

Sermon 9 Prov.8.17. Part. B~n April 24, 1853 48 pages 6 1/8"x 7 1/2"

Prov. 8.17. P.art.	[watermark on some sheets	Ps 92
	Southworth MFG co]	<u>93</u>
Those, that seek me early, shall find me.		166S
		92.1B
		336.S

In the scriptures, Christ is called wisdom, the wisdom of

God. In this chapter he is personated by the term Wisdom as
addressing the children of men in a most affectionate [sic] and
endearing manner. He calls upon them to listen to his instruction
and encourages [sic]
and obtain true wisdom and understanding, ~~incouraging~~ [sic] them
with
by many and precious

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promises. In the verse from which our text is taken he expresses his peculiar regard to those who love him and then presents the promise who heart cheering^ to those ^ early seek him, that they shall find him.

Two essential particulars are suggested in these words
~~to which we will direct our attention.~~

I. What it is to seek Christ early.

II. The peculiar encouragements ~~to those who seek Christ~~
~~early.~~ given to such.

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By seeking we are to understand those various methods by which we may become acquainted with him and obtain his favor and blessings. This may be done by prayer and praise, by attending to his ^{word} spoken and written; attend to the ordinary means of grace, by submitting to the terms of salvation, and becoming truly pious and devoted to his cause. But in respect to time we are to seek him early, that is.

1. In the early part of our days in our youth.

In God's requirements there

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is nothing calculated to mar our peace or

dispoil [sic] our joy, but much to increase their value and purify
them

and refine, 1 extend their moral influence and render them more

desirable. 1 The wisdom of God has so arranged all things

pertaining to his creatures, that in the ways of obedience to him

there is happiness; but in departing from his commands is always

attended with more or less of misery. This law has been fully
and fully tested

illustrated by the universal experience of mankind, in all

ages of the world. This was

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life

fully proved in the ~~ease~~ of Josias [sic] king of Israel. He commenced his reign when he was only eight years old and following the good advice of those who had the care of his minority, he soon manifested his love and attachment to the religion of his fathers and the worship of the true & living God. Though Israel had been governed by princes of an idolatrous character, and overrun with graven images, he did not hesitate to show his good sense in destroying image worship, even while he was but a youth. ~~and although he had many to oppose yet by the~~
~~nation~~

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for his piety even by those who went after other gods. He sought the Lord betimes and God blessed him. So also Samuel and Timothy early turned their attention to the service of God, and were greatly blessed their heavenly Father. This is the most suitable & best time for establishing a religious character, ~~as the mind is the least~~ ^{with} ~~cumbered,~~ ~~the busy scenes of this life, and the most susceptible of religious impressions,~~ and the [sic] lay the foundation of a useful life and a happy old age, ~~the better, both as it respects ourselves and a triumphant death.~~

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~~and the world.~~

Hence inspiration saith Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy
while
youth. ~~before~~ the evil days come not nor the years draw nigh, when
thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them. Eccl. 12.1. It is never too
soon to become interested in the Redeemer, but soon it may be too late.

It is a great error in human calculations to defer to the last portion of
life
~~our lives~~ those things which pertain to man's highest interest. And
is
what renders this practice so strange and unwise, ^ we know not what
a day may bring forth ~~and the period which give to the most the most~~
~~important business~~

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and by
~~of our lives may never come, and by~~ procrastination, the most precious
riches, and the most invaluable treasures ~~for which we are sent into the~~
may
~~world to procure~~, be irreparably lost. No one ever repented for having
sought the Lord too soon, but multitudes have with deep regret
bewailed their irripable [sic] loss for neglecting this duty too long.

