

## Testing Religion

I Kings 18:21

When a great boiler is made and before it is used in the midst of a working crew who are exposed to it it is tested to see if it will stand the pressure that will have to be developed to run its machinery. This is a wise procedure. It is also wise to test out religion before it is accepted as a safe thing to place in the midst of people.

In I Kings 18:21 we have a test of religion. and the test there was not as to pressure but to see which would bring fire from heaven.

Let us look into the situation. Time was in the midst of Israel's Kings and in the reign of Ahab. Benjamin Franklin once said that the worst wheel of the Cart makes the most noise. This was true of Israel's Kings. In 927 B.C. Omri was King and followed in the steps of his wicked father Jeroboam. When Omri died, his son Ahab came to the throne and was perhaps the worse curse Israel had experienced. He made an alliance with the Phoenicians establishing the worship of the sun god Baal. It looked as if the worship of the true God was to be blotted out. Never before was Israel so cursed with a King nor was she ever before so blessed with a fearless prophet.

Right into the presence of Ahab Elijah rushed. He could do this because he was fired with a message from God. It burned upon his heart and he feared not the powers of darkness. Pointing his finger in Ahab's face he told him that there would be no rain nor dew for three years except according to his word. He spoke thus and vanished.

For three years and six months a fearful drought reigned and not a spring of green lived any where. All this time Ahab was furious and had the country cursed to grief the prophet. Israel began to learn that God still lived. It is not impossible in these days for God to direct the nations and Kings in such a way that people who put all their trust in gold rather than in God may see that God still lives.

At the instruction of God Elijah went out and showed his self to Ahab. and Ahab said, "Art thou he that

troubleth Israel?" you know it is the natural disposition of sinners to lay all the trouble to the righteous. when Paul wanted enter a town and get the people stirred up for God and caused them to see the wickedness of those who had been engaged in idolatrous worship the wicked would accuse him of hurrying the wheel up side saw. He was a disturber. He would not allow the people to sleep in their sin and not remind them to "awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee life".

So here was the most wicked of Kings throwing it up to Elijah that he was the trouble. But poor old Elijah hurled back in his teeth "I have not troubled Israel but ye have and thy father's house in that thou hast forsaken the commandments of God and followed Baal". So if preaching the Gospel begins to disturb those who sleep in sin do not lay the blame to the Gospel or to the preacher but to the sin of the man who is dead in trespasses and in sin.

Now to prove that he was on the right side Elijah called for a test of religion. Call all Israel to gether at 450 prophets of Baal. --- etc (omit the story) and the answer which answers with fire chose the Lord. So the test of religion is whether or not it can produce the fire.

What is the work of fire? It is the symbol of the Lord's presence and power. It burns up the chaff, it purifies, and it answers a great need of humanity, it is power.

We hear the question some times "Is one Rel. as good as another?" There are over five hundred religions in the world. There are some people in each who think their Rel. is all right. But thinking a Rel. is all right does not make it so. A lady with two children was on a train - a Dakota blizzard. Every time conductor came by she would ask if next stop was here. After awhile he said: "He forgot that next stop was a water station. She got off there. Conductor came through found his mistake. He looked train at found her dead children alive. She thought she was getting off at right station but death was penalty for her mistake. Now the Lord might not get that far with it and let one be lost who was sincere in her belief that her non-Christian Rel. was all right. That leads up to a thought we have not time discuss now but will

So so, I think, when I get back from my vacation the thing we are dealing with now is our religion as good as another? The answer is "no" there is one religion and that is Christianity. It has been tested, is being tested and will continue to be tested and should be tested by us and if it proves to be the religion of fire and of power we should quit humping between two sides. "If God be the Lord then hear us and if Baal then serve him"

"There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby men must be saved" Now can we know the true Rel.? A Rel. is known by its product. Some time ago I noticed a tobacco advertisement. It read "There are two kinds of tobacco, Old North State and the others." So with religion there are two kinds Christianity and the others. Now back to our key to religion. A Rel. is known by its products.

Mohammedanism 224 000 prophets - 225 000 000 followers. <sup>It</sup> Heaven is a place where sensuality is prominent and permitted. Polygamy is predominant. In its name the most atrocious crimes of history are committed.

So with Confucianism, Brahmanism, Taoism, Shintoism, <sup>in</sup> their names taken or thrown in to the ranges, sick persons killed off. Prostitution is a part of the temple worship, so with all the others of the 500 the real Christian religion is free of all this. Take your choice, which do you want for your boys and girls? you have got to take one or the other, you will leave this house with one or the other, we do not have to live in India or Turkey to be Mohammedans. If we yield to sensuality which is the heart of their religion and its promised heaven we are followers of that heathen Religion spirit but if we yield not to lust and sensuality we are Christians. you can't be both at the same time. And this is not true because I say it but it is true because God has thus declared it.

A Rel. may be known by its pastor, killed in court in Toronto, skipped the country to avoid arrest, died B.C. Courts could reveal his immoral career to the world.

or a Rel. may be known by its Elijah, Daniel, Samuel, Paul, Peter, James, John Wesley, Calvin, Knox, Luther, Spurgeon, Smith and Sunday and the good old saints of the invalid chairs.

Elijah proved the Rel. he professed and the people cried out, "The Lord He is the God" and the people will do the same thing when we prove our Rel. you can't prove it at the Lord's Table, you can't prove it in profanity, you can't prove it in the dance hall, nor can you prove it in the blind tigger business, <sup>you break it</sup> you have got to prove it by a righteous life.

There is a story told of a war between the animals and the fowls. a bat was in the battle. when animals rushed at the fowls he drew in his wings and said "I am an animal" when the fowls rushed at with shrieks, a the animals he spread his wings and said "I am a fowl."

There are people just like that of the world when with sinners and porching as Christians, yet with people of God. They are like the chameleon - a lizard that becomes the color of the thing he is with.

"How long will ye be between two opinions, if the Lord be God follow him; but if Baal be God follow him. and the people answered not a word."

"Choose ye this day whom ye will serve"

