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## **"BE TEMPERATE IN ALL THINGS."**

– *DEC. 13. – PROVERBS 23:15-25. –*

"For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty." – Prov. 23:21.

HAVING found a lesson for the old in the experience of Solomon and his alienation from God in old age, we come in this lesson to the words of wise instruction to the young.

(15,16) The exhortation is that of a parent or a teacher who has had experience in life and who fain would be helpful through advice to one starting upon life's pathway. Knowledge of good and evil may reach us either through the instruction of those who have already profited by either or both of these. To profit by instruction is indeed an evidence of wisdom. The "prudent [wise] man foreseeeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple [foolish] pass on, and are punished." (Prov. 22:3.) We see folly in this respect repeated every day. Those who profit by the experiences of others either through instruction or observation are the smaller number, but they are the wise ones. The majority must gain their wisdom through severe experience – punishment for errors, for rashness, for lack of observing the natural laws of cause and effect. Since they will not learn through instruction that whatsoever a man soweth the like shall he also reap, they must learn this lesson through bitter experience. The lessons of wisdom learned, no matter in which school, the school of instruction or the school of experience, are valuable, and ultimately, we believe, will be profitable to the majority of our race. Ultimately all shall learn that peace, joy, divine favor, including everlasting life, can be had only by walking in the way of truth, honesty, righteousness – the godly way.

### **A GOOD WAY.**

This lesson seems to picture before our minds a youth starting upon life's journey where two roads meet; the one an upward road, an

honorable course of morality, prudence, self-control, patience, perseverance, righteousness; the other path a downward road, a way of gratification of the depraved tastes and appetites of the fallen human nature, a way of apparent ease, of carelessness for the truth and for honesty and self-restraint, a way of loose liberty, a way that leads into intemperance of language, of thought, of conduct, of food and of drink; and which leads on to further degradation and dishonor.

The voice of wisdom is heard by nearly every young man and woman starting in life, directing them to the upward and honorable path; it reaches them either through parents or instructors or friends or observation. The smaller number, however, are wise enough to accept heartily the instruction and so to avoid the downward path entirely. The vast majority desire the pleasures of sin for a season at least. They [R2074 : page 291] have no thought of going onward in the path of sin, but merely to remain near by the noble path of morality and honesty and truth. They do not realize that each step in the downward road away from the path of righteousness will cause their hearts to lose appreciation of righteousness and to become inured to sin. Very few, therefore, accept the lessons of wisdom promptly and heartily, and act thereon. There will indeed be opportunities farther down the journey of life to leave the downward way and to seek the upward path, but they will be much more difficult than at the beginning, at the parting of the way in youth – more difficult because the downward path has been leading their characters and sensibilities farther and farther away from the way of morality and honesty.

(17,18,19) There may be times when those who [R2074 : page 292] walk in the way of wisdom may seem to see disadvantages therein, and pleasures in the way of sensualities; but the voice of wisdom instructs such to look beyond and consider the full end of the downward way, to respect the Lord and seek to walk honestly and uprightly, assured that the end of this course will eventually be better than the other. "Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the [good] way."

(20,21) Statistics show that hundreds of millions of dollars are spent every year for intoxicating liquors, which not only fail to profit the users, but which do others as well as themselves serious injury – mental, moral and physical. How many have been brought to poverty through intoxicants! And, to our shame be it said, this sin against self and manhood is more common in the civilized or so called Christian nations than in some others.

The sin of gluttony leads usually to another kind of poverty. The poor may become sotted with drink, but rarely can they afford to be gluttonous. Gluttony is chiefly, therefore, a sin of the rich or well-to-do. It leads to poverty of both mental and physical strength. It is as truly intemperance as drunkenness, although not so far reaching in its bad influence.

The lesson speaks of the intemperance and impropriety of sloth, or idleness, or lack of energy; and the observation of every wise man proves that true happiness is associated with energy – mental and physical activity. "Not slothful in business," is one of the characteristics of a Christian, as set forth by the Apostle. We live in a day, however, in which another form of intemperance prevails in an opposite direction with not a few – intemperance in energy and ambition; a consuming desire for honors or wealth, that robs many, not only of proper social enjoyments, but, more important still, of spiritual privileges and joys.

