

The background of the cover is a photograph of a bright sun in a clear blue sky. The sun is positioned in the upper right quadrant, creating a lens flare effect. Below the sun, a thick layer of white, fluffy clouds stretches across the middle of the frame. A horizontal line, representing the surface of water, runs across the middle of the image, and the clouds are perfectly reflected in the water below. The overall scene is serene and bright.

REFLECTIONS ON
PROVERBS

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1. The Importance of Proverbs

Present Truth, July 4, 1901

Original title: A Good Book for Business Men

Proverbs 1:4; 14:15

ONE of the best books for any man to study, is the book of *Proverbs*. It was written by the wisest man that ever lived, and its purpose is...

Proverbs 1

⁴ To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

The word “simple,” is the same as in:

Proverbs 14

¹⁵ The simple believes every word; but the prudent man looks well to his going.

Its root idea is that of open-mouthed credulity. This book, if heeded, will make such a silly person cautious and prudent, shrewd, and one who cannot be deceived. No matter how credulous and easily deceived and led astray one may be, the *Book of Proverbs* will make him wise.

But that, of course, is on the condition that he listens to it, and ceases to hear false instruction. Then when he hears only the truth, his quality of believing every word will stand him in good stead; for the truth of God gives true wisdom. It *is* wisdom, and therefore everybody who receives it must necessarily receive wisdom.

Then read the book; study it; become permeated with its teachings, and you will know how to deal wisely in every condition of life.

2. Introduction to Proverbs

Signs of the Times, November 6, 1884

By A. T. Jones¹

Proverbs 1:2-4, 5, 7, 10; 15:2; 16:31

SOLOMON was a very voluminous writer. He spoke three thousand proverbs, and a thousand and five songs. He spoke of trees, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that springs out of the wall.

From all his writings, however, we have preserved to us only the present book of *Proverbs*, containing about four hundred, one song of which seems to have been the chiefest of all (*Song* 1:1), and the short book of *Ecclesiastes*. It seems that from all the three thousand proverbs these were selected as being the best, “excluding all that were local, personal, or simply humorous,” and retaining those only which fell in with the great moral and religious purpose of God in handing down his will to men.

Here the child is taken, and, as it were, introduced to Wisdom herself in all her beauty, who, if he will allow her, takes him by the hand and leads him through the treacherous paths of youth to manhood, and to an old age which is itself a crown of glory because found in the way of righteousness.

Proverbs 16

³¹ The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.

Here is instruction not only for the child and the youth, but for husband and wife, for father and mother, for the farmer, the merchant, the rich, the poor, the high, and the low. It is Wisdom’s grand summary of instruction to the children of men.

The purpose of the *Proverbs* is stated:

¹ **Editor’s note:** I’ve included this early article and the following one by A. T. Jones on the book of *Proverbs* as they fit very well into this collection.

Proverbs 1

² To know [give] wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;

³ To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;

⁴ To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

“To give subtilty”—acuteness, nicety of distinction, i.e., the ability to distinguish the true from the false, to know the good, and to detect the bad; to see the right, and to discover any lurking tendency toward wrong.

“To the simple.”—On this we give the following from Dr. Clarke:

The word *simple*, from simplex, compounded of sine, without, and plica, a fold, signifies properly, plain and honest, one who has no bye-ends in view; who is what he appears to be;...but because honesty and plain dealing are so rare in the world, and none but the truly religious man will practice them, farther than the fear of the law obliges him, hence simple has sunk into a state of progressive deterioration.

First it signified, as above, without fold, unmixed, uncompounded; this was its radical meaning.

Secondly, as applied to men, it signified innocent, harmless, without disguise.

Thirdly, such persons were rather an unfashionable sort of people, it sunk in its meaning to homely, homespun, mean, ordinary.

And fourthly, as worldly men,...supposed that wisdom, wit, and understanding, were given to men that they might make the best of them in reference to the things of this life, the word sunk still lower in its meaning, and signified silly, foolish; and there, to the dishonor of our language and morals, it stands....And simplicity, that meant at first openness, plain dealing, downright honesty, is now degraded to weakness, silliness, foolishness. And they will continue thus degraded till downright honesty and plain dealing get again into

vogue.

“To give subtlety to the simple” therefore signifies, to give, acuteness, tact, and nicety of distinction to the honest-hearted, the upright, the sincere.

Proverbs 1

⁵ A wise man will hear and will increase learning.

Solomon has himself given us the meaning of wise as here used:

Proverbs 15

² The tongue of the wise uses knowledge aright.

The right use of that which we have already learned not only creates a desire to learn more, but it imparts the ability to properly acquire and appreciate more. Such a man will indeed “increase learning;” he cannot help it; and every increase of such learning is an increase and strengthening of his wisdom.

Wisdom therefore is not shown in the amount that we know, but in the right use of that which we know, however little it may be.

Ecclesiastes 9

¹⁴ There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it.

¹⁵ Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city...

¹⁶ Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength...

¹⁸ Wisdom is better than weapons of war.

Proverbs 1

⁵ ...and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels.

Literally, shall make himself a pilot. The cognate word is used thus in *Ezekiel 27:8*. That is, he may gain “the power to

steer his course rightly on the dangerous sea of life.”

⁷ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

“The fear of the Lord.”—Not the slavish fear arising from dread of punishment. But that filial “fear” which springs from respectful reverence, and a fear to offend lest we cause pain to the one whom we have in view; that fears to do contrary to the wish of the one whom we serve, lest we disappoint his expectations of us and forfeit his confidence.

“Is the beginning of knowledge.”—The man who fears the Lord has entered upon a course of knowledge and wisdom, which is limited only by eternity. However little he may have acquired of knowledge, as the world goes, if he have the fear of the Lord, he has eternity before him, in which to increase knowledge.

And though he have all the knowledge of all men of all the world, and have not the fear of the Lord, his little life is soon “rounded by a sleep,” and all has ceased, all his knowledge is ended. For when he arises from the dead, it is to woeful destruction, and all that he was is brought to naught. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

Proverbs 1

¹⁰ My son, if sinners entice you, consent not.

“If sinners entice you consent not.”—Or, as Dr. Clarke gives it, “will not,” that is have a “will not” for all forms of evil enticement. There is nothing that will strengthen and confirm us in our determination to do right, and at the same time weaken the seducer to wrong, like a firm, decided, “I will not.”

If one would entice you to take strong drink, meet it with, “I will not.” If they would entice you to chew or smoke tobacco, or to run with them in “ways that are dark and tricks that are vain,” give them a plain, “I will not.” They may sneer at, and make fun of you, yet in their hearts they will respect and

honor you. The Lord says:

1 Samuel 2

³⁰ Them that honor me I will honor.

Proverbs 1

¹⁰ If sinners entice you, will you not.

3. True Wisdom

Signs of the Times, November 13, 1884

By A. T. Jones

Proverbs 1:20-22; 8:1-17

THE subject of this lesson is “True Wisdom.” We have therefore thought it wise to allow Wisdom to tell her own story, and we have no hesitation in saying, and we are sure that all will agree, that it is the best set of Sunday-school notes that ever was written.

Proverbs 8

¹ Does not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?

² She stands in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths.

³ She cries at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors.

⁴ Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man.

⁵ O you simple, understand wisdom: and, you fools, be of an understanding heart.

⁶ Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things.

⁷ For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

⁸ All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them.

⁹ They are all plain to him that understands, and right to them that find knowledge.

¹⁰ Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold.

¹¹ For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

¹² I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.

¹³ The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

¹⁴ Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength.

¹⁵ By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.

¹⁶ By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.

¹⁷ I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

Wisdom Calls

Proverbs 1

²⁰ Wisdom cries without; she utters her voice in the streets:

²¹ She cries in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she utters her words, saying,

²² How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?

4. The Sin of Gossip

Signs of the Times, August 25, 1890

Original title: Front Page

Proverbs 6:19

AMONG the seven abominations which the Bible says that the Lord hates, is:

Proverbs 6

¹⁹ He that sows discord among brethren.

It is worthy of note that the one who does this is classed with “hands that shed innocent blood,” and “a false witness that speaks lies.”

When it is remembered that a “whisperer separates very friends,” it will be seen that what is often considered as harmless gossip is not so harmless after all.

It would seem as though the Lord regards a “tale-bearer,” a “whisperer,” or a “busybody in other men’s matters,” as one of the most despicable of creatures.

5. Studying the Bible

Present Truth, March 23, 1893
Proverbs 2:1-6

FEW people know how to really study the Bible. And this is not always because they do not know how to study at all, for very often those who are good students otherwise, are poor students of the Bible, even though they want to understand it. In *Proverbs* we are told how to study the Bible so as to understand it. Let us read the passage:

Proverbs 2

¹ My son, if you will receive my words, and hide my commandments with you;

² So that you incline your ear unto wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding;

³ Yea, if you cry after knowledge, and lift up your voice for understanding;

⁴ If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures;

⁵ Then shall you understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

Digging for Gold

When a man is convinced that there is rich silver or gold ore in a certain place, what does he do? He goes right there and digs in that very place.

But how do people generally do with the Bible? Why as soon as they light upon a portion where there is special treasure,—and that means a place where there is special difficulty,—they immediately go off to some other place to dig.

If they went to some other part of the Bible it would not be so bad, for there is treasure everywhere in the Bible, and whoever finds it in one place will be better able to find it in another; but they generally go to a library and begin to dig among the commentators, or they ask their pastor or some

friend what he thinks it means.

It is as though a man should find indications of gold in a certain place, and should straightway go off a hundred miles and begin digging. People are not so foolish as that in temporal matters.

Examine Every Part

Another point: When a man is digging for silver or gold, he carefully examines every portion of the soil where he is digging. Whoever has seen men washing out gold knows that every particle of the soil is carefully examined. No matter what the style of mining, everything is in some way closely scrutinized.

Here then we have the simple directions for studying the Bible. First go to the Bible itself, and to the particular passage which you wish to understand, and then give the most careful and patient attention to every sentence and every word. Let your mind dwell upon every word and every clause, noting its relation to what precedes and what follows, until you know for a certainty just what it says.

Not Merely Memorization

Do not sit down to commit the passage to memory so that you can repeat it parrot-like. That is not study. But question the text, asking a question and letting the words of the text give the answer, until you cannot possibly think of it without thinking the very words.

Many people who read the Bible a great deal do not know what it says, because they read it carelessly, and do not let the Bible itself form their ideas. No one can hope to understand any portion of the Bible when he does not know for a certainty just what it says. This is self-evident, for it applies to everything.

The Lord Gives Understanding

When the student knows what the text says, then what? Here is the instruction,

2 Timothy 2 [RV]

⁷ Consider what I say; for the Lord shall give you understanding in all things.

How will He give us the understanding? By our considering what He says. That is, while we are diligently considering the text, the understanding of the text will come from the text itself. From what other place should we expect it to come?

Proverbs 2

⁶ For the Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

The meaning of what the Lord says is in just the very words that He says.

Patience and Submission

How long must one consider the words before he can understand it? That depends upon several things. We must be prepared to consider them for ten years, if need be, without getting impatient. We must have such confidence that wisdom and knowledge do come from the very words of the Lord that we shall be assured that they are really there, and that they are nowhere else.

But much depends on the spirit in which we approach the study. The Spirit of God is the source whence the Bible comes; the Spirit is the life and power and wisdom of the word. When we come with hearts submissive to the Spirit, we shall not have to wait so long as we otherwise would.

Remember that the righteousness of God is revealed to faith, and not to intellect. That does not put any discount upon intellect, but it simply exalts faith. God has given man talents of intellect, and expects him to use them, but not with-

out faith. A very feeble intellect with faith will understand the Bible far more readily and more perfectly, than a giant intellect without faith.

Consider the Connection

At the same time that one particular passage is being thus studied, do not neglect the reading and studying of other parts of the Bible. The Bible is a unit; one Spirit and one truth is in it all; and every part is thus directly connected with every other part.

If the particular passage under special consideration is in the middle of a chapter, the student will find it necessary to extend his careful study back to the beginning of the chapter, and even to the beginning of the book; for no book in the Bible, unless it be *Proverbs* and *Psalms*, is made up of detached thoughts. A line of thought runs through each, and every text should be considered in its full connection. Then when it is used in the study of any special subject, it will not be misapplied.

