

The Sunday-School.

FOURTH QUARTER.
LESSON I.—Oct. 2.

ELISHA SUCCEEDS ELIJAH.

2 Kings 2: 12-22.

THE LESSON includes the story from verse 1 to the end of the chapter.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Let a double portion of thy Spirit be upon me.*—2 Kings 2: 9.

HISTORICAL SETTING.—*Time.* Elisha began his prophetic career about B.C. 850 (or 892, Ussher. See Notes on "Table of Chronology"). The exact date is uncertain; but it is inferred from 2 Chron. 21: 12, that it was after the accession of Jehoram as co-regent with his father Jehoshaphat, in Judah, B.C. 851 (or 893); and from 2 Kings 3: 11 that it was before the death of Jehoshaphat B.C. 847 (or 889).

The Period of Elisha's Work as a Prophet extended into the four reigns of Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz, and Jehoash, of Israel, about fifty years, from B.C. 850-798 (or 892-842).

Place.—Elisha began his ministry at Jericho, but later made his home in Samaria, and for a time at Dothan with a resting place at Shunem, and at the schools of the prophets.

Rulers.—Jehoram (or Joram), son of Jehoshaphat, co-regent with his father over Judah. Jehoram, son of Ahab, king of Israel.

Home according to Herodotus, lived at this time, B.C. 850, contemporary with Elisha.

LEARN BY HEART.—Vs. 12-14; Prov. 4: 23; Matt. 12: 35.

ELIJAH'S LEGACY TO HIS COUNTRY.—A NEW PROPHET.—Vs. 12-15. The Lord commanded Elijah to anoint Elisha to be his successor. He indicated to the young man this choice by casting his mantle upon him.

Ten or twelve years later, as Elisha was going with Elijah to the scene of his translation, the older prophet said to the younger man, "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I am taken from thee" and Elisha asked for a double portion of his spirit.

Elisha (God is salvation) was the son of Shaphat, and belonged in Abel-Meholah, a few miles south of the Sea of Galilee. He was the son of a well-to-do farmer, for he was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, eleven yoke being with his servants, while he followed with the twelfth. Elisha was a fine character before Elijah came to him, obedient, filial, industrious and religious.

Elisha's Training.—He must have grown up amid wholesome home influences. Then, from the time Elijah had called him, for more than ten years, he was a close companion of the prophet, ministering unto him.

Elisha Received Assurance of his Succession.—And Elisha saw it. The ascension of Elijah. And he cried, My father, my father. Elijah had been a father to him. The chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof. Elijah was a greater defense of his country than an army for he helped place his country where God could defend it; he inspired the people and thus doubled their strength.

Good men are still the true defense for any nation. Not in armies, but in

righteousness; not in navies, but in the prevalence of true religion, is found the safeguard of a people. *Rent them.* A common mode of expressing grief. He took up the mantle of Elijah, which had fallen from the ascending prophet. Went back and stood by the bank of Jordan, within sight of the fifty sons of the prophets, who were watching him, waiting to see whether he was really the appointed successor of Elijah. And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and smote the waters, as Elijah had done. *Where is the Lord God of Elijah?* Not an expression of doubt but of faith. The result, that for him also the waters . . . parted hither and thither, as they had done for Elijah, formed his credentials as Elijah's successor. The sons of the prophets. The fifty who had been waiting his return accepted him as their master and head of the school by bowing themselves to the ground before him.

THE WAY ELISHA TREATED THE DOUBTS OF HIS SCHOLARS. THE SEARCH FOR ELIJAH'S BODY.—Vs. 16-18. And they said unto him. They did not feel quite sure that body and spirit had both ascended to heaven. They would solve all doubts by personal investigation. Fifty strong men. For so difficult and dangerous a search. The Spirit of the Lord hath . . . cast him upon some mountain. As the Lord long before had hidden him during the drought. And he said, Ye shall not send. He would not have them doubt his word. They urged him till he was ashamed. Till he was at a loss how to refuse them any longer. And he said, send. He came down to them who were as yet unable to come up to him. When they came again to him. Elisha had gone to the city of Jericho, while the young men were carrying on their search. Did I not say . . . Go not? Your search has simply confirmed my statement.

THE CONFIRMATION OF ELISHA'S AUTHORITY BY A MIRACLE — THE HEALING OF THE WATERS OF JERICHO.—Vs. 19-22. Elisha could do little for his countrymen, till they were convinced of his prophetic power. The first test was by the inhabitants of Jericho, who said the situation of this city is pleasant, but the water is naught, good for nothing. And the ground barren. The water was such that as caused the trees to shed their fruit prematurely. Bring me a new cruse. A bowl or dish. It must be new to show that nothing in the cruse caused the change in the water. Put salt therein. Salt would have no helpful power over the water but naturally the reverse. He went . . . unto a spring. The source of the streams which supplied Jericho with water.

Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters. The healing came directly from the Lord through the prophet.

THE HEART OF THE LESSON.

