

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

FIRST QUARTER: STUDIES ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH.

B. C. 765. LESSON VIII. UZZIAH'S PRIDE PUNISHED; or, Trouble for the Presumptuous. 2 Chron. 26, 16-22. Commit to memory verses 19, 20, February 24.

EXPLANATORY.

STRONG. 1. In his security upon the throne, where he had been placed during a popular tumult. 2. In the material prosperity of his kingdom, which had grown rich during years of peace. 3. In the strength of his defenses and the number of his warriors. 4. In his conquest of the surrounding nations, from Philistia to Ammon. 5. In his fame and honor abroad. His heart was lifted up. Prosperity beget presumption: strength led to self-sufficiency; instead of gratitude to God, there came pride of position. To his destruction. The proud heart ever trembles on the verge of a precipice. See GOLDEN TEXT. Transgressed. The sin of other kings was in forsaking God's house; his was in seeking it sacrilegiously. "The good way is one, by-ways are many."—Henry. Went into the temple. Into the holy place, where none save the priests might enter. To burn incense. He wished to be like the kings of all the surrounding nations, who combined the regal and sacerdotal functions, and were heads of the religion as well of the State. Altar of incense. An altar covered with plates of gold and standing in the holy place, in front of the curtain which separated it from the sanctuary. His crime was sacrilege, an irreverent trespass upon holy things. [Teacher, impress the duty of reverence in behaviour during the service of worship in God's house.]

VALIANT MEN. The highest valor is not in facing bayonets, but in standing by conscience, and speaking manfully of God and the right. Withstood. Not by violent acts, but by calm admonition and reproof. Ministers who would be faithful to God must be ready to rebuke iniquity, even in the highest places. It appertains not unto thee. There are duties for all in God's service, but to each his own vocation. The king could wave the sceptre, but not the censor. Priests the sons of Aaron. The honor of being at once priest and king was reserved for the coming Messiah, who should both wear the crown and offer the sacrifice. Neither, for thine honor. Nothing forbidden by God can bring lasting honor to men. [Teacher, call attention to the calmness and directness of this admonition. Let those who must speak against evil, do it reverently, and without anger.]

UZZIAH WAS WROTH. Sin of rebellion under reproof, added to sin of sacrilege. Not so did his great ancestors, David and Jehoshaphat, receive the rebuke for their sins. Censer. A bowl for burning incense, held suspended by chains. Leprosy. A terrible disease, beginning with a white spot, and turning the skin to a chalky, corpse-like appearance. It cut off its victim from every association with men, and ended only in death. Throughout Scripture it stands as a living type of the effects of sin. Rose up. A sudden judgment, in the very act of sin; a signal judgment, in its severity; a public judgment, before many witnesses; a conspicuous judgment, upon the forehead, the most exposed portion of the body. "Public offences must have open shame."—Bishop Hall. Forehead. The forehead of the high-priest bore the inscription, written in letters of gold upon his mitre, "Holiness to the Lord;" Uzziah's pallid brow bore witness to the divine holiness and justice. So sin disfigures the looks of the sinner, and draws its own lines upon the face. Looked upon him. Josephus states that at the instant of the king's sacrilege an earthquake shook the whole land (referred to Amos 1, 1; Zech. 14, 5), and rent asunder the roof of the temple; while a beam of light flashed through the darkness of the holy place, revealing to the assembled priests the leprous countenance of the king. Thrust him out. What a fall from honor to disgrace, from royalty to contempt. A moment ago a haughty prince, now a humiliated, despised leper, driven like a dog from the sacred precincts. Himself hated. He who would strive with men sinks beneath the wrath of his Maker.

UNTO THE DAY OF HIS DEATH. No repentance can remove the results of sin. A moment may cause that which a lifetime cannot undo. [Teacher, present the thought of the life-long duration of sin's consequences, to be escaped only by avoiding its beginnings.] Several houses. Apart from all, even his own family. A living death, for his house was like a sepulcher, and his body decaying and dissolving before his eyes. Cut off from the house of the Lord. Let us appreciate the privileges of worship in God's house

among his people while we enjoy them. Judging the people. As regent or deputy. He who would usurp the powers of others now loses his own. The rest of the acts. A record now lost from the sacred canon. In the field. Not in the royal sepulchers, but in the adjacent grounds, that the place might not incur legal pollution. "Uzziah bore his punishment to the grave; many will carry theirs to eternity."—Barth.

GOLDEN TEXT: Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Prov. 16, 18.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION: Divine wrath.

The next lesson is 2 Chron. 28, 19-27.

WHAT TO TEACH THE BOYS.

Alfred L. Sewell, in his new monthly for boys, "Home Arts," published in Chicago—a nice little paper, price one dollar a year—writes as follows:—

A philosopher has said that true education, boys is to "teach them what they ought to know when they become men." What is it they ought to know, then? 1. To be true—to be genuine. No education is worth anything that does not include this. A man had better not know how to read—he had better never learn a letter in the alphabet, and be true and genuine in intention and in action, rather than being learned in all sciences and in all languages, to be at the same time false in heart and counterfeit in life. Above all things, that Truth is more than riches, more than culture, more than earthly power and position.

2. To be pure in thought, language and life—pure in mind and in body. An impure man, young or old, poisoning the society where he moves with smutty stories and impure examples, is a moral ulcer, a plague spot, a leper, who ought to be treated as were the lepers of old, who were banished from society, and compelled to cry "Unclean!" as a warning to save others from the pestilence.

3. To be unselfish. To care for the feelings and comfort of others. To be polite. To be just in all dealings with others. To be generous, noble and manly. This will include a genuine reverence for the aged and things sacred.

4. To be self-reliant and self-helpful, even from early childhood. To be industrious always, and self supporting at the earliest proper age. Teach them that all honest work is honorable, and that an idle, useless life of dependence on others is disgraceful.

When a boy has learned these four things—when he has made these ideas a part of his being—however young he may be, however poor, or however rich, he has learned some of the most important things he ought to know when he becomes a man. With these properly mastered it will be easy to find all the rest.

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