Spurgeon on Proverbs

Related Resources

Illustrations on Proverbs 1-12

Illustrations on Proverbs 13-19

Illustrations on Proverbs 20-31

Multiple Commentaries on Proverbs

Spurgeon Sermon Notes on Proverbs

Spurgeon Sermon Notes On Proverbs

Proverbs 15:19 The Thorn Hedge

> The way of the slothful man is as a hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain. — Proverbs 15:19

IT has been said that the shrewdness of the Scotch nation is owing to the pretty general study of the Book of Proverbs in that country. Of this I am not a judge; but certainly, if carefully followed, the Proverbs of Solomon make men wise for this world with a high order of prudence. God would have his people wise. There is no credit in being a fool, even if you have the grace of God in your heart. To me it seems a duty to make as much of myself as I can, since I am a servant of the Lord: I do not want everybody to think that all my Lord's children are short of wit. In meditating upon this two-leaved proverb, we shall:

I. TAKE THE TEXT IN ITS TEMPORAL BEARINGS.

1. It is clear from the apposition that a slothful man is the opposite of righteous. Certainly he is so. His sins of omission abound. He breaks his word, he vexes others, Satan finds him mischief to do; he is, in fact, ready for every bad word and work.

2. It is not enough to be diligent unless we are righteous; for though the curse is to the idle, the blessing is not to the active, but to the righteous. It is diligence in the service of God, under the Holy Spirit, which wins the reward of God.

3. A slothful man's way is not desirable: "A hedge of thorns."

> It is difficult in his own apprehension: a rough and thorny road, and he cannot have too little of it. He would sooner look at it a month than run in it an hour.
>
> It becomes really thorny ere long. His neglects hedge him up, involve him in difficulties, bring losses, and create hindrances.
>
> It becomes painful: he is poor, mistrusted, harshly dealt with by weary creditors, and at last without a livelihood.
>
> It becomes blocked up: he does not know where to turn; he cannot dig, and he tries begging. Laziness gets little pity, and charity itself repels it.

4. A righteous man's way is under a blessing.

> It becomes plain as he proceeds in it diligently.
>
> God makes it so.
>
> He makes it so himself.
>
> Other people become willing to aid him, or, at least, to trust him, employ him, and recommend him.

1. The spiritual sluggard.

Takes the way of indifference, carelessness, indecision, and unbelief; and this, though it may seem easy, is as full of sorrow as a thorn-hedge is full of pricking points.

He will have his own way; and self-will and obstinacy are briar hedges indeed: besides, his frowardness provokes others to oppose him, and the thorns thicken.

He chooses the way of sin, and he soon finds it full of sorrows, difficulties, perplexities, entanglements, and snares.

By his evil ways, and the inevitable consequences of his sins, he is shut out from God and heaven.

2. The righteous man.

His way is that of faith and obedience.

It has its impediments: these are swept away.

It is frequently mysterious; but it is cleared up.

It is sometimes hilly; but it is the King's highway,

Wherein we are right.

Wherein we are protected.

Wherein we are secured of a blessed end.

Are you wonderfully easy in religion, taking things as they come, in a slovenly way? Then your way will soon become a hedge of thorns. Neglect is quite sufficient to produce an immense crop of thorns and briars.

Do you seek to be righteous? Do you love holiness? Do you know Christ as your Way? Then go on without fear; for your way will be made plain, and your end will be peace (Ps. 37:37).

Confirmations

"The way of the slothful man," the course which the sluggard taketh in going about his affairs,"is as a hedge of thorns," is slow and hard; for he goeth creeping about his business, yea, his fears and griefs prick him and stay him like thorns and briars. "But the path of the righteous is as a paved causeway." The order which the godly man taketh is most plain and easy, who so readily and lustily runneth on in the works of his calling as if he walked on a paved causeway. — P. Muffet

Who can tell the pains which lazy people take? the muddles into which they bring themselves? They are driven to falsehood to excuse their sloth, and one lie leads on to more. Then they scheme and plot, and become dishonest. I knew one who fell out with hard work, and soon he fell in with drink and lost his position. Since then, to earn a scanty livelihood he has had to work ten times as much as was required of him in his better days, and he has hardly had a shoe to his foot. Meanwhile, a simple, plodding man has gone onward and upward, favored, as he confesses, by Providence; but, best of all, upheld by his integrity and industry; to him there has been success and happiness. He works hard, but his lot is ease itself compared with the portion of the sluggard.

Nobody rides to heaven on a feather-bed. Grace has made a road to heaven for sinners, but it does not suit sluggards. Those who reach the Celestial City are pilgrims and not lie-a-beds. Neglect is a sure way to hell; but we must strive to enter in at the straight gate, and so run that we may obtain. If you let your farm alone it will be overrun with weeds, and if your heart be let alone it will be eaten up with sins. Nothing comes of sloth but rags and poverty here, and damnation hereafter. Let idlers in Zion note this.

It is wonderful how difficulties vanish from the path of the righteous! In traveling up the Rhine you appear to be landlocked, but as the steamer proceeds you perceive a clear passage; a sudden bend enables you to see the opening between the hills. The road of Israel seemed blocked at the Red Sea, and again at the Jordan; but as they were following the Divine Leader, he made a way for them through the waters. Old Roman roads are still visible which were thrown up along the sides of hills and across valleys; these were plain enough to be followed by the least familiar traveler: even so hath the Lord cast up the road-way of his people and they shall not miss it. "The way-faring man, though a fool, shall not err therein."

The spiritually negligent involve themselves in much sorrow. Neglecting prayer and other means of grace, they seek spiritual ease; but if they are God's children they do not find it, but sow for themselves abundant thorns of regret and depression. I know of a surety that the diligent Christian is the only happy Christian. True religion is above all other things a business which is not only worth doing but is worth doing well. High farming in the fields of the soul is the only farming which pays.

Proverbs 16:2 Things Are Not What They Seem

All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weigheth the spirits. — Proverbs 16:2

OCCASIONALLY in seasons of collapse and disaster great discoveries are made concerning those who appeared to be commercially sound but turn out to be rotten. Then the whole machinery of financing is laid bare, and things which directors and managers

have thought to be right have been seen to be utter robbery. All looked solid and substantial until the inevitable crash came, and then no man felt that he could trust his neighbor. No doubt these schemers thought their ways "clean;' but the event discovered their dirty hands.

