

things, yet all are told by the Psalmist to praise the Lord. Hence, we understand him to mean that we should praise the Lord for all the innumerable things in creation that bring us so much joy and other blessing. The book closes with the words on which we have had frequent comments and that are rendered "Hallelujah."

PROVERBS 1

General remarks. Concerning the authorship of this book, Smith's Bible Dictionary has this to say: "The superscriptions [titles] which are affixed to several portions of the book, in chs. 1: 1; 10: 1; 25: 1, attribute the authorship of those portions to Solomon the son of David, king of Israel. With the exception of the last two chapters, which are distinctly assigned to other authors, it is probable that the statement of the superscriptions is in the main correct, and that the majority of the proverbs contained or collected were by Solomon . . . The Proverbs are frequently quoted or alluded to in the New Testament, and the canonicity [authority] of the book thereby confirmed."—Article, Book of Proverbs. Since it is certain, then, that the authorship of the book belongs to Solomon, it will be well to settle the question of his qualifications and authority for writing the book. The wisdom of Solomon has been a subject of discussion among the friends of the Bible. Some have said that, while it was far above what any other person had, it was not in the form of inspiration; that it was mental talent such as all people have through nature, except that his exceeded others. That will not hold, for Solomon was already a mature man, with all natural endowments possessed and developed, when God gave to him the wisdom we are speaking about. Again, it is claimed that his wisdom pertained to his ability as king and judge of disputes, not to his writings; wrong again. In 1 Kings 4: 32, immediately after mentioning his wisdom, the writer tells us of the songs and proverbs he composed. The conclusion is, then, that Solomon was divinely inspired in all of his writings that have been included in the Bible. The fact of his unrighteous life does not affect his inspiration, any more than Peter's hypocrisy at Antioch (Gal. 2: 11-13) affected his inspiration at Jerusalem (Acts 15: 7-11) or his epistles.

Verse 1. The word *proverbs* is from MASHAL and Strong defines it, "prop-

erly a pithy maxim, usually of a metaphorical [figurative] nature; hence a simile [comparison], (as an adage, poem, discourse)." The importance of the author is indicated by telling of his ancestry. He was not only a son of David, but David was a king. And David was not only a king, but was king of Israel.

Verse 2. This verse states the purpose of these proverbs; that it was to know *wisdom* and *instruction*, and to perceive words of *understanding*. The three nouns that are italicized have about the same meaning. Generally speaking, they have the idea of information necessary to wise and proper living, and correction when one gets out of the line of duty. The key to the verse is the word *know*. It is from YADAH, and Strong says it is used in a great variety of senses "including observation, care, recognition." In the King James version it has been rendered acknowledge 5 times, be aware 2, discern 4, consider 7, have respect 1, perceive 18. So the force of the verse is, the proverbs of Solomon were written to the end that the reader would be led to recognize and give attention to the things mentioned. Or, using a popular saying, to "know a good thing when he sees it."

Verse 3. *Perceive* is still a stronger word than *know* in the preceding verse. It means not only to recognize and give some attention to the instruction, but actually to accept it. The four items of the list have much in common in their meaning, yet there is some distinction. I shall state the leading idea in each as drawn from the lexicon. *Wisdom* means to be on the alert; *justice*, to be strictly or technically right; *judgment*, a proper verdict when called upon for a decision; *equity*, to show the spirit of fair play in one's relations with others.

Verse 4. *Subtily* means the exercise of common sense instead of being *simple*, which means to be easily misled. A man might not be "simple" in the sense of the word here, but if he were young he would need to be given knowledge and *discretion*. This word is from an original that means the ability to think for himself.

Verse 5. A *wise* man is one who will hear so as to increase his *learning*. In other words, the wisest man in the world is the one who realizes he does not know it all. Paul taught this same thing in 1 Cor. 3: 18. The last clause of the verse has practically the same meaning as the first.

Verse 6. This verse, like 3 others above, starts with the word *to*. All of verses 2-6 were written to show the purpose of the proverbs that are mentioned in verse one. Among those purposes this verse gives that of helping the reader to *understand* (distinguish or recognize) what he reads. *Proverb* and *interpretation* have the same definition, and mean a "maxim" or comparison. *Dark* and *sayings* are from the same original and mean "puzzling" sentences. All puzzles are possible of solving if one uses the proper key. So as a final summing up, Solomon wished to produce a group of pithy remarks, short but thorough, in many repetitions yet with some distinctions, so that his friends and fellow citizens would be helped in the field of his (Solomon's) own specialty which was WISDOM. These 6 verses should be regarded as a preface to the whole Book of Proverbs, and kept in mind throughout the entire study of the book.

Verse 7. *Beginning* is from *RESHIYTH*, and one part of the definition is to be first in rank. It is translated "principal thing" in ch. 4: 7. The thought is that when a man learns to fear and respect the Lord, he has learned the most important of all forms of wisdom. By this token a fool is one who does not fear or respect the Lord because he does not want to receive instruction as to his conduct.

Verse 8. *Son* is from *BEN*, which occurs several hundred times in the Old Testament. The definition in Strong's lexicon is, "a son (as a builder of the family name), in the widest sense (of literal and figurative relationship, including grandson, subject, nation, quality or condition, etc.)." In view of this definition it can be seen that Solomon used the word with reference to young men generally. Parents are the first teachers of children and their advice is backed by years of experience.

Verse 9. *They* refers to the instructions given a boy by his father and mother. The *ornament* is figurative, of course, and used to indicate the value of a good life.

Verse 10. To *entice* means to induce another by deceptive means. The apparent worth of the thing suggested covers the danger therein from the view of the victim. The advice is for the young man not to be misled by the temptation.

Verse 11. It is wrong to overtake even a guilty person by dishonest

methods; how much worse to do so against those who have no evil *cause* justly charged to them.

Verse 12. It is not likely that a gang of outlaws would use this language literally in trying to seduce a young man into wrong-doing. The idea is that their persuasive inducements should be regarded in that light.

Verse 13. The motive of violence for the purpose of robbery is what these *sinners* had in mind. The desire for wealth by any means is the subject of this verse.

Verse 14. This is just another way of suggesting that they all work together in the robbery, then divide the spoil among all equally.

Verse 15. A boy might think he would associate with these sinners without joining with them in their evil deeds. But sooner or later he will find himself doing just as they are doing. Paul taught this great truth in 1 Cor. 15: 33. Another thing to consider, if a boy is found in company with those who are engaged in wrongful practices, he will be looked upon with suspicion if not actually charged together with them. Therefore Solomon's advice to the young man is not to go along with them.

Verse 16. The purpose of the enticers may not be seen at first, but Solomon says their path will lead to the greatest sin. By the time the unsuspecting boy learns what he is mixed up with, it will be too late to retreat.

Verse 17. This verse explains why the evil characters keep their real purposes from those whom they wish to mislead. If a bird sees a trap being set he will not go into it. For the same reason, if the evil designs of these "sinners" were allowed to be known, the young man would understand better than to follow them.

Verse 18. Evil often works its own rebuke. In Ps. 141: 10 David wished for the wicked to fall into their own trap. Such is the meaning of the verse we are considering.

Verse 19. If a man is so greedy for gain that he will attempt getting it by "armed robbery," he is in danger of losing his own life.

Verse 20. *Wisdom* is the subject of this and all the following verses of this chapter. It has already been stated (at v. 6) that wisdom was Solomon's specialty. It was the thing for which he asked God at Gibeon (1 Ki. 3: 5-9), and we should not be sur-

prised if it proves to be the most prominent subject running throughout this book. Solomon represents wisdom as the speaker in the following verses, and practically all of the personal pronouns are impersonations of the subject; and without exception that is true of the pronouns in the first person.

Verse 21. The need for wisdom is present in the gates and all other public places.

Verse 22. *Simple ones* means those who will not try to improve their situation in life by seeking for wisdom. A man who belittles the value of knowledge is a fool.

Verse 23. The reader should not forget that it is *wisdom* that is talking. If men will accept the reproof that wisdom offers them, and turn or change their foolish ways, they will be given further words of truth.

Verse 24. Wisdom had been offered to the people of the world but they had turned the offer down. Wisdom had even pleaded (*stretched out my hand*) with men to receive her, but it had been disregarded as if it amounted to nothing.

Verse 25. *Counsel* means advice in general, and *reproof* means an attempted correction of error. To *set at naught* means to regard it with contempt as if it did not have any merit worthy of being accepted or given any consideration.

Verse 26. All the wisdom in the world will be of no avail after a man has ignored it until he meets up with a calamity. In his fear he may recall the words of wisdom that had been offered him but which he slighted.

Verse 27. Such misfortunes as are named in this verse may come to any person and through no fault of his own. But the ones meant here are those which might have been avoided had the victim listened to the voice of wisdom in time.

Verse 28. This verse describes a great many people who try to escape from the results of their own folly when it is too late. Such persons generally are the quickest to cry for help. Yes, they *seek me early* says the voice of "wisdom," but the seeking is too late to be of any benefit because the fruit is ready to be harvested.

Verse 29. These unfortunate people got into their serious trouble because they hated or disrespected knowledge. The author couples hatred for knowledge with rejection of the fear of the

Lord because they work the same result to the guilty ones.

Verse 30. *They would none* means they would not receive any of the counsel of wisdom. They despised (belittled) the reproof that was offered them by wisdom.

Verse 31. A New Testament expression with the same meaning as this verse is in Gal. 6: 7 about sowing and reaping. The people of our own verse were to have a similar experience, and all because they would not accept the counsel of "wisdom." A man falling into the pit he had digged for another is another comparison, except that the ones in this verse may not have involved anyone else in their folly.

Verse 32. *Turning away* means a backsliding or departing from the pathway of right. The *simple* means those who would not consult the advice of wisdom. Their own carelessness will be their ruin in the end. Also, those who ignore wisdom's direction in the obtaining or use of their wealth will perish in their own foolishness.

Verse 33. This verse describes a character just opposite to that of the preceding one. By listening to the voice of wisdom the individual will be secure in life.

PROVERBS 2

Verse 1. See comments at chapter 1: 10 on meaning of *son*. *Receive* and *hide* are used in a good sense, meaning to accept and retain the words and commandments of the wise monarch of Israel, since he spoke them by the help of the Lord.

Verse 2. Not only should the young man retain the words of wisdom, but he should have a favorable attitude toward them. And he should display that attitude by making a practical demonstration of it in his manner of life.

Verse 3. This verse is still stronger than the two preceding ones. The young man does not wait to be offered words of wisdom but calls earnestly for them. That is indicated by the phrase *lifting up his voice*.

Verse 4. This is a comparison, considering knowledge as valuable as the precious metal and other treasures of accepted worth.

Verse 5. The search for wisdom will logically lead to a knowledge of God, which in turn will result in *fear* or respect for the Lord. See the com-

ments at Ps. 86: 12 for the distinctive meanings of *Lord* and *God*.

Verse 6. Solomon at first spoke of the commandments as his (v. 1), now he attributes them to the Lord. So we have his own admission that he wrote by inspiration. See the comments in the first verses of ch. 1 on meanings of *wisdom*, *knowledge* and *understanding* when used as separate terms.

Verse 7. *He* is a pronoun referring to the Lord. *Layeth up* means the wisdom is provided and always at hand for those who are worthy of it. A *buckler* is one who defends and supports another in his activities.

Verse 8. *Paths* and *way* refer to the life conduct of the *saints* or servants of the Lord. He will watch over and protect his righteous followers in their good walk.

Verse 9. To *understand* means to realize through experience what these virtues amount to. *Righteousness* is the act of doing right; *judgment* is the use of common sense in forming conclusions; and *equity* is the showing of fair play with others.

Verse 10. Wisdom must not merely be heard, but must be permitted to enter the heart or mind; it should be considered as a pleasant thing. We are reminded of the statement of Christ on this subject as recorded in Matt. 5: 6.

Verse 11. *Discretion* and *understanding* means the right use of knowledge gained.

Verse 12. Such use of one's knowledge will assure one against being misled by the *froward* (stubbornly wayward) man.

Verse 13. *Who* refers to the "froward" man of the preceding verse. He is contrary in that he will not remain in the right path but deserts it to wander in paths of sin.

Verse 14. The antecedent of most of the pronouns in these verses is the "evil man" in verse 12. Such a person would not only do the evil but would rejoice in it. And his rejoicing would not stop at his own evil practices, but he would actually take delight in the *frowardness* (stubborn waywardness) of others.

Verse 15. *Crooked* and *froward* mean almost the same; to sway back and forth.

Verse 16. The verse starts with *to*, which goes back to the purposes of the book. See the comments at ch. 1: 2. One of the purposes was to put the

young man on his guard against the *strange* woman; one who belongs in another and an evil class. It has special reference to the immoral woman who seeks the patronage of the young man, and who uses flattering words to him to win him over to her association.

Verse 17. The description of this *strange* woman indicates that she had belonged with the people of God. Yet she had placed herself in a *strange* class (another class v. 16) by the corrupt life she formed and the associates she had made by such a life.

Verse 18. *Her house* means a house of bad repute. *Death* and *dead* are used in a moral and spiritual sense. If a young man becomes a patron of an immoral house he separates himself from a life of righteousness. That is when he becomes *dead* since the basic meaning of death is a separation.

Verse 19. No one gets so far into sin that God will not receive him back if he makes the proper amends. But the danger and rule is that a patron of the kind of life described above will continue therein to the end of life.

Verse 20. The purpose of the proverbs is again mentioned. That the young man will associate with good characters instead of with the "strange" woman.

Verse 21. *The upright* being considered at present are those who avoid evil companions and prefer the righteous. Such characters are regarded as *the perfect*, and they have the assurance of prolonged residence in the land.

Verse 22. On the principle of the preceding verse, the patrons of "strange" women and other wicked characters will be rejected and brought to ruin.

