

## SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

## INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

## LESSON V.

Feb. 3 } JEIIOSHAPHAT REPROVED. { 2 Chron. xix.  
1878. } 1-5.

**GOLDEN TEXT:**—"There is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts."—Verse 7.

## HOME STUDIES.

- M. 2 Chron. xviii. 1-11.....Affinity with Ahab.  
T. 2 Chron. xviii. 12-27.....Prophecy of Micaiah.  
W. 2 Chron. xviii. 28-34.....Jehoshaphat's escape.  
Th. 2 Chron. xix. 1-11.....Jehoshaphat reproved.  
F. Ps. lxxvii. 1-8.....Judges exhorted.  
S. Rom. xiii. 1-10.....Rulers God's ministers.  
S. Ps. lxxv. 1-10.....God the Judge.

## HELPS TO STUDY.

The reign of Jehoshaphat was one of unbroken prosperity for many years. In the early part of it he made a treaty of peace with Ahab, king of Israel; and the two kingdoms which had been in hostility to one another ever since their separation, a period of about sixty years, now at last for the first time were at peace and in alliance with one another. In pursuance of this peaceful policy, Jehoshaphat went from Jerusalem to Jezreel, to pay a friendly visit to his brother monarch. Availing himself of his presence, and perhaps as a test of his friendliness, Ahab proposed to him that they should together make an attack upon Ramoth-Gilead, a strong fortress on the east of the Jordan, which belonged to Ahab, but which had been taken from him by the Syrians in a recent invasion. Jehoshaphat readily assented, in spite of an ominous prediction by an eminent prophet. The attack was unsuccessful; Ahab was severely wounded, and died before evening on the field of battle. The Israelites retreated, and dispersed to their homes, without being pursued by the Syrians; and Jehoshaphat, finding it inexpedient to return to Jezreel, his royal host being dead, and affairs there being in confusion returned direct to Jerusalem.

He came in peace, that is, safe, uninjured; so that the prediction of Micah (chap. xviii. 16), was fulfilled in regard to him as well as his word concerning Ahab. On his return he was met by the seer, Jehu the son of Hanani (Note 1) with

## I. FAITHFUL WORDS OF REBUKE: verses 2, 3.

Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?

Observe the nature of the king's sin. He had helped in an ungodly enterprise, against which the prophet had warned him. He had formed an alliance with a gross idolater, whose family and court were fearfully corrupt. He could, it is true, plead a very plausible excuse to justify his sin.

Syria of Damascus was at this time growing in power, and threatening the independence of both the Palestinian kingdoms. Her possession of the highlands of Gilead was a standing menace, no less to Judah than to Israel. Their substitution, therefore, of friendship and alliance for distrust and hostility, and their close union against the common enemy, must to mere worldly politicians in either country have seemed eminently fit and proper, and calculated to be of advantage to both nations.

There is a right way in which to help the ungodly. Pity them, relieve their wants. The good Samaritan did not ask whether the man who fell among thieves was a good or a bad man. God Himself is kind to the evil and unthankful, Luke vi. 35.

But this is very different from intimacies with the wicked for the sake of worldly advantage. This nothing can justify, and it is the source of great sins and great sorrows. "Can one go upon hot coals and his feet not be burned?"

Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord. If a man loves what God hates, it must be ill with him, and must continue so until he renounces his sin, and gives himself up in complete self-surrender to God as his Saviour.

The sin of God's children especially never escapes rebuke. It is sure to find them out. But it is in mercy, to bring back the transgressor. Even when the sin is forgiven, its evil effects often fall upon the sinner, and become in God's hand a discipline of love. So it was in this case. God punished his house by wars with Moab and Ammon (chap. xi. 1), and by means of his own son (the son-in-law of Ahab), who destroyed many of his children (chap. xxi. 4), and by means of his daughter-in-law Athaliah, daughter of Ahab (chap. xxii. 20).

Nevertheless there are good things found in thee. God loves to speak of the good and rejoices in all He can find. He sets praise ever against reproof, and makes bright hopes follow His condemnations.

The prophet set us an example both of faithfulness and tenderness in rebuke. He is frank, plain spoken, fearless of any harm that might come to himself. He could not have forgotten that for like fidelity King Asa had cast his father Hanani into prison. He is at the same time courteous and kind; unlike those who are quick to censure, and slow to commend.

## II. WORKS WORTHY OF REPENTANCE: verses 4-9.

The king received the reproof with meekness. Of this his silence here seems a sufficient proof. Then he kept aloof from occasions of fresh sin. He went no more after strange alliances. He dwelt at Jerusalem.

