unto himself and hid them in the ground. 'Nobody will know, why destroy those things? It would be silly really; nice garment!' But you see, this was the bother; he'd taken of those things and brought them into the ecclesia. Nothing in themselves, of course, but it's what they stood for, brethren and sisters. And you know the story, how that Joshua brought him out and they took a lot, and the lot fell upon Achan and he said, 'Give glory unto God, Achan and you confess your sins'. And he confessed and they

stoned him in the valley of Achor; remember that because we're going to come across that in the lifetime of Elijah. The valley of Achor is where they stoned him, which means 'the valley of trouble' and then in the 6th chapter of Joshua and verse 26, Joshua said something concerning the city of Jericho, 'And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before Yahweh, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it'. Now what Joshua is saying was this, any man that rebuilds Jericho will have to do so under the curse of Yahweh, and if he attempts to build that city, it will cost him his two sons. It'll cost him his firstborn and his youngest son; at the cost of those two boys you'll rebuild that city. Now it is, I think, brethren and sisters, of the height of significance, that we read in the first of Kings chapter 16 these words, speaking of the reign of Ahab, in verse 34 we read, 'In his days (note that) whose days? the days of Ahab, under his patronage 'did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gate thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of Yahweh which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun'. Now, brethren and sisters, who rebuilt Jericho? Hiel did, but under whose patronage? under the patronage of Ahab, and here's Ahab meeting Elijah on the plains of Esdraelon, 'ah, ha ha, the troubler of Israel'. Who was troubling Israel? Who was the man that took the Babylonish garment, the wedge of gold, and the silver, the very emblems of heathen worship and idolatry? who was the man that brought that into the ecclesia, and almost destroyed them and lost 3,000 good brethren? because they went against Ai and almost lost their lives? Who was the man that was troubling Israel? Achan! Who was the man that was rebuilding Jericho and defied the curse of Yahweh? Who brought Jezebel into the ecclesia? 'Aha, no', says Elijah, 'I'm not the troubler of Israel. All the brethren and sisters may feel that, but I'm telling you who's troubling Israel, you, Ahab, and your father's house!' The statues of Omri are kept and the works of the house of Ahab, says Micah. And there, brethren and sisters, was a graphic illustration as to who was the troubler of the nation. My word! I feel that Ahab would have been severely rebuked by the words of Elijah on that occasion. And I think, brethren and sisters, that we ought to bear this in mind, that none of us want to be trouble; a man who raises controversy for controversy's sake deserves to be booted into the middle of that river. But a man who is weak and who refuses to see a principle when a principle is at stake, and is afraid to stand up, and cause sometimes a little bit of pain, that the pain might result in a healthy condition, is also deserving of being booted into that river.

Now, Elijah was not a man, brethren and sisters, who wanted to trouble Israel, I don't believe there would be another man who wanted peace more than Elijah, but it's like Jehu said, when he drove towards the walls of Jezreel, and Ahaziah and Joram, descendants from Jezebel, kings of Israel and Judah together there in Jezreel, and they sent a message to Jehu, as they saw him driving furiously across the plain, and the message was, 'Is it peace, Jehu? Peace, he said, peace, while the whoredoms of thy mother are in the ecclesia! NEVER! And that's the attitude of Jehu, and as wrong as he may have been in the way he applied judgment, nonetheless, he was right in that! Peace, he said, how can there be peace on those conditions. No! As long as those conditions existed, brethren and sisters, there'd be trouble. And it wasn't until the cairn of stones was built over the body of Achan, that God blessed that nation as they went

