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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.

[August 23.] **Elijah at Horeb** [1 Ks. xix 1-18.]

The moral victory at Carmel produced high hopes in the bosom of the prophet, that idolatry was overthrown. Ahab hastened to report to Jezebel the terrible discomfiture of Baal. Elijah waited outside of the city to see what the result would be (vs. 2). No repentance or mis-giving—rather purposes of revenge and execution. Elijah saw, arose, and went for his life—not stopping until he reached Beersheba, ninety-five miles the servant going no further, but the prophet proceeds a day's journey into the wilderness, out of reach of both Ahab and Jehoshaphat, who had formed an alliance. The prophet is thoroughly exhausted, and discouraged (vs. 4).

SOME OF THE CAUSES OF DISCOURAGEMENT.

1. Great reaction after the high excitement at Carmel.
  2. Great exhaustion, from expenditure of nervous energy.
  3. Great loneliness, from lack of human sympathy.
  4. Enforced inactivity, and perplexity as to the course of duty.
  5. Thrown off his guard, after the signal success.
- These causes still operate on the faithful workers, and they become discouraged.

THE CURE FOR DISCOURAGEMENTS OF SUCH A CHARACTER.

I. REFRESHMENT AND REST. vs. 5, 6, 7; Heb. i. 14. Horeb is reached in the course of his journey. Meditation, guidance and strength are given in the way.

II. GET A CLEARER INSIGHT INTO GOD'S METHOD OF working moral changes. The prophet is three hundred miles from Carmel and its stirring memories, and secluded in a cave. "What doest thou here, Elijah?" is the searching enquiry of God. In the answer we have a confession of deep interest in the cause of God in Israel, and a fourfold accusation against Israel and the progress of their sin. They have—1. Forsaken thy covenant; 2. Thrown down Thine altars; 3. Slain Thy prophets; 4. They seek my life.

III. GET OUT OF THE CAVE. Come into the full light. Ex. xxxiii. 18; xxiv. 7. The cave of secret sin—the cave of despondency—the cave of murmuring. God is not mainly in the dazzling displays of power, or in the stirring scenes of Carmel, but in the more silent, hidden working of pervading forces. This conspicuously true of—1. God in nature; 2. God in history; 3. God in personal character; 4. God in the history of His church.

IV. GET TO WORK IN THE LORD'S CAUSE. vs. 15, 16

[August 30.] **The Story of Naboth.** [1 Ks. xxi. 4-19.]

Ahab, flushed with his victories over Syria, turns his attention to an oriental luxury—a garden. The importance of the incident lies in the fact of its being the providential occasion of the overthrow of the dynasty. Read chap. xx.

PICTURES FROM A VINEYARD IN JEZREEL.

I. A KING COVETING A POOR MAN'S VINEYARD. Naboth is one of the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. He had in dark days remembered God's covenant and law, and as still in force. He refused to sell his vineyard, on PERSONAL GROUNDS. It was his own by inheritance, and God had forbidden the sale of the land (Lev. xxv. 23; Num. xxxvi. 7). He regarded the proposal with abhorrence. A faithful man in dark times and under trying circumstances. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth."

II. A DISCONTENTED KING IN A PALACE. He is mortified because his request is refused. Sullen and in bad temper, he won't come to his meals. His trouble is his temper. Living in an ivory house, ceiled with cedar, painted with vermilion, ivory furniture; but, "that man! won't sell his vineyard, and I want it"

III. A QUEEN PLANNING RELIEF FOR THE KING. The terrific woman, Jezebel. The weak, childish man, Ahab. "Dost thou now govern? I will give thee the vineyard." An unprincipled, imperious will! Infirm, but selfish purpose. The plan is carried out by constitutional machinery (Deut. xvi. 18). But, while the instruments are chosen by the people, they are handled by Jezebel.

IV. THE RIGHTEOUS MAN ON TRIAL. vs. 9-14. A fast for the entire city of Jezreel is formally proclaimed, so as to make the matter appear of great moment. Two worthless men are secured, perhaps by hire, to perjure themselves; and, contrary to the Hebrew law, the entire family are put to death by stoning (2 Kings ix. 26; Deut. xxiv. 16). But the heirs are in the way, and the property of the criminal without heirs, reverts to the crown; but Naboth's name and that of his sons are added to the ROLL OF MARTYRS.

V. GOD'S VINDICATION OF NABOTH. The Queen's better plan than buying. The king's taking possession of the ill-gotten garden. The Divine promise of sure retribution. Read carefully, 1 Kings xxi. 29; 2 Kings ix. 25, 26; 1 Kings xxii. 34-38. "Be sure your sin will find you out." "Voices from a Vineyard."

ONE of our exchanges gives us a part of the annual report of an Ohio church under the caption, "The seven rules for the social," as follows:

1. Greet the friends by name.—3 Jn. 14.
2. Be courteous.—1 Pet. 3, 8.
3. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers.—Heb. 13, 2.
4. Be kindly affectioned one to another.—Rom. 12, 10.
5. Be no respecter of persons.—Jas. 2, 9.
6. Be given to hospitality.—Rom. 12, 13.
7. Seek, each one, to please his neighbor for his good.—Rom. 15, 2

We submit whether they might not be practical in every gathering with profit.