THE INDUSTRY OF THE SPIDER

If there is any animal with which Edwards is associated, it is the spider, whether the “flying” variety described in the 1723 letter to Paul Dudley that “recreates” itself by means of its long webs, or the unfortunate arachnid in *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* held over the pit of hell by the Deity, suspended on one thin, fraying strand. Here, in the concluding installment of a four-part series on Prov. 30:24-28, Edwards provides what may well be his most extended consideration of the spider since the “Spider Letter.” More than two decades later, the spider is still “despicable,” but, like the ant, the coney, and locust, the subjects of the previous sermons (nos. 798, 799, 803), it offers wisdom to any human who will take the time to observe its ways.

A lengthy Exposition explores the meaning of the scripture’s terms. The spider’s “taking hold” with her hands, Edwards notes, can also be translated as “improving,” which points to the “industry and art” of the spider. That she dwells in “kings’ palaces” means that she constructs an elaborate, elegant, and well-stocked nest. Thus, a lowly insect, through industry, comes to live in what for it is a palatial setting: that is the divine lesson for sinful humankind as well.

The spider, through her diligence, is advanced, proportionally speaking, to riches and honor. But what are riches and honor, Edwards asks. His position is not a facile theology of prosperity—that God rewards the saints with riches and success. If anything, he teaches the opposite during his last years at Northampton: that God gives adversity to the saints to secure them in their blessedness, while giving prosperity to the wicked in order to secure them in their damnation. There are worldly riches and honors: these are transient, “worthless.” And then there are true riches and true honor. True, spiritual, and heavenly riches answer the “proper good” of
sinners—their spiritual good—because those riches, bestowed by God, are durable, sure, and give comfort. True honor consists in excellent qualifications, station, esteem, and permanence. As the spider is exalted in the animal world, so God brings the meanest and most contemptible of humans to a state of true riches and honor. Sometimes, God “exalts” the lowly, other times, he gives them an interest in Christ’s benefits. But true riches and honor are usually attained through wisdom and industry. Wisdom, as Edwards discussed in the previous sermon on the locust, is distinct from mere techné, knowledge, in that it pertains to our ultimate end and to God. Industry is characterized by, and achieved by, strict attendance on duty, sustained activity, and engagedness of mind. Wisdom and industry, then, are the proper and appointed means and qualifications for obtaining spiritual wealth and distinction.

In the Application, Edwards rehearses the importance of seeking wisdom, which has an “unparalleled worth,” citing numerous Scripture examples where wisdom is extolled. Secondly, he recommends devotion to the search after wisdom and industry as the way to realize true riches and honor. This is especially important, considering the natural state of meanness and corruption that humankind is in, and what disgrace they will have if destitute of heavenly riches and spiritual honor. Edwards concludes with a set of directions from God’s Word for those who would seek wisdom. Do not think yourself wise, but rather seek wisdom from the fount of wisdom, Jesus Christ. Cry to him for understanding, seek the rare spiritual treasures with which you can “buy the truth,” seek the company of the wise, and follow in the footsteps of Wisdom. If believers do so, they will, like Solomon, seek the better part.

* * * * *
The manuscript is eighteen duodecimo-sized leaves of mixed paper, one of which is a discarded marriage bann. Edwards dated the sermon, “Jan. 1745, 6.” A number of the leaves have manuscript damage along the margins.
THE WISDOM OF THE SPIDER


There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: . . . the spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.

In order rightly to understand the aim and design in what is observed here of this animal, spoken of in this verse, two things must be borne in mind: viz.,

1. That what is observed of every one of these four kinds of animals, is mentioned as an instance of the wisdom of the animal, or great appearance of wisdom, in disposing things for its own benefit; for that is the declared design of the inspired penman in the introduction, in v. 24, and that is very manifest in the three foregoing instances. ['Tis] evident in the instance of the ants, {who exercise} wisdom in something that they do for their own benefit, [and in] the conies, {and in} the locusts. And therefore, undoubtedly what is observed in this verse of the spider, is observed also with the same view, viz., to show the great wisdom, or appearance of wisdom, of the animal in what it does for its own benefit.

