

depressing to one who is honestly facing toward the right as to be reminded that so long he faced the other way. When one has turned a new leaf it is discouraging to be told how badly blotted the one before it is. We are tempted to say, "It is no use; this new page will be like the other before it is finished, and people will always turn to the blotted page." But the God who "abundantly pardons" drowns the sins in the depths of the sea, and sets the free soul full sail over the waves, with a clear sky from which his transgressions have been blotted out as a thick cloud. Among the things multiplied to pardon this beautiful gift is promised. It is said, "to him that overcometh—that is, to him who by the grace of God gets the victory over sin—I will give the morning star." Ah! a new day! a new beginning! Yesterday's sun set in clouds, but to-day rises clear. The morning star shines. It promises a full, long day. Yesterday was lost, but this new day with its opportunities is mine. If God is willing to forget yesterday I need not darken his new day with hopeless thoughts. He gives me, with his forgiveness, the morning star, "His favor precedes my day. He makes me glad before I have learned to be good." This is the way of the God who abundantly pardons. For as the heavens are higher than the earth so are his thoughts higher than our thoughts.

The Lesson in Literature and Art

1. Manasseh is unique alike in extreme wickedness, sincere penitence, and thorough reformation. The reformation of Julius Caesar or of Henry V, or, to take a different class of instance, the conversion of Saint Paul, was nothing compared to the conversion of Manasseh. It was as though Herod the Great or Caesar Borgia had been checked midway in a career of cruelty and vice, and had thenceforward lived pure and holy lives, glorifying God by ministering to their fellow men. . . . Manasseh becomes in the Old Testament what the Prodigal Son is in the New: the one great symbol of the possibilities of human nature and the infinite mercy of God.—*Professor W. H. Bennett.*

2. A people that gives up God is like a people that gives up a territory: it is a lost people. There is only one greater folly than that of the fool who says in his heart, "There is no God," and that is the folly of a people that says in its heart that it does not know whether there is a God or no.—*Bismarck.*

3. Verse 2. I preach and think that it is more bitter to sin against Christ than to suffer the torments of hell.—*Chrysostom.*

4. Verses 3-5. Travelers tell us that there is a tribe in Africa so given to superstition that they fill their huts and hovels with so many idols that they do not even leave room for their

Manasseh had been notoriously wicked. Such perversity in the son of a good father seems doubly inexcusable. No doubt those who knew the father gave the son up with a hopeless sigh, or even with disgust. But Hezekiah knew how to pray. Surely one who pleaded with God for Jerusalem, prayed often for this son. The prayer chain is long and strong. It seems not to hold the boy or the youth, but its invisible links stretch over the years to the man in exile and in trouble. "When he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him, and he was entreated of him and heard his supplication and brought him again to Jerusalem and to his kingdom." His repentance was sincere and his pardon was equally so. He had a new chance; the rest of his life was spent in undoing as far as he could the evil he had done in the dark years of his sin. To repent of sin and to forsake it is our part. To abundantly pardon is God's part. If we have done our part no sinful past should cast its shadow over the forgiven present. It is a new day, with the morning star shining.

"Every day is a fresh beginning:

Listen, my soul, to the glad refrain.

And spite of old sorrow and older sinning,

Take heart with the day and begin again."

families. How many men there are who fill their hearts with the idols of sin, so that there is no room for the living God, or for any of his holy principles!—*Bate.*

5. Verse 9. It was a sound reply of an English captain at the loss of Calais, when a proud Frenchman scornfully demanded, "When will you fetch Calais again?"—"When your sins shall weigh down ours."—*Brooks.*

6. Verse 10. Whosoever sins against light kisses the lips of a blazing cannon.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

7. Verse 10. Those solemn imperatives and their awful responses—"Thou shalt not"—"I will;" "Thou shalt"—"I will not"—make up, then, all that the man knows of intercourse with God. This is sin, in the ultimate and finished type of it. This is what it grows to in every sinner, if unchecked by the grace of God. Every man unredeemed becomes a demon in eternity.—*Dr. Austin Phelps.*

8. Verse 11.

God hath yoked to guilt
Her pale tormentor—misery.

—*Bryant.*

9.

When thou hast drained a swallow's milk and plucked

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