

PEARLS
OF
GREAT
WISDOM

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

TIMOTHY TOW

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Preface

The Proverbs of Solomon, far from being a collection of sayings of the Hebrew people, are a crystallisation of the wisdom God has given him. They are divinely inspired and take their place among other books of the Bible. Hence they are justly called “Pearls of Great Wisdom.”

By his God-given wisdom, Solomon, with one stroke of his psychological sword, solved the case of the contending mothers. None of today’s learned judges could have done that. Thus, wisdom is the principal thing. It is the key to all life’s intricate problems. It is far above the price of rubies. It shines brighter than diamonds.

We have expounded the first nine and last two chapters of the Book. From Chapter X to XXIX the “Pearls of Great Wisdom” are displayed in parallels of contrast: Not wickedness but righteousness. Not folly but wisdom. Cast in short, pithy sentences they stand out each one like a glowing pearl. The best way to study them is to memorise them, for they are self-explanatory. To make them more outstanding we have them printed in black. To see them in profile we have restated them as accurately as we can, for homiletically speaking, restatement puts them in a new light.

Truly, from our observation, there is no better way of learning the Proverbs than by committing them to memory. One verse a day will make you wiser and wiser all the way. Amen.

—*Timothy Tow*

Chapter I

Introduction

The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; (1:1)

Reader's Digest Oxford Complete Word Finder defines a proverb as "a short pithy saying in general use, held to embody a general truth". As to Proverbs or the Book of Proverbs, it is "a didactic poetic Old Testament book of maxims attributed to Solomon and others".

Now, among Bible commentators, there is a low view and a high view of its authorship. The low view is represented by Scofield. He says,

That the Proverbs were Solomon's (1:1) implies no more than that he gathered into orderly arrangement sayings already current among the people, the wisdom of the Spirit, perhaps through many centuries (Eccl. 12:9).

But here is Matthew Henry's rebuttal:

The Proverbs were not merely a collection of wise sayings formerly delivered, as some have imagined, but were the dictates of the Spirit of God in Solomon, and are often quoted and alluded to, as such in other parts of the Bible, the canonical authority of no book in the Old Testament is better ratified by the evidence of quotations than that of the Proverbs ... Take the proverbs of other nations, and we shall find great numbers founded upon selfishness, cunning, pride, injustice, national contempt, and animosities. The principle of the Proverbs of Solomon are piety, charity, justice, benevolence

and true prudence. Their universal purity proves their inspiration.

In ordinary proverbs, the sayings of the people, “we shall find great numbers founded upon *selfishness*. ...” This immediately brings to mind two Chinese proverbs that are founded on selfishness: 各人自扫门前雪, 莫管他人瓦上霜 Let each man sweep the snow outside his own door. Do not bother the frost on another man’s roof. 肥水不流别人田 Rich waters flow not into another man’s field.

Among the Jews, who have been enlightened by the Word of God, are also many erroneous sayings which are exposed by our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount. Let us consider just two of them as we consider the Chinese proverbs. “Ye have heard that it was **said** by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: (i.e. the illicit sexual intercourse between a man and a woman.) But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” (i.e. adultery is deeper than the physical act, it penetrates the thought life) (Matt. 5:27,28). A second saying is grossly wrong, “Ye have heard that it hath been **said**, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matt. 5:43,44).

From the study by contrast of the two Chinese sayings and two Jewish sayings we see how erroneous the proverbs of the nations can become. Not the Proverbs of Solomon, because they are given to him by the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Now it is further recorded in I Kings 4:32-34, “And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five. ... And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.”

The Abingdon Bible Commentary, noting that the first 29 chapters of the Book of Proverbs contain but 850 verses, concludes that little has come from his hand. We contend 850 verses is a good

portion of the 3,000 Proverbs. It is not necessary that all the Proverbs Solomon penned must be preserved for posterity inasmuch as not all of Jesus' acts and sayings were recorded in the Gospels according to the Apostle John. "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25).

The truth about the Wisdom of Solomon is he is specially endowed with Divine Intelligence which inspired him to write this Book for our learning, as he orally instructed all kings and commoners alike. The Queen of Sheba is mentioned by our Lord as one who came to hear his wisdom and how he must have answered all her questions.

The story is told how the Queen tested Solomon by sending "two troops of boys dressed like girls, and of girls dressed like boys, nosegays of artificial flowers to be distinguished from real ones by the sight alone. ... Solomon detected the boys and girls by their different manners of washing. The difference in the nosegays he discovered by letting the bees in upon them" (*Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church, Dean Stanley of Westminster*). But it is the judgment that he dispensed to the true mother against the fake claim of another by ordering the living child to be divided in two that brought acclaim to Solomon's name as a judge of judges. Solomon's pearls of great wisdom are derived from no other source than from Wisdom Himself. "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here." (Matt. 12:42).

To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. (1:2-4)

Commenting on vv. 2-4, Matthew Henry says,

The instructions here given are plain, and likely to benefit those who are sensible to their own ignorance and their need to be taught. And those who receive these instructions, in their light and power, will be made wise to know the sin they should avoid, the duty they should do, and to escape the tempters' wiles. If young people will take heed to their ways, according to Solomon's proverbs, they will so gain knowledge and discretion. The wise man will hear, and will always be a learner: He will therefore add to his treasure from every maxim of this book. No man has so much understanding but he may increase it, as he attains to the true interpretation of each proverb, and discovers the meaning of the words of the wise, which to the careless, superficial and conceited, appear dark sayings.

A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings. (1:5,6)

Vv. 5, 6 are most succinctly restated in 9:9, **“Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser:”**

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. (1:7)

According to v. 7, religion is the key to knowledge vis-a-vis so-called science. The fear of the Lord leads immediately to God Himself who is the Beginning of all things. But the doctrine of evolution blinds the eye of every scientist. A godless scientist is no better than a fool, as it is stated in **Ps. 14 and 53**, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God”.

Two “scientists” were discussing on the BBC the meaning of life, and both agreed that life is meaningless. Without God, life is a hopeless end. With God, life is an endless hope. “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the (knowledge of the) whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). Ph.Ds dying without Christ!

My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck. My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. (1:8-10)

Vv. 8-10. The Jews rightly place the Fifth Commandment, “Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.” (Exo. 20:12) on the first Table, not as Protestant commentators on the second. Fathers and Mothers who bring us up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord are God’s representatives. Thus in **4:1**, “Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.”

Evangelism should begin in the home. When neglected the result is a brood of godless children and a great loss to the Church. The Presbyterian system of covenanting with the Lord in paedobaptism after our spiritual father Abraham (Gen. 17:11-14; Col. 2:11) is the Biblical way. So, the fear of the Lord should lead us to the fear of our parents.

By corollary, it is the duty of parents to lead their children to the Lord from infancy. It should be the aim of every **Christian kindergarten** to teach the Gospel message to its young pupils. The Christian kindergarten should teach the fourth **R**, viz., **Righteousness**. It is a great loss to God and the Church when this is neglected.

If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause: Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit: We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil: Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse: My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path: For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood. Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird. And they lay wait for their own blood; they lurk privily for their own lives.

So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof. (1:11-19)

Vv. 11-19. This is restated in Ps. 50:17,18 “Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.”

Parents, who have eaten more salt than children eat rice, can discern more clearly between right and wrong. One rule of pedagogy is to forbid what is wrong even as the Ten Commandments are predominantly stated in the negative. The lure of unrighteous gain or filthy lucre is so great that it easily fools the young and inexperienced into partnership with evil doers. They are enticed to crime of the basest sort, murder for gain (谋财害命). In so doing they kill also themselves.

Three decades ago two brothers who were Church goers and had even taught Sunday School lured some elderly merchants into their house in Serangoon Gardens and strangled them in cold blood in order to rob them of their gold bars. The result of such a cruel plot, the gold bar murder case, sent the young men to the gallows. (*The Tenth Man: Gold Bar Murders*, by Alex Josey) What a monstrous deceiver is the lust for gain—covetousness and greed. Thus desperados today succumb to smuggling drugs and pay with their lives.

Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scornors delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. (1:20-23)

Vv. 20-23: Who is this Wisdom that is published city-wide to the inhabitants of all Jerusalem? Solomon’s wise counsels are sought

even by kings and dignitaries of other nations and in the noble example is the Queen of Sheba.

Jesus says, “And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country” (Luke 4:24). As Jesus was rejected by his own kith and kin, so was Solomon. The simple ones, the naive and thoughtless, the scornful and the conceited, and fools doubly bigoted, reject the wise teachings of the King.

Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. (1:24-32)

Vv. 24-32: Fools and knaves reject God and by God are they rejected. When they are finally overtaken by disaster, then it comes down upon them like a tornado. When they cry to the Lord, He will not answer. The door of Grace is closed to them because they despise the Word of the Lord. Their sins of contempt will find them out and slay them.

In contrast we have Isaiah’s free offer of salvation and deliverance to those who seek after righteousness, to the humble and willing-hearted.

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour

for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee. Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. (Isa. 55:1-7)

Solomon closes Chapter I with grace extended to those who listen, **“But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.” (1:33)**

Chapter II

What Will You Ask of God?

You will not go wrong if you read this account of the boy-king Solomon. The story is recorded both in I Kings 3:5-25 and II Chronicles 1:7-12,

In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said unto God, Thou hast shewed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead. Now, O LORD God, let thy promise unto David my father be established: for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great? And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king: Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like. (II Chron. 1:7-12)

For any young person, whether king or commoner, what greater gift can he receive from God's hand? But many will ask an inferior thing, such as fame, power and riches. Not Solomon. What he desires of God is wisdom and understanding, for this is the key to success in life. So he becomes the wisest man that ever lived, and having found wisdom from Above, he received all that comes together with it.

“Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like” (II Chron 1:12).

My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path. When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things; Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness; Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked; Whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths: (2:1-15)

The words of fatherly advice to young people in chapter 2:1-15 are none other than reflections from his own experience with God in the dream at Gibeon. Now, the wisdom and understanding that Solomon sought for was not for his own gain but for service of the Lord. As a young king Solomon needed wisdom that he might discern, judging his people. This is shown in the **two harlot** mothers' case.

This is also shown in how the young king **disposed of the enemies to the throne, one by one**, by his patient yet firm handling of several of the chief ringleaders. “**Discretion** shall preserve thee,

understanding shall keep thee: To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward (crooked) things; Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness; Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked; Whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths:” (v.11-15).

Now, before David’s death he had committed to Solomon the following enemies to the throne for judgment:

- (1) Joab, Commander-in-chief of the Army. Although he sided with David against Absalom, he later veered to Adonijah, Absalom’s younger brother who tried to usurp the throne from Solomon. Joab had also murdered Abner in cold blood and Amasa, two captains of the hosts of Israel (I Kings 2:5-6).
- (2) Shimei who cursed the king when he was escaping out of the hand of Absalom. Though he received back David by coming down to Jordan when the king was on his triumphal return, which moved him to spare his life, yet this man Shimei was not fully pardoned. “Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood” (I Kings 2:9).

In condemning Joab, Adonijah was implicated, for Adonijah, Solomon’s elder brother, conspired with Joab to snatch the throne from Solomon. Solomon could have Adonijah executed, but to show his magnanimity as a young king, he let him off on parole: “And Solomon said, If he will shew himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth: but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die. So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house” (I Kings 1:52-53).

The wisdom of Solomon (2:6-12) in disposing of these enemies to the throne is manifested in the following judgments:

- (1) Adonijah, instead of repenting from his crime of attempted usurpation of the throne harboured a lust towards Abishag, the

royal nurse to King David. He cunningly used Bathsheba the Queen Mother to seek Solomon's permission for Abishag's hand. "And king Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; for he is mine elder brother; even for him, and for **Abiathar** the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah. Then king Solomon swore by the LORD, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life. Now therefore, as the LORD liveth, which hath established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who hath made me an house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day" (I Kings 2:22-24).

- (2) The name of Abiathar is implicated with Adonijah because according to I Kings 1:19 Abiathar the priest was in league with Joab and Adonijah in their unsuccessful plot. So Abiathar was banished to Anathoth to his own fields, who should be put to death, but for the sake of his service with David, he was deposed and not executed. "His bishopric let another man take" (Ps 109:8).
- (3) Joab, having failed in his coup with Adonijah against Solomon, sought shelter in the Tabernacle of the Lord by catching hold of the horns of the altar. He refused to leave the altar, but was executed there anyway by order of the king.
- (4) Shimei who cursed king David was put under house arrest in Jerusalem, being prohibited from crossing over the brook Kidron. Should he cross the brook Kidron, he would be punished with death. Three years after, Shimei crossed over the Kidron to retrieve his runaway servants. So he was executed.