(22,23) True wisdom will never despise the counsel of the aged, especially from parents, of whose interest in the child's welfare there can rarely be doubt. It is one of the peculiarities and difficulties of our day that because of the sudden increase in knowledge and educational facilities the young have in many departments of knowledge outstripped their seniors. The resultant tendency is disrespect for the experiences and advice of parents and seniors, and a disposition to be heady, high-minded, unthankful, unholy, disobedient to parents and other like disgraces foretold by the Apostle as features of our day. (See 2 Tim. 3:4.) On this account additional wisdom and great patience are needful on the

part of parents and all instructors of the young. Recognizing the influences which counteract parental instruction, and recognizing the fact that the children may be in advance in some points, the wise parent should seek to set a good example in proper childlikeness himself, and be ready to learn from and with the children along the lines of their superior advantages, explaining that the present increase of opportunities for knowledge are phenomenal, and not of men but of God, as foretold by the prophet respecting the "time of the end." (Dan. 12:4.) By this course of honesty and wisdom the parent will maintain the confidence of his child, who will then be the better prepared to learn in turn along the lines of the parent's experiences in life and respecting principles of morality and the evil tendencies of immorality. Thus wisdom in the parents has very much to do with the choice of wisdom by the child. One of the chief lessons to be inculcated is, that truth is precious above all things – with reference to the ordinary affairs of life and dealings between men, with reference to spiritual things, with reference to God, and with reference to the divine plan. Truth is to be prized, and those who love and practice the truth are to be esteemed, and such only; error, falsehood, no matter how gaudy or showy or attractive, is to be disdained and repudiated. This is in harmony with our Lord's prayer, "Sanctify them [*i.e.*, separate them from the evil and set them apart for good] through thy truth: thy Word is truth."

(24,25) These verses suggest, and properly, that wisdom in the young does not depend wholly on inculcation, instruction. Probably the majority of wise children are born wise. "He that *begetteth a wise child* shall have joy of him." If parents in general could realize the importance of the parental office and the bearing of their own characters and sentiments upon their offspring, laying the foundations for good and wise characters before the children are born, the responsibilities of their position and relationship would, we believe, not only favorably influence their children, but help also to develop positive character in themselves.

The parents who have failed to discern the laws of nature under whose control they have brought forth children; and whose children therefore reflect the parental unwisdom and unsettledness of character, have in consequence double reason for exercising patience toward the unwisdom of their offspring, and double reason for perseverance in their later efforts to correct that unwisdom and to lead their children into right ways.

### **A STILL MORE EXCELLENT WAY.**

It should be carefully observed that the way of morality, temperance, moderation and wisdom above set forth, although a commendable way, is not the way in which the Christian of this Gospel age is invited to walk, in the footsteps of his Lord, to **[R2074 : page 293]** attain glory, honor, immortality and a share in the heavenly Kingdom as one of the kings and priests. (Luke 13:24; 12:32; Rev. 5:10; 20:6; Rom. 8:17.) The foregoing is sound advice for all, and none should be more quick to follow it than the consecrated, the "new creatures in Christ Jesus." But the "Narrow Way" of self-denial and self-sacrifice marked out in the New Testament is the pathway of those who would win the prize of the high calling to joint heirship with Christ as his Church, his Bride.

All sensible people commend the path of temperance and morality above set forth, but few appreciate or commend the "narrow way" in which the Church is called as the bride to follow the Lord, her Bridegroom. The narrow way is foolishness to the world, neither can the worldly appreciate it, because its value must be spiritually discerned. (1 Cor. 2:7-16.) The wisdom that indicates and approves the narrow way of self-sacrifice is an inspired or begotten wisdom which cometh from above only to the consecrated, the spirit-begotten. It is inspired, not by earthly hopes or aims or promises or ambitions, but by "exceeding great and precious promises," "heavenly promises," of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and unfading, which the earthly eye has not seen, which the earthly ear has not heard and which has not been

