

Adages

By J. W. Henson

When I read the "PROVERBS" of Solomon the son of King David, in the Bible, I try to understand the reason that caused him to write those terse words. A proverb is a summary of truth. I believe that Solomon would hold court, listening to the facts and arguments that were being presented. When he had enough information to pronounce a sentence of judgment, he would do so through the vehicle of a proverb. I try in my mind's eye to see the scene in the courtroom; to understand the facts that were praised or condemned with the proverb. I believe a novel could be written around each proverb, certainly a short story. I have entertained myself by the hour in this pursuit within the Book of Proverbs.

Most Aphorisms are condensed from life's experience, from one's reaction with others, a feeling or response to something showing the thoughts aroused; things that were distilled into a short statement of apparent truth. The appearance of truth may be unique to one's individual experience, and be totally foreign to another. One must not uphold such thoughts to be universal truth, but rather guides for their journey through life.

There was a time when I was the Graphic Arts sales representative to the Cavalier Corporation, of Chattanooga, Tennessee. They were a very old company that built machines to dispense bottled and canned drinks. There was an old receptionist there by the name of Ruth Webb. She was a collector of proverbs that she found quoted by others. She would type them on sheets and make copies. The copies were then bound into books. She discovered that I valued what she did as a hobby and would give a copy of each new issue to me. I know nothing of what happened to her in the intervening years, but I love to know what another does with their spare time; to know upon what they choose to spend their time when there is nothing pressing to be done. It's a window to the soul. The more hobbies and interests a person has the more I want to know and understand the diversities of their complex being.

Life is a fleeting blossom that can be bloomed to the fullest or obscured in the shadows to bring forth a small fragrant flower. The more flamboyant a personality the less colorful I find his life to be. It is the ordinary fellow that hides the truth of himself that I find of interest. That man with brightly colored clothes senses that he lacks true color and tries to add it to the outside. What a sham façade! The world looks very shallowly into the soul of men. They do not value the true worth of the individual. I find much wisdom buried within the silent Black man. He has been oppressed for centuries, but his ways have caused him to survive. We could learn much if we could but cause him to start talking. He is wise beyond measure. The tests of the colleges and universities do not have a scale that reach into the spectrum of his thoughts. Nor would those who have never lived with dreary drudgery, fear, and want understand the basic wisdom that underlies his being. He is in a more stable sphere than they. He will continue to exist long after they have destroyed themselves chasing false theories. Let us each seek to find that which undergirds all mankind; that common denominator that rules all, knows all, and loves all.

WITH LOVE TO ALL,