A Thousand Ways

When the mind thus gets accustomed to dwelling upon the Scriptures, it is wonderful how light will come. Almost anything may serve to cause the light to shine forth from the word. While reading some other portion of the Bible, while listening to a discourse, in conversation even upon some other subject,—in short, in a thousand different ways,—the mind may be directed to the text that has been studied, and the light will shine forth.

No one can tell in what way the Spirit will work, and what means it will use to lead the soul into the truth; only let it be remembered that in any case it is the Spirit that guides, and that the knowledge gained comes from the word itself, and not from any other source.

Proverbs 2

⁶ For the Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

6. The Fear of the Lord

Present Truth, May 18, 1893
Proverbs 1:9; 3:19; 9:13; 16:6

Proverbs 1

⁹ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

AS THE marginal rendering has it, the fear of the Lord is the principal part of wisdom. So in *Job* we are told plainly,

Job 28

²⁸ The fear of the Lord that is wisdom.

But we also read,

Proverbs 9

¹³ The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.

Also,

Proverbs 16

⁶ By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.

Therefore we learn that true wisdom and knowledge spring from righteousness.

Psalms 111

¹⁰ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do His commandments.

This is because the commandments can be kept only in Christ, for His life is the living law; and,

Colossians 2

³ [In Him] are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Proverbs 3

¹⁹ The Lord by wisdom has founded the earth; by understanding has He established the heavens.

Jeremiah 10

¹² He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, and has stretched out the heavens by His discretion.

But this is only another way of saying:

1 Corinthians 1

²⁴ [God] created all things by Jesus Christ.

So not only are all power and all true wisdom found only in Christ, but all knowledge of the creation of the heavens and the earth can be obtained only through Christ. He who studies nature in the light of Christ and His work, will arrive at real knowledge; for:

Psalms 25

¹⁴ The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.

Christianity is the religion of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the only manifestation of God.

Matthew 11

²⁷ No man knows...the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.

Therefore whatever religion is not the religion of Jesus Christ, is not the worship of God, and must be heathenism. There are only two systems of religion in the world—Christianity and heathenism.

Christianity is the religion of love.

1 John 4

⁸ God is love,

and

Romans 13

¹⁰ Love is the fulfilling of His law.

Jesus Christ is the manifestation of God's love to man;

John 3

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Whatever religious practices therefore do not spring from love, are not a part of Christianity, but are a part of heathenism.

But love knows nothing of force. It cannot be forced.

“Does your dog love you?” said a man to a boy.

“Indeed he does,” replied the lad; “he knows that I’ll pound the life out of him if he doesn’t.”

Such “love” as that does not afford any satisfaction to either party. Forced service is not love, but is slavery. Therefore compulsory religious service, not being a service of love, is not Christianity, but is essentially heathenism.

But law means force, for a law that cannot be enforced is not a law. Therefore it is absolutely impossible that religion by law can be Christianity.

Enforced religious observances, no matter of what kind, are no part of Christianity.

7. How to Get Knowledge

Present Truth, July 6, 1893
Proverbs 1:7, 20-23; 2:6

Proverbs 1

- ²⁰ Wisdom cries without; she utters her voice in the streets;
²¹ She cries in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates; in the city she utters her words, saying,
²² How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning; and fools hate knowledge?
²³ Turn at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

This is the language of the Lord Jesus Christ,

Colossians 2

- ³ In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

This means that there is nothing of any kind whatever that is worthy to be called wisdom, which is not to be found in Christ.

1 Corinthians 1

- ²² For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom;
²³ But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness;
²⁴ But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

That is, the wisdom which the Greeks sought after, is contained only in Christ. Because they sought it in themselves, and not in Christ, the wisdom which they had became foolishness. Out of Christ it is impossible to find true wisdom.

True wisdom consists in knowing God.

Jeremiah 9

- ²³ Thus says the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not

the rich man glory in his riches;

²⁴ But let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness, in the earth; for in these things I delight, says the Lord.

To know God is the sum of all scientific knowledge for Christ, who is the only manifestation of God, is the Source of all creation.

Romans 11

³³ O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!

³⁶ For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things.

Christ is the beginning, the head, or source, of the creation of God. *Revelation 3:14*.

Colossians 1 [RV]

¹⁵ [He is] the firstborn of every creature.

¹⁶ For in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him, and unto Him;

¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Therefore the study of natural science must begin and end with the study of God in Christ.

But Christ is the righteousness of God. Righteousness is the character of God. Therefore no one can know God without knowing His righteousness; and so the study of true science reveals the righteousness of God. And this is wisdom, for:

Proverbs 1

⁷ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

The knowledge of the righteousness of God is connected with the knowledge of the works of God that we see with our eyes; for the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation:

Romans 1

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes.

And the power of God is seen in the things that are made:

²⁰ For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.

Therefore when the Bible speaks of wisdom and knowledge, it means not only the wisdom and knowledge which would be counted as such by men, but also...

Colossians 1

⁹ ...all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

All this is summed up in the words of Moses to the children of Israel:

Deuteronomy 4

⁵ Behold I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do so in the land where you go to possess it.

⁶ Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.

They who keep the commandments of God, not in form merely, but in fact, will have wisdom which will excite the wonder of people who do not recognize the source of knowledge.

And now that we have seen what wisdom is let us note the words with which this article begins, to see how it may be obtained. The Lord says,

Proverbs 1

²³ Turn at my reproof; behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

That is; those who listen to heed the reproofs of the Lord,

will know His words, which are wisdom.

Proverbs 2

⁶ For the Lord gives wisdom, out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

The reproofs of the Lord are by the Spirit of the Lord and are given, not for the purpose of taunting us with our failures, nor for the purpose of causing us to cringe in terror before Him, but that we may turn from our sins to righteousness.

Before He went away, Christ promised to send the Holy Spirit as a Comforter, and the first thing that He was to do was to convince the world of sin. This He does by revealing the righteousness of God.

These reproofs come in various ways, according to the sin and the peculiarity of the person. They are not simply of a general nature, but they come home to the individual, pointing out specific acts of wrong, and saying,

2 Samuel 12

⁷ You are the man.

It is naturally a severe trial to any one to receive a sharp reproof, because it cuts directly across self. But no matter how cutting it may be, and even though the Lord has allowed the knowledge of our failing to come to us through an unfriendly source, it is the part of wisdom to heed it. To heed it means to forsake the evil, and that can be done only through Christ; for it is the blood of Christ alone that cleanses from all sin.

1 John 1

⁷ If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

The promise is that those who turn at the reproof of wisdom shall have the words of wisdom made known unto them. Not only will such a one have the words of the Lord,—the words of wisdom,—told to him, but he will have them made

known to him.

In this is found the secret of the failure of many to understand the Bible. They are cherishing some sin, or they are unwilling to keep all the commandments of God, and consequently they cannot know the meaning of the words of wisdom. Self stands in the way.

Christ said that if any man had a mind to do the Father's will, he should know of the doctrine:

John 7

¹⁷ If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

Psalms 25

⁹ The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach His way.

Surely the result is worth all that it costs, even though the lesson be a trying one. The pain comes only in the letting go of self. When one has once yielded fully to the Lord; the reproofs of the Lord are pleasant. When self is dead, it cannot be hurt by them. Then instead of mourning over the reproof, because of wounded pride; or even in despondency, he will delight himself in the increased knowledge of God.

Try it, all you who wish that you might understand the Bible. Let your doubts go to the winds. Let your own foolish wisdom, which would lead you to hesitate to receive the word of God, if it is contrary to your preconceived opinion, give place to the meekness of wisdom. In short; let your own opinions go entirely, and do not try to draw conclusions according to your own wisdom, but let God teach you at every step of the way.

When you cannot see how a certain statement harmonizes with another, do not get impatient, and begin to doubt, but wait in faith, and God will explain it to you. Do not be afraid of waiting awhile. It may be that the Lord has some other les-

son for you to learn before you can understand this one.

But while you are, waiting, wait only on the Lord, and His words will explain themselves.

2 Timothy 2

⁷ Consider what I say; for the Lord shall give you understanding in all things.

8. The Best Book

Present Truth, July 13, 1893
Proverbs 30:5

Proverbs 30

⁵ Every word of God is pure.

LAST week² we talked about the trees, grass, flowers, birds, animals, sunshine, and many other beautiful things that we see when we go out of the house.

This week we shall talk about a certain thing that we see in the house. It can tell you who made the grass and animals and just how they were made. It is a wonderful book called the “Holy Bible,” and it can tell you all about these and many other things of which you would like to know. Ask someone to please open it and read the first chapter to you.

The first chapter in the Bible says that God, who lives up above the stars in heaven, is the One who made the sun, moon, and stars, the flowers, birds, and animals, and all living things.

In *Ephesians* the 3rd chapter and *Colossians* the 1st chapter we also read that:

Ephesians 3

⁹ God...created all things by Jesus Christ [His Son],

Colossians 1

¹⁶ ...all things...that are in heaven, and that are in earth, seen and unseen.

¹⁹ For it pleased the Father that in Him [the Son] should all fullness dwell.

And in *Hebrews* the Father says to the Son,

Hebrews 1

⁹ You have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even your God, has anointed You with the oil of glad-

² See the book containing the articles for Children on “India” from 1893.

ness above your fellows.

John 1

¹⁸ No man has seen God at any time; but the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him [or made Him known to us].

So we need not be afraid to trust Him, for Jesus has come down to the earth and shown us that God is so powerful, and wise, and good, and loving, and kind, that among the gods there is none like Him, neither are there any works like unto His works, but He is God alone.

And yet God says that:

John 5

²³ All should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He that honors not the Son honors not the Father which sent Him.

And,

Hebrews 1

⁸ Unto the Son He said, Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever.

⁶ And again when He brought in the first begotten into the world, He said, And let the angels of God worship Him.

In *Hebrews* we read that:

Hebrews 1

² [God] has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds,

³ Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power,...sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Now there are many books in the world but all of them together are not worth so much as this one book—the Bible—which introduces us to the God who made the heavens and

the earth. It is the only book that is perfectly good and perfectly pure, because it is the only book that comes to us from God Himself.

It came not as other books, by the will of man,

2 Peter 1

²¹ ...but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

It is therefore God's word to us, and can have nothing wrong in it. When it says that God made the grass and flowers, we may believe every word that it says about it.

The word "Bible" means book. It is the "Holy Bible" (Holy Book), because Jesus by His Holy Spirit dwells in it. Jesus is so holy that His very presence makes a place holy. The Bible is therefore the purest and the best book in the whole world.

It is the most wonderful book of all for by studying it and believing it and receiving it in our hearts we receive the pure and lovely Jesus in our hearts, because He dwells in it. Thus it can take from us every naughty thing; for naughtiness cannot stay where Jesus is.

1. Have you found out who caused the pretty flowers and grasses and animals to grow?
2. Who was it?
3. Where only can we find out all about it?
4. What is the Bible?
5. Who sent it to us?
6. Then what kind of book is it—a good book, or a bad book?
7. Why is it a good book? Because it is the Word of God, and God is good.
8. How are other books written? By the will of man.
9. How was the Bible written? By the will of God, holy men wrote only as they were guided by the Spirit of

God.

10. Then whose word is it?
11. Therefore when it says that God made the grass and every living thing, what may we believe?
12. Is it always safe to believe what other books say? Why not?
13. Why may we believe all that the Bible says? *Proverbs* 30:5.
14. If we really receive God's Word into our hearts, what a wonderful change will it work in us? Why?
15. Can any other book do so much for us?
16. Then which is the best book in the whole world?
17. Has any one ever seen God?
18. Then how can we know Him? By knowing Jesus. *John* 14:6-7; 1:18.
19. What does the Father call Him? God. *Hebrews* 1:8.
20. What did He tell the angels to do? To worship Him. *Hebrews* 1:6.
21. How does He command us to honor Him? *John* 5:23.
22. By whom did God create all things? *Ephesians* 3:9; *Colossians* 1:16.

9. Acknowledging Him

Present Truth, July 13, 1893

Original title: Front Page

Proverbs 3:3-6

Proverbs 3

³ Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them about your neck; write them upon the table of your heart;

⁴ So shall you find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not unto your own understanding.

⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

TO acknowledge God is to acknowledge that He has all wisdom, all power, all goodness. And that means to acknowledge that we lack all those things, and are dependent on Him for them.

That means meekness and submission; and the promise is,

Psalms 25

⁹ The meek will He teach His way.

Thus acknowledging God in all our ways will make our ways such as God Himself will acknowledge.

10. Withholding Good

Present Truth, July 27, 1893

Original title: Back Page

Proverbs 3:27

Proverbs 3

²⁷ Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do it.

