

A GOOD FATHER'S BAD SON

The International Sunday School Lesson For August 5 Is "Manasseh's Sin and Repentance." II Chron. 33:1-20.

By WILLIAM T. ELLIS

The great plagues of western America do not typify life. The latter is not a dead level. It has its ups and downs. History is a succession of mountain ranges, valleys and short stretches of plain. Progress is not a steady rise upward. It is interrupted by many declines and depressions. Reform is voted in today and voted out tomorrow. Hezekiah reigned righteously, and it seemed as if wickedness was at an end; but his young son, Manasseh, succeeded him and all the old evils came trooping back into power again, reinforced, it seemed, at the moment, tenfold. The lesson of this experience of old Judah is one with the lesson for today; for good people everywhere need to learn, perhaps first of all, not to grow discouraged. Through the jaundiced eye of the discouraged man, all that is good and true is forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne. With better vision, however, he would learn that:

"Behind the dim unknown Stands God within the shadow, Keeping watch above his own."

A Boy in Peril

Why should strong fathers so often have weakling sons? Primarily, perhaps, because a hot house is a poor place to grow boys. Fathers who have achieved often make it too easy for their sons. The latter are kept out of school in which the parents learned their most important lessons. It is the rare father who fails to realize, "It is good for a man to wear the yoke in his youth." Yet that boy who is not brought to school to discipline, who does not learn to do things for himself, and to whom duty is an unknown fact, is a boy in serious peril. The worst fact about the good King Hezekiah was his son, Manasseh. For one thing the lad came to power too early, though there is a sense in which children are always on the thrones of the world. Every child is more concerned for the health and happiness of his child than for the prosperity of his business, or for any honor that may come to him personally. This headstrong youngster who fell heir to Hezekiah's throne ruled conscientiously, which is always a bad thing for a child. Under evil court influences, the young prince became a reactionary, and there is no reactionary like a young one. The worst old fogies are the young men. The conservatism of the youthful is more hindrance to progress. This boy's state of mind boded worse for the kingdom than the wickedness of half a dozen aged kings.

Cutting Loose From The Past

Many there be, like Abraham, who set out from Ur of the Chaldees, but few there be like him, who left it because the price of liberty and liberty is too high for most to pay. Judah had set out the right way. It would appear as if she had learned her lesson, but, alas! most of her virtue seems to have been in the possession of the good king, and not in the man, the upholder of his father's. So at the touch of a boy's hand the wheels of progress were stopped. The nation, almost in a day, went back to the old forsaken idols, as a young missionary to Africa has abandoned Christianity and civilization and become chief of a cannibal tribe. To this decline of Judah the famous epigram could be applied, "It was worse than a crime: it was a blunder." Even if the nation had not reverted to its own ways, without so manifestly proved to be evil. Yet when a nation or an individual gets to sliding, there is no telling where it will stop. Usually it winds up on the level of the lowest, as Judah did. Manasseh truckled to the basest sense of his time. He erected altars and idols, and created the worship of many gods. He went to the very limit of heathenism. Perhaps he did not intentionally go there, but he drifted and the drifter is likely to land eventually at the very end of the stream. It takes resolution and moral courage and constant intellectual activity to maintain a spiritual religion. When many people stop thinking, and cease to be actively aggressive concerning religious ideals then the loss of real religion is an almost inevitable consequence.

Bad Signs and Good Times

This is an ugly, discouraging story, one calculated to shake a man's faith in humanity. It makes one wonder most why the Lord does not let us go to the dogs. It is easy to understand the story of the flood, and of Sodom and Gomorrah, but the one has contemplated unrepentant humanity. Even in this enlightened year of our Lord, nineteen hundred and seventeen, it makes one fight to maintain the lofty standards of a pure religion, even as it was a way back in the sixth century, B. C. One has but to beam in advertisements found in many of the reputable newspapers, of fortune tellers and clairvoyants and palm readers and spiritual mediums, to find out that not to have the question raised in his own mind, as to whether there is not as much superstition and idolatry in our own land and time as there was in old Judah, when Manasseh sat on David's throne. Mature, and presumably intelligent persons are still looking for their destiny in the stars, or a greasy pack of cards or an old



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tea cup instead of in the will of the business. When we consider the number of persons who will not sit at table in a company of thirteen, and who have a cold chill over the breaking of a mirror, or the spilling of some salt, we wonder if we are not separated from Manasseh and his idolatry by something less than twenty-six centuries. One who searched deep in the lives of every day people will find that there are idolatries and superstitions very near at home.

The Most Satanic Sin

The person who is in the business of tempting others to sin is in the business of the devil. Of all the sins in the black calendar the most satanic is that of leading others astray. The worst indictment of Manasseh is not that of folly or pride or wickedness; it is the same as that of his ancestor, Jeroboam, "He made Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do that which is a charge before which the most hardened offender should shrink. It is the sweeping indictment not only of Manasseh, but of the youth of his imagination by unclean speech; all who put to innocent lips the cup of strong drink; all who in any way guide the steps of beginners into the way of transgression. Better a thousand fold for such an one to have a millstone tied around his neck, and be cast into the depths of the sea. A good man gone bad is the worst man; Manasseh made the Jews worse than the heathen whom the king had destroyed for their heathenness. Perhaps this is the law of extremes or by whatever name it is called, its outworking has been witnessed by everybody. The occasional drinker when intoxicated is far worse than the regular toper; for scoundrelness, the renegade member of the Sunday School may be worse than the graduate of the slum. They who fall from high places, fall farthest. Every good person needs to tremble lest he should be tempted and fall, knowing that if he does fall he will fall far.

