

the highest moral purpose with the intelligence and foresight requisite for carrying it into effect; **understanding**, which comprehends relations and adapts means to ends; **knowledge**, namely, of the natures and powers of all things, so as to be able to use them for his purpose."

20. Depths were broken . . . skies drop.

A manifest allusion to the creation as described in Gen. 1, 6, 7. The contrast between the perfect and imperfect tenses of the two verbs is the same as pointed out in the note on verse 13.

21. Sound wisdom and discretion.

Two new words here introduced to furnish a still broader suggestion of the character of true wisdom. Zockler renders: "Maintain thoughtfulness and circumspection;" Stuart: "Hold fast counsel and reflection;" Conant: "Keep true wisdom and reflection." The idea compassed is that of the discriminating thoughtfulness which underlies safe counsel and the practical sagacity which sees that truth and right are politic as well as grounded in holy principle.

23. Foot not stumble. Literally, as in the margin, "Thou shalt not dash thy foot." Comp. Psalm 91. 12.

The Lesson Council.

Question 1. What is meant by "chastening" in this lesson?

This word "chasten" comes down to us through the German *kasteien*, from the old Latin *castigare*, which is made up of *castus*, meaning pure, and *agere*, to lead. This gives us a hint of its true meaning. On the surface it seems to signify merely punishment, but there is a deeper significance. "To chasten" is to punish, but not merely to punish for the sake of inflicting penalty, but to lead out of the evil, the impure, into the good, the pure, by imposing suffering, either physical or mental. The chastening of the Lord is the educating process, the "drawing out" process of a faithful Father, a mercifully severe Teacher.—*Professor G. E. Ackerman, D.D.*

Question 2. Should all trouble and affliction be regarded as "chastening," and as sent by the Lord? Should we regard trouble which is the result of our own folly or error or sin as a chastening from the Lord?

The results of our "error and folly and sin" are not to be regarded by us as direct providential visitations, but are to be acted upon as though they were such. They are consequences which flow from the laws which God has established, and in this sense are from him. He has affixed penalties to all transgressions, whether of natural or moral law, and he who suffers afflictions growing out of

his own transgressions, whether of natural or moral law, should regard them as sent to turn him from the error of his ways. While we cannot consider all trouble as sent by the Lord, we may properly recognize all our suffering to be for our chastening and reformation.

Question 3. Do long life, riches, honor, peace, etc., always come with "wisdom?"

No, not always. But the thought of deeper significance is this: Our world is a rational system—truth, goodness, and order at the core. It is the thought of God constantly realized through his will. Man is a subject in this realm, and his well-being depends upon his finding his true place and staying there. The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth, and all the real blessings of this life and the life to come flow from the harmonious adjustment of the individual life to the principles of this divine plan. This is the philosophy of the profitability of godliness.

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

Seven Blessings in Serving God.

I. DISCIPLINE.

The chastening of the Lord. v. 11, 12.

"Blessed . . . whom thou chastenest." Psalm 94. 12.

"Good for me . . . afflicted." Psalm 119. 67, 71.

II. WISDOM.

Happy . . . findeth wisdom. v. 13-15.

"Treasure hid in a field." Matt. 13. 44.

"Wisdom . . . above rubies." Job 28. 18.

III. LONG LIFE.

Length of days . . . right hand. v. 16.

"With long life . . . satisfy him." Psalm 91. 16.

"Length of days forever and ever." Psalm 21. 4.

IV. PROSPERITY.

Left hand . . . riches and honor. v. 16.

"Promise of this life." 1 Tim. 4. 8.

"These things shall be added." Matt. 6. 33.

V. PEACE.

All her paths are peace. v. 17.

"In me . . . peace." John 16. 33.

"We have peace with God." Rom. 5. 1.

VI. HAPPINESS.

Happy . . . retaineth her. v. 18.

"Rejoice in the Lord alway." Phil. 4. 4.

"Be glad in the Lord." Psalm 32. 11.

VII. SAFETY.

Walk in thy way safely. v. 23, 24.

"He that keepeth . . . not slumber." Psalm 121. 3, 4.

"In the secret place." Psalm 91. 1, 2.