PROVERBS 3

Verse 1. See comments at ch. 1: 10 on "son." Since Solomon was an inspired man (see "general remarks"), it follows that the commandments are those of the Lord. For the young man to keep them with his heart means that he will be wholehearted in life.

Verse 2. Those who honor the Lord will observe the proper rules of life. That will lead to better health and hence to a longer life.

Verse 3. *Mercy* and *truth* are named together which is very significant. *Mercy* that is not in accordance with *truth* would be wrong. The other parts of the verse are figures of speech. *Mercy* and *truth* are the most desirable of all ornaments.

Verse 4. Yes, both God and man will be favorable towards the one who is merciful and truthful. Paul wrote something along that line in Gal. 5: 23, second clause.

Verse 5. Human wisdom is frail compared with that of the Lord; however, one should use his own reasoning faculties in applying the Lord's words of wisdom.

Verse 6. *Acknowledge* is from a word that means to give attention to the Lord for the purpose of learning of Him. By such learning the young man will be directed aright.

Verse 7. This is practically the same in thought as the last clause of v. 5. It is also like the statement of Paul in Rom. 12: 16.

Verse 8. *Navel* is from *shor* and Strong's definition is, "a string (as twisted), i. e. (specifically) the umbilical cord (also figuratively as the center of strength)." *Marrow* is from a word that means moisture. The verse is figurative, and based on the literal importance of the mentioned organs for the health of the human body.

Verse 9. Paul says "we brought nothing into this world" (1 Tim. 6: 7), and also teaches that whatever is in our hands now was received from some one else (1 Cor. 4: 7). The wise man teaches the same truth in this verse. It is our duty, therefore, to use our *substance* (possessions) in a way that will honor the Lord.

Verse 10. If man makes the proper use of the blessings God has given him he has the promise of being prosperous again. This also was taught by Paul in 2 Cor. 9: 6-10.

Verse 11. This is one of the passages that is quoted in the New Testament; it is in Heb. 12: 5, 6. To *despise* means to belittle, and the young man is exhorted not to underestimate the value of chastisement. Whether of a physical or mental nature, it is always beneficial to have all disorders corrected, even if the operation is painful.

Verse 12. A true parent, whether human or divine, who administers proper punishment to a wayward son, thereby shows his real love for the child. Withholding a needed correction is not an indication of love, but of hatred and unconcern.

Verse 13. For several verses the subject will be *wisdom*, and it will be impersonated generally by a feminine pronoun. See the comments on this

subject at ch. 1: 20. There are several words that may be found in the Bible that are similar in meaning, such as wisdom, understanding, knowledge and discretion. These are so much alike they can be used interchangeably. However, there is a slight distinction in their meanings, especially if two or more of them are used in one connection. For instance, in the present verse the first word denotes mental ability in general, and the second is the right use of that ability. Solomon says that happiness results from these virtues.

Verse 14. *Merchandise* is from a word defined as "profit from trade." The idea is that if one deals in wisdom as his stock, his profits will be greater than if he was dealing in silver and gold, even though they are very valuable elements.

Verse 15. This verse makes the comparison stronger than the preceding. It places the value above everything else, and even above all other desirable things put together.

Verse 16. *Length of days* will be a result of living according to wisdom. It will also bring true riches because it is coupled with honor. Right and left hand are figures of speech to indicate completeness of benefits obtained by using wisdom.

Verse 17. The ways or manner of life directed by wisdom will be pleasant to one who loves righteousness. He may be even forced to endure some physical discomfort as a result of clinging to the right, but the consciousness that he is right will be a pleasant meditation. On the same principle it will give him a perfect peace.

Verse 18. Using some good things in nature for an illustration, wisdom is even compared with a tree of life. That would mean a tree whose fruit produced a never failing source of joyful existence. But to have these good effects the person must *lay hold* of the source of wisdom, not merely long for it. He must go further yet; he must *retain* the wisdom after he has made the effort to lay hold of it.

Verse 19. Wisdom was not the force by which the Lord *founded* (made and established) the earth. It means that he used wisdom in the work. See comments at v. 13 for explanation of *understanding*. The heavens means the regions where the birds fly, and where the planets are fixed in their firm position.

Verse 20. God's control over the sea

has been demonstrated more than once, so we do not know which instance was meant by this verse. And the dropping of the dew is so common, though wonderful, that a bare mention of it should cause adoration for Him.

Verse 21. The pronoun *them* is mentioned before the antecedent, *wisdom* and *discretion*. The two words will take the same comments as v. 13.

Verse 22. People wore ornaments of pearls or costly stones around their necks. The wise man used it to compare the beauty and attractiveness of wisdom and discretion. *Soul* means the entire being and *life* refers to the force that sustains it.

Verse 23. A man need not stumble if he can know the pathway he is trying to travel. Wisdom and discretion will point out such a mode of travel.

Verse 24. The greatest assurance one can have is that which comes from the consciousness of being right. Such an assurance may be had by accepting the words of wisdom offered by the wise king of Israel. It will prepare the mind to relax at the hour of retirement and enter into peaceful sleep.

Verse 25. With the equipment of wisdom one will always be prepared for emergencies, so that he will not have any dread of some sudden crisis. He will not even have to be in dread of the enemy who is not backed up by this wisdom.

Verse 26. The secret of all this confidence is one's faith in the Lord who knows all about the tricks of wicked men, and will protect the righteous from all pitfalls.

Verse 27. No one is required to contribute to the needs of others if he does not have wherewith to do so. But if a favor is due another and the debtor has the necessity in hand he should contribute it to the need of him who makes the request.

Verse 28. This is practically the same as the preceding verse except that it is more specific. But that makes the individual more entitled to criticism than before. The fact that he promises to perform the favor at a specified time, and at a time only one day in the future, indicates that he already has the means of meeting the obligation.

Verse 29. *Securely* is from *BETACH* and Strong's definition is, "a place of refuge; abstractly safety, both the fact (security) and the feeling (trust); often (adverbially or without prepo-

sition) safely." It is a beautiful thought. The neighbor has rested in a feeling of security by you, having no fear of any harm at your hands. Now then, do not betray that confidence by devising or practicing some evil against him.

Verse 30. It is the claim of national lawmakers that our constitution and acts of legislation are based on principles taught in the Bible. It is right that such is the case. The Mosaic system was a combination of religious and civil law, and it was the only government the Jews had. Since that system ceased as it was, and the Christian Dispensation came in, the Lord does not legislate in civil affairs directly. However, he wishes man to have some civil government and endorses the existence of such (Rom. 13: 1-6). It is a mark of good judgment, therefore, for human legislators to respect the laws of the Old Testament in formulating those for our day. And we should also bear in mind that many individual laws set forth obligations that have to do with both one's duty to God and to man. That was true of the verse cited in this paragraph. The courts of the land recognize this principle of fairness in dealing with a fellow citizen. If a man attempts to bring a suit at law and the courts consider the claim of the plaintiff without foundation they will "throw it out of court."

Verse 31. To envy another is to be grieved because of his success; to begrudge him his good fortune. The idea of this verse is that an oppressor (violent man) really has nothing to be envious of. What a man seems to gain in that way will prove to be vain and worthless when all of the results of such a life are made known.

Verse 32. A *froward* man is one who is wayward and stubborn with it. Such a character is abominable in the sight of the Lord. *His secret* means the Lord will be intimate and friendly with a righteous man.

Verse 33. To *curse* another means either to cause him some undesirable experience or at least to wish it upon him. The Lord can do both, and of course the undesirable experience He would cause to come upon a wicked house would be just.

Verse 34. According to Strong, to *scorn* means to "make mouths at, i. e., to scoff." In this verse it is attributed to both God and man. The word is contrasted with *the lowly* in the same

verse, as it applies to man. Hence the meaning of the verse is that if a man is proud and makes light of things and persons who are good, then God will belittle that man and abase him. (Luke 14: 11.)

Verse 35. This is practically the same as the preceding verse as to the proud and humble. It also has the same kind of promise as Jesus made in Matt. 5: 6, and the apostle also taught the same principle in 2 Pe. 3: 13.

PROVERBS 4

Verse 1. This verse is addressed to children in general. Solomon wrote as a father in the general sense also, and as an inspired instructor to his and other sons.

Verse 2. *Doctrine* is another name for teaching. The teaching of Solomon would be good doctrine because he was an inspired man.

Verse 3. The personal experiences of Solomon could have been told without the qualification of inspiration, but the recording of them in the Bible was done by the guidance of that faculty to insure their accuracy.

Verse 4. Solomon had great respect for David's teaching even if he did not always carry it out in his own life.

Verse 5. For distinctions between *wisdom* and *understanding* see the comments at ch. 3: 13. To decline from the words of the wise man meant to hesitate at doing them.

Verse 6. *Forsake* is negative and *love* is positive as it concerns the attitude toward the words of wisdom. It is not enough to say of one that he will not forsake the teaching of wisdom coming from the great man; but he should love it. (Matt. 5: 6.)

Verse 7. See the comments on ch. 3: 13 on the distinctive meaning of these words. While wisdom is the principal thing, yet if it is not used properly the benefits will be far from what they should and could be.

Verse 8. All of these remarks of the wise man have to do with the proper attitude toward wisdom. A mere toleration of a good thing will not suffice. It must be ardently loved and embraced. It is like the interest one should have in partaking of the things that pertain to righteousness. (Matt. 5: 6.)

Verse 9. These ornaments are figurative, and the comparison is made because of the value of wisdom and un-

derstanding when attached to a person's character.

Verse 10. There was no literal lengthening of a man's life promised as a reward for his acceptance of the wisdom. See the comments at ch. 3: 2 for explanation.

Verse 11. Solomon was a wise man in all of his teaching although he did not live up to his own words, especially in the latter part of his life.

Verse 12. The pronoun *thou* refers to the *son* of v. 10. The verse points out some of the good results of following the words of wisdom offered him. He will not be *straitened* (hindered) in his daily life. *Runnest* refers to the occasions when he would need to make haste in his conduct. If the young man has been relying on the good instruction offered him by this father in Israel, he will not be in any danger of *stumbling* or making a misstep and falling by the wayside.

Verse 13. No additional information on the subject of wisdom is given in this verse. It is rather an exhortation to heed the instructions already given.

Verse 14. The *path of the wicked* means their manner of life, also the association formed thereby. It is dangerous for a young man to form evil companionships (1 Cor. 15: 33), even if he does not intend to take part in their evil deeds.

Verse 15. In view of the preceding advice the young man should avoid the company of wicked persons as he would a rank poison or a vicious beast.

Verse 16. These wicked persons are so devoted to their life of crime that no day is allowed to close without some evil deed having been done. Should they retire at night and recall that no misdeed had been done that day it would be counted as a day lost. The thought of it would so disturb them that they could not go to sleep.

Verse 17. These evil persons do not relish their meals unless they were procured through fraud or violent robbery.

Verse 18. The life practices of mankind do not come to a standstill as regards good and evil. The first will grow into more and greater goodness, while the second will get worse and worse. Hence this verse says that the *path* (life practice) of the just will get brighter and brighter as the person gets nearer the end, even down to the "last mile of the way."

Verse 19. The experiences of the

wicked are just the opposite of that described in the preceding verse. These men not only stumble, but, being in the dark, they do not even know what it was over which they stumbled.

Verse 20. To *attend* means to listen attentively, not merely give a casual hearing. Incline denotes that he goes further than an attentive hearing. It means he is also favorably impressed with what he hears.

Verse 21. Words are not things that literally can be seen. The idea is to see with the mental vision and to keep looking for the good words of advice from the wise man. The last clause of the verse is a little more direct in its meaning. If a young man keeps looking (mentally) for and at the wise sayings of the teacher, that will result in the storing of the words in the heart from where they will come forth in deeds.

Verse 22. Spiritual life and health is what is meant in this passage. The mention of temporal things such as flesh is figurative, because both the flesh and inner beings were created by the same God, and there is much sameness in the laws governing them in their activities and also in their treatment when out of order.

Verse 23. The *heart* is the innermost part of a person, including his mind and emotions. It is the part that thinks; that has motives; that decides for or against any proposition suggested, whether good or bad. That is why Solomon says that the *issues* (source) of life are from the heart. Jesus taught the same truth in Matt. 12: 34 and 15: 19. David likewise considered the heart in that light in Ps. 19: 14.

Verse 24. *Froward mouth* and *perverse lips* mean the same and are given for the purpose of emphasis. The meaning of frowardness is stubborn waywardness.

Verse 25. The idea is to look ahead and not become interested in the attractions along the side of the road of life. To do so may result in side-stepping and finally a failure to reach the desired goal at the end of life's journey.

Verse 26. Strong gives "to weigh mentally" as a meaning of the original for *ponder*. This is the same thought that Paul set forth in Eph. 5: 15. If a man thinks and looks carefully about his walk in life his *ways* will be established or well ordered.

Verse 27. This verse contains the

same subject matter as v. 25, with an additional implied reasoning in the last clause. We would think of the word *remove* as an active or positive one. Yet it is really a negative term as it is used here. It is somewhat like a familiar saying, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." By keeping in the strait pathway of righteousness the young man will avoid the steps of evil at the side of the road. Hence in that negative manner he will *remove his foot from evil*. It will be a kind of negative righteousness with a positive effect for good.

PROVERBS 5

Verse 1. *Attend* means to give respectful attention. *Bow thine ear* is virtually the same in sense as the first clause with the added idea of condescension or humility.

Verse 2. By taking heed to the teaching of Solomon, the young man will know how to use *discretion* (good judgment) in his conduct. To *keep knowledge* means to keep the use of it in all of life's relations regarding principles of right and wrong.

Verse 3. Solomon had much to say of the *strange* woman. The word literally means one outside of the people of God as a race. By extension it means a woman whose manner of life is different from that of the faithful servants of the Lord, whether she be of the Jew or Gentile stock. Such a woman uses flattering words to lure the young man into her path. *Drops as an honeycomb* refers to the sweetness that flattery seems to possess. For comments on the reference to the honeycomb see those at Ps. 19: 10. Flattery also has a smoothness like oil which makes it agreeable.

