

## LESSON NOTES

## THIRD QUARTER.

## STUDIES IN THE KINGS.

B.C. 907.] LESSON VIII. [Aug. 23.

## ELIJAH AT HOREB.

1 Kings 19. 1-18. Commit to mem. vs. 11-13.

## GOLDEN TEXT.

And after the fire a still small voice.—1 Kings 19. 12.

## CENTRAL TRUTH.

God visits and comforts his people in their hours of darkness.

## DAILY READINGS.

M. 1 Kings 19. 1-18. Th. Matt. 4. 1-11.

T. Ps. 139. 1-12. F. Ex. 33. 12-23; 34. 1-9.

W. Deut. 9. 9-29. Sa. John 1. 1-18.

Su. Isa. 51. 3-16

TIME.—B.C. 907. Immediately following the last lesson.

PLACE.—Wilderness south of Beer-sheba; and the Mt. Horeb, i.e., Sinai.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—After his great victory on Carmel, Elijah went to Jezreel, the residence of Ahab's queen, Jezebel, seemingly with high hopes that the new idolatry would be overthrown and the worship of God be adopted by the people with mighty enthusiasm. The unexpected result is recorded in the lesson for to-day.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—3. *Beer-sheba*—A town south of Judah, ninety-five miles from Jezreel. 4. *A day's journey into the wilderness*—Beer-sheba was on the borders of the wilderness of Israel's forty years' wanderings. He did not feel safe even in the kingdom of Judah, for its king had made alliance with Ahab. *Under a juniper tree*—Rather, a species of broom abundant in the desert. *I am not better, etc.*—No more able to do this reforming work than others who had failed. Elijah's despondency grew out of (1) reaction after his great excitement; (2) bodily and nervous exhaustion; (3) loneliness and want of sympathy; (4) a troubled conscience for running away; (5) enforced inactivity; (6) disappointed hopes. 5. *Slept*—His first need was rest. *Arise and eat*—His next was refreshment. 8. *Horeb*—The same as Sinai. *The Mount of God*—So called because the law was given there. 10. *Zealous*—Zealous; earnest for his cause. *They covenant*—God's law, and his promise to bless them if they would keep it. 11. *The Lord was not in the wind*—Here was not his great manifestation of power. *A still small voice*—God works most in nature by the silent forces of life, gravitation, heat, chemical affinity; and in the spiritual world the greatest results are from love, from character, from silent influences of the Spirit, etc. 15. *Go, return*—Work was one of the best means of curing his despondency. *Hazeel*—An officer who afterwards became king, and was God's instrument for punishing Israel. 16. *Jehu*—He became king in place of Ahab, and destroyed his whole family. 17. *Shall Elisha slay*—Not as the others, but by the powerful words he spoke. He was the still small voice, and did much to reprove and reform his country. 18. *Hath not kissed him*—Or kissed to him. Both were forms of idol worship.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Was Elijah justified in fleeing from Jezebel?—His journeyings.—The causes of his discouragement.—The first cure: bodily refreshment.—The second cure: a revelation of God's method of working.—The meaning of the scene on Horeb.—The third cure: more work.—The object of anointing Hazeel, Jehu, and Elisha.—The fourth cure: encouragement.

## QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What great work had Elijah just done? To what place had he come? What results did he probably expect from the work on Carmel?

SUBJECT: THE CAUSE AND CURE OF DISCOURAGEMENT.

I. THE DISCOURAGED PROPHET (vs. 1-4).—How did Jezebel receive the report of Elijah's doings on Carmel? What message did she send to the prophet? What did he then do? Was he right in running away? Would you expect it of such a man? Where did he go? How far was it? Where did he stop to rest? How did he feel? What is meant by his "not being better than his father's?" What causes can you assign for such great discouragement? Do most people have such times?