WHATEVER else may be included in this commandment, it certainly charges those who have money that is due to the Lord's work, to give while they are alive, and not to keep it until after death.

Then it is not in the power of their hand to do anything, and there is no certainty that their intentions while living will ever be carried out.

If God loves a cheerful giver, how must He regard the man who holds fast to his money until his latest breath, having previously made a will that the Lord may have it when it is of no more use to him?

11. Our Best Friend

Present Truth, July 20, 1893
Proverbs 18:24, 27

Proverbs 18

²⁷ There is a Friend that sticks closer than a brother.

ALL little boys and girls like to have friends—those who love them—to whom they can go and tell all of their joys and sorrows.

Some children have a great many friends. There are their playmates, with whom they go to school and spend many happy hours. Then there are their uncles, and aunts, and cousins, their brothers and sisters, and best of all their father and mother.

Their father and mother are the best earthly friends that they have, because they love them more and have done more for them than any other of their friends.

Some children have lost their father and mother and do not have many other friends. But no matter how poor and lonely they may be, all children have one Friend,

Proverbs 18

²⁴ ...that sticks closer than a brother,

—a Friend that loves them more and has done more for them than any father and mother.

- He gave them their parents, and brothers and sisters.
- He caused the wheat to grow that they might have bread to eat.
- He made water for them to drink, air for them to breathe, and warm sunshine to keep them well and strong.
- And He made the animals, and birds, and bright flowers, with which they love to play.

- He watches over them and takes care of them day and night.

Can you think who this good Friend is? Yes, it is God, our kind Heavenly Father, of whom we learned last week.

It is right for us to love our fathers and mothers, and to do all that we can to please them, for they have suffered and done a great deal for us. But our Heavenly Father has done more for us than they, so we will love Him best of all. And we will try to show our love and thankfulness to Him by doing all that we can to please Him.

We cannot see Him now, for we are too weak and full of sin to bear even the sight of His purity and brightness. His face is brighter than the sun, and His garments are of dazzling white. He has beautiful angels (messengers), more than we can count, and each one shines like lightning, and is clothed in light as white as snow. He has a wondrous white throne, encircled with a rainbow. And He lives in a city with gates of pearl and streets of purest gold, a city where there is no sin, sickness, pain, or death. How rich, how great, how glorious!

But best of all, this glorious King is so loving and good that He is willing to be our best Friend. Such a Friend! How we should love and praise Him for His goodness. He says,

Isaiah 49

¹⁵ Can a woman forget her little baby? Yes, they may forget, yet will I not forget you.

Let us remember this precious promise when we get into trouble. And let us remember that although His home is in heaven, He is not so far away but that He can see us all the time, and can hear us whenever we cry unto Him.

1. Have you any brothers and sisters?
2. Do you ever play with anyone else? Who?
3. Have you any cousins, or aunts, or uncles who come to see you?

4. Have you a father and mother?
5. Which of these friends do you love best? Why?
6. How can you show them that you love them? The best way is to try to please them.
7. Then if you do not try to please them, what will they think? They will think that you do not love them.
8. Would you be very lonely without all of these dear friends?
9. Who gave them to you?
10. What else has God done for you?
11. Has anyone else done so much for you?
12. Then who is the best friend of all?
13. How can you show Him that you love Him and thank Him for all His kindness? By trying to please Him.
14. Can we see God now? Why not?
15. How bright is His face? *Matthew 17:2; Acts 26:13-15; Revelation 1:13-16.*
16. How is He clothed?
17. How many beautiful angels has He? *Revelation 5:11; Hebrews 12:22.*
18. How bright are their faces? *Matthew 28:2-3; Daniel 10:5-6.*
19. What kind of garments have they?
20. What do angels do? They are God's messengers, going here and there at His bidding. *Psalm 103:20-21; Hebrews 1:14.*
21. Tell what you can about God's throne. *Revelation 20:11; Daniel 7:9; Revelation 4:3-8; Ezekiel 1:26-28.*
22. Who only have thrones? Kings.
23. Then what is God? A mighty king.
24. In what kind of city does He live? *Revelation 21:10-23.*
25. Where is this city?
26. Although so great, what is He willing to be? Your best

Friend.

27. A better friend than a brother? *Proverbs* 18:27.

28. And what does He say that shows Him to be a better friend than even your own mother? *Isaiah* 49:15.

29. Can He hear when you call upon Him? *Psalms* 34:17; 145:18.

12. Light and Darkness

Present Truth, August 31, 1893
Proverbs 4:18-19

Proverbs 4

¹⁸ The path of the just is as the shining light,...

¹⁹ The way of the wicked is as darkness.

ONE of the most pleasant things in the world is light. Do you remember who made it, and how it was made? What a cold, lifeless, gloomy place this earth would be without the beautiful light.

'Tis true we need the cool, quiet night in which to rest, but how gladly everything welcomes the morning light! At the first peep of day, the little birds pour out their songs of praise. And as the trees and grass and flowers are touched by the warm rays, they shake out there dewy leaves and seem to say,

“Good morning, merry sunshine! We are so glad that you have come again.”

Men go forth to their work with gladness, and baby hands reaching out with joy to catch and kiss the pretty sunbeam that rests a moment on the floor. Ah, yes, 'tis true, we love the light better than the darkness. And sometimes we almost wish that it would never go away.

Although day and night will continue to come and go as long as this earth remains, yet our whole life will be as pleasant as the shining light if we have Jesus with us. He says,

John 8

¹² I am the light of the world; he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

We need the sunlight, but we need Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, more.

But how can we have Him with us? Jesus by His Holy Spirit

dwells in His word, therefore by loving His holy letter and letting its words enter into our hearts we let Jesus into our hearts, and He will then abide with us, and His life will be our light. Then no matter if we are all alone in the dark, away from every earthly light, we are safe, and may be happy.

When we disobey God or our parents, and are cross and angry with our brothers, sisters, or friends, and say naughty words, and lie, or steal, Jesus looks grieved and sad, for that shows that we do not love Him. He cannot stay with us, and we feel unhappy and everything seems dark and unpleasant, no matter how bright the sun may be shining. Wickedness always brings a feeling of darkness and unhappiness, because Jesus leaves us. Without Him we make mistakes and go into wrong ways as surely as without light we stumble and go into broad paths. So the Bible says that:

Proverbs 4

¹⁹ The way of the wicked is as darkness.

Dear child, in which road are you walking? Are you cross, and selfish, and disobedient? If so, you are walking in the way of darkness. Jesus loves you and wants you to be saved, but He knows that if you keep on in this way you will finally be lost. He therefore calls you to come out of the way of the wicked into the path of the just (righteous), to come out of the darkness of sin into the light of Jesus' own righteousness.

That you may not make mistakes and go wrong, He places in your hand the Bible lamp.

“Take it,” He says, “Let its words enter into your hearts, and do as it says, and you will find the right way. It will lead you to me, and I am the light of the world.”

Then your path will be as the shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day. At that time Jesus will come and take you to live with Him in His beautiful home, where it is always light.

Here are some little verses for you to learn:

God is always near me
Hearing what I say;
Knowing all my thoughts and deeds,
All my work and play.

God is always near me,
In the darkest night
He can see me just the same
As by midday light.

God is always near me,
Though so young and small;
Not a look or word or thought
But God knows it all.

1. Of what use are your eyes?
2. Suppose that this earth today were just as it was at first, what good would your eyes do you?
3. Who made the light?
4. When?
5. How?
6. "And the evening and the morning were ___" ?
7. When does every day begin?
8. For what is the light good?-It shows us the beautiful things that God has made; we can seek to work and play; it makes us warm and healthy; it gives color to the grass and flowers and fruits; it makes things grow and ripen. Everybody and everything would become ill and die if there were no light.
9. Did you ever see any grass or plants or people who lived in the dark?
10. How did they look?
11. Then do you think that we ought to keep our blinds shut and our shades down so that the light can't get through our windows? Why not?
12. Of what use is the night?

13. Can you see the night when it is very dark?
14. Who can see just as well in the night as in the day?
Psalm 139:11-12.
15. Can He not watch over us, then, and take care of us in the dark just as well as in the light?
16. To whom do both the day and night belong? God.
Psalm 74:16.
17. Then have we any right to use them in a way that will not please Him?
18. Which do you like better, light or darkness?
19. How may your path all the time be like the shining light?
20. If you continue to live without Jesus, how will it be?
21. How much do you need Jesus? More than you need sunshine.
22. How can you find Him? By following the wonderful Bible lamp.

The heart that will open
To Jesus the Sun
May dwell in the sunlight
Till life's day is done.

13. He Makes His Ways Known

Present Truth, September 14, 1893

Original title: Front Page

Proverbs 1:23

Proverbs 1

²³ Turn at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

THIS is the promise of Wisdom which is but another name for Christ,

Colossians 2

³ ...in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

1 Corinthians 1

²⁴ [He is] the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Therefore the promise in the 1st chapter of *Proverbs* is identical with that recorded in the Gospel according to *John*. Jesus promised His disciples the Comforter, and said,

John 16

¹³ Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of [from] Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come.

¹⁴ He shall glorify me; for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.

The Holy Spirit, then, makes known the things of God. It unfolds to us the meaning of the words of Christ. The psalmist exclaimed,

Psalms 92

⁵ O Lord, how great are your works! and your thoughts are very deep.

The Lord tells us,

Isaiah 55

⁹ As the heavens are high above the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

But however deep and wonderful the ways and thoughts of God are, the Spirit is able to make us understand them;

1 Corinthians 2

¹⁰ For the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God;

and

¹² We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

We are told that:

Psalms 103

⁷ [God] made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel.

This was by means of His Spirit, for we read that He gave them His good Spirit to instruct them.

Nehemiah 9

²⁰ You gave also your good spirit to instruct them, and withheld not your manna from their mouth, and gave them water for their thirst.

This was not because they were so good, for the chapter which tells us this is filled with the record of their misdeeds; but God sends His Spirit to convince men of sin, in order that it may bestow righteousness upon them. As disobedient as the children of Israel were, the Spirit of God was ready to make them intimately acquainted with the words and ways of God, if they would but listen to His reproofs.

It is not in man to give to another an understanding of the words of God. The words of God are an expression of His

thoughts, which are very deep; and only the Holy Spirit knows the deep things of God. The Spirit alone can give an understanding of the truth of God. Men are used by the Spirit, to open the Scriptures and present them to their fellows; but only the Spirit of God itself can give an understanding of them.

There is therefore no such thing on earth as a class of men possessing the sole right and power to deal out the truth to less favored mortals.

For God is no respecter of persons. In far greater measure than sinful men are willing to give good things to their children, is God willing and able to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.

Luke 11

¹¹ If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

¹² Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

¹³ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?

The Holy Spirit is given to everyone who believes.

John 7

³⁹ But this He spoke of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive.

And what must he believe?

Hebrews 11

⁶ He that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

The Spirit is given without stint to everyone who desires it, and who believes that God gives it. Therefore the poorest and humblest may understand the words of God as well as the greatest. No one can have a monopoly of the knowledge of

God. Everybody can believe, and whoever believes shall understand.

No self-constituted priest is needed to stand between the soul and God, for the humblest soul may come boldly to the throne of God, through Christ the great High Priest,

Hebrews 5

² Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.

No man can hinder another from receiving the Spirit, and therefore no one can prevent another from finding and knowing God, if that other really desires to know Him.

Then let the despondent ones, who have thought that they were too poor and ignorant to know God's truth for themselves, take courage. The promise is without exception,

James 1

⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him.

14. Awake, You That Sleep

Present Truth, October 19, 1893

Proverbs 1:7; 20-29

THIS is the call that is sounding today from the throne of Divine mercy, to the children of men. But it falls, for the most part, upon ears that are dull of hearing. We read in the book of *Proverbs* that:

Proverbs 1

²⁰ Wisdom cries without; she utters her voice in the streets;

²¹ She cries in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates; in the city she utters her words.

But how many realize the fact and discern her voice? She says,

²² How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?

²³ Turn you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

⁷ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

The voice of wisdom is the voice that calls men to turn to the Lord. Through the night of sin, to the myriads that lie in darkness and the shadow of death, but down by the stupor of sin, it calls, and its language is,

Ephesians 5

¹⁴ Awake, you that sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.

The world is asleep, and their sleep is as the sleep of death. The voice of wisdom calls, but they know it not; the hand of Mercy is reached down to save them, but they know not the day of their visitation.