Spiritual failures of like kind occur in the church. Great reputations explode, high professions dissolve. Men readily cajole themselves into the belief that they are right, and are doing right. They misapply Scripture, misinterpret providence, and in general turn things upside down, but the inexorable judgment overtakes them. A weighing time comes, and their professions are exposed. Niagara is at the end of the fatal rapid of self-deception: the self-satisfied pretender descends with a plunge to sure destruction.

Let us practically consider some of the "ways" which appear to be "clean;" but are not so, when the Lord comes to weigh the spirits.

I. THE WAYS OF THE OPENLY WICKED. Many of these are "clean" in their own eyes.

To effect this self-deception:

They give pretty names to sin.

They think ill of others, making them out to be much worse than themselves, and finding in this an excuse for themselves,

They claim to have many admirable qualities, and fine points.

They urge that if imperfect they cannot help it.

They also seriously resolve to amend; but never do so. Men do with themselves as financiers do with companies:

They put down doubtful assets as certain property.

They reckon expectations as receipts.

They tear out pages from the account-book.

They conceal damaging facts, and ruinous entanglements.

They cook the accounts in all sorts of ways, and make groundless promises.

The Lord's trial will be thorough and decisive. He weighs with accurate balances and weights; and he looks not only to the open way but to the inner spirit.

II. THE WAYS OF THE GODLESS.

These often boast that they are better than the religious.

They pretend that their superior intellects prevent their being believers: they must doubt because they are clever.

They extol regard to the second table of the Law as being far more important than any service rendered to God himself.

They will not be held accountable for their creed, or be judged for rejecting a few crabbed dogmas.

But all these shall be weighed in the balances and found wanting.

III. THE WAYS OF THE OUTWARD RELIGIONIST. These seem "clean,"

His observance of ceremonies.

His regular attendance at worship.

His open profession of religion.

His generosity to the cause, and general interest in good things.

Thus ministers, deacons, members, etc., may boast, and yet when the Lord weighs their spirits they may be castaways.

IV. THE WAYS OF THE COVETOUS PROFESSOR. His ways are specially "clean."

His greed keeps him from expensive sins, and therefore he gives himself credit for self-denial.

He stints the cause of God and the poor.

He oppresses his workmen in their wages.

He makes hard bargains, drives debtors to extremes, takes undue advantage, and is a skinflint to all around him.

The Lord says of him, "covetousness which is idolatry."

V. THE WAYS Of THE WORLDLY PROFESSOR. He thinks himself "clean."

Let him honestly consider whether he is "clean"—

In his secret life? In his private and hidden indulgences?

In his pleasures and amusements?

In his company and conversation?

In his forsaken closet, forgotten Bible, lukewarm religion, etc.

What a revelation when the weighing of his spirit comes!

VI. THE WAYS OF THE SECURE BACKSLIDER. He dreams that his way is "clean;" when a little observation will show him many miry places:

Decline in private prayer (Job 15:4).

Sin gradually getting the upper hand (Jer. 14:10).

Conversation scantily spiritual (Eph. 5:4)

Scriptures little read (Hos. 8:12).

Heart growing hard (Heb. 3:13).

Religion almost destitute of life (Rev. 3:1).

Pride cropping up in many directions (Deut. 8:14).

The Lord gives him a weighing in trial and temptation; then there follows an opening up of deceit and hypocrisy.

VII. THE WAYS Of THE DECEIVED MAN. He writes pleasant things for himself, and yet all the while he is a spiritual bankrupt.

Failed in true faith in Jesus.

Failed in real regeneration.

Failed in heart-work and soul-service for the Lord.

Failed for ever. Will our hearer do this?

Comparisons

How beautiful all things look when winter has bleached them! What a royal bed is to be seen in yonder corner! The coverlet is whiter than any fuller on earth could white it! Here might an angel take his rest, and rise as pure as when he reclined upon it. Pshaw! It is a dunghill, and nothing more.

All the ships that came into the harbor were claimed by one person in the city. He walked the quay with a right royal air, talked largely about owning a navy, and swaggered quite sufficiently had it been so. How came he to be so wealthy? Listen, he is a madman. He has persuaded himself into this folly, but in truth he has not a tub to call his own. What absurdity! Are not many the victims of even worse self-deception? They are rich and increased in goods according to their own notion; yet they are naked, and poor, and miserable.

"This must be the right way, see how smooth it is! How many feet have trodden it!" Alas, that is precisely the mark of the broad road which leadeth to destruction.

"But see how it winds about, and what a variety of directions it takes! It is no bigot's unbending line." Just so; therein it proves itself to be the wrong road; for truth is one, and unchanging.

"But I like it so much." This also is suspicious; for what an unrenewed man is so fond of is probably an evil thing. Hearts go after that which is like themselves, and graceless men love graceless ways

"Would you have me go that narrow and rough road?" Yes, we would; for it leadeth unto life; and though few there be that find it, yet those who do so declare that it is a way of pleasantness. It is better to follow a rough road to heaven than a smooth road to hell.

Proverbs 21:2. Pondering Hearts

The Lord pondereth the hearts. — Proverbs 21:2

THE heart among the Hebrews is regarded as the source of wit, understanding, courage, grief, pleasure, and love. We generally confine it to the emotions, and especially the affections, and, indeed these are so important and influential that we may well call them the heart of a man's life. —

Now we cannot read the heart, much less ponder or weigh it. We can only judge our fellow men by their actions; but of motive, and actual condition before God, we cannot form a true estimate, nor need we do so. This, however, the Lord can do as easily as a goldsmith judges silver and gold by weight. He knows all things, but he is pleased to show us the strictness of his examination by the use of the metaphor of weighing. He takes nothing for granted, he is not swayed by public opinion, or moved by loud profession; he brings everything to the scale, as men do with precious things, or with articles in which they suspect deception. The Lord's tests are thorough and exact. The shekel of the sanctuary was double that which was used for common weighings, so at least the Rabbis tell us; those who profess to be saints are expected to do more than others. The sanctuary shekel was the standard to which all common weights ought to be conformed. The law of the Lord is the standard of morals. The balances of God are always in order, always true, and exact.

I. THE WEIGHING OF HEARTS.

1. God has already performed it. Every man's purpose, thought, word, and action is put upon the scale at the first moment of its existence. God is not at any instant deceived.

2. The law under which we live daily weighs us in public and in private, and by our disobedience discovers the short weight of our nature, the defect of our heart.

3. Trials form an important order of tests. Impatience, rebellion, despair, backsliding, apostasy, have followed upon severe affliction or persecution.

4. Prosperity, honor, ease, success, are scales in which many are found wanting. Praise arouses pride, riches create worldliness, and a man's deficiencies are found out (Prov. 27:21).

