

The Sabbath School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

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JEHU THE KING.

MAY 13th.—2 Kings 10: 20-31.

Golden Text: 2 Kings 10: 31.

JEHU—the son of Jehoshaphat, and grandson of Nimshi—founder of the fifth dynasty of the Kingdom of Israel—was the instrument raised up by God to punish the house of Omri (1 Kings 19: 17, 2 Kings 9: 7-10), and to abolish the impure nature—worship that had been imported from Phœnicia.

V. 20 28 *The artifice and the massacre.* The slaying of the Baalites—who according to the law of Moses were guilty of high treason—was legitimate; but Jehu's motives were selfish and his fraud inexcusable. An act of righteous punishment was thus reduced to the level of a St. Bartholemew's massacre.

“A solemn Assembly,” a fast day in honour of Baal, Lev. 23, 36. Jo. 1, 14. Amos 5, 21.

“Vestments”—sacred robes which the priests put on only when officiating, and which were kept in a wardrobe of the vast temple.

“Jehonadab,” descended from the Kenites, the Arabian tribe that entered Palestine with the Israelites. To keep his tribe from losing their wilderness habits, he bound them by strict vows which they with Bedouin tenacity observed even when forced to live in cities, Jer. 35, 6 8.

“The City of the house of Baal”—the inner sanctuary of the temple.

“Images”—wooden figures of the inferior divinities seated round the great stone statue of Baal. The images were burnt, and the stone statue broken.

V. 29 31. *Jehu's true character.*—Men zealous about one part of religion and indifferent about others are only zealous for self, Matt. 23, 23; yet even partial obedience may be useful, and rewarded with temporal blessings.

Le-sons—(1) Zeal for God should never tempt us to sacrifice truth. He does not need our lie, Deut. 32, 4. That “faith should not be kept with heretics” is a maxim worthy only of those who slew the Albigenes.

(2.) Men are apt to compound for sins they love by condemning sins that are against their own interests or inclinations.

(3.) Even partial reformers are used by God as instruments, and their work is owned by Him, Phil. 3, 16.

(4.) We must depart from every sin, and be wholly the Lord's. Jas. 2, 10. 2 Cor. 11, 2. A Greek said “he would like to be a philosopher in a few things.” So would many like to be religious.

HOME STUDIES.

M. 2 Kings 9: 13—*Jehu anointed king.*
 T. 2 Kings 9: 3—*Jehoram slain.*
 W. 2 Kings 9: 7—*Jezebel slain.*
 Th. 2 Kings 10: 14—*Ahab's sons slain.*
 F. 2 Kings 10: 31—*Idolaters slain.*
 E. Ezek. 6: 1-10—*Warnings against idolatry.*
 S. Jer. 10: 1-15—*False gods shall perish.*

JONAH AT NINEVEH.

MAY 20th. — Jonah 3, 1-10.

Golden Text: Matt. 12, 41.

The Prophet.—Jonah, the son of Amittai, born at Gath-hepher a small village of Zabulon; said to have been a disciple of Elisha; according to general opinion the first of the 16 canonical prophets. Having prophesied a restoration to Israel, probably in the days of Jehoahaz, (2 Kings 14, 25), he was sent to the East by God to warn Nineveh. Obeying the voice of nature, he flees to the West. As a patriot he shrank from being the instrument of saving the people Israel had most cause to dread, (4, 2.)

The Message.—“The second time.” Jonah had fled once from duty, but the duty remained. Had he fled again, he would—after more suffering—have been brought to it the third time, unless God cast him off. Obey God at first, no matter how hard it may seem.

The walls of Nineveh enclosed a great space for tillage, so that in case of a siege, it could supply itself with food. Like Babylon it had “the circumference of a nation rather than of a city.” “One day's journey” of 20 miles would enable Jonah to traverse it from end to end. How vivid the picture of his preaching! He walks from street to street in his rough garment of hair cloth, repeating the one cry God had commanded him to cry; and the result of that one day's simple preaching was the conversion of the whole people.

The Repentance of the Ninevites.—Our Lord says that Jonah was a sign to them, Luke 11, 30. They must then have heard of what befel him, and believed that God who avenged his disobedience would avenge theirs.

“A fast,” abstinence from all food till evening, 2 Sam. 1, 12; and that continued for 40 days. It seems to have been proclaimed by common impulse, even before