

thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning." 13:1 says, "A scorner heareth not rebuke." And 15:12 says, "A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise."

In conclusion, it may be that there are individuals whom you have thus far refused to go to and speak correcting words. Consider your duty in the light of Proverbs. It may be that you have been corrected, but have not received it. Consider yourself in the light of Proverbs. Humble yourself and receive both the chastening of the Lord and the correction of your fellow-man. Hear this final, timely warning from the Proverbs; "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

## *Parenthood*

Men feel a responsibility for providing the material needs of their households, and they put in many hours each week doing so. But, that is not the sole responsibility of the begetter to the begotten. Women take care of the cooking, washing, and housekeeping to the tune of many hours each day. But, these deeds do not fulfill the responsibility of the bearer to the born. If children had no side but the physical, the parental work would be well done by the above. But, with minds to be filled with a knowledge of the right, with characters to be started aright, and with souls to be guided, caring for the material side is but the beginning of parents' responsibility toward their offspring.

Proverbs, more than any other book of the Bible, has much to say upon parenthood, and it is the purpose of this message to bring forth some of that important teaching.

### I. PROVERBS INTRODUCES TO US "TEACHING PARENTS".

Proverbs shows us parents who teach and warn their children. "My son," the writer says, "if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." And then he goes on to forewarn his son of the way they will approach him to get him to go in with them. But, the father adds, "Walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path" (1:10-15).

There was ever that instruction to trust in God. "My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion: so shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken" (3:21-26).

The writer tells his son, "I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live" (4:3, 4), and the writer was turning around and doing the same thing to his son—teaching him.

Some fathers do little more than bring the children into the world and bring the money home for their livelihood. Proverbs shows that a father is to be teacher too, not expecting the mother to do all the talking and all the rearing of the children. On the other hand, the woman is to be a teacher also: "For-sake not the law of thy mother" (1:8). She doesn't always wait till Dad comes home from work to tend to the disobedience of the children. She is strict with them also.

### II. CHILDREN ARE TO RECEIVE THE INSTRUCTION OF PARENTS.

"Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law" (4:1, 2). A good father gives good doctrine—good teaching. His ways are right, and he is not going to misguide his child. 3:1 says, "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments." Remembering what they are told is just as important in the home as remembering what God has commanded us. People forget what God says and disobey; children forget what parents say and disobey. "I forgot," they say so often. They need to be taught to remember what they are told, and parents whose regulations regularly kicked around with this "I forgot" business are weak parents, who are in the process of failing already with their children.

How important are parental instructions? Listen to 6:21: "Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck." Listen again: "Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart" (7:3). "Bind" is a strong word. Children should "bind" their "parents' teachings upon their hearts, fingers, and all to remind them of what they are to do.

But, there are some children who will not listen. "A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent" (15:5). Children who will not listen are labeled "fools", and the outcome usually shows them to be such. While a wise son maketh "a glad father, a foolish man despiseth his mother" (15:20). 13:1 tells of the way that a wise son will listen to his father's instruction, and that there are sons who scorn every rebuke given. Yes, there will be outside forces, outside influences, that will seek to tear down our children. That is why the Proverb writer said, "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge" (19:27). What a text! Such sons and daughters come to no good end.

### III. PARENTS ARE TO INFLICT BODILY PUNISHMENTS FOR DISOBEDIENCE.

A "scourge" was a whip. The Bible says that God "scourgeth" every son whom He receiveth (because no son is above correction), and that fathers of the flesh are to do the same thing to their children (for there has never yet been the perfect child except Jesus). But, with this teaching of bodily punishments, many people and the Bible part company. There is much infidelity today upon this point. In some cases, whole congregations have rebelled against this very practice so definitely taught in the Bible—but look at the children of those who oppose this Bible doctrine! Most of them have some of the sorriest children.