5. Great crises in our own lives, in families, in religious thought, in public affairs, etc., are weights and scales. A man's heart can hardly be guessed at when all goes on steadily.

6. Truth is ever heart-searching. Some left Jesus when he preached a certain doctrine. Hearts are weighed by their treatment of the truth. When they refuse God's word, that word condemns them.

7. The moment after death, and specially the general judgment, will be heart-weighing times.

II. THE HEARTS WHICH ARE WEIGHED.

They greatly vary, but they may be divided roughly into three classes, upon which we will dwell, hoping that our hearers will judge themselves.

1. Hearts which are found wanting at once.

The natural heart. All who have been unchanged come under this; even "the good-hearted man at bottom."

The double heart. Undecided, double-minded, false. "their heart is divided, now shall they be found faulty" (Hos. 10:2).

The heartless heart. No decision, energy, or seriousness. He is "a silly dove without heart" (Hos. 7:7).

The perverse heart. Rebellious, willful, sinful.

The unstable heart. Impressions forgotten, promises broken, etc.

The proud heart. Self-righteous, confident, arrogant, defiant.

The hard heart. Unaffected by love or terror. Obstinate. Resisting the power of the Holy Ghost.

2. Hearts which turn out to be wanting on further weighing.

"Another heart," such as Saul had. A new phase of feeling, but not a new nature.

A humbled heart, like that of Ahab when Elijah had prophesied his ruin. Humbled, but not humble; turned, but not turned from iniquity.

A deceived heart. Thinks itself good, but is not.

3. Hearts which are of good weight.

The trembling heart: penitent, afraid of sin, etc.

The tender heart: sensitive, affectionate, longing.

The broken heart: mourning, pining, humble, lowly.

The pure heart: loving only that which is good and clean, mourning sin in itself and others, sighing for holiness.

The upright heart: true, just, sincere, etc.

The perfect heart: earnest, honest, resolute, consecrated, intent, united, etc.

The fixed heart: resting firmly, abiding steadfastly, etc.

Is your heart ready for the weighing? Have you no fear of the final trial? Is this confidence well founded.

Is Jesus enthroned therein by faith? If so, you need not fear any weighing.

If not, what will you do when the King sets up the final scales?

Sundry Helps

Heaven's Sovereign saves all beings, but himself,
That hideous sight, a naked human heart.— Young

In the reign of King Charles I. the goldsmiths of London had a custom of weighing several sorts of their precious metals before the Privy Council. On this occasion, they made use of scales, poised with such exquisite nicety, that the beam would turn, the master of the Company affirmed, at the two-hundredth part of a grain. Noy, the famous Attorney General, replied, "I shall be loath, then, to have all my actions weighed in these scales." "With whom I heartily concur," says the pious Hervey, "in relation to myself; and since the balances of the sanctuary, the balances in God's hand, are infinitely exact, oh what need have we of the merit and righteousness of Christ, to make us acceptable in his sight, and passable in his esteem."

My balances are just,

My laws are equal weight;

The beam is strong, and thou mayst trust

My steady hand to hold it straight.

Were thine heart equal to the world in sight,

Yet it were nothing worth, if it should prove too light.

But if thou art asham'd

To find thine heart so light,

And art afraid thou shalt be blam'd,

I'll teach thee how to set it right.

Add to my law my gospel, and there see

My merits thine, and then the scales will equal be.

— Christopher Harvey, "Schola Cordis"

In the mythology of the heathen, Momus, the god of fault-finding, is represented as blaming Vulcan, because in the human form, which he had made of clay, he had not placed a window in the breast, by which whatever was done or thought there might easily be brought to light. We do not agree with Momus, neither are we of his mind who desired to have a window in his breast that all men might see his heart. If we had such a window we should pray for shutters, and should keep them closed.

Proverbs 23:23 To Heavenly Merchantmen

Buy the truth, and sell it not. — Proverbs 23:23

WHEN describing the pilgrims passing through Vanity Fair, Mr. Bunyan says: "That which did not a little amuse the merchandisers was, that these pilgrims set very light by all their wares; they cared not so much as to look upon them; and if they called upon them to buy, they would put their fingers in their ears and cry, 'Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity'; and look upwards, signifying that their traffic was in heaven.

"One chanced, mockingly, beholding the carriage of the men, to say unto them, 'What will ye buy?' But they, looking gravely upon him, said, 'We buy the truth.'"

The true Christian is like the merchantman who sought goodly pearls: he sought them to buy them; he bought the? with all that he had.

Let us carefully consider

I. THE COMMODITY: "the truth."

1. Doctrinal Truth. The Gospel. The three R's — Ruin, Redemption, and Regeneration. The doctrines of grace.

These are the genuine articles, but counterfeits are in the market.

A gospel buyer must learn to discriminate, so as to reject

Salvation without Christ as God.

Pardon without an atoning sacrifice.

Life without the new birth.

Regeneration without faith.

Faith without works.

Safety without perseverance in holiness

2. Experimental Truth. The new birth and the heavenly life are real gems. But of these there are base imitations.

Discriminate between true religion and

Faith without repentance.

Talk without feeling.

Life without struggles.

Confidence without examination.

Perfection without humility.

3. Practical Truth. Truth as a matter of act and deed.

Take care not to seem what you are not.

Never do what you are ashamed of.

Never be willfully ignorant of what you should know.

II. THE PURCHASE: "buy the truth." Here let us at once:

1. Correct an Error. Strictly speaking, truth and grace cannot be either bought or sold. Yet Scripture says, "Buy wine and milk without money and without price."

2. Expound the word. It is fitly chosen; for in order to be saved we should be ready to buy truth if it were to be bought:

To give up every sin, fulfill all righteousness, and give that which we have, if such were the price.

To be right with God by earnest watchfulness as much as if everything depended upon ourselves.

To be ready to endure every test, make every search, etc.

To run every risk, bear every cross, give up every worldly pleasure in order to be true to Jesus.

3. Paraphrase the Sentence.

Buy what is truly the Truth

Buy all the Truth

Buy only the Truth.

Buy the Truth at any price.

Buy now the Truth.

4. Give reasons for the Purchase.

It is in itself most precious.

You need it at this moment for a thousand useful purposes.

You will need it in time and in eternity.

5. Direct you to the Market.

"Buy of Me," saith Christ.

The Market-day is now on; "Come, buy."

6. Repeat the Text: "Bray the Truth."

Not merely hear about it.

Nor rest content with commending it to others.

Nor satisfied just to know about it.

Nor content with heartily wishing for it.

