

SCHOLAR'S NOTES.

(From the International Lessons for 1877 by Edwin W. Rice, as issued by American Sunday-School Union.)

LESSON IX.

MARCH 4.

THE STORY OF NABOTH. [About 890 B. C.] READ 1 Kings xxi. 4-14. RECITE vs. 7, 10.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord.—1 Kings xxi. 20.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Covetousness makes criminals.

DAILY READINGS.—M.—1 Kings xxi. 4-14. T.—Prov. xix. 1-12. W.—1 Tim. vi. 6-19. Th.—Ecc. iv. 1-2. Sam. xl. 14-21. Sa.—Acts vi. 8-15. S.—Prov. xxv. 14-28.

CONNECTED HISTORY.—Elijah called Elisha as his successor; the Syrians twice defeated by Ahab who was reproved for sparing their king; Ahab desires Naboth's vineyard; through the wickedness of Jezebel, Naboth is slain.

TO THE SCHOLAR.—Do not fail to read verses 15 to 28, foretelling the terrible punishment of Ahab and Jezebel for this and other great sins.

NOTES.—Naboth, owner of ground and a vineyard near Jezreel, beside Ahab's palace; was a pious man, regarding the law forbidding the sale of an inheritance. Lev. xxv. 23-28. Jezebel, wife of Ahab. Seal letters were sealed as now in the East, not signed as with us. Arabs carry a seal fastened within their girdle with great care, or secreted in their personal clothing. Jezebel having the king's seal makes it probable that she knew of her wicked use of it. Be-uhal, occurs 13 times in the Old Testament; twice translated "wicked," once "ungodly," and 13 times as a proper name; here means "worthless" or "wicked persons."

EXPLANATIONS AND QUESTIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) AHAH'S PASSION. (II.) JEZEBEL'S PLOT. (III.) NABOTH MURDERED.

I. AHAH'S PASSION. (1) HEAVY AND DISPLEASED—sullen and angry" (Hebrew); 1 Kings xx. 43; NABOTH, see Notes; GIVE THREE—that is, sell thee, see v. 6; INHERITANCE, the law forbade his sale, Lev. xxv. 23; Num. xxxvi. 7; BED, couch; TURNED AWAY HIS FACE TO AVOID CONVERSATION. (5) JEZEBEL see Notes. (6) FOR MONEY, or silver in bars, not coined.

I. QUESTIONS.—Why was Ahab "displeased"? Where was the vineyard? How did Ahab want to use it? v. 2. Why would not Naboth sell it? What was the law as to selling inheritances? Lev. xxv. 23, &c. How did Ahab act in his anger? Who came to acquire the cause of his sadness? How did the king express it?

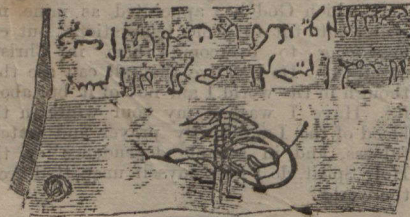
II. JEZEBEL'S PLOT. (7) DOST THOU GOVERN? perhaps spoken in derision, or "Art thou king, to be thwarted by a subject?" (Speaker's Com); I WILL GIVE, he emphasizes on "I." If you as king are weak I the queen will do this. "Infirm of purpose I give me the dangers." (Shakespeare). (8) WROTE LETTERS, as if written by Ahab; SEALED, his seal, Arab letters are not usually signed as with us, but stamped with a seal, see picture. (9) A PART, a shocking pretence; SET NABOTH ON FIRE, Heb "on the top of the people"—that is, as a prisoner in court is usually set up above the people. (10) SONS OF BELIAL, see Notes; BLASPHEMERS, the Hebrew word commonly means "bless" but here used in the opposite sense of "cursing" as now persons may say, "I'll give you a blessing," meaning the opposite; CARRY HIM OUT, outside the city, Acts vii. 58; STONE HIM, Lev. xxiv. 16.

II. QUESTIONS.—What was Jezebel's question to the king? v. 7. What did she offer to do? What letters did she write? How did she sign them? To whom were they sent? With what orders? How was Naboth to be accused? By what kind of witnesses? With what result?

III. NABOTH MURDERED. (11.) AS JEZEBEL HAD SAID, this shows the low moral sense of the people. (13.) STONED HIM, and from 2 Kings ix. 26 his sons were stoned to death also. (14.) SENT TO JEZEBEL, probably a messenger.

III. QUESTIONS.—Who carried out Jezebel's wicked orders? Why? Describe the manner of doing it. What shows that it was done publicly? State the accusation. The sentence. How executed? Where? Upon whom beside Naboth? What report was made of it. To whom?

What facts in this lesson teach us—The danger of covetousness?



PART OF A TURKISH FIRMAN, OR LETTER, WITH A PHENICIAN SEAL ATTACHED—THE SEAL IS COPIED FROM AN ANCIENT SPECIMEN.—See Ayre's Bible Treasury.



MARCH 11.

LESSON X.

ELIJAH TRANSLATED. [About 896 B. C.] READ 2 Kings ii. 1-12. RECITE vs. 8, 9, 13.

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

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Heaven is the home of the righteous.

DAILY READINGS.—M.—2 Kings ii. 1-12. T.—Ruth i. 6-18. W.—Josh. iii. 7-17. Th.—Mark xi. 22-33. F.—John xvi. 16-25. Sa.—Ps. lxxviii. 17-24. S.—Acts i. 1-11.

