

LESSON NOTES.

THIRD QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE KING.

B.C. 907.] LESSON VI. [Aug. 9.]

THE PROPHETS OF BAAL.

1 Kings 18. 19-29. Commit to mem. vs. 19-21.

GOLDEN TEXT.

If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.—1 Kings 18 21.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

The most important decision of our lives is, whom we will serve and love supremely.

DAILY READINGS.

M. 1 Kings 18. 19-29. Th. Luko 16. 1-13.
T. Ex. 32. 26-35. F. Deut. 6. 1-25.
W. Josh. 24. 14-28. Sa. Jer. 10. 1-16.
Su. Isa. 55. 1-13.

TIME.—B.C. 907, immediately following the last lesson.

PLACE.—Mount Carmel, a ridge 12 miles long, on the west coast of Palestine. It is 1,728 feet high at its summit. Elijah's sacrifice was on the eastern summit, which rises like a wall from the great plain of Esdraelon. It could be seen by vast numbers, even as far as Jezreel. There is on it a sort of natural platform, and near it an unfailing spring of water.

RULES.—Ahab, king of Israel (11th year); Jehoshaphat, king of Judah (7th year).

INTRODUCTION.—In our last lesson we left Elijah confronting Ahab near Mt. Carmel. Elijah had charged Ahab with being the cause of the famine, and he now challenges the king to a test as to who was the true God.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—19. *Prophets of Baal*—Priests who conducted his worship, and who uttered sometimes wild and frantic cries supposed to come from the inspiration of the idol. Hence they were called prophets, i.e., those who speak under special divine influence. *Of the groves*—Of Ashteroth, the Phœnician Venus. *Eat at*—Rather from. They were supported by Jezebel. These last-named prophets did not come. 21. *How long halt ye*—i.e., Are ye undecided, vacillating. *Between two opinions*—Whether to serve God or Baal. 24. *The God that answereth by fire*—A miracle, that only God could perform would be a test as to whether Baal was God. Baal was regarded as the sun, and it was midday, so that if any idol could bring fire he could. God is as fire in the influences of the spirit, in consuming sin, in warning and cheering hearts, in giving light to mind and soul, purifying men. Any religion which cannot do these things is false. This is the test of all. 26. *O Baal, hear us*—This was repeated, over and over again, with shouts, frantic dances, and cutting of flesh. 28. *Cut themselves*—Thinking their God would be pleased with their torture. *Evening sacrifice*—Three o'clock p.m.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Elijah meeting Ahab.—Mt. Carmel.—The prophets of Baal.—The fairness of the trial.—Answering by fire.—Elijah's irony.—The prayers and cuttings of the priests of Baal.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Where did we leave Elijah in our last lesson? With what had he charged the king?

SUBJECT: THE IMPORTANT DECISION.

I. THE CHALLENGE (vs. 19, 20).—What did Elijah now propose to Ahab? Who were to be assembled? In what place? How was Mt. Carmel especially adapted for this purpose? Why are Baal's priests called prophets? Who were meant by the prophets of the groves? Who supported them? Did they come with the others? Did the king obey? What made the great king yield to the true prophet?

II. THE CHOICE (v. 21).—Between what two sides must the people choose? What position did they take? What reasons had they for serving Baal? What reasons can you think of why they should serve God? Why were they undecided? Why did they make no answer? Have we a like choice to make? What excuses do men have for not serving God? What reasons have we for choosing him as our Master and God? Why is indecision unreasonable? Why is it dangerous?

III. THE TEST (vs. 22-24).—How many were on God's side? How many on Baal's? How did Elijah propose to test which was the true God? Show how his proposal was perfectly fair, and gave them every advan-

tage? How would the fire from heaven prove which was the true God? How was fire especially adapted to Baal's claims? In what respects is fire a good symbol of the true God? (Acts 2. 1-3; Mal. 3. 2; Deut. 4. 24; Matt. 3. 11; Ex. 13. 21; John 1. 9.) What test something like this is the test of every religion? (See Helps.) What did the people say to Elijah's proposal?

