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## **A GOOD SON OF A BAD FATHER.**

– 2 CHRONICLES 34:1-13. – AUGUST 6. –

**Golden Text:** – "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." – Eccl. 12:1.

WE CANNOT treat this lesson from the standpoint evidently intended by those who selected it. We cannot base upon it and plead for "good citizenship" amongst the Lord's consecrated people of spiritual Israel. We cannot make it the groundwork of an exhortation to social, political and moral public reforms, because while commending the course followed by Josiah we cannot concede that it is a proper illustration for the Lord's people of spiritual Israel to-day. A failure to recognize the times and seasons in the divine plan, and the different features of the work apportioned to those different times and seasons, have greatly beclouded the judgment of many good people in their endeavors to expound the Word of the Lord and to draw lessons therefrom.

Coming to the throne at eight years of age it is remarkable that, instead of having his head and heart turned to foolishness and vanity, Josiah at the age of sixteen began to seek earnestly to know and do the will of God in respect to the kingdom which he governed as an absolute ruler. By the time he was twenty years of age his convictions were crystallized and he began a thorough reformation of the kingdom of Judah, extending the same beyond the lines of his own particular dominion into the territories of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon and Naphtali. He was in earnest, and not only [R3607 : page 236] gave the commands for the destruction of the images and various paraphernalia associated with the idolatry established in the land, but he gave the matter his personal supervision, – he went with the officers whom he commissioned and saw to it personally that the destruction was thoroughly accomplished. This work of reform had been prophesied for him years before, even to the declaration that

he would burn the bones of the priests of Baal upon the Baal altar at Bethel. – 1 Kings 13:1-3; 2 Kings 23:15-17.

The course of Josiah and that of other reformers of the Jewish epoch – as, for instance, Elijah, who caused thousands of the priests of Baal to be slain – are a source of confusion in the minds of many earnest Christians, as apparently sanctioning acts of violence public or private, totally out of accord with the spirit of this Gospel dispensation. In order to have a right conception of the matter it is necessary that we remember that the Jewish nation by divine arrangement represented God's judgments in the world, and that under the Law there was a certain responsibility resting upon every king of Israel, and also in some respects upon the individuals of that nation, to oppose idolatry with violence, because the kingdom typically represented God and his reign of righteousness. With the end of the Jewish era, when fleshly Israel was cast off from divine favor as a nation, all the laws and regulations given to that people governing such matters ended, were abrogated, made null and void. As our Lord declared unto them, "Your house is left unto you desolate." – Matt. 23:38.

With the establishment of Spiritual Israel at Pentecost a new covenant, a new relationship and new regulations have accordingly gone into effect. The spiritual Israelites are not to war with carnal weapons. Their warfare is to be each within his own heart, fighting the good fight of faith against the desires of the flesh, the wiles of the Adversary and the spirit of the world. Each heart has its own dominion to conquer, to clear of idols; each heart is expected to establish in all the realm of the natural body which it controls the worship and reverence and service of the Lord our God. As for worldly affairs we are distinctly told that we have nothing whatever to do with them – "Ye are not of the world even as I am not of the world." The world at present is under the control of the Gentiles and that by divine permission. The New Creatures, spiritual Israel, are to keep themselves separate from the world, and, so far as their

consciences will permit, to be subject to the powers that be because these powers are permitted of God. This does not signify that they endorse all the doings of the powers that be in their hearts – they may be seriously grieved thereby; but whatever they may experience of grief or opposition or suffering or trials of patience and of faith are to be esteemed as so much of the Lord's fitting and polishing process, making them ready for the kingdom conditions of the future, making them the more humble and patient and loyal to himself and to righteousness, and the better qualified for the great work they will be engaged in in the future of blessing, ruling, judging, uplifting and encouraging the world in the right ways of the Lord.

### **THE MOTHER'S INFLUENCE**

In a previous lesson we saw something of how a good father might have a bad son, and how in a general way at least it implied dereliction, unfaithfulness to his duties as a father, no matter how zealous and faithful he might have been in other respects and whatever excuses might be possible as respects his own lack of parental talent. Our lesson to-day reverses the matter, showing us the good son of a bad father, and we think it entirely reasonable to suppose that this implied a good mother. For a bad father and a bad mother to have reared a good son would appear almost impossible. Hence we feel safe in assuming that Josiah's mother was a godly woman.

