

April 30. WISDOM'S WARNING.

Lesson, Prov. 1: 20-33. Golden Text, Heb. 12: 25. Memory vs. 20-23. Catechism Q. 57.

Solomon's great wisdom was a special gift in answer to prayer, but he must have been wise to ask such a gift. Gathering around him a body of wise men, himself the wisest of them all, they studied all subjects and formed a bright centre of learning and wisdom which attracted men from all nations, 1 Ki. IV, 33, 34.

Solomon's school of learning existed five centuries before the wise men of Greece lived and taught, and it is probable that much of the wisdom of the latter was due to this source, just as Solomon, while excelling in wisdom all the men that ever lived, no doubt made use of the gathered wisdom of previous ages.

Of his wise sayings on all subjects three thousand were noted. Of these, a few, bearing upon moral and religious subjects have come down to us in the word of God.

The Book is called "Solomon's," because its contents are chiefly his sayings, though part of it is due to others, the last two chapters, for example, are the prayers of Agar and Lemuel. Portions of it were gathered and arranged in the days of Hezekiah, Chap. 25: 1. but the main part of it is of Solomon, hence the name.

"The book of Proverbs is the best statesman's manual that was ever written. An adherence to the political economy and spirit of that collection of wise sayings would do more to root out from a people the causes of extravagance, debasement and ruin, than all the contributions to 'political economy,' of all the great writers on that subject."—*Coleridge*.

"The first nine chapters represent a continuous, grand discourse, which, after the introduction in the first six verses, is introduced by the text, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." This is indeed the theme of the whole book, showing that no wisdom or morality which has not its root, as its source, its spring, in this, is not worth the name. "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."

I. Wisdom Calling, vs. 20-23.—The place of it; vs. 20-21, in the place of public discourse: wherever men do gather, there, if they have but ears to hear, all around, their own experience and observations, speak to them of what is wise.

2. The substance of it, vs. 23, 23.—Three classes are addressed, v. 22, as in the first Psalm. Then comes the promise, v. 23, God's spirit cannot be received unless there is a turning from sin.

II. Wisdom Rejected, v. 24, 25.—Show some of the ways in which this is done.

III. The Consequences, vs. 24, 24.—*Mock*, God does not mock, but, just as the weakness of the body, the fruit of his own doings, mocks the vain prayer of the debauchee for health, so man finds in the misery of sin the mockery of the choice he made. *Shall not find me*.—Men often long for lost opportunities, but they cannot return. *Eat fruit*.—"Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap, v. 33, The way of peace.

1. "God leaves none without calls and warnings."

2. "There is a too late. If the farmer neglects the spring time the year is lost to him beyond recovery." So there is a spring time of opportunity for man.

3. Those who turn away from God destroy their own souls.

4. Those who hearken to his calls shall be quiet from the fear of evil."

May 7. THE VALUE OF WISDOM.

Prov. 3: 11-24. Golden Text, Prov. 3: 5. Memory vs. 13-17. Catechism Q. 58.

"The second chapter of this wonderful book treats further of the excellency of wisdom, exhorts the student to seek after her," and warns against a common and deadly sin. The third chapter shows the rich reward of listening to the voice of wisdom.

I. A caution, vs. 11, 12. Before setting forth the value of wisdom and the blessedness of those who choose her, the wise man gives a word of caution to show that even wisdom does not free from life's ills. This is the great problem taught by the Book of Job, that even the good are subject to God's corrections and chastisements, and yet all in love and for their own good." God sends us to His school because He loves us too much not to teach these lessons. Foolish parents can endure any pain for their despot child, except the pain of resisting and instructing him. And, accordingly, they have sometimes to experience the shame and anguish of their children's curses; like that Carthaginian mother, of whom it is related that her son, a convicted criminal, passing to execution, requested that he might whisper something to her, and, coming near, bit off her ear, saying that it was his revenge for having brought him up so badly."

II. The value of wisdom, vs. 13-15.
Happy—No matter under what circumstances.

Merchandise—It can do for one what gold and silver cannot do. Every gain in it is real, lasting gain. *None of the things*—Men desire many things, health, wealth, fame, but none of them can be compared to wisdom, none will do for us what it can do, none will last as it will.

3. Wisdom's effect upon life, vs. 16-18. *Length of days*—Good habits give health of body, good morals give peace of mind, and both tend to prolong life. *Riches*—Industry, honesty, and the fear of God, while they may neither win the fortunes nor the places that grasping ambition will do, will on the other hand keep as a rule from poverty and want. *Pleasantness*—Peace with man and peace with God makes a life a pleasant thing no matter what its outward circumstances. "It is by walking in wisdom's ways, not in pleasure's ways, that the whole life may be transfigured with a divine and heavenly joy." *Tree of life*—It gives the best both of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

3. The Lord's wisdom, vs. 19-20.

The fact that it is God, infinite in wisdom and power who both gives the charge and sets the example of wisdom, makes it all the more imperative.

My Son—Divine and human tenderness breathe in the words. *Grace*—As a necklace of jewels is to the body so is wisdom to the character. *Securely*—The man who keeps "wisdom" as a companion can never stumble. *Afraid*—Peace by day and sweet sleep by night is the reward of a conscience at peace with itself and with God.

1. "We should be submissive and patient under trials.

2. Religion is more to be desired than any earthly good.

3. Without it, though we may be rich in worldly goods, we will be found poor at last.

4. We should seek this best of all possessions in the very morning of life.

5. Ask of God, and he will give you heavenly wisdom."

6. Whosoever will, may have this treasure.