

LESSON IX. MARCH 4, 1877.

THE STORY OF NABOTH. 1 Kings, 21: 4-14.

(B. C. 900.)

4. And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased. A careful reader will gather that Ahab and his Queen were now residing at Samaria, twenty-five miles from Jerusalem.

7. And Jezebel his wife said unto him. Like a spoiled child, who has been so much accustomed to his own way in everything that he knows not how to bear refusal, and lies down sprawling on the floor in the impotence of rage and disappointment, the monarch was actually so much affected that he took to his bed and refused his food.

8. Sealed with his seal. The seal ring contained the name of the king, and gave validity to the documents to which it was affixed.

9. Proclaim a fast, etc. Those obsequious and unprincipled magistrates did according to orders.

10. Two men, sons of Belial. Belial is to be regarded as a proper name in the old Testament. Its meaning is worthlessness, recklessness. Sons of Belial mean simply worthless, lawless fellows.

11. The men of his city... did as Jezebel had sent unto them. Never was queen-craft more apparently triumphant and successful. Once got that recalcitrant citizen accused of blasphemy, and by a divine law, the property of the blasphemer and rebel reverts to the crown.

14. Naboth is stoned and dead. Naboth and his sons were stoned. (See 2 Kings 9:26.)

LESSON X. MARCH 11, 1877.

ELIJAH TRANSLATED. 2 Kings 2: 1-12.

B. C. 896.

1. When the Lord would take up Elijah. These long wanderings were now over. No more was that awful figure to be seen on Carmel nor that stern voice heard in Jezreel.

2. And Elijah said unto Elisha, "Tarry here." As to Elijah's motive in making this request, Keil thinks that, on account of his great humility, he wished all witnesses of his glorification to be absent; others it was to test his love and fidelity.

3. And the sons of the prophets. From sundry incidental allusions we are led to the conclusion that much of the Tishbite's labors especially in the later years of his life, were given to the education of the sons of the prophets throughout the land. The first mention in Scripture of "schools of the prophets" is in the history of Samuel, and it is probable

at he was himself the founder of that at Naioth.

4. Jericho, in the valley of the Jordan, was about twelve and a half miles from Bethel. From Bethel the two men of God start on another stage of this last journey. They pursue the old, well known valley, "The long defile leading from Ai to Jericho," which in other times formed the route of invading armies into Palestine." On reaching Jericho the same-touching scene, in an interview with the sons of the prophets residing there, is repeated. The old helmsman is about to resign his post, but his last thought is for those who, after he is gone, are to steer the shattered vessel through the surging sea.

6. And they two went on. They went on alone, They descended the long, weary slopes that led from Jericho to the Jordan. On the upper terraces, or on the mountain heights of the city, stood "afar off," in awe, about fifty of the young disciples; "and they two stood by the Jordan." They stood by its rushing stream, but they were not to be detained by even this barrier. "The aged Gileadite cannot rest till he sets foot on his own side of the river." He ungirds his mantle from around his shaggy frame; he rolled it together, as if into a wonder-working staff, and he smote the turbid river as though it were a living enemy, and the waters divided hither and thither and they two went over on dry ground.

9. Ask what I shall do for thee. He knew that his hour was come, he knew that he had at last returned home, that he was to go whither Moses had gone before him; and he turned to Elisha to ask for his last wish. One only gift was in Elisha's mind to ask, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me, the right of thy first born son." It was a hard thing he had asked. But it was granted on one condition. If he was able to retain to the end the same devoted perseverance, and keep his eye set and steadfast on the departing prophet, the gift would be his.

11. A chariot of fire. As they went on conversing of high things, suddenly a whirlwind reft Elijah from his companion, and he was borne aloft, like an exhalation, in "a chariot of fire," or glowing like fire, to heaven, followed by the cry of the forsaken disciple as he rent his clothes.

12. Elisha saw it, and he cried, "My father The chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof," i. e. that, as earthly kingdoms are dependent for their defence and glory upon warlike preparations, there a single prophet had done more for the preservation and prosperity of Israel than all her chariots and horsemen.