

PROVERBS 1

THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON

The subject of this Book of Proverbs may be stated by an enlargement upon the opening verses of the first chapter. The human penman of these wise words was King Solomon, the son of David. They speak of the knowledge of wisdom, of piety toward God, of instruction and moral discipline, and of the understanding of wise and prudent counsels. These Divinely inspired Proverbs give the common person the wisdom to discover what is right, by supplying them with just principles and correct views of virtue and vice. They particularly give young men and women knowledge (so that they need not err through ignorance) and discretion (so that by pondering these precepts well, they may not err through obstinacy). A great many of the proverbs of heathen nations around the world are founded upon selfishness, cunning, pride, injustice, national contempt, and animosities. But the principles of the Proverbs of Solomon are piety, love, justice, benevolence, and true prudence! Their universal purity proves that they are indeed the Word of God.

This Book of instruction receives great sanction and authority from the Lord Jesus, as to the mode that is herein adopted of using parables to convey Divine truths. It was the custom of those lands in those times to teach in parables. And in conformity to this custom, Christ Himself delivered His discourses in parables so often that the Gospels record that “without a parable spake he not unto them.” May the Holy Spirit graciously give us a right understanding in all things, so that while heavenly truths are only spoken in parables to others, it may be permitted for us to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven! And in that knowledge and enjoyment, may we find the same grace which was imparted to Christ’s disciples when He said, “Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.”

The opening verses of this chapter show us that the lessons given here are plain, and they are likely to benefit those who feel their own ignorance and know that they need to be taught. If young people especially would only take heed to their ways, according to Solomon’s Proverbs, they would indeed gain true knowledge and discretion. In order that he might enforce what he had to say, the sacred writer of this Book began with an exhortation. Under the character of an instructor and father of his sons and daughters, he endeavored to gain their affection by tender and loving addresses. And the opening of his discourse is entirely upon the plan and principles of the Gospel; for it points to the corruption of the heart in the enticement of sinners, as well as to the propensity of our

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ *Introduction to the Book of Proverbs – verses 1-6*
- ❖ *Exhortations to fear the Lord and to honor one’s parents – verses 7-9*
- ❖ *Exhortations to avoid the enticings of sinners – verses 10-19*
- ❖ *The words of Wisdom to sinners – verses 20-33*

fallen nature to listen to such temptations. Among the first offices of the Holy Spirit, the work of convincing people of sin stands pointed out by Christ (John 16:7-8).

Wicked people are zealous in seducing others into the paths of the destroyer. How cautious young people ought to be! "Consent thou not," says the wise father to his children. "Do not say as they say, nor do as they wish you to do; have no fellowship with them." What an awful thing to think that it is a pleasure for such evil people to destroy others with them! See their idea of worldly wealth. It is the ruinous mistake of thousands to overvalue the wealth of this world. Many promise themselves in vain that sin will turn to their advantage and make them rich. But in reality, the way of sin is downhill; we cannot easily stop ourselves once we begin to go down. If young people wish to shun temporal and eternal ruin, then let them refuse to take even one step in these destructive paths. What is a man profited, even if he could gain the whole world, if he loses his life – let alone his immortal soul – in the process?

Having showed how dangerous it is to hearken to the temptations of Satan, Solomon declared how dangerous it is to *not* hearken to the calls of the Lord. In verses 20-33, Christ is introduced in His gracious office of calling upon the sinner who is wounded under a sense of sin, to look unto Him and be saved (Hos. 10:12; Isa. 45:22). Jesus Himself is Wisdom! And three sorts of persons are here called by Him. First, there are the simple-minded ones. Sinners are fond of their simple notions of good and evil, and their simple prejudices against the ways of God; and they flatter themselves in their wickedness. Second, there are the scorers. These are proud, jovial people who make a jest of everything. They especially scoff at religion, and they downplay everything that is sacred and serious. And third, there are the fools. The worst of fools are those who hate to be taught, and who have a strong dislike for serious Godliness.

Christ's precept is plain: "Turn you at my reproof!" We do not make a right use of reproofs if we do not turn away from evil to that which is good. And the Savior's promises are very encouraging to do so! Human beings cannot turn by any power of their own; but God answers, "Behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon you." Special grace is needed for sincere conversion, but that grace shall never be denied to any who seek it. The love of Christ, and the promises that are mingled with His reproofs, should surely have the attention of everyone. Let

us hearken diligently, and obey the Lord Jesus, so that we may enjoy peace of conscience, and so that we may be free from evil – in life, in death, and forever!

Thank You, Lord Jesus, for teaching us true wisdom – just as a wise and loving father instructs his children to walk in ways that will be for their own well-being and true profit! Amen.

