Proverbs - Commentaries by Henry Allan Ironside

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, April 7

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“The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.... When He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment: when He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and My delights were with the sons of men”—Prov. 8:22, 23, 29-31.

IT is easy to see in Wisdom, as personified in Prov. 8, our blessed Lord Jesus, the eternal Wisdom and Word of God, who was one with the Father from all eternity, and participated with Him in the creation of the universe. How precious to read that His “delights were with the sons of men.” He foresaw all that they would be guilty of, yet loved them still. Creation was in order to redemption: It is a mystery far too great for our poor minds to take in, but it tells of a love that is infinite and eternal.

—Wm. Cowper.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, April 6

“The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble” — Prov. 4:18, 19.

HOW marked is the difference between the way of the wicked and the path of the just! That of the latter leads ever onward and upward to that city which is enlightened by the glory of God, and from whose gates streams that glory which shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Death is but the entrance of the saint into the presence of the Lord and the beginning of a richer, fuller life, “far better” (Phil. 1:23) than anything known on earth. But how terrible the contrast when we consider the way of the lawless! Bent on enjoying the present moment, seeking ever some new thrill, they cast all caution to the winds and run in the path of iniquity.

Proverbs has been called “The Young Man’s Book.” It abounds in wholesome instruction, which, if implicitly followed, will insure a life of happiness and rectitude. It was not written to show the way of salvation, nor does it deal with prophecy or great spiritual doctrines. It is as truly applicable for this age of grace as for that of law, which preceded it.

—F. J. Exley.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, April 10

“Where there is no vision the people perish” —Prov 29:18.

WE need the revelation of coming glory in order to sustain us in our present conflict with sin and to lift us above discouragement as we often see the apparent thwarting of the will of God. But it is only apparent. Nothing can hinder the eventual carrying out of the divine program. The kingdoms of this world shall yet become the kingdom of our God and His Christ. At the present time we are called upon to suffer for righteousness’ sake, to endure trial and persecution, to share in our Saviour’s rejection. But as surely as there is a God in Heaven, so surely shall His kingdom come at last and the Crucified shall become King over all the earth. In that day “a King shall reign in righteousness” (Isa. 32:1). “Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins” (Isa. 11:5). Then the law and the prophets shall all be fulfilled and the days of Heaven will be known on earth.

—C. C. Crowston.

Daily Sacrifice, April 11

“He that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days” —Prov. 28:16.

THE covetous man is an idolator who, whatever his profession otherwise, is a worshiper of the great god SELF. He thinks of himself first, last, and all the time. He is never satisfied. He always craves more than he possesses, hoping that each addition to his store will give that peace and satisfaction which he has never yet found.

True satisfaction is the portion only of those who have learned, like Paul, to be content with such things as it has pleased God to entrust them with (Phil. 4:11,12). It is only as we know Christ that this can be true of us. When He fills the vision of our souls we can surrender all else gladly, knowing that He will never forsake those who confide in Him and who delight themselves in His Word.

—Grace E. Troy.

Daily Sacrifice, April 7

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction”— Proverbs 1:7.

FEAR here implies, not dread, but rather reverent awe. He who does not revere God is branded as a fool, a simpleton, who in his colossal ignorance often fancies himself wiser than his Creator and so ignoring all advice, plunges headlong into things that are destructive alike to body and soul.

—J. A. B.

Daily Sacrifice, April 10

“The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water”— Proverbs 17:14.

A little grit in a motor will soon ruin the most costly engine, and it is the little things that destroy family affection and set one member against another. The cherishing of resentment because of possible slights, giving way to feelings of displeasure because others are preferred before us, allowing the thoughts to wander into forbidden paths, all of these, small as they may seem at first, are the things that mar family life and destroy fellowship. Plug the leak at once and the whole dike may be saved.

Daily Sacrifice, April 9

“A man’s heart deviseth his way”— Proverbs 16:9.

WHAT one is in his secret thoughts determines his real character. The disciple of Christ is called to maintain the very highest standard of personal purity. He is to judge, in their beginnings, the first evidences of evil desire, lest he fail into grievous, open sin, which will bring lasting reproach upon his name and grave dishonor to the God he professes to serve. To indulge in carnal thoughts and lustful desires is to be guilty of uncleanness before Him, whose holy eye discerns the inmost secrets of the heart. The sacredness of family life will never be jeopardized by one who thus walks in self-judgment before God.

—Douglas Malloch.

Daily Sacrifice, April 8

“The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honor is humility”— Proverbs 15:33.

HUMILITY is one of the loveliest flowers that springs up in the garden of the regenerated heart. We are all inclined to pride and vanity by nature. When the Spirit of Christ possesses us, we manifest that lowliness and meekness which ever characterized our blessed Lord. To many this seems like slavish servility, but it is the very opposite. Greatness is evidenced by one’s readiness to deny self and to serve others for His sake, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for all. We cannot share in His atoning or redemptive work, but we can and should follow Him in His life of patient service for the blessing of a needy world.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, April 9

“Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people” — Prov. 14:34.

WHEN nations or communities of lesser size turn from the paths of rectitude and self-restraint to those of wickedness and careless self-indulgence, they are in the way of inevitable ruin. It was not the barbarians that destroyed the Roman Empire in the fourth century of our era. It was the voluptuousness and drunkenness of its citizens. Israel could never be vanquished by foes from the outside. It was always the enemies within that caused defeat and brought ruin and desolation. The nation or community that trains its youth to walk in righteousness and shun licentiousness, drunkenness, and other vicious types of behavior will become and remain strong and powerful. Where it is otherwise, its weakness will soon become manifest. It is as true of whole groups as of individuals, that whatsoever they sow will surely be reaped (Gal. 6:7).

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, April 8

“The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself” —Prow. 14:14.

DISTRUST of self and full trust in God is the sure way to prevent backsliding. It is never safe to depend upon past experiences for future blessing, or to rely on one’s own ability to stand in the hour of temptation. “He giveth more grace.” We see this in the account of Peter’s failure. Had his dependence been upon the Lord Himself, he would not have failed so miserably in the hour of stress. It is important to realize,

however, that there is a vast difference between spiritual declension and apostasy. No matter how genuine one’s Christianity may be, he is never beyond the possibility of failure or backsliding while in this scene, but no real believer will ever become an apostate, for that involves a definite turning away from the truth as to Christ and His redemptive work. The Spirit of God will reclaim the backslider, but there is no such promise for the recovery of the apostate.

The downward path is an easy and rapid one. Peter’s boastfulness, when warned by the Lord Jesus of danger, was mistaken for true courage, but when courage was really needed he became a coward and denied all that once he had gloried in.

—H. McDowell.

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