While their destiny is trembling in the balance, and the hours are burdened with the awful events which turn the

scale for life or death, they are engaged in oblivious revelry or the pursuit of gain, like Belshazzar feasting with his lords, not knowing that he was the same night to be slain, and his kingdom given to another.

Consider the case of Sodom. There was the wicked city wholly taken up with its vain and licentious pleasures, living its life of...

Ezekiel 16

⁴⁹ ...pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness,

—without a thought of righteousness or judgment to come. While the same day, only a few miles distant, the patriarch Abraham, with face bowed to the earth, was talking with the God of the universe, and saying,

Genesis 18

³² Peradventure ten [righteous] shall be found there?

And receiving the answer,

³² I will not destroy it for ten's sake.

But the ten were not found, and the wicked inhabitants were overtaken in a moment by...

Jude 1

⁷ ...the vengeance of eternal fire.

Or consider that more momentous scene, many years later, in the garden of Gethsemane, where the Son of God, in human form, poured out the agony of His soul in prayer. There the awful burden of sin forced from His lips the words,

Matthew 26

³⁹ O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

And if that prayer had been answered, the world would have been left to its fate. But while this momentous scene, upon the outcome of which its destiny hung, was taking place in Gethsemane, the world was asleep. The inhabitants of the

earth were totally oblivious to the crisis which had come, in which their eternal destinies were involved. Even the three disciples, whom the Saviour had chosen to accompany him to the scene of His suffering, were wrapped in the same oblivious slumber,

Matthew 26

⁴³ ...for their eyes were heavy.

Only the inanimate trees and the watchers that looked down in pity from above, beheld at the scene when the iniquities of the world were laid on the world's Redeemer.

With men, there was no thought of the awful crisis that had been reached in the history of the human family. They slept, and rose and went about their accustomed rounds of duty or pleasure as if that night were like all others, and not darkened by a great tragedy in which every interest of their existence, both for time and eternity, was involved.

And so it ever is with those who sleep when they should awake to spiritual things. They know not the day of their visitation. The crisis comes when their destiny for eternity will be decided, and they perceive it not.

Like the blind inhabitants of Jerusalem spending in self-righteous ease the last day before the Divine judgment was pronounced upon the city, or the licentious Sodomites feasting and reveling through the very hours when the question of their doom was being decided, these sleeping ones pass on and know not their position until their fate comes upon them. Then their eyes are opened, but the awakening comes too late.

So it may be with us who live in the world today; for there is a spiritual crisis which must come to us as well as to those that have lived before us, a time when the decision must be made for us, as it has been for the destiny of others. And how near that hour may be, who can tell? How far off are we from the day of our visitation? We cannot do better than to turn to

the words of Paul in the exhortation given on this point:

Romans 13

¹¹ And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

It is not necessary that the crisis should overtake us asleep. The apostle says,

1 Thessalonians 5

⁴ You, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

⁵ You are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

1 Corinthians 15

³⁴ [Let us] awake to righteousness, and sin not.

Ephesians 5

¹⁴ Wherefore he said, Awake you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.

The righteousness of Christ is offered to us, and will be ours if we awake and grasp it. That is the light which Christ will give to those that awake and “arise from the dead.” But if we heed not the call of wisdom, if we hear not her voice saying,

Proverbs 1

²³ Turn at my reproof,

–the day will surely come when we will hear her saying,

²⁴ Because I have called, and you refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

²⁵ But you have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof;

²⁶ I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear comes;

²⁷ When your fear comes as desolation, and your destruction comes as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish comes upon you.

²⁸ Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me;

²⁹ For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 6

² Behold now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

15. Insects

Present Truth, January 11, 1894
Proverbs 6:6

Proverbs 6

⁶ Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.

BY READING the above verse, we find that God wishes people to study even the little insects. Although some are so small that most people never notice them, they can teach us many useful lessons; they are all wonderful, and many are really very beautiful.

If you notice carefully, you will see that there are two kinds of insects, those having jaws or mouths, like the ants, bees, beetles, and grasshoppers; and those having sucking-tubes, like the butterflies, moths, flies, and mosquitoes.

A full-grown insect always has six jointed legs, and two horns or feelers. They have a row of breathing tubes along their sides, and most of their bones, instead of being on the inside of their bodies, are on the outside, like a soldier's armor, to keep them from getting hurt.

No king ever had a better or more beautiful armor than the Tiger Beetle, or Sparkler. Its suit is light but strong, allows the insect to move in any direction, and yet covers every part of its body; it shines with more than steely brightness, and looks as though it were trimmed with gold, and dotted with sparkling stones. This beetle even folds up its wings when not in use, and lays them carefully away in a stout little case on its back.

How delicate and beautiful are the wings of insects! Look at the common fly. Its wings are so thin and clear that you can see through them, and yet they are so ribbed, like a leaf, that they are quite strong. If you move them in the sunlight you see all the colors of the rainbow dancing over them.

The most beautiful of all insects are the butterflies and moths. And yet these things of beauty were once but creeping caterpillars! Then let us not despise one little creature that God has made; it may not appear beautiful to us, and we may not know that it is good for anything, but we may be sure that it is, or God would not have made it. The more we study about them, the more we wonder and admire.

The eyes of insects are very wonderful. They are often smaller than the hole made by a tiny pin, and yet they are really often composed of thousands of little eyes or facets. Some ants have about fifty, the dragon-fly 12,000, and some beetles and butterflies as many as 25,000, while the common house-fly has two eyes, each made up of 2,000 little eyes. It is thus enabled to see in almost all directions at once.

The tiniest insects have tools as perfect as those belonging to the larger creatures that God has made. The little breathing holes along the sides of the fly have fine sieves to keep out dust. The bottom of its foot has two strong hooks and some small suckers with which the fly can hold on the wall and even walk on the ceiling.

The saw-fly has a saw and glue, and one kind of bee has a boring tool and a cutting instrument with which it can cut leaves to fit its nest as well as you could with the scissors.

The mosquito has a pump, the earwigs, pincers, and the baby glowworm has a brush with which to keep itself clean. The honey bee has a honey bag, and the fire-fly carries a lantern under his wings; the wasp has a paper mill, and the silk worm a spinning machine.

Although so small, insects are very useful. The Burying Beetles bury in the ground every dead bird, mouse, or small reptile that they find, and thus keep them from making the air impure. Lady-birds kill the plant lice that get on our flowers and plants.

The bright reds and pretty pinks in pink water paints, wool, and silk, are made from the dried bodies of the Cochineal Insects. The Lac Insects give out a reddish brown substance that is used in making sealing wax, varnish, and cement. And who has not seen, yes, and eaten, the many little six-sided rooms full of sweet honey, made by the busy bees?

When you put on your shining ribbons and silk clothing, do you ever stop to think of the little worms that worked hours and hours in spinning those silken threads? A silk worm hangs itself by its hind feet and, for seventy-two hours, spins away until it has a fine unbroken thread of silk eleven miles long, wound round its body!

It is no wonder that God thinks that sluggards (lazy persons) might learn something by watching the ants. The farming ants of western Texas clear a piece of land four or five feet wide round their city, take away all plants, stones, and rubbish, sow a certain kind of grass, tend it carefully, keep it free from weeds, and when ripe carry the seeds to their nests. If the seeds are found too damp, they are carried out, laid in the sunshine until dry enough, and housed again.

In South America, the Leaf-cutting Ants build nests about two feet high and often forty feet across; and in one instance it was found that they had dug a well one foot across and thirty feet deep, so that they might have water.

The White Ant often builds its houses sixteen or seventeen feet high, and, although hollowed out into many rooms, it is strong enough to hold up heavy cattle. There are many other things which you must find out for yourself.

What wonderful insects, wonderful birds, and wonderful water-animals! And they were all made on one day! No wonder that the One who is kind-hearted, powerful, and wise enough to do that is named "Wonderful." *Isaiah 9:6*.

Let us show Him how much we thank Him, by treating ev-

ery creature that He has made with gentleness and kindness, and by learning the lessons that He would have us learn from them.

1. Do you like to work?
2. What does God say that lazy people should do?
Proverbs 6:6.
3. Why does He wish them to watch the ant?
4. Can you think of some other little creature that is always very busy?
5. Where does it find the honey that it gathers?
6. In what does it carry it?
7. Where does it store it? In little six-sided rooms that it makes itself.
8. How can it do such fine work in the dark? It uses its feelers.
9. Do you think of anything that you can learn from the bee?
10. What strange thing is done by the Burying Beetles?
11. Name some other things for which insects are useful?
12. Out of what do wasps make their nests? Some use clay, others use paper, while others use hard white shiny cardboard.
13. Where do they get their paper and cardboard? They make it out of fine bits of wood.
14. What can a fly do that you cannot do?
15. How does he manage to walk on the ceiling without falling off?
16. Name some of the strange tools that insects have.
17. What kind of clothing do insects wear?
18. Which are the most beautiful of all insects?
19. Then should we despise the caterpillar and other insects that do not at first appear beautiful or useful? Why not?

20. How do insects breathe?
21. How many kinds are there? Two: those having jaws, and those having sucking tubes.
22. How long would it take a man to make one of these smallest insects?
23. How long was God in making all the insects, all the birds, and all the water animals.
24. What new name have we learned by which He is called? "Wonderful."
25. Do you not think that a good name for Him?
26. How can we show Him that we thank Him for His great goodness in placing around us these wonderful creatures?

16. Enjoying Freedom

Present Truth, March 8, 1894
Proverbs 15:17

IT IS SAID that when the Czar of Russia goes for his outing in Denmark, he may be seen almost every morning, by those who rise early enough, tramping across the meadows, with osier basket on his back, in quest of mushrooms for his breakfast. For a short time he is a free man.

Very generally the poor peasant with frugal fare, a thatch to cover his head, a strong arm, and a free heart, knows more of the real enjoyment of life than those who wear soft raiment and are found in kings' palaces.

Even this natural life is a great leveler, and we have the poor rich and the rich poor breathing the same free air.

Proverbs 15

¹⁷ Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.

17. Temptation and Sin

Present Truth, August 9, 1894

Proverbs 1:10

Proverbs 1

¹⁰ My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.

To be tempted is not a sin, for:

Hebrews 4

¹⁵ [Jesus Christ] was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

The sin comes in only when the temptation is consented to.

18. What God Desires

Present Truth, December 6, 1894
Proverbs 23:26

Proverbs 23

²⁶ My son, give me your heart.

THIS is what God asks. It is useless to substitute anything for this,—gold, or talents, or other thing of value that we may possess; it will not be acceptable to Him.

He has all the gold, all the talents, all the treasure of every kind that He needs, save only our hearts. It is the gift and the treasure of human hearts that is needed in His cause.

19. A Good Name

Present Truth, March 7, 1895
Proverbs 8:17-19; 22:1

The Bible tells us that:

Proverbs 22

¹ A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.

THIS “good name” is too often limited to earthly reputation, that is, to what people think of us. This is a great mistake.

A man may have an excellent name among men, and be abominable in the sight of God; and on the other hand some of those who have been most despised on earth had been the Lord’s chosen ones.

The good name which is so valuable is the...

Isaiah 62

² ...new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.

His is the loving kindness that is better than silver and gold.

Psalms 119

⁷² The law of your mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.

Proverbs 8

¹⁷ I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

¹⁸ Riches and honor are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.

¹⁹ My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver.

He who has a good name with the Lord can very well endure any manner of reproach among men.

20. A Race and a School

Present Truth, May 2, 1895

Original title: Front Page

Proverbs 4:18

Proverbs 4

¹⁸ The path of the just as the shining light, that shines more and more on to the perfect day.

It was in harmony with this fact that the Apostle Paul prayed:

Colossians 1

¹⁰ That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

The Christian life is a race, and the watchword is, Progress. A race in which there is no advance is simply not a race. So if a professed Christian does not...

2 Peter 3

¹⁸ ...grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,

–he is not living the Christian life.

The Christian life is also a school, in which Christ is the Teacher. He says,

Matthew 11

²⁸ Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me.

Christ says of Himself,

Isaiah 50 [RV]

⁴ The Lord has given me the tongue of them that are taught,...He wakens morning by morning, He wakens my ear to hear as they that are taught.

The disciple is not greater than his Lord. Therefore the man

who determines that he will never believe or practice anything more than what he believed and did when he was first converted, deliberately resolves never to live the Christian life. It is the same as though a boy should determine never to learn anything more than he learned the first day he went to school.

