

# Gleanings From Proverbs 1

Matthew Henry's Commentary



III. For whose use they were written, v.4. They are of use to all, but are designed especially,

1. For the simple, to give subtlety to them.

The instructions here given are plain and easy, and level to the meanest capacity, the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein; and those are likely to receive benefit by them who are sensible of their own ignorance and their need to be taught, and are therefore desirous to receive instruction and those who receive these instructions in their light and power, though they be simple, will hereby be made subtle, graciously crafty to know the sin they should avoid and the duty they should do, and to escape the tempter's wiles.

He that is harmless as the dove by observing Solomon's rules may become wise as the serpent; and he that has been sinfully foolish when he begins to govern himself by the Word of God becomes graciously wise.

2. For young people, to give them knowledge and discretion.

Youth is the learning age, catches at instructions, receives impressions, and retains what is then received. It is therefore of great consequence that the mind be then seasoned well. Nor can it receive a better tincture than from Solomon's proverbs.

Youth is rash, and heady, and inconsiderate; man is born like the wild ass's colt, and therefore needs to be broken by the restraints and managed by the rules we find here. And, if young people will but take heed to their ways according to Solomon's proverbs, they will soon gain the knowledge and discretion of the ancients.

Solomon had an eye to posterity in writing this book, hoping by it to season the minds of the rising generation with the generous principles of wisdom and virtue.

IV. What good use may be made of them, V. 5,6.

Those who are young and simple may by them be made wise, and are not excluded from Solomon's school, as they were from Plato's.

But is it only for such? No; here is not only milk for babes, but strong meat for strong men.

This book will not only make the foolish and bad, wise and good, but the wise and good wiser and better; and though the simple and the young man may perhaps slight those instructions, and not be the better for them, yet the wise man will hear.