2. Early in the days of grace. ~~or opportunity of salvation.~~

~~If a~~ If a man does not comply with

~~Whatever man may do in complying to~~ terms made to him by
his fellow man, ~~and not except and~~

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he may
~~comply and~~ still ^ remain blameless, but this cannot be done to
his Creator. For he commands like a God and it is man's duty and
but
interest to obey, ~~and~~ to disobey, is sin. Whenever God calls ~~upon~~ upon
us by his word or providence, we should be early in attending to such
and say
calls & ready to hearken as Samuel, Speak Lord for thy servant heareth.
1.Sam. 3.9. We should embrace the earliest opportunity of
complying as David says When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart
said unto thee, Thy face Lord will I seek. Ps. 27.8. This is our
opportunity, this season ought

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not to pass by unimproved, for the call is To day if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts. Heb. 3.15. Or more definitely God says

Now is the accepted time behold now is the day of salvation.

moment

2.Cor. 6.2. The present ^ to every son and daughter of fallen man is preeminently valuable for the next moment is not his and the past is gone forever. On the present moment hangs his everlasting interest; and to seek him early is to heed his call now and delay not; for on a complis [sic] with this requisition alone is appended the promise to find him

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3. Before all other things.

This is a very natural inference from the fact that to seek an interest in the Lord outweighs all other ~~earthly~~ considerations whatever. To seek the Lord before all other things, leaves no hour of the youth to devote to any other pursuit until this is attended to and the mind has given ~~to~~ it, its earliest attention. When this is done, then other things may engage the attention and not until then; for man is required to seek first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness and all these things shall be added. All things

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therefore is brought into subservency to the religion of Christ by infinite Wisdom, because it is paramount to all other considerations. ~~The youth, who has comany~~ [sic] Whoever therefore that has not complied [sic] with this injunction and continues ~~other pursuit before entering upon this~~ has failed to comply and so has the middle aged so to do, sins against Jehovah & is without God and without hope in the world – and the aged who have neglected to this day and of course living in direct opposition to the command of God, and consequently their eternal interests.

II The peculiar encouragements [sic] to those who seek Christ early. These are various and exceedingly

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animating. The scriptures abound in such allusions as must to a reflecting mind give the greatest inducements to seek Christ early and no one either old or young ^{can} ~~ought~~ [sic] ~~to~~ pass them over with indifference, ~~And~~ and be innocent

1. Early seeking Christ is the most pleasing to him.

This is clearly intimated in the verse of which our text is a part.

I love them that love me; and they that seek me early shall find me.

This love is reciprocal and emanates [sic] from Christ on account of some good qualities in

[page 17 [sic]]

in [sic] the being beloved. Those who love Christ, can love him in this case, for what he is in himself considered, and not on account of any good, which they may derive from him, for in that case, it could not be reciprocated by him who knoweth the heart. ~~Although~~ He loves all his creatures, with the love of benevolence, but in this passage, is clearly implied the love of complacency on the ground of their early seeking him. Hence he loves all who seek him early, in a prominent [sic] degree ~~peculiar manner and a condescension [sic]~~, which should move

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every youthful heart to love him in sincerity and truth, ~~and obey him in filial regard and most ardent affection~~ [sic].

early

The tender love of Christ for the young who consecrate themselves to his service is most beautifully portrayed by Isaiah saying, He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; and he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom. 9.11. No language is more expressive of tender affection [sic] than this, which here alludes to those who seek him early. While his love and affectionate regards are

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towards the whole flock, yet his most tender love is manifested to the young; he takes them in his arms and cherishes them in [sic] his bosom.

With what condescending love did our Savior regard little children when he was on earth. He took them in his arms and blessed them. As it is written, They brought little children to him that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those those [sic] that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children

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to come unto me and forbid them not; for of such is
the kingdom of God. Mark 10.13 & 14. Here was displayed in an
effecting manner Christ's tender regards to the young and his delight in
granting them his blessing. He was displeased at his disciples when
they forbid those who were bringing their children to ^{him} ~~Christ~~, as
though he were above noticing their tender years. But see the blessed
Savior, affectionately [sic] taking them in his arms and blessing them.
If he was pleased to see those children coming to him through parental
aid and authority, how much more pleasing it must be to him to see the

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young giving themselves to him in the covenant of grace?