II. THE FIRST CURE.—BODILY RELIEF

(vs. 5-8).—In what two ways was the tired prophet refreshed? Why was this care given him before any effort was made to comfort or reprove? Are angels still ministering spirits? (Heb. 1. 14.) How long did this food last him? What other two persons fasted the same number of days? (Matt. 4. 1-11, Ex. 34. 28, 29) Was Elijah fasting probably for the same reasons? Where did he go?

III. SECOND CURE.—THE REVELATION OF GOD'S METHOD OF WORKING (vs. 9-13).—What question did God ask Elijah? How does this question apply to us? Was the question a reproof? What was Elijah's reply? What charges does he make? How did the Lord answer him? What three great and powerful things passed before him? In what sense was God not in the wind and fire? What came after these? What did this scene teach Elijah as to God's method of working? How would this encourage him? How would you apply this teaching to our times?

IV. THIRD CURE.—NEW WORK (vs. 13-17).—What question did God again ask Elijah? Had the comfort God had so far given changed the facts? (v. 14.) What did God now tell him to do? Who was Hazeel? Jehu? Elisha? What part did each do in punishing or reforming Israel? How would this work help to remove Elijah's discouragement? Is this cure equally good for us?

V. FOURTH CURE.—THE BRIGHTER SIDE (v. 18).—What fact did God now declare to Elijah? Why had he not seen this before? Was v. 14 a true picture of the times without v. 18? Is there more good and hope in the country, the world, and in the Church than many see? Why should we look on the bright side? How will it encourage us? Should we also see the other side?

## PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. The best people sometimes get discouraged.
2. By caring for the bodies of men we may prepare the way for doing them spiritual good.
3. God cares for us and sustains us in our need.
4. God asks each of us, What doest thou here? Are you where you ought to be, and doing what you ought to do?
5. God's mightiest forces are silent and secret in their working—as light, heat, electricity, attraction.
6. There is far more good in the Church and in the world than many persons see.

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

16. When Jezebel heard of Elijah's work on Carmel what did she do? *ANS.* She threatened to take his life. 17. What did Elijah do? *ANS.* He fled into the desert, utterly discouraged. 18. What were the causes of his discouragement? *ANS.* (1) Bodily exhaustion; (2) want of sympathy; (3) absence of work; (4) disappointed hopes. 19. How did God encourage him? *ANS.* (1) By bodily relief; (2) by insight into God's ways of working; (3) by new work; (4) by a truer view of the facts.

B.C. 900.] LESSON IX. [Aug. 30.

## THE STORY OF NABOTH.

1 Kings 21. 4-19. Commit to mem. vs. 17-10.

## GOLDEN TEXT.

Thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord.—1 Kings 21. 20.

## CENTRAL TRUTH.

The tendency of sinners is to grow worse and worse and end in ruin.

## DAILY READINGS.

M. 1 Kings 21. 1-19. Th. 2 Kings 9. 14-26, 30-37.

T. 1 Kings 21. 23-29; F. 2 Kings 10. 1-11, 22. 1-4.

W. 1 Kings 22. 29-40. Sa. 2 Kings 10. 18-23. Su. Luke 12. 13-21.

TIME.—About the year B.C. 900.

PLACE.—Jezreel and Samaria, the capitals of Israel.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—4. *Ahab came*—To Samaria, from Jezreel. *The inheritance of my fathers*—It was contrary to Jewish law to part with it, except till the Jubilee year. (Lev. 25. 23-28.) 8. *She wrote letters in Ahab's name*—And therefore he was responsible for what she did, as he gave her permission by yielding up to her his seal. *Sealed them with his seal*—In the East, all letters and documents are stamped with a seal, instead of signing the name as we do. *Elders and nobles*—The popular assembly that

