

made for scholars or noblemen, and the style suited those for whom he wrote—"plain, vigorous, homely, and yet with all its homeliness, full of a solemn grace and dignity, which made men feel that they were reading an ordinary book." This translation "provided an easy entrance into the secrets of the divine Word for all who could read; and gave uneducated preachers and teachers an unfailing source of divine truth to set before those who could not read it for themselves. Wycliffe's work, and that of his co-laborers, had indelibly stamped itself on our present-day Bible." Many of the best-known expressions of our English Bible originated with him: "the beam and the mote"; "the deep things of God"; "strait is the gate and narrow is the way"; "enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Wycliffe's version soon gained a very wide circulation, even though it was only in manuscript form. Its cost was very great, and this limited its possession to the rich; but those who could not buy it gained access to it. A load of hay was sometimes given for permission to read a copy an hour a day for a specified period, the readers often copying out parts of special interest. And this again enables one to see how the Christians of those days prized their Scriptures, especially when we remember that it was at great risk that such study was carried on. The readers of this book were often burned at the stake, with copies tied about their necks. Parents were executed for teaching their children the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer in English. Husbands were compelled to witness against their wives. "Children were forced to light the death-fires of their parents. Possessors of the banned Wycliffe Bible were hunted down as if they were wild beasts." These are some of the things it cost in those days to study this Book, which is now so much neglected even by professing Christians. Yet people by the thousands ran the risk of losing their lives that they might learn its precious truths.

Taxing and Our Banking Institutions

Topic for September 24.

Subject matter for study: "Canadian Civilization," pages 96 to 101; children the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer in English. Husbands were compelled to witness against their wives. "Children were forced to light the death-fires of their parents. Possessors of the banned Wycliffe Bible were hunted down as if they were wild beasts." These are some of the things it cost in those days to study this Book, which is now so much neglected even by professing Christians. Yet people by the thousands ran the risk of losing their lives that they might learn its precious truths.

(NOTE—On Topic IX, in "Canadian Civilization," the author submits six questions. As leader of the meeting, you can, perhaps, do no better than to submit these same questions into the hands of as many persons as can be answered on the platform. They are (1) Why should a nation not so deeply into debt? (2) How does the Dominion obtain its revenue? (3) What are some of the annual items of expenditure? (4) What are "customs duties"? (5) What is a "protective tariff"? (6) What is the budget? These are all treated in the chapter headed "Taxation." A brief consideration of each question in order will constitute a good strong first part to your programme. The second part might well be made less formal, and be conducted as a friendly competition. Divide your audience as equitably as possible into two parties. To each group of four persons submit a one dollar bill, a silver half-dollar, or even a common cent. Let them, in turn, examine the money, whatever it is, for five full minutes, and then, from memory only, write down on slips of paper as many things as they can remember having seen on the object under examination. You will all be surprised at what you do not know of even the most common pieces of currency you are handling every day.—Ed.)

The affairs of national government cannot be conducted without a great outlay of money. The larger a nation grows the more complicated do its necessary

expenses become. Not only in the sustenance of public works in the various departments, but in the extension of others that increase and multiply as new sections are opened up, great outlays are called for. To meet the expenses incurred by both maintenance and development, more money is often necessary than the current income of the government provides. Money must then be borrowed, and a national debt is incurred. On this, of course, interest must be paid. As long as this national debt is kept within reasonable bounds no objection can properly be made to it. When it becomes too large, the credit of the country falls, and the burdens of taxation are heavy on the people.

To meet the interest on the debt, to pay the ordinary expenses of government, and provide for the maintenance of the various public interests, a revenue must be assured. Hence we have the Customs duties, with which we are all more or less familiar. The government imposes a tax on certain articles imported into the country. This tax is immediately paid by the importers, but eventually the people must meet it by the increased cost of the articles in question when they purchase them. So, though the Dominion government places no direct tax on the people, indirectly the people provide the government's regular income. One of the long-standing subjects of political strife is this one of the tariff. It is the supreme question of Canada at this present time. In the Reciprocity question, and to settle in a general election will have been held the very week we are studying this topic in our meetings. As a result of the elections all our young people should have some clear conviction on the matter, though we fear that, as at all other elections, there are other side-issues dragged in to cloud the one main question, and simply win the political game.