And accordingly, in the text we may observe two things:

(1) What this little, despicable animal doth: she "taketh hold with her hands."

The words in the original, translated "taketh hold," not only signify [to] take hold, but [to employ] and improve, and the m[eans that] she industriously useth and employeth her hands in doing the work that the God of nature hath made her capable of.¹

What is aimed at, is the industry and diligence of the creature in weaving her web and building her house; the creature is not idle, but with wonderful industry and art makes a nest or house for herself, being busy with
[her] hands. Sloth and idleness is expressed in this book, by not using the hands, folding the hands together, and the like. Ch. 6:10-11, “Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.” So ch. 24:33, “Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep.” And Eccles. 4:5,3 “The fool foldeth his hands together and eateth his own flesh.” So Prov. 19:24, “a slothful man hideth his hands in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.” So ch. 26:15, “The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth.”

So diligence is expressed by using the hands, or working with the hands. Prov. 31:13, “she worketh willingly with her hands.” And v. 19, “she layeth her hand to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.”

So that what is intended in the text, [is this]: in the spider’s taking hold with her hands, as an instance of her wisdom, is signified the industry of the creature.

(2) We may observe the benefit that the creature has, as the consequence of this its wisdom and industry: it is “in kings’ palaces.”

We are not to understand [by] this, that spiders, though despicable insects, get into the most stately buildings of great men, and even the palaces of kings, as well poor men’s cottages: for spiders being in kings’ palaces, in this sense, is not the fruit of the work and industry of this creature. But that which is spoken of, is something that is the consequence of the wisdom and diligence of the animal in her works, or in her taking hold with and wisely employing her hands.

And therefore, by her being in kings’ palaces, we must understand the houses that she builds for herself with her own hands, that web she weaves with wondrous art and diligence for the places of her abode: which on account of the curious art with which it is built, and its convenience for the
creature’s use and abode, and the plentiful provision her house is stored with, which she obtains by her art, is compared to a king’s palace.

This is the fruit of the creature’s wisdom, and taking hold and working with her hands; but spiders being [in] the houses of kings as well as mean men, is no fruit of either, and therefore don’t at all answer the declared design of the Holy Ghost in what is observed of each of these four animals: which is to show how they are exceeding wise, and how by their wisdom they obtain their own good and benefit.

And what further confirms this interpretation, is that building and furnishing an house in this book of Proverbs, is a special fruit of wisdom. Ch. 24:3-4, “Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.” And the contrary of the building of an house, even the house falling down or dropping through, is spoken of as the consequence of slothfulness of hands. Eccles. 10:18, “By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.

2. Another thing to be borne in mind, in order to a right understanding of the words, is that it is the design of the Holy Spirit, as was observed before [once and] again, [in] what is observed of each of these four animals, rather to teach us wisdom than to assert the proper wisdom of the animals themselves {in their actions}, who don’t really act from any consideration or reflection {in taking care for themselves}.

DOCTRINE.

*Wisdom and industry is the way for those that are mean and contemptible, to come to riches and honor.*

This is the lesson that it is evidently the design of the Holy Spirit to teach us.
The Spirit of God takes notice that the animal here mentioned is mean and contemptible, {and} little on the earth, “but that they are exceeding wise.” What is here observed of the animal, as to what is done, is its industry and art, or wisdom.

And its being in kings’ palaces, is spoken of as the benefit it has as the fruit {of its industry and art}. Kings’ palaces are places of great honor and riches, honorable and wealthy habitations.

I. What are true riches and honor.

II. Observe that God sometimes brings those that are mean and contemptible to true riches and honor.

III. That wisdom and industry is the way for such to obtain those benefits.

I. What are true riches and honor. And here,

[First.] I would observe,

1. What riches is, or what is the notion of riches.

2. What may be said to be true riches.

1. What is meant by riches, or what is the notion of wealth.

The notion of riches is this: it is an abundance of such possessions, as answer the needs and cravings of nature, and tends to its comfort and delight.