CONNECTED HISTORY.—Ahab humbled himself, and his punishment was delayed; he and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, fought with Syria; Ahab was slain; Hazael, his son, king (2 years); Elijah called fire from heaven and consumed two military companies of Hazael; Jehoram, brother of Hazael, king of Israel (12 years); Elijah went to heaven in a whirlwind.

TO THE SCHOLAR.—Notice that the solemn scene awed Elisha into silence, and he wished "the sons" to be silent also. We may well be silent when God comes specially near.

NOTES.—Gilgal, not the place where Joshua set up the 12 stones, for that is below Bethel; but the prophets went down from Gilgal to Bethel. This Gilgal was in Ephraim, between Nablus and Bethel, about eight and a half miles north of the latter, and now called Jilwiler. Beth-el see Notes, Lesson II. Jor-dan "the descender," chief river of Palestine; has four sources; the Hasbany, Banias, Leddan, and Esh-shar; rising near the foot of Mt. Hermon, runs south through Lakes Huleh and Galilee, and empties into the Dead Sea; rises 1,700 feet above the Mediterranean, while its mouth is 1,300 feet below the Mediterranean, making its total descent about 3,000 feet; length of river by the crooked channel is about 225 miles, in a direct line about 138 miles; is about 400 feet wide at its mouth; is crossed by many fords, and by one or two bridges near the Sea of Galilee. E-l-i-sha, see next lesson.

EXPLANATIONS AND QUESTIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) ELIJAH'S LAST JOURNEY. (II.) HIS BEQUEST TO ELISHA. (III.) HIS TRANSLATION.

I. ELIJAH'S LAST JOURNEY. (1) LORD WOULD TAKE UP, the event was known to Elijah, Elisha, and the prophets of Bethel and Jericho; GILGAL, see Notes. (2) TARRY HERE, said, perhaps, to try Elisha's faithfulness, or because the coming scene was so sacred that Elijah wished to be alone; TO BETHEL, about eight and a half miles, see Notes; THE LORD LIVETH, an earnest affirmation, like an oath, 1 Sam. xx 3; xxv. 26. (3) SONS OF THE PROPHETS, those in the schools of the prophets; FROM THE HEAD, from his place at the head; disciples sat at the feet of their master; HOLD YOUR PEACE, say nothing to disturb us. (4) TO JERICHO, about twelve and a half from Bethel. (5) PROPHETS, these schools were not for education merely, but great missionary centres from which laborers went forth to the Lord's work like that of the old Chaldee church on Lonia Island. See Taylor's "Elijah," p. 181. (6) TO JORDAN, about 5 miles from Jericho. (7) FIFTY OF THE SONS, the school at Jericho was large; 50 were only a portion of it; STOOD TO VIEW, afar off, or to view in sight, or "over against" Jericho, perhaps going upon the high hills behind Jericho; whence they could see across the Jordan. (8) MANTLE, "sheepskin" says the Greek version; it may have been made of skins; WRAPPED, rolled it together; SMOTE, Ex. xiv. 21; Josh. iii. 14.

I. QUESTIONS.—What was the Lord about to do for Elijah? To what place did the two prophets first go? State Elijah's request at Gilgal, v. 2. Why made? How answered by Elisha? Who met them at Bethel? With what message for Elisha? How did he receive it? What request was repeated at Bethel? How again answered? Describe the next place visited. What schools are supposed to have been at these three places? For what purpose? What message was repeated to Elisha by the prophets at Jericho? How again received? State the third request of Elijah to Elisha. Why made three times? (See under v. 2.) To what river did they go? How far had they travelled from Gilgal? (About 26 miles.) Whither did the "sons of the prophets" go? How many of them? For what purpose? How did the prophets cross Jordan? When had it been crossed near his place before in a similar way? Who by? Josh. iii. 13.

II. HIS BEQUEST TO ELISHA. (9.) WHAT I SHALL DO, make your final request; DOUBLE PORTION OF THY SPIRIT, let "two parts" be given me (Heb.), the heir or "first born" received "two portions" (Deut. xxi. 17), so Elisha asked to be made Elijah's heir and successor—not, as some say, to be made twice as great a prophet; (10.) HARD THING "had done hard in asking" (marginal reading); SEE ME, if thou continue faithful.

II. QUESTIONS.—State Elijah's final request to Elisha. Where made. Elisha's response. What he meant by "double portion." Why does his request not mean twice as great a prophet? On what conditions would the request be granted?

III. HIS TRANSLATION. (11.) CHARIOT OF FIRE, got appeared to Elisha; afterward his servant saw a similar appearance, 2 Kings vi. 17. (12.) MY FATHER, said, "O my master, my master, who by thy prayers wast better to Israel than chariots and horses" (Chaldee Targum); RAN THEM IN TWO PICES, in token of his sorrow over his loss.

III. QUESTIONS.—How were the prophets engaged now as they journeyed? What appeared to them? What did it do to them? Whither did Elijah go? By what means?

what? State Elisha's cry. Its meaning. His first act after this. What it showed.

What facts in this lesson teach us—

- (1.) The value of faithfully serving God even in a wicked nation.
(2.) The benefit of being a companion of a godly person?
(3.) The reality of heaven?

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