Nor be content with intending to buy it.

But, "Buy the Truth": down with the cash, conclude the bargain, secure the estate.

III. THE PROHIBITION: "sell it not." Purchase it as a permanent investment, not to be parted with.

Some sell it for a livelihood; for respectability; for repute of being scientific and thoughtful; to gratify a friend; for the pleasure of sin; for nothing at all but mere wantonness; but you must hold to it as for life itself.

Buy it at any price and sell it at no price.

You still need it.

It has well repaid you hitherto.

You cannot better yourself by bartering it for the whole world.

You are lost without it. Sell it not!

Hints to Buyers

Solomon bids us "buy the truth," but doth not tell us what it must cost, because we must get it though it be never so dear. We must love it both shining and scorching. Every parcel of truth is precious as the filings of gold; we must either live with it, or die for it. As Ruth said to Naomi, "Whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge, and nothing but death shall part thee and me" (Ruth 1:16-l7); so must gracious spirits say, Where truth goes I will go, and where truth lodges I will lodge, and nothing but death shall part me and truth. A man may lawfully sell his house, land, and jewels, but truth is a jewel that exceeds all price, and must not be sold; it is our heritage: "Thy testimonies have I taken as a heritage for ever (Ps. 119:l 1). It is a legacy which our forefathers have bought with their blood, which should make us willing to lay down anything, and to lay out anything, that we may, with the-wise merchant in the gospel (Matt. 13:45) purchase the precious pearl, which is more worth than heaven and earth, and which will make a man live happy, die comfortably, and reign eternally. — Thomas Brooks

"Now, as I said, the way to the Celestial City lies just through this town where this lusty fair is kept; and he that would go to the City, and yet not go through this town, must needs go out of the world. The Prince of princes himself, when here, went through this town to His own country, and that upon a Fair-day too. Yea, and as I think, it was Beelzebub, the chief Lord of this Fair, that invited Him to buy of its vanities: yea, would have made Him Lord of the Fair, would he but have done him reverence as He went through the town; yea, because He was such a person of honor, Beelzebub had Him from street to street, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a little time, that he might, if possible, allure that blessed One to cheapen and buy some of his vanities; but he had no mind to the merchandise, and therefore left the town, without laying out so much as one farthing upon these vanities. This Fair, therefore, is an ancient thing, of long standing, and a very great Fair." — Bunyan

Proverbs 23:26. Wisdom's Request to Her Son

My son, give me thine heart. — Proverbs 23:26

It is wisdom that here speaks. Wisdom is but another name for God, or, better still, for the Lord Jesus, who is incarnate wisdom. The request is for the heart, the affections, the center of our being. "Give me thine heart" is the first, the daily, the chief, the ultimate demand of the good Spirit.

I. LOVE PROMPTS THIS REQUEST OF WISDOM.

1. Only love will thus seek love. What cares indifference for the love of others? If it can serve its turn by their hands, their hearts may go where they choose.

2. Only for love would wisdom seek the hearts of such poor things as we are. What service can we render to him whom angels adore? What matters our love or hate to him?

3. Yet wisdom gains a son when the heart is given to it; for no one is a true son who does not love. "He that loveth is born of God."

4. If a son already, God's love bids us become yet more wise by a more complete yielding of the heart to God, to Christ, to wisdom. We cannot push this precept too far.

II. WISDOM PERSUADES US TO OBEY THIS LOVING REQUEST.

It is for our lasting good to love the Lord and his wisdom.

1. Evil lovers will seek us, and our hearts will be given to one or other. To our ruin or our ennobling the choice will be. He who has the heart has the man.

2. It is well to be engaged with the highest love that we may overcome the lower. God's servant cannot be Satan's slave.

3. It will please God for us to love him; a father is charmed with the love of his little child. What an honor, a heritage, a heaven to be allowed to love the Lord!

4. Nothing else can please him. Whatever we do without our hearts will grieve him; it will be an empty formality. Fish were never offered to God, for they could not come to the altar alive. The heathen reckoned it to be a fatal omen when the heart of the victim was not sound.

5. He deserves our heart, for he made it, he keeps it beating, he cheers it, he bought it, he prepares it for heaven; he gives heart for heart — his own love for ours.

6. There is no getting wisdom without giving the heart to it. God will not give himself to the heartless. Nothing can be done well unless the heart is thrown into it.

III. LOVE WOULD HAVE US OBEY THE REQUEST WISELY.

At once-give God your heart. Delay is wicked and injurious.

Freely-give God your heart; it cannot be done else. Force cannot compel love; the gift must be spontaneous.

Altogether give God your heart. Half a heart is no heart. A divided heart is dead. "God is not the God of the dead."

Once for all give him your heart, and let it remain in his keeping: for ever.

Where is your heart now?

What state is it in? Is it not cold, worldly, restless?

Come and believe in Jesus, that you may receive power to become a son of God, and serve him with loving heart.

Choice Quotations

Of all the suitors which come unto you, it seems there is none which hath any title to claim the heart but God, who challengeth it of you, calling you by the name of a son (Mai. 1:6), as if he should say, Thou shalt give it to thy Father, which gave it to thee. Art thou my son? My sons give me their hearts, and by this they know that I am their Father, if I dwell in their hearts, for the heart is the temple of God (1 Cor. 6:16); therefore, if thou be his son, thou wilt give me thy heart.

Canst thou deny him anything, whose goodness created us, whose favor elected us, whose mercy redeemed us, whose wisdom converted us, whose grace preserved us, whose glory shall glorify us? Oh, "if thou knewest," as Christ said to the woman of Samaria,"If thou knewest who it is that saith unto thee" give me thy heart, thou wouldst say unto him, as Peter did when Christ would wash his feet (John 13:9),"Lord, not my feet only, but my hands and my head"; not my heart only, but all my body, and my thoughts, and my words, and my works, and my goods, and my life; take all that thou hast given. If ye ask me why you should give your hearts to God, I do not answer like the disciples which went for the ass and colt,"The Lord hath need" (Matt. 21:3), but you have need. If ever the saying were true (Acts 20:35),"It is more blessed to give than to take," more blessed are they which do give their hearts to God than they which take possession of the world. — Henry Smith

"My son, give me thine heart." For two reasons: Because, (1) unless the heart be given, nothing is given (Hos. 7:14; Matt. 15:8-9); (2) if the heart be given, all is given (2 Chron. 30:13-20). — Hugh Stowell

No possible compromise. Now, most people think, if they keep all the best rooms in their hearts swept and garnished for Christ, that they may keep a little chamber in their heart's wall for Belial on his occasional visits; or a three-legged stool for him in the heart's countinghouse; or a corner for him in the heart's scullery, where he may lick the dishes. It won't do! You must cleanse the house of him, as you would of the plague, to the last spot. You must be resolved that as all you have shall be God's, so all you are shall be God's. — John Ruskin

"My guilt is damnable," exclaimed a humble saint, "in withholding my heart; because I know and believe his love, and what Christ has done to gain my consent — to what? — my own happiness." — C. Bridges

Give thee mine heart? Lord, so I would,
And there's great reason that I should,
If it were worth the having:
Yet sure thou wilt esteem that good

Which thou hast purchased with thy blood,
And thought it worth thy craving.

