

ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

Elijah and Elisha.

1. True love is persistent. It will not be turned aside by any entreaty, trial, or difficulty. v. 1-6.
2. True faith goes where God's Spirit calls; and as it goes on, trusting, the way opens, and difficulties disappear. v. 1-6.
3. True sympathy requires but few words. The overburdened heart knows its own bitterness. v. 1-6.
4. True living is to live for others. Elijah's last journey, his last thoughts, like all his life, were for others' good. v. 9.
5. True peace may come as the result of a storm, and that which to others may seem a whirlwind and a devouring fire may be the very means appointed for our eternal peace. v. 11-13.

An English Teacher's Notes on the Lessons.

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

THERE is a story of a philosopher of classic times who, not satisfied with the honor he received during the course of his life, was desirous of distinguishing himself beyond other mortals at its close, and of having it believed that he ascended up to heaven without dying. To obtain this end he threw himself into the crater of a volcano, thinking to leave no trace behind. But in the next eruption the sandals of the ambitious man were thrown out of the crater, and thus his fate was discovered and his aspirations brought to naught. The universal dominion claimed by Death could not be, even apparently, set aside. There is a more modern tale of a young French prince who asked with some apprehension: "Must kings then die?" Even an obsequious courtier dared not reply in the negative, and the answer came, regretfully, "Sometimes, sir."

Yet Scripture tells us that this universal sovereignty has been twice set aside. There have been two men, partakers of the infirmities of other mortals, over whom Death had no power, who never felt his cold touch, never experienced the severance of body and spirit. Such a remarkable exemption makes these two men of exceptional interest, and though separated from one another by the lapse of hundreds of years, their lives are rightly linked together in to-day's lesson, the one being brought before us in the passage for reading, the other in the Golden Text. Let us ask then: What was there in common in the lives of the two thus so strikingly honored of God?

First, they were almost solitary witnesses for God in a time of apostasy. It was when "all flesh had corrupted itself," and the wickedness of man had become great on the earth, that Enoch "walked with God." A lonely man among those who had cast off the fear of the Almighty, he not only witnessed by his life, but boldly prophesied of the Lord's coming and of the vengeance that should overtake the ungodly. Jude 14. So it was with Elijah, as we have seen. There were, it is true, still seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed

the knee to Baal, but they were hidden ones. On Mount Carmel he had stood alone as Jehovah's witness. Against him the reproach was cast that he was the "troubler of Israel." Of the "hundred men of the Lord's prophets" who had been rescued by Obadiah we read nothing more save only Micah the son of Imnah. 1 Kings 22. 8.

Secondly, they walked with God. Without this there could have been no true witness. If they had gone their own way and pleased themselves their words would have had little weight. But men saw that they were directed by Another—and not merely directed, but accompanied; that though they might stand alone amid their fellows, the Mighty One was with them. Elijah's description of himself was, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand." Of Enoch it is written, "He walked with God."

These two, who had kept close to God and had stood forth as his witnesses in the midst of abounding evil, were the two chosen to escape the pangs of death and the humiliation of the grave. Will there ever be any others?

Look at 1 Cor. 15. 51; 1 Thess. 4. 17. Enoch and Elijah were but the first fruits of a great company. At the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ those of his servants who are yet living shall be caught up like the two holy men of old. Day by day we see people dying around us, but the day is coming when Death shall never more touch one of the people of God. The moment Christ appears Death's reign will be over. And yet those who have died "in the Lord" are to have the precedence: "The dead in Christ shall rise first." 1 Thess. 4. 16. So that the great company of those who remain will not be more blessed or more honored than the great company of those who have died. Both must be changed, the one by resurrection, the other by translation.

How can we insure our place in one or other of these happy companies?

We must be among those who walk with God. To walk with another there must be, 1. Agreement (see Amos 3. 3), sin put away through the blood of Christ, and nothing between to separate us from him. The other points may be illustrated by the narrative of Elijah's walk with Elisha. 2. Friendship. Elisha was Elijah's servant, but it was a service of love. He might have remained behind when Elijah went on his farewell journey to the "sons of the prophets" at Beth-el and at Jericho. Love impelled him to keep close to his master. 3. Devotion. Suppose the way is rough, or long, or sorrowful? Elisha must have dreaded the questions that were put to him at the different stages. He must have dreaded the parting. But he refused to leave his master. Three times over he repeated his resolve: "I will not leave thee;" and he kept it. Happy is the soul that can say:

"I would rather walk in the dark with God,
Than go alone in the light."

We must be among those who witness for Christ. His servants are here for this purpose—to witness