{Riches} consists in an abundance, and this abundance must be possessed; otherwise, though it be never so great, it is not properly called riches.

There are doubtless a multitude of precious things in the bowels of the earth, {or} at the bottom of the sea, not properly called wealth: because it not being in any man’s possession, it don’t denominate anyone rich.
Such] may indeed figuratively be called riches, as all the good things of the earth in Scripture is said to be the fullness and riches of the earth, and as it is that by which a person, if they were possessed of it, would make him rich, {and so} has a tendency to enrich, in that there are materials of the same kind, with which men are wont to enrich [themselves].

But in order to an abundance being properly denominated “riches,” it must be an abundance in some person’s possession, or at least in some person’s right and title, by which a future possession is secured.

But it is not all abundance that a man hath, that is properly called riches. [There is also] abundance of that which is worthless, and of no value. It must be an abundance of that which is valuable and precious.

But things are valuable and precious, only as they are of such a nature that they answer the needs and cravings of nature, and tend to its comfort and delight. Men’s possessions of silver and gold and pearls are of no value to mine, than the possession of common stones, any further than they tend to answer those ends.

Riches is an abundance of those things in possession that are of that sort, {that answer the cravings of nature, and} tends to its comfort and delight. Either the things themselves immediately have this tendency, as one has a store of food and much clothing, and many buildings and apartments, etc.; or that have a tendency from whence, or by which, these may be procured.

2. What is true riches.

We read of “the true riches,” Luke 16:11. What has been observed of the nature of riches in general, may help us {understand what are true riches}.

(1) An abundance of that sort of good that is man’s proper good.

[I] have observed, that {that only is valuable to man, that} answers the needs and wants of nature, [and tend to] true comfort and delight, [and issue] in true happiness. If he han’t his proper good, he is still left
empty. [He needs] an abundance of those possessions that truly tend to answer and satisfy the cravings of nature, [that] affords real satisfaction, [and] affords a fullness, and don’t leave the soul still empty.

(2) {An abundance} of those things that will answer the needs of persons in the various circumstances that are appointed them, and through the various changes that they must pass through.

(3) {An absence of that which} tends to yield that comfort and delight that is liable to bring with it, or after it, that sorrow that shall countervail it.

(4) That which is a man’s own, by a sure tenure.

[‘Tis not] of that which a man is uncertain of, {or} is not confirmed to him by a firm instrument, [and] liable every day to be got from him.

“Who will give you that which is your own?,” Luke 16:11-12.

(5) [An abundance of those things] which will answer the needs and cravings of nature, as long as his nature shall continue.


Second. What is true honor.

1. Wherein honor consists.

2. What is requisite in order to true honor.

1. Wherein honor [consists]. Four things:

(1) Honorable qualifications, [such as being] great [and] noble.

So ‘tis accounted honorable, to [be] of a great capacity.

(2) An honorable character.

(3) Honorable circumstances.

Honorable circumstances consist in a fine dwelling, apparel, badges or ensigns of honors, attendants, equipage, and appearance.

(4) In the actual esteem and respect that a person is the object of.

Now it is easy from hence to learn, in the

2. [Second] place, what is requisite in order to true honor.

(1) That a person should be possessed of those qualifications, that are truly honorable, and worthy of high esteem.

Many are esteemed honorable by the world, when it is not for any inherent qualifications. Many qualifications are looked upon as honorable by many that are not so in themselves. They have the same kinds of knowledge, wit, craftiness, and the same sorts of courage. Many vices are by some looked on as honorable, such as revenge. Contempt of others is what many look on as honorable in themselves. Many actions that are really very dishonorable, are looked upon as honorable, such as those of Alexander the Great.

But true honor does not consist at all in these things. In order to this, it is requisite that qualifications be such as are truly honorable.

Knowledge is honorable in a person, if it be true wisdom, or if he act from true virtue, is truly noble, and if his actions are truly excellent, and really worthy of esteem.

