

April 14.—The Scriptures Found and

Searched.—2 Chron. xxxiv, 14-22. 11
1st ed. 1840. B.C. about 624. (1st ed. 1840. B.C. about 624.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Search the Scriptures; for in them ye shall have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me.* John 5:39.

INTRODUCTORY.—*For several years, while the purging of the nation from idolatry was in progress, a collection was being made for the renovation of the temple.*

"This money had been collected, not merely at the temple (2 Kings xxiv, 3), but also, and perhaps mainly, by collectors who had visited all parts both of Judah and Israel (verse 9) in order to obtain contributions." This money was deposited in the temple till the time came to begin repairs. The idols and altars and shrines of idolatry which had been allowed in the very court of the temple, were all taken away. Open idolatry was driven from the nation, and especially from Jerusalem. The repairs were going on, architects, carpenters, stone cutters, and masons were busy, and so faithful that no account need be kept of expenses. While these repairs were being prosecuted so earnestly, the great discovery was made which forms the subject of to-day's lesson."

Lesson.—Our lesson tells of (1) The finding of the Scriptures; (2) The Reading of the Scriptures; and (3) The result produced.

THE FINDING OF THE SCRIPTURES, 14-18.

V. 14. Hilkiah. He was the high priest in Josiah's reign, and as such had access to the Holy of Holies in the temple. He was the ancestor of Ezra (Ezra viii, 1). His name will be found in 1 Chron. vi, 13; ix, 11; Neh. xi, 11. Found a book of the Law of the Lord given by Moses. "The copy of the Law found by Hilkiah was, no doubt, that deposited in accordance with the command of God by Moses (Deut. xxxi, 26), by the side of the ark of the covenant, and kept ordinarily in the Holy of Holies. It had been lost, or secreted during the desecration of the temple by Manasseh, but had not been removed out of the temple building."—Sp. Com. We are not told how this hid treasure was found, whether accidentally or after patient search. Stanley supposes that Hilkiah came suddenly upon it, under the accumulated rubbish or ruins of the temple." Wordsworth says: "They laid up treasure for building the Lord's house, and the reward of their zeal was that they found the treasure of God's Word."

V. 15. Shaphan the scribe. He was the scribe or secretary of King Josiah. "His history brings out some points in regard to the office which he held. He appears on an equality with the governor of the city and the royal recorder with whom he was sent by the king to Hilkiah to take an account of the money which had been collected by the Levites for the repair of the temple, and to pay the workmen." (2 Kings xxiv, 4; 2 Chron. xxxiv, 9.) Compare 2 Kings xli, 10. Ewald calls him Minister of Finance. It was on this occasion that Hilkiah communicated his discovery of the copy of the Law. Shaphan was then apparently an old man, for his son Ahikam must have been in a position of importance, and his grandson Gedaliah was already born. He was a sly man, Shaphan disappears from the scene, and probably died before the fifth year of Jehoiakim, eighteen years later, when we find Hilkiah's scribe, (Jer. xxxiii, 12).—Smith's Dictionary. Delivered the book to Shaphan, whose duty would be to publish the text, and make copies. In 2 Kings xxii, 8, 10, we are informed that Shaphan read the book carefully himself before proceeding to the king.

V. 16. To the king. He chose for doing this the occasion in which he took the account of

the completion of the repairs. He first reports the satisfactory progress of the work, and then (v. 18) produces the Book. They do it though they have done it.—Sp. Com.

THE READING OF THE SCRIPTURES.—V. 18, 19.

V. 18. And Shaphan read it before the king. The original Hebrew says he "read it in." The teachers would do well to read with the class, a few verses selected from Deut. xxviii, which chapter was no doubt a part of what was read to King Josiah.

V. 19. He rent his clothes. The usual sign of grief or distress in eastern countries. Mr. Van Lennep says that at the present day "Care is taken not to injure the garment by this operation. The central seam of the kufyan or robe, is ripped three or four inches down, and this is afterwards easily repaired with a needle and thread." This rending of garments sometimes indicated grief and horror, (Gen. xxxiv, 20; Job i, 20) and sometimes it was a sign of repentance for sin, (1 Kings xxi, 27). Josiah may have felt both for his sins and the sins of his people. There is a sealed one to him notwithstanding the solemn directions contained in it for its being read by kings; see Deut. xvii, 15, 18-20; xxxi, 10, 11; Matthew Henry remarks on this passage: "Were the things contained in the Scripture new to us, as they were here to Josiah, surely they would make deeper impressions upon us than they commonly do."

THE RESULT PRODUCED.—V. 20-22.

V. 20. The king commanded. He seems to have acted very promptly and firmly. Ahikam the son of Shaphan.—The friend and pupil of Jeremiah (Jer. xxvi, 24), and father of Geshai, who became governor of Judah under the Babylonians, (2 Kings xxv, 22). Abdon, see 2 Kings xxii, 12, for a variation of this name and that of his father.

