## SABBATH SCHOOL FEACHER.

## INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XIV.

April 7. 378. 3 GOSIAH'S EARLY PIETY. (2 Chron, xxxiv. 1-8.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."—Eccl. xii. I.

HOME STUDIES.

M. Eccl. xii. 1-14.....Golden Text and connection.

M. Eccl. xii. 1-14...... Golden Text and connection.
T. Prov. viii. 12-21.... Early seeking rewarded.
W. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 1-8. Josiah's early piety.
Th. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 9-13. The temple repaired.
F. Ps. cxxii. 1-9..... Joy in God's house.
S. 2 Kings xxiii. 13-20. The altar at Bethel broken.
S. Ps. xxvii. 1-14...... The house of the Lord sought.

## . HELPS TO STUDY.

Manasseh died about 643 B.C., and was succeeded on the Manasseh died about 643 B.C., and was succeeded on the throne by his son Amon, who was probably called by the idolatrous Manasseh after the Egyptian god of that name. Amon was twenty years old when he became the fourteenth king of the separate kingdom of Judah. His reign lasted only two years, from 643 to 641 B.C. He was a bad man, pursuing the same idolatrous and other evil courses which his father had pursued in the earlier and larger part of his reign. At the and of two years, some of his servants conhis father had pursued in the carrier and single reign. At the end of two years, some of his servants conspired against him, and murdered him; but they were not allowed to derive any benefit from the crime. The people

spired against him, and murdered him; but they were not allowed to derive any benefit from the crime. The people rose in indignation against the conspirators, and put them to death, and recognized Josiah, the son of Amon, at that time only eight years old, as their king.

I. EARLY PIETY: Verses 1-3.

Josiah shares with Hezekiah the praise of walking perfectly in the ways of David his father. His reign marks the last dying glory of the earthly kingdom of David. It may indeed seem mysterious that a doom, so often postponed by the repentance and faith of earlier kings, should have followed so close upon the reign of the best and most zealous of them all, and that he himself should have fallen by a premature and violent death. But we must look beyond the personal character of the king to the state of the people and their rulers. We have seen that the great reform of Hezekiah was probably superficial; the apostacy under Manasseh and Amon was the last and lowest stage in the long course of national degeneracy. The very violence of Josiah's reformation indicates the absence of true and spontaneous sympathy among the people. In short, they were past purifying except by the fiercest fires of affliction. Yet the popular election which placed Josiah on the throne, of itself marks some strong change of public feeling. There was also a circle of remarkable persons in or around the palace and temple, who, possibly driven together by the recent persecutions, had formed a compact band, which remained unbroken till the fall of the monarchy itself.

Idolatry was rampant in the land. The boy king may have kept aloof from it, but the narrative does not say so. In any case, it was in his sixteenth year that he began to seek after the God of David his father, and in his twentieth year that he began his reformation.

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Josiah is, therefore, the type of those who, just as they are passing out of childhood into youth, take the decisive step, and yield up their hearts wholly to the Lord. He sought the Lord, we are told, while he was yet young.

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." What an utterly paltry and ungrateful thing it is to think of giving God only the dregs of life.

Suppose a poor man gathering the fruit off a tree in his little gaiden. He carefully separates the best, and keeps them for himself; the half-ripe and the decayed he puts into a basket, and sends them as a present to his employer, or to some benefactor. What would you think of that man?

In one of our Lord's parables we read of some fishermen who found their net filled with fish of every kind. They "gathered the good into vessels, and cast the bad away." Suppose they had a tribute to pay to the ruler of their country, and had sent the bad fish in payment. What would you think of them?

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country, and had sent the bad fish in payment. What would you think of them?

Here is a boy who looks forward to (say) sixty or seventy years of life. He is now full of health, strength, capacity for enjoyment. He sees the old men about him feeble, infirm, taking little pleasure in what pleases him. He thinks, "What a comfort religion must be when you are old, and going to die! I will enjoy myself, get on in the world, and then, in my old age, repent and die happy." Of course one might reply, "You know not how many years you can count upon;" but, putting this aside, and assuming he really will live to be an old man, what do you think of his offering his worst to his heavenly Benefactor and King?