Thus all the wicked ones, this "gang of four", were eliminated one by one by Solomon's wise and patient process of judgment. He uses the psychological sword that shut the mouth of every critic. He who is a politician must not be hasty. The reason why David Marshall lost out to Lee Kuan Yew was he was too quick-tempered.

Counsel Against Strange Women

To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words; Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God. For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life. That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous. For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it. But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it. (2:16-22)

This first counsel against the strange woman followed by numerous others that further expose the snares of women are derived from Solomon's own mistakes for loving them.

To understand who are the strange women involved in the King's life, let us turn to I Kings 11:1-8 which reads:

But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father. Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of

Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

Comparing Scripture with Scripture these strange women of Solomon's are so-called because, they are foreign, non-Israelite (non-Christian) women, forbidden of the Lord to be married to a son of Israel (v.2). For these are idol-worshippers, "And they turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father" ... "Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods." (vv. 7,8).

The vulnerability of men to the fairer sex is expressed in the Chinese proverb, "Even the hero can hardly get through Beauty's gate" (英雄难过美人关). When Solomon succumbs to his foreign, non-Israelite wives' religion, he breaks the first two Commandments, much more serious than the VII Commandment. To take a non-Christian wife today leads us into the same quandary.

I have known of a once zealous Christian for relapsing into idol-worship with his non-Christian idol-worshipping wife. I have known of another Christian who gave up his faith in order to marry a Thai wife with her house full of Buddhas. His mother was grief-stricken when she visited Thailand and entered their bedroom, filled with a cloud of incense over a pantheon of idols.

For a Christian to marry a non-Christian is fatal. The passage forbidding such mixed marriage in the New Testament is found in II Cor. 6:1-14 - 7:1,

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be

their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (II Cor. 6:14-7:1)

Chapter III

Formula of Success and Prosperity for a Young Man

My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. (3:1-4)

When we talk of the Law and Commandments we think of the Ten Commandments. Reduced to two basic principles they are love for God and men (Matt. 22:36-39). Expanded to cover every detail of life, it is the whole Bible. We have a sure and immutable Instruction Book to show us the Way of life. If we walk in His Word which is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path, it will lead us to success and prosperity. Let us treasure Truth and Mercy like precious gems that we keep with all diligence, like under lock and key.

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. (3:5-8)

The first rule is look to God with our whole heart for guidance. To look to God is conversely to depart from evil. We receive vigorous spiritual health that immunizes us from every spiritual virus.

Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine. (3:9-10)

The second rule is worship God with our substance, which includes the tithes of every increase from His Hand. “God loveth a cheerful giver” by giving to him more. Do not withhold from God or else He will withhold from you.

My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. (3:11-12)

The third rule is to submit to God when He chastises us when we go wrong. (Like David in the case of Bathsheba).

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. ... (3:13)

Wisdom which is the faculty of discernment in making decisions in life is to be sought above silver, gold and precious stones. Wisdom transcends everything. Wisdom is long life, wealth and honour. Its pathway is pleasant and peaceful. It is a tree of life. It is by Wisdom that God created the heavens and the earth and maintains it by His Providence. By treasuring Wisdom we have no fear of any eventuality. We have full security. In the event of disaster that overtakes the wicked, it shall not harm us.

Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee. (3:27,28)

Having stressed the paramount importance of the spiritual, Solomon now deals with the earthly. This is his first instruction on our economic life. He observes how the economically strong exploits the weak. He puts it in his own way what Moses has declared, first in Lev. 19:13, “Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him:

the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.” A towkay must pay his employee on time. To defer only one day is exploitation. “In any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment, and bless thee: and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the LORD thy God” (Deut. 24:13). A poor man may pawn his blanket with his rich friend. The law says he can get the blanket back in the night for a brief season, but hand it back the next day. To deny him this privilege is unrighteous (Deut. 24:12).

Moses continues, “Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates: At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the LORD, and it be sin unto thee.” (Deut. 24:14,15).

In Jer. 22:13, the prophet cries out, “Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour’s service without wages, and giveth him not for his work;” How often we see this in ungrateful wives of rich men. Instead of paying their contractor promptly they take advantage of their position to over-criticize their work and cut off their wages.

Coming back to Prov. 3:27, it is interesting to note that this verse is followed by “Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.” (v.28). Such procrastination to do good when it is in the power of their hand to do it is condemned by the Apostle James, “If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?” (Jas. 2:15,16).

In our modern context, we have been fully tested in our Pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Not being used to tipping in Singapore, we Singaporeans can become stingy when travelling

abroad where it is expected. No doubt those who serve us in hotels, in airports, in restaurants, in driving us from place to place, are paid, but their pay is meagre. So they expect a tip from you. The law of tipping is you tip more if your servant serves you more.

Now, when we tip below the expected sum when we have every means of doing it, we get a cold shoulder when we leave. But when we tip just a little above the scale, you have the whole waiter force lined up to wish you goodbye. They truly bless you. We have learned one thing in our travel to the Holy Land and that is to tip liberally. Then you are served like kings. And they who are blessed, bless you in return.

How about private tipping? Do you leave a dollar or two on the hotel bed everyday they make your bed? It is a hard job making bed, but by your tip you can wipe away the sweat on their brows. And they bless you!

When your servant goes out of the way to please you, tip him right away. In one of the sailings across the Sea of Galilee, when the Jesus Boat stopped for the pastor to preach the Word, suddenly the Singapore Flag was hoisted, while it burst out patriotically “Mari kita rakyat Singapura ...” The fifty of us spontaneously and proudly stood at attention. We were pleasantly lifted up in our spirits 5,000 miles from home. As leader I ordered that a tip of US\$20 be given to the crew. Were they surprised also, since it came from a non-tipping Singapore?

Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee. Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm. (3:29-30)

Positively stated, live at peace with your neighbour. Good fence makes good neighbours.

Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways. For the froward is abomination to the LORD: but his secret is with the righteous. (3:31-32)

Leave bullies alone. Do not be influenced by their behaviour. God hates them already. But we have the inner teaching of our God unto righteousness.

The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just. Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly. The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools. (3:33-35)

Therein is an on-going judgment of curse and blessing on the wicked and the just. In Rom. 12:19-21, Paul says, “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” Never take the law into our own hands is Christ’s teaching also in the Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 6:28-40).

Chapter IV

In Praise of Law and Wisdom

Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law. For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live. Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. 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. Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many. I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble. Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life. (4:1-13)

This preamble of praise on the law of God from a father's hand, yea, which is wisdom, is emphasised the fourth time. The young and the uninitiated must be reminded again and again to keep to the directive, yea, the preceptive will of God to be blessed by His cooperative will.

Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. For

they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall. For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence. (4:14-17)

Conversely stated, we are to keep out of all evil. We are in fact to flee from it, to quote from St. Paul's instruction to young Timothy (II Tim. 2:22). The wicked is insatiably bent on mischief like a hungry man for bread and a drunkard for wine.

But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. (4:18)

David puts it this way, "And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain" (2 Sam. 23:4).

Pilgrim Chant

*Fear not, my soul to press on Upon thy pilgrim way.
The night though dark yields to dawn, And dawn to perfect day!
Wait, wait for His salvation That rises with the sun.
O what bright hope tomorrow, O the Promised Land!*

*I will press on to victory Upon my pilgrim way.
I've finished half the journey, Shall now I go astray?
Arise, my soul, and be gone, Lest thou be left alone.
O what a glory waits thee, In the Promised Land!*

*I'll put on spurs to my feet, The wings of faith and love.
Let sin beat a quick retreat - I soar to heights above.
Speed, speed onward to Jordan, Wide, wide, the horizon.
O what a glory 'fore me, There's the Promised Land!*

*O Christ, I've reached the Jordan: The waters surround me.
O ferry me to Canaan, And bring me home with Thee
With Thee I'm saved forever - Come ocean come River!
I'll live fore'er with Jesus, In the Promised Land!*

The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble. (4:19)

Conversely the way of the wicked is like walking in night's pitch darkness and all he can do is to stumble through.

My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. (4:20)

Again the fatherly advice to a young man is to incline his ears (both ears) to the words of Wisdom. It is like drinking the elixir of life, the taking of tonic and vitamins.

To succeed in life, he must stablish his heart, make up (programme) his mind to do right. That should teach him to refrain from speaking crooked things, and from perverted lips. That should set his eyes right on target. That should guide his feet on the straight path, neither to the right nor to the left—away from every kind of temptation. “Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin.”

It is like Abraham's servant being instructed to go to Mesopotamia to get a bride from Abraham's family for Isaac. Abraham's servant sincerely set his heart to this mission, following every instruction of his lord. Thus he accomplished his mission with quick success by finding Rebekah right on target. He could say, “I being in the (right) way, the Lord helped me.” (Gen. 24:27)

It is like a resolute young scholar who devotes himself to his study and achieving a 4-point distinction, full marks in his four-year career. He is first on the Dean's Honours List.

In our Christian walk, the Lord expects the highest from us, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (Matt. 5:48). Amen.

Chapter V

The Disaster of Leaving the Wife of Your Youth

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. For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil: But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell. Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them. Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth. Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house: Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel: Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labours be in the house of a stranger; And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, And say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me! I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly. Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets. Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee. Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love. And

why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray. (5:1-23)

Speaking like a father to his son Solomon from his own experience of succumbing to strange women when he was already happily married, says in v.18, “Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.” It is a sad story to hear even of Christian couples developing a triangular relationship. A loving wife can suddenly run after another man, but more often it’s the man. These are a pastor’s burden for marrying them. “Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe (as expressed by artists); let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love. And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?” (v.20).

When a married man is carried away by the charm of a strange woman, not only by a non-Christian but also by one of the same faith, he can only plead guilty before God and suffer all the consequences of his sin. (vv.21-23).

The power of the opposite sex is so strong that it can topple a king’s crown. First is Solomon as it is recorded of him. So he is able to warn others from his miserable experience.

The most notorious case is King Edward VIII of recent history. Being bewitched by Mrs. Simpson an American divorced woman, King Edward VIII could keep his throne but for a month. For the love of a woman the Monarch of the British Empire had to abdicate. And so he married her against not only the British Constitution that governs kings but also the Holy Commandments of the Lord. The couple faded into eternal bliss as the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, but did they? Outwardly yes, perhaps for the honeymoon period. As

the wages of sin is death, the couple lived a miserable life as revealed in a book written of them.

The saddest part of it all is that history repeated itself in the life of Prince Charles his nephew who married Diana when he was in love with a married woman.

As the wages of sin is death the double triangles formed from their marital infidelity resulted in the sudden snuffing out of Diana's life.

How do "strange" women work to bewitch unsuspecting men? First by flattery. "A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin" (Prov. 26:28). "A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet" (Prov. 29:5). This is the strange woman's honeycomb lips. But the end is bitter as wormwood and cuts like a razor-sharp two-edged sword. The result is death and hell. Her dealings are simply treacherous, deluding its victim.

The way of salvation is simply to keep her at arm's length, yea, to flee from her door. "Out of sight, out of mind," is the saving recipe. To yield to her ends in the robbing of your money and savings, and the consuming of your body and physical powers. When one is thus consumed it would be too late to regret one's folly in not listening to one's teachers and instructors.

Chapter VI

Never Be a Guarantor for Another

My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger, Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth. Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend. Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids. Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler. (6:1-5)

There are many wise sayings on money matters. One of them is “Neither a borrower nor a lender be.” My grandfather taught me from young “never to borrow, never pay interest”. Here we have Solomon’s warning on becoming surety or guarantor for another. He repeats this warning in Prov. 11:15, 20:16, 27:13 so as to show the severe consequences that result from such an undertaking.

According to Hebrew law a guarantor who fails to meet his obligation might be sold into slavery and his goods confiscated. A guarantor who “strikes hands with another”, indeed, has put his head on the chopping block. In this context he is like a hunted animal or a fleeing bird.

Never be taken in by even “good” friends. I have known a church member guaranteeing another who has lost heavily paying the latter’s debt. The sin of pride or the folly of unguarded simplicity can lead a man to this ruin.

Learn a Lesson From the Ant

Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? 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. (6:6-11)

Man, because of his sinful nature, can go astray from his normal behaviour. Those who take to alcoholic drinks, even doctors and lawyers, end up in the dumps. Those who are lazy to work suffer hunger, for Paul says, “If any would not work, neither should he eat” (II Thess. 3:10). He is therefore reduced to poverty like a traveller who keeps on spending with no income and like an armed man on the prowl.

The ant is a diligent worker. He saves for rainy days. He knows how to labour hard even without supervision. Can human beings be worse than ants—Not worth the life of an insect?