But the best proof of his penitence was that he did what he could to repair the wrong his example had done. He went out, perhaps not in person but by a commission, as he did before in the early part of his reign (chap. xvii. 7), to which the word "again" refers. From Beersheba the well of the oath (Gen. xxvi. 32, 33), the southernmost town in the kingdom, to Mount Ephraim, its northern boundary. Thus he sought to have the people brought back to the Lord God of their fathers. And in order to place

the work of reformation upon a sounder and more enduring basis, he set about the improvement of the administration of justice. What exact change Jeho-haphat made in the judicial system of Judah, it is impossible to determine. There had no doubt been, from the first, local judges or magistrates, in all the chief cities and towns. David seemed to have assigned the office of judge to 6,000 Levites (1 Chron. xix. 4). Probably Jehoshaphat found corruption widely spread, and the magistrates in some places tainted with the prevailing idolatry. He therefore made a fresh appointment of judges throughout the whole country, in all the fenced cities, that is the fortified cities. Probably most of the larger towns in the kingdom were by this time fortified (chap. xi. 5, xiv. 7, xvii. 2). The king set the judges in the fenced cities, then, simply because these were the larger towns. The expression means either that the king concentrated the administration of justice in the large towns, abolishing the village judges; or, more probably, that his reform was directed more particularly to the administration of justice in the large places, and that he did not disturb existing arrangements in the villages. City by city. The Hebrew form of expression for "in every city."

Ye judge not for man, but for the Lord. Two truths are here implied; first, that the ruler is the minister of God, Deut. i. 17; Rom. xiii. 1-4; second, that every thing is to be done unto the Lord, and not merely unto men, Eph. vi. 6, 7; Col. iii. 23.

Who is with you, to watch you, here is warning; to give wisdom and help, here is encouragement.

For there is no iniquity, injustice, with the Lord, nor respect of persons, partialities, nor taking of gifts, bribery.

Besides this, Jehoshaphat established at Jerusalem a supreme court for the decision of difficult cases which the judges of the inferior courts could not decide. It consisted of three classes of judges, Levites, priests, and the chief of the fathers, that is, the great heads of tribes and clans. Probably the priests and Levites took cognizance chiefly of cases wherein there was dispute concerning the performance of religious obligations, such as payments to the temple, the redemption of the first-born, etc., and thus constituted a kind of ecclesiastical court, while the chief fathers decided ordinary civil and criminal cases. The two classes of cases are distinguished in this verse, the former being called the judgment of the Lord, and the latter controversies. When they returned to Jerusalem. This clause has given some trouble. In the original it is not "when they returned," but, "and they returned." Some think that Jehoshaphat and his attendants must be spoken of, since they are the only ones who are said to have left Jerusalem (verse 4); and therefore either maintain that the clause has become misplaced, and should precede the eighth verse, or attach it to what follows, and make it the beginning of a new sentence. Others think that the priests and Levites and fathers are spoken of; but, seeing that nothing is said of their leaving Jerusalem, they think that the Hebrew word rendered "returned" has, through the carelessness of scribes, taken the place of one almost exactly like it which means "dwelt;" and they render, "and they dwelt at Jerusalem." Is it not a better explanation, that there is a hint here that the court spoken of was not merely metropolitan, but was also to some extent a circuit court, visiting other cities, but coming back to Jerusalem as its chief place of sitting? Compare what is said of Samuel: "He went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places; and his return was to Ramah" (1 Sam. vii. 15).

The king's charge to his judges applies to every one of us. There are three requirements. First of all and greatest of all is that fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom. A right apprehension of God's character and a deeply reverential sense of His presence control most effectively all that a man does, so that he will do it faithfully, and with a perfect heart, a heart sincere, entirely in His service, undivided in its allegiance.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES.

1. Jehu, son of Hanani. A prophet of Judah whose ministrations were chiefly directed to Israel. His father was probably the seer who attacked Asa (2 Chron. xvi. 17.) He must have begun his career as a prophet when very young. He first denounced Baasha (1 xvi. 1-7), and then after an interval of thirty years, re-appears to denounce Jehoshaphat for his alliance with Ahab. He survived Jehoshaphat, and wrote his life (2 Chron. xx. 34).

2. Sophronius, a wise teacher, would not suffer even his grown-up sons and daughters to associate with those whose conduct was not pure and upright. "Dear father," said the gentle Eulalia to him one day, when he forbade her, in company with her brother, to visit the volatile Lucinda,—"dear father, you must think us very childish if you imagine that we should be exposed to danger by it." The father took in silence a dead coal from the hearth, and reached it to his daughter. "It will not burn you, my child: take it." Eulalia did so, and behold! her beautiful white hand was soiled and blackened, and, as it chanced, her white dress also. "We cannot be too careful in handling coals," said Eulalia, in vexation. "Yes truly," said the father. "You see, my child, the coals, even if they do not burn, blacken: so it is with the company of the vicious."—From the German.

**BIBLES! BIBLES!**—See in another part of this paper an offer of high-priced Bibles at low rates. The offer is genuine, and all orders and letters will have prompt attention. We suggest a Bible is a handsome Christmas present.

**AN ASTONISHING OFFER.**—"The Independent," of New York, offers in another column to give away, absolutely, a Worcester's Unabridged Quarto Pictorial Dictionary, which retails everywhere for \$10, and is, of course, a household necessity. How they can do it, we must confess, a mystery; but that they do there is no question. "The Independent" is now publishing REV. JOSEPH COOK's famous Boston Monday Lectures, which are creating so much discussion everywhere. See advertisement of "The Independent" in this paper.

