

[Note to reader: This topic gives you a good opportunity to have an impersonation meeting. Choose as many young men as are necessary, appointing each one to impersonate some Cabinet Minister. Let him be introduced by the chairman (who might well be called for the occasion the Premier), by the name of the office he is supposed to fill, and let the members call his name. Suppose, for instance, that the Minister of Railways and Canals is being presented.

The chairman (Premier Laurier) would simply name the office, and the meeting would name the man, and perhaps be able also to state the constituency that elected him. And so on through the list. The Minister thus introduced would give just a brief statement of the business involved in his office, and make way for the next. If each on retiring takes a seat in full view of the audience, the Cabinet will be formed as the meeting progresses, and the whole personnel of the Government be at the close arranged before the congregation. In this way, by a little ingenuity and considerable beforehand preparation, you may have a high-class and most instructive programme. If you haven't enough young men in your league to do this, get them in. Here is your opportunity to make it interesting for them and to use them for "the good of the order."—S.T.B.]

Studies in Bible Biography—

Elijah

BY THE EDITOR.

Topic for Sept. 2nd. Lesson suggested, 1 Kings 18: 20-46.

The facts concerning Elijah's work are easily found. The main recorded events with which he was prominently associated are familiar to every Bible reader. That of the Scripture lesson given above is perhaps the best known. It may be dealt with at length in the meeting; but, in my judgment, it would be more profitable to seek some of the principles that actuated the prophet and that made him valiant and strong for God and His cause.

One phrase more than any other that I have noticed in the record, gives me an insight to the heart of the man, and explains his strength of character and far-reaching influence. It contains but four short words, but they are weighty ones: "Before whom I stand." Look them up and study them well.

The phrase occurs four times. See 1 Kings 17: 1; 18: 15; 2 Kings 3: 14; 5: 16. Here are four incidents in which a tremendous weight of responsibility is consciously felt by the prophet, for what was true of Elijah was also true of his successor, Elisha. The words, "Before whom I stand" were spoken in these four recorded instances: 1. By Elijah to Ahab. 2. By Elijah to Obadiah. 3. By Elisha to Jehoshaphat. 4. By Elisha to Naaman.

But let us not concern ourselves so much about the history as with the spirit and purpose of the prophets themselves, and particularly so because our young people need the same source of abiding strength for character as these old-time heroes required. There is no short-cut, or modern, or new method for the attainment and display of real greatness.

The outstanding fact in the prophet's life was his deep consciousness of the imperative obligation laid upon him as the advocate of Jehovah. To him, God was real, the commission urgent, the responsibility personal, the issues clear. Such depth of conviction made his purpose strong and sustained him in his work. And such convictions regarding

God and duty are still needed. Without them we lack force, and our labors are fluctuating and weak. Strong souls are always in demand to do the Lord's work. Elijah's strength of inner purpose grew out of his consciousness of an imperative Divine commission given to him, and for which he was personally responsible. Perhaps, in a less degree, but none the less really and actually, we should every one of us realize that God has a work for us, that he calls us to it, holds us accountable for it, and that if we fail to do it, it will be left undone. These two great thoughts—the personal sovereignty of God and my personal call to service for Him—are at once both the source and secret of a strong character and a faithful life.

It may profit us to notice how this sense of Divine control affected Elijah, and at the same time remember that it will influence us in similar manner in proportion as we give it right of way in our lives.

1. Elijah was a commissioned man. He was sensible that God wanted him to represent Him. Hence, he could say, "I stand where I stand"—for authority. He spoke with the assurance that deep convictions prompted. We know the results. And is there any other way? There is none, and none other shall ever be discovered. In these days every Christian is commissioned to represent his Master. In proportion as he feels the weight of personal responsibility will he put forth his best efforts for God. There are still evils to be denounced, errors to be eradicated, wrongs to be righted, and idols to be overthrown. Nations as well as individual ideals need to be elevated and purified, social as well as personal habits need to be cleansed—all life must be brought into harmony with Divine law. But if we lack Elijah's spirit against vice and for virtue; but, having, in some measure, his clear inward sense of God's sovereignty over us, we shall show, to the extent of our capacity, his heroic opposition to all prevailing sins.