Verse 4. *Wormwood* was a plant growing in Palestine and was very bitter, some varieties also being poisonous. It is frequently referred to in a figurative sense in the Bible to symbolize the experiences of sorrow and/or death. The *end* (result or outcome) of following in the path of the "strange woman" is here compared to the bitter plant, and it is compared to the sting of a two-edged sword.

Verse 5. This verse is another wording of the thought in the preceding one. *Hell* is from *sheol* which means either a state of forgetfulness in this world, or of utter ruin in the world to come when the sentence of the great judgment day is pronounced.

Verse 6. The life of the strange

woman is deceitful and changeable. The temptation would be to *ponder* or study over it so as to solve the mystery. That is why the wise man offered his advice to keep the "son" from pondering over it.

Verse 7. Solomon uses the term *children* in the same sense he has that of "son." See the comments at ch. 1: 10 for explanation of this use of the word.

Verse 8. The only safe and wise thing to do is to stay as far away from evil as possible. There can be no good come from the house of a corrupt woman, hence the young man should avoid her as he would the den of a vicious beast.

Verse 9. No good man can actually give his honor to a wicked woman by patronizing her. The thought is that in associating with her he lets her destroy his honor. Moreover, by such a life of dissipation he will shorten his days and in that way he will be giving his *years unto the cruel*.

Verse 10. See one of the several previous paragraphs for the meaning of *strangers*. And see the preceding verse on the meaning of giving what he has to another.

Verse 11. This verse refers to the wasting disease that is contracted by intimacy with an immoral woman. For more detailed comments on this fearful subject, see what is offered in ch. 7: 23.

Verse 12. After this awful condition comes to the young man he will recall the many words of warning that were offered to him. He will admit, then, that he *despised* (belittled) those warning words, and in so doing was counted as having hated them.

Verse 13. Solomon was not the only one who had given words of warning to the young man. All persons who had the proper regard would be alert to warn young men of the pitfalls. Alas that so often they would turn a deaf ear to the warning.

Verse 14. *Evil* is from RAH, which Strong defines, bad or (as noun) evil (natural or moral). The word could apply in all of its senses to this young man. Here he was, in the midst of the congregation and surrounded with all the inducements for clean living. Yet he ignored all those good influences and wasted his physical and moral strength on corrupt women. That brought upon him the contempt of his people.

Verse 15. This and several following

verses offer an exhortation to the young (married) man to be true to his lawful partner in the intimacies of life. The terms are used figuratively but very clearly set forth the thought of the writer. The demands of the flesh have been created by the Lord and are not in themselves sinful. But the Lord has ordained the marriage relation as the lawful means of meeting those demands. What Solomon means is for the man to be true to his wife and live with her only.

Verse 16. In this verse the wise man seeks to warn the "son" not to expose his lawful pleasures to the corrupting influences of others, but keep them to himself and within the proper regulations as regards his moral obligations.

Verse 17. The corrupt woman would profess to enjoy the pleasures that the young man would give her by his association with her. The advice is for him to keep them to himself as far as the strange woman is concerned, and exercise them with his wife.

Verse 18. *Fountain* is from MAQOR and I will quote the part of Strong's definition needed here: "source . . . figuratively, of happiness, wisdom, progeny." From this definition we see that the *fountain* which Solomon had in mind was the man's wife. He was to let her be blessed; that is, be treated with proper respect. The second clause has the same thought in different words. *Wife of thy youth* might suggest the idea that Solomon was writing about a man advanced in years. All of the instructions would be appropriate for such a man but the connection shows he is still addressing his remarks to the "son." It is well known that even young husbands sometimes tire of their wives and cast their eyes upon another (strange) woman. Solomon would remind him that his wife was young like him and he should be satisfied with her.

Verse 19. The comparison is made to some attractive creatures of the animal kingdom that are of the more timid and refined character. *Breasts satisfy thee* refers to some of the intimacies that belong to the relation of husband and wife. It is the same procedure that is meant in the second clause of the Song of Solomon, 2: 6. *Ravished* is from SHAGAH and Strong defines it in part, "by extension (through the idea of intoxication) to reel (figuratively) be enraptured." *Love* is from an original which Strong

defines, "to have affection for (sexually or otherwise)." Thus the verse means that a husband should be so much in love with his wife that he will always find his complete sexual thrill and satisfaction with her. In that case he will not even be interested in a "strange" woman enough to look in her direction.

Verse 20. This does not present any new material, but is a challenge to the young man to explain why he would not follow the advice offered to him.

Verse 21. Over and above all reasons stated so far, there is the most important one yet to be considered. The Lord knows all about man's conduct and will bring him to an account in the last great day of judgment.

Verse 22. This verse is a way of saying that a wicked man will likely be caught in the trap that he had set for another.

Verse 23. *Die without instruction* denotes that for lack of instruction he shall die or come to a state of ruin. And his folly or foolishness is so great that he will wander off from the pathway of good judgment and be lost.

PROVERBS 6

Verse 1. *Friend* is from a word defined by Strong, "an associate (more or less close)." Hence it does not necessarily mean one who is a genuine friend in the strongest sense of the word. *Stranger* is still less close than this *friend*. Solomon is giving advice about becoming a bondman for these persons.

Verse 2. There is an old saying that "a certain way to lose a friend is to loan him some money." I do not know how far this should be carried, but I am sure there is much truth in it. Solomon had such a thought in mind when he wrote the words of this verse. *Snared* and *taken* mean that the "son" had placed himself in a snare or trap by agreeing to go on the other fellow's bond.

Verse 3. Before the matter goes on and becomes fixed, he should have the promise released. *Humble thyself* denotes that he should go to his "friend" and beg to be released from a bond that he did not realize at the time; he had "spoken too soon."

Verse 4. He should not wait over a single night, but go while the same date is in the calendar. One thing to be gained by going immediately, the other fellow could not have as much

occasion to say he had already arranged his business according to the transaction and that it would have to stand.

Verse 5. When a creature in the class of game is first taken is when it makes its most active struggles to get loose. Sometimes it may not have been caught quite completely, so that if it makes a desperate effort while it still has all its strength it may get loose. Solomon cites this illustration to urge the young man to undo his unwise action while the chances are the best.

Verse 6. A *sluggard* is a person who is inactive through laziness. He will let many opportunities pass by because he does not want to bestir himself. *Go to the ant* means "go and observe the ant and take a lesson from the wisdom of her activities."

Verse 7. That is, she does not have any one immediately at hand to see that she performs her duty in providing for the future.

Verse 8. Smith's Bible Dictionary states that there are two species of ants called "harvesting ants," and that they do lay up food as the verse here states. The wisdom and diligence of these ants are seen in that they work while it is the best time.

Verse 9. The wise man asks a criticizing question and accuses the sluggard of being asleep. This would not be literal sleep in all instances, but his laziness is as bad as it regards his usefulness as literal sleep would be.

Verse 10. This verse is a picture of the sluggard along the same line as the preceding verse. *Folding of the hands* is a physical action and is given as a synonym of *slumber*. That indicates the sleep referred to is the sleep of laziness.

Verse 11. *Come and travel* should be considered together in order to get the point. If one travels he does not merely stroll along leisurely and slowly; he makes some speed. So will poverty come to this lazy man very speedily. *An armed man* overpowers his victim who is often overtaken unprepared. Thus a lazy man is not prepared to resist the poverty that comes as a result of his indolence.

Verse 12. The original for *naughty* is a stronger word than is commonly considered. The lexicon defines it, without profit, worthlessness; by extension, destruction, wickedness." Hence we have another word with practically the same meaning and which the trans-

lators have rendered *wicked* in this verse. A *froward mouth* is one that stubbornly speaks contrary to the right way of life.

Verse 13. *Eyes, feet and fingers* are named because they are parts of the body that act as the outward fruit of the thoughts. This external manifestation is mentioned first, and the basis of it will be shown in the next verse.

Verse 14. *Frowardness* is stubborn waywardness, and such a sentiment in the heart would lead to such conduct as that described in the preceding verse. As a result of said conduct we would expect to witness discord among the people.

Verse 15. This verse takes the same comments as verse 11.

Verse 16. *Six things... yea seven.* It will not be well to lay too much stress on *seven*, although when used alone and figuratively it denotes completeness. Also the combination of *six* with it should not be pressed too far. In ch. 30: 18-24 the numbers three and four are used in a somewhat similar figure of speech. So the safest and most reasonable view of it is to think of it about as we use such terms as "two or three; four or five; six or seven," and so on. No doubt Solomon could have named even more than seven things which the Lord hates, but he sets forth enough to give us a complete picture of His attitude toward evil characters.

Verse 17. It has been said that "the eyes are the windows of the soul." Hence a *proud look* would indicate a heart tainted with pride, and that is a principle that is always condemned in the Bible. Truth is the sweetest and most valuable sentiment possible to intelligent creatures. How unspeakably wicked, then, is the opposite one. No wonder the apostle declared that all liars would have their part in the lake of fire. (Rev. 21: 8.) The reader should observe the distinction of *innocent blood*. If an officer of the law or other person acting under the law must execute a convict capitally, he will not be shedding *innocent blood*, but would be shedding *GUILTY blood*. But the verse we are now considering does not condemn that kind of act.

Verse 18. To *devise* means to plan and scheme and premeditate. All sins are condemned by the Lord, but those that are deliberately committed are more severely condemned and the Lord hates them. *Swift* does not refer to

speed especially, but to the idea of being always ready and eager to go into mischief.

Verse 19. All false witnesses are liars, but not all liars are false witnesses in the sense of this verse. It refers to a person in connection with the legal affairs of another. If such a person should make some false entry on the docket against another citizen, or, if placed on the stand as a witness would give false testimony, he would come under this verse. *Soweth discord* would require whole discourses and volumes to exhaust its significance. There are so many ways by which it can and is being done that the nature of this work makes it out of the question to go into all detail. I will take space only to say that any handling of even the facts of a case in such a manner that it alienates brethren from each other will provoke the Lord's fury to the uttermost and justly so, for no sin can be any greater.

Verses 20, 21. This same advice is contained in ch. 1: 8, 9 and I request the student to read my comments at that place.

Verse 22. *Goest, sleepest and awak-est* are used to signify the general activities of the young man. In all of life's relations he will be safeguarded by the instructions which he received from his ancestors if he will observe them.

Verse 23. *Lamp and light* are used figuratively, referring to the same thought explained in the preceding verse. *Reproofs of instruction* is a very significant term. Another form of the same thought is, "constructive criticism." To criticize one for the pure sake of finding fault is wrong and will not accomplish a good purpose. But a reproof that is coupled with information as to how the person should perform, will lead him into the right way if anything will.

Verse 24. Evil women was the subject that seems to have been Solomon's chief concern. The history of his life may explain that to us. He had a thousand women connected with him in some form of social relation, and most if not all of them were the wrong kind of characters. In his inspired writings he sought to save other men from the pitfalls of which he had so often been a victim. He especially warned against *flattery* of these women. The lexicon definition of this word is "smoothness," and the idea is of a woman who can choose her words in

such a manner that they sound good to the ear. The pleasant sensation caused by such speech causes the young man to overlook the poison that is lurking in the background of the conversation.

Verse 25. The warning in this verse scarcely needs any explanation. It refers to the suggestive flirtations that a pretty but evil woman would make to a young man.

Verse 26. Yes, there are instances without number where men have spent their last dollar on an immoral woman, not even leaving any wherewith to purchase the necessities of life for the faithful wife and innocent children. *Hunt for the precious life* describes the heartlessness of the professionally immoral woman. She has no mercy for a man's legal dependents; she seeks only the patronage of the man in order to get his money, or to gratify her own lust, or both.

Verses 27, 28. A man may try to flatter himself into thinking he is strong enough to indulge in pleasurable conduct that is wrong without being hurt. The reasoning of the wise man is that such is not possible.

Verse 29. It is always wrong to patronize an immoral woman. This verse considers the subject from a special angle. The *neighbor's wife* would not be in the class with the public woman. She may or may not be an immoral woman in her general practice. If she is not, the man who goes in to her must first seduce her, and that would be a violation of several principles. It would be taking advantage of her own weakness to satisfy his unlawful desire which amounts to a form of robbery. And if the woman is inclined to evil so that the association is mutual, then the gully man violates the rights of his neighbor. In any case, the whole affair is grievously wrong and stains the participants with shame.

Verse 30. Robbery is never right, but the motive that prompts an act will have some bearing on the degree of guilt attached thereto. If a man is actually hungry his act could not be attributed to the spirit of crime. Such a man would not be *despised*; he would not be regarded with contempt as would the wilful thief.

Verse 31. This verse shows that Solomon did not mean to encourage theft in the preceding verse. If a man really thinks he is in serious trouble for want of food and cannot wait to

be helped, he would better partake of enough to satisfy his immediate weakness and then leave the rest and get away. If he is found it will indicate that perhaps his motive was not for his present distress, but it was to lay up for later use. In that case he is to be penalized to the limit of his resources.

Verse 32. The wise man is back on one of his familiar subjects. *Lacketh understanding* means the man is not using good sense. Such a person is sacrificing all there is worth having by his violation of chastity.

Verse 33. This *wound* may not refer to the physical result of the sin, but rather to that inflicted upon his character, for it is connected with *dishonor*, and we know that refers to his character or reputation. *Not be wiped away* denotes that such a stain upon one's character will trail him throughout life.

Verse 34. Even if the guilty man should accomplish his purpose for the present, he will be exposed to the jealousy of the woman's husband. He will either satisfy his jealous rage by inflicting some bodily harm on the culprit, or by "shadowing" him all his days with the cloud of scandal that his crime produced.