A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth. He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers; Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord. Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy. These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren. (6:12-19)

One plus six, yea seven things repugnant to the Lord:

The first that God hates is: A fellow with no substance, a wicked man with a perverse mouth. He acts and says cunningly. He is a good talker that sows mischief and discord. God shall punish him suddenly and severely.

The six, yea seven, following are a haughty gait, a lying tongue, hands that kill innocent people, a heart plotting nothing good but evil, feet running swiftly to create trouble, a false writer and a liar, and he that stirs up quarrel between brothers.

A Fifth Refrain on the Virtue of Keeping God's Law

My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: (6:20-23)

And Warning Against Illicit Sex

To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman. Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids. For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life. Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent. Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry; But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house. But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get;

and his reproach shall not be wiped away. For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts. (6:24-35)

- (1) From the “evil and strange woman” who flatters with the tongue for the kill. From looking at her to lust after her beauty. “O be careful little eyes what you see!” The fall of David was through the eye gate. “Every suspicious familiarity will prove a wound and a reproach to a man’s character, which will not easily be wiped away” (Matthew Henry).
- (2) The greater disaster is to commit adultery with a married woman. It is like playing with fire. Can a man escape from being burnt?

To break the VIII Commandment, i.e., to steal, is faulty. The thief must restore sevenfold.

To break the VII Commandment, i.e., to commit adultery is fatal. For the husband offended will not be appeased with ransom or riches. He being enraged will not spare life or limb. Adultery that ends in manslaughter is a common story we read in the newspapers.

Chapter VII

A Sixth Refrain on the Wisdom of Keeping God's Law

My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart. Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman: (7:1-4)

To Save an Inexperienced Young Man from the Deadly Embrace of a “Strange” Woman.

That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words. For at the window of my house I looked through my casement, And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house. In the twilight, in the evening , in the black and dark night: And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart. (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house: Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.) So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee. I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. I have

perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves. For the goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey: He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed. With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.

Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death. (7:5-27)

Chapter VIII

The Call of Wisdom

Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors. Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man. O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart. 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. Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. (8:1-10)

The Pricelessness of Wisdom

For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it. I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions. The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate. (8:11-13)

The Royal Predominance of Wisdom

Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me. Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures. (8:14-21)

The Personification of Wisdom

The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.

Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD. But he that

sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death. (8:22-36)

Wisdom Personified in the Word (Logos)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. (John 1:1-3)

Wisdom Personified in the Image of the Invisible God

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; (Col. 1:15-19)

Chapter IX

Wisdom's House is the Church that Christ Has Raised

Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding. He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot. Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased. If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it. (9:1-12)

Wisdom's house is the Church that Christ has raised in the world. The seven pillars are the ministers, in perfection. Through the Church Christ has prepared a table of spiritual food for those who trust in Him. The death of Christ is prefigured in killing of animals, the wine points to His precious blood that was shed. The maidens, His servants, go forth to invite the guests. He that is simple is invited that he might become wise. "Come and eat of the bread of life and

drink the wine of his life-giving blood.” This is an open invitation to one and all as it is stated in John 3:16 that “whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

But whoever would eat His bread and drink His cup must forsake his foolish ways. Those who scorn the truth, let them be, for they will become the worse whose mistake is exposed, but a wise man will hear reproof and become the wiser.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom—religion is the key to wise learning. Wisdom bestows long life. To seek wisdom is for our own good. Those who scorn wisdom end up to their own shame.

The Invitation of a Foolish Woman, and Death is in her Embrace

A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing. For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city, To call passengers who go right on their ways: Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell. (9:13-18)

Christ is Wisdom, but Satan is Folly. Satan tempts us as a foolish woman, offering her carnal pleasures, blinding the conscience. She is very persuasive and overpowering. Those who succumb are also foolish. When one’s sinful passion is consummated, then comes the verdict from Above, “Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell.”

By application we have the case of David falling for Bathsheba’s beauty. This resulted in the great king being hounded from his throne

for a season and the loss of four sons to pay for the murder of Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, according to Moses' Law. Who are they?

Happily for Joseph, he shook off Potiphar's wife's irresistible advances by the help of the Holy Spirit, and because he yielded not to temptation he rose in his integrity to become prime minister of Egypt.

Yield Not to Temptation

HORATIO R. PALMER, 1834-1907

HORATIO R. PALMER, 1834-1907
 Arr. by Norman Johnson, 1928-

1. Yield not to temp-ta-tion For yield-ing is sin, Each vic-t'ry will
 2. Shun e-vil com-pan-ions, Bad lan-guage dis-dain, God's name hold in
 3. To him that oer-com-eth God giv-eth a crown, Thru faith we will

help you Some oth-er to win; Fight man-ful-ly on-ward, Dark
 rev-rence, Nor take it in vain; Be thought-ful and ear-nest, Kind-
 con-quer Tho oft-en cast down; He who is our Sav-ior Our

pas-sions sub-due, Look ev-er to Je-sus-Hell car-ry you through.
 heart-ed and true, Look ev-er to Je-sus-Hell car-ry you through.
 strength will re-new, Look ev-er to Je-sus-Hell car-ry you through.

CHORUS

Ask the Sav-ior to help you, Com-fort, strength-en and keep you;

He is will-ing to aid you- He will car-ry you through.

PART TWO

Here begins the second part of this book. The former chapters are more in the form of a continual discourse, in which the nature and excellence of wisdom are depicted. The remainder of the book contains the dictates of wisdom expressed in short, terse, antithetic sentences, for the most part unconnected, yet forming a code of moral aphorisms, unrivalled for depth of thought, acuteness of observation, purity of sentiment, and force of expression.

The parallels of which they consist are antithetic of various degrees, from those in which word is contrasted with word through the whole sentence, to those in which there is only something of opposition in the two propositions.

And through the whole of the proverbs we are taught to look beyond the surface, for what further than the first or most obvious sense the passage may without violence imply, and this we shall find to be Christ. He is the Wisdom so often spoken of in this book, and for which the proverbs are given.

— Matthew Henry

Chapter X

The Contrast Between Righteousness and Wickedness

The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother. (10:1)

The joy of parents rests in the conduct of their children. Mothers especially are hurt by the misbehaviour of their sons.

Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death. (10:2)

Ill-gotten gains are a total loss, but righteousness saves one from death.

The LORD will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away the substance of the wicked. (10:3)

The Lord will not let the righteous go hungry, but the wicked will be brought to naught.

He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. (10:4)

The lazy becomes poor, the hard-working becomes rich.

He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame. (10:5)

To harvest in season is wise, to neglect right through brings loss of face.

Blessings are upon the head of the just: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked. (10:6)

The just is crowned with blessings, but the wicked's mouth is full of fury.

The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot. (10:7)

The memory of the good brings blessing, but the name of the bad stinks.

The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall. (10:8)

The wise person keeps His commandments, but the idle talking of a fool is vanity.

He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known. (10:9)

He who walks straight, keeps on walking, but he who walks crooked will be arrested.

He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow: but a prating fool shall fall. (10:10)

Those who practise trickery bring sorrow, and a vain talker will fizzle.

The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked. (10:11)

A righteous man's mouth flows with life, the mouth of a wicked man is full of fury.

Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins. (10:12)

Hatred makes people quarrel, but "love covers a heap of sins."

In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found: but a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding. (10:13)

Wisdom drops from the lips of an understanding man, but fools deserve a good thrashing.

Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction. (10:14)

The wise store up knowledge, but fools jabber to their own ruin.

The rich man's wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty. (10:15)

A rich man is protected by his wealth but a poor man is ruined by his poverty.

The labour of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin. (10:16)

A righteous man's hard work leads to life, the wicked's labour leads to ruin.

He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth. (10:17)

He who keeps instruction, keeps life, but he who turns from rebuke is sadly mistaken.

He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool. (10:18)

He who tells a lie to cover up hatred in his heart but slanders acts like a fool.

In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise. (10:19)

A garrulous talker tends to sin, but silence is golden.

The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth. (10:20)

Speech that is silver flows from a just man, but what is within a wicked man is naughtiness.

The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom. (10:21)

A righteous man's speech is life, but fools die for lack of wisdom.

The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it. (10:22)

(The sentence is so plain, it needs no further explanation.)

It is as sport to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom. (10:23)

A fool plays the fool, but a wise man keeps his cool.

The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted. (10:24)

The wicked fears and he's become afraid, but the wishes of the righteous shall be given.

As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation. (10:25)

The wicked are blown away by a whirlwind, but the righteous stand firmly as on an everlasting foundation.

As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him. (10:26)

A lazy fellow who is sent to do anything ends up with much irritation to him who sends him.

The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened. (10:27)

Long life to the godly, short life to the godless.

The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish. (10:28)

The righteous' hope is a happy one, the hope of the wicked is a hopeless one.

The way of the LORD is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity. (10:29)

The righteous' path leads to every springing step with God but evil perpetrators go to their own doom.

The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth. (10:30)

The righteous persevere to the end but the wicked will lose out in their earthly endeavours.

The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out. (10:31)

The just utters words of wisdom, but the tongue of the crooked will be severed.

The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness. (10:32)

The righteous speak acceptable words, but the wicked spew out double-dealing words.

Chapter XI

The Contrast Between Righteousness and Wickedness (2)

A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight. (11:1)

A balance that cheats God hates; A fifty-fifty balance is God's delight.

When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom. (11:2)

Pride leads to loss of face, but wisdom is with the humble.

The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them. (11:3)

The upright is led on to further uprightness, those who are crooked will be destroyed.

Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death. (11:4)

Money cannot buy one from judgment, but righteousness saves from death.

The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness. (11:5)

The righteousness of a good man shall lead him aright, but the wickedness of the wicked shall cause him to stumble.

The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness. (11:6)

See v.5.

When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth. (11:7)

When a wicked man dies, his hope dies with him, his hope will surely die with him.

The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead. (11:8)

The righteous is saved from trouble, which is the desert to the wicked.

An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered. (11:9)

An insincere man ruins his neighbours with his mouth, but the just is saved by the facts of the case.

When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth: and when the wicked perish, there is shouting. (11:10)

The triumph of the righteous makes glad a city, and even greater rejoicings when the wicked are destroyed.

By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked. (11:11)

The city is promoted by the blessings of the upright, but is cast down by the words of the wicked.

He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace. (11:12)

A fool looks down on his neighbour, but a wise man keeps his mouth shut.

A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter. (11:13)

He who carries tales divulges secrets, but a loyal friend keeps his mouth shut.

Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. (11:14)

The people fail where there is no word of wisdom, but many good advisers bring security.

He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth suretiship is sure. (11:15)

He who guarantees a mere acquaintance shall pay dearly for it, but he that detests guaranteeing is assured.

A gracious woman retaineth honour: and strong men retain riches. (11:16)

A gracious lady is honoured and valiant men keep their money.

The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh. (11:17)

The merciful man is blessed in his heart but the cruel man is cursed in his body.

The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward. (11:18)

The wicked works deceitfully, but the righteous shall be paid by his honest work.

As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death. (11:19)

Righteousness is life but wickedness is death.

They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the LORD: but such as are upright in their way are his delight. (11:20)

A crooked heart is abhorred by the Lord, but the upright heart is his delight.

Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered. (11:21)

The wicked plot together but they will be punished, but the children of the upright shall be saved.

As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion. (11:22)

A beautiful lady who has no understanding is like a pig wearing a golden jewel in its snout.

The desire of the righteous is only good: but the expectation of the wicked is wrath. (11:23)

The righteous is inclined to good, the wicked is inclined to punishment.

There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. (11:24)

He who sows widely gathers plentifully. He who holds back ends in poverty.

The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself. (11:25)

The generous increases, and he who helps others shall be helped.

He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him: but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it. (11:26)

He who profiteers is cursed by the multitude, but blessing comes to the honest trader who sells at a fair price.

He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him. (11:27)

Favour comes to him that keeps on doing good, and he that practises evil, evil will boomerang against him.

He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch. (11:28)

Money cannot support him who leans upon it, but the righteous grows strong like a healthy branch.

He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart. (11:29)

He who introduces unrest to his own house will be swept away by the wind, and the fool shall serve the wise.

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise. (11:30)

The righteous bears fruit from the tree of life, and a wise man will save souls.

Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner. (11:31)

The righteous are rewarded with the blessings of the earth, the wicked are punished the more for their sins.

Chapter XII

The Contrast Between Righteousness and Wickedness (3)

Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish. (12:1)

He who is a docile pupil loves knowledge, but he is an insensible fellow who hates reproof.

A good man obtaineth favour of the LORD: but a man of wicked devices will he condemn. (12:2)

The Lord shows favour to a good man, but a wicked man comes under His condemnation.