Lord, had I hearts a million,
And myriads in every one
Of choicest loves and fears;
They were too little to bestow
On thee, to whom I all things owe,
I should be in arrears.

Yet, since my heart's the most I have,
And that which thou dost chiefly crave,
Thou shalt not of it miss.
Although I cannot give it so
As I should do, I'll offer it though:
Lord, take it; here it is.
— Christopher Harvey, "Schola Cordis"

It is said that during the persecution of the Papists by Queen Elizabeth, certain of the wealthy Catholics desired to save their lives by an open compliance with her intolerant laws, though they remained Romanists at heart. To their enquiry for direction it is reported that the Pope of that day replied, "Only let them give me their hearts, and they may for this time do as they are compelled to do." Whether the story is true or not, we may be sure that if the evil one can but keep the heart, he cares little what outward religion is practiced.

Proverbs 25:2 God's Glory In Hiding Sin

> **"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing, but the honor of kings is to search out a matter." — Proverbs 25:2**

WE will first give the usual interpretation. It is God's glory to conceal many things and the honor of kings to search them out.

But this must be taken in a limited sense. It is not absolutely for God's glory to conceal, or why a revelation at all? Many things it would not be to his glory to conceal. Most mysteries are not so much concealed by any act of God, as hidden from their very nature and from our want of capacity to understand them. The Divine nature, the filiation of the Son of God, the complex person of Jesus, the procession of the Holy Ghost, the eternal decrees, and so forth, are not so much to be understood as believed.

But it is true that what is concealed it is for God's glory to conceal.

His eternal purpose as to individuals, who as yet abide in sin.

The future, and especially the day of the second coming.

The connecting link in doctrine between predestination and free agency, and a thousand other matters. These are concealed, and there is wisdom in the concealment; therefore, we need not wish to know.

But to me this seems not to be the meaning.

The antithesis is not complete. It is rather for wise men than kings to search out the secrets of nature and grace. Moreover, the following verse would not allow the antithetical sense.

We will therefore go upon another tack, and first ask, What things ought kings to search out? Here is the pith of the matter.

When justice is baffled, hoodwinked by bribes, or misled by prejudice, or puzzled by falsehood, it is to a king's damage, and dishonor, and he is bound to search the matter to the bottom. A magistrate's honor lies in the discovery of crime, but the glory of God lies in his graciously and justly hiding guilt from view.

With God no search is needful, for he sees all; his glory is to cover that which is plain enough to his eye, to cover it justly and effectually.

I. THAT IT IS GOD'S GLORY TO COVER SIN.

1. The guilt, aggravations, motives, and deceits of a life, the Lord is able to remove for ever by the atoning blood.

2. Sin which is known and confessed, he yet can cover so that it shall not be mentioned against us any more for ever.

3. He can do this justly through the work of Jesus.

4. He can do this without compensation from the offender himself, because of what the Substitute has done.

5. He can do this without any ill effect on others; no man will think that God connives at sin, seeing he has laid its punishment on Jesus.

6. He can do this without injury to the man himself. He will hate sin none the less because he escapes punishment; but all the more because of the love of the atoning Lamb.

7. He can do this effectually and for ever. Sin once put out of sight by the Lord shall never be seen again. Glorious Gospel, this, for guilty ones.

II. THIS SHOULD BE A GREAT ENCOURAGEMENT TO SEEKING SOULS.

I. Not to attempt to cover their own sin, since it is God's work to hide their iniquities, and they may leave it with him.

2. To give God glory by believing in, his power to conceal sin, eves their own crimson sin.

3. To believe that he is willing to do it at this moment for them.

4. To believe at once, so as to have sin covered once for all.

III. THIS SHOULD BE A MIGHTY STIMULUS TO SAINTS.

1. To glorify God in covering their sin. Let them talk of pardon with exultation, and tell how the Lord casts sin behind his back, casts it into the depths of the sea, blots it out, and puts it where if it be sought for it cannot be found. Jesus "made an end of sin."

2. To aim at the covering of the sins of others by leading them to Jesus, that their souls may be saved from death.

3. To imitate the Lord in forgetting the sins of those who repent. We are to put away for ever of any wrong done to ourselves, and to treat converts as if they had not disgraced themselves aforetime. When we see a prodigal let us "bring forth the best robe and put it on him," that all his nakedness may be concealed and his rags forgotten.

Come and lay bare your sin that the Lord may conceal it at once.

Studs of Silver

Thomas Brooks discussing the question whether the sins of the saints shall be publicly declared at the judgment-day, argues that they will not. His fifth argument is this: It is the glory of a man to pass over a transgression: "The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression" (Prov. 19:11) or to pass by it, as we do by persons or things we know not, or would take no notice of. Now is it the glory of a man to pass over a transgression, and will it not much more be to the glory of Christ, silently to pass over the transgressions of his people in that great day? The greater the treasons and rebellions are that a prince passes over and takes no notice of, the more is it his honor and glory; and so doubtless, it will be Christ's in that great day, to pass over all the treasons and rebellions of his people, to take no notice of them, to forget them, as well as to forgive them.

The heathens have long since observed that in nothing man came nearer to the glory and perfection of God himself than in goodness and clemency. Surely if it be such an honor to man "to pass over a transgression;' it cannot be a dishonor to Christ to pass over the transgressions of his people, he having already buried them in the sea of his blood. Again, said Solomon, "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing" (Prov. 25:2). And why it should not make for the glory of divine love to conceal the sins of the saints in that great day, I know not.

Of this truth we may say, what Young says of redemption—

"A truth so strange! 'twere bold to think it true;
If not far bolder still to disbelieve"

Mrs. Elizabeth Fry's labors amongst the female prisoners at Newgate owed much of their success to her tenderness in dealing with them. "I never ask their crimes, for we have all come short." was her quiet reproof to someone curious about a prisoner's offense.

