

derer, or the minister who calls the prodigal to repentance, or the physician who tries to control the lunatic and develop the idiotic mind. Indeed, many of them are *lawbreakers*. Our Golden Text was first uttered when most of the "sinners" were lawbreakers. To-day, while some of the boys and girls in our Sunday schools, especially in degraded neighborhoods, are tempted to overt acts against virtue and good order, we must press on the consciences of most of our scholars a more pointed application. He who votes to license liquor, he who indorses even by silence political corruption, he who is silent when he knows wrong is being done, has "consented" to the enticement of sinners, has begun fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.

Verse 10. Hear. Attend. **O my son.** If the same wise man were writing in modern days, doubtless he would add, "O my daughter;" but when this was written the average Jew did not dream that womanhood needed or could appreciate instruction in wisdom. The exaltation of womanhood is due to Christianity. **Receive my sayings.** These "sayings" give the results of two courses of life, in opposition to each other. A wise man is the man who profits by other people's experience, who sits at the feet of the teachers of the ages and weaves out of their wisdom his own thoughts and words and acts. **The years of thy life shall be many.** Not every good person lives to be aged; not every bad person dies early. Such a statement is not made; it would not be true. But this is true, that habits of virtue tend directly to health and longevity. Three generations of prudence and virtue will not issue in a fourth generation with physical weakness and early death. Wisely does Dr. Adam Clarke write: "Our principal diseases spring from indolence, intemperance, and disorderly passions. True religion excites to industry, promotes sober habits, destroys evil passions, and harmonizes the soul, and thus, by destroying the causes of most diseases, prolongs life."

11. I have taught thee in the way of wisdom. "I" stands not merely for Solomon or any other sage, but for the collected fatherhood and motherhood of humanity. "Thee" stands not merely for Rehoboam, or the Hebrew youth of his time, but for all young men and women, all boys and girls collected in our Sunday schools to-day. They, and the multitudes of young people who do not go to Sunday school, are alike the heirs of all the ages, in the foremost files of time, enriched by the teachings of the dead. Even if heedless, or unblest by the influences of a Christian home, still the world's inherited wisdom is theirs. If we to-day are more practically wise than the world was in Solomon's time (and the most confirmed pessimist will hardly dispute that statement), the improvement is due to the teachings of successive generations of observers and experimenters, the aggregated wisdom of the world. But if it be true

that the world has been taught in the way of wisdom, how specially true is it of those who have had Christian fathers and mothers. Emphatically have they been **led in right paths**. It is a bad temptation that comes to some young people to scorn or avoid the old. Disobedience to parents and doing in secret things which parents would disapprove is, as has been wisely said, "one of the first steps to ruin, and a long, long step." An added meaning is given to this verse by the fuller revelations of Christianity which its writer did without knowing. To us in these latter days has come the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1. 24), the word of God (John 1. 1), who is made unto us wisdom, and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2. 3).

12. Thy steps shall not be straitened. That is, narrowed, circumscribed. Where the Spirit is there is liberty. **Thou shalt not stumble.** God's providence turns the stumbling-blocks of life into stepping-stones. Note also the first part of each clause. Free course shall be insured to the wise man when he "goes" (that is, when he walks amid ordinary circumstances of life); but when he has to run (that is, in the emergencies of life) he is equally secured by God's providence. "Take no thought in that hour (the hour of emergency) what ye shall say."

13. Take fast hold of instruction. "Lord, I would clasp my hand in thine." Instruction, thus personified, is but one of the servant maids of God's great nursery. The thought here is of Discipline, however, rather than of Information. **She is thy life.** "Knowledge is power." Verily; but Self-discipline is *life*; without it we hasten toward spiritual, moral, intellectual, and physical death.

14. Enter not into the path of the wicked. We have commented a little upon this verse in the introductory paragraph. It couples well with verse 11, I have taught you the right path, so do not enter the wrong path. "Venture not into the company of those infected with the plague, though thou think thyself guarded with an antidote."—*Henry*.

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