forth. And as hard as that might be to us, let us remember this, that all the acts of God, in bringing about the downfall of people like Achan and Ahab, as bloodthirsty and as hard as they may seem to us, always remember this, my dear brethren and sisters, that everything that God has done, has been out of His kindness and His love for you and I. That if He hadn't done these things, then today we couldn't have opened up that book, with the pure, beautiful truth of the God of Israel flowing out of it, and binding us together as one. And remember this, that every genuine brother that stands up to defend the faith, and I say genuine brother, does so because he loves you and he loves the companionship of you, and he loves to see the brethren and sisters come together, and he knows that it's better to have a little bit of trouble and pain now, to eradicate out of our midst, those elements, which if they are allowed to grow, brethren and sisters, would smash us into fragments all over the world, and nobody wants that. We want to hold each other together on the purity of God's word, and if that means that sometimes, we need to speak a little bit straight, then let us bear that exhortation, and let us all do it together, and let us remember this, that he is a troubler of Israel, who brings things in which are detrimental to the truth which we hold. And that's what Ahab had to learn, and, of course, the nation would have looked upon Ahab, and seen the fellow who was holding the nation together, and you could imagine how Jezebel and Ahab would have been saying, 'You know, if it wasn't for Elijah, we wouldn't be having this drought!' Because no one connected up the fact, that Elijah couldn't bring the drought anyway, except that we don't know that! Nobody connected up the fact that he didn't have the key to the path of heaven, God knew that! No one thought about that, all they connected up with is that we've got no water and he's the blame!

But they were wrong! the blame was on the king, and Elijah proposed that he should get all the prophets to Carmel, and in verse 19, and in verse 18, we can read this verse, 'Elijah answered and said, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim (plural, not simply 'baal', brethren and sisters, but 'baalim' all the names of Baal.) You know, it's not our purpose now, but if you go through the scriptures on 'baal' you'll find that 'baal' is a name which means 'the lord or possessor of anything'. And it's always associated with various forms of worship, and depending upon what form of worship was current, the name of baal was put with it, so you have 'baal-peor', you have 'baal-zebub', you have baal-berith, and each of those titles, given to baal, meant that he was lord or possessor with whatever kind of abomination was going. Now that's a fact; 'baal-peor' means a certain thing, I won't mention it here again, it's one of those unmentionable things. But 'baal-zebub' means 'god of the fly'; they worshipped the fly, so that baal was the god of the fly. 'Baal-berith' means the 'covenant' because in the days of Gideon they introduced a different covenant, baal was the god of that covenant.

So that out of the various titles of baal, as he changed from generation to generation, so they worshipped him. So Elijah in a contemptuous voice said to Ahab, 'You don't just simply worship 'baal', you worship 'baalim'. You just change like the wind; anything that goes and blows, you're with it'. And that's what he's telling them; absolutely contemptuous of his stand. But now he says, 'Gather to me all Israel'; what a remarkable statement that is, brethren and sisters, 'gather to me all Israel' that's the

purpose of his life. That's going to be the purpose of his life, 'gather to me all Israel, he's going to say that again and again. And this time all Israel will be gathered to him, but now he proposes to gather them together unto Mt. Carmel. And here we have to pause, because I'm going to tell you about Mt. Carmel, not for your sake but for my sake. I want to refresh my mind about Mt. Carmel, I want to remember this when we get there!

Mt. Carmel, brethren and sisters, was an ideal spot for this proposition! Now I believe, that they were on the plain, and Mt. Carmel, of course, is here (he indicates on a map). Now when we talk about Mt. Carmel, we don't picture a single mountain, do we? There was no such mount on this Mt. Carmel, but Mt. Carmel is a range of mountains right on this south western corner of the plain of Jezreel. It's a range of mountains, rather than one single mountain; it runs for about 18 miles from the path of Megiddo here, right up to the headland of Carmel, so it's an 18 mile long range, try and visualize that. Not a tremendously high range about 1800 feet perhaps at its highest point. But at 1800 feet high, this ridge of mountains runs up from the path of Megiddo right up to the headland of Carmel. The path of Megiddo divides the Carmel range from the hills of Samaria. Quite a distinctive change here in the terrain, it's between one range of mountains and the other, and the path of Megiddo divides the two of them. So you've got this 18 mile strip of headland as it were, streaking up towards the Mediterranean, and it finishes within about two hundred yards of the shore, up here at what is now called Haifa, of course.