Listen to Proverbs: "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul" (29:17). Some parents have no rest because of the misdeeds of their children. They are always into something, always tearing up something, always breaking something, always doing something the parents don't want them to do; in short, they wear the parents out going from one thing to another. The right kind of correction, Proverbs says, will not only give you rest concerning your child, but the child will actually be a delight to your soul. What a difference! But, how is that correction to be done? Two ways, according to a companion verse in the same chapter: "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (verse 15). "Reproof" is "talking" correction, and the rod is "bodily" correction. Both are necessary; both are enjoined. A parent who talks but never acts in a bodily way is carrying out but part of what God has said, and a parent who is quick to whip, but slow to have a good talk with the disobedient son is but breeding trouble also. Do both.

"Foolishness is bound in the heart of the child," we are told in 22:15. What has God said will take it

out? The last part of the verse answers: "The rod of correction shall drive it far from him." But, some make the mistake of letting things go too far before they do anything. 19:18 says, "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." Of course, he will cry, and you may think you can't do it, but God says to inflict necessary punishment, and don't wait until it is too late to do it. Some have waited too long now. Don't others of you make the same mistake.

"Withhold not correction from the child," 23:13 says. Are you guilty of this? "Of course not," you say; "I talk to him." But, are you doing the kind of correcting that God is talking about in this passage? It continues by saying, "For if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod and shalt deliver his soul from hell." There are actually going to be many people lost simply because parents did not maintain the leadership of their lives as children, did not punish them when they needed it in the way that God said it was to be done. If you are being too soft with your children, wake up before it is too late!

#### IV. WHAT LISTENING TO PARENTAL INSTRUCTIONS RESULTS IN.

That child is not doing wrong who does what God says he should do. If he listens to his parental instructions (unless his parents be wicked), he will grow up to be a happy, useful, godly person—a good product of the home, a Christian man, a useful person, a credit to himself. In harmony with this, 3:1-4 points out, "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: for length of days and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: so shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man." Notice the blessings: (1) long life—this is also brought out in 4:10; (2) peace—good

days while you live; (3) favor in the sight of God; and (4) favor in the sight of man. Talk about a rounded life, this is it. This is the kind of life that results from good parental teachings carried out.

Many parental teachings are given ahead of time—given when they can be given. Because of parental teachings given, when evil presents itself, the child knows it is evil, and the word of the parents is right there saying, "Don't do it." This is what is meant in 6:20-24: "My son, keep thy father's commandment and forsake not the law of thy mother: bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee, when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: to keep thee from the evil woman," yes, and from any other evil that may present itself.

Parents will not always be around to see how the children live. Normally, they will precede them in death a number of years. Do you want to be sure they will go straight after you die? Parental attention while they are with you at home will assure those results, for 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

#### V. THE JOYS AND SORROWS ATTENDING THE OUTCOME OF PARENTHOOD.

10:1 says, "A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother." How true. Nothing should please man more than his children turning out right. Even when they turn out fair, how parents do brag! Nothing brings greater heaviness to a woman than to have her children go bad.

"A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him" (17:25). Along the same

line, 17:21 says, "He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy."

Other passages that indicate how far children can go in abuse of their parents are: "He that wasteth his father (and some sons surely do), and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach" (19:26); "Whoso curseth his father or his mother (and some children will), his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness" (20:20).

But, back to the more pleasant side: "My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine" (23:15); "The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy in him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice" (23:24, 25); "My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth me" (27:11).

May every parent be posted on these great Proverbs, and may these Proverbs be guiding lights to parents everywhere in the rearing of their children. They reflect God's inspired wisdom upon the subject. Prefer God's wisdom to your own in this all-important matter.

## *Two Kinds of Wives*

Of the many things the Proverb writer spoke to his son, one of them was about the matter of marriage. We can well imagine that what the book of Proverbs has to say upon this subject will be well said. Its truths should be taught to the sons of our day, and while the writer is speaking as a father to a son, in so many ways the truths are such that a mother could well use them in speaking to a daughter concerning men and marriage.