Verse 35. The pronoun *he* refers to the husband of the woman in v. 32. This verse means that he will be so enraged over the violation of his home that he will not accept any "hush" money.

PROVERBS 7

Verse 1. See the comments at ch. 1: 10 for the meaning of *son*. Laying up the commandments means to store them up in the heart for use in the future.

Verse 2. To *keep* is a stronger word than *laying up* in the preceding verse, denoting the observing of them. The result will be to *live* in a moral and spiritual sense. The *apple* or pupil of the eye is a very valuable possession, and used to compare the great worth of the divine law.

Verse 3. This verse is a figure of speech. If something is attached to the fingers it will always be present for use. It also will not likely be forgotten since it will always be in sight. To write the commandments on the heart is the same idea expressed by David in Ps. 119: 11.

Verse 4. *Sister* and *kinswoman* are used to illustrate the affectionate value

of wisdom and the nearness of the relationship that would be desirable.

Verse 5. If such pure and refined principles as these divine commandments are cherished by a young man, it will serve to save him from the corrupt intimacies of the *strange* woman. Mention of this woman again seems to have brought the wise man to a decision to write his masterpiece in description of the typical harlot.

Verse 6. *Casement* is from an original that Strong defines, "a latticed window." Solomon looked out through that opening and saw what he is about to describe. It cannot be determined whether, a certain instance was being considered, or if he meant to describe a typical case as an example. The 9th verse indicates the latter view as I will explain below. But in either case, the description is complete and is written by a man who was inspired, besides being one whose experiences in life were many.

Verse 7. This young man was not unintelligent, but was a thoughtless, inconsiderate person who did not use good sense in his conduct.

Verse 8. This does not mean he was purposely walking toward the woman's house. He had not as yet thought about her that we know, but the writer is giving us that information. He was out on a public street but happened to be on one that lead in that direction of this woman's house.

Verse 9. This verse indicates that Solomon was not writing of any specific instance, for the same man would not be met in the twilight and then late at night on the same date. It shows that such a woman as the wise man was considering would be on the lookout for a victim at all hours of the night. However, it would be at some time after close of the day as the darkened hours would best serve her purpose.

Verse 10. There were some kinds of articles worn by harlots that distinguished them from other women. (Gen. 38: 14.) *Subtil of heart* means she was deceitful and disposed to use misleading statements in a way that would make a false impression.

Verse 11. One of Strong's meanings of the original for *loud* is, "to be in great commotion." The word for *stubborn* is defined by Strong, "to turn away, i. e. (morally) be refractory [rebellious]." The main thought

in this verse is, this woman is all in commotion in her desire for indulgence and would rebel at any attempt to restrain her. For that reason she will not be content to spend her time in the privacy of her home. This will be a proper place to remind the reader that not all harlots are in that kind of life for the sake of money. As an illustration exactly in point see the instance in Ezekiel 16: 31-34. Some of them are intent on the gratification of their own lust. And a married harlot would tire of her lawful husband and be restless to get out and watch for a younger man, hence the last clause of this verse.

Verse 12. So she gets out onto the street to hunt for her prey. She takes a lurking position first at one *corner*, then at another. By posting herself at a corner she could look for the traffic on two streets at one time.

Verse 13. To *catch* sometimes indicates that an attempt had already been made to flee. But the word here means to grab or seize quickly for fear the victim might flee. At the same instant when she seized upon the young man she kissed him. That would show him that no violence was intended against him. And the magnetic kiss of a woman, out on the street in the shadows of night, would hold the young man in her grasp as certainly as if she had thrown a chain about him. While in the "spell" of the sudden circumstance, she began her conversation with him. *Impudent face* means she looked at him with a countenance that was firm and set.

Verse 14. The language of this verse indicates the woman professed to be religious. According to Funk and Wagnalls Bible Dictionary harlotry was very prevalent even among the Jews in ancient times. It might have been one of the things that God "winked at" (Acts 17: 30). The purpose of the woman's statement was to show that she was attentive to her obligations to the Lord and was free to turn her attention to personal interests and matters pertaining to her own enjoyment.

Verse 15. Having discharged her duties, she was ready to go in search of a good time with some associate. In her flattering strain she would pretend that she had come out in the hopes of meeting just such a fine young man as this one, and lo, how fortunate that she had found him; just the kind of man she was seeking for.

Verse 16. She began her seductions by describing the luxury of her bed. Such a picture was suggestive of a time of complete abandon and indulgence.

Verse 17. We might wonder why the woman mentioned these dainties in connection with her attempts at seduction. It was because she was acquainted with the effect of perfumes as a stimulant for a man's emotional nerves. A very noted doctor and psychologist, member of the faculty of a modern educational institution, says this on the subject: "A perfumed girl is likely to be a greater mental stimulus for erotic feeling," etc. I quote this to show that the woman in Solomon's case understood the subject of seducing a young man by means of these stimulants.

Verse 18. Having built up her background of alluring suggestions, the woman came directly to the subject and made the proposal that he spend the night with her.

Verse 19. But he might hesitate lest they be surprised by her husband. She had already anticipated that and so she told him that the man was not at home but had gone on a *long journey*, so that he would need have no fears from that source.

Verse 20. But even the term *long time* is somewhat indefinite and the man might return almost any time. Again she was prepared to set his mind at ease on that matter. The man of the house had taken a bag of money which denoted that he intended to be gone a considerable time. Besides all this, the very day of his return had already been determined when he left. It was to be at the time of the next new moon. The original word for *appointed* is *KECEH* and Strong defines it, "fulness or the full moon, i. e., its festival." That settled it as to the time when the man would return. So "the coast was clear" and everything was set for an uninterrupted season of indulgence.

Verse 21. *Forced* means she overpersuaded him by her flattery and other smooth talk.

Verse 22. The reference to the ox and the fool is to illustrate the complete subjection of this young man to the wiles of the woman.

Verse 23. *Dart strike through his liver* is figurative and refers to the terrible infectious disease that the young man contracted by his contact with this morally and physically cor-

rupt woman. The verse begins with the word *till*, which denotes that the state of unawareness described in the preceding verse continued until the young man realized what had been the result of his union with this vile woman. The *liver* is mentioned not because it is especially affected by the disease, but because it is a large organ of the body and thus figuratively represents much of a man's vitality. There is something remarkable about this subject. We know that the relation of the sexes is a perfectly natural one and should not result in any kind of disease. And we also know that the terrible disease under consideration is a venereal one; that it never would have existed without the union of the sexes. The conclusion is unavoidable, therefore, that it has been brought into the world by the Lord as a penalty for the sin of man in abusing one of the most important functions of the human body.

Verse 24. Having completed his details of the special example, Solomon makes a general appeal for his people to give attention to his words.

Verse 25. *Decline* means to go down, and thus the conduct with a *strange* woman is a downward step morally and physically.

Verse 26. Yes, many strong men have been brought down by the influence of bad women, and Solomon was one of them. (Neh. 13: 6.)

Verse 27. *Hell* is from a word that includes all of the conditions of ruin and forgetfulness that are awaiting men who waste their lives in sinful practices. Among those practices is that of contact with corrupt women.

PROVERBS 8

Verse 1. Solomon now takes up his main specialty which is *wisdom*. I have called attention to other words used in this book that have similar meanings and yet require some distinction. Wisdom, understanding, knowledge, instruction and discretion are all used by Solomon somewhat indiscriminately which shows that they mean practically the same thing. But the first one is used more prominently than the others, and where some other term is not used in connection, it is to be understood as standing for all the principles contained in the others named above. I shall make one more comment as to a distinction, then proceed with the one word as practically including all the others. The distinc-

tion is between wisdom and understanding. The second means the proper or common sense use of the first.

Verse 2. Wisdom is the antecedent of various pronouns (she, I, it, her, me, my) in this and following verses. *Standeth in the top* means that the highest places in the country are benefited by the use of wisdom.

Verse 3. Solomon does not mean that in all of these places men act with wisdom. The idea is that in all such places there is great need for wisdom.

Verse 4. Mankind in general is called upon to listen to wisdom and act accordingly.

Verse 5. *Simple* and *fools* may be intelligent persons but do not listen to the voice of wisdom in their ways of life and hence make many grievous mistakes.

Verse 6. *Excellent things* are those superior to others. Such things will be accomplished or possessed if men will act with wisdom.

Verse 7. It is always wise to speak the truth. It is also a mark of wisdom to practice righteousness, for wickedness is abominable to those who love wisdom.

Verse 8. *Froward* and *perverse* are about the same in meaning and are used for emphasis. It means to be stubbornly wayward, which is just the opposite of wisdom.

Verse 9. The antecedent of *they* is *words* in v. 8. If a man will use his common sense (*understanding*) he will realize that the words of Solomon are plain and clear.

Verse 10. As a contrast, Solomon sets instruction and knowledge above silver and gold in value.

Verse 11. After specifying certain articles that are less valuable than wisdom, the writer makes a sweeping comparison. He places wisdom above anything else that one can desire. That rules out any possible exception, and is in perfect agreement with David's exaltation of the Word of God in Ps. 138: 2, for we must remember that Solomon spoke by the inspiration of God and hence his words are the words of Him.

Verse 12. *Prudence* has the same meaning as discretion. *Witty* has no original as a separate word, but *inventions* is from a word that means "plans." The whole verse means that a man of wisdom will make his plans with discretion.

Verse 13. If a man fears or respects the Lord he will hate evil, for the Lord hates it. A man of wisdom will also hate *arrogancy* (self-exaltation) and other evils.

Verse 14. *Counsel* is the same as good advice. All the other good things named in this verse will be found wherever *I* (wisdom) can be recognized.

Verse 15. The greatest kings and judges in the world are those who act according to wisdom. That is better than proceeding on the basis of "policy" or partiality.

Verse 16. This verse takes the same comments as the preceding one.

Verse 17. As a reminder, let the reader understand that the pronouns stand for *wisdom*. Love is indicated by extending favors. If a man will show his love for wisdom he will obtain favors from her that cannot be had otherwise. The degree of love that one has for wisdom will be indicated by his efforts to find it. If he seeks *early* it means he is actually hungry for it (Matt. 5: 6) and is assured of finding it.

Verse 18. Even material riches will be more likely to come to the man who acts with wisdom. There is no question that spiritual wealth (*riches and righteousness*) will be reaped by the man who uses wisdom in his activities.

Verse 19. As gold is when it comes from the earth, all mixed with the dross—even then it is of some value. It is still more valuable after it has become *fine gold* (gone through the refinery). But the fruit of wisdom is better than gold in whatever form. And the business transactions with the best of silver cannot compare with the dealing that is conducted on the principles of wisdom.

Verse 20. *Lead* is from a word that means to walk or travel. The *way* and *paths* described in this verse correspond with those given in Ps. 1: 1. Wisdom is always to be found in these lanes of travel.

Verse 21. A literal and specific reward of temporal possessions is not guaranteed to those who accept the wisdom offered. But the logical result of using wisdom is to be rewarded with good fortune. It is similar to the assurance in Matt. 6: 33.

Verse 22. Wisdom was one of the traits that the Lord possessed in all of his existence, which was and is and will be, from everlasting to everlasting.

Verse 23. *Everlasting* as applied to God means without beginning or ending. Wisdom has been with Him in all of his being as expressed in the preceding verse. Yes, wisdom was with the Lord *or ever* (before ever) *the earth was*. This quality was used by the Lord in planning the earth and all that pertains to it.

Verses 24, 25. The land and water portions of the earth's surface came *after* the exercise of wisdom. That proves that these things were created by some Being who already possessed the faculty.

Verse 26. The pronoun *he* refers to the Creator. The thought of the verse is that He had wisdom always, and used it when he made the parts of the universe named.

Verse 27. *Heavens* is plural as it should be and means the same as Gen. 2: 1. The region where the birds fly is the first heaven, and that where the planets are is the second. These heavens were formed according to the wisdom of the Lord. *Compass* means a circle and *depth* is defined in the lexicon as the sea. The clause refers to the circular form of the earth. The so-called scientists discovered that the earth is round after five thousand years had rolled by. Had they consulted the Bible they would have learned it long before. It required *wisdom* to devise and execute a circular form for the earth, and then hold the mighty oceans in their place in that shape.

Verse 28. The laws of nature by which the watering of the earth takes place were all ordained by the wisdom of God. The deep sends up vapor by the force of the sun, then it is condensed and formed into clouds that send the rain upon the earth. All of this is by the infinite wisdom of the Creator.

Verse 29. In spite of the surging of the tide that seems to be trying to leap out of bounds, yet in a few hours the billows recede into their proper places. And there are no visible foundations of the earth, yet it is firmly fixed and has never slipped out of its place. All of this is by the wisdom of God.

Verse 30. The pronouns *I* and *him* refer to wisdom and God. *As one brought up*, etc., uses the illustration of a parent and child because of the constant association. So God has never been without wisdom, and all of His works have been done by it.

Verse 31. This verse means that

wherever there are inhabitants on the earth, their *rejoicing* and *delights* have been in proportion to their usage of wisdom.

Verse 32. After citing so much that the Lord perfected in connection with wisdom, Solomon sees an appropriate time to let wisdom make another exhortation. She (wisdom) addresses herself to the people as *ye children*, and tells them they will be *blessed* or happy if they will *keep her ways*, which means to walk in wisdom's ways.

Verse 33. *Hear instruction* means to accept information from the teacher who is *wisdom* personified by the various pronouns. If they will do so they will also be wise.

Verse 34. *Blessed* or happy is the man who will hear the voice of wisdom. *Gates* and *doors* mark the entrances to cities and houses. They are used here to illustrate the entrance to the place where wisdom may be found. If one is seen *waiting* and *watching* at such places, it indicates that he is indeed eager to obtain it. He will surely obtain his object and it will bring him the happiness promised. It is like the assurance that Jesus gave in his great speech on the mount (Matt. 5: 6).