How Gods Gets Even

Of all the follies of foolish man the worst is to believe that he can outwit God. That is one thing which Jehovah can never permit, for it would overthrow His throne of Godhead. If God is God he must reign. He cannot be defied, or denied, or defeated. His laws must prevail. His will must be done. That is why he is strongest who plants his life on the eternal principles, which have their springs in the nature of the Infinite. Justice is sure because God reigns, and Manasseh who was brought to terms when he would give no heed to warning—ah, the pitiful folly of the strong doers who are blind to their own end!—for God cleaned up Judah with the broom of Assyria. Many a patient saint in Jerusalem cried aloud in agony, "How long, Oh Lord, how long!" before the wrongs of his time were righted, just as many men have worn out their hearts in bitterness, while the financial and political evils of our own time now crashing to

doom, thrive prosperously. The mills of God grind slowly, but they never cease to grind. Whoever offends against God or His laws must one day meet the inevitable hour of reckoning.

A Lesson Hardly Learned

Afflictions had to be visited upon Manasseh before he would turn to the Lord. Most men will not look up until God has thrown them prostrate, on their backs, says the "Ram's Horn"; yet God may be counted upon to persist until he has taught us that He is God. The secret of many hard experiences in life is this; the Lord is trying to make us understand His Godship. As the needle turns to the pole, so in affliction the heart of man turns to his Creator. When disease or disaster clutches these mysterious bodies of ours, we instinctively cry aloud to their Maker as their only Mender. In extremity the soul always looks up. The seafarer hears. That is the wonderful thing about God, "He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil." Even Manasseh, the unrepentant, the seducer of a nation, was heavy and forgiven. He did not get his deserts, for none of us dare ask for justice; he got the infinite mercy that resides only with the Omnipotent. Nobody but God would have heard and forgiven him. It was characteristic of the God of his fathers. The one who heard Manasseh's supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem, led to his kingdom." So the story sticks to the truth. Then Manasseh knew that Jehovah, He was God."

WINNING THE WAR IN AIR

Modern aeroplanes enter the world's conflict at the crucial moment; the deadlock that has for so long held the world must be broken by attack from the skies. That is the opinion of Augustus W. Post, former Secretary of the Aero Club of America, writing in the "Navy and Merchant Marine." The heart of the Central Powers is Essen enveloped in an obscuring canopy of smoke clouds where the vast Krupp Works send through the veins of Germany the life blood of munitions. One aeroplane could not destroy Essen, nor a few aeroplanes, but a fleet of them, a fleet in numbers commensurate with the vastness of this war, could beyond the shadow of doubt blow the Essen works into ruin, and accomplish more than any other military operation. The opinion of the most cool-headed and practical experts, not mere dreamers. It is the opinion of the business-like Orville Wright and yet the fullest, truest and best of the Saviour, from Nazareth to Calvary, the words "Self-surrender." We cannot possibly like Christ until we are willing to the uttermost degree to give up our own lives and wills. To make self-indulgence life's aim is to reach the brute level. Temporal prosperity is the goal of the world. To be rich and comfortable and of good repute; to have a good time and an easy time—these are the ambitions of the day. Men are satisfied if they can "get along in the world." The objection to this view is that it deals only with temporal prosperity. It is short-sighted and insufficient. Spiritual growth is infinitely more important than worldly success. To grow in the graces of the inner man, and in the grace of Christ, is better than to increase in wealth or fame, because spiritual progress is forever, and these other things are perishing. They best live who live for the life unending.

The prodigal "Want the pace" and lost the race. "Fast" living never arrives at life's goals. Destruction

UNFRIENDLY TO ONE'S SELF

Terse Comments On The Uniform Prayer Meeting Topic Of The Young People's Societies—Christian Endeavor, Etc.—For August 5: "How Men Cheat Themselves."—Prov. 14:21; Ps. 1:1-6

By WILLIAM T. ELLIS

The rule of the world is to "look out for number one." Nothing could be more antagonistic than this to the teachings of Christ. His greatest doctrine, the underlying principle of all His words and deeds, was that of self-sacrifice, looking out for number two. Therefore He has given us the plain message that to save our lives we must sacrifice them.

There is no help for it: if a man loves his life he shall lose it. Selfishness is death. The converse of the proverb that "The liberal soul shall be made fat is equally true: When unselfishness ends, death begins. The self-centered person has within him the germ of decay.

Call the roll of the mighty men of God. Look closely into the life of each hero as he responds. Without exception you will find that the great ones like the elders about the throne, are those who have come through much tribulation. Are we willing to follow in their train?

