

Proverbs 28:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A poor man that oppreseth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.

Analysis

A poor man who oppresses the poor is like 'a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.' The Hebrew 'geshem sobeph' (driving/sweeping rain) destroys crops rather than nourishing them. When the poor oppress the poor, it's doubly tragic—they should understand suffering but instead inflict it. Reformed theology recognizes that sin transcends economic categories; poverty doesn't ensure virtue. Some of history's cruelest oppressors arose from poverty. This verse condemns all oppression, especially when those who should sympathize based on experience become oppressors.

Historical Context

Tax collectors in Roman Palestine, often poor Jews exploiting fellow poor Jews for Rome, exemplified this proverb. Understanding oppression firsthand didn't prevent them from becoming oppressors for personal gain.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. Have you seen people who experienced hardship become hard-hearted rather than compassionate?
2. How can you ensure that your own difficulties produce compassion rather than bitterness?
3. What does this proverb teach about sin's universality across all economic classes?

Interlinear Text

אִישׁ	כִּשְׁ	וְעַשֵּׂה	רָעָה	מִטֶּה	סֶהָ	יֵאֵן
man	A poor	that oppresseth	the poor	rain	is like a sweeping	H369
H1397	H7326	H6231	H1800	H4306	H5502	

לֶחֶם:
which leaveth no food
H3899