A man shall not be established by wickedness: but the root of the righteous shall not be moved. (12:3)

A wicked man is built on shifty foundation, but the righteous is firmly rooted.

A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones. (12:4)

A chaste wife is her husband's glory, but she that behaves shamefully shames him to his bones.

The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit. (12:5)

The righteous thinks uprightly, the wicked thinks crookedly.

The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood: but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them. (12:6)

The wicked are exposed by their murderous intentions even out of their own mouths, but the righteous who speak uprightly cannot be accused.

The wicked are overthrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand. (12:7)

The wicked are defeated and reduced to nothing, but the house of the righteous is firmly established.

A man shall be commended according to his wisdom: but he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised. (12:8)

A man is praised for his wise counsel, but he who has a crooked heart shall be discarded.

He that is despised, and hath a servant, is better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread. (12:9)

He who has a servant and yet lightly treated is better than he who praises himself but goes hungry daily.

A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. (12:10)

A righteous man is tender towards the animal he keeps, but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.

He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding. (12:11)

He who cultivates his land will eat its produce, but he who keeps company with vagabonds is insensible to his own need.

The wicked desireth the net of evil men: but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit. (12:12)

The wicked depends on the intake of other wicked men, but the tree of the righteous yields fruit.

The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips: but the just shall come out of trouble. (12:13)

The wicked is caught by the words of his offending lips, but the just shall not be implicated.

A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth: and the recompence of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him. (12:14)

A good man is sustained by what he says, and by what he does.

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise. (12:15)

A fool justifies himself, but rather that he listen to wise counsel.

A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame. (12:16)

A fool's evil is readily discovered, but a wise person hides shame.

He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit. (12:17)

A righteous man tells the truth, a false witness tells lies.

There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health. (12:18)

There are those whose tongues are swords, but the words of the wise bring healing.

The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment. (12:19)

The honest tongue stands up to the test forever, but the lying tongue cannot last even a second.

Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counsellors of peace is joy. (12:20)

Those whose hearts are deceitful invent evil but those who talk of peace are full of joy.

There shall no evil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be filled with mischief. (12:21)

The just need not fear an evil report, but the wicked shall be encumbered with evil.

Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight. (12:22)

The Lord hates a liar, and takes delight in the truthful.

A prudent man concealeth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness. (12:23)

A wise person does not reveal everything, but a fool tells all his foolish dealings.

The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute. (12:24)

The industrious rules, the lazy are ruled.

Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad. (12:25)

A heavy heart bends the body, but a word of encouragement straightens.

The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour: but the way of the wicked seduceth them. (12:26)

The righteous man excels his neighbour, but the wicked walk in a way that seems right but is led astray.

The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious. (12:27)

The lazy man catches his quarry, but is weary of cooking it. The industrious man's portion is of great value.

In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death. (12:28)

The way of the righteous leads to life and not to death.

Chapter XIII

The Contrast Between Righteousness and Wickedness (4)

A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke. (13:1)

A wise son heeds his father's word, but a despiser of correction is deaf.

A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence. (13:2)

He who speaks good eats good, they who offend eat violence.

He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction. (13:3)

Guard your speech and live, rambling talk leads to death.

The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat. (13:4)

Lazy bones can expect nothing, but the hardworking have plenty.

A righteous man hateth lying: but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame. (13:5)

A righteous man speaks nothing but the truth, but a wicked man brings shame to himself.

Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner. (13:6)

A righteous man walks uprightly, but a wicked man is downed by his wickedness.

There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches. (13:7)

The paradox of riches is the more money one tries to get the less one has and the less one tries to get the more one has.

The ransom of a man's life are his riches: but the poor heareth not rebuke. (13:8)

Wealth upholds a rich man's life, but a poor man is beyond admonition.

The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out. (13:9)

The lamp of the righteous brings happiness, but the lamp of the wicked burns to extinction.

Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom. (13:10)

Pride begets contention but wisdom begets good advice.

Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase. (13:11)

Ill-gotten gains are soon spent, hard earned money accumulates.

Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life. (13:12)

A desire deferred brings disappointment, a desire fulfilled brings enjoyment.

Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded. (13:13)

He who despises God's Word does so at his own peril. He who reveres God's Word obtains great reward.

The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death. (13:14)

The way of the wise leads to life, to keep him from the snares of death.

Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard. (13:15)

Wisdom bestows favour, but sin disfavour.

Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge: but a fool layeth open his folly. (13:16)

A wise man deals wisely, but a foolish man deals very foolishly.

A wicked messenger falleth into mischief: but a faithful ambassador is health. (13:17)

A wicked man can transmit no good message, but a good man brings one with life.

Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured. (13:18)

He who refuses to be taught shall end in degradation, but he who is ready to be taught shall rise in promotion.

The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul: but it is abomination to fools to depart from evil. (13:19)

Good success cheers the heart, but fools like to play with sin.

He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. (13:20)

What kind of company do you keep? You're wiser by keeping company with the wise and the worse by keeping company with the foolish.

Evil pursueth sinners: but to the righteous good shall be repayed. (13:21)

Evil follows sinners, but good the righteous.

A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just. (13:22)

Children inherit good from a good man and the just inherits the riches of the wicked.

Much food is in the tillage of the poor: but there is that is destroyed for want of judgment. (13:23)

The poor work hard so they have much food, but the foolish are come to nought for lack of wisdom.

He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes. (13:24)

He who spares the rod spoils his child, he who uses the rod loves his son.

The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul: but the belly of the wicked shall want. (13:25)

The righteous has a good appetite, but the wicked has not enough to eat.

Chapter XIV

The Contrast Between Good and Evil

Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands. (14:1)

A prudent woman builds, a foolish woman destroys.

He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him. (14:2)

He who fears God walks straight, he who flouts God walks crooked.

In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them. (14:3)

The foolish speaks vainly, the wise speaks constructively.

Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox. (14:4)

A clean stall but no oxen, a congested stall and many oxen.

A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies. (14:5)

A true witness tells the truth, a false witness tells lies.

A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth. (14:6)

A despiser of wisdom shall not find it, but he who loves wisdom can easily find it.

Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge. (14:7)

Leave the foolish man alone when all he exhibits is foolishness.

The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit. (14:8)

The wisdom of the wise is to understand life's direction, the folly of the foolish leads him astray.

Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour. (14:9)

Fools play the fool with sin, but favour is found with the righteous.

The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy. (14:10)

The bitterness of the heart who can know it, nor can the outsider take part in its joy.

The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish. (14:11)

The wicked's house shall tumble, but the house of the upright shall prosper.

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. (14:12)

A man seems to be right in his path but it leads to death.

Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness. (14:13)

There is that laughter that betrays sadness of heart, and that merry making that leads to sorrow.

The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself. (14:14)

He who slides backward will land no where, but a good man shall be contented in himself.

The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going. (14:15)

The simple-minded is credulous, but the wise man watches every step he takes.

A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident. (14:16)

A wise man fears to tread on evil ground where the fool carelessly rushes in.

He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated. (14:17)

It is foolish to get angry easily, and an evil plotter is detested.

The simple inherit folly: but the prudent are crowned with knowledge. (14:18)

The simple-minded takes to foolishness, but the wise is rewarded with knowledge.

The evil bow before the good; and the wicked at the gates of the righteous. (14:19)

Good triumphs over evil, and the wicked is subdued before the righteous.

The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: but the rich hath many friends. (14:20)

Poverty is shunned by its own neighbour, wealth is welcomed by all.

He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he. (14:21)

Do not despise your neighbour, but take pity on the poor.

Do they not err that devise evil? but mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good. (14:22)

To do bad is wrong, to do good brings mercy and truth.

Chapter XV

The Contrast Between Good and Evil (2)

A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. (15:1)

Anger is appeased by a soft word, but hard words stir it up.

The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness. (15:2)

The wise use the right words but fools use the wrong words.

The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. (15:3)

The Lord sees through both good and bad.

A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit. (15:4)

One who speaks constructively brings exuberance, one who speaks destructively brings languish.

A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent. (15:5)

A foolish son looks down on his father's teaching, but the wise son heeds reproof.

In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble. (15:6)

The righteous man's house is full of treasure, but the wicked man's house is full of trouble.

The lips of the wise disperse knowledge: but the heart of the foolish doeth not so. (15:7)

A wise man disseminates knowledge, but the heart of the foolish man does nothing of the sort.

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight. (15:8)

The wicked man's sacrifice nauseates the Lord, the upright's prayer is His delight.

The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness. (15:9)

The wicked nauseates the Lord in his ways, but he that follows the Lord rightly is His beloved.

Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die. (15:10)

Correction is painful to him who departs from the way, and he shall die who hates to be corrected.

Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men? (15:11)

Hell and death are before the Lord: the hearts of the children of men are much more.

A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise. (15:12)

A scorner hates reproof and fights shy of the wise.

A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken. (15:13)

A cheerful heart shines through a happy face, but a drooping spirit reflects a heart of sorrow.

The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness. (15:14)

An understanding heart pursues knowledge, but foolishness is fed to the foolish.

All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast. (15:15)

Evil lives with those who suffer, but feasting with the merry hearted.

Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith. (15:16)

Better a morsel with fear of God than abundance with many troubles.

Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith. (15:17)

Better a vegetable diet where love is than fatted calf where hatred is.

A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife. (15:18)

An angry man quarrels, a man slow to anger pacifies quarrels.

The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain. (15:19)

The lazy fellow is hemmed in by a hedge of thorns, but a righteous man's path is open.

A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother. (15:20)

A father is gladdened by a wise son and a mother is despised by a foolish son.

Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom: but a man of understanding walketh uprightly. (15:21)

A foolish man rejoices in folly, a wise man walks uprightly.

Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established. (15:22)

Counsel determines purposes and in many counsels they are established.

A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it! (15:23)

His speech brings joy, and his timely speech makes it even better.

The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath. (15:24)

The way of the wise leads upwards to heaven, not downwards to hell.

The LORD will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow. (15:25)

The house of the proud crumbles, but the house of the widow stands.

The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD: but the words of the pure are pleasant words. (15:26)

Whatever the wicked imagines is abominable to God, but the words of purity pleases Him.

He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live. (15:27)

The covetous brings trouble to his own house, but he that covets not shall be kept alive.

The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things. (15:28)

The righteous heart deliberates when he speaks but the mouth of the wicked spouts evil.

The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous. (15:29)

The Lord keeps the wicked at arm's length but is near to hear the prayer of the righteous.

The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: and a good report maketh the bones fat. (15:30)

A heart is made merry by what the eyes see, and the good news we hear bring health even to our bones.

The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise. (15:31)

He who listens to correction keeps company with the wise.

He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding. (15:32)

Not to receive correction is hating your own soul but to receive it is good understanding.

The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility. (15:33)

The fear of the Lord is wisdom, and humility leads to honour.

Chapter XVI

The Contrast Between Good and Evil (3)

The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD. (16:1)

God rules over man's heart and mouth when he speaks.

All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits. (16:2)

Every man thinks good of himself, but God is the Judge.

Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established. (16:3)

Give over to God what you do and you will be sure of the outcome.

The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil. (16:4)

God creates everything to His pleasure, even the evil man for the evil day.

Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished. (16:5)

The conceited man nauseates the Lord, and he will be punished though he thinks himself strongly in league with others.

By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil. (16:6)

Sin is removed by mercy and truth, and by the fear of God do men keep away from evil.

When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. (16:7)

When God is on your side, your enemy becomes your friend.

Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right. (16:8)

Right with little is greater than much without right.

A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps. (16:9)

Man proposes, God disposes.

A divine sentence is in the lips of the king: his mouth transgresseth not in judgment. (16:10)

The king judges in God's place and you cannot escape his discerning judgment.

A just weight and balance are the LORD'S: all the weights of the bag are his work. (16:11)

A fifty-fifty balance is God's balance.

It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness. (16:12)

A wicked king nauseates the Lord and for a king to rule he must rule righteously.

Righteous lips are the delight of kings; and they love him that speaketh right. (16:13)

A good king speaks righteously and he has support of his people.

The wrath of a king is as messengers of death: but a wise man will pacify it. (16:14)

A king's anger brings death, but a wise man will appease his anger.

In the light of the king's countenance is life; and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain. (16:15)

The king's beaming face brings life and augurs well like a cloud of the latter rain.

How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver! (16:16)

Wisdom far outweighs gold and understanding silver.

The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul. (16:17)

To shun evil is the upright's way and to go in this way is safest.

Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. (16:18)

Pride goeth before a fall.

Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud. (16:19)

Better company is with the humble than to share the spoil with the proud.

He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy is he. (16:20)

He who is wise in administration ends well and he who trusts in the Lord is blessed.

