

LESSON NOTES.

THIRD QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE KINGS.

B.C. 896-890.] LESSON X. [Sept. 6.

ELIJAH TRANSLATED.

2 Kings 2, 1-15. Commit to mem. vs. 9-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.

And Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him.—Gen. 5, 24.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

God is faithful to reward faithfulness.

DAILY READINGS.

M. 1 Kings 21, 23-29. Th. 2 Kings 2, 1-15. T. 1 Kings 22, 29-39. F. Ps. 97, 51-53.

W. 2 Kings 1, 1-18. Sa. John 1, 19-34. Su. Matt. 11, 1-13.

TIME.—B.C. about 896-890.

PLACE.—(1) Gilgal, near Mt. Ephraim. (2) Bethel, 12 miles north of Jerusalem. (3) Jericho, near Jordan. (4) The eastern shore of the Jordan.

INTRODUCTION.—Elijah had foretold the death of King Ahab, who was slain in battle (1 Kings 21, 19, 20), and of his son Azariah (2 Kings 1, 2-4, 16). His zealous career was approaching a fitting end. Elisha appointed his successor.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. Whirlwind—tempest. Tarry here—Either Elijah's love of solitude returned, or he would prove Elisha. 2. The Lord hath sent me—The impulse to revisit his loved prophet-colleges once more, was from God. As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth—A solemn oath by God's eternity and man's immortality. Down—A descent of 600 feet in 8½ miles. 3. Sons of the prophets—Members of the college. Knowest thou?—They knew that it was Elijah's farewell visit. From thy head—From being thy master. To-day—At this time. Hold ye your peace—The subject is too sacred for words. 4. Jericho—12½ miles from Bethel, and 1,200 feet lower. 7. Stood to view—Watching. 9. Before I be taken away—Not what intercession can I make in heaven. A double portion—(See Deut. 21, 17.) Thy spirit—The prophetic spirit. 10. A hard thing—It might not be God's will. If thou see me—That would be a sign that God had chosen Elisha, Elijah's successor. 12. Elisha saw it—(compare 6, 17). My father, my father—What Elijah was to him. The chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof—What Elijah was to Israel as its defence. Two pieces—From top to bottom. 13. Mantle of Elijah—His sheepskin cloak, sign of the prophetic office. 14. Where is the Lord God of Elijah?—A prayer, not a doubt. They parted—For the third time near that spot (Josh. 3, 16; 2 Kings 2, 8).

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Schools of the prophets.—Elisha's devotion.—A double portion.—How can we know if God sends us?—Did Elijah go to heaven without dying?—Compare Elijah with Moses.—With John the Baptist.

QUESTIONS.

I. INTRODUCTORY.—To what kings had Elijah foretold the manner of their death? What knowledge now came to himself? Did it affect him as it did Ahab? What is the central truth?

SUBJECT: FAITHFULNESS.

I. FAITHFUL TO GOD AND MAN (vs. 1-7).—Where was Elijah when he received his final summons? Why was death a greater test of faith to him than to us? (Heb. 11, 39; 2 Tim. 1, 10.) How did he spend his last hours? How would you? What was there to draw him to Bethel and Jericho? What element of faithfulness did these visits indicate? What companion had he? (1 Kings 19, 19-21; 2 Kings 3, 11.) How many times did he put his faithfulness to the test? What was Elisha's answer? Can you mention similar instances? What questions were asked of Elisha? How did his answer prove him faithful? When are we at liberty to discuss our friends' affairs? Had any of those prophets a genuine interest?

II. FAITHFUL TO THE END (vs. 8-10).—How was the river crossed? Of what is Jordan a type? What promises to God's Church in Isaiah 43, 27? What privilege was offered Elisha? What would you have chosen? What did Elisha? What was meant by a double portion? What condition was made? Why was faithfulness to the end essential to the blessing? What are the conditions on which the Holy Spirit is granted?

III. FAITHFULNESS REWARDED.—(vs. 11-15).—How did God testify his approval of

Elijah? When had he appeared to him in fire? (1 Kings 19, 11, 12.) When had he spoken through him by fire? (1 Kings 18, 38; 2 Kings 1, 10, 12.) Was Elijah ever seen on earth again? (Matt. 17, 3.) Does God notice conversation? (Mal. 3, 16; Luke 24, 17.) Elisha's sudden cry? Did Elisha keep the power of seeing things invisible? (6, 16, 17.) What sign of approval was given him? His first miracle? Had it ever been wrought there before? (2, 8; Josh. 3, 16.) What miracles of grace does the Holy Spirit work?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. He that fears God in life will not be afraid of Him at death.
2. A sentinel is on duty until he is relieved.
3. We have no right to go anywhere unless the Lord sends us.
4. The noblest natures are most capable of self-sacrificing friendship.
5. It is not kind to remind the sorrowful of their sorrows.
6. Idle gossip about the affairs of our friends or employees is disloyalty.
7. When God's guidance is rejected, we have no promise of his protection.
8. The best gift to man is God's Spirit.
9. Good men are a nation's strength; good boys are its hope.
10. Thine own friend and thy father's friend forsake not.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School in concert.)

1. What farewell visits did Elijah make? ANS. To the prophet-colleges at Bethel and Jericho. 2. How did he leave the earth? ANS. He went up by a whirlwind into heaven. 3. What did the faithful Elisha exclaim? ANS. "My father, my father! the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!" 4. What parting blessing did Elisha seek and receive? ANS. A double portion of the prophetic spirit. 5. What was the first use he made of it? ANS. The parting of Jordan as Elijah had done.

B.C. 892 or 893.] LESSON XI. [Sept. 13.

THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON.

2 Kings 4, 18-37. Commit to mem. vs. 32-35.

GOLDEN TEXT.