The commandments of God are “exceeding broad.”

Psalm 119

⁹⁶ I have seen an end of all perfection: but your commandment is exceeding broad.

The fact that we are familiar with any portion of Scripture, is no evidence that we know all that there is in it. The riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God are unsearchable, so that nobody can ever say that he knows it all.

He may know that what he does see is the truth, but he knows nothing as he ought to know it, if he does not know that there is “much more” to learn. Let us therefore all pray,

Psalm 119

¹⁸ Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

21. Take Heed What You Hear

Present Truth, May 30, 1895

Original title: Front Page

Proverbs 2:6; 19:27

Mark 4

²⁴ Take heed what you hear.

THESE are the words of the Saviour, and they are as important now as when first uttered.

But what shall we hear? This is answered by the directions as to what we are not to hear:

Proverbs 19

²⁷ Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causes to err from the words of knowledge.

Thus we are to hear the words of knowledge. And what words are they? Again we read:

Proverbs 2

⁶ For the Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

The words of the Lord, therefore, are the words of knowledge. In Christ are hid...

Colossians 2

³ ...all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

He speaks the words of knowledge, because He speaks only the words of God.

John 3

³⁴ He whom God has sent speaks the words of God.

Therefore the word of God concerning Christ is,

Luke 9

³⁵ Hear Him.

His words are God's words; and we are to live by every

word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. All other words are worse than useless.

But there is still another exhortation as important as the other. It is this:

Luke 8

¹⁸ Take heed therefore how you hear.

A man may hear the right thing, and yet not be profited, because he does not hear in the right way. How then shall we hear?

In the first place, we should hear with gladness. The angels in heaven hearken to the voice of God's word.

Psalm 103

²⁰ Bless the Lord, you His angels, that excel in strength,...hearkening unto the voice of His word.

They listen attentively, lest any word should escape them.

In the second place, they listen for the purpose of obeying. They...

²⁰ ...do His commandments.

Whoever listens in this way will have no difficulty in understanding what he hears; for:

John 7

¹⁷ If any man wills to do His will, he shall know the doctrine.

Lastly, it is important that we hear so attentively that we do not forget. There are some from whom the word is snatched away as soon as it is heard. Then it does them no good.

1 John 2

⁵ But whoso keeps His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.

That word "keep" means "to hold." We are to hold the word. Where? In our hearts. Let it remain there so that its life will

permeate every portion of the being, and it will make you...

2 Timothy 3

¹⁷ ...perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

22. Do Not Envy the Wicked

Present Truth, December 12, 1895

Original title: Front Page

Proverbs 3:31; 24:1

Proverbs 3

³¹ Envy not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.

It is so natural to envy such men that the exhortation needs to be often repeated. Again we read,

Proverbs 24

¹ Be not you envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them.

Why does anybody envy wicked men? The Psalmist tells why he envied them:

Psalm 73

³ I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

⁷ Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart can wish.

But why should we envy...

¹² ...the ungodly, who prosper in the world, [who] increase in riches?

Again the answer comes, coupled with a repetition of the exhortation:

Psalm 37

¹ Fret not yourself because of evildoers, neither be envious against the workers of iniquity.

² For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

On the other hand, it is...

James 2

⁵ ...the poor of this world, rich in faith, [who are] heirs of the kingdom of God.

Psalm 37

⁹ Evildoers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the Lord shall inherit the earth.

¹⁰ For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, you shall diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

¹¹ But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

1 John 2

¹⁷ The world passes away, and the lust thereof, but he that does the will of God abides for ever.

To choose this world, or to envy those who do choose this world, which is quite the same thing, shows a failure to make a right estimate of the value of things. He who knows that he has...

Hebrews 10

³⁴ ...in heaven a better and an enduring substance,

will not be moved to murmur at his own poverty in this world, nor to envy the prosperous wicked. The man who has gold in the bank does not envy the poor imbecile who plays with a glittering toy, and fancies that it is a diamond.

People often wonder why the wicked should so often be allowed to prosper in this world, while godly people are in distressing poverty. Why should it not be so? They who have...

1 Peter 1

⁴ ...an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven [for them],

can afford to own nothing in this life. But those who have no hope in the world to come and who will have no inheritance there, surely ought to have all they can possibly enjoy in this world. The true Christian can never envy them.

Thus the Christian's hope in the future, brightens up the darkness of the present.

23. A Place for Safety

Present Truth, February 6, 1896
Proverbs 18:10

Proverbs 18

¹⁰ The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runs into it and is safe.

AND what is the name of the Lord? Let the Lord Himself answer:

Exodus 34

⁵ And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord.

⁶ And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

⁷ Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.

This is the strong tower of safety, and so the Psalmist said,

Psalm 13

⁵ I have trusted in your mercy; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation;

and,

Psalm 89

¹ I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever.

24. Not a Creed

Present Truth, September 10, 1896
Proverbs 4:18

JUSTIFICATION by faith, and that means salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ, is not a theory. It can never be put into a creed, a form of words.

Every professor of religion who has certain points of doctrine which he holds, and who is satisfied with them just as he has put them into a formal statement, has as iron-bound a creed as any ever imposed by a council. But the truth of God is ever growing, ever enlarging.

Proverbs 4

¹⁸ The path of the just is as the shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day,

and we cannot put that light into writing, and say,

“This is the sum of the doctrine.”

We may speak what we know, and write what we know, but this simply calls attention to the truth; there is more and more. There are oceans of light and truth, wonderful revelations that the Lord will make to every soul, beyond what he has ever seen, in the treasures of the grace of Christ, if he will but give up to the Lord continually, for Him to live His own marvelous life in Him. Continually should the prayer be made,

Psalms 119

¹⁸ Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Your law.

Every wonderful thing that we see is but the forerunner of a still more wonderful thing to be revealed, if we will but be open to receive it.

But the man not content with God's words, who will not

rest until he has defined doctrine by his own words and put God into a formula, shuts himself away from learning of God.

25. The Wisdom of Solomon

Present Truth, June 23, 1898
Proverbs 26:17

Solomon wrote,

Proverbs 26

¹⁷ He that passes by, and meddles with strife belonging not unto him, is like one that takes a dog by the ears.

BISHOP Thomas W. Dudley, of whom the following story is told, had evidently learned some lessons at the same school that Solomon did. When it was first known in the city in which he was settled that he was to go to Kentucky, some of his friends were disposed to be critical.

“You are not going to Kentucky, are you?” asked one.

“Yes, indeed.”

“Do you know what kind of a State that is? I saw in the paper that one man killed another in a Kentucky town for treading on a dog.”

The bishop said nothing, and the man continued, impatiently,

“What are you going to do in a place like that?”

“I’m not going to tread on the dog!” was the calm reply.

The quarrelsome man is the one who is always in difficulty. A man of peace can live peaceably even among ill-disposed people. No man ever has any use for weapons, except the man who always carries them.

26. Walking in Light

Present Truth, August 10, 1899
Proverbs 4:18

The Word of God is called:

Psalm 119

¹⁰⁵ ...a lamp unto my feet, a light unto my path.

In *Proverbs* we read that:

Proverbs 4

¹⁸ The path of the just is as the shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day.

So in truth there is progression. With this agrees the statement of our Saviour:

John 12

³⁵ Walk while you have the light...

Why?

³⁵ ...lest darkness come upon you.

Then in *Matthew 6* Jesus says,

Matthew 6

²³ If therefore the light that is in you be darkness how great is that darkness.

But people will walk in darkness. They will not come to the light—they will not even recognize the light. Why is this? The scripture is definite:

John 3

¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Now,

Isaiah 60

² ...darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people.

But this state of things will not always continue. There will come a time when the hidden things of darkness will be brought to light, and the counsels of hearts will be made manifest.

1 Corinthians 4

⁵ Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

Then it is that those who have thought to avoid the “overflowing scourge” by placing their trust in lies and falsehood, will find that:

Isaiah 28

¹⁷ ...the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.

Then it is that:

Romans 2

⁶ [God] will render to every man according to his deeds.

How much better it would be to come to the light of truth now—cherish every ray of light, let it reveal our defects, and by the help of Jesus Christ put them away, so that we may stand with God’s people who will be:

Ephesians 5

²⁷ ...without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

But this means a sacrifice of self; it means to let Jesus come into our lives and work in them to...

Philippians 2

¹³ ...will and to do of His own good pleasure.

27. A Strong Tower

Present Truth, November 30, 1899

Original title: Back Page

Proverbs 18:10

Proverbs 18

¹⁰ The name of the Lord is a strong tower.

THEREFORE they that know the Lord will put their trust in Him.

Psalm 9

⁹ The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

¹⁰ And they that know your name will put their trust in You: for You, Lord, have not forsaken them that seek You.

You do not need to take this truth at second hand. Trust Him at all times, and you will know from experience that He is “a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.”

28. Living Out God's Ways

Present Truth, December 14, 1899

Original title: Front Page

Proverbs 3:6

Proverbs 3

⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

THE exactly literal rendering, as given in the margin of the revision, is naturally much better, as it gives the thought more fully:

“He shall make your paths straight,” or “plain.”

Know Him, recognize Him, in everything, and He will make your way plain and right. This throws the responsibility on the Lord. Not that we should shirk anything, but we should not assume that which is entirely beyond our capacity.

Jeremiah 10

²³ The way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walks to direct his steps.

This being the case, he should not try to plan his own way, or to direct his own steps. God is the only one who can do it, therefore it should be left entirely to Him. In recognizing Him at every step, and acknowledging Him, we place ourselves unreservedly in His hands.

In one of David's inspired prayers we have the very same expression as in our text:

Psalms 5

⁸ Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness because of my enemies, make your way plain before my face.

We see that the Lord makes our way plain by making His own way plain before our face; for His way is the way in which we are to walk. He is the way.

The Lord's way is righteousness.

Psalm 18

³⁰ As for God, His way is perfect.

Therefore it is that the psalmist prayed,

Psalm 5

⁸ Lead me, O Lord, in Your righteousness.

The assurance concerning the one who hears the voice of the Lord, and heeds it, is that:

Psalm 84

¹³ Righteousness shall go before him, and shall make his footsteps a way to walk in.

Such ones are blessed, because they are...

Psalm 119

¹ ...undefiled in the way, walking in law of the Lord.

³ They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways.

God's way is always right. It is not so because He takes pains to make it so, but because He Himself is right. He is, and that is all that there is to be said. He cannot be other than He is, else He would deny Himself, and that He cannot do. In other words, He cannot cease to be.

Men are prone to judge God by a human standard, and to say that in the work of salvation He could have done differently if He had chosen to, but that in His wisdom He chose to do as He has done. That is a mistaken idea.

There is but one right way, and that is the way that God does. Men are obliged often to stop and weigh matters, and to decide between two or more ways that seem to open before them; both ways cannot be right, for if they were there would be no choice between them, but both must needs be followed; for we are in duty bound to do everything that is right.

It may be that both of the ways that we are considering are

wrong, and we are obliged to pause, because of our ignorance, and because we have in us tendencies to evil, which have to be contended with. There is always before us a choice between two ways: the evil and the good; and because we often choose the wrong way, instead of allowing God to choose for us, we have to say later on,

“If I had to that to do over again, I should do differently.”

Not so with God. He never looks back upon His way with regret. He is never obliged to say,

“If I had that to do over again, I should not do the way I did.”

He does not try experiments. He is right and therefore all He has to do is to act out Himself. By His own word, His own life, He created the heavens and the earth, and when He saw everything that He made,

Genesis 1

³¹ ...behold, it was very good.

He was perfectly satisfied, and there was nothing that He wished to change. It is for this reason that when sin entered into the world God was not thrown into confusion. His word had gone forth, and it could not be altered; all He had to do was to go on in the same way that He had begun, and to prove how firmly His word was established.

The word that created continues its working, and re-creates. Throughout the eternal ages God pursues one steadfast course, without deviating to the right or to the left, and without needing to stop to think how it is best for Him to act. He lives His own life, and that is perfect. His way could not be changed, simply because His life cannot be other than it is.

God is revealed in Christ, for no one knows the Father save the Son, and He to whom the Son will reveal Him.

Matthew 11

²⁷ All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knows the Son, but the Father; neither knows any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.

Ephesians 4

⁶ [There is] one God and Father of all, and who is over all, and through all, and in all.

Christ is the word that in the beginning was with God, and was God, and:

Romans 10

⁸ The Word is nigh you, even in your mouth, and in your heart.