And this is what Elijah says, 'Gather me the prophets of Baal to Carmel. Now, why bring them to Carmel, brethren and sisters? Well, I think it's absolutely beautiful! You see, there wouldn't have been a tract of territory in Israel which could have fitted this contest better! because of what Carmel stood for. You know, the land talks to you; it really does, it speaks to you when you study the geography of the Holy Land. Now, you take Carmel, the very word, the name of Carmel means a 'park or garden'; it means a park or a garden, and it's very interesting when you study, brethren and sisters, the terminology of Carmel. Now, the word means a park or a garden; in the 32nd chapter of Isaiah, you have the word rendered a 'fruitful field'. Just to give you an idea of what 'Carmel' stood for, just have a look at some of these references. I think it'll be to our profit to have a look at these; Isaiah 32:15 and 16, we read here of the coming blessedness upon the earth when God says 'Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a 'fruitful field' (Carmel), and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field' (Carmel). So, first of all, the name of it means 'a fruitful field'; it gives that idea of fertility. Come over to the 35th chapter of Isaiah and verse 2, speaking of the day when the desert shall blossom like the rose, we see here in verses 1 and 2, 'The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God'. Now look at the phrase of Isaiah, the excellency of Carmel, now already we have a picture of what Carmel was like; and now the sisters might enter into this, and this will really cap it off

for the sisters. To give them an understanding of what Carmel was really like, we come to the Song of Solomon. Brethren won't understand this, I do!; now speaking of the bride in all her beauty, in the Song of Solomon chapter 7 and verse 5 it says, 'Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple; the king is held in the galleries'. Now, look at that, the head of the bride, brethren and sisters, is like Carmel. Why? Not because she wears a bunch of fruit on her head at all, but because, when the bride prepares herself for her husband, (as all brides will look back with nostalgia upon that very wonderful event), they'll know, brethren and sisters, that on that day they pretty up their hair, you know, they spend hours on it, don't they? so they might look their most beautiful aspect for their husbands, and the tresses of the bride's head are likened to Carmel. What a more expressive figure than that; I think it pays you to dwell upon it, not too much, but it pays to dwell on these things; but you see, the tresses of the bride's head are like Carmel. And look at the aspect we're getting of Carmel, fruitful fields; the excellency of Carmel like the tresses of a bride's head. The shaggy head of Carmel with its groves of trees, for all the world like the beautiful bride's father. There's something really wonderful about that. Now, just another reference, in the first chapter of Amos we have another reference concerning Carmel, which helps us to appreciate why it was that Elijah chose this spot. Amos 1 and verse 2, 'And he said, The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither'. As if in the extremity of the judgments of God, in order to impress, brethren and sisters, the dreadful measure of judgment, that even the top of Carmel will wither. Now when the top of Carmel withers, it is the end for Israel, because you see, Carmel is like the head of the land. I know that Hermon, of course, dominates the whole northern terrain, but of the actual land down the south here, below Hermon, Carmel is like the head of the bride. Now, Carmel, when you look at Carmel, you see this running ridge of mountains, for 18 miles, streaking up to the sea, and in the days of the prophets, (they mustn't be quite so fertile now, although the whole area is becoming reclaimed), but the days of the prophets, Carmel always gave the appearance of being heavily wooded, with the tops of the trees all in uniform, just like the tresses of the bride's head, and all green, sparkling green. Now, when the top of Carmel withers, brethren and sisters, everything was ended, and I can well and truly imagine, that after three and a half years drought, the top of Carmel was beginning to wither. And Elijah said, 'gather me all Israel to Carmel'; now what better, honestly, what better spot on the earth could he have chosen? And I would just like to point out one other thing about Carmel, just to show you how it was a striking landmark to Israel. I want to show you something! (All this on the map) When you go to the plain of Esdraelon, and here's the coast of Israel, now the Carmel range ran up here, 18 miles, and here's the pass of Megiddo, and over in this end, you have the hills of Galilee and Hermon up there and Gilboa ran down this way. But standing out on the plain there, you have another mountain called Mount Tabor, and it was almost like a perfect cone, so that down this end of the plain you had Mount Tabor, standing up there like a perfect cone, and you had this long range of mountains, like a man's finger in a sense, coming up this way so that if you were standing say here in the pass of Megiddo, you'd look down to the northeast here, and in that northeastern corner, you'd see the perfect cone, Mt. Tabor, standing all on its own, out in the plain. Then if you look over the left hand shoulder you see this other mountain, the range of Carmel, streaking up to the sea like