Sin never satisfies. All of its pleasures are for a season. Then comes remorse, that eats out the heart and to make the soul hate itself. There is no contentment in sin. Those who live in wickedness must go from sin unto sin, seeking a delect that is never found until life's direction is changed and the foot of the blood stained grass is reached.

Life's sweets are tasted not by him who gets, but by him who gives. "Even Christ pleased not himself," and yet the fullest, truest and best life ever lived on earth was the life of Christ. And if we would know the secret, humbly seeking, of the power and permanence of that peerless career, we must read under every act of the Saviour, from Nazareth to Calvary, the words "Self-surrender." We cannot possibly like Christ until we are willing to the uttermost degree to give up our own lives and wills.

Life is full of paradoxes. The seeming success of bad men and the seeming failure of good men, meet us every day. How shall we reconcile these facts? Does God go back on His own? The answer, simple enough, though hard to realize, is "Yes." His thoughts are bigger than our understanding. His plans are more far reaching than our hopes. He sometimes withholds the lesser, present reward that He may bestow upon us later the more abundant honor and blessing. This is always to be remembered in considering God's dealings with men. His standpoint is the standpoint of eternity.

The old proverb says: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man." Yes, it seems right. Idle-ness, good fellowship, plenty of money, and high living are very alluring to short-sighted and undisciplined youth. Satan well knows how to make his path seem right at the first appearing. He cunningly contrasts this lively life with the "slow" matter-of-fact existence at home. Ah! but the end thereof are the ways of death." That is it; fair at first, fatal at last. Ask the prodigal what he thinks about the "slow" way that seems right. He will point you to his starvation, shame and sorrow, and they will be answer enough.

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All Choked Up With Catarrh? Why Continue Makeshift Treatment?

Sprays and douches will never cure you. Catarrh is annoying enough when it chokes up your nostrils and air passages, causing painful and difficult breathing and other discomforts. But the real danger comes when it reaches down into your lungs. This is why you should at once realize the importance of the proper treatment, and lose no time experimenting with worthless remedies which touch only the surface. To be rid of Catarrh you must drive disease germs out of your blood. Splendid results have been reported from the use of S. S. S., which completely routs from your blood the Catarrh germs, for which it is a perfect antidote. S. S. S. is sold by all druggists. If you wish medical advice as to the treatment of your own individual case, write to Dr. C. M. Medical Adviser, Swift Specific Co., Dept. L, 214, Atlanta, Ga.

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BUY FLOUR IN SMALL QUANTITY

Housewives Warned That Attempt to Hoard and Store Often Is False Economy

Washington, D. C. Aug. 3.—Buy flour in small quantities and protect it carefully from spoilage, is the keynote of a suggestion from the United States Department of Agriculture.

Sound flour milled from standard wheat exhibits very little tendency to decompose when stored in a proper manner. Nevertheless, there is considerable loss of flour through spoilage as a result of improper storage, particularly during the summer months. Flour dealers naturally have to carry in storage an amount of flour proportionate to the current needs of their trade. Housekeepers on the farm and in the city should purchase flour in accordance with their needs only. It is false economy for the housekeeper to purchase the larger amounts of flour than can be used within a reasonable length of time. This may be a barrel for a large family; more often it will be the 50-pound sack. Agy storage of flour in excess of the consumer's needs constitutes hoarding which, under present circumstances, is an unethical and reprehensible practice, of no profit to the individual who practices it, but injurious to the best interests of the people. Since it is the duty of everyone in the present situation particularly to avoid all waste, it is incumbent upon each one so to store the normal amount of flour as to eliminate all waste whatsoever. The precautions that are required have been well worked out in practice and are stated as follows by specialists in the Department of Agriculture. There are three cardinal principles

of flour storage. Flour should not be stored in the cellar, since the cellar is rarely free from dampness, even though special floor bins have been built in. It is common to find odors in a cellar and flour absorbs odors and is contaminated by them. The cellar is cool, but is usually too damp. Flour should not be stored in the attic of the usual type. The temperature is too high in summer, there is no circulation of air, and the flour is likely to acquire a musty odor. Flour should not be stored in the pantry or kitchen except in small quantities since the temperature is certain to be uneven and the flour is exhausted, the container should be carefully cleaned before a new stock is placed. Naturally the flour must be guarded from vermin. Flour should be examined occasionally to see that composition has not begun. Conserve in this manner, the sack of flour in the household and the larger stores of the retailer can be utilized practically to the exclusion of any waste through spoilage.

Dr. Ferdinand King, a New York City Physician and Medical Author says: "There can be no strong, vigorous, iron men nor beautiful, healthy, rosy-checked women without Iron—Nuxated Iron taken three times per day after meals will increase the strength and endurance of weak, nervous, run-down folks 100 per cent. in two weeks' time in many instances. Avoid the old forms of metallic iron which may injure the teeth, corrode the stomach, and thereby do more harm than good. Take only organic Iron—Nuxated Iron." It is dispensed in this city by Croll Keller, G. A. Gargas, J. Nelson Clark, and all good druggists.

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