The divine arrangement by which the mothers of the human family are considerably separated from the selfishness and strife of business and politics, so that if the mother will she can expend her energies in the training of her children according to the highest ideals before her mind, has undoubtedly been a great blessing to the race in various ways. Undoubtedly it has prevented a more rapid decline into extreme selfishness and sin, and wherever this

arrangement of nature is interfered with more or less of disadvantage to the children is almost certain.

O, that the mothers of the world could appreciate the great power for good which the Lord has placed in their hands! O, that they could realize that the hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world! To realize this and to use the opportunity thus providentially placed in their hands would be a proper response to the divine arrangement, and would entirely remove from such the ambition to have a share in politics, business, etc. The trouble is that the counsel of the Lord's Word and the arrangements of divine providence [R3608 : page 236] on this as on other subjects pass measurably unheeded. The poor world is doing perhaps as well as it knows, some better and some worse proportionately as the instincts of nature are acknowledged and followed with a lofty sentiment.

Christian mothers, especially those whose eyes of understanding are opening to a larger appreciation of the divine character and plan, should be swift to avail themselves of their privileges in the training of their children – their responsibilities. Let none think that the work is small and insignificant and without its influence. Every son and every daughter properly trained to reverence and obedience to God and his Word and to their parents, and to the Golden Rule in respect to their dealings with playmates and neighbors, and to order and regularity and punctuality and system and truthfulness, is not only prepared for his and her own blessing in life, but prepared also to be a blessing and example to other boys and girls and men and women. Thus every mother's influence extends and multiplies as days and years go by.

Even if there were no such desirable influences to [R3608 : page 237] be exercised outside the family circle, the proper training of the children means so much to the home – so much to the general peace and comfort and love constituting a home. While the father should not shirk his responsibilities as the head of the family, the

mother as his efficient co-worker and helpmate earnestly cooperates, and to her must fall the major part of the responsibility for the training of the children, the breadwinner of the family being necessarily less in contact with them. And when the mother only is a child of grace, the whole responsibility, so far as her husband will permit, falls upon her shoulders, with only the assistance and guidance which the Lord provides. Alas, that so many homes are anarchious, lawless, therefore not really homes at all. Many parents, with false conceptions of kindness and indulgence, allow the children to grow up devoid of the proper respect for God, for parents and for the rights and interests of others. This is the secret of much of the lawlessness and growing spirit of anarchy everywhere manifest in the world. The wonder indeed is that, with homes devoid of law and order and love and kindness, the world is not in a worse state than we find it.

### **"IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH"**

The Golden Text of our lesson should be made prominent in every family. The child who learns to remember and reverence his Creator, who learns also of his own imperfections and how they were incurred, and that the death penalty is the curse resting upon himself and all the world, blighting every earthly prospect, will be in a fair way to receive the message of salvation from the curse – to learn of how God in his love has provided Jesus as the great Redeemer, and that the deliverance secured through his death will soon extend to every member of the human family. Reverence to parents follows naturally as a result of reverence to God.

The Editor of this journal had the good fortune to be born of Christian parents and to be reared under Christian influences, and thus in God's providence, quite early in life, was led to see the privilege as well as the blessing of consecration to the Lord. Looking back he can see with increasing clearness the many pitfalls and snares and sad experiences which were thus averted and the great

blessings which were thus secured. His sympathies go out toward all who by the grace of God flee from sin and lay hold upon the great Life-giver and seek to walk in his steps, holding fast his hand. He rejoices with all such, but he feels specially interested in those who seek the Lord early in life, before the evil days draw nigh, before passing into the sowing of wild oats and the reaping of the crop of bitter experiences which this implies. He feels a deep interest, therefore, in all the younger readers of this journal, especially of those who have felt the love of God constraining their hearts and who have responded to that drawing influence and have made a full consecration of themselves to walk in the steps of the Captain of our Salvation – steps of self-denial, self-sacrifice, steps which lead from glory to glory. To all such he extends earnest greetings and salutations in the Lord – congratulation on the steps already trod and best wishes for those which are to come.