The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning. (16:21)

Prudence rules over a wise heart, and pleasant words lead to further knowledge.

Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools is folly. (16:22)

Give understanding to him who has it, but not to be added to a fool's foolhardiness.

The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips. (16:23)

A wise man knows what to say, and to say it more wisely.

Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones. (16:24)

Speak good words for they are like honey that sweetens the soul and quickens the bones.

There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. (16:25)

Beware of deception, what seems life may lead to death.

He that laboureth laboureth for himself; for his mouth craveth it of him. (16:26)

Work that you may eat.

An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire. (16:27)

A godless man digs up an evil past, his word ignites like fire.

A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends. (16:28)

A crooked fellow makes people to quarrel, he is a talebearer that separates leaders.

A violent man enticeth his neighbour, and leadeth him into the way that is not good. (16:29)

A brutish fellow tricks his neighbour into a bad end.

He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things: moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass. (16:30)

He makes mischief with a smothered conscience and what he mutters leads to more mischief.

The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness. (16:31)

The greyheaded is a crown of glory, if he leads a righteous life.

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. (16:32)

Forbearance is mightier than the mighty, and he that has self control is stronger than he that captures a city.

The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD. (16:33)

Even in lot casting God is in control.

Chapter XVII

The Contrast Between Good and Evil (4)

Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife. (17:1)

Better to be poor and live in peace than to be rich and live in strife.

A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren. (17:2)

A wise servant rules over an unruly son and he shall have part inheritance of the family fortune.

The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts. (17:3)

Silver and gold are tried in the pot and furnace but a man's heart is tried by the Lord.

A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue. (17:4)

A wicked man listens to lies, and a liar to more lies.

Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished. (17:5)

He who despises the poor offends his Creator, and he that is happy at other's misfortunes shall get them himself.

Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers. (17:6)

Grandfathers and grandchildren enhance the family glory mutually.

Excellent speech becometh not a fool: much less do lying lips a prince. (17:7)

A fool cannot speak gracefully nor a prince lying words.

A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it: whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth. (17:8)

A precious gift in the hands of him who holds it prospers wherever it is presented.

He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends. (17:9)

Love covers a multitude of sins, but he who tells causes friends to separate.

A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool. (17:10)

A hundred stripes cannot convert a fool, but one word will turn a wise man around.

An evil man seeketh only rebellion: therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him. (17:11)

A wicked man rebels, so he must be treated harshly.

Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly. (17:12)

A foolish fool is harder to tackle than a she-bear robbed of her cubs.

Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house. (17:13)

He who returns evil for good, evil will plague his house forever.

The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with. (17:14)

Like water leaking is the beginning of a quarrel, so let it subside before it is too late.

He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD. (17:15)

To traverse justice by justifying the wicked and condemning the good nauseates the Lord.

Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it? (17:16)

Can you think of a fool trying to buy wisdom when he has no heart for it?

A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. (17:17)

A friend in need is a friend indeed and a brother is tested through difficulties.

A man void of understanding striketh hands, and becometh surety in the presence of his friend. (17:18)

A simple-minded man readily becomes a guarantor to his friend.

He loveth transgression that loveth strife: and he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction. (17:19)

He who likes to quarrel is a trouble maker and he that boasts of his achievements dabbles with ruin.

He that hath a froward heart findeth no good: and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief. (17:20)

A crooked heart ends up crooked, and he who talks evil ends up in more evil.

He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy. (17:21)

He who is father of a fool is full of sorrow.

A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones. (17:22)

A merry heart, like medicine, heals, but a sorrowful heart saps the bones.

A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment. (17:23)

A wicked man will bribe to prejudice judgment.

Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth. (17:24)

Wisdom is guided by discernment but fools see a blurred vision to nowhere.

A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him. (17:25)

A foolish son is the sorrow of both father and mother.

Also to punish the just is not good, nor to strike princes for equity. (17:26)

It is injustice to punish the good and to rebel against princes in their integrity.

He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit. (17:27)

The wise speaks sparingly and a man of understanding has a good spirit.

Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding. (17:28)

When a fool guards his lips he is considered wise, and to shut up shows wisdom.

Chapter XVIII

The Contrast Between Good and Evil (5)

Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom. (18:1)

There is that shuts himself up to delve in every avenue of wisdom.

A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself. (18:2)

A fool does not seek to know wisdom, except to find out his own foolishness.

When the wicked cometh, then cometh also contempt, and with ignominy reproach. (18:3)

When the wicked man appears he brings with him scorn, and with dishonour, disgrace.

The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook. (18:4)

Like well waters are a man's words and his wisdom springs into a flowing stream.

It is not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment. (18:5)

Do not trust a wicked person so as to prejudge the righteous.

A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes. (18:6)

A fool is contentious and what he says deserves a good beating.

A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul. (18:7)

A fool utters words to his own undoing, he spreads a net for himself.

The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. (18:8)

He who carries tales hurts with deep wounds.

He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster. (18:9)

The lazy fellow has a brother who is a great waster.

The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe. (18:10)

The name of God protects.

The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit. (18:11)

The rich relies on his money to protect him, yea, a high wall as he thinks of himself.

Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility. (18:12)

Pride goeth before a fall; humility leads to honour.

He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him. (18:13)

It is sheer folly to answer a matter before hearing it.

The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear? (18:14)

A man's spirit will carry him through, but not when he is cast down.

The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge. (18:15)

A wise man's heart acquires knowledge and his ears reach the same.

A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men. (18:16)

A man's gift makes way for him, and leads him to great men.

He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him. (18:17)

He who pleads his own case seems just, but cannot escape being scrutinised by his neighbours.

The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty. (18:18)

The lot settles a dispute and ends mutual altercation.

A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle. (18:19)

To hurt a brother is worse than losing a strong city. Like the bars of a castle are the strifes that ensue.

A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled. (18:20)

A good appetite that satisfies the stomach begins from the mouth.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof. (18:21)

The tongue can deliver either life or death. They who treasure the right use of the tongue shall prosper.

Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD. (18:22)

A good wife is from the Lord.

The poor useth intreaties; but the rich answereth roughly. (18:23)

The poor entreat, the rich implead.

A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. (18:24)

A friend must be sincerely friendly and there is a friend that joins another better than a brother.

Chapter XIX

The Contrast Between Good and Evil (6)

Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool. (19:1)

Better is the poor man with good character than a fool who talks waywardly.

Also, that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good; and he that hasteth with his feet sinneth. (19:2)

The soul devoid of knowledge is not good and the feet that are quick to run are sinful.

The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the LORD. (19:3)

The fool who goes on a crooked way has a heart that is afraid of the Lord.

Wealth maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbour. (19:4)

Have money have friends, have no money have no friends.

A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape. (19:5)

Judgment catches up on a false witness, yea, even every liar.

Many will intreat the favour of the prince: and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts. (19:6)

A prince is looked up to in entreaties, and he who gives gifts makes many friends.

All the brethren of the poor do hate him: how much more do his friends go far from him? he pursueth them with words, yet they are wanting to him. (19:7)

Brothers shun a poor man, and so much the more his acquaintances. He tries to get near them to speak to them but they make themselves scarce to him.

He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul: he that keepeth understanding shall find good. (19:8)

To get wisdom is to love yourself and to keep understanding works to goodness.

A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish. (19:9)

Judgment catches up on a false witness, and death on a liar.

Delight is not seemly for a fool; much less for a servant to have rule over princes. (19:10)

For a fool to find delight is not found, much less for a servant to govern over princes.

The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression. (19:11)

The prudence of a man stays his anger, and it is a glory to overlook an offence.

The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion; but his favour is as dew upon the grass. (19:12)

A king's anger is like a lion's roar, his favour like dew on the grass.

A foolish son is the calamity of his father: and the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping. (19:13)

A foolish son ruins his father, and a quarrelsome wife is a nonstop leaking rain.

House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the LORD. (19:14)

You can inherit property and money from your father, but ask God for a prudent wife.

Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger. (19:15)

Laziness slumbers and hungers.

He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul; but he that despiseth his ways shall die. (19:16)

The law-abiding soul is preserved but the lawbreaking soul shall die.

He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again. (19:17)

He who helps the poor, helps the Lord and the Lord will compensate him.

Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying. (19:18)

Correct your son when he can be corrected, and let him cry.

A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment: for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again. (19:19)

An ever angry man who must be chastised time and again is duly punished.

Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end. (19:20)

He who receives counselling becomes wiser.

There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand. (19:21)

A man's heart is full of schemings, but what stands in good stead is the counsel of the Lord.

The desire of a man is his kindness: and a poor man is better than a liar. (19:22)

What we expect from a man is his kindness, a man though poor is respected but not a liar.

The fear of the LORD tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil. (19:23)

Fear the Lord and live without worrying that bad things might come.

A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again. (19:24)

A lazy man cannot even feed himself.

Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware: and reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge. (19:25)

In Chinese proverb, kill a chicken to teach a monkey, teach a wise man and he will be yet wiser.

He that wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach. (19:26)

A spendthrift son and a plague to his mother tarnish the family name.

Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge. (19:27)

My son stop hearing evil counsel that turns you the wrong way.

An ungodly witness scorneth judgment: and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity. (19:28)

An evil witness is not afraid of punishment and a wicked man eats up sin.

Judgments are prepared for scorners, and stripes for the back of fools. (19:29)

Despisers of good await punishment and thrashings are appointed for the fool's back.

Chapter XX

Warnings and Admonitions

Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise. (20:1)

Do not be deceived by wine and strong drinks. They are powerful to bring you down from sanity.

The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul. (20:2)

Respect the king as he is powerful like a roaring lion. He who provokes the king does so at his own risk.

It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling. (20:3)

To cease from contention is honourable, to keep on meddling is a fool.

The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing. (20:4)

The lazy fellow won't work in the field because of cold weather so he is left in the lurch while others are eating.

Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out. (20:5)

The waters of good counsel run deep and it is the wise that can draw it out.

Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find? (20:6)

Every one sings his own praise, but the man who keeps faith is hard to find.

The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him. (20:7)

The just man walks justly and by his example his children are blessed.

A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes. (20:8)

The king's eyes upon the throne of judgment scares away every evil.

Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin? (20:9)

Who can say he is totally sinless?

Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the LORD. (20:10)

God hates cheating balances and measures.

Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right. (20:11)

Whatever a child does reveals its character.

The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them. (20:12)

Who makes the ear that hears and the eyes that see? God!

Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread. (20:13)

Dozing off in work leads to poverty. Diligently awake at work earns your keep.

It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth. (20:14)

Those who say no good, no good, are the real buyers.

There is gold, and a multitude of rubies: but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel. (20:15)

Gold and rubies cannot compare with wisdom.

Take his garment that is surety for a stranger: and take a pledge of him for a strange woman. (20:16)

Two sorts of persons are here spoken of, that ruin themselves. (1) Those who entangle themselves in rash suretiship, to oblige their own companions. (2) Those who are in league with abandoned women. Place no confidence in either — Matthew Henry

Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel. (20:17)

Stone changed into bread to eat. Bread eaten in the stomach reverts to stone.

Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war. (20:18)

Go into action when decisions are firmly made.

He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips. (20:19)

Talebearers are flatterers who reveal others' secrets. Keep away from them.

Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness. (20:20)

He who curses father and mother, let him become blind!

An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed. (20:21)

Easy come, easy go!

Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee. (20:22)

Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.

Divers weights are an abomination unto the LORD; and a false balance is not good. (20:23)

God hates cheating balances.

Man's goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way? (20:24)

A man's movement, here or there, is determined by God. He is not final in his decision.

It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make enquiry. (20:25)

A sacrilegious act will be punished, a vow made to be evaded is a serious matter.

A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them. (20:26)

A wise king disperses the wicked and crushes them in judgment.

The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly. (20:27)

God uses man's conscience to show himself up.

Mercy and truth preserve the king: and his throne is upholden by mercy. (20:28)

The king's reign is perpetuated by mercy and truth.

The glory of young men is their strength: and the beauty of old men is the gray head. (20:29)

Young man's beauty is his strength. Old man's glory is his hoary head.

The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: so do stripes the inward parts of the belly. (20:30)

Corporal chastisement drives away spiritual blandishments.

Chapter XXI

Warnings and Admonitions (2)

The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will. (21:1)

God rules and overrules every decision of a king.

Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts. (21:2)

Every man thinks he is right but God weighs the heart.

To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice. (21:3)

To do right is greater than worship.

An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin. (21:4)

Conceit, pride and a wicked man's work are all sinful.

The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one that is hasty only to want. (21:5)

The industrious thinks plentifully, the devil-may-care type reaps nothing substantial.

