

2, 3. **Top of high places.** Upon the hills, prominently in view, and where her voice can be heard. **In the places of the paths.** Where many paths meet, and people pass by. **At the gates.** The gate of an oriental city is the place of general meeting and of business. 1. See in this a vivid picture of God's eager desire to give the knowledge of salvation among men.

3. **Unto you, O men.** God calls to men, in the voice of his written word, of the conscience, and through his Church. Notice that the call is to all men, for God will have all the world enjoy the benefits of grace. **To the sons of men.** The two words translated "men" are different in the Hebrew, the former being the higher and stronger word, like the Latin *vir*, the latter corresponding to *hominis*.

5. **Ye simple, . . . ye fools.** We are not to take these words in too strong a sense. They mean here the inexperienced and untaught, who are open to impressions both good and bad; but not the wilfully ignorant or wicked; and they apply to the young, who possess noble capacities of knowledge and glorious possibilities of character. **Understand wisdom.** That is, "receive the divine truth," into heart as well as mind. **Understanding heart.** The heart is here named as including the mind; and the exhortation is to thoughtfulness and a discerning spirit. 2. Youth needs judgment to know and to choose the highest aim in life.

6. **I will speak of excellent things.** Literally, "of princely things," that is, of themes worthy of princes. 3. He who has learned of Christ is higher than a prince, for he is a son of God. **Right things.** "Straight things." Truth is represented by a straight line, falsehood or error by one tortuous and crooked. 4. Let the young man see that his utterances are ever straightforward.

7. **My mouth shall speak.** Literally, "my palate meditates." In the Hebrew metaphor, the palate, as the seat of taste, is named with reference to meditation for the purpose of speech. "My mind shall think of right things, that my lips may speak of them." 5. The thoughts hold the key to the lips. He who thinks of evil, imagines wickedness, will be apt to speak of such things. **Wickedness is an abomination.** True wisdom will always have respect to true morality, and the wise man will hold evil in abhorrence.

8. **All the words. . . are in righteousness.** How true is this assertion, not only of wisdom in general, but of him who spake as the incarnation of the truth itself! **Nothing froward.** Literally, "twisted," that which is bent out of the straight course. **Nor perverse.** Obstinate and misleading. 6. No one will be led astray who follows in the way of divine truth.

9. **Plain to him that understandeth.** The truth of God may be obscure to the dull mind of the unbeliever, the worldling, or the sensualist; for his spiritual faculties are not yet awakened. But he who has been enlightened by the Spirit of God sees the meaning and

relations of the word, for they are spiritually discerned. 7. Divine truth is apprehended not by the intellectual but by the spiritual nature.

10, 11. **Receive my instruction and not silver.** That is, in preference to worldly riches. The worldly standard is different, and young men are urged to seek riches, as practically the greatest good, and the most desirable object of life. But everywhere the Bible arrays itself against public opinion, and declares character to be more desirable than money. **Choice gold.** Unalloyed gold, the most precious. **Better than rubies.** Perhaps the true translation should be *pearls*, as these were the most precious gems of the ancient world. A godly character, here called wisdom, is far more precious in the end than stores of jewels.

12. **Dwell with prudence.** That is, with practical shrewdness and tact. 8. The highest religion is often found conjoined with the best business ability and energy. **Witty inventions.** Wise counsels and plans in practical affairs. In other words, the possession of heavenly wisdom does not conflict with, but rather promotes, that practical skill necessary to worldly prosperity.

13. **The fear of the Lord.** True character must have the sanction which comes from reverence toward a higher power, and this is the fear of the Lord. **Is to hate evil.** That is, true wisdom and true religion, which are one, lead the possessor to hate all evil. **Pride and arrogance.** The sin of self-exaltation, so common to men. **Froward mouth.** All so common to men. **Froward mouth.** All so common to men. **Froward mouth.** All so common to men. Notice that it is one thing to dread punishment, and quite another to hate sin.

14. **Counsel is mine.** The personification of wisdom is still continued. "Good judgment I possess, and wise advice I give," is the meaning of the clause. **I have strength.** Or, in Bacon's well-known sentence, "Knowledge is power," especially when with knowledge is conjoined character.

15, 16. **By me kings reign.** "Kings themselves sit not fast on their thrones unless they be ruled by wisdom."—*Patrick*. **Even all the judges.** Those who rule their fellow-men govern because they are believed to possess intelligence and character, and these they cannot have without the fear of God. Such rulers as Lincoln and Gladstone rest upon a foundation of confidence, not only in their ability, but in their uprightness.

17. **I love them that love me.** Men may not always find what they seek in the direction of wealth, popularity, power, but he who loves godliness above every other desire will attain unto it. **Seek me early.** Rather, "Seek me earnestly." **Shall find me.** God never hides himself long from the heart that seeks him.

GOLDEN TEXT.

I love them that love me: and these that seek me early shall find me. Prov. 8. 17.

OUTLINE.

1. The Call of Wisdom, v. 1-9.
2. The Worth of Wisdom, v. 10-17.