

PROVERBS 9

TWO INVITATIONS

Christ and sin are rivals for the souls of human beings! And here we are told how they both court attention from us, in order to have the innermost and uppermost place in our hearts. The intention of this chapter is to set before us life and death, and good and evil; and we need nothing more than a fair stating of the case, in order to determine which one ought to be surrendered to. Christ and sin both offer entertainment for our souls, and invite us to accept their offers; and concerning both, we are told what the end result will be. Herein we are taught to put a high value upon our own souls, because we see that there is such striving for them! After reading this chapter, let us choose today which of the two offers we shall listen to.

Wisdom is here introduced as a magnificent and magnanimous queen – very great and very generous. And here we still behold Jesus under this character of true Wisdom – proclaiming grace and a fullness of blessings to His people. In the last chapter, He showed His grandeur and glory as the Creator of the world; but now, He shows His grace and goodness as the Redeemer of it! These things are spoken in a parable, so that we may understand them better. The motherly head of her family gets her house ready, prepares her feast, sends out her invitation, and encourages her invited guests to come. From very similar pictures, and with the same intention, Jesus Himself framed similar parables during His earthly ministry (Matt. 22:1-14; Luke 14:16-24).

Wisdom's feast is ready, and the invitation is sent forth for guests to come and partake of its blessedness. These are plain representations of the fullness of the Gospel, and of the infinite mercy that has been provided for poor sinners in Jesus. The Gospel is uniformly represented throughout the Bible under the similitude of a rich feast! Jesus has prepared it; for here we find His body broken, and His blood shed. By faith, the poor sinner is made to see and feel his need; and he turns in at Wisdom's gracious invitation to the rich table, spread with an abundance of good things – the Word, preaching, prayer, the sacraments, and singing. In our Father's house, there is enough and to spare! The maidservants who are sent forth to invite the guests represent the Gospel-call by the Lord's ministers; as well as the plentiful means which are used to bring in those for whom both the house and the feast are prepared – namely, the poor, the needy, the wretched, and the miserable (Luke 14:21-23). The Gospel-message is especially addressed to those who are simple-minded. Those who are conscious of their ignorance are always the most ready to learn the Wisdom from above.

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ Christ, under the name of Wisdom, invites us to be entertained by Him, and to enter into communion with Him – verses 1-12
- ❖ Sin, under the figure of a foolish woman, offers her own invitation; but her pleasures are deceitful, and they end in destruction – verses 13-18

Empty vessels fill best when they are plunged into the fountain. As in Jesus' parable, those who are filled already – filled with their marrying, their cattle markets, and their lands and estates – send their excuses for absence, and do not come to Wisdom's feast. But from the hedges and lanes of conscious poverty and need, the Lamb's wedding-feast is filled with guests! Our Savior did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance!



We have heard how the Lord Jesus seeks to engage our affections to God and Godliness, and one would think that the whole world would go after Him. But in the latter part of this chapter, we are told how industrious the tempter is to seduce unguarded souls into the paths of sin; and sadly, he gains his point with many, and Wisdom's courtship is not effectual. Carnal, sensual pleasures stupefy the conscience, and put out the sparks of conviction. And when these get dominion in a soul, all knowledge of holy things is lost and forgotten. We need to seek and pray for true Wisdom, for Satan has many ways to keep people's souls from Jesus. Not only do worldly lusts and deceitful seducers prove fatal to the souls of men, but false teachers also destroy thousands with their doctrines that flatter pride and give liberty to lusts.

Under the figure of a foolish woman, the rival of Christ is set forth. She represents the "god of this world," who causes the human mind to be blended with the delusions of various temptations (2 Cor. 4:4). Like Wisdom, this woman also sits at the door of her house, in order to call passersby who are going in the right way. She pleads with them to turn aside, and she proposes to give them pleasure with her stolen waters and forbidden bread that must be eaten in secret. And these are very appropriate representations of the wicked devices of Satan. Observe that the call of this foolish woman is given to those who are going in the right way, for Satan never gives any interruption to his servants who willingly follow the paths of evil. But when the Lord Jesus causes Wisdom's sweet call to be heard among Satan's subjects – no sooner does a poor sinner attempt to run out of the devil's kingdom, than all the powers of hell are enlisted to persuade him or force him to come back! But alas! How surely are the wages of sin death (Rom. 6:23). As we behold the wretched, empty, unsatisfying, deceitful, and stolen pleasures that sin and Satan offer to us, may we pray that our souls would rather be desirous of the everlasting enjoyment of Christ! Thus, while we live on earth, we may live to Him daily by faith; and before long, we shall be with Him in glory!

Lord, we pray for grace to be blessed with true Wisdom, so that we may be preserved from Satan's devices which he uses to hinder us from coming to Jesus! Amen.