The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death. (21:6)

What is earned by false pretences ends up zero.

The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them; because they refuse to do judgment. (21:7)

The wicked rob to their own destruction because they reject justice.

The way of man is froward and strange: but as for the pure, his work is right. (21:8)

Man is usually crooked, but the pure is right in his work.

It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house. (21:9)

Better to live by yourself in an attic than to be hitched to a noisily quarrelsome wife in a spacious house.

The soul of the wicked desireth evil: his neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes. (21:10)

The wicked looks for evil so he cannot see anything good in his neighbour.

When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise: and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge. (21:11)

By a Chinese proverb, To kill a chicken to teach a monkey, but teach a wise person and he will be yet wiser.

The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked: but God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness. (21:12)

The upright man wisely sizes up the wicked man's house but God turns the wicked turtle for his evil.

Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard. (21:13)

He who pretends not to hear the poor man's call for help will get it back when he is in trouble.

A gift in secret pacifieth anger: and a reward in the bosom strong wrath. (21:14)

A gift secretly given appeases wrath.

It is joy to the just to do judgment: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity. (21:15)

The just delight in justice, but perpetrators of evil shall die.

The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead. (21:16)

He who goes into error ends in death.

He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich. (21:17)

Pleasure lovers become poor. Wine and oil are luxuries that waste.

The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright. (21:18)

The wicked are subject to the righteous and sinners to the upright.

It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman. (21:19)

Better live in a desert than with a quarrelling angry wife.

There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up. (21:20)

The wise is rich and plentifully provided, but a foolish man consumes them all.

He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour. (21:21)

Life abounds in righteousness and mercy, and honour.

A wise man scalesh the city of the mighty, and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof. (21:22)

A wise man takes over the city of the powerful and brings down its strength and confidence.

Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles. (21:23)

He who controls his speech is kept from trouble.

Proud and haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath. (21:24)

A conceited despiser of men is an angry man.

The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour. (21:25)

A lazy fellow who refuses to work is tantamount to committing suicide.

He coveteth greedily all the day long: but the righteous giveth and spareth not. (21:26)

He is a greedy fellow throughout the day, but the righteous give out and share.

The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind? (21:27)

The wicked's sacrifice nauseates the Lord, how much more when it is given wickedly.

A false witness shall perish: but the man that heareth speaketh constantly. (21:28)

A false witness shall die, but he who listens speaks all the time.

A wicked man hardeneth his face: but as for the upright, he directeth his way. (21:29)

A wicked man sets his face like a flint, but the upright will find direction.

There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD. (21:30)

Who can be wiser than the Lord?

The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the LORD. (21:31)

The horse is good for battle but safety is in God.

Chapter XXII

Warnings and Admonitions (3)

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold. (22:1)

A man's reputation is more valuable than hoards of money and gracious benediction better than silver and gold.

The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all. (22:2)

Rich and poor are put together by the hand of the Lord.

A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished. (22:3)

The wise keep clear of trouble by staying away, but the simple minded being unaware are caught.

By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life. (22:4)

A humble and God-fearing spirit inherits wealth, honour and life.

Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward: he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them. (22:5)

The crooked meets with prickly traps, but he that checks up on him shall be kept from them.

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. (22:6)

Early training in childhood guarantees stability in adulthood.

The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender. (22:7)

The poor is obliged to the rich, the borrower is subservient to the lender.

He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail. (22:8)

He who sins ends up with nothing, and his anger leads him nowhere.

He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor. (22:9)

He who deals generously shall be blessed, such as by feeding the poor.

Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease. (22:10)

Take away the scorner and you will be spared of disputings and accusations.

He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend. (22:11)

The king befriends those whose hearts are clean and whose lips are gracious.

The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge, and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor. (22:12)

The Lord sees to it that knowledge is maintained and he confounds the speech of the sinful.

The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets. (22:13)

The lazy fellow excuses himself by imagining a lion outside the streets ready to kill him.

The mouth of strange women is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the LORD shall fall therein. (22:14)

The loose woman swallows you up if you are discarded by the Lord.

Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him. (22:15)

A foolish child just needs the cane applied to correct him from his foolishness.

He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want. (22:16)

He who gets rich by exploiting the poor, and finds favour from the rich by giving to the rich ends up penniless.

Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge. (22:17)

Humbly listen to words of wisdom and take to heart my knowledge.

For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips. (22:18)

If you keep these things in your heart, they will please you and teach you what to say.

That thy trust may be in the LORD, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee. (22:19)

That you may lean on the Lord, on what I have told you this day.

Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, (22:20)

For I have even put in writing the good counsel and knowledge.

That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee? (22:21)

That you may be confirmed in the words of truth, that you might have words of truth for an answer to them who ask.

Rob not the poor, because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate: (22:22)

Do not take advantage of the poor by robbing him, nor bully the down and out in the gate.

For the LORD will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them. (22:23)

For God is on their side, and He will retaliate.

Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: (22:24)

Do not befriend anyone who gets angry easily and blows up his anger even further.

Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul. (22:25)

Lest you copy him and become ensnared yourself.

Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts. (22:26)

Don't be a guarantor for debtors.

If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee? (22:27)

If you have not the means why should you stand in for him to your own loss?

Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set. (22:28)

Don't shift the positions of old landmarks set up by your ancestors.

Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men. (22:29)

An industrious man shall rise up from a lowly position to the high place of the palace.

Chapter XXIII

Warnings and Admonitions (4)

When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee: (23:1)

Consider carefully with whom you are eating when you sit at dinner with a king.

And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite. (23:2)

If you are a glutton be ready to cut your own throat.

Be not desirous of his dainties: for they are deceitful meat. (23:3)

Don't be taken over by his choicest menu, for therein is a trap.

Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom. (23:4)

Try not to be a millionaire, be not wise in your own conceit.

Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven. (23:5)

Vain is your attempt, for money has wings, like an eagle it soars up and away.

Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats: (23:6)

Don't eat anybody's food which is not sincerely offered, or any of his delicacies.

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee. (23:7)

For he is what he determines within him, he's not happy that you eat his food.

The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up, and lose thy sweet words. (23:8)

You have to throw up the little that goes in and words of appreciation from your lips.

Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words. (23:9)

Whisper not any advise to a fool for he will spurn the words of wisdom.

Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless: (23:10)

Never shift any ancient boundary stone, nor take over the land of orphans.

For their redeemer is mighty; he shall plead their cause with thee. (23:11)

For their Saviour is powerful, He will stand up for them.

Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge. (23:12)

Listen attentively to words of advice and words of knowledge.

Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. (23:13)

Spare not the rod on your child, for by it he shall get life.

Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell. (23:14)

By thrashing him you will save him from eternal punishment.

**My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.
(23:15)**

My son I shall be happy, very happy, if you think wisely.

**Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things.
(23:16)**

Yes, I shall be thrilled through and through when you talk sense.

**Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the
LORD all the day long. (23:17)**

Don't be jealous of law breakers, but fear the Lord everyday.

**For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut
off. (23:18)**

For there is a purpose, and your hope will be realised.

**Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way.
(23:19)**

Listen, my son, be wise and be led aright within you.

Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: (23:20)

Keep no company with drunkards and gluttons.

**For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and
drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags. (23:21)**

For drunkards and gluttons will become poor and the dizzy ones will be shabbily dressed.

**Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy
mother when she is old. (23:22)**

Listen to your father and respect your mother in her old age.

**Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and
understanding. (23:23)**

Keep the truth that you have purchased, even wisdom, instruction and understanding.

The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him. (23:24)

Happy is the father of the upright one, yea, even those that are wise.

Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice. (23:25)

Your father and mother who gave birth to you shall be happy.

My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways. (23:26)

My son, incline your heart to me and look how I go about.

For a whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit. (23:27)

For a prostitute and a loose woman is a ravine and a pit in the earth.

She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men. (23:28)

She is there to snare you and will cause you to multiply your sins.

Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? (23:29)

Who is sad? who is sorrowful? who has fightings? who talks rubbish? who is wounded for no reason? Who is red in the eyes?

They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. (23:30)

They who hang around wine, who go after adulterated wine.

Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. (23:31)

Don't stare at the sparkling wine, the tantalising wine.

**At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.
(23:32)**

He will eventually strike like a snake and bite like a viper.

**Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall
utter perverse things. (23:33)**

Your eyes will see loose women, and you will speak rubbish.

**Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or
as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. (23:34)**

You will be tossed about on the sea, swinging on a mast.

**They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they
have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek
it yet again. (23:35)**

You will say, they have hit me hard, and I was all right, they have
knocked me down and I did not feel it. When shall I get up? I will go
after it again.

Chapter XXIV

Warnings and Admonitions (5)

Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them. (24:1)

Don't be jealous of wicked people, and keep away from them.

For their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief. (24:2)

For they plot death and they talk of wicked things.

Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: (24:3)

Wisdom builds a house, and understanding makes it strong.

And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches. (24:4)

Knowledge replenishes it with exquisite riches.

A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength. (24:5)

A wise man is strong and knowledge makes him stronger.

For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety. (24:6)

You go to war by wise planning and when advisers increase there is security.

Wisdom is too high for a fool: he openeth not his mouth in the gate. (24:7)

Wisdom is above the fool's reach. He cares not to speak in the high places of judgment.

He that deviseth to do evil shall be called a mischievous person. (24:8)

He who plots evil is called a troublemaker.

The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorner is an abomination to men. (24:9)

Sin is every foolish thought, and the despiser nauseates men.

If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small. (24:10)

In the day of trouble you will be weak when you faint.

If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; (24:11)

If you do not save a dying man, waiting to be killed.

If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works? (24:12)

If you pretend you don't know, does He not who weighs the heart look at this? He who has the care of the soul, will He not be cognisant of it? Will He not judge?

My son, eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste: (23:13)

My son, eat honey and honey comb, for they taste sweet.

So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul: when thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off. (23:14)

So it's wisdom to your heart. When you have discovered it, it is your reward and you will not lose hope in it.

Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; spoil not his resting place: (23:15)

Don't plot against a righteous man's house, O wicked man nor disturb his home.

For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief. (23:16)

For a just man, though he is down seven times, he will be up, but the wicked falls in trouble.

Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth: (23:17)

Don't exult at your enemy's misfortune nor be glad when he is down.

Lest the LORD see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him. (23:18)

Lest the Lord turn the punishment for him, for He is displeased with you.

Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked; (23:19)

Don't worry about evil men, nor be jealous.

For there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out. (23:20)

The wicked has no compensation, his candle shall snuff out.

My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change: (23:21)

My son, fear the Lord and the king and do not take part with them that must change.

For their calamity shall rise suddenly; and who knoweth the ruin of them both? (23:22)

For disaster will come all of a sudden and who knows the destruction of both of them?

These things also belong to the wise. It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment. (23:23)

The wise are also affected. Judgment is no respecter of persons.

He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him: (23:24)

To call the wicked righteous will be cursed by his people and detested by nations.

But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them. (23:25)

But to them that censure him shall be a happy thing, and they shall be blessed.

Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer. (23:26)

He who gives a right answer shall be approved with a kiss.

Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house. (23:27)

In building your house, take every appropriate step.

Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause; and deceive not with thy lips. (23:28)

Don't betray yourself by witnessing against your neighbour without a reason.

Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work. (23:29)

Do not do tit for tat.

I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; (23:30)

I visited the lazy bones' field and the foolish man's vineyard.

And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. (23:31)

And the fields were wasted and overgrown with thorns and thistles and the wall was dilapidated.

Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. (23:32)

Then I considered it, and got an answer.

Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: (23:33)

By taking things easy, by taking no action

So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man. (23:34)

So like a traveller and a soldier on the move he becomes poor.

Chapter XXV

Warnings and Admonitions (6)

These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out. It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter. (25:1, 2)

The glory of God is veiled in a thing, but the king's honour is to discover a matter.

The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings is unsearchable. (25:3)

Heaven is high, earth is deep, but the king's heart is not easily revealed.

Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer. (25:4)

Refined silver makes a good vessel.

Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness. (25:5)

Expel the wicked and the king's throne shall stand in righteousness.

Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men: (25:6)

Don't show off before the king nor try to rub shoulders with eminent people.

For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen. (25:7)

Better it is when you get promoted than to be demoted in such circumstances.

Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame. (25:8)

Don't get into a struggle when you are not prepared, lest you be shamed by your neighbour.

Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another: (25:9)

Argue it out with your neighbour, and don't tell others about him.

Lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away. (25:10)

Lest you get it to your shame forever.

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. (25:11)

A timely word, and a good word, is like golden apples framed in silver.

As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprovener upon an obedient ear. (25:12)

When a wise counsellor is readily heard he is like a golden earring and a jewel.