(2) An high station and character among them that are truly excellent and honorable.

Not every character is in any respect high; the devil in some respects has a high station as prince of the devils. He is called “spiritual wickedness in high places,” Eph. 6:12.

But in order to true honor, it is requisite that a person of high character be recognized among those that are truly honorable and excellent. As when a person has a high character given by him who is infinitely honorable, as
the token of his special favor, [or has a recommendation of him] made [by] kings and princes, [or by a] near relation to those that are truly honorable.

(3) {In order to true honor, 'tis requisite} that he be the object of the esteem and respect of those that are truly wise and discerning, and worthy of esteem themselves.

That is true honor, that is honor and esteem founded in truth: not he that has honor among [f]ools or mad[me]n,\(^\text{10}\) nor he that is honored among pirates {and brigands}, or in a company of highwaymen, nor others who are worthy of no esteem themselves.

(4) In order to true honor, 'tis requisite that a person should have honor in his settled and fixed state: not [that which comes] in a dream [or] [in]\(^\text{11}\) a play, or to be foremost in a particular transient business; not that exaltation that is precarious, [and] especially not that which exposes a man to be cast so much the lower.

I now proceed,

II. To observe that God sometimes brings those that are mean and contemptible to true riches and honor.

I Sam. 2:8, “[He] raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifts the beggar from the dunghill.” Luke 1:52, “[He] exalteth them of low degree.”

God doth this two ways:

First. He sometimes exalts those that are mean and contemptible among men, to true riches and honor.

[He exalts] those that are poor and low in the world, [those that] are despised, weak, [of] mean abilities, [of] mean education.

[He exalts] some of the chief of sinners. Luke 14:21, etc., “Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go
out into the highways and hedges, [and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled]."  

12 [So] Lazarus.  

I Cor. 1:26-27, "not many wise, not many mighty."  

[God exalts them] to true riches, that good that is man’s proper good; [those things that] are of a satisfying nature; [that] answer their needs under all circumstances; that which don’t bring with it, or after it, that sorrow that countervails; [that is of a] sure tenure, as long as they continue, and [an] abundance of those things.

[God] advances ‘em to true honor, qualifications, [and] an high station. [He makes them] objects of high esteem, in their settled and fixed state.

Second. Whenever God brings any of the fallen children of men to an interest of the benefits of Christ, he then advances [them from a] mean [to a high state].

III. Wisdom and industry is the way for those that are mean and contemptible, to obtain those benefits.

First. [I will] say a few words to explain the nature of wisdom and industry.

Second. [I will] show how those things are the way {to obtain those benefits}.

First. [Explain the nature of wisdom and industry.]

As to wisdom, I have already in my discourse on the preceding verse {shown what wisdom is}, and there observed that wisdom {disposes to peace and union in spirit and practice}.  

I shall not now stand to repeat.

As to industry, it consists in an active, steady and thorough attendance on any business or pursuit.

In order to industry, there must be activity, engagedness of mind, close application and attention, and this must be in some business or pursuit. Persons m[ay] be very active, and yet [not] industrious; [such is
the case with] persons bereft of reason. There must not only be activity and close application, but also steadfastness. In order to a proper industry, persons must be in all respects thorough in the business they undertake: attending to all parts of their business, all that belongs to it, not doing things to the halves, and persevering in it; [n]ot apt to [be] soon discouraged with [di]fficulties.¹⁶

Here, [I shall] observe two things concerning that wisdom and industry that is the way [to obtain those benefits]:

1. That that kind of wisdom that produces industry in pursuing our true end, is the only true wisdom: [pursuing] those discoveries, that knowledge of Christ and his love, those religious affections.

2. That that industry only that flows from wisdom, is the industry that is the way [to obtain those benefits].

Some are industrious in wickedness.

Second. Show how those things tend {to obtain those benefits}. They do so in these three respects:

1. As a proper means.

The nature of those means are adapted to this end.

Wisdom is said to hold those things in her hand. Prov. 3:16, “Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor.” They are said to be with [her]. Prov. 8:18, “Riches and honor are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.” [She is said] to cause it, v. 21.