Verse 35. To find *me* (wisdom) means to find life, for no man can truly be said to be living who rejects wisdom. While the acceptance and use of wisdom will please the Lord and it will bring forth favors from Him.

Verse 36. To reject wisdom is a sin, and the man who does so really does wrong to himself. It will injure his *soul* which means his whole being. Since life and death are opposite, the person who rejects wisdom (the thing that is necessary to life) acts as if he loves death. It would be well to consider Matt. 6: 24.

PROVERBS 9

Verse 1. Wisdom is still the principal subject of the Book of Proverbs. Its importance has been illustrated by a great variety of comparisons. For several verses in this chapter the writer thinks of the abundant provisions that wisdom offers to the children of men. The illustration he uses is that of a spacious and well built house, with arrangements for entertaining all who will come to be guests. But the material articles mentioned should be understood to represent the rich fare of genuine wisdom. In this verse the house has been erected.

When *seven* is used alone and figuratively it means completeness. Hence the house of wisdom is resting on firm support.

Verse 2. A hostess in a large mansion who expects to entertain a great many guests would prepare much meat and drink for her table. The material articles represent the mental and spiritual good things in store for those to be served by *wisdom*.

Verse 3. The illustration further carries out the idea of a generous hostess who even makes preparation just in case she may have some guests. Yea, she goes still further and sends her waitresses (*maidens*) out to solicit guests.

Verse 4. *Simple* means one who is willing to be influenced, and, as used in this place, to be influenced for good. It does not mean that the person is unintelligent. The word for *understanding* is used in the sense of knowledge. These persons are being invited to come to the (mental) feast that this generous hostess, *wisdom*, prepared.

Verse 5. As already explained, this eating and drinking means the receiving of words of wisdom that are being served in the home or house of seven pillars.

Verse 6. *Foolish* is from the same original as *simple* in v. 4, but in this place it is used in the sense of being silly or not using good sense. The invitation is to get away from persons who act in that way and come to the table supplied with the food for understanding and so freely offered to those who will partake.

Verse 7. Let us suppose the invited one should ask, "Why are you inviting me to this feast of wisdom. Do you think I am a person with no intelligence?" The *maiden* would answer, "No, if I thought you were that kind of person I would not think it worth while to invite you for *he that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame*. But, while I believe you are intelligent naturally, I hoped you were hungry for something to feed that intelligence, and my hostess has prepared just that and you are invited and even earnestly solicited to come and share the banquet.

Verse 8. This verse will have the same comments as the preceding one.

Verse 9. This verse means virtually the same as the two preceding ones except that it is on the affirmation and favorable side. A man who is inclined

to use good sense in his conduct will be glad to be taught and will profit by the same.

Verse 10. See the comments on ch. 1: 7 for explanation of this.

Verse 11. The pronoun *me* stands for wisdom. There is no literal guarantee of long life for those who accept wisdom. The thought is that by wise and sensible living one has the better prospect for long life.

Verse 12. The outstanding point here is individual responsibility. If a man accepts wisdom he will be the first to profit by it. If he rejects it he will likewise be the first to suffer and also will be the chief sufferer from it.

Verse 13. It will be seen below that by a *foolish woman*. Solomon means the immoral one. By *clamorous* he shows her to be restless and all in commotion for some associate with her in sin. *Simple* means she does not realize how silly she is acting.

Verse 14. This woman follows a different plan from the one in ch. 7, for that one went out onto the streets in search for a partner. This one occupies a house on a prominent street (*high places*) of the city, and takes a seat at the door of her house.

Verse 15. *Passengers* means people who were passing by. This woman hails them and solicits their patronage.

Verse 16. This verse is Solomon's way of saying that none but the *simple* (those easily seduced) will listen to the call of such a woman. But she knows that many men throw away their common sense when facing the lure of fleshly pleasure. So she makes some suggestive remarks like those of the next verse.

Verse 17. One prominent trait of the human being is to crave most that which he is supposed not to have. This woman knows about such a trait and uses it for her own wicked plans. Her words here are to the same purpose as those of ch. 7: 19, where the woman informed the young man that they would be alone since the man of the house was gone. The idea here is to get the man passing by to think of the seclusion that will surround them. He may then be led to steal into her house, out of sight of the public and of his own family if he has one, and there indulge himself.

Verse 18. Not literal *dead* men are in the house for that is not her business. But all men who go into such a

house, or go in to such a woman, will be tintured with a stain that will mean their moral and spiritual death. And moreover, they will be smitten with the "dart" mentioned in ch. 7: 23, referring to the terrible disease generally connected with that sort of life. The final result of such a life will be a state of forgetfulness in this world and an existence in hell in the world to come.

PROVERBS 10

Verse 1. We generally think of this entire book now being studied as consisting in proverbs, and the definition of the word justifies that idea. However, the connection will show that it is sometimes used especially to mean a short, direct remark, without any necessary application in the form of personal advice or exhortation to some individual or class of individuals. Again, both forms of wise sayings are somewhat intermixed in Solomon's writings. But as the collection for the book has here been again taken from the shorter form, I will repeat Strong's definition of *MASHAL*, which is the original word. "... in some original sense of superiority in mental action; properly a pithy maxim, usually of a metaphorical [figurative] nature; hence a simile [comparison]." Before going further with the line, I will suggest that not all of the proverbs which are generally grouped in pairs are statements of things that are alike. Instead, it will be found that Solomon gave us a large number of proverbs grouped in pairs, and one of each will be a contrast to the other. Such is this verse in which Solomon contrasts a *wise son* with a *foolish son*. Note that the father is named in one case and the mother in the other. No reason is given, but doubtless it is the mother who worries the more over a wayward son.

Verse 2. Wealth obtained wrongfully will prove to be a detriment in the end and hence a loss. On the other hand, a poor man may be threatened with some form of death, but if he will conduct himself righteously there will be some rescue provided for him.

Verse 3. These two proverbs certainly contrasts in their most fundamental bearings. A righteous man may suffer poverty, persecution and even physical death. His soul, however, will be sustained by the Lord. *Substance* is from a word that includes a wicked man's actual possessions, and also his life devoted to the efforts in

obtaining wealth and other worldly gains that are wrong.

Verse 4. These proverbs are based on the general rule of events. If a man tries to defraud the unfortunate, he will finally be understood and exposed and in being deserted by the people will himself come to want. The diligent righteous man does not take possessions from others but instead will help them to increase.

Verse 5. Please turn to ch. 6: 6 for my comments which also apply to this verse.

Verse 6. *Blessings* means happiness will be on the head of a man whose dealings are right. *Violence* is from a word with a variety of meanings, including wrongful conversation with intent to defraud another. That is why the writer says his mouth is *covered* (meaning filled) with *violence*.

Verse 7. Many of us have heard the phrase "happy memory" applied to some departed person who was loved in his lifetime for his righteous way of living. That is the meaning of the first clause of this verse. *Rot* is from *RAQAB* and Strong defines it, "A primitive root; to decay (as by worm-eating)." People will always be able to recall the name of a wicked man, but the subject will have the elements of decay in it.

Verse 8. The first clause means practically the same as the 10th verse. *Prating* means to use idle or useless language. Such a fool will come to ruin because his own unwise speech will expose him to the just opposition of reasonable people.

Verse 9. There can be no actual failure for the walk of an upright man because such a person is careful about where and how he walks. He is like the one who observes Eph. 5: 15. *Perverteth* means to step aside from the right way. The man who does so will be recognized in his true light and will be rejected.

Verses 10, 11. The importance of wells in all ages has been fully known. They form a fitting illustration for a righteous man because he will speak the truth. The effect of truth is like a spring of pure water to a thirsty man. The second clause is identical with the last of the 6th verse.

Verse 12. There are some things that we should hate, but the kind of hatred that is wrong is that which is born of the spirit of contention. Such a hatred will not be satisfied

until an attempt has been made to start trouble against the hated person. *Covereth sins* does not mean to endorse that which is wrong. It has the idea of making all possible allowance for the mistakes of others.

Verse 13. In this verse the words *understanding* and *wisdom* are used in direct connection which shows there is some distinction. The first means the right use of the second. The man who will not use good sense in the use of his knowledge or wisdom is entitled to some punishment that may possibly bring him to his senses.

Verse 14. In this verse the writer reverses the use of words and means that a man of good sense will retain his knowledge for help in the emergencies of the coming days. By an opposite token the other kind of man will talk in such a way that he may bring down upon himself the enmity of the people.

Verse 15. A strong city is a place of security and it is here compared to the security that wealth gives a man against the attacks of human enemies. We should understand that Solomon is considering the man who makes a righteous use of his wealth. On the principle of the above rule, a poor man is without protection against the others.

Verse 16. There is no particular relation between the two parts of this verse. An unrighteous man may labor and yet be working against his own interests. But the righteous man's activities will have their logical fruit and produce the necessities of life, both temporal and spiritual. A wicked man's labor will tend only to sin.

Verse 17. To *keep instruction* means to observe it, and that will outline the pathway of life to the one who practices it. To *err* means to slip off the right path, and that will happen to the man who refuses to be corrected in his conduct.

Verse 18. It is bad enough to have improper hatred, but it is worse to try covering it over with falsehood. A *slander* is an accusation that originates with a person who is a sneak and tries to injure another "at his back." A man who repeats such an accusation, as well as the one described in the first clause, is a *fool*, which is defined in the lexicon as "stupid or silly."

Verse 19. The connection shows Solomon is considering *words* spoken just for the sake of much speaking,

and such words will be filled with tendencies to sin. A wise man will not say a word unless he actually has a subject worth speaking about.

Verse 20. *Choice silver* is that which has been purged of its dross. A just man will reject the dross of evil actions and words, hence what he says will be like the good silver. As a contrast, the heart of a wicked man is like dross and worthless.

Verse 21. Righteous lips will give good spiritual food to others. Fools not only will not impart such life-giving properties, but will themselves die for its lack.

Verse 22. The wonderful thought here is, that when the Lord bestows his blessings he does not mix a "sting" with it. In other words, they are blessings indeed and not merely make-believe ones that leave a person worse off than he was before.

Verse 23. *Sport* means "laughter" in the lexicon. A fool thinks it is a laughing matter to practice *mischiefs*. The last word is defined "A plan, especially a bad one." *Understanding* and *wisdom* should again be taken to mean the right use of the knowledge that one has acquired.

Verse 24. A wicked man realizes he is doing wrong and has a "jittery" feeling that he will finally be caught. *The desire of the righteous* means a desire that is right. A man may have a desire for something that would really be harmful to him although his intentions were good. Such a desire would not be right and would not be granted to the well-wisher because it would not be for his good.

Verse 25. The apparent success of a wicked man is likened to a whirlwind. Such a wind will cause quite a commotion and raise a lot of dust, but it is of short duration. The conduct of a righteous man is based on principles that please the Lord, and such a life will be in evidence long after the whirlwind has passed by.

Verse 26. *That send him* means the people who employ a sluggard (lazy person) for some purpose that would be worth while if performed properly. The disappointment will be as painful to the mind of his sponsor as vinegar would be to the organ of the body mentioned; as smoke would be to the eyes.

Verse 27. The *fear* of the Lord means the respect for him that one should have. The man who has that will live so that the blessings of the

Lord will be added which will assist him in his existence on the earth. A wicked man, having no regard for the One who gave him his body, will abuse it in "riotous living," and cut short his life.

Verse 28. The righteous will be made glad by having their hope realized. Hope is made up of expectation and desire, yet the first item only is mentioned that will perish. That is significant, for a man's desire is his own mental action, while the disposing of his expectation is in the hand of Providence.

Verse 29. *Way of the Lord* means the way that He wishes man to travel. If man will endeavor to walk therein the Lord will give him the strength necessary for such an upright life. Of course the opposite will be true of the *workers of iniquity*.

Verse 30. This whole verse might well be shortened to mean about the same as Matt. 5: 5 which was cited from Ps. 37: 11 by the Saviour.

Verse 31. According to Solomon, justice requires the use of wisdom as certainly as it does other activities that are right. The *froward* (contrary) tongue will not literally be cut out, but the speech of such will be rejected by the Lord.

Verse 32. The thought is, a righteous man speaks what he knows is acceptable. A wicked man will persist in speaking things that are contrary or according to frowardness.

PROVERBS 11

Verse 1. *Balance* is from *MOZEN*, which Strong defines, "a pair of scales." They were used by placing the article to be weighed in one side and a stone corresponding in weight with the desired amount of the merchandise in the other. A *false balance* would mean the use of a stone that was either less or more than the supposed requirement of the merchandise, depending on whether the dealer was buying or selling. Since such a transaction would be fraudulent it would be abominable to the Lord. For that reason a just *weight* (stone) would be His delight.

Verse 2. *Pride* is never used in a good sense in the Bible. If a man acts on the motive of pride he will be brought down in the end and hence come to shame. The *lowly* or humble will have the opposite experience. (Luke 14: 11.)

Verse 3. *Integrity* means steadiness

or consistency in one's conduct, not changing from side to side, or from doing right today and wrong tomorrow. Such a person will have the right guidance in his manner of life. Those interested in him and who are being influenced by him will know "where to find him" so as not to be thrown into confusion. *Perverseness* is just the opposite of the other because it means the disposition to go off the regular pathway and wander into uncertain ways.

Verse 4. Of course this means riches obtained in a wrongful manner. When the time comes for God's wrath to be poured upon the guilty man, his wealth will avail him nothing. On the contrary, a righteous life will prepare a man against even the last test.

Verse 5. *Perfect* means "entire" according to Strong's lexicon, and that is the meaning of the word most generally. The thought here is that the man is not satisfied to be righteous only in part but in all of his life. That degree of righteousness will assure him of the right way of living. The wicked not only has no dependable basis of conduct, but his unrighteous manner will work its own rebuke and bring him a fall.

Verse 6. A righteous man may have to suffer bitter persecution, even to the extent of death. But in the day of final accounts he will come off a victor. The other class may seem to be winning out for a time, but in the end they will be brought to judgment and caused to suffer the reward of an unrighteous life.