The same feelings were manifested by our Savior throughout the whole of his sojourn on earth. When the children sang their hosannas to the Son of David sorely displeasing the scribes and pharisees, he approves and says Have ye never read Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou has perfected praise? Math. 21.16.

How tenderly and affectionately [sic] does God speak of Israel saying When Israel was a child then I loved him: and again, Wilt thou

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not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth? Jer. 3.4. As God is well pleased with those who early seek after him so does he delight in having them remember the kind effections [sic] of their youth and never forget the blessings which fell upon them on account of their early seeking him.

2. In the ordinary course of Divine grace, God is found of early seekers.

It is a melancholly [sic] fact that comparatively few of the aged turn to God. Their habits are formed and they are hardened in sin; and having neglected God's grace so long, it

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him
is almost impossible for them to be found of God by seeking ^ as for
the Ethiopian to change his skin or the wild Leopard his spot; for they
have become so accustomed [sic] to do evil, they choose rather to
persevere therein. There are some rare exceptions, but how
few who
^ compared to those continue on in their accustomed way. Some
have come in at the eleventh hour, laden with deep and serious regrets
what is
for neglecting so long, ~~when it is~~ attended with so many sources of joy
and happiness. But what multitudes of youth have sought the Lord &
found him the

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chiefest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely. All the churches of the new Testament were made up mostly of those who sought the Lord early & the same is the fact at the present day. How few, compared to multitudes, who compose the Christian church at the present day, came in when their heads were whitened with many a winter, their habits are formed, their characters and mode of thinking are established, and they often settle down in self righteousness or some other fatal delusion.

But

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of those who compose the Christian church the greater part sought the Lord early, and God was well pleased with their early consecration and blessed them and made them the main pillars in his church militant, in sustaining and carrying forward the great and benevolent operations [sic] of the day. Among them where can one be found who would say that ^{he} ~~they~~ ^{his} ~~their~~ regretted ~~their~~ early consecration to the service of God.

So well is this principle established by facts, among those who are engaged in carrying

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the gospel to heathen lands, that although they feel a deep anxiety for all both old and young, yet their principal attention is directed to the young, for here they find their labors are especially blessed. Here they see in a peculiar manner the approbation of heaven on their labors: here they see God is well pleased in turning the children and youth into the ways of his testimonies; here their hearts are made to rejoice and their eyes made glad in beholding the early consecration of the young to God's service, and verifying the truth of our text, They that seek me

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early shall find me.

With such facts before them, why should they delay to emulate the the [sic] example of pious Josias, the devout Samuel and the precious devoted Timothy and receive like ^ rewards? God regards them with emotions of love and tenderest care and with open arms of mercy and compassion is ready to receive them as the returning prodigal by his father, and welcomes them to all privileges and rich blessings of the sons of God. No consideration should deter no temptation should divert their

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minds from such distinguished mercies, such unparalleled blessings.

3. Those who seek Christ early have less obstructions to encounter than others.

The mind of man is ever active and more or less effected [sic] by circumstances. Thereby [sic] part of human life is more susceptible [sic] of good impressions as well, as bad, and therefore should be the more carefully guarded on the one hand against evil impressions, and on the other ^ open to those whose tendency is favourable to the formation of a character prepared for usefulness and a happy

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always
old age. The teachings of the holy Spirit ~~all~~ have a tendency
to form that very desirable character and never ought [sic]
to be disregarded. Its power on the youthful mind is great, and at this
period of life there are reason [sic] for not cherishing its heavenly
monitions. It points out to the youthful mind, the way to true greatness,
usefulness and happiness. While this heavenly teacher is
affording its most invaluable aid, the youth should be exceedingly
cautious lest the habit be formed of grieving

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it away, lest its calls be less frequent and it ~~finally takes~~
finally never return.

~~its flight never more to return.~~ Nothing, in early life, should be

depreciated with greater earnestness ~~and seriousness~~ than an event so

unhappy ~~and~~ so disastrous [sic] for heaven and all its joys
no more to return.

are lost forever when the Holy Spirit has left ~~one~~.

