



LESSON VIII.—NOVEMBER 20.

**Manasseh's Sin and Repentance.**

II. Chron. xxxiii., 9-16. Memory verses 12, 13. Read the chapter.

**Golden Text.**

'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'—I. John i., 9.

**Home Readings.**

- M. II. Kings xxi., 1-16.—The Lord's denunciation of Manasseh.
- T. II. Chron. xxxiii., 1-25.—Manasseh's sin and repentance.
- W. Isa. i., 1-20.—A call to repentance.
- T. Psa. li., 1-19.—A penitent's prayer.
- F. Psa. xxxii., 1-11.—'Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.'
- S. I. John i., 1-10.—'He is faithful and just to forgive us.'
- S. Psa. xxxviii., 1-22.—'I will be sorry for my sin.'

**Lesson Story.**

Manasseh, son of the good King Hezekiah, was twelve years old when his father died, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. But he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, and re-introduced the abominable idolatries of the heathen. He rebuilt the high places which his father had taken such pains to break down, and made an image which he set up in the Temple. He offered his children as sacrifices to the idols and dealt with evil spirits and wizards, in every way insulting and defying God.

Jehovah, through his prophets, warned Manasseh, to turn from his wicked ways, but the king would not listen to warnings or believe the threats. So God sent the Assyrians to take Manasseh and his people captive.

When Manasseh found that God kept his word and punished him, he cried to God for forgiveness in great humility and affliction. His repentance was sincere, so God forgave and brought him back to his own country. Here he sought to make amends for his awful sin in leading the people astray. The king fortified his country and cast out all the idols and images and the forbidden altars. He repaired the altar of the Lord and renewed the temple service and commanded all Judah to serve the Lord.

Thus did Manasseh seek to repair the damage he had done to his people in leading them away from God, but sin always leaves results. Manasseh's son followed in his early footsteps, and the people yet more easily led into sin, again made themselves abominable before God. However, this had lasted only two years, when Amon, was murdered and his little son Josiah, one of the 'three perfect kings,' was set upon the throne of Judah. Josiah reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years, in peace and godliness.

**Lesson Hints.**

'Manasseh'—put in power when only twelve years old. His father having governed the kingdom in purity and righteousness, Manasseh had seen nothing of the awful results of the impure idol worship, and was led into it by evil counsellors, almost before he was old enough to comprehend its depth of iniquity. He had begun wrongly by not taking God as his Counsellor, and serving him, and having turned from God it was very easy, to go on in the downward path. But the bad son of a good father has more to answer for than the son of a bad father could have under the same circumstances.

'Worse than the heathen'—he who has known God and turned away from him is fallen lower than the meanest man who never knew God. (Heb. vi., 4-6.)

'The Lord spake to Manasseh'—through the prophets and through the ancient law. God speaks to us through his own word, and through his servants who live by that word.

'The Lord brought'—their enemies upon them as he had warned them he should do if they continued to disobey him, (Deut. xxviii., 18, 36, 37.)

'The thorns'—a sharp, thorn-like hook

was thrust into the lip or nose of the captive, to lead him behind his conqueror

'He besought the Lord'—he had learned the lesson which the affliction had been sent to teach him, he repented and turned to God as did the Prodigal Son in our Saviour's parable. (Luke xv.)

'And prayed'—every affliction is sent to teach us how to pray and to draw us nearer to God.

'He was intreated'—God hears only sincere prayers; this was a sign of true repentance on the king's part.

'Brought him again'—as God had allowed the Assyrians to take his people captive so in the hour of their repentance he compelled the Assyrians to let them go again.

**Questions.**

1. What kind of a man was Manasseh's father?
2. What kind of a man was Manasseh?
3. What led Manasseh to turn to the Lord?
4. Could he ever undo the wrong he had done?
5. What does this teach us?

**Suggested Hymns.**

'Yield not to temptation,' 'Have courage, my boy, to say No,' 'My brother, the Master is calling for thee,' 'What shall the harvest be?' 'Blessed be the Fountain of Blood!' 'What a Friend we have in Jesus.'

**Practical Points.**

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A king has a mighty influence either for good or evil. Verse 9.

The Lord entreats before he afflicts, and his afflictions are tempered with mercy to bring the wanderer back. Verses 10-12.

Let those whose sins have caged them in the castle of Despair take courage from the case of Manasseh. Verse 13.