German rationalists, discussing the sins of the patriarchs, were designated by Dr. Duncan: "Those Ham-like writers!" He often said,

"Let us speak tenderly of the faults of the Old Testament saints."

There is no pardon so complete as that of God. He forgets as well as forgives. He restores to favor, and he does not think he has done enough when he withdraws his anger, for he manifests his love. An act of amnesty and oblivion has been passed concerning the believer's transgressions; neither can any of them be justly charged against him any more. The atonement makes it as just for God to pass by iniquity as it would have been to punish it. The wound is so healed that no scar remains. O Jehovah, who is a God like unto thee? In this glorious forgiveness none can compare with thee.

Proverbs 25:25 Good News

As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country. — Proverbs 25:25

It is only on hot summer days that we can appreciate the illustration here employed; for we dwell in a well-watered country where thirst is readily assuaged. Yet we can imagine ourselves in the condition of Hagar, Ishmael, and Samson; or of a caravan in the desert; or of poor sailors in a boat upon the salt sea, dying for a draught of water.

When separated from friends by their journeying, or by our own, or when we have a trading interest in foreign ports, or a holy concern in missions, good news from a far country is eminently refreshing.

We shall use the text in three ways.

I. GOOD NEWS FOR SINNERS FROM GOD.

Sin put men into a far country, but here is the good news,—

1. God remembers you with pity.

2. He has made a way for your return.

3. He has sent a messenger to invite you home.

4. Many have already returned, and are now rejoicing.

5. He has provided all means for bringing you home.

6. You may return at once. "All things are ready."

If this good news be received, it will be exceedingly refreshing to thirsty souls. To others it will be commonplace.

II. GOOD NEWS FOR SAINTS FROM HEAVEN.

1. News does come from heaven. By the Spirit's application of the Word, and by the sweet whispers of Jesus' love.

2. To keep up this intercourse is most refreshing, and it is very possible; for Jesus delights to commune with us, the Father himself loveth us, and the Holy Spirit abideth with us for ever.

3. If for a while suspended, the renewal is sweeter than ever, even as cold water is doubly refreshing to a specially thirsty soul.

4. The news itself may thus be summarized:

> The Father on the throne of Providence works all things for your good.
>
> The Lord Jesus is interceding, preparing a place for you, and representing you before God.
>
> He will shortly come in his glory.
>
> Many like yourself are with him in the Father's house above.
>
> You are wanted there: they cannot be a perfect family till you are brought home.
>
> Receive this, and feel the attractions of heaven drawing you above the distractions of earth.

III. GOOD NEWS FOR HEAVEN FROM EARTH. It gives joy to the home circle to hear that,—

1. Sinners are repenting.

2. Saints are running their race with holy diligence.

3. Churches are being built up and the Gospel is spreading.

4. More saints are ripening and going home.

Let us accept the message of love and be happy in the Lord.

Let us tell the glad tidings to all around.

Scraps of News

The Hawaiian notions of a future state, where any existed, were peculiarly vague and dismal, and Mr. Ellis says that the greater part of the people seemed to regard the tidings of ora loa ia Jesu (endless life by Jesus) as the most joyful news they had ever heard, "breaking upon them," to use their own phrase, "like light in the morning." "Will my spirit never die? and can this poor weak body live again?" an old chieftain exclaimed, and this delighted surprise seemed the general feeling of the natives. — From "Six Months in the Sandwich Islands, "by Miss Bird

Thirst is a blessed thing, if cold water be at hand; cold water is a blessed thing to those who thirst. Needy sinners get; a gracious Savior gives. When thirst drinks in cold water, when cold water quenches thirst, the giver and the receiver rejoice together. While the redeemed obtain a great refreshment in the act, the Redeemer obtains a greater; for himself was wont to say, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." — W. Arnot

The words remind us of the scanty intercourse in the old world between wanderers and the home they had left. The craving for tidings in such a case must be as a consuming thirst, the news that quenched it as a refreshing fountain. — Speaker's Commentary

Dr. Field, in his "Journey through the Desert," speaks of being upon Mount Sinai and writes, "Here in a pass between rocks under a huge granite boulder is a spring of water, which the Arabs say never fails. It was very grateful in the heat of the day, especially as we found snow in a cleft of the rocks, which, added to the natural coldness of the spring, gave us ice-water on Mount Sinai."

Proverbs 27:10 The Best Friend

Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not. — Proverbs 27:10

MAN may have many acquaintances, but he will have few friends; he may count himself happy if he has one who will be faithful to him in time of trouble. If that person has also been kind to his father before him, he should never be slighted, much less alienated. Real friends are to be retained with great care, and, if need be, with great sacrifice. The wisdom of the world teaches this, and inspiration confirms it.

If we rise into a higher sphere, it is much more so. There we have one Friend — the Friend of sinners, who in infinite condescension has called us friends, and has shown that greatest of all love-laying down his life for his friends. To him we must cleave in life and death. To forsake him would be horrible ingratitude.

I. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE. "Thine own friend and thy father's friend."

1. "Friend": this implies kindness, attachment, help.

2. "Father's friend": one who has been faithful, unchanging, patient, wise, and tried, and this in the experience of our own father, on whose judgment we can depend. In many cases the best medical man you can have is the family physician, who knows your parents' constitutions as well as your own. The friend of the family should ever be a welcome guest.

3. "Thine own friend;" with whom you have enjoyed converse, in whom you can safely place confidence; with whom you have common objects, to whom you have made private revelations.

4. Do not forget the other side of friendship: thou must be a friend to him whom thou callest thy friend. "He that hath friends must shew himself friendly."

In all these points our Lord Jesus is the best example of a friend, and it is well for us to set him in the forefront, as a "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother." "This is my beloved, and this is my friend."

II. SUGGESTIVE ADVICE. "Forsake not."

1. What it does not suggest. It gives no kind of hint that he will ever forsake us. Hath he not said, "I will never leave thee nor

forsake thee"?

2. In what sense can we forsake him? Alas, some professed friends of Jesus become traitors, others follow afar off, grow cold, turn to the world, lose fellowship, do not defend his cause, etc.

3. What seasons tempt us to it? Both prosperity and adversity. Times of spreading heresy, worldliness, infidelity, etc.

4. What is the process of forsaking? Gradual cooling down leads on to utter turning away. By degrees we see his poor people despised, his doctrine doubted, his ways forgotten, his cause no longer aided, and at last, profession given up.

5. What are the signs of this forsaking? They can be seen in the heart, heard in the conversation, marked in the absence of zeal and liberality, and at length detected in actual sins.

