

and reigned the longest of any of the kings of Judah. His father's good work was undone, and the king and the people entered upon a career of crime and wickedness unsurpassed even by Ahaz. Baal worship was restored, Moloch sacrifices and the Chaldean worship of the heavenly bodies were introduced, and to crown his crime against his God an idol was set up in the temple and the altar and ark of Jehovah removed. Describe briefly the condition of Jerusalem during Manasseh's reign: (a) The denouncing of the king's course by many prophets of the Lord; (b) The persecution of the prophets and devout Jews; (c) The death (?) of Isaiah; (d) The final fall of the city and the capture of Manasseh.

*Development of the text.* Place upon the board the subject, "The Way of Forgiveness," and the following outline: 1. The great wickedness; 2. The divine warnings; 3. The terrible punishment; 4. The humble confession; 5. The restored servant.

1. *The great wickedness.* Manasseh exceeded all his predecessors in his willful wickedness and defiance of the law of God. Note some of his sins as recorded in 2 Chron. 33, 3-8, and 2 Kings 21, 2-9. Note also that these sins were committed in spite of (a) His godly parentage; (b) The many warnings from God (see sec. 2); (c) The history of the past. Seemingly Manasseh had no excuse for his course.

2. *The divine warnings.* The tenth verse of the lesson is very significant, "The Lord spake . . . but they would not hearken." The warnings to the king were direct from God through the mouths of the prophets, but the king and his party turned upon them, and instead of receiving their words, persecuted them even unto death. Here we note: (a) Divine love and mercy, and (b) Human folly and wickedness. Warnings come to us to-day in many ways—from the experiences of the past, from human counsel, from known operation of law, from divine providences. Some heed; many are like Manasseh and the people of Judah, who "would not hearken."

3. *The terrible punishment.* Captivity was Manasseh's punishment for disobedience. He was helpless. He could not call upon God for help, for he had turned away from him, and the idols which he had worshipped were impotent. Contrast the action of Hezekiah as seen in our last lesson with that of Manasseh in the present. In time of sore need the one turned to his God, the true God, and help came; the other, because of sin, received his merited punishment, from which there was no escape.

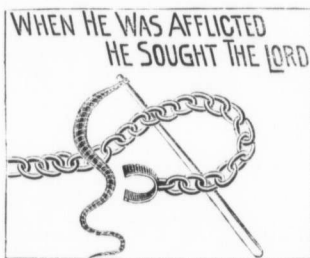
4. *The humble confession.* In captivity the king had time to reflect. What great results might come to many a sinner to-day if he would but

stop in his course and think. Manasseh realized; (a) His past folly; (b) His present need; (c) The only source of help; (d) The way of repentance. He humbled himself before God, confessed his sin, and prayed for pardon. The prayer was heard and answered, as all such prayers will be. These must be the steps a wanderer to-day must take in order to obtain the divine pardon and restoration.

5. *The restored servant.* The king was finally restored to his people and his throne. He at once began to undo his former acts. Note what he accomplished: (a) Increased the defenses of the city; (b) Destroyed the idols and altars; (c) Restored the temple services; (d) Commanded the people to serve Jehovah. He showed fruits meet for repentance, but the past could never be undone, and the nation suffered because of his wickedness. The sinner may be forgiven, but the evil of his acts lives on, bringing suffering to many.

*Specific application.* Manasseh in captivity turned to God, the God of his father, and in confession found "The Way of Forgiveness." The words of the hymn, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" need to be sung to-day with great persuasiveness and power. "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Seek to impress this thought upon the class, that "The Way of Forgiveness" is through confession. Read in closing 1 John 1, 9.

### Blackboard.



### OPTIONAL HYMNS.

Deep are the wounds.  
I'm poor, and blind, and wretched.  
Hasten, sinner, to be wise.  
Depth of mercy.  
God calling yet.

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