Therefore,

⁹ If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.

Simply let the Word have free course; do not hold down the truth, but acknowledge it; and the Word that was made flesh will be manifest in your flesh even as it was in Jesus of Nazareth. This is what it is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 1

¹² As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.

Merely to believe that there was such a person as Jesus of Nazareth, and that He was indeed the Son of God, hundreds of years ago, is not to believe on Him.

To believe on Him is to receive Him and to acknowledge Him in the life; to allow Him through the eternal Spirit to live in you the same life that He lived of old. This is to acknowledge the Lord, and this will ensure your walking in the right way—the way of the Lord’s righteousness.

When we acknowledge Him in all our ways, we shall not need as heretofore, to hesitate between two ways, since for us there will be only one way—His way. We shall know that way, because He has promised that they who continue in His words shall know the truth. We shall never be guilty of saying that our way is right, for we shall know that all our own ways are wrong; in that...

Isaiah 53

⁶ ...we have turned everyone to his own way.

We have gone astray; but we shall not hesitate to declare that God's way is perfect, and that it is God that makes our way perfect, because He makes His way our way, setting us in the way of His steps.

It will most certainly not be the way that we should have chosen, for our ways and thoughts are not His ways and thoughts; but we shall be content, since:

Job 23

¹⁰ He knows the way that I take; when He has tried me I shall come forth as gold.

29. As He Thinks in His Own Heart

Present Truth, May 31, 1900
Proverbs 23:6-8

We have lately heard the sentence,

Proverbs 23

⁷ As he thinks in his heart, so is he,

quoted as teaching that anybody is just what he thinks himself to be; that is:

- if he thinks that he is ill, he is ill;
- if he thinks himself to be well, he is well; and
- if he thinks himself to be good, then he is good.

This last statement should show everybody how absurd the interpretation is. It would do away with all reality, and make both this world and the world to come, with all that they contain, only imaginary things. It would shut the power of God out of man's experience, in that he would have no need for it.

An examination of the context shows the meaning.

Proverbs 23

⁶ Eat not the bread of him that has an evil eye, neither desire his dainty meats:

⁷ For as he thinks in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, he says to you; but his heart is not with you.

⁸ The morsel which you have eaten shall you vomit up, and lose your sweet words.

It is a warning against being deceived by the words of an evil man. He makes generous offers,

⁷ ...but his heart is not with you,

and

⁷ As he thinks in his heart, so is he.

That is, he is dishonest; he is not what he seems outwardly

to be, but what he thinks in his heart. It is not the wicked thoughts that make a man evil, but the evil man thinks the evil thoughts. An evil man brings forth evil thoughts and acts, and a good man thinks good thoughts, and does good deeds.

Matthew 12

³⁵ A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

No man can by taking thought make one hair white or black, or affect his real condition in any way whatever.

Matthew 6

²⁷ Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

The mind of man cannot create; it can only grasp that which God has created. This is faith; and it is by faith, not by human inspiration, that a man is saved in body and soul.

30. True Nobility

Present Truth, August 8. 1901

Original title: Back Page

Proverbs 11:2; 12:16

IT IS a common notion among men, that to be quick to resent any insult or abuse, whether fancied or real, is a sign of noble manhood. So one is thought to be lacking in manhood, if he does not stand on his dignity and “defend his honor.” But that is a false view of the case. Here is the truth:

Proverbs 12

¹⁶ A fool’s wrath is presently known; but a prudent man covers shame.

How can it be thought to be a sign of manliness, to emulate a dog, a wolf, or a tiger? The truly wise and noble man is the man, no matter what his state, who can bear real injuries silently, without giving any sign that he has been slighted.

No person can exhibit folly more surely than by quickness to take offense.

Proverbs 11

² With the lowly is wisdom.

31. How to Think Right Thoughts

Present Truth, September 12, 1901
Proverbs 16:3

One of the most common questions asked by old as well as by youthful enquirers is this:

“How can I control my thoughts?”

To this we are obliged to answer, You cannot do it at all; there is only one remedy for your wicked, wayward thoughts; and that is found in:

Isaiah 55

⁷ Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord.

⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Better than trying to control our own thoughts, is to get an entirely new lot, and then leave the Lord to do our thinking in us. This is possible; for we have the assurance:

Proverbs 16

³ Commit your works unto the Lord, and your thoughts shall be established.

32. A Soft, Strong Voice

Present Truth, February 13, 1902
Proverbs 15:1

Proverbs 15

¹ A soft answer turns for away wrath.

THIS is true in the most literal sense. It is impossible to quarrel with one who replies in a soft voice,—not a weak, and whining voice, but a firm, yet soft and low voice,—a voice which in its very tone shows that its softness is the softness of strength; that the speaker uses a low tone because he has the power to restrain himself.

A high, strident tone, the tone in which people quarrel, is on the contrary a sign of weakness.

We should study to cultivate low tones in speaking, especially for use with those who are excitable; and the best way to cultivate them is to let the peace of God rule in the heart; for the peace of God is strength.

Colossians 3

¹² Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

¹³ Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.

¹⁴ And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts,

33. Music of a Higher Sphere

Present Truth, April 3, 1902
Proverbs 23:9

PROFESSOR Huxley and a friend once traveled among the alps. The friend heard only the tramp of the mules' hoofs on the hard mountain road, Huxley only the hum of insects which filled the summer air with its mellow melody.

There are ears that catch only the dull sounds of the lower ranges of life; others that lose these coarser sounds in the music of a higher sphere.

Proverbs 23

⁹ Speak not in the ears of a fool, [says the wise man,] for he will despise the wisdom of your words.

34. One Flesh of Man

Present Truth, May 15, 1902
Proverbs 22:2

Proverbs 22

² The rich and poor meet together; the Lord is the Maker of them all.

THIS proverb is well illustrated in the following story in Mr. P. A. Russell's "Characteristics":

Many years ago, before the days of railways, a nobleman and his wife, with their infant, were traveling across Salisbury Plain. They were overtaken by a severe storm, and took refuge in a lone shepherd's hut.

The child had taken cold before they could find shelter, and the nurse began at once to undress it by the warm cottage fire. As she pulled off one rich silken garment after another, the shepherd and his wife looked on in odd silence.

At last the process of undressing was completed, and little naked baby was being warmed by the fire. With all its splendid outer husks peeled off, its little body was beginning to glow in the heat of the fire. The shepherd drew a long breath and exclaimed, "Why, it's just like one of ours!"

It is not at all surprising that the simple shepherd judging from the gorgeous rappings, in contrast with the severely plain garments to which he was accustomed, thought that the nobleman's child was of a different order of beings from his own; and we are amused at his astonishment on finding that "there is one flesh of man."

His error is a very common one. Many people look upon clothing as though it were a part of the body, whereas it is but a mark of the curse. The more the human body is "adorned" with clothing and jewels, the more is the fact emphasized that the natural adornment has been lost.

Christ said,

Matthew 6

²⁸ Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow;...

²⁹ I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

The reason is that what we ordinarily call our clothing is not our clothing at all, but is clothing that we have taken from other creatures. The real clothing grows on the person or thing, as Christ intimated concerning the lily. Solomon, stripped of his royal trappings was certainly not so well clothed as a leaf; and even the most gorgeous apparel cannot stand comparison with the beauty that clothes the flowers.

1 Samuel 16

⁷ Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.

We are not to envy the rich, nor despise the poor, because of their coverings; neither are the poor to say of the rich,

“They are after all no better than we,”

for that may not be true. Their outer covering does not make them better, but the beauty of humility and holiness may exist under fine garments, as well as under the plainest; but all are to pray,

Psalms 90

¹⁷ Let beauty of the Lord our God be upon us,

—knowing that if our adornment be...

1 Peter 3

⁴ ...the hidden man of the heart,

—Christ dwelling within, then He will at His appearing,

Philippians 3 [RV]

²¹ ...fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory.

35. Good and Defective Eyesight

Present Truth, December 4, 1902
Proverbs 15:3

The Lord has good eyes; nothing escapes them;

Proverbs 15

³ The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and good.

But what is He looking for? Here is the answer:

2 Chronicles 16

⁹ The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect [whole] toward Him.

And here is the text which shows what is the true test of eyesight:

Habakkuk 1

¹³ You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity.

So even though His eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good, He sees only good; for even of rebellious Israel it was said through the Spirit:

Numbers 23

²¹ He has not beheld iniquity in Jacob, nor seen perverseness in Israel.

That is a sign of good eyes. By that test we learn, therefore, that to be always seeing defects is a sign of defective vision. The one with bad eyes sees only evil; God, with purer eyes, sees only good. God is love; and:

1 Corinthians 13 [RV]

⁵ Love takes not account of evil.

This is demonstrated in the case of a little child. In childhood, if ever, the sight is perfect, and everybody knows that

an innocent child beholds evil, and yet sees no evil. It sees no evil, because it knows no evil. Purity of sight, therefore, depends upon purity of heart.

Matthew 5

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

And God is the sum of all goodness and beauty.

So the anointing of our eyes with the eyesalve which the Lord sells without money and without price, in order that we may see (*Revelation* 3:17-18), is the receiving of the Holy Spirit, to write God's law in our hearts and minds, thus shedding abroad in our hearts that love that thinks no evil.

Then instead of finding fault, we shall find goodness everywhere, because we shall carry it everywhere.

36. Guidance, Protection, Instruction

Medical Missionary, February 1904

Wednesday, February 17

Proverbs 6:20-22

Proverbs 6

²⁰ My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not the law of your mother:

²¹ Bind them continually upon your heart, and tie them about your neck,

²² When you go, it shall lead you; when you sleep, it shall keep you; and when you awake, it shall talk with you.

WHAT a blessed assurance of guidance, protection, and instruction.

- *Psalm* 1:1-3 tells to what a certain end the guidance is;
- *Psalm* 121:3-8 tells how sure is the protection; and
- *Isaiah* 51:4 tells of the awakening in the morning to hear.

There is no better time to talk with the Lord than early in the morning. It is then that He speaks to us, if we have ears to hear; and it is then that He ought to hear our voices in response.

Psalm 5

³ O Jehovah, in the morning shall You hear my voice; in the morning will I order my prayer unto You, and will keep watch.

37. A True Thinker

Medical Missionary, May 1904

Sunday, May 22

Proverbs 3:5

Proverbs 3

⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not unto your own understanding.

There is wisdom in this; for...

1 Corinthians 1

²⁵ ...the foolishness of God is stronger than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

He that trusts in his own heart is a fool. God's thoughts and ways are as much higher and greater than our ways as the heavens are higher and greater than the earth: and so much better will the way of the man who trusts in the Lord than the way of the man who counts himself wise.

It is impossible to imagine the advantage which the man has who allows God to think for him. Only such a man is in the truest sense a thinker.

38. Real Individuality

Medical Missionary, May 1904

Monday, May 23

Proverbs 3:6

Proverbs 3

⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths [or, shall make your way right].

MAN has been called “a thinking animal,” but man has no more power of himself to originate real thought than a tree has.

1 Corinthians 3 [Psalm 94:11]

²⁰ The Lord knows the thoughts of the [professedly] wise, that they are vain.

Man is but dust, designed an instrument for God to use. This does not destroy individuality, but is real individuality. God’s presence in men constitutes their individuality; and because God is infinite, no two men are the same.

To the degree that a man allows God to use his brains, as well as the rest of his being, does he approach to “the perfect man.”

Psalms 37

³⁰ The mouth of the righteous talks of wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice.

³¹ The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.

³⁷ Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for there is a happy end to the man of peace.

He who thinks that he is independent, and will not acknowledge God, finally loses his manhood.

³⁵ I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green tree in its native soil.

³⁶ But one passed by, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.

³⁸ As for transgressors, they shall be destroyed together; the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

39. The Sword and the Law

Present Truth, June 4, 1896

Original title: The Sword and the Law—or The Gospel and the Bible

Proverbs 16:25

MANY men have done those things which seem right in their own eyes, but they were not right in the eyes of God. When Solomon said,

Proverbs 16

²⁵ There is a way that seems right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death,

he was stating something which would always be true, until death should be done away with for ever at the second death of the wicked and the destruction of Satan, by whom death came into the world.

In every age there have been those who were zealous to persecute. By this they have thought that they were serving God. Paul, before he became an apostle, was one of these. It seemed right to him to persecute.

