

PROVERBS 23

BUY THE TRUTH AND SELL IT NOT

Buy the truth and sell it not! (verse 23)

Hard work lies before us in the instruction and upbringing of our sons and daughters, and we must go into the heart of it! The rude battle of life is raging, and we must strike home! The lessons which the wise parent has selected in verses 15-35 of this chapter are those which the pupil truly needs, and not those which are necessarily pleasant to the master or interesting to the audience. Life is real! Therefore, the preparation for it must be regulated by its actual requirements. One of the lessons (verses 23-25) which the wise father here gives his child is this: “*Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding. The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.*”

The wise merchantman, in Jesus’ parable, purchased the “pearl of great price” at the cost of all that he had. But indeed, the blessing can only be “bought without price!” It is as *free* as it is *precious*! However, the illustration in the parable helps to show us the importance of gaining it at any cost. But first, let us satisfy ourselves that the Seller of truth is no deceiver, for He is perfectly upright in all of His dealings. “Buy of me!” says the Savior. And this sets the matter at rest. But let us also ponder its inestimable value! It is the *truth* – the only means of salvation, the only deliverance from sin, the only principle of holiness, and the “one thing needful!” Place the blessing fully in view – “the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord!” We cannot be defrauded in the purchase. It is a cheap purchase at any price! In Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, no cost was considered too great for the baubles of Vanity Fair. But Bunyan described his Pilgrims beautifully, as they answered the sneering reproach, “What will you buy?” They lifted up their eyes toward heaven and said, “We will buy *the truth!*”

However, like the wise merchant in Jesus’ parable, we must secure the genuine article that we are seeking to purchase. Much counterfeit coin is circulating, so we must bring everything up to the Lord’s standard. That which brings wisdom, instruction, and understanding is the truth of God. Then, having ascertained its riches and its purity, we must not only wish for it, gaze at it, and commend it; but we must *buy* the truth! Do not merely throw out a bid, or make an offer; but strike the agreement as if it were a done deal! Make it *yours*! The man in the Savior’s parable did not merely *wish* for the field with the hidden treasure; but he sold all that he had, *and he bought it*.

We must be sure that our purchase is the *whole* truth. Every particle is priceless. Many are content to take some pains, but they stop short of the prize. King Herod shrunk from the full price of the truth when it was presented to him by John the Baptizer, and so did the rich young ruler and King Agrippa; and therefore, they did not buy it. And yet Moses gave up all “the treasures of Egypt”

in order to obtain it! Paul put aside his Jewish privileges and high reputation. The martyrs “loved not their lives unto the death.” And did any of these persons repent of the costly purchase?

Having thus made the purchase of truth, shall we ever part with it? Will we not find that it is all that we expected; or shall we, after all, discover that we are glad to be rid of it? Many an estate has been bought and sold again because of disappointed expectations. But although we are usually at liberty to resell something that we have bought, this passage contains a prohibition to sell the truth after we have purchased it! Truly, though, it is a merciful prohibition, for those who sell the truth are selling their own souls with it. And “what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” Can we look at Esau, Judas, and Demas – selling their treasures for worthless things of the world – without sorrowful trembling? Yet their apostacy clearly proved that they had never received and loved the truth in the first place. Therefore, having never felt its power or known its value, they could easily sell it for this world’s lusts or pleasures, or for the more flattering delusions of their own hearts. Have we ever esteemed the Divine Truth as being so valuable in our eyes, that it is worth every sacrifice to buy it? We may rest assured that no one who has truly bought it will ever be willing to sell it.



Buy the truth, then – no matter what it may cost! And do not sell it, no matter what price may be offered. Accept the grace and mercy which has been bought by the Redeemer’s blood, and which is offered freely to you. “I am the Truth!” said Jesus. Close the deal with Him, and trust in His salvation alone.

It is a joyous sight to see children fulfilling their parents’ fondest hopes – proving themselves to be possessors of “a wise heart,” by a diligent enquiry about this all-important purchase and transaction between God and their own souls. Truly, it is a reason for great rejoicing when parents see their righteous children thus enriched for eternity – in possession of a treasure which they can never spend; and which no troubles, no changes, and no malice of hell can touch. If the Godly parents have had a seed-time of tears, such precious sheaves of joy are an abundant recompense! Will not the child feel the constraining obligation to fulfill his parent’s rejoicing, thus vividly portrayed? Most unnatural must he be, if his heart does not glow with the desire to thus repay the anxious love of his father, and the longing tenderness of her who gave birth to him. They ask no other reward than the joy and gladness of seeing a wise and righteous son or daughter. Hereby, both parents and children may rejoice together, as they walk side-by-side in Wisdom’s ways of pleasantness and peace!

Lord Jesus, You are the Way, the Truth, and the Life! We thank You that You offer the precious truth of the Gospel to us, without money and without price. Thank You for purchasing our salvation by Your priceless blood! Amen.