appreciated by the heart of the wisest of men. To so great an extent is this true that in the estimation of the worldly the way of the fully consecrated seems foolishness. In view of this the Apostle declares that as the world does not know the Lord, and does not understand his plan, which is higher than the world's conception as the heavens are higher than the earth (Isa. 55:9), so the worldly do not understand the true Church; and as the Apostle said, "We [who walk the "narrow way"] are counted fools all the day long," – harmless but "peculiar people." The moving impulses which help us in this "narrow way" were only received after we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, when we made full consecration of ourselves to the Lord and received the spirit of adoption into his family. Then, because children of God, we received his spirit and were privileged to know more and more of "the mystery of his will," "the hidden mystery" (Eph. 3:9; 1:9), to appreciate the divine plan in harmony with which (and in harmony with our consecration) we have joy in spending our lives, in "laying down our lives," in faithfulness in the service of the Lord; in the calling and perfecting of his saints to be the first fruits of the salvation purchased by the Redeemer.

Those who have received this special sealing of heavenly wisdom, and who are walking this "narrow way" of full consecration to the Lord, although counted "fools," are the truly wise referred to throughout the Scriptures: – "the wise virgins," "the wise shall understand," "the wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament." They who attain to this wisdom and this relationship to Christ do so at the expense of earthly reputation, as the Apostle declares: "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool [according to the earthly standard], that he may be wise." – 1 Cor. 3:18.

Once when we misunderstood the divine arrangement, and did not see that the "little flock" is to be a "kind of first fruits unto God of his creatures" (James 1:18), but supposed that the "little flock" who walked the "narrow way" of self-sacrifice would be the only ones to receive any measure of divine favor hereafter, that all others would suffer some kind of awful punishment, **[R2075 : page 293]** because they did not walk in

the "narrow way" which few of them saw and which still fewer of them were able to appreciate, it perplexed us greatly; as it still perplexes the majority of Christian people. Thank God that we now see in his Word the clear instruction that when this "little flock" shall have been selected and rewarded with joint-heirship with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom, then the "narrow way," will have ceased and another way, "a highway" shall there be opened up – a way in which the human family as a whole shall be invited to return to harmony with God and righteousness through the Great Mediator and under the terms of the New Covenant sealed with his precious blood. It will not be a downward way like the way of sin in the present time, but an upward way. "The redeemed of the Lord shall go up thereon." It will not be a narrow way, that few can find, but a "highway," from which the stumbling blocks of temptation will be removed, and on which the ravenous beasts of evil and temptation will not be permitted.\* – Isa. 35:8,9.

[\\*See MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. I., Chap. II.](#)

We can thus see that, while a life of honesty and morality will not fill the requirements of the "high calling" of this Gospel age to joint-heirship as the bride, the lamb's wife, yet those who during this present time seek to live soberly, justly, truthfully, morally, and who thereby develop character, will be much in advance of the besotted and degraded of mankind (who gratify instead of restraining the fallen tendencies of their nature), when the new age shall open up in which all the families of the earth shall be blessed by the great "Seed of Abraham," Christ and his Church, the bride. – Gal. 3:16,29.

The call of wisdom to the way of honesty, morality, etc., has been heard and to some extent followed by heathen as well as civilized people; by unbelievers as well as by those who have heard of Christ; and to some **[R2075 : page 294]** extent they have profited by his teachings, and all who walk in this, the way of wisdom, secure blessings both for the present life and also a preparation for the future blessings promised. But the "narrow way," pointed out to some by the still higher wisdom, is found by none of the heathen; Christ is the Door, the Gate, to this

"narrow way," and it has but one, which opens to believers only. Although it is not merely a way of morality, but a way of consecration and sacrifice, nevertheless it includes morality in every respect, and to a higher degree than the unconsecrated generally recognizes. Those who are on the "narrow way" are required to consecrate their all, including their wills, and to receive instead the will of their Lord and Head, and to operate in harmony with that will. And since Christ's will is perfect in righteousness, truth, purity and goodness, all who walk in his will must walk as closely as the weakness of their flesh will permit after the spirit, after the will of their Head, and not after the will of the flesh.

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