## I. MARRIAGE IS A GOOD STATE.

There is too much levity concerning this subject of marriage. Of course, we cannot avoid some of the humorous things that happen and that are told, but the tone of things needs to be much more serious than it usually is when certain passages from the Bible on this subject are read or quoted. Here is a great passage that has experienced entirely too much humor: "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord" (18:22). Listening to levity-loving preaching read this to the emphasis that a wife is merely a "thing" leaves much to be desired when the author has no such thought in mind. The word "thing" is even in italics, which forbids any such meaning or emphasis. A wife is no more a "thing" than a husband is. If woman is a "thing", a man is a bigger "thing", for she came from man. What that verse is saying is that the person who finds a wife is finding something good or is getting into a good state of life. The latter part of that passage shows that God is pleased when people marry, provided of course they do not marry contrary to His will.

As people have married, so does their marriage usually go. If they have run off to get married, it usually isn't too long until one of them is running away from the other. If they have taken the Lord into their home, they have found His blessing abiding upon their home.

Yes, marriage is good. Ask the person who is properly married. He or she would not think of becoming unmarried at all. Even those who break away from a mate are soon found trying to make another home. Marriage is not the only state in which to live, but it is a mighty good one.

## II. THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF WIVES.

12:4 is a wonderful passage, saying, "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that mak-



eth ashamed is as rottenness in his bones." There is the virtuous woman, and there is that one who makes her mate ashamed. The virtuous woman, distinguished for her many virtues of godliness, wisdom, patience, love, attractiveness, and care, is a crown to her husband. Such a wife actually promotes her husband to greater places. Many a man can thank a good wife for a part of his accomplishments in life. Some large companies today, before promoting a man to a high place investigate his wife first. They know she will have an influence and an effect upon him either for good or for bad. The wife that maketh ashamed, possibly for speaking out of turn, failing to keep the house in good order, or getting out of line in one way or another, is described as rottenness in his bones. When one has such a disease in his bones as rottenness, he isn't able to do very much, and the same is true of the man who has such a wife.

Another passage: "A prudent wife is from the Lord" (19:14). Any man with a good wife or any woman with a good husband should thank the Lord for it. God was having a hand in it. When it says a "prudent" wife, it also indicates that there is such a thing as a wife who is not prudent. It doesn't say where the non-prudent wife is from, but I have always thought that if a prudent wife is from the Lord, a non-prudent one must surely be from the devil. Ask the man who has one, and he will probably confirm it.

Yes, there are two kinds of wives just as there are two kinds of husbands.

### III. FURTHER COMMENTS ON THE WRONG KIND OF WIFE.

31:31 says, "For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear," and the passage goes ahead to list these four. The third one is "an odious woman when she is married". An

"odious" person is a hateful person. We usually think of the feminine portion of humanity being distinguished for mellowness of spirit. For sweetness, and for kindness. But, this passage indicates that some of them are not so sweet.

27:15 says, "A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike." Some days it rains and rains and rains. There is no let-up. This passage says that a contentious woman is like that. She starts in with her fault-finding and nagging before breakfast. The husband has to listen to more griping at the breakfast table. When he leaves to go to work, she is boiling over, and when he comes home at night, she hasn't cooled off yet. She is ready to fuss away the entire evening. It is no wonder that some husbands prefer twin beds. I have known a few who preferred separate bedrooms. One case I knew of, they slept on separate floors—she downstairs; he upstairs.

21:9 again recognizes the unpleasantness of such a home when it says, "It is better to dwell in a corner of the house top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house."

#### IV. A WONDERFUL SECTION DEVOTED TO THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN.

Don't suppose that the writer of Proverbs has it in for the women and that he can say no good thing about them. In the 31st chapter, he has devoted one of his longest sections in the book to an unusual praise of the good woman. Good women appreciate this wonderful section, and they agree with the Proverb author concerning his feelings about non-virtuous women.

In verse 11, he states the great value of such a woman to her husband, family, and society in general: "Her price is far above rubies." Verses 11 and 12 show her faithfulness to her mate: "The heart of

her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life."

She is a woman known for the busy and useful life she leads: "She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land (she didn't marry just 'any old stick'). She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come" (verses 13-25).

She is known for the wisdom and kindness of her words: "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness" (verse 26). Because "she looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness," her children "arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her" (verses 27 and 28). While a woman may be useful in various ways, yet the family woman has excelled them all: "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all" (verse 29). And instead of living for favor, which is so often deceitful, and for beauty, which is said to be vain, the virtuous woman fears the Lord and is

praised because of it (verse 30). Yes, her own works shall praise her (verse 31).