So of industry. [‘Tis the] way to riches. Prov. 10:4, “The hand of the diligent make rich.” [Ch.] 13:4, “the soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.” [Ch.] 21:5, “The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness.”

[‘Tis the way to] honor. Prov. 22:29, “Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.”

2. As the appointed means.
    “Honor [is] not seemly to a fool,” Prov. 26:1.

[2] Riches. Eccl. 4:5, “The fool foldeth his hands together, and
    eateth his own flesh.”

[Ch.] 18:9, “[He also that is slothful in his work is] brother to him that is
    a great waster.” Prov. 6:11, “[So shall] poverty come as one that
    travaileth.”

3. As the qualification that entitles to those benefits by divine promise.

[They are] promised to true wisdom. Prov. 3:35, “[The] wise shall
    inherit glory.” Prov. 4:8–9, “Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she
    shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to
    thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.”
    “[They that be] wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament,” Dan.
    12:3. So a promise of riches as a reward of wisdom is implied, Prov. 14:24,
    “The crown of the wise is their riches.”

[They are] promised to that industry that proceeds from wisdom. Matt.
    7:7, “seek, and ye shall find.” “[I have] not said, Seek ye me in vain,” Is.
    45:19.

APPLICATION.

[Use] I. Hence we may learn a reason why wisdom is spoken of as such
    an excellent and precious thing in Scripture, and men are earnestly exhorted
to seek after [it].

We find {it described} as a thing of most unparalleled worth. Job
    28[:13–19], “Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the
    land of the living. The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It
    is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed
for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it: and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold." Prov. 8:11, "[For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it]." Prov. 16:16, "[How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!]

They [who are wise] are spoken of as most happy persons. Prov. 3:13-15, "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her."

[We are] most earnestly exhorted [to seek it]. Prov. 4:5, "Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not." [V.] 7, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding." Prov. 5:1-2, "[My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding: that thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge]." Prov. 7:4, "Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman."

What has been {shown from Scripture}, may show us the reason [why wisdom only is such an excellent and precious thing].

[Use] II of Exhortation, to persuade all to an engagedness of mind after that wisdom and industry, that is the proper means for those that are mean and contemptible, to come to true riches and honor.
Riches and honor are things that all men naturally are desirous of. You have now had declared to you what true riches and honor are, and have now had set before you the true and certain and only way to obtain [them].

First. What a state of meanness, poverty and disgrace we are all naturally in.

We at first were in a wealthy and honorable state. But men, being in honor, “abode not [in the truth,” John 8:44].

[Now, we] are poor, stripped of all, without anything of our proper good. [You are without] that which our nature, above all things, needs, without anything to satisfy the cravings, to support and supply you under the various circumstances. [You are without] anything that you hold by a sure tenure, [without] any lasting good.

[You are] without food, and without clothing, without an habitation, without money or price.

[You are] mean and contemptible, without honorable qualifications, of a dishonorable character [and] circumstances, without esteem, in great disgrace, looked on as odious, [and as] children of the devil. [Such are] called dogs and {swine} [Matt. 7:6].

Second. What poverty and disgrace you are welcome to, if you are destitute of these qualifications.

[You are] destitute of all spiritual [good], of all temporal [good, subject to] everlasting contempt, trodden underfoot. Mic. 5:10, “And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots.” God will trod ‘em down, [make them] his footstool. “[I will] trod them in mine anger,” Is. 63:31.

Third. How glorious that riches and honor are, that is to be obtained by true wisdom and industry, for those that are so mean {and contemptible}.

’Tis true riches and honor, as you have heard. [They are] not only true, but exceeding great. [You will be] rich in the most inestimable possessions in your own soul: “rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him” [Jas. 2:5]; rich in the possession of an infinitely excellent portion.