But was it right? Did he do right when he helped stone Stephen? Did he do right when he went into the houses and took out Christian men and women, and committed them to prison? With what bitter repentance he afterwards acknowledges his error.

Yet, although Stephen died, and many were put in prison, still even this did not suppress the Gospel, but it spread it the more, for many, being scattered abroad, went everywhere preaching the Word.

- In the condemnation and crucifixion of Christ a certain semblance to the fixed forms of law was followed, though so palpably insufficient as to be a mockery.
- In the stoning of Stephen legal regulations were observed.

- In the Roman persecutions of the Christians which followed, the forms of law were invoked.
- All the unnumbered millions whose lives have been taken by the Inquisition and in the persecutions of the Roman Catholic Church, have met their death for conscience sake, but according to the law.
- There have been Protestant persecutions, and in them also the law served the same purpose.

Is it not time that history taught intelligent men a few lessons? It is time for those who would be Christians to know that neither the sword nor the law are Gospel missionaries, acceptable to God.

And still more,—those who use them must yet repent, and suffer under the forces which they themselves have started, as did Paul, or take their place before the judgment seat at last, with Pilate and the priests, the Pharisees, and the soldiers who crucified Christ, the young men who stoned Stephen, and the informers, the inquisitors, and the executioners who have put to death their millions since, because they would not deny Him who Himself died upon the cross.

It is indeed time that men read and understood their histories and their Bibles.

40. The Seeing Eye

Present Truth, September 17, 1896
Proverbs 20:12

Proverbs 20

¹² The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord has made even both of them.

HAVE you ever thought what a very wonderful piece of machinery the eye is? Each part acts in perfect obedience to the messages which come to it by the nerves from the brain, so that when we wish to open or close our eyes, it is done instantly and almost unconsciously.

Now in *Matthew 6:22*, we find the eye called “the light of the body,” and I do not think there could be a better name. In front of the eyeball there is a round, transparent window, always kept beautifully clean, through which the rays of light pass into the eye, and after being collected by a lens, they strike on a delicate membrane at the back of the eye, known as the retina. Here, an image of the object at which we look is formed, and here the sensation of sight is felt.

We do not value this precious gift of sight so much as we ought. Too often we strain our eyes by small print and reading in dim lights. Let us take more care in future of our sight.

But what about the eye of our souls? That eye is faith. How many are blind with this eye! They have never asked God to open “the eyes of their understanding.”

Jeremiah 5

²¹ Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; that have eyes, and see not; that have ears, and hear not.

Psalms 119

¹⁸ Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

Daniel 4

³⁴ And at the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, *lifted up my eyes unto heaven, and my understanding returned unto me*, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored Him that lives for ever; for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom from generation to generation.

41. The Law is Light

Present Truth, August 4, 1898
Proverbs 6:20-23

Proverbs 6

²⁰ My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not the law of your mother;

²¹ Bind them continually upon your heart, and tie them about your neck.

²² When you go, it shall lead you; when you sleep, it shall keep you; and when you awake, it shall talk with you.

²³ For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.

THE law of God is nothing other than His life. It is in no sense to be compared with human laws, for it has nothing in common with them.

Men get together, and after a certain amount of deliberation they decide on certain rules which they will impose on other men. The requirements may in the main be just, but they cannot possibly do equal justice to all, since they cannot take into consideration all the various circumstances and conditions.

And even where they are applicable, they give the person to whom they speak no power. They do nothing; they are lifeless; the man to whom they are addressed must supply the action.

Moreover human statutes have no special connection with the men who issue them. The laws and the law-makers are no part of each other, and very often the laws are ignored by the very men who make them.

So for a double reason the laws cannot put any life or goodness into the subjects of them:

1. The men who make them are not themselves perfectly in harmony with them;
2. They cannot, no matter how good they are, put any of

their personality or vitality into the laws which they frame.

Not so with God's law. He Himself is all that He requires. He is not only good, but He is Goodness. His own life is the law. Each plant has what is termed its "law of growth." There are certain general characteristics common to all plant life, and then each plant has certain individual peculiarities.

But these "laws" are not certain enactments to which the plant conforms. The plant grows by the Word of God which says now as in the beginning,

Genesis 1

¹¹ Let the earth bring forth grass...

And that Word of life abiding in each makes it perfect "after its kind." God's "everlasting power and Divinity," that is, His own life and personality, are revealed in all the things that He has made.

Romans 1

²⁰ For the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity.

The plant is involuntarily submissive to the life force of God, and so it conforms to law.

In like manner God's law for mankind is His own character—His life. He wishes men to be good, but He Himself is all goodness. There is no goodness but God's goodness, consequently men conform to His righteous requirements only by voluntarily yielding to His life as implicitly as the plants of the field do involuntarily.

He does not require us to be something of ourselves; but He is what He wants us to be, and we become that by accepting His life. Now,

1 John 1

⁵ God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

This is the Gospel message. His life is the law, and His life is light.

John 1

⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

So the law is light. This is most literally true. God conveys His life to the earth through agents. He has set His glory in the heavens, and made the sun, together with the stars, the bearer of light to the earth.

Mind this, the sun does not originate the light, but is simply the bearer of God's light—God's life to the earth. Thus the sun is, under God, the supporter of all life upon our planet. Whatever we have, whether it be food or clothing, grows from the earth; but there could be no life nor growth without the light coming from God through the sun. Thus we see that light is most emphatically our life.

But this life that comes to us in the light is God's own life of righteousness. Its shining brings the plant of the field to perfection; and if men were only voluntarily submissive to the life of God as the plants are involuntarily, it would bring them to equal perfection after their kind.

With this knowledge concerning the light, the life, and the law, we can see the force of the 19th *Psalm*:

Psalm 19

¹ The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork.

² Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night shows knowledge.

³ There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard [or "without these their voice is heard."]

⁴ Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

⁵ In them has He set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a

bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices as a strong man to run a race.

⁶ His going forth is from the end of the heavens, and His circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

⁸ The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

⁹ The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

There is no change of subject in verse 7. The law of the Lord is conveyed to us in the light and heat of the sun, which gives life to the earth. If we but recognize God's life in the light, we shall receive it with constant gratitude, and yield to Him, that He may direct His own life in His own way. Thus shall we glorify God in our lives.

We are precluded from making the objection that we cannot see how God can convey righteousness to us in the light of the sun. We cannot tell how He conveys strength and beauty in perfection to the plant by means of the light, but we know the fact; and that fact is ever before us to teach us the possibility of His imparting to us, by the same means, the righteousness for which He designed us.

42. A Shining Light

Present Truth, May 4, 1899
Proverbs 6:28

Psalm 119

¹⁰⁵ Your Word is, a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Proverbs 6

²⁸ For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light.

THIS is true of God's Word as a whole, but it is equally true of every portion of it. One does not need to eat all the corn there is in the world; in order to have life; there is life in every grain. So there is life in every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, for each word is living and active; it is life.

But the life is the light.

John 1

¹ The Word was with God, and the Word was God.

⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

In every sentence of the Bible there is something to enlighten us. From the seemingly most obscure and meaningless statements, there will flash forth the most glorious light, if we but consider them attentively.

More than this, these very obscure passages, some of them seeming to be utterly irrelevant, will give light that will make a host of other things shine with increased brilliancy.

Do you not know that a single ray of light flashed into a dark room will reveal everything that is in it? Let the sun but for a single moment flash out through a rift in a thick cloud, and the whole landscape will be transfigured, and objects that were before unnoticed will stand out in bold relief.

So from a single text of Scripture, to which careful, earnest

attention is given, will often come light that will flash through the entire Bible, making everything appear new. Everybody who has given any real study to the Bible must have had some experience of this kind.

Therefore let no one lightly esteem any portion of the Bible; and let no one think it a waste of time to spend hours, and days, and months, and even years, in meditating upon and studying a small section of it. If one will do this, not neglecting of course to read the rest of the Bible, he will acquire such a knowledge of the whole as will not possibly be gained in any other way.

43. Why Men Are Sick

Present Truth, May 18, 1899
Proverbs 3:1-2, 24-25; 4:13, 18

GOD never designed that man should suffer with disease of any kind. All suffering is due to transgression.

Proverbs 3

¹ My son, forget not my law; but let your heart keep my commandments:

² For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to you.

²⁴ When you lie down, you shall not be afraid; yea, you shall lie down, and your sleep shall be sweet.

²⁵ Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it comes.

In this we see that life and freedom from disease depend upon obedience, and one who renders perfect obedience, can never die. It must be remembered that perfect obedience necessitates perfect knowledge; but with Paul we may say that while we have not attained unto it, we “follow after” it.

Philippians 3

¹² Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

Proverbs 4

¹⁸ The path of the just...shines more and more unto the perfect day.

The perfect day will come when we have a perfect knowledge, and are thus able to render perfect obedience. Then it will be that:

Psalms 91

⁵ You shall not be afraid...

⁶ ...for the pestilence that walks in darkness; nor for the destruction that wastes at noonday.

⁷ A thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your

right hand, but it shall not come nigh you.

The admonition to us in this is that we should earnestly seek after that perfect knowledge so that it can be truly said of us,

Revelation 14

¹² Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

Proverbs 4

¹³ Take fast hold of instruction, let her not go: keep her; for she is your life.

John 17

³ This is life eternal, that they might know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ.

44. Judging With Scant Evidence

Present Truth, December 13, 1900

Original title: Back Page

Proverbs 17:15

Proverbs 17

¹⁵ He that justifies the wicked, and he that condemns the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord.

THERE are many who would not think of justifying a man who tells a lie, who do not feel that it is a very serious matter to condemn a man on slight evidence, and who, for aught they know, may be just.

To say that a good man is bad is just as wicked as to say that a bad man is good.

45. A Lesson in Temperance

Present Truth, September 12, 1901

International Sunday-school Lesson for September 22

Proverbs 23:29-35

Proverbs 23

²⁹ Who has woe? who has sorrow? who has contentions? who has babbling? who has wounds without cause? who has redness of eyes?

³⁰ They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.

³¹ Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it gives his color in the cup, when it moves itself aright.

³² At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder.

³³ Your eyes shall behold strange women, and your heart shall utter perverse things.

³⁴ Yea, you shall be as he that lies down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lies upon the top of a mast.

³⁵ They have stricken me, you shall say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

HERE we have a brief but complete description of the drinking habits and its results. It brings woe, or wailing and lamentation. It brings sorrow, or want, poverty, wretchedness; for all these ideas are conveyed by the Hebrew words rendered “woe,” and “sorrow.”

The drunkard also has “contentions.” The Hebrew word from which this is translated as the root idea of judging, and primarily means “to attack one judicially,” “to contend before a judge,” not excluding, of course, ordinary strife between man. So a litigious disposition is one of the products of wine-bibbing. Wine inflames the passions, makes one self-important, it gives one an exaggerated sense of his own dignity, and an inclination to resent any affront, together with a quickness to detect affront when none was meant.

The drinking habit also produces “babbling” or complaining,

as it is in the *Revised Version*. Who has not seen a strong man manifest all the carelessness and pettishness of a spoiled child, making a most shamefully ridiculous exhibition of himself, simply because he had put an enemy into his mouth, to take away his brains?

The wine-drinker has also “redness of eyes,” or, as in the margin of the *Revised Version*, darkness of eyes. The Hebrew lexicon gives as the rendering of the Hebrew word in this place, “darkened flashing” of eyes, “referring to the wild fierceness arising from intoxication.” The drinking of intoxicating liquor makes men silly, quarrelsome, and stupid, according to the degree of intoxication.

The loss of sense is most vividly depicted in the last verses. What could be more foolhardy than to lie down for rest in the midst of the sea, or on the top of a mast? And, most of all, the one who has been stricken and beaten by this enemy, which appeared to be a friend, will say,

“When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.”

He is bound in chains, so that he follows after that which brings him all his wretchedness and misery.

But it must be noticed that it is only a certain kind of wine that affects these results. It is the “mixed wine” that sparkles and carries a “bead;” that is, it is fermented wine. Natural, unfermented wine, the kind that the Lord makes for man, is good and wholesome, refreshing and health-giving. It is not simply harmless, but it is actively beneficial, being the pure fruit of the vine. It does not deceive.

Now that we have looked at the picture of the drunkard,—a picture with which we are unfortunately too familiar without the Bible presentation of it,—we come to the heart of the matter, and ask,

“What is the sin of wine and spirit-drinking? Why is it

wrong to drink alcoholic liquor of any kind, no matter what its name?”