Elijah was not on the popular side, but he was on God's side, and sure of this, he was unafraid and spoke with authority in rebuke of wrongdoing and in appeal to the practice of righteousness. Let us not fear to advocate all measures that make for purity in every sphere and avenue of life. If we are God's representatives we must not compromise; but ever advocate His cause and substantiate His claims.

2. Elijah was a thoroughly human man, subject to discouragement; he had his hours of despondency; hence, it was "Before whom I stand" for strengthening in the execution of his commission.

Let us not make the mistake of supposing that the prophet found it always easy or pleasant to stand in the things of God. It was no light matter to confront Ahab. It was a daring contest to which he summoned the priests of Baal. Little wonder if he retired from the frenzied Jezebel. Put yourself in his place. But in some sense you have already been in it. The Christian life is not an easy one if the righteous man has a true appreciation of his duty to God and his nation. To make one's daily life a standing reproof to sinners is good, but to keep one's lips shut, and one's tongue still in the face of numerous popular and deadly evils, is not good. And we may secure all needed moral courage to do our duty in this regard, if, prophet-like, we cultivate "the practice of the presence of God."

3. Elijah was God's representative, speaking for Him, advocating His cause. Hence, it was "Before whom I stand" for judgment. Approval or condemna-

tion by the world was by no means of such concern to him as the judgment of Jehovah. God was the final arbiter, and to merit His praise, to stand before Him accepted, was the great aim and controlling desire. (Study in this connection our Lord's words in such passages as John 4: 34; 5: 30; 6: 38; or 8: 29. Do you see what Paul says in such statements as 2 Cor. 6: 9, Gal. 2: 20, etc.)

Such thoughts of God have moved some of earth's mightiest men to perform their greatest works. "What does God think of me?"—How important the question! "Am I seeking to please Him?" This is perhaps even more important. For God has no favorites. To those whose supreme aim is to do His will, He gives His abundant blessing. All others withhold it from themselves.

Our Pledge comes in most fittingly here, and I think if I were leading the meeting, I should not wait for the formal calling of the roll; but ask for voluntary statements of personal consecration right at this point. And as opportunity offered during these testimonies, I should try to make clear that only by bringing God into our lives, and by keeping ourselves consciously in His sight, can we find strength for manhood, obtain purpose for action, make character pure, influence others for righteousness, add dignity to service, give nobility to daily living, gain supremacy over self, and eventually find our way into the holy and heavenly company which stands before Him in a sense we can neither know nor appreciate till we enter the portals of life eternal in glory.

Canadian Methodist Missionary Work

BY REV. J. H. McARTHUR, S.T.D.

Topic for week beginning Sept. 10.

Text-Book, "Heal the Sick," by Rev. O. L. Kilborn, M.A., M.D.

Study Chapter II.

Suggested Scripture Lesson—Luke 10: 30-37.

The Spirit of Prayer. One result of our study of missions should lead us to pray more for missions. Prayer and study should go together. On the one hand, prayer will help us to better understand and appreciate what we study; and, on the other hand, missionary study should help us to pray more earnestly and intelligently. Study will help us to understand the needs of men, and prayer will help us to understand the will of God. Prayer is a gift which God has given to us all. We cannot all go to the mission field; we cannot all give large sums of money for the support of the missionary cause; but we can all pray. To pray for missions is to truly serve the cause of missions. Missionary work cannot successfully be carried on without money. But while money is necessary, prayer is still more necessary. The Motto of the Forward Movement for Missions is "Pray, Study, Give." We cannot do any one of these without neglecting the other two. These three must go together. Prayer, study, give, are all essential to Christian life, but the greatest of these is Prayer.

But for what and for whom should we pray? Pray for yourself, that you may have the mind of the Master, and a sincere desire to extend His kingdom to all the earth. Pray for your fellow-leaguers that they too may catch the true missionary spirit. Pray that God may call some from among the members of your league who will actively engage in missionary work. Pray for the missionaries in the field, and for their families. Pray for the native