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MANASSEH; OR, ABOUNDING GRACE.

When a traveller emerges suddenly from a dark and dreary wood, on some beautiful scene, the contrast between his situation before and then, adds a charm to the spot. Thus in exploring the word of God, while sadly pursuing our way amid evidences of the blight of sin on our nature, we may light on some cheering passage illustrative of abounding grace, and be thrilled with the discovery. The greater part of the reign of Manasseh was characterized by unsurpassed wickedness. "Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem; but did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel." There was, however, a great and radical change before the close of his life. After passing through a sterile desert, we come to an oasis. The history of Manasseh takes a sudden and unexpected turn; he becomes a true penitent—a monument of grace. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? His case was as bad as it could be; the catalogue of crime seems to have been exhausted by him; his name is proverbial for wickedness. His daring acts of idolatry cause a shudder in the recital. From the height of towering ungodliness, we expect to see him fall into the pit of perdition. God's ways are not as ours. Grace intercepts this man in his way to hell. While we wait to see the murderer arrested by insulted heaven, and dragged forth to justice, a greater wonder appears in the change of that hardened heart. What redeeming grace has done, it may do again. Reader, ponder what it has done for you. Take heed of begrudging heaven to the guilty; there may be a self-righteous spirit that shrinks from others as if they were specially vile—that would almost give up the hope of heaven before it would consent to be touched by the vulgar. Yet profoundly is that spirit rebuked. Publicans and sinners shall enter the kingdom of heaven, washed in the blood of Jesus, but the children of the kingdom may be cast out. From the outermost circles of want and woe, the gospel may gather its trophies. It has planted jewels in the Saviour's crown which have been found in the mire. The power of God unto salvation is seen in every case of conversion. Sin's form may vary, but it is ever deadly. It may now be fitly represented by the savage lion or prowling wolf, and anon be as a flower of fair appearance, yet of pernicious and deadly qualities. The outward manifestations of sin may differ from circumstances of temptation, of education, of opportunity, of restraining mercy; it springs, however, from the same evil root, a heart estranged from God. Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, and all wickedness. That heart a divine hand alone can