1. Elisha took up his work, endorsed by the authority and power of God.
2. Elisha's first work was to make the people better. This is the work of true religion everywhere.
3. This miracle taught the ancient Jews and still teaches us that the great need of the world is new hearts, the healing of the springs of action, the new birth through the Holy Spirit.
4. In carrying out the blessed mission of the prophet, there was necessarily another motive that must be used to urge

the people to obey his teachings. Love and truth must warn, must utter woes against sin as Christ himself did, must show the danger of sin, and the certainty of its punishment.

5. Love, with all its gentleness has the power and the need sometimes to wield the divine lightnings. From the heart of love itself came the most terrible "Woe unto you, hypocrites!" The gentleness of love has the more power, because it can and must sometimes flash and flame against evil. Love kills the vipers that are slaying the true children. Love insists on punishing those whom no other motive can restrain.

"WHICH WAY ARE YOU GOING?"

A little girl went home from church one day full of what she had seen and heard. A day or two afterward when taking to her father, who was not a godly man, she said suddenly, "Father, do you ever pray?" He did not like the question, and in a very angry manner asked her:

"Is it your mother or your aunt who has put you up to this?"

"No, father," said the child, "the preacher said all good people pray, and those that don't pray can't be saved. Father do you pray?"

This was more than the father could stand, and in a rough way he said:

"Well, you and your mother and your aunt may go your way and I will go mine."

"Father," said the little creature, with great simplicity, "which way are you going?"

The question pierced his heart. It flashed upon him that he was on the way to death. He started from his chair, burst into tears, and began to pray for mercy.

Which way are you going?—The Revivalist.

START ON TIME.

Start a Sunday-school on time, even if you have to start almost a minute before time! The cure for lagging pupils and teachers is to have the teaching service already started at the hour promised. Just as surely as the superintendent waits five, or ten or fifteen minutes just so surely is his school going to be filled five, or ten, or fifteen minutes late. A railroad train scheduled to leave at 2.30 is late if it doesn't move at that time, even though the conductor calls "All aboard!" and flourishes his hands and tells the people to "hurry up!" Until the signal to go is given, the sophisticated are not alarmed, and will not hurry. Just so in the Sunday-school. The superintendent may ring his bell, call out for order, flourish his hands and ring his bell till doomsday, but the sophisticated know that "there is no cause for alarm" until the opening hymn is actually begun.—Sunday School Times.

If You Don't Sleep Well.

It's because your nerves are in a weak, irritable condition. Ferrozone will make them strong and correct the trouble causing your insomnia. "I fell into a state of nervous exhaustion last fall," writes Mrs. J. Stroud, of Dexter. "I was run down, couldn't sleep and felt perfectly miserable. Tried Ferrozone and was quickly benefited. I can recommend Ferrozone to anyone suffering from over-wrought nerves and sleeplessness." No tonic is better. Try Ferrozone. Price 50c. at druggists.

Everywhere God's strong hand was busy during the nineteenth century preparing a highway among the nations of the world for his spiritual and eternal kingdom on the earth.—J. S. Dennis.

Ayer's

Impure blood always shows somewhere. If the skin, then boils, pimples, rashes. If the nerves, then neuralgia, nervousness, depression. If the

Sarsaparilla

stomach, then dyspepsia, biliousness, loss of appetite. Your doctor knows the remedy, used for 60 years.

"Returning from the Cuban war, I was a perfect wreck. My blood was bad, and my health was gone. But a few bottles of Ayer's Sarsaparilla completely cured me." H. C. DOEBLER, Scranton, Pa.

\$1.00 a bottle. All druggists. J. C. AYER CO., Lowell, Mass.

Impure Blood

Aid the Sarsaparilla by keeping the bowels regular with Ayer's Pills.

If you want to serve your race, go where no one else will go, and do what no one else will do.—Mary Lyon.

Always a Good Friend.—In health and happiness we need no friend but when pain and prostration comes we look for friendly aid from sympathetic hands. Those hands can serve us no better than in rubbing in Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil, for when the Oil is in the pain is out. It has brought relief to thousands who without it would indeed be friendless.

Those who do most for the heathen abroad are those who do most for the heathen at home.—John G. Paton.

They are carefully prepared.—Pills which dissipate themselves in the stomach cannot be expected to have much influence upon the intestines, and to overcome coarseness the medicine administered must influence the action of these canals. Parmelee's Vegetable Pills are so made, under the supervision of experts that the substance in them intended to act on the intestines are retarded in action until they pass through the stomach to the bowels.

There was never a brighter day in the history of missions than today. The obstacles have all be surveyed and all have been surmounted.—John Potts

If a dog bites you don't be scared. Bathe the wound with cold water and cover it with a cloth on which Weaver's Cerate has been freely spread. The Cerate relieves the pain caused by the stings of insects.

A good man is always growing better.

AFTER SHAVING

POND'S EXTRACT



COOLS, COMFORTS AND HEALS THE SKIN, ENABLING THE MOST TENDER FACE TO ENJOY A CLOSE SHAVE WITHOUT UNPLEASANT RESULTS. Avoid dangerous, irritating Witch Hazel preparations represented to be "the same as" Pond's Extract, which easily sour and generally contain "wood alcohol," a deadly poison.