



Dr. J. R. A. Crossland, St. Joseph, Mo., Ex-Minister to Liberia, member of the Republican State Central Committee for many years and one of the race's most distinguished physicians.



Wm. Clarence Hueston Esq., one of Kansas City's brilliant young Attorneys and Chairman of the Committee on Grand Master's address, which position he has filled with singular fitness and ability in the past.



A. F. Neal, headwaiter at the famous Hotel Utah, Salt Lake City, formerly Deputy Grand Master of the Missouri Jurisdiction and yet dear in memory to the boys of the Grand Old State of Missouri.



Edw. W. Lamy, of St. Louis, Mo., D. Phone

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D. D., Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)
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LESSON FOR AUGUST 5.

MANASSEH'S SIN AND REPENTANCE.

LESSON TEXT—II Chronicles 33:1-20.
GOLDEN TEXT—Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.—Isaiah 55:7.

The reign of Manasseh was the longest of any of the kings of Judah. It is strange that a wicked king should have the distinction of the longest reign. This can be accounted for, perhaps, by the fact that the nation was in such a state that their idolatrous corruption needed to go to its fullest development. It seems to be necessary in a world of free beings, that their actions must go to a certain stage of development. It was so with the inhabitants of Canaan before that land was possessed by Israel. Israel was kept in Egypt until the iniquity of that nation was full. In this case doubtless the Lord permitted this to go on until the idolatrous practices would become extremely obnoxious.

I. Manasseh's Sin (vv. 1-9). Though he had the example of a good father, he with passionate endeavor gave himself up to the imitation of the heathen about him. This shows that grace is not inherited; a good father may have a bad son. It also teaches us that it is absolutely necessary to bring the grace of God into vital touch with our children, for that grace is absolutely essential to their salvation. Only his grace can counteract the downward pull of sin.

1. He restored the high places which had been destroyed by his father (v. 3). It is thus seen that he sought to undo the good work done by his father.

2. He erected altars to Baal (v. 3). The idols worshiped on these altars seem to have been images of licentious appearance, provoking the indignance of the human passion. Therefore, with this worship was coupled the grossest licentiousness.

3. He introduced the star worship of the Chaldeans and Assyrians (v. 3). He even erected these altars in the house of the Lord, placing them on a level with God himself.

4. He set up Moloch in the Vale of Hinnon (v. 6). He not only encouraged this worship on the part of others, but he even caused his own children to pass through the fire.

5. He practiced magic, witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit (v. 6). So gross were these practices that they did even worse than the heathen whom God had destroyed before the Children of Israel came into the land.

6. He rejected the Lord's testimony (v. 10). Doubtless the prophets had again and again admonished him, but he seems to have turned entirely aside from such remonstrances.

II. Manasseh's Chastisement (vv. 11-13). The Lord in grace used the Assyrians to chastise Manasseh, so as to bring him to see his evil ways. He was captured, perhaps while hiding among the thicket of thorns (v. 11), bound in chains and carried to Babylon. This was most humiliating. His hands were manacled, his ankles fastened together with rings and a bar.

III. Manasseh's Repentance (vv. 12-13). Fortunately, the chastisement had its desired effect. Manasseh was brought to his senses and turned from his evil ways. The steps in his repentance are as follows:

1. Affliction (v. 12). This was most severe. Bound with chains and dragged to Babylon. While this was severe, it was light in comparison with the sins which provoked it.

2. Supplication (v. 12). Manasseh had the good sense to cry out to God in this condition. It is the unmistakable evidence that God's chastisement is accomplishing its purpose. We are instructed in James 5:13 in time of affliction to pray.

3. Humility (v. 12). This is a common characteristic of penitent souls. Those who come under the hand of God always recognize it in their humble walk.

4. Forgiveness (v. 13). As soon as God sees the signs of penitence, he turns in mercy to the penitent and grants absolution for sin. No one needs to wait long to receive his forgiveness.

5. His kingdom restored (v. 13). Manasseh not only was forgiven, but he was actually restored to his kingdom. Those who truly repent, God will not only forgive, but he will restore (Psa. 32:3-5).

6. Apprehension of God (v. 13). Through this experience Manasseh came to know God.

IV. Manasseh's Reformation (vv. 14-20). Manasseh was not content with merely receiving God's forgiveness and restoration to his kingdom, but he sought so far as possible to undo the mischief which he had done.

1. He strengthened the fortifications of Jerusalem, so as to make his people safe from the attack of a foreign foe (v. 14).

2. He removed the idols from the House of the Lord (v. 15). Through bitter experience he had come to know that an idol is nothing, that it could avail him nothing in time of deepest need.



Sir E. S. Baker, Kansas City, Mo., for many years Grand Secretary of the Royal Arch Chapter.



Crittenden C. Clark, Attorney-at-law St. Louis, Mo., Senior Grand Warden of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Missouri.



Richard Fullbright, one of the old Guard and a power in Kansas City Masonic Circles.