IV. THE FAILURE OF BAAL TO STAND THE TEST (vs. 25-29).—What did the prophets of Baal do? What was their prayer? What did they do to make Baal hear them? What was the object in cutting themselves? What did Elijah say to them? How long did they continue their trial? With what success? Will the gods of this world—riches, pleasures, honours, or the various forms of infidelity—be any better able to help us in our times of need?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Every one must make the choice between God and the world.
2. Every person should faithfully examine the claims of true religion.
3. The test of true religion is the "answering by fire,"—the purifying, cleansing power of the Holy Spirit, the power that brings revivals, that gives spiritual life, that enlightens the mind, that cheers the heart.
4. Indecision in religion is stupidity and folly and death.
5. Let us rejoice in a God that never sleeps, but is so great that he can hear every cry of every person in his whole universe.

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

6. What did Ahab do for Elijah? Ans. He gathered the people of Israel and the prophets of Baal upon Mount Carmel. 7. What did Elijah say to the people there? (Repeat v. 21.) 8. What test did Elijah propose? Ans. That each party build an altar, and "the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." 9. What did the prophets of Baal do? Ans. They built the altar, laid the sacrifice upon it, and called upon Baal for several hours. 10. What was the result? Ans. "There was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded."

B.C. 907.] LESSON VII. [Aug. 16.]

THE PROPHET OF THE LORD.

1 Kings 18. 30-46. Commit to mem. vs. 36-39.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God.—1 Kings 18. 39.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

God answers the prayers of his people in a wonderful way.

DAILY READINGS.

M. 1 Kings 18. 30-46. Th. James 5. 13-20.
T. 2 Chron. 7. 1-14. F. Luko 11. 1-13.
W. Deut. 13. 6-18. Sa. 2 Kings 19. 8-20, 32-37.
Su. Ps. 65. 1-13.

TIME.—B.C. 907, immediately following the last lesson; the afternoon of the same day.

PLACE.—Mt. Carmel; the eastern extremity.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—The people of Israel were assembled on Mt. Carmel, with king Ahab, to witness the trial between Elijah and the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. These last had prepared their sacrifice, and for several hours had prayed to Baal for fire from heaven, but no answer came. Now it was Elijah's turn.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—30. *Come near*—To defend and to watch the prophet. 31. *Twelve stones*—To show that all the tribes should be one in serving the Lord. 32. *A trench . . . as great as would contain two measures of seed*—The measure here is the seah, containing about three gallons. The trench was as wide and deep as a vessel that would hold two measures. 33. *Fill four barrels (water jars) with water*—To prove to the people that there was no trick or deceit. 35. *Time of the evening sacrifice*—Three o'clock. 38. *The fire of the Lord fell*—From heaven, openly, before the eyes of the people. *Consumed the stones*—To show that it was no ordinary fire, but divine. *The dust*—The earth which filled the enclosed place between the stones. 39. *They fell on their faces*—In wonder, fear, and worship. 40. *The brook Kishon*—Which flowed at the base of Carmel. *And slew them there*—Not a massacre, but an execution for crime. So God had commanded (Deut 13. 1-18.) The king would not do it, therefore Elijah did.These men were criminals. They were ruining their country. They were traitors. And they were punished on the same principles that murderers are executed, or an invading army is attacked and slain. Not to do it would be cruelty, and not mercy. 44. *A cloud . . . like a man's hand*—As large as a man's hand. In Palestine this is the precursor of a rain storm. 46. *The hand of the Lord*—The power of the Lord, enabling him to run the seventeen miles to Jezreel. *Ran before Ahab*—To show that though a prophet he was still an obedient subject of the king.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—The circumstances.—Elijah's altar.—His precautions against all possible deception.—Elijah's prayer.—The fire from the Lord.—The use of miracles.—The destruction of Baal's prophets.—The rain.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What company was assembled in our last lesson? In what place? For what purpose? What was the result of the trial on the part of the idolaters?

SUBJECT: TWO PRAYERS AND THEIR ANSWERS.

I. ELIJAH'S PREPARATION FOR THE SACRIFICE (vs. 30-35).—Why did Elijah gather people near him? Of what did he build the altar? Was it a new one? Why did he use just twelve stones? How large was the trench around it? How many "barrels," or water jars, of water were poured over the sacrifice? For what purpose? Why was this very important?

II. ELIJAH'S PRAYER (vs. 36, 37).—When was Elijah's sacrifice ready? Why did he choose this time? How did he address God? Why did he use this address? What did he desire in his prayer? Had God then already turned the heart of the people back again? What characteristics of true prayer do you find in this prayer?