## ADVICE TO YOUNG MEN.

The Rev. Canon Garbett in a letter addressed to the Secretary of the Surbiton Young Men's Christian Association, on the occasion of the Annual Meeting, gave some excellent words of farewell warning and advice to the members of the Association, which cannot be too widely read, and which therefore, we reproduce as follows:

I exhort all young men to stand firm in the simple faith of Christ Jesus, as it is taught us in the Word of God, and as it was held by the fathers of the primitive ages of Christianity, and by the confessors and martyrs of the Reformation. It is the tendency of the day to despise the wisdom of the past, and in the conceit of modern science and modern discovery to frame a Christianity more suited to the tastes and opinions of the day than the old Christianity of Apostles, Prophets, and Martyrs, and of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Sometimes it is the doctrine of the Atonement—the true vicarious atonement of Christ for sin—which is called into question. Sometimes it is the historical truth of the Old Testament Scriptures—sometimes it is the inspired and Divine authority of the Word of God—sometimes it is the resurrection from the dead—sometimes it is the immortality of the soul,—nay, even the existence of the soul itself, and the eternal duration of future punishment—which men, wiser than God who cannot lie, and more tender-hearted than the God of comfort and the Author of all consolation, dare to call into question. These are the new lights, we are told,—the latest results of the enlightened consciousness of the nineteenth century. Dear friends, believe it not, trust it no more than you trust the mists of the morning, or the empty visions of the night. Stand you in the old ways, and no more doubt them than you doubt God. Be content with the atoning righteousness which was the hope of St. Paul, and with that mercy of God which suffices for the true heart of John. I bid you beware of these modern delusions, never more than when they come to you in the garb of an angel of light, under the profession, I mean, of a peculiar jealousy for the character of God. Trust God to take care of his own, and for yourselves see that you add nothing to his Word, lest He add unto you the plagues that are written within this Book, and that you take nothing away from the Word lest God take away your part out of the Book of Life. For this reason be especially careful not to be misled by the sound of words. Words are important only for the meaning they convey. It is not the sound that will satisfy your souls, but the sense. There are those, and they are not few, who use the old words in a new sense, and while they tickle your ears with the old Evangelical sounds, would rob you of the old Evangelical doctrines. Be on your guard against them. Hold fast that thou hast, O man of God, that no man take thy crown. Be Christians first of all things else; and last of all things else—aye, and in middle of all things else, too—eschew politics and partisanship, and in a human sense of our human weakness pray for a right understanding in all things. Be faithful unto death, and when Christ shall give us the crown of life, you and I shall meet together in heaven. I bid you farewell in the words of the Apostle, words which he spoke in this precise reference,—not, that is, with regard to the faith of your heart, but with regard to the Scriptural soundness of your belief—"Stand fast in the faith; quit you like men: be strong."

A LADY died lately in the neighbourhood of New York, who studied and mastered the Hebrew language, in order that she might be able to read the Old Testament in the original. Her walk was a private one. She was not known as a student. She was a lovely Christian character, and a thorough searcher into the Word of God. She therefore became thoroughly conversant with the Hebrew, and has sometimes been heard to say of the Old Testament thus studied, "I can give you no idea of the riches and fulness of the meaning; it is untranslatable."

"WE owe more to God for redeeming us than for making us. His word made us; but when He came to redeem us, that word must be made flesh, and that flesh must suffer. In our creation He gave us ourselves, but in our redemption He gave us Himself; and by giving Himself for us, gave us ourselves again that were lost; so that we owe ourselves, and all that we have, twice told. And now, what shall we give? Ourselves a thousand times over? And yet, if we do give ourselves a thousand times over, what are we to God? And yet, if we do give ourselves to Him and His service, such as we are, and such as we can, He accepts it, and will reward it. I will never grudge God his own; I have nothing that is not his; and if I give it to Him He will restore it again with interest. Never any man was a loser by God."—Bishop Henshaw.

## Births, Marriages and Deaths.

NOT EXCEEDING FOUR LINES 25 CENTS.

## MARRIED.

At Strathroy, on Wednesday, the 9th inst., by the Rev. Robert Scobie, Presbyterian minister, Mr. John Milliken, to Miss Catharine Whyte, both of East Williams.

## MEETINGS OF PRESBYTERY.

LINDSAY.—At Woodville, on 26th of February.

BARRIE.—At Barrie, 1st Tuesday of February.

STRATFORD.—In Knox Church, Stratford, on 29th January, at 10 a.m.

OTTAWA.—In St. Andrew's Church, Ottawa, on Tuesday, 5th February, at 3 p.m.

PARIS.—Presbytery of Paris meets in River Street Church, Paris, on first Tuesday of February, 1878, at 11 a.m.

LONDON.—Next regular meeting in 1st Presbyterian Church, London, on the last Tuesday in March, 1878, at 2 p.m.

MANITOBA.—In Knox Church, Winnipeg, 2nd Wednesday of March.

TORONTO.—In the usual place, on the 1st Monday of March.