V. 21. Go, enquire of the Lord. That is, to ascertain some prophet who may give us directions as to what we ought to do to avert the threatened indignation of the Lord, of which we have read. "Because our fathers have not kept etc." Josiah, it will be observed, assumes that preceding generations had had full opportunities of hearing and knowing the Law, but they had turned a deaf ear to it. He thus regards the loss as comparatively recent."—Sp. Com.

V. 22. Went to Huldah the prophetess. "It might have been expected that the royal commissioners would have gone to Jeremiah, on whom the prophetic spirit had descended in Josiah's 13th year (Jer. i, 2), or five years previously to the finding of the Law. Perhaps Jeremiah was at some distance from Jerusalem at the time; or his office was not yet so highly recognized."—Sp. Com. Among the prophetesses of Scripture were Miriam (Exod. xv, 20; Num. xii, 2), Deborah (Jud. iv, 4), Isaiah's wife (Is. viii, 3), and Anna (Luke ii, 36). In the college. The margin gives: "in the second part," which is said to be the preferable translation; and the meaning is that Huldah dwelt in the second, new, or outer city which had been enclosed with a wall by Manasseh (see chap. xxii, 14, and compare Zeph. i, 10).

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. We should live God every moment of our lives that we live in an age when the Scriptures can never be lost again, and when every one may have a copy not only of the Law but the Gospel also for himself.

2. The Scriptures should be read reverently, as containing the Word of God; and they should command our implicit and prompt obedience.

3. Those who read the Scriptures as Josiah did will obtain great blessing (see verse 27), while those who neglect and disobey God's Word, with all the light and opportunities of the present age,

may expect the curse of God to rest upon them in far greater measure than the Jews of Josiah's age (see verses 23-25).

Religious Intelligence.

DENOMINATIONAL.

ONTARIO AND QUEBEC.

Baptisms reported during the month: at Ailsa Craig, 10; Alvinston, 5; Barrie, 3; Bramford First, East Ward, 2; Bristol, 3; Brooke, 7; Burlington, 2; Chatham, 2; Claremont, 22; Collingwood, 5; Durham, 20; Dutton, 3; Forest, 5; Foxcville, 8; Glanville, 12; Kempsville, 30; Montreal, St. Catherine st., 5; Oldest, 7; Pakenham; Park Hill, 6; Priceville, 48; Toronto, Jarvis st., 16.

Pastoral Changes.—Rev. JOHN ALEXANDER has resigned the care of the East Ward church in order to take the agency of the Grande Ligne Mission.

Rev. JOSHUA DENOVAN has received and accepted the hearty and unanimous call of the Alexander st. church, Toronto, and enters on his ministry there on the 17th or 24th of March.

Bro. D. B. BURKETT of the C. I., Institute has accepted the call of the Leamington church.

Rev. J. G. CALDER, having resigned the pastorate of the Ailsa Craig church, has accepted a call to the St. Mary's church.

Chapel Opening. The new brick chapel for the ORILLIA Baptist church, was publicly set apart for the worship of God on Lord's day, March, 2d. The dedication sermon was preached by Rev. Dr. Davidson, Secretary of the Convention, at eleven a. m. to a full congregation. In the afternoon Rev. Joseph D. King, of Yorkville, preached, and in the evening Dr. Davidson, again occupied the pulpit. All the sermons were able, eloquent and impressive. Attendance was increasingly large at each successive service. No Baptist service ever before held in Orillia attracted so many people.

On the following Monday evening a very successful Tea Meeting was held. After the usual bountiful supply of material comfort had been disposed of, the chair was occupied by Dr. Buchan, President of the Home Missionary Convention. Addresses were given by the chairman, Revs. E. D. Sherman, pastor of the church; H. F. Griffin, Barrie; James Conits, Collingwood; D. King, Yorkville; the resident Presbyterian and C. Methodist ministers of the town; and, last but not least, by Dr. Davidson, whose speech drew forth from the audience pledges towards the liquidation of the chapel debt, amounting to the handsome sum of \$1,370. This whole achievement is provided for with the exception of about \$500. The response to the worthy doctor's appeal is considered most noble. We trust that now the Orillia church is fairly established, its prosperity, material and spiritual, may be very marked.

EMERSON BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL.—We clip the following letter of acknowledgment from the Canadian Baptist, of February 14th—

"The undersigned desires to express his most sincere thanks for the liberal gift of ten dollars sent by the Baptist S. School, Jarvis St. Toronto, and also for additional ten dollars by the Winnipeg Baptist S. School, to purchase a library for Emerson Baptist S. School, which has been done, and books will assist us greatly in our labours, and enjoy a want for ever since we had the blessed privilege to direct the minds of the young in this prairie town to the one thing needful. I would take this opportunity to acknowledge the receipt of ten dollars last winter from the Jarvis