Verse 7. There is no action after death. All opportunity for unrighteous plans must come in this life, for there will be no changes of any kind in the next world.

Verse 8. This does not mean that a good man will escape all unpleasant experiences, but they will not be permanent. *Wicked cometh* denotes that what appeared to be a fatal state of trouble for the righteous will actually be so with the wicked.

Verse 9. A *hypocrite* is one who pretends to be what he knows he is not. That means that he is not only wrong but knows it, and endeavors to make others think he is right. It would be natural, then, for such a person to dislike another whom he knows to be actually good, and will show his envy by spreading falsehoods against him. In spite of such false efforts against a

just man, when *knowledge* of the truth is made known he will be delivered from the evil intended by the hypocrite.

Verse 10. *Goeth well* means to be successful and prosperous. The rejoicing of the city would be on account of its benefiting by the good fortune of the righteous. A righteous man will share his good things with others. The shouting at the destruction of the wicked would be caused by the relief that would come by reason of the downfall of the wicked class and their designs, and would consider it "good riddance."

Verse 11. This verse means the same as the preceding one.

Verse 12. *Void of wisdom* denotes an emptiness of wisdom. Such a man will *despise*, which means to speak belittling things about the others. But even if there is some question about the neighbor, it is wise to hold one's tongue until the facts can be known and that the public interest demands that they be made generally known.

Verse 13. A *talebearer* is one who peddles gossip, going about for that purpose. Such a man is so eager to have something to talk about that he will reveal things that should be kept within his own knowledge. He might even betray the intimate confidence that some trusting friend had imparted to him. The faithful spirit is one who respects the confidence that another has shown to him.

Verse 14. On matters where the Lord has legislated the advice or *counsel* of man has no authority. But there are numerous subjects on which no inspired legislation has been given and where man must use his own judgment. It is with reference to such that Solomon is writing here. In a matter depending upon the *counsel* (advice) of man, the greater the number of counselors the better.

Verse 15. For explanation of this verse see my comments at ch. 6: 1-5.

Verse 16. The outstanding point in this verse is the contrast between *gracious* (kindness) and *strong* ("powerful or tyrannical"). The former manifested by a woman will gain for her the honor of the people. The latter when exerted by a man gains only an increase of material gains that will not be of benefit to any other persons.

Verse 17. Perhaps the best comment I can offer on this verse is the saying of Jesus in Matt. 5: 7. If a merciful man will himself be shown mercy, it

can be seen why it is said that such a person is good to his own soul. It would be well also to consider James 2: 13 on the subject of mercy and who will receive it at the judgment.

Verse 18. It is not even good policy to practice deceit in wickedness, for such a life cannot produce any desirable result. On the other hand, the one *who soweth righteousness*, which means to sow righteous seed or deeds, will certainly reap the acceptable fruit. This is all in accordance with the great law of cause and effect, and taught in Gal. 6: 7, 8 by the apostle Paul.

Verse 19. Life and death are both terms with literal and figurative meanings. A person can be dead and alive at the same time (1 Tim. 5: 6), so the context must determine which is meant in each case. In the present verse the righteous man may die physically for the sake of his principles, but it will mean his spiritual life afterward. Jesus also taught this same truth in Matt. 10: 39.

Verse 20. *Froward* means to be stubbornly wayward, and those who manifest it are an abomination to the Lord. There is good reason for it because the Lord has pointed out a clear and practical road for the righteous to travel and no one needs to miss it.

Verse 21. *Hand join in hand* is another phrase for monopoly. God has never encouraged combines that obtain great power that can be used to oppress the less fortunate. These monopolies may succeed for a while, but they are destined finally to be brought to justice. When that time comes, the *seed* or people who are righteous will be released from the burdens that had been heaped upon them by the monsters.

Verse 22. The nature or value of a thing is often made apparent by placing it with something else for comparison. A swine is a coarse looking creature, and if a farmer should put a ring of gold in the snout of the animal instead of the ordinary iron one, it would certainly look out of place. The word *fair* is defined in the lexicon as "beautiful." A beautiful woman is God's most attractive creature that pertains to this life. But if such a creature acts and speaks without *discretion* or good sense, it is all the more noticeable in her because of the contrast.

Verse 23. A good man will naturally

desire only that which is good, and that will be pleasing to the Lord if his desires are obtained. A wicked man does not necessarily expect the wrath of God. The clause means that if he realizes his expectation it will logically be something evil and that will bring upon him the wrath of God.

Verse 24. Solomon is not specifying any particular person or thing in this verse, but is stating a rule of cause and effect that has many applications. For instance, the more generous and unselfish a man is with his good things of life, the more he will receive from others in the way of love and respect. The second clause of the verse needs no special comment except to say it is the exact reverse of the first.

Verse 25. Both clauses of this verse are to be explained on the same basis as the first of the preceding verse.

Verse 26. Solomon is not condemning a man for the mere fact of his seeking the best market for his product. But *corn* (any small grain) is a necessity of life and God makes it grow for the nourishment of man and beast. It is wrong, therefore, for the grower to keep the necessities of life off the market when the people are actually needing it for food and are in danger of suffering without it.

Verse 27. Sometimes a man will profess to want to do something beneficial, but will say he cannot see any opportunity. Solomon stipulates that such a would-be benefactor should *diligently* seek for the opportunity. It is just as true that if a man is seeking an opportunity to do mischief he will find it. The sad part of it is that it will fall back upon his own head.

Verse 28. The mere possession of riches is not wrong but it is the trust one puts in them that constitutes the evil. Jesus taught the same thing in Mark 10: 24 and Paul in 1 Tim. 6: 17. *Branch* refers to the foliage on a thrifty tree that spreads out and sheds its shade and encouraging verdure before humanity.

Verse 29. *Wind* used figuratively means something that is noisy but vain. If a man brings trouble into his own family it will result in a loss to all. The *fool* becomes a servant because he is the victim of a man wise enough to manage him.

Verse 30. A tree of life is one from which the necessities of life may be gathered. The deeds of a righteous man will offer just such benefits to the

world. The most precious things in the world are human souls, hence a wise man is one who prefers the gathering of such fruit to that of perishing wealth.

Verse 31. The final destiny of both good and evil men is to come after the earth has passed away. But each kind of life will bring certain fruit now as a logical result of that life. That is especially true of the unrighteous. *Wicked* and *sinner* differ only in degree of the wrongful life, the first being more active than the second according to the lexicon definition of the original words.

PROVERBS 12

Verse 1. *Instruction* and *knowledge* are used in a way that requires some distinction. The first is from an original that has special reference to corrective discipline and chastisement. The man who welcomes that shows that he has a sincere desire for knowledge and is willing to make all adjustments necessary for it.

Verse 2. The New Testament teaches that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10: 34), and the next verse there teaches that he does respect those who fear Him. So the verse of this paragraph tells us that the favor of the Lord is for those only who are good, and that is the way it should be.

Verse 3. The apparent success of a wicked man will not endure. *Be established* and *not be moved* have the same force of meaning. The righteous man is laying a foundation that will hold him up after the wicked man has lost out.

Verse 4. Many of Solomon's comparisons and contrasts are expressed by using literal or material terms, and we must make the application to the ideas in his mind. A crown is an ornament that indicates honorable exaltation. Many a man has been accorded a place of respect for the sake of his virtuous wife. On the contrary, if she is an objectionable woman it may be a hindrance to him. One may hear such remarks as, "He is a good man but I cannot endure his wife."

Verse 5. If a man is righteous in his conduct he will be so in his thoughts. (Ps. 19: 14; Prov. 4: 23; Mark 7: 20-23.) Since the thoughts of a wicked man are wrong, he will likewise give evil *counsels* or advice. But he will present them in such a way that they will not appear in their true light; instead they will cause deceit.

Verse 6. In the preceding verse the counsels (words) of the wicked are said to be deceit. In this verse they are described with more definiteness. The wicked man will speak as if he were a friend when in reality he is seeking opportunity to destroy his hearer. The upright man may try to expose the sham and deliver *them*, meaning the ones who were in danger of the bloodshed threatened by the deceiver.

Verse 7. This means the wicked will have their plans overthrown, while the plans (*house*) of the righteous will endure all tests and will stand.

Verse 8. If a man observes wisdom and acts accordingly, he will be commended by those who see his conduct. A *perverse heart* is one that is stubbornly wayward in its intentions, and of course the man will act accordingly. Such a person will be *despised* or belittled because his worthless kind of life is manifest to all who see it.

Verse 9. To be *despised* means to be thought little of. However, that might be done sometimes unjustly and such is the kind of situation Solomon means in this verse. If a man is belittled and yet is able to have a servant, it shows that others are begrudging him his good fortune. But if a man claims to be honored yet is lacking in the bare necessities of life, it indicates that he is really of small importance.

Verse 10. This is similar to the statement of Moses in Deut. 25: 4 and cited by Paul in 1 Cor. 9: 9. Men who are cruel to their work animals will not receive mercy from God. *Tender mercies . . . cruel* is a figure to show contrast. It means that the least objectionable sentiments of a wicked man are cruel enough.

Verse 11. A man cannot do his work of production while spending his time with idlers. *Void of understanding* means he does not use common sense.

Verse 12. *Desireth* is defined in the lexicon "to delight in." The thought is, the wicked are not objecting to being taken in the net of other evil men. Such a person, however, can never produce anything useful for others. As a contrast, the *root* or source of vitality in righteous men is used to bring forth some fruit that will be beneficial to others and hence will continue to be propagated.

Verse 13. It frequently happens that a wicked man who does a great amount of talking will finally "talk too much,"

and will thereby expose his wickedness and be caught. *Shall come out* denotes that a just man may have to suffer for a while, but if he maintains his just conduct, "time will tell" that he is right, and he will then be relieved of his trouble because the troublers will be compelled to cease troubling.

Verse 14. A man should guard his words and watch his steps. If he will do these things he will be satisfied with the result.

Verse 15. We are to understand that Solomon is writing of the general matters of life in which human judgment is the guide. The thought in the first clause is true both ways in which it could be spoken. It is true that a fool thinks his way is right. It is true also that the man who follows only the way that his own judgment suggests is a fool. The basis for such a conclusion is the truth of the next clause namely, that it is wise to hearken to counsel. This is the truth set forth in ch. 11: 14.

Verse 16. Righteous indignation is a kind of wrath that is based on some fact, and it may take a little time for it to be realized generally. But a *fool's wrath* has no just reason and it can soon be recognized as such. *Covereth shame* is done by preventing it, and that is accomplished by being "slow to wrath" and thus avoiding any premature statements that would cause shame upon the one making them.

Verse 17. Truth is always in harmony with any other truth, and the man who speaks the truth only will be known as a righteous man. In order for a false witness even to appear to be right, he must so word his speech that it will deceive the hearer.

Verse 18. A sword will pierce with pain but seldom accomplishes any good. But when a man uses wisdom in his speech he will bring moral and spiritual health to those who hear him. This will be true even if the words are pointed and somewhat unpleasant.

Verse 19. *For ever* and *moment* are used for comparison only. However, truth is permanent regardless of the shortness of falsehood.

Verse 20. Falsehood is cowardly, and a wicked man is likewise so, hence his efforts to keep his true motives unknown. That is why he uses deceitful words when he speaks. A counselor of peace means one whose advice tends toward peace, and the outcome of it

is joy to those who are exercised thereby.

Verse 21. The just may be mistreated for a while but there will not be any evil that is permanent. It is just the opposite with the wicked, for his apparent success will at last give place to *mischievousness*, defined in the lexicon, "evil, natural or moral."

Verse 22. The greatest principle in all the world is truth, therefore God hates lying. By the same token He not only favors those who tell the truth, but is delighted in them, which is certainly a great honor bestowed upon a human being.

Verse 23. A *prudent* man means one who is cautious and who is not overly eager to tell what he knows. A fool is so much inclined in the other direction that what he blurts out is soon found to be foolishness.

Verse 24. *Bear rule* is figurative, meaning that a diligent man will be an influential and leading man. The *slothful* or lazy man will constantly be depending on others and will ever be in debt to those who have favored him.

Verse 25. The gist of this verse is that we should be ready to speak a word of encouragement to those who are *stooped* or weighed down with sorrow and worry.

Verse 26. *Neighbor* in this verse is anyone who is benefitted by the excellent life of another. To *seduce* is to mislead, and a wicked man's way of life will do that to others instead of benefitting them as does that of the excellent man.

Verse 27. A *slothful* man went to the trouble of hunting the game just because of his personal pleasure in the chase. Then after he has taken it the pleasure is over and he is too lazy to prepare it for use as food. A *diligent* man proves that the game taken is *precious* or of real value by preparing it for his nourishment.

Verse 28. The contrasting clause in this verse is what is implied in the closing words. The entire verse could well be placed beside the teaching of Jesus in Matt. 7: 13, 14 and Luke 13: 24.

PROVERBS 13

Verse 1. Age and experience should be respected by those who are younger. This is the point of the first clause, not merely the physical relation of father and son. This comment is borne out by the last part of the verse, for

the *scorner* is named as opposite of *wise man*. A *scorner* is one who makes light of any advice offered him.

Verse 2. This means that if a man uses good sense in his speech he will succeed in producing the good things of life. Of course the man who *transgresses* this principle will have an unpleasant life and be in want.

Verse 3. The comments on the preceding verse should be applied to this one.

Verse 4. A *sluggard* is a lazy person. Such a man will have only the empty desire for good things because he is too indolent to work for what he wants. Of necessity the *diligent* or active man will have the opposite experience.

Verse 5. Since God hates falsehood a righteous man will hate it also. It is not strong enough merely to say that a wicked man's ways are hateful, but he is *loathsome*. The lexicon defines the original of the word, "A primitive root; to smell bad; figuratively to be offensive morally," and we would expect such a man to bring shame.