It was not so with king Josiah. If it had been—if he had waited for old age before serving God—he never would have served him at all, for he did not live to see his fortieth birthday. But, though cut off in the flower of his age, he has left behind him a name typical of all that is lovely and of good report, and which affords a signal proof of the truth of God's promise, "I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me." And Josiah decided thus early for God in the face of the most terrible disadvantages and opposition.

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early for God in the face of the most terrible disadvantages and opposition.

The idolatry Josiah had to overcome can be readily pictured out from verses 4-7, compared with the fuller account in 2 Kings xxiii. 4-20. And how utterly debased the people had become, not only in religion but in daily life, we learn from the prophecy of Zephaniah, and the earlier chapters of Jeremiah; for instance, Zeph. iii. 1, 5; Jer. v. 25-31. It is easy enough to lead an outwardly religious life in the midst of godly surroundings. The test is, Can you be faithful to Christ when all around you are against Him?

The great feature of Josiah's character was his straightness.

He declined neither to the right hand nor to the left. "Make straight paths for your feet," says the apostle. (Heb. xii. 13.) "Make thy way straight before my face," prays David. (Ps. v. 8.) How can we insure a straight walk? Every boy knows how to do it in literal walking. If he watches his feet never so carefully he will make a crooked path, and on snow or sand or mud his footstare. It he watches his feet never so careilly he will make a crooked path, and on snow, or sand, or mud, his footsteps will show it only too plainly. No, he must fix his eyes on the point he is aiming at, and then he will go straight. So in the spiritual life. "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyellds look straight before thee." (Prov. iv. 25.) "Let us run the race set before us, looking unto Jesus." (Heb xii, I. 2.) (Heb. xii. 1, 2.)
II. EARNEST REFORM: Verses 4-8.

II. EARNEST REFORM: Verses 4-8.

At the age of sixteen, when the pious king had attained his majority, he hegan to purge Judah and Jerusalem of idolatry. A mighty task, when we consider (I.) The accumulations of more than four hundred years of idolatry, secret and open. (2.) The depraved condition of the people, who had no hearty desire for godliness; and (3.) The undercurrent of opposition from the nobility, who were wedded to worldliness and idols. Yet this young man veatured to enter upon the work of reform. "You have the world against you," said a scoffer to Athanasius the reformer. "No, it is Athanasius against the world!" was the response.

world against you, said a scoffer to Athanasius the reformer. "No, it is Athanasius against the world?" was the response.

His reform was thorough. It was done under his own personal direction. He travelled throughout his kingdom, giving to the destruction of the idols his own supervision; partly from the energy of his character, partly because he could not fully trust his officers, who were infected with the prevailing evils. He made dust of the images, burning the wooden ones to ashes and grinding those of metal and stone to powder. Ex. xxxii. 20. The idols were still more dishonoured by strewing their dust upon the graves of the idolaters. And to desecrate the altars, he burnt upon them the bones of the idolatrous priests, who were probably first seized and put to death. 2 Kings xxiii. 20. Then fell in rapid succession the houses of those who ministered to the licentious rites close by the temple, and the sanctuaries that stood just outside the gates of Jerusalem. The wooden chariots consecrated to the sun, the brazen altars planted by Ahaz and Manassela in different parts of the temple, disappeared. Everywhere, as by a kind of exorcism, he desecrated the sanctuaries of the high places, especially those in the valley of Hinnom and on Mount Olivet, by heaping upon them the bones of the dead. Even beyond the limits of Judah his zeal extended to the cities of Manassela, Ephraim, and Simeon, and to the old Israelite sanctuaries of Bethel and Samaria. Thither he came as the long expected deliverer, foretold by Iddo the seer. A terrible vengeance followed on those who had ministered at these shrines. Those that he still found alive were executed upon their own altars. Of those who were dead, the bones were dug up (with the one exception of the prophet of upon their own altars. Of those who were dead, the bones were dug up (with the one exception of the prophet of Bethel, whose memory was still preserved on the spot,) and thrown upon the sites of the altars which they had once served. (Note I.)

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Josiah made no compromise with sin. By his vigorous measures the realm was brought into outward conformity. But it their hearts the people were still idolatrous, and too degenerate to be permanently reformed. They needed the sharp discipline of the captivity.

His reform was sincere.—It is very easy to oppose other people's religion and yet care nothing for true religion our selves. Josiah not only put down false worship—he set up the true worship. Money was collected—workmen sent to repair and beautify the temple. Priests and Levites all arranged properly. Singers in their white robes—musicians with their instruments. The worship of God once more set up in Jerusalem. And in this work he had some noble helpers. (Note 2.)