## *Psychological Outlook*

Billy Sunday used to say he knew God had a sense of humor "because He made the monkey and some of you people". Be that as it may, we do believe God intends for men and women to enjoy their sojourn upon the earth, and if they live the full life of obedience to God, they will be happy and blest.

The book of Proverbs, which treats so many subjects so well, has not overlooked this important field of one's psychological outlook upon life. Let us notice some of the things it includes on the subject.

### I. PROVERBS CONTRASTS MERRY AND SAD HEARTS.

It says, "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken" (15:13). When one is happy on the inside, it will show up on the outside. We have a chorus that says, "If you're happy, and you know it, Then your face will surely show it," and it will. Proverbs says a merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, but the verse also says by sorrow of heart is the spirit broken. What a picture of one's spirit! Broken. No word can better describe the spirit when grief and sorrow leave one lifeless and hopeless.

Another verse says, "All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast" (15:15). There are days that the sun may shine, but its light fails to cheer the downcast. The birds may sing, but their song will find no appreciative response in the heart of the afflicted. All

the days of the afflicted are evil, are full of trouble. In contrast, the verse says that one of a merry heart has a continual feast. How better could life be expressed than to call it a continual feast? And that is what it is to the happy, cheerful person. But, unless one maintains a merry heart, it will not be much of a feast. How tragic that there are those who do not look on the bright side of things, but who always see the dark side!

Listen to yet another passage: "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones" (17:22). Any doctor would need no commentary to understand this verse. There is a definite connection between physical health and one's mental outlook upon life. When one has a cheerful disposition, the body has so much quicker response toward recovery, but when one gives up, it is mighty hard to pull him out of it. 18:14 possibly brings it out even more forcefully: "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?"

## II. THINGS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO A PERSON'S HAPPINESS.

A man's own success has much to do with his possession of happiness. Listen to three verses upon this subject: "A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth: and the recompense of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him" (12:14). When a person has said the right thing and has done the right thing, it brings him personal satisfaction, and he enjoys the reward of right doing. A second passage states it so well, when it says, "The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul" (13:19). When a person has launched out into a project and has accomplished it, how good it feels. To spend a day in carrying out well-laid-out plans is one of life's greatest joys, and for the most part, it is an everyday privilege. A third passage reads: "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire com-

eth, it is a tree of life" (13:12). When a person has planned for something and then finds that its realization cannot be at the time expected, it brings a let-down that is well described by the words, "maketh the heart sick." All of us have sometime known what it is to be sick of heart over a deferred hope. But, the passage says it is a tree of life to us when that desire is realized. So, our successes and failures have much to do with our happiness or our lack of it.

But, there are other things that enter in also. 15:30 says, "A good report maketh the bones fat," after it says, "The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart." Similarly does 25:25 report, "As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country, when one has been eagerly awaiting news, is just as exhilarating to his spirits.

Then, when one's spirit is bowed in sorrow, how good it is to have the comfort of another! 12:25 says, "Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good work maketh it glad." And 16:24 says, "Pleasant words are as any honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones." Such words, either uttered to us when our spirits need refreshment or uttered in the normal course of conversation, cast a spirit of cheerfulness about us which we all appreciate. Unpleasant words do quite the opposite.

A life of trust in God also brings happiness to a person. "He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he" (16:20).

### III. THREE FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE SUBJECT.

The first is found in 14:10: "The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not inter-meddle with his joy." In other words, while others may sympathize with us, they do not experience the depth of our bitterness, and while they may be happy

with us over a matter, they cannot experience the rejoicing that floods our hearts. We know the things that cast us down better than anyone else does, and we know the joy that sweeps over our soul better than any other know it. Our emotions, then, at least in their depths are personal property into which others cannot fully enter.