Verse 6. Wickedness sometimes makes a bold appearance, but finally it will work the overthrow of those who practice it. Logically, then, the righteous person will close the end of his life with that which is desirable.

Verse 7. The only comment I will offer on this verse is to cite James 2: 5.

Verse 8. If a man is contacted by an armed robber he can save his life by surrendering his riches to the robber. If a man has no money to give to the thief, the only thing he can do is to ignore the threat. If that does not open up a way of escape he has no other recourse and will have to take the consequences.

Verse 9. The *light* of the righteous is his life of good works and it will benefit others. Jesus taught this fact in Matt. 5: 14-16. By logical reasoning from this principle we understand that the influence of the *wicked* will be darkness.

Verse 10. Pride is never used in a good sense in the Bible. It is prompted by an inferiority complex in which the possessor pretends to have a virtue he desires but knows he does not have. Such a man will engage in *contention* which Strong defines as a "quarrel." *Well advised* means those who are informed. Such a man does not feel it

necessary to quarrel with his opponent, but will reason with him instead.

Verse 11. *Gotten by vanity* could apply to riches that have been inherited. The one receiving them often does not know the value of a dollar, never having earned one. The rule is that he soon "runs through with it." The man who accumulates wealth by his own efforts "knows how he got it," and will also know how to retain it.

Verse 12. *Sick* means to be weak and impatient with longing, and that is the condition when the thing hoped for is delayed. The more eagerly a thing is waited for the more it will be appreciated when it comes. It is compared to a tree of life because it will seem, as it were, "a life saver."

Verse 13. *Word and commandment* are used in the same sense and refer to the Word of God. To *despise* it means to make light of it, and all who do so will be *destroyed* spiritually. To *fear* it means to respect it, and that will bring the spiritual reward.

Verse 14. The *law* or counsel of wise men is a source of moral and spiritual life. If one follows it he will escape the snares that would lead him to ruin.

Verse 15. This is similar in thought to the preceding verse. If a man listens to another who has *good understanding* it will result in his favor. *Way* is from a word that means "a course of life," and *hard* is from one defined "to continue." It is used in a bad sense and has been rendered in the A. V. by *hard*, *rough* and *others*. The clause is a contrast with the first one of the verse. The meaning is that while the pathway pointed out by men of good understanding has some favors interspersed through it to make it easier to follow, that which is being followed by transgressors has no relief in sight or prospect and that is why it is said to be "hard."

Verse 16. The key word in the first clause is *dealeth* which means to advance or do something. A *prudent* or careful man will not do anything until he knows what he is doing. A fool plunges headlong without considering it and soon exposes his rashness.

Verse 17. If a man is sent out on a mission he should deliver it faithfully. Failing to do so will get him into trouble.

Verse 18. There is no disgrace in poverty that cannot be avoided after listening to counsel. But if it is be-

cause a man closed his ears to advice it is a shame to him.

Verse 19. An unexpected favor will be appreciated, but one desired and finally realized will be still more so. This is a positive pleasure, and a negative one is set forth in the second clause of the verse. If fools object to departing from evil, by the same token they will take pleasure in clinging to it.

Verse 20. To *walk with wise men* means to associate with them and to follow their counsels. The opposite would be true of those who associate with evil characters. This truth is taught by David in Ps. 1:1 and by Paul in 1 Cor. 15:33.

Verse 21. That which pursues comes afterward and may not be seen for a time. For this reason a wicked man many think there is no danger of his getting into any trouble over his conduct. The time will come, however, when his record "will catch up with him." It will be well to consider the words of Moses in Num. 32:23 where he said to certain men who might try to hide their sins, "be sure your sins will find you out." It is just as true of good as it is of evil, that the reward comes afterward and the righteous man should be patient and hope for it. (Gal. 6:9.)

Verse 22. All rules have some exceptions, but if a man is good he will be considerate of the coming generations and the provision he has made for them will be enjoyed by them after their common ancestor has passed away. Since the sinner's wealth is usually obtained wrongfully, it will be right and just for good people to take possession of it, for they will make the proper use of it.

Verse 23. A poor man can produce much food by *tillage* (land cultivation), but if he does not use judgment afterward he will lose the fruit of his labors.

Verse 24. It is false love that causes a parent to refrain from punishment of a wayward son. Solomon's statement is severe but true, that such a parent really hates his son. This is no arbitrary decision but a logical conclusion. If a man refuses to administer that which will be of benefit to his son he certainly does not love him. To chasten *betimes* means to do so promptly, and that also means to do it at the time it is needed. Frequently a parent will threaten to punish his child "the next time you do it." If a child will deserve punishment in the

future for something that he has done *now*, then the proper time to punish him is *now*.

Verse 25. *Soul* is used of the whole being, of which the body is the visible part, and that by which material food is administered to sustain life. A righteous man takes this view of the matter as he is enjoying his food. Paul had the same thought in mind in the latter part of Acts 14: 17. A wicked man eats without any appreciation of the good things he is enjoying and will hence neglect to do his part in the further production of the necessities of life and will finally come to want.

PROVERBS 14

Verse 1. *House* is used in the same sense as "household" in ch. 31: 15, 27. To *build* means to work for the welfare of her people. A foolish woman may profess to love her family, but by her lack of judgment she will be a detriment instead of an advantage.

Verse 2. It is his *fear* (respect) for the Lord that causes the man to walk uprightly. *Perverse in his ways* denotes that a man is stubbornly wayward. This is different from the person who is in error because of ignorance or other weakness.

Verse 3. A *rod* is used to chastise an erring person, and a man who is so foolish as to speak proudly will feel the chastening rod of his own foolishness in the end.

Verse 4. A man could save his present supply of corn by not keeping any oxen. However, he would not be able to produce the corn needed in the future. The lesson is that all desirable things require that we put up with some inconvenience.

Verse 5. The simple point in this verse is that faithfulness and truth must always be together; one cannot exist in the absence of the other.

Verse 6. A man may pretend to be wanting information even while he is making light of the person of whom he is inquiring. Such a man would not recognize information when it was expressed in his hearing. The same source of information will benefit the one who *understandeth*, which means he uses good sense in applying the information.

Verse 7. We have learned that it is dangerous to associate with a wicked man because it will threaten our own character. On the same principle it

would be better to avoid intimacy with a man who speaks contrary to knowledge. His foolish conversation might react in such a way as to corrupt those who hear him.

Verse 8. The first clause is describing a *prudent* (careful) man. He is one who wants to know what is best before he goes on his way. (Eph. 5: 15.) Not only so, but the right kind of man will not hesitate to seek the information even if he knows it may not all be pleasant. The other kind of person is afraid to face the truth for fear it will condemn him. But he is not fair enough to admit it, so he will try to "cover up," using the *deceit* that our own verse mentions. (John 3: 19 20.)

Verse 9. An intelligent man knows that sin cannot be justified and hence knows better than to try. *Fools* may know enough to recognize sin but are so lacking in good sense they resort to mocking as an "alibi" for their evil deeds. A man who is righteous will gain the favor of God; if he makes a mistake he will make amends to God.

Verse 10. A man knows his own heart and realizes his own worries better than anyone else; for that reason he bears most of the burden alone. It would be only fair that outsiders (strangers) also keep their fingers out of his good things.

Verse 11. Solomon has said so much about the apparent success of wicked men that we might think this verse is a contradiction. The idea is that in the end the wicked will fail. This was taught by Christ in the parable of the houses (Matt. 7: 24).

Verse 12. There is an old saying that "the road to perdition is paved with good intentions." That saying is true, and it is true also that the blocks of honest ignorance help to cover the pavement. Jesus taught that also in Matt. 15: 14.

Verse 13. At the same time that one is outwardly rejoicing he may have some sentiments that are not pleasant. It is reasonable, therefore, to expect such a circumstance to end in *heaviness* or sorrow.

Verse 14. The heart is the place where evil deeds are planned, hence if a man backslides in his heart, his *ways* (outward actions) will be accordingly. The second clause of the verse is the same thought that Paul expressed in Gal. 6: 4. The point is that one man will not be blessed be-

cause some other one did his duty. Each man must work out his own salvation and win the crown by his own faithfulness.

Verse 15. *Simple* is from a word which Strong defines, "silly (i. e., seducible)." It means a man who just listens to anything that is said to him "regardless." The *prudent* (careful) man *looketh well to his going*. That is the thought in Eph. 5: 15.

Verse 16. *Feareth* means the wise man respects the admonitions offered him and ceases his wrongful conduct.

The *fool* is one who pretends to believe he is right (*is confident*), but it is because he does not want to leave off his sinful practices.

Verse 17. The mere fact of being angry is not sinful, for Jesus got angry according to Mark 3: 5, and Ps. 7: 11 says God is angry with the wicked every day. But it is what a man does under the influence of anger and also his tendency to anger that determines the right or wrong in any given case. One of the negative qualifications required in elders is that they be "not soon angry" (Titus 1: 7). *Wicked devices* are actions that have been planned and that are wicked.

Verse 18. The *simple* are those who are so silly that they never acquire any useful information, consequently they are always seen to *inherit* (possess) foolishness. The *prudent* are those who are careful and use good judgment in regard to the opportunities opened before them, and as a result they gain knowledge.

Verse 19. *Bow* is from SHACHACH, which Strong defines, "to sink or depress." Evil and wicked men do not voluntarily acknowledge their inferiority to righteous men, but at last the contrast will be made so evident that it will be generally recognized.

Verse 20. The poor man is hated in the sense that he is looked down upon and regarded with slight. By the same token, a rich man will have many friends because they are looking to him for favors that his wealth can provide.

Verse 21. *Despise* is used in the same sense as *hated* in the preceding verse. He that belittles or looks down upon a neighbor because he is poor *sinneth* according to this verse. Having mercy on the poor means to help them obtain the things they need. The man with money who does this will be

happy in the knowledge of having done right.

Verse 22. To *devise* means to meditate on some plan that is to be carried out, whether one of good or one of evil. To *err* signifies that one has stepped aside from the true path, and Solomon declares that such has been done when a man devises evil. *Mercy and truth . . . to them* means these virtues will be attributed to them.

Verse 23. It is generally necessary to plan one's work in order to accomplish success. However, if a man talks only about his plans he will not make any profit.

Verse 24. If a man is diligent and careful in his plans for acquiring the good things of this world he will be crowned with success. Since the figure of speech in the first clause is *crown*, we should look for its equivalent in this. It might well be worded to say a fool's crown is his own foolishness; not a very shining crown!

Verse 25. A *true witness* is one who produces testimony in favor of a man who was about to be unjustly punished. All that is ever obtained from a man who merely pretends to be a proper witness is lies.

Verse 26. If we *fear* or have reverence for the Lord we will rely on Him for help in times of need. *Strong confidence* is the same as hope, and it will be the lot of those who have the proper respect for the Lord. *Place of refuge* is practically a repetition of the first part of the verse.

Verse 27. Life may sometimes consist in escaping from death. If a man fears the Lord he will eagerly drink from the divine spring of wisdom, and that will teach him how to avoid the traps set for him that would cause his death.

Verse 28. Loyalty to one's government is the main point in this verse.

Verse 29. See the comments on v. 17 for the explanation of this one.

Verse 30. There is some truth in the theory of "mind over matter," which is the thought in this verse. If the heart (mind) is settled and filled with good thoughts it will be beneficial even to one's bodily welfare.

Verse 31. God has great compassion for the poor, and for that reason to mistreat them is to disrespect Him. That *honoreth him* means to honor Him, and a man does that if he has mercy on the poor and contributes to their comfort.

Verse 32. *Driven away* applies to being driven from the favor of God, and a man's wickedness will do that. The hope of the righteous will sustain him even down to the hour of death. David expressed this beautiful thought in Ps. 23: 4.

Verse 33. A man who has *understanding* (uses good judgment) shows that wisdom is a regular principle in his life, although it may not always be recognized by others since they cannot read his heart. On the other hand, a fool's unreasonable conduct is so out of line that its folly is evident to all.

Verse 34. According to Strong the original for *exalteth* may be either literal or figurative. A righteous nation may not always become high literally or from the standpoint of worldly greatness, but in reality it is high in true grandeur.

Verse 35. A servant who acts with good sense will be considered the most valuable in the eyes of his master. And if that master is the king, he can and will bestow upon such a servant his royal favors. The opposite treatment would be accorded a servant whose conduct was shameful.

PROVERBS 15

Verse 1. The original for *soft* is defined by Strong as "tender." An *answer* (reply) in a controversy need not be a compromise in order to be tender. A clean, clear-cut statement may be worded in such a way as to manifest some respect for the feelings of the other party, and at the same time be true to all the facts. Such a reply will often quiet the storm of wrath that was about to arise. *Grievous* means sharp and painful, and such words, even if they are technically true, will arouse more anger than was in evidence at the start of the controversy.

Verse 2. This verse is closely related to the preceding one in thought. It is not enough to possess the bare knowledge of any case, but all parties concerned should use common sense in talking about it, and that is what a wise and careful man will do. A foolish man will speak so discourteously that even what truth he happens to have will be hidden or neutralized by the kind of speech he uses.

Verse 3. The eyes of the Lord are spiritual and hence can be universally present, even while his person is on the throne in Heaven. There is no hiding from God, as Adam and hosts

of others have learned. David very completely described the infinite presence of God in Ps. 139: 7-12.

Verse 4. A *wholesome tongue* is one that speaks only the truth, and the truth is always a source of life. *Perverseness* is the disposition to be stubbornly wayward. The man who was wholesome previously, and then becomes perverse, thereby makes a *breach* (break) in his spirit or character.

Verse 5. To *despise* means to belittle or make fun of. A fool does not want to change his ways for the better, therefore he scoffs at his father's words of advice. A *prudent* son is one who is careful and uses his common sense. Such a son will appreciate the counsel of his father and will profit thereby.

