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2CHRONICLES 33: 1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign; and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem.

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Manasseh reigns fifty-five years, and restores idolatry, pollutes the temple, and practises all kinds of abominations, 2Chr 33:1-9. He and the people are warned in vain, 2Chr 33:10. He is delivered into the hands of the Assyrians, bound with fetters, and carried to Babylon, 2Chr 33:11. He humbles himself, and is restored, 2Chr 33:12, 2Chr 33:13. He destroys idolatry, and restores the worship of God, 2Chr 33:14-16. The people keep the high places, but sacrifice to the Lord on them, 2Chr 33:17. His acts, prayer, and death, 2Chr 33:18-20. His son Amon succeeds him; and after a wicked idolatrous reign of two years, is slain by his own servants in his own house, 2Chr 33:21-24. The people rise up, and slay his murderers, and make Josiah his son king in his stead, 2Chr 33:25.

Verse 1

Manasseh was twelve years old - We do not find that he had any godly director; his youth was therefore the more easily seduced. But surely he had a pious education; how then could the principles of it be so soon eradicated?

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2CHRONICLES 33: 2 He did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the nations whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

2CHRONICLES 33: 3 For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down; and he reared up altars for the Baals, and made Asheroth, and worshipped all the army of the sky, and served them.

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Verse 3

Altars for Baalim - The Sun and Moon. And made groves, אֲשֵׁרוֹת Asheroth, Astarte, Venus; the host of heaven, all the Planets and Stars. These were the general objects of his devotion.

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2CHRONICLES 33: 4 He built altars in the LORD's house, of which the LORD said, "My name shall be in Jerusalem forever."

2CHRONICLES 33: 5 He built altars for all the army of the sky in the two courts of the LORD's house.

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Verse 5

He built altars - See the principal facts in this chapter explained in the notes on 2 Kings 21:1-17 (note).

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2CHRONICLES 33: 6 He also made his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom; and he practised sorcery, and used enchantments, and practised sorcery, and dealt with

those who had familiar spirits, and with wizards: he worked much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

2CHRONICLES 33: 7 He set the engraved image of the idol, which he had made, in God's house, of which God said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name forever:

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Verse 7

A carved image - "He set up an image, the likeness of himself, in the house of the sanctuary." The Targumist supposes he wished to procure himself Divine honors.

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2CHRONICLES 33: 8 neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from off the land which I have appointed for your fathers, if only they will observe to do all that I have commanded them, even all the law and the statutes and the ordinances given by Moses."

2CHRONICLES 33: 9 Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that they did more evil than the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel did.

2CHRONICLES 33: 10 The LORD spoke to Manasseh, and to his people; but they gave no heed.

2CHRONICLES 33: 11 Therefore the LORD brought on them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh in chains, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon.

2CHRONICLES 33: 12 When he was in distress, he begged the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers.

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Verse 12

And when he was in affliction - Here is a very large addition in the Chaldee: "For the Chaldeans made a brazen mule, pierced full of small holes, and put him within it, and kindled fires all around it; and when he was in this misery, he sought help of all the idols which he had made, but obtained none, for their were of no use. He therefore repented, and prayed before the Lord his God, and was greatly humbled in the sight of the Lord God of his fathers."

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2CHRONICLES 33: 13 He prayed to him; and he was entreated by him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.

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Verse 13

And prayed unto him - "While he was thus praying, all the presiding angels went away to the gates of prayer in heaven; and shut all the gates of prayer, and all the windows and apertures in heaven, lest that his prayer should be heard. Immediately the compassions of the Creator of the world were moved, whose right hand is stretched out to receive sinners, who are converted to his fear, and break their hearts' concupiscence by repentance. He made therefore a window and opening in heaven, under the throne of his glory; and having heard his prayer, he favourably received his

supplication. And when his Word had shaken the earth, the mule was burst and he escaped. Then the Spirit went out from between the wings of the cherubim; by which, being inspired through the decree of the Word of the Lord, he returned to his kingdom in Jerusalem. And then Manasseh knew that it was the Lord God who had done these miracles and signs; and he turned to the Lord with his whole heart, left all his idols, and never served them more." This long addition gives the Jewish account of those particulars which the sacred writer has passed by: it is curious, though in some sort trifling. The gates of prayer may be considered childish; but in most of those things the ancient rabbins purposely hid deep and important meanings.

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2CHRONICLES 33: 14 Now after this he built an outer wall to the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entrance at the fish gate; and he encircled Ophel with it, and raised it up to a very great height: and he put valiant captains in all the fortified cities of Judah.

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#### Verse 14

He built a wall - This was probably a weak place that he fortified; or a part of the wall which the Assyrians had broken down, which he now rebuilt.

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2CHRONICLES 33: 15 He took away the foreign gods, and the idol out of the LORD's house, and all the altars that he had built in the mountain of the LORD's house, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city.

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#### Verse 15

He took away the strange gods - He appears to have done every thing in his power to destroy the idolatry which he had set up, and to restore the pure worship of the true God. His repentance brought forth fruits meet for repentance. How long he was in captivity, and when or by whom he was delivered, we know not. The fact of his restoration is asserted; and we believe it on Divine testimony.

