

I am the resurrection and the Life.—John xi. 25.

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OUR COLUMN FOR PREACHERS AND TEACHERS.

NUGGETS OF GOLD FROM THE S. S. LESSONS.

By REV. JOHN McEWEN, Secretary S.S. Association of Canada.

[Sept 6.] **Elijah Translated.** [2 Kings ii. 1-15.]

After the meeting of Elijah and Ahab in the garden of Naboth, the prophet appears in the record only twice, once to Ahaziah who was sick and inquired of Baal-zebub, (2 K. i. 3, 4) then as sending a letter to Jehoram. (2 Chron. xxi. 12) Elisha was called to become a pupil and attendant of Elijah eight years since, and now comes into prominence in this lesson (1 Ks. xix. 19,) Elijah has exercised the office of prophet for sixty years, a long, faithful and eventful ministry, and is to be closed by his being taken up. The faithful man visits the haunts of his stirring life, Gilgal on the west, Bethel and Jericho, where were groups of faithful men, as students of the law.

I. WATCHFULNESS AND FAITHFULNESS EXEMPLIFIED. These two elements of godly character always grow together. Christ's teaching enjoin them (Matt. xxv. 13,) upon his followers, and they must have entered into the experience of Enoch (Gen. v. 24.) The manner of Elijah's departure had been revealed to him, and possibly he had intimated the same to the prophets. Elisha especially seems to have been moved and absorbed with the announcement (*vs* 3-6) Note His petition, (*vs* 9.) A double portion not of the Holy Spirit in our sense, for this is an unbecoming petition to present to one who may be regarded as a dying man "Let a first born son's double portion, (Deut. xxi. 17,) of thy prophetic spirit descend on me." Elisha is a very character to Elijah in Scripture, only once named in the New Testament, while Elijah comes up very often. Watchfulness and fidelity are made conditions of blessing. Both are faithful and watchful in their work and to the Lord, to the end.

II. WATCHFULNESS AND FIDELITY REWARDED. There is marvelous inter-weaving of fact and figure in the record. Whirlwind, Chariot, horses, fire, all expressive of the Divine presence in a pre-eminent degree: A visible proof that this life does not end all, and that this is a fitting close to a signal life—a seal of acceptance. Let the teacher note carefully and intelligently the resemblance between Elijah and Moses. Both fasted forty days; both had visions of God in Horeb; both were sent to rebuke kings; both fore-cast miracles that were to be wrought; both opened heaven; both revenged idolatry; both quenched the thirst of Israel. Moses body was hid, Elijah was translated, both were present at the Transfiguration of Christ. Elisha saw the prophet go up. He had the the prophet's mantle, the prophet's God, Spirit, office and power.

[Sept. 13] **The Shunammite's Son.** [2 Ks. iv. 18-37.]

With this lesson, read 1 K. xvii. 17-24, and Heb. xi. 35. Elisha is attested by God as the Head of the Schools of the prophets as had been Elijah. He took up his permanent abode at Samaria and for nearly sixty years he continued to make his periodical circuits of instructing and arousing the people. Shunem, had been his resting place on these Missionary journeys. Hence the story of our lesson; which is told with great simplicity and beauty.

Its persons, doings, and mental pictures, are numerous, clear, and very instructive.

The prompt, strong, wise, devout, believing, hospitable woman is made glad in becoming a Mother. She may have been animated by the hope of Israel, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

The higher our blessings; the deeper our trials, and the more need for testing our Faith, and

THE TESTING OF FAITH IS THE SPIRITUAL ASPECT OF THE LESSON.

The sun-stricken boy has suddenly died on his Mother's knees, she lays him on the prophet's bed. Shuts the door. Lesson.

THE SUBMISSION AND CALMNESS OF FAITH, *vs* 21.

Possibly remembering the story of Elijah and the Widow's son, she loses no time in communicating the death of the boy to the Prophet.

THIS IS THE PROMPTITUDE OF FAITH, *vs* 22-24.

The comparatively indifferent Husband feebly remonstrates with his wife's purpose, but silently and intently she goes on.

THIS IS THE PERSEVERANCE OF FAITH.

"Drive and go forward, slack not thy riding."

THIS IS THE URGENCY OF A TRUE FAITH.

The deep sorrow, and the "eloquent silence" of an appealing heart.

SHEWS THE INTENSITY OF THE WOMAN'S FAITH.

"As the Lord liveth, I will not leave thee." Clinging to the source of blessing, thro' the proved medium of blessing, she had little faith in the staff.

THE PERSISTENCE OF FAITH, 'I will not let thee good.'

THE MOTHER'S FAITH IS REWARDED BY A MANIFESTATION OF THE PROPHETS.

The whole being of the prophet is brought into adapted contact with the end in view. See Jesus at the grave of Lazarus. Jno. xi. 25, 33, 43.

The Lord is magnified by their united faith, 2 K. viii 1-6. **THE TRIUMPHS OF THEIR MUTUAL FAITH, *vs* 36, Luke vii. 15.**

HOW much are you giving for the support of the Gospel? Is the sum as large as that you spend upon the luxuries of life? Take paper and pencil and figure the thing out. If you find, as we dare say you will find, that the indulgence of your appetites and tastes is costing you many times more than your religion, will you not try to rectify this mistake? It is not right to spend so much on carnal pleasures, and so little for Christ, and still claim that you cannot afford to do more for the cause of the Saviour.