tried such cases. (Deut. 16. 18) 9. *Proclaim a fast*—As if a great danger threatened the city on account of some great crime. *Set Naboth on high*—i.e., Bring him before the assembly as a prisoner. 10. *Two men*—Because the law required two witnesses before any one could be executed. (Deut. 17. 6.) *Sons of Belial*—Belial is not a proper name, but means worthlessness. They were worthless, reckless fellows. *Blaspheme God*—Had reviled, spoken evil of the God of Israel. *And the king*—He probably had condemned Ahab's wickedness and idolatry. *That he may die*—His sons also were put to death. (2 Kings 9. 26.) So that he would have no heirs; and, as was a common custom, the property would revert to the king. 18. *Which is in Samaria*—Whose capital and palace were there. That was his home, although just now he had gone to Jezreel. 10. *Thus saith the Lord, etc.*—These words were fulfilled in Ahab's son Jehoram. (2 Kings 9. 25, 26) Ahab repented, and the Lord deferred the full punishment. (1 Kings 21. 29.) But it was also partly fulfilled in himself. (1 Kings 22. 34-38.)

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Naboth.—Covetousness.—Discontent of those who have an abundance.—Seals.—Sons of Belial.—Responsibility for evil that we permit others to do.—The progress of sin in Ahab.—The end of Ahab and his family.

## QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—How many years elapsed between the events of the last lesson and this? Give some account of what took place in this interval. What do we know of Elijah during this time?

SUBJECT: THE PROGRESS OF SIN.

I. COVETOUSNESS.—Where was Ahab's summer palace? What kind of a palace did he have? (1 Kings 22. 39.) Whose garden did he desire? (v. 2.) What did he offer for it? Why did Naboth refuse? Was it wrong for him to sell this inheritance? (Lev. 25. 23-28.) Had he as good a right to it as Ahab to his palace? Which of the ten commandments did Ahab break? Will any amount of possessions keep us from covetousness? Why not?

II. COVETOUSNESS LEADING TO DISCONTENTMENT (v. 4).—How did Ahab act when Naboth refused him? What kind of a spirit did he show? Will any amount of possessions keep us from being discontented? What will keep us? (1 Tim. 6. 6-8; Heb. 13. 5.) Is discontentment a sin? Why?

III. DISCONTENTMENT LEADING TO CONNIVANCE WITH CRIME (vs. 5-8).—Who tried to comfort Ahab? Why was it false comfort? What did Jezebel promise the king? What did he do to aid her? (v. 8.) What were seals used for? Was Ahab to blame for what Jezebel did in his name? Was she any worse than he? Are we guilty of the sins we permit others to do for us, when we dare not do them ourselves?

IV. CONNIVANCE WITH CRIME LEADING TO LYING AND HYPOCRISY (vs. 9-13).—What was Jezebel's plan? How were there two witnesses? (Deut. 17. 6; 19. 15.) What were "sons of Belial?" What was the object in proclaiming a fast? What were the charges against Naboth? Why might a good man be likely to speak against such a king as Ahab? Show why Jezebel must have been a hypocrite in her charge of blasphemy. What was the Jewish punishment for blasphemy? (Lev. 24. 11-14.)

V. LYING AND HYPOCRISY LEADING TO MURDER AND ROBBERY (vs. 13, 14).—What was done with Naboth? Who was stoned with him? (2 Kings 9. 26.) How would this bring the property into Ahab's possession? How many commandments were broken in obtaining possession of this vineyard?

VI. ALL THESE CRIMES FOLLOWED BY RETRIBUTION (vs. 15-19).—What did Ahab do when he heard of Naboth's death? Who met him in the vineyard? What did Ahab say when he saw him? (v. 20.) What doom did Elijah pronounce upon him? Meaning of the Golden Text? How was this doom mitigated, and why? (1 Kings 21. 27-29.) How and when was it fulfilled? (1 Kings 22. 34-38; 2 Kings 9. 24-26.) How was Jezebel included in this punishment? (1 Kings 21. 23; 2 Kings 9. 30-37.) What lessons can you learn from this history?

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

1. What further sin did Ahab commit? *ANS.* He coveted his neighbor's possessions.
2. To what sin did covetousness lead? (Repeat second heading, and so on through all the headings of the lesson.)

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