(Even though this should not be the disastrous [sic] consequence of neglecting its admonitions, the formation of the habit of neglecting its teachings is almost as dangerous, as the habits formed in early life

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will be likely to continue in mature age. In either case the youth will find less difficulties to encounter in respect to the instructions of the Holy Spirit than in more advanced life.

They are less stupid and hardened in sin and iniquity than when in more mature years. This fact renders early seeking the only safe course to be pursued by the young; and hence the wisdom of the command Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days

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come not, or the years draw nigh when thou shalt say

I have no pleasure in them. At this period they are much less yielding to the impressions of God's grace, than in youth, time hastening and eternity is approaching. Add to this the cares, perplexities and entanglements of this world, in which the man of business is involved, to distract the mind and lead it from all thoughts of God and holiness, presents obstructions almost insurmountable and hence so few come in, after the days of

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youth have passed by [sic]. The difficulties are constantly increasing and their power augmenting to prevent reformation, and hence the alarming inquiry and declaration of the prophet Jeremiah Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil. 13.23. This alarming truth should fill the mind of the youth with fear and dread, who is yet disposed to procrastinate repentance. Nothing should

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strike the young with greater dread than such a hopeless state and rouse him to act discreetly now in the formation of a good religious character.

4. There are peculiar promises made to early seekers.

God is ever mindful of his creatures, and will not leave nor forsake any, who have the least intimations of a desire to turn to him; and hence there are many promises to ^{all} others of every age ^{especially} as well as to the young. These promises are made that all may know ^{means} that God will by no [^] cast off those who come

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unto him. Hence he says by inspiration, Blessed ~~is~~ is the man that
heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my
doors. For whoso findeth me ~~findeth me~~ ^{life} findeth, and shall obtain
favour of the Lord. Prov. 8.34 & 35. This promise is made unto any
man, who is found carefully seeking after true wisdom, although the
promise is indirect, yet there is good evidence that he shall find because
he is pronounced happy, clearly implying that he shall
not be disappointed, in in [sic] finding Christ the true Wisdom he
findeth

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life. Those who are in the way of duty are always blessed of God according to his word which says They that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. Isa. 40 31. To these may be added many very many which apply to all persons who in the path of duty and they have never yet found his word to fail. From the Old we turn to the New Testament and find that God is ever mindful of those who think upon their ways and desire a closer

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walk with him shall be abundantly satisfied [sic] as says our blessed Savior, Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Math. 5.6. Again says the same divine teacher, Ask, and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find: knock and it shall be opened unto you. Math. 7.7. Such seem to be the whole tenor of scripture and equally applicable to both old and young, who are found in the way of duty; and none of his promises fail.

But to the young there are

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peculiar and special promises and can be meant for noneothers, as though God had a particular regard to them. The one in our text is of this character, They that seek me early shall find me. This is positive, is peremptory; and in finding him, he adds all other necessary blessings to raise them to happiness and usefulness. I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me. Riches and honor are with me; yea durable riches, and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea than fine gold; and my revenue than

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choice silver. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgement: That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures. Prov. 8.17-21.

These expressions spring from infinite love and benevolence. God has established his government in wisdom and righteousness and has so arranged all things that no rational being can be happy except in accordance with this arrangement, He is a God of order and not of confusion, and

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has provided all necessary means to inform man that this
is the only way by which he can obtain substantial ^{joy} ^ and unsullied
peace. How clearly does his wisdom and goodness shine forth in this
order of things and requires us first of all things to seek the kingdom of
of [sic] heaven and its righteousness that the richest of
his blessings might flow to man according to those principles wisely
ordered in all things and settled in the councils of heaven.

Reflections.

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1. Young people should be cautious and not pursue those things, would prevent their seeking Christ.

We have seen that great and lasting benefits rest on those who seek Christ early, and every means coinciding with the Divine economy, should be employed to accomplish so desirable an end. No mind however enlarged and matured can duly appreciate this fact; and especially when we take into consideration the dangers which procrastination induces.

