

ed to gather to watch those going in and out, and hear the events of the day. Not only as pleasure resorts, but as places for the administration of justice, for traffic, for audience to rulers, ambassadors, and kings, gates ever played a most important part in the life of every city. Indeed, so closely associated were they with every avenue of public interest that they represented the city itself, and became the emblems of power, strength, and dominion.

A score of biblical incidents connect themselves at once in our minds with gates. It was there that Boaz, redeeming the estate of Elimelech, received Ruth as his wife. It was there that the aged and trembling Eli sat waiting for tidings from the ark of God. It was there that the two kings of Israel and Judah, in royal robes, each on his throne, held a council in regard to an expedition to Ramoth-Gilead. It was there that the children of Israel came to judgment before Deborah. It was there that the broken-hearted David, lamenting the death of his treacherous son, cried bitterly, weeping, "Oh, my son Absalom, my son, my son! would to God I had died for thee!" It was there that the Lord Jesus at Nain restored to life the only son of a widow, and brought back joy to her agonized heart. These are a few of those many incidents upon which we have not time to dwell.

Let us turn at once to the text: "Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors."

These are the words of one of whom it has been truly said that he is in some respects the saddest and greatest figure in the sacred volume, one whose sun seemed to rise so clear and bright, and yet whose setting was obscured by clouds so dark and gloomy. In that wonderful dream of Solomon, described in the third chapter of the first Book of Kings, we find him choosing not riches, not honor, but wisdom. In the Book of Proverbs and in the text he personi-

fies wisdom as a prophetess, standing at the gates of some mighty city, calling to the people as they pass in and out. She is a divinely appointed herald. She has some special message to mankind. She seeks the busiest place of all, and there, where kings and peasants meet, lifts up her voice. To some it is a call worthy to be heeded. To others it is only that of Cassandra from the walls of Troy.

Wisdom as thus pictured is the poet's method of teaching that whatever is true, noble, and beautiful in this world is constantly appealing to man for recognition.

Wisdom in the highest and best sense relates to character. All the virtues of knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity are summed up in this word. All that makes life worth living finds an echo in the call of her who would gain attention at the city gates. She has come hither that her voice may be heard. There may be distinctions, from an earthly point of view, in the circumstances of those who pass, old and young, rich and poor, learned and unlettered, cultured and uncouth. But the same call is made to all. The principles which underlie character can never differ. To all sorts and conditions of men the appeal is made, whether it reach Jew or Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free.

The religion of character is a universal religion. In the costliest palace and the humblest cottage it finds alike a home. It is certainly most pathetic that the man who painted so vividly wisdom should have come so far short himself of all her teachings. Truly has it been said of King Solomon that he sounded every depth of pleasure, and drank the brimming cup of human joy. "If there be any element of permanent satisfaction in life apart from God," says one, "he might have found it, for with every possible advantage he made a deliberate search after it, and ever came back with this melancholy result: 'vanity of vanities, all is vanity.'"