Be, like Josiah, earnest in doing good. Every good ser-

up in Jerusalem. And in this work he had some noble helpers. (Note 2.)

Be, like Josiah; earnest in doing good. Every good servant works well. Every good soldier fights well. See what advice St. Paul once gave to a young soldier (2 Tim. ii. 3.)

Be earnest—brave for God. Don't be ashamed of doing right. Some boys very brave in many things—very angry at being called "cowards." Yet not always brave enough to do what is right! This not much like Josiah. Hard sometimes to bear sneers and laughter. But what is that to displeasing God! Bear it all bravely. Be like Josiah—earnest, active, brave, good. earnest, active, brave, good.

EXPLANATORY NOTES. .

The northern kingdom had been destroyed about a hundred years before this by the Assyrians, and most of the people had been carried into captivity; a scattered population, however, still remained, which was increased by colonies of foreigners transported from the east by the Assyrian monarch (2 Kings xvii. 24). From the time of the fall of Samaria, 721 B.C., the country had been subject to the king of Assyria; but the Assyrian power was now very much weakened, and was near its fall, which took place a few years afterward, in 606 B.C. Josiah, therefore, ventured to assume jurisdiction over the whole of what had once been the land of Israel. Probably he entertained the design of restoring the political as well as the religious unity of the people. The abolishment of idolatry in Ephraian involved the pollution and destruction of the altar and temple of the restoring the pointian as well as the lengths and of the pollution and destruction of the altar and temple of the pollution and destruction of the altar and temple of the golden calf at Bethel, which had been the royal chapel of the kings of Israel (Amos vii. 13); and this was a remarkable fulfilment of a singular prophecy. Compare 2 Kings xxiii. 15-18, with 1 Kings xiii. 1, 2.—With their mattocks. The word thus rendered has caused some perplexity and discussion. The word is written in our present Hebrew Bible as two words; hence either there are really two words, or else a single word has accidentally become divided into Bible as two words; hence either there are really two words, or else a single word has accidentally become divided into two words. Gesenius recognizes two words, and translates, "he searched their houses," omiting the italicized words in our version. Most scholars recognize but one word; but they give it different meanings, according as they derive it differently. Some take it to be the word which means sword, axe, or other sharp instrument; and render, "with their swords," or, as our translators, "with their mattocks," or "mauls." Others take it to be the word which means desolation and ruin, and render, "in their ruins," that is,

the ruins of the cities: "so did he in the cities of Manasseh, etc., in the ruins round about;" or, in the ruinous cities. Furst takes it to be a word akin to the Arabic words for "grave-stone," "pyramid," and gives it the meaning, "mausoleum," "pyramid." The word is so used in Job iii. 14, "which built mausoleums [English version, desolate placed for themselves. desolate places] for themselves.

desolate places] for themselves.

2. Shaphan, called scribe in 2 Kings xxii. 3. The scribe or secretary was on an equality with the governor and royal recorder. We may think of the scribes as the king's secretaries writing his letters, drawing up his decrees, managing his finances. The scribes became a body of men whose duty it was to transcribe old records, and put in writing what had been handed down orally; then to preserve the sacred books, the laws, hymns, prophecies, of the past. Recorder. An officer of high rank in the Jewish state, exercising the functions not simply of an annalist, or maker of records, but of chancellor or president of the privy council. His title has reference to his office as adviser of the king.