The answer must be that the evil is in the effect produced. The act of drinking is not sinful, for it is the same when wine is strong or as when the beverage is water. If wine never produced any more ill effects than water does, it would be no more sinful to drink it than to drink water.

So of any other article of food or drink. There is no arbitrary command, the list of things that must not be touched; but there is the command:

1 Timothy 5

²² Keep yourself pure.

1 Peter 2

¹¹ Abstain from fleshly loss, that war against the soul.

1 Corinthians 10

³¹ Whether therefore you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.

We are to be...

Titus 3

¹ ...ready to every good work.

We belong to God, and are to yield our members to Him as instruments of righteousness; whatever habit or practice tends to lower our vitality, or in any degree, even though temporarily, to unfit us for the best service it is possible for us to render, is a sin against God.

The thing that is most lauded in the Bible is wisdom,—true wisdom that comes from above,—wisdom that shows itself in all one’s acts. It is the Spirit of God that gives wisdom, and so we have the exhortation:

Ephesians 5

¹⁷ Wherefore be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

¹⁸ And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess [riot]; but be filled with the Spirit.

The spirit of wine—alcohol—is in direct opposition to the Spirit of God; and it is absolutely useless to pray for wisdom, or to be filled with the Spirit, while at the same time one is putting into the body that which drives out wisdom.

A little thought will show anyone that this principle is a far-reaching, having to do with many things besides wine. Whatever article of food, or combination of food or drink, or quantity of it, tends to produce dullness, stupidity, irritability, heaviness, or in any way to diminish one's physical or mental powers should be shunned as rigidly as alcoholic liquors. It is certainly as bad to brutalize one's self by indulgence in eating as by indulgence in drink.

Moreover since the stream of life flows fresh and full and free for all, it follows that whenever we are not fresh and active, we are not taking up that pure stream, but are in some way perverting it, or adulterating it. Then our duty is to find out as soon as possible what it is that is hindering its free flow, and remove it.

There is no ground here for anybody to say,

“Well, if the sin consists in the evil effects, then it is not wrong for *me* to drink wine, since it doesn't harm me,”

—or to use the same argument about any habit of eating or drinking, by which men curtail and destroy their usefulness. For the truth is, that what ever is injurious to anybody is injurious to everybody. Some people are stronger than others, and can longer endure abuse without succumbing, just as some people can carry a heavier load than others.

But it would be absurd for the man who can easily lift twenty stone to say that there is no muscular power required, and no cell structure broken down, and lifting ten stone, beyond which another man cannot go without serious injury.

This of course is not a perfect parallel, because exercising muscles within bounds is beneficial, while alcohol is always poison; but the parallel is here, that although one may be able apparently to resist its attacks for a long time, the fact that it is poison, and that thousands die from it, is evidence that it is surely yet insidiously undermining his constitution.

Romans 12

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

You cannot win people from the world to Christ by lowering the standard of Christian living. The standard must be exalted; the Saviour must be “lifted up.” *John 12:32.*

46. Wisdom the Principal Thing

Present Truth, December 12, 1901
Proverbs 2:6; 4:7

Proverbs 4

⁷ Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all your getting get understanding.

THUS wrote Solomon, who was well qualified to speak in the matter; for he was wiser than all other men, and his possessions were such as to make the wealthiest wonder. God said to him:

1 Kings 3

¹³ I have given you a wise and understanding heart; so that there was none like you before you, neither shall any arise like unto you.

¹⁴ And I have also given you that which you have not asked, both riches and honor; so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto you all the days.

And it was all given according to the promise. Solomon had riches and honor, but he had that which was of more value than all things else, namely, wisdom.

This truth is made even more emphatic by the Apostle James; for he gives us to understand that whoever has wisdom has everything. All are familiar with the promise,

James 1

⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him.

But most people read it as an independent statement, not recognizing that it has any close connection with what precedes it. Let us now read the fourth and fifth verses together, using the *Revised Version*, and the connection will be apparent:

⁴ Let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing.

⁵ But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God...

Is it not plain that to be “lacking in nothing” is to be in possession of wisdom? If any one lacks anything whatever, he lacks in wisdom; to possess wisdom is to be in possession of all things.

Wisdom is life; for:

John 17

³ This is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.

Wisdom is power; for:

Jeremiah 51

¹⁵ [God] has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom and has stretched out the heavens by His understanding.

Wisdom is righteousness; for:

Job 18

²⁸ The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

Now to...

Ecclesiastes 13

¹³ ...fear God, and keep His commandments...is the whole duty of man

Therefore to be in possession of true wisdom is to have a perfect character; in short, to be “lacking in nothing.” But all this is simply to be a keeper of the commandments of God; for, in harmony with what we have already read,

Psalms 111

¹⁰ The fear of the Lord is the beginning [head, chief portion] of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do His commandments.

Proverbs 2

⁶ The Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

Is it true, then, that God gives righteousness? Most certainly; it can be had in no other way; for:

Romans 3

¹² There is none that does good, no, not one;

²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

²¹ But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifest, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

²² Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference;

²³ For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

²⁴ Being justified [made righteous] freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

And this means that God gives obedience to His law:

Romans 5

¹⁹ For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.

That One is the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose heart is God's law.

Psalms 40

⁸ I delight to do your will, O my God: yea, your law is within my heart.

The law is His life (*Romans 5:10*), and we are saved by His life,—the perfect law of liberty,—

Romans 8

¹ For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from law of sin and death,

⁴ That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Now note the kindness of the promise to give wisdom—righteousness, all fullness. If any of you lack wisdom,—if any of you through sin still come short of the glory of God, have failed with respect to any commandment,—let him ask of God, that gives to all liberally, and upbraids not, and it shall be given him.

Note the statement that He “upbraids not.” The Greek word in this place means “to throw a reproach upon one,—to cast in one’s teeth,” and is the same that occurs in *Matthew 27:44*, where we read of Christ, that:

Matthew 27

⁴⁴ The thieves also, which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth.

That is something that God never does. He never reproaches us; never casts our failures in our teeth.

James 5

¹¹ The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

Psalms 145

¹⁴ The Lord upholds all that fall, and raises up all that be bowed down.

When we come making our requests known to Him, He does not say,

“What did you do with that which I gave you before?”

“Why did you squander the talent I entrusted to you?”

“If you had given heed to what I said, you would not be in this plight.”

But He gives to us just as simply and freely as though we had never asked before, and had never failed Him. What an encouragement this is to us to come and ask often, no matter how much or how often we have failed! We have sinned grievously, but “He ever lives” and is able, and willing, as well, to save “to the uttermost” (*Hebrews 7:25*); and He gives us His

life of obedience to law as freely as He did to Adam in the day that He created him.

Psalm 116

¹ I love the Lord, because He has heard my voice and my supplication.

² Because He has inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live.

47. Exaltation Through Humility

Present Truth, January 9, 1902

Original title: Back Page

Proverbs 14:34

Proverbs 14

³⁴ Righteousness exalts a nation.

THE nation that knows the sound of God's voice shall walk in the light of His countenance, and be exalted in His righteousness.

Psalms 89

¹⁵ Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of your countenance.

¹⁶ In your name shall they rejoice all the day: and in your righteousness shall they be exalted.

But righteousness means humility, submission to God.

Habakkuk 2

⁴ Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.

Only in absolute dependence on God, in acknowledging Him to be everything and ourselves nothing, can we be righteous. Therefore it follows, paradoxical as it may seem, that exaltation comes only through humility. And this is just the secret of the Gospel.

Philippians 2

⁷ [Christ] made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and...humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

⁸ Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name.

James 4

¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up.

48. Christian Evidence

Present Truth, June 19, 1902
Proverbs 22:17, 18, 20, 21

THE call for something on the “Christian Evidences,” is quite frequent in the religious papers, from young Christians who are brought in contact with scoffers. They want to know what books will furnish them with the matter wherewith to meet the arguments of unbelievers.

There is nothing in the world that can take the place of the Bible. The Lord says:

Proverbs 22

²⁰ Have not I written to you excellent things in counsels and knowledge,

²¹ That I may make you note the certainty of the words of truth; that you might answer the words of truth to them that send unto you.

But those words of truth must be in the heart and life of the Christian, as is indicated in the verses immediately preceding those just quoted:

Proverbs 22

¹⁷ Bow down your ear and hear the words of the wise, and apply your heart unto my knowledge.

¹⁸ For it is a pleasant thing if you keep them within you; they shall withal be fitted in your lips.

If they are not in the life, they will not be fitted in the lips, but will have a strange sound. But coming from the heart, they will fit the lips naturally, and will have a convincing power. This is the same “evidence” that is referred to by the Apostle Peter:

1 Peter 3

¹⁵ Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

The best “Christian Evidence” is the life of Christ. Like every other special miracle wrought by Christ, the giving of the manna was to teach us to recognize God at work all the time doing the same thing. When He rained bread from heaven, it was that the people might learn that that is what He is always doing. Our daily bread is just as truly rained down to us from heaven as was that of the Israelites.

Psalm 78

²³ [He] commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven,

²⁴ And rained down manna upon them to eat.

And even so,

Isaiah 55

¹⁰ The rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and returns not there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater.

Nahum 1

³ The clouds are the dust of His feet,

and

Psalm 65

¹¹ All His paths drop fatness.

So not only the Israelites in the wilderness, but all the heathen, even at that same time, and we ourselves, have eaten bread rained down from heaven. Indeed, we never ate any other.

To the idolaters at Lystra, the Apostle Paul said that although God had suffered all nations to walk in their own ways,

Acts 14

¹⁷ He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

And this witness received into our hearts day by day with our food, makes us His witnesses. What kind of witnesses are we? Are we faithful witnesses? or have we by our faithless lives denied the Lord, saying that He is not among us?

49. Taking Advantage of the Poor

Present Truth, October 16, 1902

Original title: Back Page

Proverbs 11:26

Proverbs 11

²⁶ He that withholds corn, the people shall curse him; but blessing shall be upon the head of him that sells it.

THIS text was forcibly brought to mind by reading the following item last week:

House coal of all classes was advanced by 1s. a ton in London, yesterday. "This movement is entirely due to the cold weather coming on," said a dealer on the London Coal Exchange to a *Daily Chronicle* representative yesterday, "and has nothing to do with the American demand for coal."

If we should have an unusually cold winter, such items of news would be a frequent occurrence. Yet the cold weather does not in the least increase the cost of the production of coal.

The increase in the selling price is simply the taking advantage of the necessity of the people, especially of the very poor, and is therefore on a par morally, with the act of the man who receives money from the trembling wayfarer at the mouth of his pistol.

Take notice that the text does not say that people ought to curse those who withhold the necessities of life in order to get a higher price for it, but that they will do so. And we call attention to it, not for the purpose of arousing indignation against those who thus enrich themselves at the expense of the poor, but to caution any who read, against following the same unrighteous practice.

Such a procedure is so common that it is considered only as "ordinary business policy," and many well-meaning persons may be led into it without thinking how opposed it is to the

principles of Christianity.

50. The Word that Watches and Teaches

Present Truth, June 25, 1903
Proverbs 6:20-22

Proverbs 6

²⁰ My son, keep the commandment of your father, and forsake not the law of your mother;

²¹ Bind them continually upon your heart, tie them about your neck.

²² When you walk, it shall lead you; when you sleep, it shall watch over you; and when you awake, it shall walk with you.

So it is that God wakens us morning by morning:

Isaiah 50

⁴ The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakens morning by morning, he wakens my ear to hear as the learned [or, “as they that are taught.” RV].

Not only so, but if one meditates in the law day and night, instruction will come even while sleeping. The text so often quoted,

Psalms 127

² He gives His beloved sleep,

is by good authority,—as indicated in the margin of the *Revised Version*, rendered:

“Such things He gives to His beloved in sleep.”

It is not necessarily in dreams or night visions that God instructs in sleep. Sleep itself imparts many needed things both to body and mind. We cannot understand it, but everybody must sometimes have experienced it in a special manner. How often we have fallen asleep with a perplexing problem on our mind, and waked to find it solved, not after thinking over it, but the very instant of waking.

It shows that God is using our brain while we sleep, and

should teach us the value and importance of leaving it wholly subject to His use even while we are awake. If we always did, we should think to more purpose. Thus would God's kingdom come, and His will be done on earth even as it is done in heaven; for the kingdom of God is within, and:

Philippians 2

¹³ It is God that works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

Unless the word of Christ dwells in us richly in all wisdom, we have no true wisdom.

