

Synthetic Bible Studies

Containing an outline study of every book of the Bible
with suggestions for Sermons, Addresses and
Bible Expositions

By

James M. Gray, D.D.

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LESSON TWENTY

PROVERBS

Following the book of Psalms, of which David was the principal author, come the three books usually ascribed, to his son Solomon.

Of these, Proverbs is the first. That Solomon was the principal author is indicated therein by 1:1, and 25:1, compared with I Kings 4:29-32. The last two chapters, however, seem to be the work of other authors to whom reference is made in the text. Perhaps it is not necessary to suppose that Solomon collected and edited the whole book, indeed, it contains a plain statement that this was not true of a portion of it (chaps. 25-29).

A proverb is a short sentence conveying moral truth in a concise and pointed form, instruction by which means was common in the early history of nations in the East.

It is the view of some that in Solomon's day there was a new and distinct class of leaders in the nation known as "*teachers of wisdom*," of which he, the king himself, was the most conspicuous; a supposition which gives countenance to the further thought that the usual form of address in Proverbs, "**My son**," is not that of a father to a child, but a teacher to a pupil. See Lange's Introduction.

It is remarkable that most of the proverbs seem based merely on considerations of worldly prudence, which was quite like Solomon; but considering the HOLY SPIRIT as the real Author

of the book, we must believe that faith is the underlying motive productive of the conduct to which the reader is exhorted. Indeed, this is expressed in several instances, and to be presupposed when not expressed. The instances are 1:7; 5:21; 15:11; 23:17-19; 26:10.

Outline of the Book

It is not easy to speak of the divisions of this book as, in the nature of the case, it does not lend itself to any very orderly or logical classification.

The following has been suggested:

1. The superscription, 1:1-6.
2. The introduction; proverbs on the nature and advantage of wisdom, with the dangers that threaten it, 1:7-9:18.
3. A group of proverbs illustrating wisdom and the fear of GOD in contrast with folly and sin, chapters 10-24.
4. A group of proverbs selected by the men of Hezekiah's reign, chiefly comparisons and antitheses, chapters 25-29. Both of these groups are of proverbs very loosely connected, whose principle of unity is not very clearly defined.
5. A group of supplemental proverbs of Agur and Lemuel, chapters 30, 31.

Particular attention is called to the personification of wisdom in the eighth chapter of the book, where the spiritually-minded reader will have little difficulty in identifying the voice of his Lord.

~ end of Lesson 20 ~