a man's hand. Now you turn to the 46th chapter of Jeremiah, and Carmel will become a symbol to Israel of the certainty of God's judgment; in the 46th chapter of Jeremiah and verse 18, 'As I live, saith the King, whose name is Yahweh of armies, Surely as Tabor is among the mountains, and as Carmel by the sea, so shall he come'. And there, brethren and sisters, you have one of those beautiful illustrations of how the Word of God is spoken on the basis of the poverty of that land, and that is one of the reasons why God loves that land because virtually, the land of Israel is like a bible written in earth.

Now look what Jeremiah was saying, As surely as Tabor is by the mountains, and you look down to the northeastern corner, and there's Tabor standing up, and you can't mistake it, right on the plain on its own. As surely as Tabor is by the mountains, as Carmel is by the sea, and you see this 18 mile range streaking up like a man's finger, so shall he come. And who's going to come? THE LORD OF HOSTS. And Elijah says, 'Go and tell Ahab that as truly as the LORD of hosts lives, I will appear to him today. Gather me all Israel to Carmel'. And you wouldn't have got, brethren and sisters, a more expressive stretch of territory than that. Not only that, but I want to run just a little bit longer on Carmel. If you were to stand here, brethren and sisters, on the headland of Carmel, you're in a miniature universe! because from the headland of Carmel, (mind you, not from every position here, but certain positions on the headband of Carmel), you can see almost the world, in miniature. Because when you look down the coastal plain, as it runs its way down to Sharon, you've got the white sand of the Mediterranean coast, and down there you have sub-tropical climate where they grow date palms. A little bit to your left down the hills of Judeah you've got the harsh bound hills of Judeah where the snow lies deep in the winter; over across the plain right in front of you, you've got the fertile plain of Esdraelon where they grew all their crops. Tremendously fertile and piling up behind them, you've got the ring of Galilee, as 'Galilee' means 'the ring' a ring of mountains going up to about 4,000 feet and then, piling up behind them again, you've got the snows of Hermon, 9,100 feet above sea level, and you can look right down here to the great depths of the Jordan valley where it's 110 degrees in the shade, as the saying goes they can see 'snow on Hermon'. And it's a miniature universe! and now it's going to be a contest on Mt. Carmel and the issue was, who created it? Baal? or Yahweh? And I believe, brethren and sisters, that if we could only mentally take that scene in, we'd do ourselves a lot of good. And I can see, and I've meditated on and done my very best, to place myself there on that day, when the great day of that contest took place. And if you can imagine Elijah absorbing all the atmosphere of it all, and seeing in Carmel, the very symbol of what he was trying to accomplish, fruitfulness and fertility in Israel, on the basis of the fact, that the nation must recognize that God was the Creator of all things, and He was the one to be honoured by them. It was a tremendous issue, which was to be decided on that day.

Now, I think my time is gone, and I'm a long, long way from finishing this particular talk. I think we're going to have to finish it here, and come back, say tonight, to combine the sacrifice of the prophets of Baal, with the sacrifice which Elijah made. So just permit me, if you would, in your patience, to come to verse 21. First of all, we might just mention in verse 19, that he was to invite all Israel, and he was to bring the 450