Jas. Weatherly, Worshipful Master of Olympia Lodge No. 147 Douglas, Ariz., who retired last year as first Sergeant after thirty years faithful service in the 9th Cavalry.



A. R. Bohon, District Deputy of Hannibal, Mo., one of the most enthusiastic Masons in the State.

PURITAN WAS EARLY RISER

Getting-Up Bell Rang at Five o'clock in Morning in Boston Two Hundred Years Ago.

The nine-o'clock bell in the evening was an early observance by the Massachusetts colony of the old English curfew bell, says the Boston Transcript. It was rung in Boston previous to 1650 by the town bell ringer, who later also had charge of the town clock. A century ago three bells were rung in Boston—at eight in the morning, one in the afternoon and nine in the evening. Two hundred years ago the hours were five in the morning, eleven in the morning and nine at night. At that date the inhabitants were not so prompt in rising as in the previous century, when the bell was rung at 4:30 by the first bell ringer.

The midday bell was not first rung to call people to their noonday meal in Boston. In 1664, "for the more convenient and expeditious dispatch of Marchants, assayers or any other relating to strangers and our inhabitants, it is ordered that the bell shall be rung at a 11 of ye clocke every working day to give notice thereof to all persons concerned and that the ringer shall be allowed 12p. per peare by every person that commonly resort thereunto and that they may assemble in the Rome under the Towne house, for the space of one hower for the ends above expressed."

About 1730 the practice of ringing a bell at one was begun, though for some years later requests were made for an eleven o'clock bell at some of the churches, and that practice continued in the last half of the eighteenth century. During that century bells were rung between eight and nine in the morning on the day of a town meeting. On days of rejoicing the bells were rung from six to seven in the morning till noon, and from two to six in the afternoon. The allowances by the town to sextons for daily ringing were, for one ringing £10, for two £20 and for three £30 per annum.

The Civil war did more to abolish the observance of Saturday night as the beginning of Sunday, and finished the falling away of the previous 20 years. To the war must also be credited the abandonment of New England farms, started by the more frequent intercourse between town and country by railroads.

A Novel Surgical Device.

In cases of stricture of the esophagus, which is the canal through which food passes to the stomach and which is situated behind the windpipe, it is important to secure an early diagnosis. Popular Mechanics magazine tells of a new method, reported by a New York hospital physician, which gives a clear outline of malignant strictures and is also a readily applied aid in the treatment of moderate cases. A small length of sausage skin, which is the fibrous coat of the intestine of the hog, is thoroughly washed and treated with formaldehyde and glycerin, then formed into a bag by tying one end with silk floss, the other end being slipped over a rubber tube and tied. The bag, which is now only a string, is then easily swallowed by the patient with the aid of a little water, and a thick bismuth mixture is allowed to flow into it, after which X-ray pictures show the outline of the stricture clearly.

Out of Her Line.

Among her presents was a large bowl of goldfish. Now it happened that her literary tastes were well known, and there was little in the world of literature from the Anabasis to Zwingli with which she was not thoroughly familiar—but goldfish—well, they were out of her line. So in order to familiarize herself with the life, habits, appetite, prejudices and idiosyncrasies of goldfish, so as to be able to assist them in their physical and moral development, she went to a book store.

"I want a goldfish book," she told the young man who waited on her.

A puzzled look overspread his countenance as he asked, "A what?"

"A goldfish book, a goldfish book," she replied.

Suddenly his face brightened as, with a lordly air of condescending superiority, he said: "Oh, yes, I know what you want. You mean Goldsmith's works."—Indianapolis News.

Did a Fine Job.

In the Woman's Home Companion C. H. Claudy says: "Whoever did the calculating for a baseball field made a fine job of it. It takes just so long to run from home plate to first, and it takes just about that long, less a tiny fraction of a second, for the average ball to be fielded by the average shortstop and hurled down to the big mit waiting for it. The least slip, hesitation, juggle, or wait, and the umpire is going to spread his palms down for a 'safe.'"

An Outrage.

Lawyer A—I always said that Bowers was the meanest man alive and now he's gone and proved it.

Lawyer B—How is that?

Lawyer A—He's given away all his property so there won't be a thing left to fight over.

A Mistake Somewhere.

Trombone of Village Band—What do we play next, SI?

SI—Sousa's "Grand March."

Trombone—Gosh all hemlock! I just played that.—Judge.

Encouraged.

"How's your motorcar behaving?"

"Well," replied Mr. Chuggins, "the way it uses gasoline shows that while it may be weak in spots, its appetite is all right."



Benj. F. Allen the distinguished President of Lincoln Institute and Master of Capital City Lodge No. 9, Jefferson City, Mo., one of the foremost educators of the race.



Charles H. Calloway, Esquire, Attorney at law, Kansas City, Mo., Worshipful Master of John Lang Lodge No. 103 Grand Attorney of the U. E. F. and Captain on the Colonel's staff of the K. of P.



P. L. Pratt of Cameron, Mo., Grand Lecturer of the first district.



Jas. W. Johnson, Secretary N. A. A. C. P.