In addition to the revenue derived from a tax on importations, the government receives a large sum of money every year from what are called Excise Duties, taxes levied on all tobacco and liquor manufactured in Canada.

When Parliament meets, one of the most important items of business is the Finance Minister's statement, which is called the Budget, and which gives the estimated expenditures for the year, and the proposed way of providing for them. This is of general public interest, because it affects everybody in the country to greater or lesser degree.

N.B.—There will be found in this paper an admirable article from the pen of Rev. Elwood Lawson on "The Relation of the Christian Man to the State." This should be carefully read by all our young people, who desire to become true citizens, and its presentation by some good reader to the meeting is suggested. Do not overlook it.

Studies in Bible Biography—

X. Elisha

BY THE EDITOR.

Topic for October 1.

Lesson, 2 Kings 2: 1-14.

Elisha had been associated with Elijah for several years. Read 1 Kings 19: 19-21, for an account of the commencement of their fellowship. Just what the communion of these two men was no one can describe in detail; but the younger man had without doubt learned many vital things from the elder prophet.

And now Elijah's work is closed, and a successor must be chosen to take his place as the recognized mouthpiece of Jehovah. How Elisha became such

and the way in which he did his work are simple matters of record in the early chapters of 2 Kings. These are full of interesting stories, but of them I need not here treat.

The present study is pre-eminently suitable for a consecration service. The older generation is passing away; the younger one must take its place. *How can we as young men and women best serve our fellows?* This is the question I advise you to study, and a solution is found in our Scripture lesson. The narrative is simple and plain. Any reader can easily grasp it. But a study of it will suggest the answer to our italicized question above, and with it let us chiefly concern ourselves.

Note Elijah's question, "What shall I do for thee . . . ?" It is tenderly human and kind. And Elisha understands the deep meaning it conveys. The older prophet had been giving his life to his age and nation. The younger man must continue the process in his own way, but with the same great end in view. Elisha recognizes that he cannot give out as Elijah had done unless he has the same strong impelling motive that constrained the pioneer prophet. Hence his request, "Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." This does not imply that Elisha was to do just what Elijah had done, for no two men are fitted for work after the same precise pattern; but it did mean that, unless he had the spirit of Elijah actuated and controlled Elisha in his life work, the younger man knew he must fail. And herein is a great lesson for the youth of Methodism to-day. We are not called to work after precisely the same plan as our fathers; but lacking their motive and sustaining purpose, no plans that we can devise will avail. It is the spirit of the fathers dwelling within and impelling their children in modern Methodism? That is a larger question than organization, or method, or plan, in all our work. It demands our most prayerful consideration.

Now note: Elisha recognized that his call was to a life of service to his fellows, and he grasps the essential truth that the best gift he could impart to them was a practical exposition in all his work of Elijah's spirit. This is the one all-important lesson for us. The best service we can render our church, our country, our generation, is to possess in our own hearts and show forth in all our daily activities the dominant spirit of the fathers.

What was this "spirit" of Elijah which Elisha longed to possess in large measure? I cannot make full inventory of it, but three elements in it seem clear:

1. It was the spirit of prophecy to teach. That was his supreme business. It is not a surprise that every sage would seek the ability to instruct in the highest possible ways of life all with whom he holds daily intercourse. In our days we may exalt the pedagogue at the expense of the prophet. By that I mean to impress the absolute need of inward knowledge, clear vision, spiritual passion, and whatever else holds the teacher in the strong grip of deep, abiding, personal conviction of the essential truths of righteousness. The teacher must know, and know he knows, if he is to speak with force and move others toward the goal of all his efforts. Elijah knew God as no other man of his day did. Elisha realizes that he, too, must have such knowledge. Hence his request. A similar one should be in the heart and on the lips of every teacher and leader among our young people to-day. Let the spirit of the prophet rest upon us, that we may speak the truths of God with the authority that only comes from personal knowledge of His mind and will.

2. It was the spirit of power to work. It was not an easy task before the old