prophets of Baal and he was to bring the 400 prophets of the groves, which eat at Jezebel's table. All Israel turned up; the 450 prophets of Baal turned up, Jezebel's boyfriends stayed home. And the reason why, brethren and sisters, was that the question was, 'Why halt ye between two opinions?' Jezebel and her 400 prophets never halted between two opinions. They knew exactly what they believed; they were never in doubt! They were perfectly happy with their religion and they had no interest whatsoever in the contest that was going to be held. But it was Ahab who was halting between two opinions, and as Elijah said in verse 21, 'How long halt ye between two opinions?' Now, the word 'halt' literally means to 'hop' to 'leap' from one place to another, as a matter of fact, the word 'halt' here, is from the same root and very closely akin to the word 'passover'. Very closely akin to the word 'passover'; now when you do a 'passover' the angel of death hopped over the houses of the Israelites. That's what the word 'pass over' means; so he went over one house and on to another. If an Egyptian's house was there, then they died, but he hopped over the house of the Israelite, so that they were hopping between two opinions. Now the word 'opinion' is a word which means to 'divide' and it's rendered in the scriptures, 'the tops' and it's used in the sense of 'a branch which divides at the top'. So you get a branch of a tree, you follow it up and it divides into a division, doesn't it? Now, that's the idea of that Hebrew word 'opinion'. Now, what Elijah was saying was, you can make quick work of that, can't you? Silly little birds on the top of a tree, chirping and hopping about, he said, you're crazy! You know, silly birds flitting from one branch to another; why can't you make up your minds? You know, it wasn't the first time that this illustration was used; in the prophecy of Hosea, Hosea said that Israel rushed down into Egypt and they go to Assyria. They're like a silly dove without heart; a silly dove without heart, now you look at a dove sometime? without a heart? Who wants a dove? you watch it pick backwards and forwards and there's no purpose in it whatsoever. It just flits from one branch to another, and that's like Israel; they're running down to Egypt one minute, to Assyria the next. North and South; they couldn't make up their minds who they wanted to align themselves with, so they're like a silly dove without heart, and here they were, Was it Yahweh, was it Baal; was it Baal, was it Yahweh? and they were hopping backwards and forwards, and Elijah said, 'Look, it's crazy to continue on like that! And he proposed this tremendous consequence that the 'people answered him not a word'. Didn't answer him a word, brethren and sisters, because they knew they had carried on in this fashion, and then, as we move on with the story, we'll leave it here, and tonight we hope to show, brethren and sisters, when all Israel came to Carmel, this great contest of faith, of course, was worked out. And we're going to see, I believe, a very dramatic episode in the life of Elijah. That's the one for which we remember him the most! but bear this in mind, my beloved brethren and sisters, that as the outcome of Elijah's contest on Carmel, he gained nothing! Nothing that was profitable; for all its glory, there was nothing gained and God taught him, that in the earthquake, and fire and storm, I'M NOT IN IT ELIJAH, I'M NOT IN THEM! God was in this of course, in the fact that He sent the fire, but He wasn't in it in this sense, this is not the way to bring people to the truth. NO! And with the grandeur of Carmel, as we will see it, no doubt, there's no question of this, it vindicated God's name before the people, but as for accomplishing their salvation, it didn't work. But the one thing it did do, brethren and sisters, it must have confirmed in the mind of Elijah, he was certainly a prophet of Yahweh. IT MUST HAVE



STRENGTHENED HIS FAITH, but apart from that, it accomplished very little, and he was going to learn later on, that there is something grander even than that! In all this, let's learn this lesson, that in all humility, it doesn't matter what God gives us to do, brethren and sisters. DO IT WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT, and I believe one of the evils of this age, and I've seen it in action, and I know it exists among us, one of the evils of this age is, that brethren and sisters are not satisfied to take up with their two hands the work for which they are suited. But everybody wants to do Joe Bloes' work because it's more romantic; but believe me, that what we've got to do is to learn the lesson that Elijah learnt, brethren and sisters. We may not all be suited to do the things which bring notoriety; don't aspire to those things because with the notoriety will come tribulation, responsibility, anguish and trouble, and you'd wish you were a doorkeeper. And if you're cut out to be a doorkeeper then be a doorkeeper. If all you can do is wash the wine glasses on a Sunday morning, make sure you do it every Sunday morning. When the Lord comes, pray that He will find you washing wine glasses, and you'll be in the kingdom, and that's all that really matters in this life. That's all that matters; this romanticism that's associated with some of the work of the truth, what really matters, brethren and sisters, is that we're going to get into that kingdom! Goodness me! this is the purpose of our lives, and I believe we should learn this lesson, that whatever we're given to do, do it with all your might. Do it faithfully; do it well, that when the Lord comes, we'll be commended, because we've worked faithfully, and diligently within the service of Yahweh, like Obadiah, and when He comes, He'll come to us first!