

success and failure in life. Many have been struck by the seeming worldliness of its tone, and have condemned it for its "prudential" morality.

True, it is a shrewd book; but it is more than that. Or rather it is shrewd in the profoundest sense, for it sees to the bottom of things. It knows that morality must rest upon religion, and that all true life is based upon the recognition of God. This is what is meant by the words

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning (or the chief part) of knowledge," ch. 1: 7.

And amid all the seeming prudential maxims with which the book is strewed, it must never be forgotten that the wise man has thus laid his foundations deep in the recognition of God. Wisdom is not adroit calculation and scheming: it consists in giving God His place. Out of this, the other virtues on which the wise man insists will naturally flow. For the fear of the Lord will bring a man humility; it will inspire him with earnestness and industry in his work, with kindness to man and beast, and especially to the poor; it will teach him caution in framing and executing his plans, as well as in forming his friendships; it will lay upon him the obligation to self-control in his choice of words, and in his use of the pleasant but dangerous things of which life is so full.

So the book is not only a book of morals, but of religion, and is fully entitled to its place in the Bible. Here and there it sparkles with kindly humor, and flashes upon its pictures which make us feel that the east is not far distant from the west. Note, for example, the picture of the scold:

"It is better to dwell in the corner of the house-top,

Than with a contentious woman in a wide house," ch. 25: 24.

Or note that other picture of the child who needs a flogging:

"Withhold not correction from the child:

For if thou beat him with the rod, he shall not die," ch. 23: 13.

How can men say 'there is no humor in the Bible?

Knox College, Toronto

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