How excellent [is] the comfort and delight that those riches will yield; how excellent the comfort through those changes you must pass through; how excellent the food, how sweet the dainties--royal riches, royal dainties--how great [is] the honor: [the] honor that is of God. [He will] put honor upon you, give you most honorable qualities. [He will] give you a most honorable character; [you shall be] called the sons of God, [the] spouse of the King of heaven, the bride, the Lamb’s wife.


[The] highest degrees of earthly honor are but shadows of {heavenly honor}, and are so made use of [in Scripture]: kings, crowns, palaces. [You shall be] partakers of Christ’s riches, and of the delights and pleasures Christ has in his riches. [You will partake of] Christ’s own honor.

How great will be the actual respect. [You shall be] esteemed and respected by those that are most wise, [those that are] most honorable themselves, esteemed of God, of Christ, honored by the saints, [and] honored by the angels. [You] shall have honor over your enemies, the honor of triumph. This honor have all the saints. [You shall] tread on the lion and adder, [and] subdue Satan under your feet.
Fourthly. What poverty and disgrace Christ has been the subject of, to procure this riches and honor for those that will seek it in a way of wisdom and industry.

Fifth. How reasonable, easy and good are the means requisite {to obtain true riches and honor}.

[They are not only] reasonable, excellent, easy, [but] sweet and pleasant. Prov. 24:13-14, “My son, eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste: so shall the knowledge of wisdom [be unto the soul].” Wisdom’s ways are “ways of pleasantness” [Prov. 3:17]. The very means is the prelibation of the good sought, [the] very means in riches and honor.

Sixth. How much is done and suffered by men for that riches and honor that is not true, but very vain.

How vain is that worldly wealth [and] honor. Yet how much [is done and suffered for them]. The means they use are not good, easy and pleasant.

Directions for the seeking that true wisdom that is attended with industry:

[I will] use such as I find in the Word of God.

1. Be not wise in your own eyes.

I Cor. 3:18, “If any man seemeth to be wise [in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise].” Prov. 26:12, “Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool [than of him].”

2. Seek wisdom of him, who is the fount of it.

Job 28:12, etc., “But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me. It can’t be gotten from gold.” Prov. 2:6, “The Lord giveth wisdom.” Jas. 1:5, “[If any of you lack wisdom, let him] ask it of God.”
Sit at his feet, and hear his word with Mary. Be much in conversing with the holy Scriptures, “[which are] able to [make] wise to salvation.” [Hear] the words of wisdom. Prov. 8:6-9, “Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things. For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.”

3. Cry after wisdom, and lift up your voice for understanding [Prov. 2:3].

4. Seek it as silver, and search for it as for hid treasures [Prov. 2:4].

5. “Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding,” Prov. 23:23.


7. Tread in the steps of him who is Wisdom itself, in the way in which he is come to riches and honor.

Heb. 12, at the beginning: “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”
Notes

1 MS damage; conjectural reading.
2 The leaf from which this portion of the sermon is a discarded marriage bann, which reads:

These may Certifie that the Intention of marriage
between Mr Thomas Bliss of Springfield and Mrs Rachel
Parsons of Northampton was Entred with me on the
30th day of Novr Last and on the Same day the parties were
published by posting Up their Names and Intentions
In Northampton at the usual place

Attest Samll Mather Town Clerk
Northampton Dec 31. 1745

Rachel Parsons was b. July 14, 1721; Bliss was from Springfield, Mass.
3 MS cites v. 4.
4 MS damage.
5 MS damage.
6 MS damage affects the following portion of this sentence.
7 MS: “Enriches.”
8 MS damage affects the last two words.
9 MS damage affects the foregoing part of the sentence.
10 MS damage affects the last three words.
11 MS damage affects this word.
12 Refer to sermon on this text from earlier in the year.
13 See sermon no. 851, from Dec. 1746, on Dives and Lazarus.
14 See no. 803, the third installment in the series on Prov. 30:24–28, on the
locust.
15 MS damage affects this sentence.
16 MS damage affects this sentence.
17 MS damage.
18 MS cites v. 18.
19 MS: “of X.”
20 MS damage.
21 MS damage.
22 MS damage.
23 MS damage.