

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1878.

SUNDAY, February 24, 1878.—Uzziah's pride punished.—2 Chron. xxvi. 16-23.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vss. 19, 20.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall"—Proverbs xvi. 18.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, 2 Chron. xxvi. 1-23. Tuesday, Num. viii. Wednesday, Num. xvi. Thursday, Leviticus xiii. 38-46. Friday, Zechariah xiv. Saturday, Daniel iv. 28-37. Sunday, Mark i. 39-45.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Uzziah's transgression. Vs. 16. II. Opposed by the priests. Vs. 17, 18. III. Anger and punishment. Vss. 19-23.

QUESTIONS.—Who was Uzziah's father? I. Vs. 16. What brought Uzziah to ruin? How long had he prospered? Vs. 5. How did his proud heart disobey God? What did Uzziah assume he had the right to do? To whom did this solely belong?

II. Vs. 17, 18. Who withstood the act of the king? What brave words did they use?

III. Vs. 19, 20. Why do men get angry when hindered in wrong doing? What disease fell upon Uzziah? What regulation compelled the priests to put the leprous king out of the temple? Leviticus xiii. 45. Where was Uzziah buried?

Why will the sinner not feel at home in heaven? Who alone can cleanse the leprosy of sin?

Uzziah was not the last man to stumble on the rock of pride.—Vs. 16. It is dangerous for a man not to know his place.—Vs. 18. Public offenders merit open shame.—To be but eternally hateful to themselves would be a sufficient hell to sinners.—Vs. 26.

After Joash's closing reign, in which he turned idolater and persecutor, Amaziah, his son, reigned in Judah. He, like his father, was slain by murderers, and was succeeded by his son Uzziah, who carried on successful wars against the Philistines and Arabians. In the reign of Uzziah we have the warning of Isaiah against idolatrous worship. At first Uzziah was greatly prospered, "for he was marvellously helped till he was strong; but when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction." It is of this the present lesson speaks.

EXPOSITION.—See for a parallel, but briefer account of Uzziah, 2 Kings xiv. 21, 22; xv. 1-7, where the name has the form Azariah, the same as that here borne by the high priest. As Uzziah was sixteen years old when crowned, and reigned fifty-two years (vs. 3), he was at his death sixty-eight years old. As his son, Jotham, was twenty-five years old at his father's death (xxvii. 1), and yet was old enough, at the time his father became a leper, to administer the government for the father, we cannot regard the father as then less than sixty years of age.

Verse 16.—When he was strong—His reign, now of some forty-five years, had been prosperous, especially in military achievements. See vss. 5-15, and especially vs. 8. Was lifted up. Not like Jehoshaphat, in obedient trust and hope (xxvii. 6), but in self-sufficient, disobedient pride. To his destruction—Literally, to the destroying, that is, of himself; for though God struck the blow, the king's own act provoked the blow. Went into the Temple—"The Holy Place" of the Temple proper, as distinguished on the one hand, from "the Most Holy Place," and on the other, from the courts of the Temple. In this apartment were the Table of Shew Bread, the Candlestick, and the Altar of Incense. See Ex. xl. 22-27; xxx. 1-10.

Verses 17, 18.—Azariah, the priest—The high priest (vs. 20), who, therefore, had the oversight of the Temple service. Valiant men, powerful warriors. Trouble was anticipated, and hence the kind of attendants taken by the high priest. Withstood Uzziah the King—face to face, to utter the protest in God's name, and, if need should be, to enforce it by power of muscle, leaving consequences to God. It appertaineth not unto thee, etc. Energy of will gave energy of speech. The high priest's business it was to see that the Temple service was administered. Hence it was the high priest's duty to compel even the king's conformity to that law, and in this there was no resistance of the king's

authority, nor rebellion against the king's government. The religious acts of David and Solomon, recorded in 2 Samuel vi. 14, and in 1 Kings iii. 15, were not akin to Uzziah's. In those cases there was no intrusion into the priestly office. The priests, the sons of Aaron—See on their appointment and consecration, Exodus xxviii, xxix.