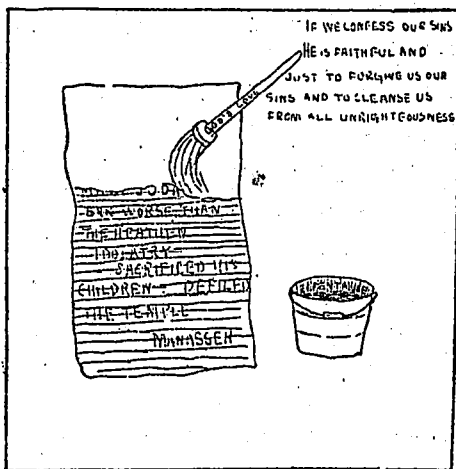
By faith Manasseh repaired the city of David, and fortified Jerusalem with wall and army. By faith he destroyed the gods he formerly had worshipped, and the altars on which he had offered sacrifices. Verses 14, 15.

By faith Manasseh rebuilt the altar of God which had been forsaken and forgotten. By faith he offered sacrifices thereon, most acceptable to the God who had loved him from first to last. Verse 11.

Tiverton, Ont.

**Lesson Illustrated.**

Manasseh's sins make a black catalogue as we write them down; for, it is written that he made Judah to err worse than the heathen, worshipped idols, sacrificed his own children to them, and introduced an idol into God's own house. But there came to him sincere repentance and God's love dipped in genuine repentance blots out all the bad re-



cord. If it had never been there to blot out though, how much better it would have been. Then Manasseh would have come down as one of the great and good kings, the glory of his people and the trusted and used of God.

It is good to have the sins blotted out, but a life is wasted and opportunities lost. Better not to have them. Be God's from the beginning.

**Christian Endeavor Topics.**

Nov. 20.—Praise the Lord!—Psa. cxlvii., 1-20.

**The Teacher a Perpetual Counsellor.**

(By L. Sandys.)

My heart aches for the boy whose teacher says indifferently, 'Oh, I have lost all trace of him since he left my class!' Scholars look for religious counsel from their teachers, and I recall an incident which opened my eyes to this fact. One evening one of my boys came to say good-by to me, as he had accepted a position in a distant city. The room was filled with callers, so, though I had a nice little chat with him about his prospects, nothing was said on religious subjects. After his departure, I was told that he had said to a mutual friend, that he had been disappointed in his visit, as; there being so many present, he had not been able to have a word with me. Well, I was surprised, for I had devoted myself to him during his visit, and could not conceive what he meant, until the conviction forced itself upon me that he had expected something more than the usual kindly inquiries about his worldly prospects—hence his disappointment.

This thought haunted me, and, finally, not without a vague misgiving as to how it would be received, I wrote him a long letter, telling him what I thought would be his special temptation, reminding him that he must look to and ask for higher aid to keep him from falling into the many temptations he would meet with, and telling him how sorry I was that I had not had an opportunity of saying all this to him before his leaving.

This was the first break in my class, and my heart sank within me as week after week went by and I received no answer. I could only pray and wait. One day it came, and tears of joy filled my eyes as I read: 'I have written many letters since I got yours, but they did not require the same depth of thought or frame of mind that was requisite in answering your welcome letter; for I could not write a common-place, everyday kind of answer to you.'

Ah! fellow-teachers, can you not sympathize with me here? Was it not better to have him think for weeks over my letter than answer it immediately, and then forget all about it?

And now, while we are on the subject of answering, let me impress upon you that there are some scholars who will never answer your letters. But that is no reason why you should conclude that your's are not welcome, and cease writing. Of course, there is always an awkwardness in a one-sided correspondence; but I have found that a very easy way to remedy this is to write a letter that does not require an answer; for example, with a brief introduction such as 'I was thinking of you when preparing this lesson,' give him a brief explanation of it, concluding with a sincere expression of interest in his spiritual and temporal welfare. In this way, knowing your scholars' special weaknesses and temptations as you do, a door of influence is open to you as to no one else outside of the home circle—a door which neither time nor distance need ever close. Beware how you shut it!—'Sunday-school Times.'

**A Tribute of Thanks.**

(Vesta Leroy.)

We thank Thee, dear Father, for health and for strength,

For the love of kind friends that are round us;

We thank Thee for blessings Thou daily hast sent,

For the ties that have lovingly bound us,

We thank Thee for pleasure's cup filled to the brim,

We thank Thee no less for deep sorrow, Or that Thou in Thy wisdom hast veiled from our sight

The scenes of each longed-for to-morrow.

We thank Thee that Thou hast been with us to guide

Our wavering footsteps aright,

Or when we have stumbled, hast stooped to raise us up,

And lead us through error's dark night.

We thank Thee, that, though erring wanderers here,

Thou hast kept us still safe in Thy care,

Hast tempered our gladness with shadows of grief,

Yet shielded from lonely despair.

—'Housekeeper.'