I am the resurrection and the life.—John 11, 25.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

By grace we are saved, through faith.

DAILY READINGS.

M. 2 Kings 2, 16-25. Th. 2 Kings 4, 18-37. T. 2 Kings 3, 4-27. F. Ps. 103.

W. 2 Kings 4, 1-17. Sa. Luke 7, 1-18. Su. John 11, 21-44.

TIME.—B.C. about 892 or 893.

PLACES.—(1) Shunem, now Solam, a town in Issachar. (2) Mt. Carmel, a high promontory overlooking the Mediterranean. (1 Kings 18, 42).

PERSONS.—(1) The Shunammite family, composed of an aged man, his wife, and young son. The central figure in that family was the woman: wise, efficient, independent; conferring favour, but asking none; relied on by her husband; devotedly attached to the child that she had received as a special gift from God. (2) Elisha, the successor of Elijah in the prophet's office, from B.C. 896-838, about 60 years. (3) Gehazi, Elisha's servant, as Elisha had been Elijah's.

INTRODUCTION.—Elisha had a house in Samaria, making that the centre of his missionary circuits throughout Israel. On his way to Mt. Carmel, where he gave religious instruction at stated times, he frequently passed through Shunem. A lady there proposed to her husband that they should prepare for his use a roof chamber, airy and retired, which she furnished suitably with a bed, a seat, a table, and a lamp. For her kindness to his servant, God gave her a son.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—18. Grown—Large enough to go by himself. 19. My head, my head.—Evidently he received a sunstroke, which is not uncommon there. 22. Send me—Not only servants, but asses were in the harvest field. Run... and come again—Mt. Carmel was 17 miles away, a journey of 5 or 6 hours. 25. Neither new moon nor sabbath—The first day of the month was to be kept holy. Here, away from the temple, instruction by the prophets took the place of the regular services. It shall be well—An ambiguous term, meaning "All right." "Never mind." 24. Slack not thy riding—Do not hinder me. 25. Afar off—Carmel is steep, and 1,600 feet high. 26. Run now to meet her—a mark of honour.

27. Caught him by the feet—an oriental custom in supplication. Vexed—distressed. The Lord hath hid it from me—The prophets were not always "in the spirit." 28. Did I desire a son of my Lord? etc.—By these questions she indicates her bereavement without putting it into words. 29. Gird up thy loins—Gird the loose mantle under the girdle, so as to leave the legs free. Salute no man—Oriental salutations are long and elaborate; he had no time to lose. My staff—The sign of a prophet's power, as a sceptre of a king's. Upon the face of the child—Hoping that he could transfer the power to the swift Gehazi. 31. Not awaked—A Jewish use of the word for death. 34. His mouth upon his mouth—Compare John 9, 6, 7. Waxed warm—Gradually. 35. Returned, and walked in the house—Turned away, and walked the room.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Compare Elisha's work with Elijah's.—Sunstrokes.—The duties of new moons and sabbaths.—Gehazi's mission and its failure.—Does faith prevent the need of means.—Persistence of a mother's love.—The faith of the Shunammite woman.—The faith of Elisha.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What was Elisha's early occupation? (1 Kings 19, 19.) Where did we leave Elisha in last lesson? Give incidents in his life after this. (2 Kings 2, 16-25; 4, 1-7.) Where was his later home? (2 Kings 2, 25.) At what place and by whom was special provision made for his comfort? (2 Kings 4, 8-10.) Of whom was the family composed?

SUBJECT: THE POWER OF A LIVING FAITH.

I. THE TRIAL OF FAITH (vs. 18-20).—What do you know of the Shunammite's prosperity? Was God mindful of her? (Hob. 6, 10) What great bereavement now came? What were the circumstances? Why was the child taken from her? What is compared to a mother's tenderness? (Isaiah 66, 13.)

II. THE WORK OF FAITH (vs. 21-35).—Where did the mother lay her dead child? What did she desire of her husband? Why was he surprised? Was her answer truthful? Where did she go? Why? How did she show her haste? (v. 22 f.c. and 24.) What was the distance to Mt. Carmel? Who was the first to recognize her? How did he show his politeness? How did Gehazi show his officiousness? Did not prophets understand all mysteries? What was the woman's cry? What did Elisha understand by it? What commission was given to Gehazi? What caution was added? Did Gehazi succeed in his mission? Can any gift of God to us be transferred to another? Upon what had the mother insisted? What was Elisha's first step? (v. 33.) Does prayer release us from the necessity of using means? What means did he use? What had been the mother's works of faith?

III. THE VICTORY OF FAITH (vs. 35 l. c. to 37).—What were the signs of returning life? How was the mother's gratitude manifested? Do you know anything more of the family? (2 Kings 8.) What reference to this story in Heb. 11, 35? Whose power raised the child? Of what was the miracle a forerunner? What is the Golden Text? How is God constantly raising from the dead? (Eph. 2, 1.)

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. A much-used "prophet's chamber" has blessed many homes.
2. It is as desirable to be a good guest as a good host.
3. The only way to avoid giving our reasons is always to have a good one.
4. Be specially gentle towards motherless girls and boys.
5. Errands of mercy forbid delay.
6. God has made believing a condition of receiving.
7. Do not grieve a sad soul.
8. To ask largely of God prepares us to receive largely.
9. Better that a child die than become a bad man.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School in concert.)

1. Who prepared a chamber for the prophet Elisha? ANS. The Shunammite woman.
2. What great affliction overtook her? ANS. The death of her only son.
3. To whom did she go for help? ANS. To Elisha, on Mt. Carmel.
4. What effort failed? ANS. Gehazi was sent with the prophet's staff.
5. What means were successful? ANS. The prophet prayed, and stretched himself upon the child.

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