As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters. (25:13)

He who is a faithful messenger to them that send him, is like snow in harvest, refreshing to their masters.

Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain. (25:14)

Like rainless clouds is a promised gift that never comes.

By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone. (25:15)

By patience is a prince appeased, and a soft word can subdue resistance.

Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it. (25:16)

Enjoy yourself sparingly but overeating will make you throw it up.

Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house; lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee. (25:17)

Do not overstay when you visit a friend, lest you take away his convenience and he dislikes you instead.

A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow. (25:18)

To betray a neighbour by giving false witness is like a wooden hammer, sword, and arrow.

Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint. (25:19)

To lean on a faithless man in time of difficulties is like a tooth broken and one's foot dislocated.

As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart. (25:20)

Serenading to one in heaviness of heart is like taking off clothes in winter, and pouring vinegar on nitrate.

If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: (25:21)

If your enemy hungers give him bread and when he thirsts, give him water.

For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee. (25:22)

In so doing you are like putting burning charcoals on his head and God will compensate you.

The north wind driveth away rain: so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue. (25:23)

An indignant face against a talebearer is like the north wind that scatters away the rain.

It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house. (25:24)

Better to live in an attic than in a big house with a loud quarrelling wife.

As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country. (25:25)

Like ice water to a thirsty person so are good tidings from a distant country.

A righteous man falling down before the wicked is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring. (25:26)

An upright man cowed down before the wicked is like a disturbed fountain and fouled up spring.

It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory. (25:27)

To eat too much honey is bad, so for man to aspire to vain glory is vanity.

He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls. (25:28)

He who has no self control is like a dilapidated city.

Chapter XXVI

Warnings and Admonitions (7)

As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool. (26:1)

As snow in summer and rain in harvest are not compatible with one another so is honour not fitting for a fool.

As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come. (26:2)

As a bird wanders around and a swallow flies around, so a curse without reason cannot come to you.

A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back. (26:3)

Just as a whip is used for a horse, a bridle for an ass, so is the rod for the fool's back.

Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. (26:4)

Don't answer a fool in his foolishness, lest you be degraded to his level.

Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit. (26:5)

Answer a fool accordingly, lest he esteem himself too highly.

He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool cutteth off the feet, and drinketh damage. (26:6)

To send a message through a fool is like amputating your feet and suffer damage.

The legs of the lame are not equal: so is a parable in the mouth of fools. (26:7)

A lame man has unequal legs, so is a parable spoken by a fool.

As he that bindeth a stone in a sling, so is he that giveth honour to a fool. (26:8)

To bind a stone to a sling is as incompatible as honouring a fool.

As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools. (26:9)

As drunken man will heedlessly wound himself till he becomes sober so is a parable uttered by a fool.

The great God that formed all things both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors. (26:10)

As God Almighty has made all things, so He rewards both the fool and the sinner.

As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly. (26:11)

A dog eats up what he throws up, so the fool goes back to his foolishness.

Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him. (26:12)

A man who thinks too highly of himself is worse than a fool.

The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets. (26:13)

The lazy man imagines there is a lion of adversity outside his house.

As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed. (26:14)

A lazy man rolls on his bed like a door swings on its hinges.

The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth. (26:15)

A lazy man will not feed himself from hand to mouth.

The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason. (26:16)

The lazy fellow is wiser in his own haughtiness than seven wise men.

He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears. (26:17)

A busybody in other men's affairs is like one that holds to a dog's ears.

As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, (26:18)

As a crazy fellow throws torches, arrows and death around.

So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport? (26:19)

So is he who tricks his neighbour and says I'm merely playing the fool.

Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth. (26:20)

Where there is no fuel, there is no fire, so when tale carriers shut up there is no quarrel.

As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife. (26:21)

A quarrelsome man will stop short as when a fire burns down with no fuel.

The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. (26:22)

A talebearer's words hurts to the stomach.

Burning lips and a wicked heart are like a potsherd covered with silver dross. (26:23)

A wicked heart and a wicked tongue are like a piece of broken pot covered with silver dross.

He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him; (26:24)

He is a hater who talks falsely with deceitful intention.

When he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart. (26:25)

Even when his speech is proper, don't trust him, there are seven nauseating things in his heart.

Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation. (26:26)

Hatred is cunningly covered up, his wickedness shall be exposed before everybody.

Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him. (26:27)

There is retribution for every wicked thing you do.

A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin. (26:28)

Lying affects those who suffer under it, and flattery destroys.

Chapter XXVII

Warnings and Admonitions (8)

Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. (27:1)

Don't brag about your future, for you do not know beyond a day.

Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips. (27:2)

Don't praise yourself but let another.

A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both. (27:3)

Stone and sand both weigh heavily, but heavier is a fool's anger.

Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy? (27:4)

Indignation and anger are cruel and raging, but envy is the worst of all.

Open rebuke is better than secret love. (27:5)

Open admonition excels covert love.

Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. (27:6)

A friend hurts sincerely, but an enemy kisses insincerely.

The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet. (27:7)

A full stomach disdains honey, a hungry stomach relishes even the bitter.

As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place. (27:8)

A wanderer is like a bird away from his nest.

Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel. (27:9)

Oil and perfume are a delight, so does good advice from a friend's counsel.

Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off. (27:10)

Don't leave an old friend, even your friend in time of trouble, don't go to your brother for a near neighbour is better than a distant relative.

My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth me. (27:11)

My son, be wise and make me happy that I might reply him who upbraids me.

A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished. (27:12)

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

Take his garment that is surety for a stranger, and take a pledge of him for a strange woman. (27:13)

See 20:16.

He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him. (27:14)

He who hails his friend loudly in the morning is tantamount to cursing him.

A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike. (27:15)

A quarrelsome wife is like dripping rain that wouldn't stop.

Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand, which bewrayeth itself. (27:16)

He who tries to cover her up is like trying to hide the wind or the perfume on his right hand, which he cannot.

Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (27:17)

As a Chinese proverb says, Get close to red and you become red, get close to black and you become black.

Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof: so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured. (27:18)

He who tends the fig tree will eat figs, he who serves will be served.

As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man. (27:19)

As you see your face in the water, you see yourself in another's friendship.

Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied. (27:20)

As hell and death are never filled, so a man's eyes are never satiated.

As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise. (27:21)

A man's praise comes through much refining process, like silver and gold.

Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him. (27:22)

Some are so ingrained in their evil ways that it is impossible to correct them.

Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds. (27:23)

Look after your sheep well.

For riches are not for ever: and doth the crown endure to every generation? (27:24)

For riches don't last very long, nor can one be king forever.

The hay appeareth, and the tender grass sheweth itself, and herbs of the mountains are gathered. (27:25)

But you have hay and green grass and mountain herbs.

The lambs are for thy clothing, and the goats are the price of the field. (27:26)

And lambs and goats are your provisions.

And thou shalt have goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and for the maintenance for thy maidens. (27:27)

And you have goats' milk to feed yourself and your family and for the young girls.

Chapter XXVIII

Warnings and Admonitions (9)

The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion. (28:1)

The wicked are afraid, the righteous brave like lions.

For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof: but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged. (28:2)

When a country has many evils, it has many rulers, but by a wise ruler the life of the nation is preserved.

A poor man that oppresseth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food. (28:3)

When the poor bully the poor it is like pouring rain that destroys the food.

They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them. (28:4)

The lawless praise the wicked, but the law keepers are their opponents.

Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the LORD understand all things. (28:5)

Wicked men are blind to judgment but the devout understand all things.

Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich. (28:6)

Better the poor in his good character than the rich in his depravity.

Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father. (28:7)

The law keeper is a wise person but who befriends reckless men brings disgrace to his father.

He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor. (28:8)

He who makes exorbitant money by high interest gathers for him who will help the poor.

He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination. (28:9)

He who refuses to hear the law, his prayer will nauseate God.

Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good things in possession. (28:10)

He who sidetracks the righteous to sin will fall into his own trap, but the righteous shall possess good things.

The rich man is wise in his own conceit; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out. (28:11)

The rich are proud and conceited, but the poor by wisdom can see him through.

When righteous men do rejoice, there is great glory: but when the wicked rise, a man is hidden. (28:12)

When the good celebrate there is glory, but when the wicked are up men go into hiding.

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. (28:13)

He who hides his transgressions will not succeed, but he who confesses and abandons them will find mercy.

Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief. (28:14)

Blessed is the man who is careful about his ways always, but the hard hearted shall fall into evil.

As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear; so is a wicked ruler over the poor people. (28:15)

A wicked king is as a roaring lion and a prowling bear to a poor people.

The prince that wanteth understanding is also a great oppressor: but he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days. (28:16)

A king who lacks knowledge is also a tyrant, but one who is clean in money matters shall rule a long time.

A man that doeth violence to the blood of any person shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him. (28:17)

A man who treats people roughly to the point of shedding blood shall flee to the grave. Let no man help him.

Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved: but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once. (28:18)

The upright person shall stand, but the crooked shall be toppled at once.

He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread: but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough. (28:19)

He who works hard on his land shall eat plenty, but he who goes about with hooligans shall have little to eat.

A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent. (28:20)

A faithful man shall have plenty, but he who tries to get rich quick is no clean person.

To have respect of persons is not good: for for a piece of bread that man will transgress. (28:21)

To have regard for persons is not right: for for a little advantage that man will do wrong.

He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him. (28:22)

He who is hasty to covet is envious of others who are richer than him, but does not realise he will become poorer.

He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue. (28:23)

A constructive criticism after the event will be respected more than flattery.

Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression; the same is the companion of a destroyer. (28:24)

He who steals from his parents and says it is O.K., he is no better than a devourer's friend.

He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat. (28:25)

He that is a haughty spirit quarrels, but he who trusts the Lord shall prosper.

He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered. (28:26)

He who relies on himself is a fool, but he who walks circumspectly shall be saved.

He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse. (28:27)

He who distributes to the needy shall have much, but he who pretends not to know shall meet with many misfortunes.

When the wicked rise, men hide themselves: but when they perish, the righteous increase. (28:28)

When the wicked are in power, men go underground. When they die away the righteous prosper.

Chapter XXIX

Warnings and Admonitions (10)

He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. (29:1)

He who turns a stiff neck to admonitions shall be taken away for good.

When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn. (29:2)

Right is might brings rejoicings, Might is right brings sorrowings.

Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father: but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance. (29:3)

A wise son, a happy father. A prodigal son, an impoverished father.

The king by judgment establisheth the land: but he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it. (29:4)

A just king rules over a tranquil nation. But bribery overthrows it.

A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet. (29:5)

A flatterer is like a bird catcher spreading a snare.

In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare: but the righteous doth sing and rejoice. (29:6)

A wicked person's sins become a trap, but the righteous rejoices.

The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it. (29:7)

The righteous stand up for the needy, but the wicked turn their back on it.

Scornful men bring a city into a snare: but wise men turn away wrath. (29:8)

Despicable men ensnare a city, but wise men cause destruction to deviate.

If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest. (29:9)

In a contest between a wise and a foolish man, whether they laugh or become angry, there is no conclusion.

The bloodthirsty hate the upright: but the just seek his soul. (29:10)

The doubly hateful hate the upright, but the just by contrast pray for their persecutor's salvation.

A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards. (29:11)

A foolish man bares everything when he talks, but a wise man keeps silence accordingly.

If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked. (29:12)

A ruler has discretion in hearing all complaints about his servants.

The poor and the deceitful man meet together: the LORD lighteneth both their eyes. (29:13)

The poor and the deceitful mingle together, and the Lord shows them the truth together that the poor might have patience and the deceitful might repent.

The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever. (29:14)

A just king to the poor will have an established throne.

The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame. (29:15)

The rod of correction brings wisdom but a child without correction shames his mother.

When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth: but the righteous shall see their fall. (29:16)

More wickedness, more sins, and the righteous will see their fall.

Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul. (29:17)

Teach your son in the right way and he will give you peace and joy.

Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he. (29:18)

The people die when there is no vision, but he that is law-abiding is happy.

A servant will not be corrected by words: for though he understand he will not answer. (29:19)

To tell a servant his mistakes will not elicit a reply though he understands.

Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him. (29:20)

A man quick to speak is worse than a fool.

He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child shall have him become his son at the length. (29:21)

A servant brought up like a son will become a son at last.

An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression. (29:22)

An angry man and a man who loses his temper easily introduce quarrels and troubles.

A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit. (29:23)

Pride goeth before a fall, but honour goes to the humble.

Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul: he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not. (29:24)

Whoever keeps company with a thief hates his own soul for they wilfully do that which will curse them.

The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe. (29:25)

Fearing man ends up in a trap, trusting God is safety.