## THE LATE REV. DR. DUFF.

The funeral of the Rev. Dr. Alexander Duff, took place on Feb. 18th, at Edinburgh, the burying-ground being the Grange Cemetery. The funeral was a public one, and was attended by the Lord Provost, the magistrates, and the town council, and the representatives of the various Protestant Churches and missionary Societies. The outer coffin, of polished oak, bore the following simple inscription:—"Alexander Duff, LL.D., born 25th April, 1806; died 12th February, 1878." The place of sepulture is on the south side of the main walk in the cemetery, in the tomb where the wife of the late Dr. Duff was interred in 1865. On the opposite side of the walk, about 100 yards westward, is the wife of the late Dr. Duff was interred in 1865. On the opposite side of the walk, about 100 yards westward, is the grave of Dr. Chalmers, and at the south end of the walk is the burial place of Dr. Guthrie. The graves of Dr. Finlayson and other eminent divines are within a radius of a few hundred yards. The Edinburgh Daily Review of Monday says that on Sunday there was scarcely a Protestant Church throughout Scotland in which allusion, more or less direct, was not made, either in the prayers or sermons, to the lamented death of the Rev. Dr. Duff, the "prince of missionaries." Dr. Horatius Bonar, in concluding his sermon on Sunday mornics and the service of the service the lamented death of the Rev. Dr. Duff, the "prince of missionaries." Dr. Horatius Bonar, in concluding his sermon on Sunday morning, said:—"One of the greatest of our great men has fallen; a standard-hearer; a general; one whose life has been no common life, for zeal and energy and self-denying love, whose death will make no common blank amongst us, and whose name has been and will be held in no common honour in all the Churches of God throughout the earth. God raised him up and fitted him for the doing of a work of no ordinary magnitude, both in India and in Scotland, a work extending over half a century in so far as the past is concerned, but stretching far beyond that in its effects upon the future of our world. With genius, mental force, unslacking fervour, far-ranging vision, administrative skill, overwhelming eloquence, and a fearlessness of nature which set all danger at defiance, he went forward in his missionary career as if saying what Rowland Hill is credited with answering when the question was put, "When do you intend to stop?" "Not till we have carried all before us!" A lover of his own land, he yet loved all lands. oredited with answering when the question was put, "When do you intend to stop?" "Not till we have carried all before us!". A lover of his own land, he yet loved all lands. A lover of his own Church, he yet loved all Churches. The world was in his heart, and his heart was in the world, we may truly say in the highest sense. His intercessions went round and round the globe; and, if they rested on any land with neguliar longing it was on India or on any city with round and round the globe; and, if they rested on any land with peculiar longing, it was on India, or on any city with special earnestness, it was Calcutta. As one of Napoleon's soldiers said to the surgeon who was probing a chest-wound, "a tittle deeper and you'll find the Emperor;" so our missionary warrior now gone to be nearer his Captain, might have said, with his hand laid upon his breast, "a little deeper, and you'll find India;" or, more than this, "a little deeper still and you'll find Christ"—yes, Christ, whose love, whose cross, whose death were all to him in life and death. Self-denying, generous, loving, large-hearted, and utterly unworldly, he showed what a servant of Christ should be; the Christian and the missionary always, less than the Christian and the missionary never. He took his stand at the cross of Christ, the old cross of the Divine sinbearer, and bore witness to its efficacy, its sufficiency, and stand at the cross of Crist, the old cross of the Divine sin-bearer, and bore witness to its efficacy, its sufficiency, and its glory. He dreaded everything that would nullify that cross or obscure its splendour, as the one light of a dark world, the one hope for his much-loved India. He dreaded error in the Church of God, and often spoke of the Rational-istic and Infidel leaven that is now permeating all Churches, with a tone and a look of mingled alarm and melancholy, such as few voices and few faces save his own could give exsuch as few voices and few faces save his own could give expression to. How much the present condition of the Free Church, in her exposure to Rationalistic contagion, weighed pression to. How much the present condition of the Free Church, in her exposure to Rationalistic contagion, weighed upon his mighty spirit, those well knew to whom he so often and so freely unbosomed himself on these momentous questions. But we cannot in a few sentences say what we might wish to do in regard to him, whom God for a season gave us in his love, and has now, in what seems to be the darkness of a mysterious Providence, taken away. One is perplexed at these great bereavements, and tries in vain to answer the question—What do they mean or portend? Is it night, or is it day, that they fortell? Does God mean to leave us and our children face to face with utter darkness? or is He saying, "be of good cheer, the day is coming up; I extinguish the lamps because the sun is rising." Yet we cannot help feeling that we are left poorer and weaker by the death of such men. For themselves, it is well. The righteous are taken away from the evil to come. They rest while we are left to labour. They go to be with Christ, which is far better, while we are kept here for a little longer amid strife, and error, and sorrow. But the Master is coming—sooner, perhaps, than we think—and the reward, which will more than compensate for all the trials through which we may have to pass, is sure and everlasting. The work to be done is not ours, but his, and He will provide the workmen. The truth to be maintained is the truth of which He Himself is the Alpha and the Omega, and He will see thatthe witnesses are raised up for asserting it in all its fulness.