6. What reasons cause forsaking? Pride, deadness of heart, neglect of prayer, love of the world, fear of man, etc.

7. What arguments should prevent it? Our obligations, his faithfulness, our vows, our danger apart from him, etc.

8. What in the end comes of such forsaking?

All manner of evils follow, to ourselves, to his cause, to other friends, to the worldlings around us.

III. CONSEQUENT RESOLVE. I will cleave to him.

Let us cling to Jesus.

In faith, resting alone in him.

In creed, accepting his every teaching.

In confession, declaring our loyalty to him.

In practice, following his footsteps.

In love, abiding in fellowship with him.

Forsake not Christ when he is persecuted and blasphemed.

Forsake him not when the world offers gain, honor, ease, as the price of your defection.

Forsake him not when all men seem to desert him, and the church is decaying and ready to die.

Good Words

He hath the substance of all bliss,
To whom a virtuous friend is given;
So sweet harmonious friendship is,
Add but eternity, you'll make it heaven.
— John Norris

Hewitson writes: "I think I know more of Jesus Christ than of any earthly friend." Hence one who knew him well remarked, "One thing struck me in Mr. Hewitson: he seemed to have no gaps, no intervals in his communion with God." — G. S. Bowes

The Prime Minister of Madagascar presiding at a missionary meeting, July 11th, 1878, said, "I don't like to speak about my own father here before you all, but I remember one young woman whom my father taught to read the Bible, and trained to be a Christian. When the persecution came again she was accused, convicted, and sentenced to death for being a Christian. She was brought here to be thrown over this rock, and at the last moment was offered her life if she would recant. But she refused, crying out, 'No, throw me over, for I am Christ's.'" — Chronicle of the London Missionary Society

We must not forsake our own friend, for that would be to forsake our second self; and we must not forsake our father's friend, for that would make us guilty of a double ingratitude of the basest sort that we can practice towards men. Our fathers' friends, if they are honest, are the best possessions that they can leave us; and if Naboth would not sell, for any price, the inheritance left him by his father, but kept it in spite of an Ahab and a Jezebel, till he was stoned, shall we show such irreverence to the memory of our fathers, as to give up, without any price, the most precious possessions which they have bequeathed us? Solomon carried on his father's friendly intercourse with Hiram, and spared a traitor to his crown and dignity, because he had shared with his father in all his afflictions. Rehoboam would have been a wiser and happier man if he had followed the example and precept of his father. — Dr. G. Lawson

Old family friends. I. Consider some of our father's old friends: (1) the Sabbath, (2) the Sanctuary, (3) the Savior, (4) the Scriptures. II. Consider some reasons for being true to them: (1) because of what they have done for those who are dear to us, (2) because of what they promise to do for us, (3) because of what they have already done for some of us. — Biblical Museum

One day the pulpit of the Rev. G. Cowie, of Huntley, was occupied by a minister who spoke as if the Holy Spirit was not needed either by saints or sinners. After the sermon, Mr. Cowie stood on the pulpit stairs, and said: "Sirs, haud in wi' your auld freen, the Holy Ghost; for if ye ance grieve him awa', ye'll nae get him back sae easy."

Proverbs 27:18 The Honored Servant

> **Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof: so he that waiteth on his master shall be honored. — Proverbs 27:18**

THE general rule is that service brings reward. The man tended the fig tree, and it bore him fruit: faithful service usually brings its recompense. Masters, if at all worthy of their position, will honor those servants who do their duty to them.

I. CHRIST IS OUR MASTER

1. Our sole master. We serve others, that we may serve him: we do not divide our service. "One is your master, even Christ."

2. Our choice Master. There is not such another in the universe.

3. Our chosen Master. We cheerfully take his yoke: to serve him is to us a kingdom. "I love my master (Exod. 21:5).

4. Our gracious Master: bearing with our faults, cheering us when faint, aiding us when weary, tending us in sickness, instructing us with patience, promising a great reward, etc.

5. Our life Master. Our ear is bored to his door-post: we are his to all eternity.

II. OUR BUSINESS IS TO SERVE HIM.

1. Expressed by the sense of "keeping the fig tree. "We are to see to our Lord as a good body-servant watches over his master.

> Remaining with him. Never quitting his side, or getting out of communion with him.
>
> Defending him. Allowing none to speak against him, or to injure his honor while we have a tongue in our heads.
>
> Guarding his interests. Making his cause our own, his business our business.
>
> Cherishing his family. Loving the least of them, and laboring for the good of all.
>
> Striving for his objects. Consecrating ourselves to carry out the grand purposes of our Lord, and laying aside everything which would hinder us in this one pursuit.

2. Expressed by the words "waiteth on his master."

> Waiting his word. "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth" (1 Sam. 3:9; Ps. 85:8).
>
> Seeking his smile. "Make thy face to shine upon thy servant" (Ps. 31:16).
>
> Depending upon him for strength "Give thy strength unto thy servant" (Ps. 86:16).
>
> Expecting the fulfillment of his promises. "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope" (Ps. 119:49).
>
> Consecrated to his service — "body, soul, and spirit." Having no private ends (1 Chron. 12:18).
>
> Acquiescent in his will. Ready either to suffer or to labor as he may appoint (Luke 7:7-10).

The contrary of this is

> Self-seeking. Lusting after honor, wealth, ease, pleasure.
>
> Self-guiding: doing your own will, and yet pretending to serve the Lord.
>
> Self-applauding: robbing our Lord of the glory which belongs to him alone.

III. OUR SERVICE WILL BRING HONOR.

I. Among your fellow servants here below.

2. Even among enemies, who will be forced to admire sincerity and fidelity.

3. From our Lord, who will give us a sweet sense of acceptance even here below.

4. At the judgment-day, before the assembled universe.

5. Throughout eternity, among angels and glorified spirits.

Let us grieve that we have not served him better.

Let us repent if we have not served him at all.

Let us pray him to receive us into his service this day.

Concerning the Master

How sweetly doth My Master sound! My Master!
As ambergris leaves a rich scent
Unto the taster:
So do these words a sweet content,
An oriental fragrancy, My Master.
— George Herbert

Two aged ministers met one Saturday at a station in Wales as they were going to preach in their respective places on Sunday. "I hope," said Mr. Harris, of Merthyr, to Mr. Powell, of Cardiff, "I hope the Great Master will give you his face tomorrow." "Well, if he does not," replied Mr. Powell, "I will speak well of him behind his back."

