

of conduct based upon justice as between man and man. **Equity.** A plural word in the original, not differing widely in meaning from the others in the sentence. These words of similar meaning are used to impress the thought of the writer more strongly. 1. The highest aim of all education is not knowledge, but character.

4. **To give subtilty.** A shrewdness and sharpness of intellect, enabling its possessor to escape evil. **To the simple.** The open-hearted and open-minded, exposed to every influence capable of harm, but equally capable of good. **To the young man.** For whom the book was especially written. **Discretion.** Rather, *discernment*, power to know the good and reject the evil. 2. Youth needs wisdom most at a time when it is apt to be without it.

5. **A wise man will hear.** The one who is wisest will appreciate wisdom most, and be least likely to overrate his own stock of it. **Increase learning.** Even the wisest can gain more knowledge and the power which it brings. **Wise counsels.** Literally, "steersmanship," or the power to guide his vessel aright through dangerous seas.

6. **To understand a proverb.** Another purpose of this book is here named. It is to give practice and skill in the understanding of difficult saying, penetration of mind in solving mysteries. **And the interpretation.** An unfortunate mistranslation. The word means "an enigma," or saying which contains a great but concealed truth. 3. Strength of intellect is obtained only by exercise in grappling with difficulties.

7. **The fear of the Lord.** To this point the verses have been introductory: now comes the motto of the book, the enunciation of its great fundamental principle, as true now as it were three thousand years ago, that all true wisdom has for its foundation the fear of God; that is a recognition of his existence, and a due reverence for his authority. Any other view which leaves out a personal God from the universe, is destructive to all sound character. **Fools despise wisdom.** "The fool" in the Scripture is not merely the ignorant nor the dull-minded, but more especially the one who is indifferent to God, or disbelieving toward him, and hence the atheist. 4. No matter how great the intellect he is a fool who will not see God.

8. **9 My son.** The wise man addresses youth in the tone of a father; and perhaps Solomon wrote these proverbs for the instruction of Rehoboam. **Hear the instruction.** The parent is the natural instructor of childhood, and the true teacher strives to put himself in the parent's place. **The law of thy mother.** 5. The mother and father stand side by side, and are to be held in equal reverence. **An ornament of grace.** Like a crown upon the brow giving beauty, and the token of sovereignty, is true wisdom. **Chains about thy neck.** The gold necklace is worn in oriental courts by the favourites of the king. So true wisdom will show its possessor as one

favoured of God. 6. There is no beauty and no honour comparable to that given by a noble character.

10. **My Son.** With this verse wisdom begins its warning against evil companionships, a fruitful source of ruin to character. **If sinners entice thee.** It is a trait of sin to desire to bring others down to its own level; hence the wicked are ever striving to corrupt the good. **Consent thou not.** The only safeguard of youth under temptation is a definite, peremptory resistance, an open refusal. 7. He who parleys with temptation doubles its danger.

11. **Let us wait for blood.** The temptation proffered is to join a band of highway robbers, a manner of life for which the mountains and caves of Palestine give abundant opportunities, and one frequent in all ages. The popularity of cheap stories of bandits and pirates, among young people of our time, shows that the warning is still needed, for there is to many minds a strange fascination in the thought of a freebooter's life. **For the innocent without cause.** Those who are innocent in vain, whose innocence does not protect them from evil.

12, 13, 14. **Let us swallow them.** Destroy them suddenly. **As the grave.** As the grave receives the dead, so were the robbers to open their arms for their prey. **We shall find.** The temptation of sudden riches obtained by robbery and without labour. 8. Wicked men forget that God sees them, and will surely punish. **Let us all have one purse.** There is an attraction to youth in the communism of property and of interest, each receiving from the gains of all.

15, 16. **Walk not thou.** The only safety for youth is to keep out the path of temptation, to have no intercourse with evil. **The feet run to evil.** God's word presents the highest motive to right conduct. It tells us to avoid sin, not merely because it is harmful to the sinner, or unwise, but because it is wicked. 9. Appeal to the highest motives in character and you will awaken them.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Prov. 1. 7.

OUTLINE.

1. The Aim of the Proverbs, v. 1-6.
2. The Beginning of Wisdom, v. 7-9.
3. The Enticements of Sin, v. 10-16.

LESSON HYMNS.

My son, know thou the Lord,
Thy father's God obey;
Seek his protecting care by night,
His guardian hand by day.
Call, while he may be found;
Seek him while he is near;
Serve him with all thy heart and mind,
And worship him with fear.
If thou wilt seek his face,
His ear will hear thy cry;
Then shall thou find his mercy sure,
His grace forever nigh.