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As youth is the time to store the mind with useful knowledge for future activity and usefulness and activity, so also is it the time to cultivate the moral feelings, to form moral habits for happy life and a triumphant death. And we should mark the strong resemblance of the state of mind and its agency in making moral and intellectual improvement. Every youth who has given his mind to study, ^ knows that without attention and application he can make little or no advancement. If

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his mind has been diverted from his studies at the time which is assigned to them, he most assuredly will come forward illy prepared to meet the duties assigned him in his recitation. So also in religious improvement. If the youth spends the morning of his days without properly attending to the religious culture of his heart, he will be very likely to be summoned by death, unprepared to meet the solemn ordeal at the bar of God. Hence every thing at this important juncture should be avoided which has a tendency to lead the mind

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from serious thoughts and holy meditation. Even those pleasurable amusements, which in themselves are innocent ought to be laid aside until this great object, placed first of all other considerations be obtained, viz. an interest in Christ Jesus.

This may seem rigid and severe, but what would be the results in acquiring an education should the pupil be indulged even in innocent amusement, when he should be preparing to meet his teacher in recitation? This we have alluded to before. Every one knows the result. So also in matters of religion. In that, time is lost, but

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the pupil may be redoubled diligence, regain his place; but no [sic] so in this. Time is gone probation is ended, and no efforts afterwards can repair the loss!! Hence the wisdom of our Savior's instruction. Seek first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you. Seek him first of all things, and whatever is necessary for your comfort and happiness, will in the ordinary way of his providence be granted.

Then let not the young pervert

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the order of this wise arrangement, and set themselves to work to obtain other things for without Christ all other fancied joys are vanity and vexation of spirit.

2. Let the young direct their minds to this subject now.

We have seen the great dangers of delay, lest the mind be filled with other matters and the cares of this world engross the attention and the business of seeking Christ early be neglected and your lives be spent in constant anticipation of a more favourable opportunity, and your sun go down sooner

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than you anticipated and set in sullen gloom forever. Go to Christ in prayer and tell him you come by his assistance, as your early and youthful choice, to make a full and entire surrender of yourselves to him for time and eternity. Plead the encouragements he has given to early seekers, implore his mercy and aid that you may pray in faith. And the blessed Savior will not turn you away emty [sic], but with a smile of love and condescending goodness will let down a shower of Divine

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mercy upon your consecrated heads and cause your souls to rejoice in his regenerating grace.

3. Those who have sought him early, be encouraged to seek more ardently, and serve him with greater fidelity.

This is necessary to your usefulness to others, and the perfection of your own enjoyment. The closer [sic] you walk with Christ, the more you will know of his character, and the greater will be your joys. As saith inspiration, Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord; his going forth is prepared as the

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morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth. Hos. 6.3.

In the exercise of those duties as Christians early in the service of your Redeemer there is [sic] great rewards: for his blessings shall be great and refreshing. As the early and latter rain causes the earth to bring forth abundance of fruit, cherished by the invigorating rays of the sun, so shall showers of Divine grace descend upon you in copious effusions, and the sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in

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his beams; and ye shall grow up to perfect men and women in Christ Jesus. The fruits of your early piety and consecration to God, shall descend to posterity, who shall arise and call you blessed.

4. Let not aged sinners think themselves excluded from all hope.

Though you have misspent all your youthful days, and become hardened in sin and neglected Gods grace, yet none are excluded who come even at the eleventh hour.

You well know that must require a greater effort to break off your sins by righteousness

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and your iniquities by turning unto the Lord now, than when you were young; yet there is a precious promise left even for you who will turn to God now: for sath [sic] the blessed Redeemer, Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out. Jn. 6.37. Let not the cares and perplexities of this world control your mind longer, but listen to that voice. Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me. Rev. 3.20. It is the voice of the Savior, Arise, open your heart & bid him welcome

B~n. April 24.1853

Audience 106

Everage [sic] 92