

that secured to him all he wanted. Such a talisman is the "wisdom" described here. It insures strength, (verse 14,) ability, (verse 15,) power, (verse 16,) honour and lasting riches, (verse 18,) inexhaustible wealth, (verse 21.) No wonder it is written: "All the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it." Verse 11. Would not such a treasure be worth years of patient, untiring search?

The traditional "philosopher's stone" could only be discovered by the learned. It was they alone who could presume to seek for it. The illiterate knew not which way to look; they had no chance of ever finding the treasure. Is this the case with Solomon's talisman, with wisdom? Quite the contrary; it is for the "simple" and the "fools." Verse 5. It is not a deep, hidden mystery, but "all plain to him that understandeth." Verse 9.

Men sought for the "philosopher's stone" with toil and pains and hardships. But Solomon represents wisdom as seeking men. She who is "better than rubies" (verse 11) is described as using every possible effort to make men acquainted with her. She calls to them, "puts forth her voice," stands in the most prominent parts of the city, in its most frequented ways, at its gates. She takes pains that all may hear. She speaks both to the great and noble and to the poor obscure, (such being the actual meaning of the Hebrew words "men" and "sons of men." Verse 4.) Her call is earnest, eager, and pressing.

And why this eagerness? Does wisdom need anything from those to whom she calls? Has she anything to gain from them? The 17th verse, our Golden Text, explains it. It is love that impels the call. Wisdom is no cold, harsh abstraction, but a living, loving Person.

Is there anything corresponding to this in the New Testament?

We read of One with whom is honour, (John 12. 26; Rev. 3. 5, 21,) power, (Luke 10. 19; Phil. 4. 13;) dominion, (Rev. 1. 6; 2. 2, 6,) riches, (Rom. 8. 32; 1 Cor. 3. 21,) joy, (John 15. 11; 16. 24; 17. 13.) We read of One who is found of the young, the ignorant, the burdened. Matt. 11. 25, 28. And we read of One who waits not to be sought for, but who seeks. Matt. 18. 11. All this corresponds with the description of "wisdom" while the latter part of the chapter in Proverbs shows that the speaker whose "cry" has been sounding in our ears can be no other but the Son of God.

But why does he say: "I love them that love me?" Is there not a seeming contradiction between this and the teaching of the New Testament? Comp. Matt. 5. 43-48.

There may be two reasons for it: 1. Divine love toward the unworthy was less clearly revealed in the Old Testament. It was, indeed, strongly impressed upon Israel as a nation, (Deut. 7. 7; 9. 4-6, but less so upon individuals. Hence we find Job pleading his integrity, (Job. 31. 5, etc.) and David bringing forward his own goodness and love for God, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house." Psa. 26. 8.

Men may be said to love gold, and to love fame, to love pleasure, etc. But do these return love for love? Are not wealth, fame, pleasure, etc., cold, hard, unsatisfactory? But how differently is heavenly Wisdom! Wisdom is a Person with a heart that beats with warm and abounding love. There is no coldness, no hardness here; there is infinite return and infinite satisfaction. For this person is none other than the Son of God, "who loved me and gave himself for me." Gal. 2. 20.

The "philosopher's stone" was a fable, a lie; like the mirage of the desert, it attracted only to deceive. But the Son of God, who is heavenly wisdom, Christ, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," (Col. 2. 3,) never deceives. "My mouth shall speak truth." Verse 7. He is the "faithful and true Witness." And he calls now, in his word, in his providence, by preachers, teachers, books, by all manner of means, and in all manner of ways, seeking souls that he may bless them.

#### BEREAN METHODS.

##### Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Be sure, first of all, to see just what is here meant by wisdom, (see notes,) and keep it in mind while teaching. Fill out the word-picture presented by the lesson—of wisdom as a noble, beautiful woman, pointing the multitudes the right way... Observe who are specially invited—"the simple," "the fools," not in a severe and evil sense, but those who are inexperienced... Show how the invitation especially applies to the young. Notice what is the promise of "wisdom" in this lesson: 1. Righteousness, v. 6 9; 2. True riches, v. 10, 11; 3. Practical sagacity, business tact, etc., v. 12; 4. Sound character, v. 13; 5. Royal power, influence among men, v. 14-16... Notice, lastly, the conditions of obtaining these rewards: 1. Desire; 2. Search, v. 17.

References. FOSTER'S ILLUSTRATIONS. [Numbers marked with a star refer to poetical volumes.] Ver. 1: 6050. Ver. 4: 10632, \*2755. Ver. 5: \*1351, 8783. Vers. 10, 11: \*2999, \*3000. Ver. 12: \*2607, 4802, 11286.