

PROVERBS 6

GO TO THE ANT!

If we live according to the directions of the Word of God, we shall find it to be very profitable to us, even in this present world. The Lord has made us stewards of our earthly possessions, and we must answer to Him for our use of them. Therefore, it is wrong to waste our resources in rash schemes, or in plans which may entangle us in difficulties and temptations. A person ought never to become surety – that is, a “co-signer” – for a debt that is more than he is able and willing to pay without wronging his own family; he ought to look upon every sum that he is engaged for as his own debt. And if we must take such care to be clear from our debts to our fellow human beings, how much more ought we to make sure that we have obtained forgiveness with our God! We must humble ourselves before Him; and we must make sure that Jesus is our Friend and Advocate, to plead on our behalf before the Lord. Christ alone can pardon and forgive our debt of sin, so that we may be kept from going down to the pit of ruin and destruction.

We cannot possibly read these verses about suretyship (which are greatly expressive of the tender concern of a watchful father over his child) without having our souls immediately directed to the One Who – at the call of His Father – stood up as the willing, voluntary Substitute for His people! Jesus became the Surety for sinners, and entered into covenant-engagements by His promises of love, which He did not break. He pledged His own life to pay off the unimaginable debt that we owed to the justice of God – even when we were still strangers and enemies to Him because of our wicked works (Rom. 5:8; Eph. 2:12-13). O how greatly does the love of Christ surpass our deepest understanding!

Diligence in business is every man’s wisdom and duty. Even the lowly ants are more diligent than slothful human beings! We may learn wisdom from the humblest insects, and we may even be shamed by them. The words in verses 6-11 are one of those beautiful Scripture passages in which the Lord causes His people to gather instruction from the tiny creatures of His creation; for when it comes to providing for his eternal safety, sinful mankind – by reason of the Fall – has sunk lower than the instincts of animals.

Habits of idleness, indolence, and indulgence will grow upon people like cancer. As they waste away their lives, poverty gradually travels nearer and nearer to them. And when it arrives, it is like a man armed with deadly weapons – too strong to be resisted! All of this may also be applied to the concerns of our souls. How many people love their sleep of sin, and their dreams of worldly hap-

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ Warnings against rash suretyship, slothfulness, and mischief – verses 1-15
- ❖ Seven things the Lord hates – verses 16-19
- ❖ An exhortation to make the Word of God familiar to us – verses 20-23
- ❖ Another warning about sins against the Seventh Commandment – verses 24-35

piness! Shall we not seek to awaken such persons? And shall we not give diligence in the matters that relate to our eternal security and well-being?

Those who are slothful may justly be condemned for doing nothing; but on the other hand, those persons also deserve to be censured who do as much ill as they possibly can. Such a person is described in verses 12-15. He says and does everything deceitfully, and with bad intentions. His ruin shall come without warning, and without relief.

Verses 16-19 specify a list of seven things that are especially hateful to Jehovah. These sins are particularly provoking to God, and they are also hurtful to the comfort of human life. These things which the Lord hates, we must also hate in ourselves; it is not enough to merely hate them when we see them in the lives of others. Not only must we disapprove of all who are guilty of them, whatever their rank may be; but we must also pray for grace to shun all such practices ourselves. The Holy Spirit has given a fuller catalog, in Galatians 5:19-21, of the fruits of the conduct of such a person as Solomon here described. But also, as a beautiful contrast, the 22nd and 23rd verses of that same chapter detail the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the souls of His redeemed children!

The Word of God has something to say to us upon all occasions; and therefore, the faithful reproofs that we find in its pages ought not to make us uneasy – even when they are repeated often, as they are here, in verses 20-35. When we consider the large number of sins that are committed against the Seventh Commandment, the heinousness of the crime of adultery in its own nature, the terrible consequences which are sure to follow it, and the certainty of its destruction of spiritual life in the soul – then we shall not wonder that the cautions against these sins are emphasized again in this chapter.

Let us take one moment to look particularly at verses 20-23. The binding of our parents' wise admonitions upon our hearts, and our wearing them around our necks, is similar to what Moses commanded the Israelites to do (in a literal sense) with the law of the Lord (Deut. 6:6-9). Do not these verses suggest to our minds the recollection of Aaron – how he represented our Lord Jesus, going into the Holy of holies, and approaching the mercy-seat with the names of the twelve tribes of his people over his heart? (Ex. 28:29) And does not Jesus bind His people to Himself now, in His High Priestly office? What a relief would the recollection of this be to a poor believer in every trying hour, if he could only steadily look (by faith) inside the veil where our Forerunner has entered, and behold Him thus engaged as his Mediator and Intercessor? And what a blessing it would also be for the Holy Spirit to work upon the heart and cause the believer (by faith) to bind upon himself everything concerning the enjoyment of Jesus and His salvation, so that they may lead him when he goes forth, keep him when he sleeps, and talk with him when he awakes!

Thank You, Jesus, for striking out our name from the dreadful bond of our sin-debt, and for paying and cancelling it all! Amen.