Verses 19-21.—Censer—"A small portable vessel of metal fitted to receive burning coals from the altar, and on which the incense for burning was sprinkled." The coals were taken from the brazen altar in the court, and brought to the golden altar of incense. Leprosy—The foulest and most dreaded of diseases, and hence its fitness for judgment. His forehead—He had lifted up his head in pride, and is thus smitten on his forehead in "poetic justice." A several house—Literally, "house of disease," that is, a sick house, which, in case of such a disease, was a pest house. See Leviticus xiii, xiv. Cut off from the house of the Lord—From the Temple, and its worship as unclean, and hence, not allowed to mingle with his own people socially. Judging—Acting as king.

Verses 22, 23.—Isaiah, etc. See Isaiah i. 1. In the field of the burial—Not in "the sepulchres of the kings," because of his leprosy.

The subject is "Uzziah's Pride Punished." We are shown its Crime, its Rebuke, its Judgment, and the Sequel.

I. The Crime. Verse 16.—(1.) The occasion of the pride was past success. Success is not properly a cause of pride. If we keep a true sense of our dependence on God, success will not fill us with pride, nor inevitable failure with shame. The poor man and the rich man alike should pray, "Give us day by day our daily bread." (2.) Pride was the true cause and source of transgression against the known law of God. Law requires submission and service, pride dislikes both. Pride, is already inward rebellion. The outward act in rejecting a positive precept follows naturally afterwards. We cannot serve the two masters, self and God. (3.) There is no limit to the crime born of pride. A more outrageous, flagrant, God-defying act, the king could hardly have done. He was in fact exalting himself above God, by putting his authority above God's. (4.) Yet pride blinded him to the true nature of his act. He, no doubt, thought his act meritorious, and even pious. Never has sin in this world taken on vaster proportions, and a more aggravated character, than under the guise of religion. Witness persecutions in the name of Christianity.

II. The Rebuke. Verses 17, 18.—(1.) The crime made rebuke necessary. True, the law broken was God's, but God commits some of his laws and ordinances to a certain care guardianship of man. (2.) The rebuke came from the proper source. It does not follow that I ought to rebuke a sin because I see a sin which ought to be rebuked. Duty in such cases depends upon one's relation to the sinner. It would be a grievous sin in me to punish my neighbor's child for an act for which it would be a grievous sin in me not to punish my own child. The high priest, and he only, was the guardian of the law of sacrifice, and so from his lips, and his only, should come the rebuke. (3.) The rebuke was given in proper manner. It was given just when the intention had come into visible act, and when there was no evasion. It was given in the right spirit, with all kindness, and even sorrow, no doubt. It was also prudently given. There were enough at hand to be at once witnesses and executors of the high priest's word. It is no virtue to be rash or imprudent, to presume where we ought only to trust. (4.) Consequences were foretold as an argument for repentance.

III. The Judgment. Verses 19, 20.—(1.) The king's obstinacy made it necessary. Had he repented, and heeded the word of man, he might even now have escaped the judgment; but the pride that led him to the crime, made him angry at the rebuke. (2.) The judgment revealed its origin. Not even the victim could doubt whence it came, or why. (3.) Its degree and nature fitted the crime. God distinguishes between sins as greater and less, and he discriminates likewise in his treatment of them. (4.) The judgment was exceptional. The rule is not that sin and

punishment thus go together in this world, but God has given such special judgments to show the ultimate principle of his government. (5.) In the judgment even the criminal owned it just. He hastened out.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, March 3rd, 1878.—Persistent Wickedness of Ahaz.—2 Chron. xxviii. 10-27.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord: this is that king Ahaz."—2 Chron. xxviii. 22.

The Story of the Lesson.

FOR THE PRIMARY CLASS.

Uzziah built up the broken walls of the city, and strong towers, and placed around Jerusalem engines that could throw great stones at an enemy at a distance. He was like his grandfather, Joash, in being taught by a good man, and in serving the Lord while his teacher, who was Zechariah, the prophet, lived. But all the time his heart was growing prouder, and he was puffed up by the praises and honors hereceived; and he thought he could do anything he wished—even to be priest as well as king. God had made strict rules about the Temple, and only priests might enter the Temple itself. Even the king must worship in the courts. But Uzziah, in his pride, not only went into the Temple, but took a censer to burn incense on the golden altar. Azariah, the high priest, went after him, with eighty priests, and boldly told him it was not his place to offer incense. Uzziah was angry, and went on swinging his censer of incense. Suddenly the priest saw Uzziah's forehead grow white as snow. God had sent the horrible leprosy. They quickly drove him out—yes, he hurried out himself—for he knew the Lord had done it. He had to live in a separate house, and never again could even come into the court of the Temple; and, though he lived for years, his son, Jotham, had to judge the people in his place.