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2CHRONICLES 33: 16 He built up the altar of the LORD, and offered sacrifices of peace offerings and of thanksgiving on it, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD, the God of Israel.

2CHRONICLES 33: 17 Nevertheless the people sacrificed still in the high places, but only to the LORD their God.

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#### Verse 17

The people did sacrifice - "Nevertheless the people did sacrifice on the high places, but only to the name of the Word of the Lord their God." - Targum.

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2CHRONICLES 33: 18 Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, behold, they are written among the acts of the kings of Israel.

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Verse 18

The words of the seers that spake to him - "Which were spoken to him in the name of the Word of the Lord God of Israel." - Targum.

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2CHRONICLES 33: 19 His prayer also, and how God was entreated of him, and all his sin and his trespass, and the places in which he built high places, and set up the Asherah poles and the engraved images, before he humbled himself: behold, they are written in the history of Hozai.

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Verse 19

His prayer also - What is called the Prayer of Manasseh, king of Judah, when he was holden captive in Babylon, being found among our apocryphal books, I have inserted it at the end of the chapter, without either asserting or thinking that it is the identical prayer which this penitent king used when a captive in Babylon. But, as I have observed in another place, there are many good sentiments in it; and some sinners may find it a proper echo of the distresses of their hearts; I therefore insert it.

Written among the sayings of the seers - "They are written in the words of Chozai." - Targum. So says the Vulgate. The Syriac has Hunan the prophet; and the Arabic has Saphan the prophet.

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2CHRONICLES 33: 20 So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house: and Amon his son reigned in his place.

2CHRONICLES 33: 21 Amon was twenty-two years old when he began to reign; and he reigned two years in Jerusalem.

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Verse 21

Amon - reigned two years - See on 2Kgs 21:19 (note).

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2CHRONICLES 33: 22 He did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, as did Manasseh his father; and Amon sacrificed to all the engraved images which Manasseh his father had made, and served them.

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Verse 22

Sacrificed unto all the carved images - How astonishing is this! with his father's example before his eyes, he copies his father's vices, but not his repentance.

2CHRONICLES 33: 23 He didn't humble himself before the LORD, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself; but this same Amon trespassed more and more.

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Verse 23

Trespassed more and more - He appears to have exceeded his father, and would take no warning.

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2CHRONICLES 33: 24 His servants conspired against him, and put him to death in his own house.

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Verse 24

His servants conspired against him - On what account we cannot tell.

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2CHRONICLES 33: 25 But the people of the land killed all those who had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his place.

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Verse 25

The people of the land slew all them - His murder was not a popular act, for the people slew the regicides. They were as prone to idolatry as their king was. We may rest satisfied that idolatry was accompanied with great licentiousness and sensual gratifications else it never, as a mere religious system, could have had any sway in the world.

For an explanation of the term groves, 2Chr 23:3, see the observations at the end of 2Kgs 21:26 (note).

I have referred to the prayer attributed to Manasseh, and found in what is called the Apocrypha, just before the first book of Maccabees. It was anciently used as a form of confession in the Christian Church, and is still as such received by the Greek Church. It is as follows: - "O Lord, Almighty God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of their righteous seed, who hast made heaven and earth, with all the ornament thereof; who hast bound the sea by the word of thy commandment; who hast shut up the deep, and sealed it by thy terrible and glorious name; whom all men fear, and tremble before thy power; for the majesty of thy glory cannot be borne, and thine angry threatening towards sinners is insupportable; but thy merciful promise is unmeasurable and unsearchable; for thou art the most high Lord, of great compassion, long-suffering, very merciful, and repentest of the evils of men. Thou, O Lord, according to thy great goodness, hast promised repentance and forgiveness to them that have sinned against thee, and of thine infinite mercies hast appointed repentance unto sinners, that they may be saved. Thou, therefore, O Lord, that art the God of the just, has not appointed repentance to the just, as to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, which have not sinned against thee; but thou hast appointed repentance unto me that am a sinner: for I have sinned above the number of the sands of the sea. My transgressions, O Lord, are multiplied; my transgressions are multiplied; and I am not worthy to behold and see the height of heaven for the multitude of mine iniquities. I am bowed down with many iron bands, that I cannot lift up mine

head, neither have any release; for I have provoked thy wrath, and done evil before thee. I did not thy will, neither kept I thy commandments. I have set up abominations, and have multiplied offenses. Now therefore I bow the knee of mine heart, beseeching thee of grace. I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, and I acknowledge mine iniquities: wherefore I humbly beseech thee, forgive me, O Lord, forgive me, and destroy me not in mine iniquities. Be not angry with me for ever, by reserving evil for me; neither condemn me into the lower parts of the earth. For thou art the God, the God of them that repent; and in me thou wilt show all thy goodness: for thou wilt save me, that am unworthy, according to thy great mercy. Therefore I will praise thee for ever all the days of my life: for all the powers of the heavens do praise thee, and thine is the glory for ever and ever. - Amen."

The above translation, which is that in our common Bibles, might be mended; but the piece is scarcely worth the pains.