III. THE ANSWER (vs. 38-40).—In what way did God answer? What showed that the answer came from God? What is a miracle? How do miracles prove the word to be from God? Why do we not need miracles now? What was the answer in the hearts of the people? Were they really converted? How did Elijah immediately set them to work? The object of this? How many prophets of Baal were slain? According to what law? (Deut. 13. 1-18.) Did they deserve it? Could the country have been saved in any other way? How was this execution an act of mercy to the nation? What practical lessons can you find in the above verses?

IV. ELIJAH'S SECOND PRAYER (vs. 41-43).—What did Elijah do next? Had rain been promised? (1 Kings 18. 1.) Why, then, was it necessary to pray for it? Why was the answer delayed? How many times did he send to see if the rain was coming?

V. THE ANSWER (vs. 44-46).—What did the watcher first see? What message did Elijah send to the king? Was this answer given by natural law? How does it differ from the answer to the previous prayer? Does God answer in both ways now? Where did Ahab and Elijah go? Why did Elijah run before the king? How far was it? What lessons can you learn from this part of the lesson?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. The Church of God is one, in spite of all its apparent divisions.
2. There is advantage in worshipping God at stated times.
3. Miracles are God's signature to his message, and endorsement of his messengers.
4. God still approves his message and his messengers by his divine power in changing the hearts of men.
5. Righteous punishment of the criminal is mercy to the nation.
6. Persevere in prayer. Watch as well as pray.
7. Small beginnings often result in great endings.

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

11. When Baal's prophets failed, what did Elijah do? Ans. He rebuilt an altar of the Lord with twelve stones. 12. What did he do as a guard against deception? Ans. He flooded altar and sacrifice with water. 13. What followed Elijah's prayer? Ans. Fire came from God and consumed sacrifice and altar. 14. What was the effect on the people? Ans. (Repeat v. 39.) 15. What followed the repentance of the people? Ans. The rain came and the famine was ended.

SUNDAY SCHOOL
REWARD BOOKS.

Neatly Bound in Cloth and Illustrated.

THE TOOLS AND INDUSTRIES OF
ANIMALS.

A Series of Books, each with Coloured Frontispiece and numerous Engravings. 18mo.

Who was the First Architect?
Who was the First Paper-Maker?
Who were the First Miners?
Who were the First Builders?
Who were the First Weavers?

A series of entertaining and instructive books.

MRS. GEORGE CUPPLES' TALES
FOR THE YOUNG.

Each with Coloured Frontispiece, Illuminated Side, and numerous engravings. 18mo.

Price 30 cents each.

Bertha Marchmont.
Fanny Silvester.
Bluff Crag; or, A Good Word Costs Nothing.
Hugh Wallwood's Success.
Alice Leighton.
Carry's Rose; or, The Magic of Kindness.
Little May and her Friend Conscience.

Bright, cheerful stories, each having for its object the inculcation of some good moral lesson.

THE KITTEN SERIES.

By R. M. BALLANTYNE.

Each with Coloured Frontispiece, and numerous Engravings.

The Three Little Kittens.
Me-a-ow; or, Good Advice to Cats and Kittens.
The Robber Kitten.
The Butterfly's Ball.
Life of a Ship.
Mister Fox.

Six pretty volumes for the amusement of the little ones. While amusing, the author contrives to interweave many useful lessons with his stories.

THE A. L. O. E. SERIES.

Each with Coloured Frontispiece. Royal 18mo.

Price 35 cents each.

Edith and Her Ayah, and Other Stories. With numerous Engravings.
The Hymn my Mother Taught Me, and Other Stories. Twenty-four Engravings.
The Olive Branch, and Other Stories. With Sixteen Illustrations.
A Friend in Need, and Other Stories. With Seven Engravings.
Good for Evil, and Other Stories. With Fourteen Engravings.
Try Again, and Other Stories. With numerous Engravings.
Upwards and Downwards, and Other Stories. With Sixteen Engravings.
Wings and Stings. With Six Engravings.FAVOURITE STORIES FOR
YOUNG READERS.

The Adopted Brothers; or, Blessed are the Peacemakers. By M. E. Clemens, Author of "The Story of the Beacon Fire," etc. Large foolscap 8vo, cloth extra.

Annals of the Poor. Complete edition, with Memoir of Leigh Richmond. Royal 18mo.

A cheap edition of these well-known Christian narratives, which so faithfully portray true piety in humble life.

WILLIAM BRIGGS,

78 & 80 King Street East, Toronto.

C. W. COATES, Montreal, Que.

S. F. HUESTIS, Halifax, N.S.