Youth's Department.

The Boy that followed Christ.

We cannot help thinking that many of the boys and girls in Galilee and Judea must have loved Christ and followed him, but the evangelists tell us very little about them. We do know that Christ loved little children, and one of the dearest passages in the New Testament is that which describes his reception of them. Then who can doubt that those boys and girls whom he healed and restored to life loved him, and, if possible, followed him in his journeyings. When the Master made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the multitudes that accompanied him, singing hosannas, were composed in part of children, and they filled the great temple with their shouts of praise, till the chief priests and scribes could endure it no longer.

But the interest of the Jewish boys and girls in the Saviour is not left entirely to our imagination, nor to general statements. John tells us of one lad who followed Christ. The Master with his disciples had crossed the Sea of Galilee to an uninhabited region among the hills, for it was not safe for him to gather in the cities such crowds as habitually followed him. But the multitude found him even there. Perhaps ten thousand people had gathered from the surrounding towns and cities, bringing their sick, and he healed them. It drew towards evening. The crowd showed no disposition to retire. There were yet, perhaps, hundreds of sick, and maimed, and lame, who had not been brought to Jesus for his healing touch. They could not go without his blessing. The disciples began to grow anxious for the multitude, and desired the Master to send them away that they might obtain food in the cities. But Jesus proposed to feed them there, greatly to the astonishment of his disciples: He asked Philip where the bread could be bought, and he only replied that two hundred pence, which was probably more money than the disciples had, all told, would not begin to buy bread for such a throng. Andrew, who had a little more faith, went running about among the multitude in

search of bread, and found a boy who had five barley loaves and two small fishes, and reported the fact to Jesus, as if in vindication of his opinion that the people had better be sent away. But Jesus knew that the small provision was enough. Doubtless the boy brought his bread and fish to Jesus, wondering what his strange power would do with them. Doubtless, he gave them up willingly, glad to be of some service to so wonderful and so good a man.

The multitude was made to sit down upon the green grass, and Jesus took the five loaves and the two fishes, and blessed them, and the great crowd was fed. They had more than enough, and the fragments that remained far outweighed the original provision. The company numbered five thousand men, besides women and children.

We have no means of knowing why this lad followed Jesus. It is enough that he followed him, and was willing to give up his little store of food for the Master's use. Humble, and of little consequence as he was, apparently, he was the means of a great blessing to an immense throng of people.

The lesson is obvious. Let the boys, and girls too, follow Jesus. Let them mingle in the throng that press to his feet. We must not regard their offerings of small account. Let them bring to Jesus all they have, and who knows but the Master will bless it to the benefit of thousands of hungering souls. He can make their mite feed a multitude. —Congregationalist.

How to be a Lady.

"Miss Winchester, what is the secret of being a lady? Is it to be true and fearless like a man, or to be just, or polite, or charitable, and always giving up one's self for others?"

Miss Winchester was darning a tablecloth. She always did the nice parts of housekeeping, to steady her nerves, she said, and she took time to answer:

"The truest ladies I ever knew had two things so blended that one never knew which to be surest of, their sincerity or their kindness. I never saw a lady, whether she was a girl or grown woman, who had not the faculty a wise writer calls 'a genius for loving.' It was born in them, and grew with them. It is not that kind of 'I don't know what to do with myself' feeling, that makes girls throw their arms round the nearest friend and smother her with kisses, that is feigning petty jealousy of others, and saying, 'I wish you could love me,' when one isn't in a mood for sweet stuff. The most loving-hearted girls don't show their feelings by any means. They do not love to kiss, or parade affection, but they are kind, O! so kind, to their last breath and drop of strength, to those who need and deserve their care. Kind with the kindness that makes one wise for others' happiness, so that mother looks into the mending-basket to find that troublesome torn shirt-sleeve made whole, and the apron finished for Bobby, and father has the room quiet for a long evening when he wants to read the debates, or to make calculations, and Jennie finds her rain-soiled dress sponged and ironed fresh in the wardrobe, and Mrs. Brown over the way sees the children taken out of the house when she has aacking headache, and the teacher knows who will run up the flounces and sew on buttons for the new suit she is hurrying to make out of school hours.