Rutherford, speaking of how his Lord encouraged him with sweet fellowship while he was serving him, says in his quaint way, "When my Master sends me on his errands, he often gives me a bawbee for myself"; by which he meant that as sure as ever God employed him he gave him a penny for reward, as we do to boys who go upon our errands.

An old highlander, Hugh Chisholm, was one of the personal attendants of Prince Charles in his wanderings. Lord Monboddo was much attached to this interesting old man, and once proposed to introduce him to his table at dinner, along with some friends of more exalted rank. On mentioning the scheme to Mr. Colquhoun Grant, one of the proposed party, that gentleman started a number of objections, on the score that poor Chisholm would be embarrassed and uncomfortable in a scene so unusual to him, while some others would feel offended at having the company of a man of mean rank forced upon them. Monboddo heard all Mr. Grant's objections, and then assuming a lofty tone, exclaimed: "Let me relieve you, Mr. Grant: Hugh Chisholm has been in better company than either yours or mine!" The conscience stricken Jacobin had not another word to say. — Memoir of Robert Chambers

There will be a resurrection of credits, as well as of bodies. We'll have glory enough by-and-bye. — Richard Sibbes

A dog which follows anybody and everybody belongs to no one, and no one cares for it. The more it shows its devotion to its master the greater is the man's attachment to it. In domestic service we should not care to keep a body-servant who spent half his time in waiting upon another employer.

Old and faithful servants grow to look upon all their master's property as their own. One such said, "Here comes our carriage, and there are our dear children coming home from school!" Our Lord Jesus loves to see us feel a fellow-ship — a community of interests with himself. He makes such service to be its own reward, and adds heaven besides. He will not cast off his old servants, but he will grant them to be with him in his glory, as they have been with him in his humiliation.

Proverbs 29:25 Fear of Man Destroyed by Trust in God

The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe. — Proverbs 29:25

WE have here a double proverb: each half is true by itself; and, put together, the whole is forcible and full of teaching. He who fears man is in great danger from that very fact; he who trusts in the Lord is in no danger of any sort; trusting in the Lord is the great antidote against the fear of man.

I. HERE IS A VERY COMMON EVIL. "The fear of man bringeth a snare:"

1. It is thought by some to be a good; but it is in the best instance doubtful. Even virtue followed through dread of a fellow creature loses half its beauty, if not more.

2. It leads men into great sins at times-, snaring them, and holding them like birds taken by a fowler. Aaron yielded to popular clamor and made the calf. Saul cared more to be honored among the people than to please the Lord. Pilate feared that a charge would reach Caesar, and so he violated his conscience. Peter denied his Master for fear of a silly maid.

3. It keeps many from conversion: their companions would ridicule, their friends would be annoyed, they might be persecuted, and so they are numbered with the "fearful, and unbelieving."

4. It prevents others avowing their faith. They try to go to heaven through a back door. Remember, "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10).

5. It lowers the dignity of good men. David was a poor creature before Achish, and even Father Abraham made but a poor figure when he denied his wife.

6. It holds some believers in equivocal positions. Illustrations are far too abundant. Men fail to carry out their principles for fear of men.

7. It hampers the usefulness of very many: they dare not speak, or lead the way, though their efforts are greatly needed.

8. It hinders many in duties which require courage. Jonah will not go to Nineveh because he may be thought a false prophet if God forgives that city. Galatian preachers went aside to false doctrine to be considered wise, etc.

9. It is the cause of weakness in the Church. It is cowardly, shameful, dishonorable to Jesus, idolatrous, selfish, foolish. It should not be allowed by any man in his own case.

II. HERE IS A VERY PRECIOUS SAFEGUARD. "Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe."

Not slavish fear of man, but childlike trust in the Lord will be the protection of the believer.

1. The truster is safe from fear of man.

God is with us, therefore we are strong, and need not fear.

We are determined, and will not fear.

We pray, and lose our fear.

We prepare for the worst, and fear vanishes.

2. The truster is safe from the result of men's anger.

It often never comes. God restrains the persecutor.

The loss which it inflicts if it does come is less than that which would be caused by cowardice.

When we trust in God any such loss is joyfully borne.

After all, what is there to fear? What can man do unto us? God being with us, our safety is perfect, continuous, eternal, even though the whole human race should besiege us.

III. HERE IS A VERY GLORIOUS DOCTRINE. We may take in the widest sense the doctrine of the second sentence,— "Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe"—

From the damning and conquering power of sin.

From the overcoming force of temptation.

From the deadening effect of sorrow.

From the destroying force of Satan.

From death, and hell, and every evil

From all injury which men can inflict.

Will you fear a worm, or trust your God?

Break the snare in which fear has entangled you.

Enter the palace of safety by the door of trust.

Warnings

The soul that cannot entirely trust God, whether man be pleased or displeased, can never long be true to him; for while you are eyeing man you are losing God, and stabbing religion at the very heart. — Manton

"Fear of man." Grim idol — bloody-mouthed — many souls he has devoured and trampled down into hell! His eyes are full of hatred to Christ's disciples. Scoffs and jeers lurk in his face. The laugh of the scorner growls in his throat. Cast down this idol. This keeps some of you from secret prayer, from worshipping God in your family, from going to lay your case before ministers, from openly confessing Christ. You that have felt God's love and Spirit, dash this idol to pieces. Who art thou, that thou should'st be afraid of a man that shall die? "Fear not, thou worm, Jacob." "What have I to do any more with idols?" — M'Cheyne

The difficulties attending an open confession of Christ are the occasion of multitudes making shipwreck of their souls. In many hopeful characters, that Scripture, "the fear of man bringeth a snare," is verified. Cato and the philosophers of Rome honored the gods of their country though unbelievers in the superstitions of their country. Plato was convinced of the unity of God, but durst not own his convictions, but said,"It was a truth, neither easy to find, nor safe to own." Even Seneca, the renowned moralist, was forced by temptation to dissemble his convictions, of whom Augustus said, "He worshipped what himself reprehended, and did what himself reproved." At the interruption which was given to the progress of the Reformation by the return of the Papists to power, some, as they went to mass, would exclaim, "Let us go to the common error." Thus, conviction is not conversion where there is no confession of Christ. — Salter

One fire puts out another. Nothing so effectually kills the fear of man as abundance of the fear of God. Faith is an armor to the soul, and, clothed with it, men enter the thick of the battle without fear of wounds. Fear of man deadens conscience, distracts meditation, hinders holy activity, stops the mouth of testimony, and paralyzes the Christian's power. It is a cunning snare which some do not perceive, though they are already taken in