Another thought is found in 14:13: "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness." Psychologists and psychiatrists recognize that the person who laughs much and laughs loudly may not be the person who is truly happy. Many laugh in an attempt to be happy whereas laughter should itself be but a reflexion of a happiness that already exists. There are those who seem to be the life of a party when they are with a group, but when they get home, how dejected they can get! Proverbs recognized this fact long ago. The Bible is an up-to-date book on all these things.

We close with a consideration of 24:10: "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small." Adversities will come, and usually they will go. Happy, then, is the person who can weather them while they last. In a sense, this verse seems to be chiding us if we let circumstances of adversity overcome us. It says our strength is small. Proverbs would have us overcome and withstand that we might be strong individuals.

## *Things Abominable*

6:16-19 tells us of six things that God hates—yea, seven that are actually abominable to Him. They are listed as follows: (1) a proud look; (2) a lying tongue (3) hands that shed innocent blood; (4) a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations; (5) feet that are swift in running to mischief; (6) a false witness; and (7) one who sows discord among brethren. An abomination is something that is utterly detestable, something that one cannot stand. The Bible elsewhere tells us that God is grieved with men's sins, but Proverbs tells us that men's lives can be so wicked that they are an outright abomination to Him. The above seven things find themselves all too often in the everyday lives of too many people—pride, lying, injustice, and trouble-making. If they are so abominable to God, we should guard that none of them be a part of our lives.

You would suppose from said passage that only seven things are actually abominations to God, but when you get to picking through Proverbs, you find still others. Those things that personally receive statements all of their own, we are considering in this message.

### I. DISHONESTY IN BUSINESS MATTERS.

Hear how the eleventh chapter opens: "A false balance is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is his delight." This verse has to do with their system of weighing in those days.

If one will read the books of the prophets, he will see how much stress those God-sent men placed on honest dealings man-to-man. Some of the sternest warnings in those books were issued to those who were cheating their fellowmen. All of that crooked-



ness did not end with the Mosaic dispensation. Graft is still a common thing—sometimes even among those who are church people. Much goes on in the name of good business that ought to be done in the name of dishonesty.

In my grade school history book, there was a picture of white men cheating the Indians out of their furs. The man weighing the furs would put his own foot on the scale with the weights, and more and more furs had to be put on the other side to make it balance. Butchers will cut off a piece of meat, toss it onto the scale, and take it off and begin wrapping it up before the scale has stopped. That will not be an accurate weigh, and you know which way the amount will be marked! Brethren, these and other dishonesties are abominations to the Lord. A Christian can have no part in them. Whoever does is a dishonest thief.

## II. THE PROUD.

Very plainly does 16:5 say, "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished."

Man is no more wrong than when he thinks himself really to be someone. God knows otherwise. God has spoken otherwise. There are so many things that man does not know, so many things that he cannot do, so many ways in which he is imperfect. God sees all those failures. A proud man doesn't.

Man with an inflated idea of himself is like a person who has no musical education, has never attended a real music concert, has not come in contact with those who really know music, but who takes the bench to play with an air of great swelling importance. One is present who is well schooled in the matter of music. He sees the poor use of the hands, the wrong posture of the body. He hears those mistakes that are made. As he sits and listens and at the same time beholds the arrogance of the one play-

ing, he well knows the feelings to be completely out of place, and musically it is disgusting—abominable—to him. The same is true of God when He sees the arrogance of man amid the many imperfections of man.

He realizes, too, that it is not the proud who submit to Him in obedience, but the humble. Those with a self-contained feeling do not call upon God, do not look to Him, do not lean upon Him. Man, fed by the goodness of God, clothed by the mercy of God, kept alive by the power of God, going on as he does as if there were no God cannot help but arouse a feeling of disgust and indignation within God.

### III. LYING LIPS.

"Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight" (12:22). What a difference between being abominable to God and delighting Him!

The Bible labels the devil as a liar and the FATHER of lying. When, then, a person's lips lie, the devil is controlling his heart. The devil has fathered the lie. Do you realize this?

God and the devil are against each other in every way. God hates the devil and his works, and He hates to see a person taking up the ways of the devil, which he does when he lies.