There is nothing too homely or distasteful for this sort of girl to do, and she might take for her signature what I saw once in a kind letter written by Elizabeth Stoddard, 'Yours to serve.' The kisses and the love-making may be shy enough with her, but the kindness is for everybody, and it runs very deep. Nothing draws on her help and sympathy so much as to need it most, to be without interest or attraction in any way.

"The best recipe for going through life in an exquisite way, with beautiful manners, is to feel that everybody, no matter how rich or poor, needs all the kindness he can get from others in the world. The greatest praise written of Madame Recamier, the most beautiful woman and complete lady of her own or any other time, was this," and Miss Winchester's face softened, her voice fell to a moving key, as she repeated softly the words I afterward saw copied in an old black manuscript book of hers,

and knew that she had loved them: "Disgrace and misfortune had for Madame Recamier the same sort of attraction that favor and success usually have for vulgar souls." There was the nature of a great lady."—Wide Awake.

Dobbins and Debbins.

I wish to say a word about these two brethren. The vowels are interchangeable. Dobbins might, therefore, easily become Debbins, and Debbins Dobbins. The men themselves are just as much alike as their names; and it would really make little difference whether we should call Debbins Dobbins, or Dobbins Debbins. I do not mean that they are alike outwardly. One is light haired, fair faced, thin skinned. The other has very black, crispy hair, and a dark complexion. Both are ambitious, both are sensitive, and each looks upon the other as a predestinated rival. They are both members of my church, and prominent workers in the Sunday-school; but nothing could ever induce them to work together. I think I might be happy, and that our school would prosper, if we only had Dobbins or Debbins; but I have almost despaired of doing anything with Dobbins and Debbins.

If Dobbins is in office, Debbins feels that he has suffered a personal injury, and that the cause is imperiled; if Debbins is in the lead, Dobbins is sure things are going to ruin. I met Debbins last Sunday, going away from Sunday-school. "Ah, brother," said I, "you are going the wrong way." "No, I am not," said he. "I have given up my class, and am going where I can hope to do something; or, at least, where I shall be appreciated." I knew at once what was the matter. Dobbins had been elected superintendent of the school. Last night, these two brethren were in their places at prayer-meeting. Debbins prayed. He begged the Lord to remember the church, in its cold and lifeless state; to enable us to repent, and do our first works over again; and in mercy not to remove our candlestick. Dobbins was all thankfulness. He thanked the Lord for the gospel faithfully preached; for the brotherly love that prevailed; that the people were inclined to use the means of grace; and especially for the prosperity of our Sunday-school.

I recall a time when the case was exactly reversed. Both these brethren are singers; and both aspire to lead the Music. Some time ago, Debbins was made chorister. Dobbins was in great distress. The pieces selected were in bad taste; the tunes were pitched wrong; the singing dragged; and he was sure the school would go down. On the other hand, Debbins was jubilant. "Pastor," said he, "things are very bright with us. You preach better than I ever heard you. The brethren are as warm-hearted as they can be; the school is growing in numbers and interest; and I am happy. I enjoy my religion." He grasped my hand warmly, and his eyes filled with tears.

Thus it goes. We have a sort of saw with Dobbins and Debbins all the time. When one is up, the other is down; and their mutual bickerings keep us in a state of perpetual irritation. Our school is small, and we need the services of both of them. We cannot leave them both out of office. Neither would then be pleased. We cannot put both of them in office; for each would be vexed to see the other honored. We cannot put one of them in office; for then the out works against the in, and we are a house divided against itself. I really do not know what to do in the case. I report it for two reasons. First, because I find relief in making known my trouble, and the church's trouble; and, second, there may be Dobbinses and Debbinses in other churches; and other pastors may sympathize with me, if they cannot help me. Possibly, too, the D.s and D.s, in reading what I have written, may see, what they are now far from suspecting, that they are controlled by jealousy and self seeking, and not by a simple-hearted zeal for the glory of the Lord's house. In the mean time I can only look upon them and say, in my helplessness—O Dobbins! O Debbins!—Baptist Teacher.

CONUNDRUM.—My first is company; my second avoids company; my third calls company together; and my whole entertains company. Give it up? Conundrum.