

meets his courtiers at table. The laugh, the jest, the repartee go round. Brilliant as the bubble that dances on the brim of the cup, healing and maddening men, is the royal proverb on human follies. He may be in "the house of the forest of Lebanon." At night he walks alone in the "porch of pillars." The cool wind comes murmuring from the hills and sweeps away the mist from the stars, and as the bright eyes of the king glance upward, some brilliant maxim of the night flashes into his thoughts. If men would only follow these little guide-boards that wisdom plants along the roadways of life!

If the eyes that are tempted to stray would only look up and obey! Ah! there is one now. Encircling him is a ring of tempters. They bow to him deferentially. They whisper in his ear soft words of flattery. They fondle him. They dazzle his eyes with offers. They cry, "What can thwart us? We can lie in wait behind the rocks. We can spring out upon the travellers unseen. Gold is there. Come! come!" They press their offer. Ah! the silly bird is caught in the meshes of the net spread before his very eyes. When will men make God's fear the beginning of knowledge?

B.C. 990.]

[November 30.]

LESSON IX.—TRUE WISDOM.

Proverbs 8. 1-17.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

The lesson presents to our eyes the picture of an oriental city, rising above the surrounding hills, and protected by its walls. At the open space just within the gate we behold the crowd of people passing to and fro. There are men of business and of pleasure, the merchant proclaiming his wares, the artisan plying his trade, the lounge standing by in idleness—just such a scene as may be witnessed to-day at the gate of Damascus or of Jerusalem. Suddenly a sound is heard above the confusion of sounds. Upon an elevated spot, above the heads of the crowd, and prominently to be seen, appears a form, and is heard a voice. Our lesson represents it as personified Wisdom, standing on high, and calling to the sons of men, especially to the young and inexperienced. She invites those who are conscious of their own ignorance, and long for true knowledge, to listen to her counsels. She represents the highest type of humanity, combining in one personality religion, and culture, and character, the three elements which unite to form the perfect man or woman. Above the babble of worldliness and selfishness of sin, her voice sounds in clear tones, calling upon the men to seek aims higher than those of earth, to find riches more precious than gold or rubies or pearls, to obtain knowledge which will make its possessors kings, and a nobility which he may win who is worthy to wear it.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Verse 1. Doth not wisdom cry. The wisdom referred to in the Proverbs, and especially throughout this lesson, may be defined as consisting of three elements, all of which enter equally into its meaning, namely, 1. Religion, or the fear of God; 2. Intelligence, or mental power; 3. Character, or moral principle. It is here represented as a person, calling to the young to accept the blessings which she presents. **Put forth her voice.** It is God's desire that all mankind shall receive the benefits of the true wisdom which is embodied in the Gospel of Christ.



1 Doth not *a* wisdom cry?
and understanding put forth
her voice?

a Chap. 9. 3; 1 Cor. 1. 24; Col. 2. 3.

2 She standeth in the top of
high places, by the way in the
places of the paths;

3 She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the
city, at the coming in at the doors:

4 Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is
to the sons of man.

5 O ye simple, understand wisdom; and, ye
fools, be ye of an understanding heart.

6 Hear; for I will speak of *b* excellent things;
and the opening of my lips shall be right things.

b Chap. 22. 20.

7 For my mouth shall *c* speak truth; and
wickedness is *a* an abomination to my lips.

c John 8. 14; Rom. 15. 8.—*a* The abomination of
my lips.

8 All the words of my mouth are in right-
eousness; there is nothing *b* froward or per-
verse in them.

b Wreathed.

9 They are all plain to him that understand-
eth, and right to them that find knowledge.

10 Receive my instruction, and not silver;
and knowledge rather than choice gold.

11 For *d* wisdom is better than rubies;
and all the things that may be desired are not
to be compared to it.

d Job 28. 15; Psa. 19. 10.

12 I wisdom dwell with *c* prudence, and find
out knowledge of witty inventions.

c Or, subtilty.

13 The fear *e* of the LORD is to hate evil;
f and arrogance, and the evil way, and *g* the
froward mouth, do I hate.

e Chap. 16. 6.—*f* Chap. 6. 17.—*g* Chap. 4. 24.

14 Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am
understanding; *h* I have strength.

h Eccl. 7. 10.

15 By *i* me kings reign, and princes decree
justice.

i Dan. 2. 21; 7. 14; Matt. 28. 18; Rom. 13. 1.

16 By me princes rule, and nobles, even all
the judges of the earth.

17 I *j* love them that love me; and *k* those
that seek me early shall find me.

j 1 Sam. 2. 30; John 14. 21.—*k* James 1. 5.