Many seek the ruler's favour; but every man's judgment cometh from the LORD. (29:26)

Many look to the ruler's help, but judgment comes from God.

An unjust man is an abomination to the just: and he that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked. (29:27)

An unjust man nauseates the just, and vice versa.

Chapter XXX

The Words of Agur

The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, even the prophecy: the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal, Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. (30:1, 2)

I am like a brute, and I know my wretched condition. I lack what a man should know.

I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy. (30:3)

I need the wisdom from above to guide me to holiness.

Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell? (30:4)

Who has come down from heaven and ascended into heaven? Who has control over the wind and sets limits to the waters? Who has made the earth? Who is He and who is His Son? Can you tell me?

Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. (30:5)

The Word of God is sacred, every word. He protects them that turn to Him.

Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar. (30:6)

God's Word is exact to the last letter, to every jot and tittle. To add to it makes you a liar.

Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: (30:7)

To want to know two things,

Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: (30:8)

The things spiritual, the things physical.

Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain. (30:9)

If I be rich, I might deny God. If I be poor, I might steal and shame God's Name.

Accuse not a servant unto his master, lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty. (30:10)

Don't talk bad of a servant to his master, lest he talks bad of you and you are exposed.

There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother. (30:11)

There is a generation that breaks into pieces the V Commandment.

There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. (30:12)

There is a generation of highest self esteem, but are polluted.

There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up. (30:13)

There is a generation of the utmost arrogance and conceit.

There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men. (30:14)

There is a generation of sharks that prey on the poor.

The horseleach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give. There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, It is enough: (30:15)

The horse leech (a blood sucker leech that sticks to a horse to suck its blood) has two daughters who want more and more. Three things that are never satiated, and four things that never have enough.

The grave; and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire that saith not, It is enough. The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it. (30:16, 17)

The eyes that look down on their parents should be picked and eaten by ravens and eagles—how wicked they are!

There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not: The way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid. Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness. (30:18-20)

A loose woman commits adultery like having a meal, like ordinary business.

For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear: For a servant when he reigneth; and a fool when he is filled with meat; For an odious woman when she is married; and an handmaid that is heir to her mistress.

There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: The ants are a people not strong, yet they

prepare their meat in the summer; The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks; The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands; The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.

There be three things which go well, yea, four are comely in going: A lion which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any; A greyhound; an he goat also; and a king, against whom there is no rising up. If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, lay thine hand upon thy mouth. Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood: so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife. (30:21-33)

Chapter XXXI

Admonitions to King Lemuel from His Mother

The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him. What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows? Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings. It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted. Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more. Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy. (31:1-9)

It is the duty of parents to instruct their children. The father is the head of the family and the responsibility falls on him. But the mother who brings up the infant child from her bosom has a greater influence. An example is Timothy who inherits his faith from Mother Eunice and Grandmother Lois.

The queen mother cautions her son against two temptations that will ruin his career: women and wine. As to women we have received plenty from Solomon—on strange women. This is simply a reminder of the power of women, that a hero, as the Chinese saying goes, can hardly resist.

As to wine it is a taboo to kings totally. A king must be a teetotaler that he may not be under its sway and thereby lose his

kingship. A president of Singapore had taken to drinks. This led him to behave shamefully to women. He lost his job.

Those who are ready to die can take strong drinks. Those who drink their sorrows away eventually extinguish themselves.

Kings and judges should be more temperate than others that they may always possess a sound mind to decide on matters of life and death. Yes, it is not for kings to get drunk.

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.

Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates. (31:10-31)

Using the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet for an acrostic, here is a poem dedicated to the Virtuous Woman, the Model Wife. This is the highest blessing God can confer on a man.

A virtuous woman and a model wife is her husband's anchor. She contributes to the economy of the family in her feminine ways. It is stated that a woman who stays at home to manage the household saves her husband \$1,700 per month.

She even gets up to give supper to the family, not forgetting the young girls her domestic help. She works in what we call a cottage industry. She invests in property and cultivates it for profit. She is ever diligent and by diligence she prospers. Being blessed of God she returns to Him a part by distributing to the needy.

She prepares for the coming of winter with winter wear and fine linen for warmer times. She makes extra to sell to merchants.

Behind every man there is a woman, and here is the virtuous woman, the model wife. Thus he is sustained by a good wife and thereby he rises to high honour in society. She on her part is well respected. Her speech is full of wisdom and kindness.

She takes good care of her children, and is not a shirker like some mothers. Thus her children respect and love her. Her husband also sings her praises. She is queen among many women. And a woman's beauty is not on the outside but inside—in the heart and not on the skin. She as a woman will be highly regarded “in the gates”. Amen.

APPENDIX

1. Arrangement of the Proverbs of Solomon

Contents of Proverbs, ch. 10 to ch. 29. classed under different heads, so as to present at one view the various texts which relate to the same subject.—*From Henry.*

- (1) Of the comfort or grief parents have in their children, as they are wise or foolish, godly or ungodly, ch. 10.1; 15.20; 17.21, 25; 19.13, 26; 23.15, 16, 24, 25; 27.11; 29.3.
- (2) Of the world's insufficiency, and religion's sufficiency, to make us happy, ch. 10.2, 3; 11.4; and the preference to be given to the gains of virtue, above those of the world, ch. 15.16, 17; 16.8, 16; 17.1; 19.1; 28.6, 11.
- (3) Of slothfulness and diligence, ch. 10.4, 26; 12.11, 24, 27; 13.4, 23; 15.19; 16.26; 18.9; 19.15, 24; 20.4, 13; 21.5, 25, 26; 22.13, 29; 24.30-34; 26.13-16; 27.18, 23-27; 28.19. Particularly improving or neglecting opportunities, ch. 6.6; 10.5.
- (4) The happiness of the righteous, and the misery of the wicked, ch. 10.6, 9, 16, 24, 25, 27-30; 11.3, 5-8, 18-21, 31; 12.2, 3, 7, 13, 14, 21, 26, 28; 13.6, 9, 14, 15, 21, 22, 25; 14.11, 14, 19, 32; 15.6, 8, 9, 24, 26, 29; 20.7; 21.12, 15, 16, 18, 21; 22.12; 28.10, 18; 29.6.
- (5) Of honour and dishonour, ch. 10.7; 12.8, 9; 18.3; 26.1; 27.21. And of vain glory, ch. 25.14, 27; 27.2.

- (6) The wisdom of obedience, and folly of disobedience, ch. 10.8, 17; 12.1, 15; 13.1, 13, 18; 15.5, 10, 12, 31, 32; 19.16; 28.4, 7, 9.
- (7) Of mischievousness and usefulness, ch. 10.10, 23; 11.9-11, 23, 27; 12.5, 6, 12, 18, 20; 13.2; 14.22; 16.29, 30; 17.11; 21.10; 24.8; 26.23, 27.
- (8) The praise of wise and good discourse, and the hurt and shame of an ungoverned tongue, ch. 10.11, 13, 14, 20, 21, 31, 32; 11.30; 14.3; 15.2, 4, 7, 23, 28; 16.20, 23, 24; 17.7; 18.4, 7, 20, 21; 20.15; 21.23; 23.9; 24.26; 25.11.
- (9) Of love and hatred, peaceableness and contention, ch. 10.12; 15.17; 17.1, 9, 14, 19; 18.6, 17-19; 20.3; 25.8; 26.17,21; 29.9.
- (10) Of the rich and poor, ch. 10.15, 22; 11.28; 13.7, 8; 14.20, 24; 18.11, 23; 19.1, 4, 7, 22; 22.2, 7; 28.6, 11; 29.13.
- (11) Of lying, fraud, and dissimulation, and of truth and sincerity, ch. 10.18; 12.17, 19, 22; 13.5; 17.4; 20.14, 17; 26.18, 19, 24-26, 28.
- (12) Of slandering, ch. 10.18; 16.27; 25.23.
- (13) Of talkativeness and silence, ch. 10.19; 11.12; 12.23; 13.3; 17.27, 28; 29.11, 20.
- (14) Of justice and injustice, ch. 11.1; 13.16; 16.8, 11; 17.15, 26; 18.5; 20.10, 23; 22.28; 23.10, 11; 29.24.
- (15) Of pride and humility, ch. 11.2; 13.10; 15.25,33; 16.5,18,19; 18.12; 21.4; 25.6,7; 28.25; 29.23.
- (16) Of despising and respecting others, ch. 11.12; 14.21;
- (17) Of tale-bearing, ch. 11.13; 16.28; 18.8; 20.19; 26.20, 22.
- (18) Of rashness and deliberation, ch. 11.14; 15.22; 18.13; 19.2; 20.5, 18; 21.29; 22.3; 25.8-10.
- (19) Of suretiship, ch. 11.15; 17.18; 20.16; 22.26, 27; 27.13.

- (20) Of good and bad women, or wives, ch. 11.16, 22; 12.4; 14.1; 18.22; 19.13, 14; 21.9, 19; 25.24; 27.15, 16.
- (21) Of mercifulness and unmercifulness, ch. 11.17; 12.10; 14.21; 19.17; 21.13.
- (22) Of charity to the poor, and uncharitableness, ch. 11.24-26; 14.31; 17.5; 22.9, 16, 22, 23; 28.27; 29.7.
- (23) Of covetousness and contentment, ch. 11.29; 15.16, 17, 27; 23.4, 5.
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These maxims have the Divine authority, and are infallible rules to direct our conduct in every circumstance of human life. They

agree with the manners of every age, and are adapted to every period, condition, and rank in life. Kings and subjects, rich and poor, wise and foolish, old and young, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, sons and daughters, masters and servants, may here learn their respective duties, and read lessons of instruction for the regulation of their conduct in their various circumstances.

2. Proverbs for Christian Living

By Wang Ming-tao

Fearing God is the foundation of life.

Loving neighbour is the way of living.

Be very sincere in dealing with others.

Be very severe in regulating yourself.

When in poverty, do not cringe.

When in prosperity, be not proud.

Never harbour a spirit of jealousy.

Rejoice with them in prosperity.

Rejoice not at the misfortunes of others.

When others are down, share their troubles.

Don't overtake your neighbour where profit lies ahead.

Don't step backwards in the face of common danger.

When you're indebted to others, be ready to confess and redress.

When others are indebted to you, be indulgent and forgiving.

When doing good to others, regard that your duty.

When others do good to you, recognise it is by their grace.

Let not any wealth that goes through you,

whether big or small, soil your palm.

In making friends with members of either sex,

be proper and open.

Do not promise easily.

Having promised, be diligent to fulfil.

Do not borrow at random.

Pay back quickly any loan.

Respect your elders, and elders of others.

Love your children, and children of others.

Let the strong points in others become a pattern to you.

Let the weak points in others be a warning.

Control your temper: be not easily provoked to anger.

Guard your lips; and be slow to speak.

Do not spread any unfounded report.

Do not do anything that fears exposure.

Do not covet the wealth you see in others.

Do not look on with folded arms when others fall.

Bow not nor fawn before people.

Speak no evil behind others' backs.

Be diligent and loyal in serving others,

True and straightforward in your transactions.

Hate evil like snakes and scorpions.

Love neighbours like rare treasures.

Rather lose money than trustworthiness.

Rather lose your life than self-control.

Do not cover up your mistakes,

Nor boast at all of your virtues.

Be always courteous in speech and conduct.

Be always neat and tidy in apparel.

Do not provoke others to hate you,

Nor speak words that irk your hearers.

Absolutely no smoking, no drinking, no gambling,

Taboo to all seductive make-up.

Think always for the good of others.

Wherever you go, seek God's glory.



THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON, far from being a collection of sayings of the Hebrew people, are a crystallisation of the wisdom God has given him. They are divinely inspired and take their place among other books of the Bible. Hence they are justly called "Pearls of Great Wisdom."

By his God-given wisdom, Solomon, with one stroke of his psychological sword, solved the case of the contending mothers. None of today's learned judges could have done that. Thus, wisdom is the principal thing. It is the key to all life's intricate problems. It is far above the price of rubies. It shines brighter than diamonds.

We have expounded the first nine and last two chapters of the Book. From Chapter X to XXIX the "Pearls of Great Wisdom" are displayed in parallels of contrast: Not wickedness but righteousness. Not folly but wisdom. Cast in short, pithy sentences they stand out each one like a glowing pearl. The best way to study them is to memorise them, for they are self-explanatory. To make them more outstanding we have them printed in black. To see them in profile we have restated them as accurately as we can, for homiletically speaking, restatement puts them in a new light.

Truly, from our observation, there is no better way of learning the Proverbs than by committing them to memory. One verse a day will make you wiser and wiser all the way. Amen.

Timothy Tow



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