Actually the foundation of all society is truthfulness. The element of "trust" (believing the other party) is a part of our homes, our business dealings, our everyday lives in the community. When lying enters in, we cannot be trusted. We actually undermine homes, business, and others—a thing that is mighty grave. God knows it, and He abhors it.

### IV. HYPOCRITICAL RELIGION.

15:8,9 says, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the up-

right is his delight. The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness." Think of it—"the sacrifice of the wicked!" What business does the wicked man have sacrificing to God? Every religious act is to be a manifestation of some acceptable attitude—like gratitude, reverence, contrition. Godly people are to approach God. The wicked are an abomination to Him. God delights in the prayer of the upright, but He cannot stand the hypocritical offerings of the wicked.

21:27 says, "The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?" The wicked have a motive for sacrificing. God hates even their motives for so doing; He knows they are not worthy motives.

One of the better known proverbs in this field is 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." If men do not hear God's law, why should God hear their prayers? If they do not try to carry out God's wishes, why should He theirs? That one who disregards what God says and who prays God to do certain things for him, even his prayer is out of place—it is abomination to God.

#### V. JUSTIFIERS OF THE WICKED AND CON- DEMNNERS OF THE JUST.

"He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord" (17:15). The wicked are to be condemned both in the judgment of God and of men. The just are justified of God and should be of men. But, when people justify the wicked, they are justifying those whom God condemns, and when they condemn the just, they are saying God is wrong. This is abomination to God, and you can see why.

There are many who approve people in their sins. Every form of evil is justified by somebody. Yet, God condemns evil. God wants people to believe Him,

to disapprove of those things that He disapproves, to take HIS side. Not only does this function in the field of men's habits, but those who are deceiving people with "other gospels" are received as "angels of light" when they are bringing destruction to souls.

And, of course, there are people who condemn the just—those who separate themselves from the evil, those who try to lead souls to Christ, those who preach the true gospel, those who try to keep the leaven of evil out of the congregation. God uses those whom the world so often condemns. Those who take God's side, He takes their side, and those opposing God's people will be opposed by Him.

#### VI. THE THOUGHTS OF THE WICKED.

"The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord: but the words of the pure are pleasant words" (15:26).

The wicked have thoughts. They are usually expressing them too. You talk to them about Jesus, and you will see that they have thoughts. But, they are not the kinds of thoughts that God would have. They are thoughts that do not agree with God's thoughts. They are thoughts that lead away from God rather than to Him. They are thoughts that degrade instead of inspire. They are thoughts that oppose God rather than submit to Him.

Because of the way that wicked people think, it is hard to help them, it is hard to deal with them for God. God knows this. The just deplore the way of the wicked, and the feeling is mutual—the wicked deplore the way of the righteous (29:27). God deplores the way of the wicked and would have them turn from it immediately.

#### VII. STUBBORNNESS.

"For the froward (stubborn, obstinate) is abomination to the Lord" (2:32). "They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord: but such as are upright in their way are his delight" (11:20).

We use the words "to" and "fro". "To" means going "toward"; "fro" means going "from". "Froward" is the opposite of "toward". God wants us to come to Him—not go from Him. Therefore, the stubborn are called the "froward".

There is much downright stubbornness in people. Just as soon as they think you are trying to get them to do something, no matter how good it is or how important it is, they set themselves against doing it. They are stubborn. They are froward. They are an abomination to God as a result.

Wives try to get husbands to do right. Children try to get parents to do right. Preachers try to get congregations to do right. Christians try to get others to do right. What do they meet? Frowardness. God hates it. It is an abomination to Him. Can you see why it is?

Anything is abominable to God that is not as it should be! Everything pronounced an abomination in Proverbs is something that is not as it should be. God is consistent in His disgust. We can see why He reacts as He does. May we be of a sound mind to desire to be a delight to God rather than an abomination!

## *Things Preferable*

A proper evaluation of things is one of the important things of life. The Hebrew author tells us of the great choice of Moses and the way he preferred to be God's servant rather than to live the life of ease as an Egyptian prince. Every great man of God has had to make important decisions, and those decisions are many times based upon the proper evaluation of things.

Let us turn our attention to those passages in