Verse 6. A righteous man uses the proper means to obtain the good things of the world and hence will have in his house a collection of them which he can enjoy in peace. The gains that a wicked man makes are a source of trouble to him because he got them by trampling upon the rights of others.

Verse 7. What a man has in his heart benefits others only when it comes out by his lips in the form of wise information. The lips of the foolish cannot disperse words of wisdom because his heart does not contain such thoughts, and it is "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (Matt. 12: 34.)

Verse 8. From a material standpoint a sacrifice is more valuable than a prayer. However, when the first is offered by a wicked man, and the second by a righteous, the latter is more valuable in the sight of the Lord.

Verse 9. *Way* is from *DEREK*, which Strong defines, "a road (as trodden); figuratively a course of life or mode of action, often adverbially." It is the word for "way" in Isa. 35: 8. In view of this definition it is easy to see why the way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. The last of the verse is exactly opposite the first.

Verse 10. *Way* is from *ORACH* and defined in Strong's lexicon, "a well trodden road (literal or figurative);" The connection shows Solomon uses the word for the road of righteousness which the Lord has laid out on which his people should travel. *Forsaketh* is from *AZAB*, which Strong defines, "a primitive root; to loosen, i. e., relinquish." It therefore applies especially to one who was in the road of righteousness and then became interested

in things on the side and decided to leave (forsake) the path. Such a person, then, would object to any attempts at correcting his backslidings. The original for *grievous* is *RAH* and has the brief definition "bad" in the lexicon. It is significant, for when a man concludes to go wrong he will regard all objections as bad. But the saddest thought is that such a person will die spiritually.

Verse 11. *Before* means to be open and known as if it were present and in sight. If the Lord can see the fact of hell and future destruction, though invisible now, he certainly can see the hearts of men which are ever present for Him to read.

Verse 12. A scorner is one who mocks and belittles that which he cannot oppose with any facts. He is not fair enough to admit the justice of the reproof, hence tries to weaken its force by scoffing at it. Of course such a person would not voluntarily seek instruction from wise men lest it call upon him to change his foolish ways.

Verse 13. This verse is a statement of facts known to almost everyone. It may be asked why take up space in the Bible with something everyone knows. It is for the implied advice it contains. It should always be our desire to be pleasant in mingling with other people, and to that end we should cultivate a cheerful mind. If we imagine there is nothing about which to be cheerful, just "count your many blessings" and you may be surprised at what the Lord has done for you, and change your mind.

Verse 14. *Understanding* is used in the sense of good judgment or common sense, and the man who uses that will be eager to obtain information. On the contrary, a fool would rather be content with his foolishness than take the trouble to learn something worth knowing, for that would require more mental effort than he wants to make.

Verse 15. The word for *afflicted* is defined "depressed," and refers to the state of mind. That is why the last clause contrasts it with one of a merry heart. See my comments on v. 13 regarding the effect of the feelings on the countenance.

Verse 16. Solomon had experienced most of the things he wrote about, especially those connected with power and riches. The fear or respect for the Lord will lead people to find joy

in many things that would seem dull and disappointing to the rich.

Verse 17. Neither of these meals is considered wrong in itself; the subject is their comparative enjoyment in connection with certain social conditions. *Stalled ox* means one that has been kept in a stall to be fattened for slaughter.

Verse 18. The comments I now offer are the ones made on verse 1.

Verse 19. A slothful man is one who is lazy and everything that suggests labor looks objectionable to him; consequently he looks upon it as a hedge of thorns. The *way* of the righteous means the road on which they are expected to travel. That road has been *made plain* by the Lord, and there is nothing that looks like thorns to the man who truly wishes to travel thereon.

Verse 20. This is identical in thought with ch. 13:1, and the reader is requested to see that place again and make the application to this verse.

Verse 21. A man who does not have wisdom does not know any better than to enjoy folly or things that are foolish. *Understanding* is another word for intelligence, with the added thought of making good use of it. The man who does so will walk uprightly or righteously and thus show he appreciates his opportunities.

Verse 22. *Counsel* means judgment or advice of man where there is no direct revelation from the Lord. See the comments on this subject at ch. 11:14.

Verse 23. The second clause of this verse explains the first. *In due season* means to say the right thing at the right time. It is on that condition his mouth will bring him joy because of the favorable reaction to the good things he says.

Verse 24. There is a familiar hymn that says: "Plant my feet on higher ground," and that is the sentiment of this verse. If a man is *wise* he will consider that the proper way of life is on "higher ground," that is, above the ways of sinful men.

Verse 25. *House* means a home or household, and *border* means a boundary or territory. The former may be attractive and even imposingly grand to suit the fancy of a proud man. Yet it is not useful for much except to gratify the pride of the owner and the Lord will overthrow it in the end. The *border* of the widow includes her

field or means of production, and He will reward her simple life by guarding her possessions.

Verse 26. Thoughts are supposed to exist before words, but the Lord knows them before they are spoken and considers them an abomination when evil. In God's sight there is no difference between a man's thoughts and his words as to guilt or innocence. It is therefore for the sake of euphony (pleasing sound) that Solomon switches from one to the other in wording this verse.

Verse 27. The second clause of this verse modifies the first. To desire gain is not necessarily wrong, but to acquire it by accepting *gifts* (bribes) is wrong, and will bring trouble upon a man's household if he gets his wealth in that way.

Verse 28. This means a righteous man makes a conscientious effort to give a true reply to any proposition made to him. The wicked man will treat it with contempt.

Verse 29. The Lord is in every nook and corner of the universe in the sense of his knowledge, but he is not near those who are wicked in the sense of being favorable toward them. In this sense also the Lord is deaf to the prayers of the wicked, but he heareth those of the righteous. (1 Pe. 3: 12.)

Verse 30. If one's eyes can see good things to be enjoyed it makes the heart rejoice. This is the same thought expressed by Paul in Acts 14: 17. On the same principle, but in a more figurative use of words, news of good things about to be enjoyed will nourish the structure of the body.

Verse 31. A man who will listen to words of reproof, even though they be unpleasant, is a wise person. It will mean life to him because it will lead him to avoid that which might have resulted in a fatal misfortune to him.

Verse 32. A man is only "spiting himself" when he refuses to receive correction. If he acts with *understanding* or good sense it will be for his own benefit.

Verse 33. The wisest instruction one can obtain is that which is prompted by the fear (or respect) of the Lord. *Before honor is humility* was taught by Christ in Matt. 23: 12. True greatness consists in a modest attitude that prefers to favor another. That is the spirit of unselfishness, one of the finest qualities possible.

PROVERBS 16

Verse 1. This verse should be considered in the light of ch. 15: 26 and the comments offered thereon. Solomon is writing of thoughts and words that are right, and all such must come from the Lord or be in harmony with him.

Verse 2. This corresponds with the preceding verse in that it shows why our words and actions should be directed by the Lord in order to be sure of having them right. The wisdom of man unaided by the Lord will be very unreliable.

Verse 3. *Commit* means to let the Lord direct the works of man. The one who does so will logically be thinking along the same line and thus his thoughts will be good.

Verse 4. *Hath made* does not refer to the creation of the things in mind. It means the use or disposition that God will make of them. So the thought is that God has his plans all made, and one of them is to bring all wicked men to the day of their doom. As to who are to be included with *the wicked*, that is left for man himself to determine and it is done by the kind of life he chooses to live.

Verse 5. Pride is never used in a good sense in the Bible but is always condemned. The second clause of the verse concerns the proud man who might rely on others to "hold hands" with him in his unrighteous ways. In spite of his evil confederates he will finally be punished.

Verse 6. *Mercy and truth* should always work together. An act of mercy that is not in harmony with the truth will work no good to anyone. But if a man in sin is shown some mercy and at the same time is able to see that truth requires that he cease his practice of iniquity, he will be induced to reform. This whole procedure should be induced by *fear* or reverence for the Lord.

Verse 7. This would not mean that a man's enemies would approve of the righteous ways of the Lord's servant, but through the oversight and ruling of the Lord the enemies would be subdued.

Verse 8. See the comments on ch. 15: 16 which is similar in thought to this verse; the terms used to express it only are different. *Fear of the Lord* in one corresponds with *righteousness* in the other. *Trouble* in one is related to *revenues without right* in the other.

Verse 9. An old saying is, "man proposes but God disposes," and it expresses the thought of this verse pretty well. The first clause refers to the plans that a man makes independent of the Lord, and the second tells that the success or failure of the plans is in the Lord's hands. It is well for us to read James 4: 13-16.

Verse 10. *The king* in this case was Solomon and hence we need not be confused at the statement. When he asked God for wisdom to help him judge the people (1 Ki. 3: 5-12) it was promised him, and we believe God fulfilled the promise; that justifies the declaration of this verse. It should be noted that it was in matters of *judgment* he says he would not err and that was all that God promised him at Gibeon. As to his personal conduct no claim was made here, and his mistakes in life had nothing to do with his wisdom in ruling the nation or in his writings. See my comments on 1 Ki. 3: 12 in Vol. 2 of this COMMENTARY.

Verse 11. See the comments at ch. 11: 1 for an explanation of the *balance*. God demands that people deal honestly with each other. *The bag* was the container of the stones used as weights for the balance.

Verse 12. There was no king in Israel except Solomon; he was speaking of kings in general and the principles on which their rule should be conducted.

Verse 13. Apply the same comments offered on the preceding verse.

Verse 14. *Messengers of death* are those sent to carry out the sentence of the king. If a subject of the king causes the royal wrath to be stirred up he might as well get ready to see the executioners. On the other hand, if a man uses wisdom he will comply with the wishes of the king and thus will quiet his wrath.

Verse 15. After it has been hot and dry, a cloud bringing cooling showers would be refreshing. In like manner, if a citizen *pacifies* the wrath of the king, he will see the refreshing light of his countenance in place of the wrath that was threatened.

Verse 16. Both clauses of this verse mean the same and are given for the sake of emphasis. Gold and silver are material objects and may easily be lost or stolen. *Wisdom and understanding* are accomplishments of the mind and no one can steal them.

Verse 17. Regardless of how a man travels he will need some thoroughfare on which to travel. Hence there are the two words used in this verse; *highway* meaning the road and *way* referring to the manner of a man's walking in that road. The verse as a whole describes a righteous traveler through life.

Verse 18. Pride is always held in a bad light in the Bible. *Goeth before destruction* means that pride will lead a man to his ruin. The second clause means exactly the same but is expressed in different words to give it emphasis. The verse also is the same in thought as the teaching of Christ in Luke 14: 11.

Verse 19. *Divide the spoil* is a phrase indicating financial success in a conflict since *spoil* means valuables taken thereby. No one can *divide* or share such property unless he has been a victor. Yet if in the conflict he was confederate with the proud he is destined to feel the wrath of God and will finally lose his gains. But the humble will possess the favor of God which is worth more than gold and diamonds.

Verse 20. The second clause should be Solomon's explanation of the first. If a man trusts the Lord he will use the wisdom He offers in handling the affairs of life.

Verse 21. Again the second part of the verse modifies the first. Lips are sweet, figuratively, that speak words of true learning. And thus will the lips speak that belong to those who are *wise* and *prudent* (carefully thoughtful) in heart, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (Matt. 12: 34.)

Verse 22. A *wellspring* is a constant source of water which is necessary to life. It is used to compare the supply of *understanding* that a man may possess if he desires. By the same token, all that a fool gets is more *instruction* in folly or foolishness.

Verse 23. It is out of the heart the mouth speaketh. If a man's heart is wise his mouth will know how to speak that which is according to righteousness.

Verse 24. See the comments on the last part of ch. 15: 30. While the main point of this verse is concerning spiritual benefits, it is true also that the health of the body is affected by the mental condition.

Verse 25. This verse is identical

with ch. 14: 12; see the comments there.

Verse 26. This verse is related in thought to the preceding one. The reason a man allows himself to follow the way that *seemeth right*, is because it promises to gratify the *craving* of his mouth (fleshly desires).

Verse 27. An ungodly man will always be favorable to evil that is offered to him by another, but he will not be satisfied with that. He will busy himself in finding it even if he has to *dig* or probe for it. Yes, he is so eager to have something about which to gossip that his lips seem to be on fire and buring with some tale of scandal he wishes to peddle to the injury of another.

Verse 28. A *froward* man is one who is stubbornly wayward. If the said man is a *whisperer* (gossiper) he will persist until he breaks up the fondest of friendships.

Verse 29. *Violent* and *enticeth* might not seem to agree in meaning, yet it is possible. A man would have motives of violence, but would have to use caution in carrying out his wicked designs. That would make it advisable to use *enticement* or underhanded methods. If he succeeded he would mislead his neighbor to his ruin.

Verse 30. A man like the preceding verse describes may know that his plans are extremely wicked, but he will refuse to see the facts; he *shutteth his eyes* against them. Then he will go on and with his words will proceed with his plans.

Verse 31. Pride sometimes causes men to color their hair in order to hide their age. The mere fact of gray hair is nothing of which to be ashamed; it depends upon what has been the practices while attaining old age. If the practices have been righteous, then a gray head represents many years of usefulness on behalf of others, and a life of devotion to God. In that case it means the near approach to a triumphant ending of the race of life. The gray head will glow with the reflection that is theirs who have served the Lord, even until they have reached "the land of the setting sun"

Verse 32. Anger alone is not sinful, but he that is soon angry is condemned. The man who controls his temper shows more generalship than one who can take a city in war, yet who is a victim of a fiery wrath.

Verse 33. One method of deciding

questions was by the lot. Various forms of procedure were used in different ages, but whatever form was used, the outcome would be only a chance unless the Lord saw fit to use it, which he often did. The *lot* was the article on which the candidate or contestant was named. These were put into a shielded vessel here called the *lap*. Someone was blindfolded and caused to draw out one of the lots and the one whose name or number appeared on it was the winner. If the Lord was using this practice on any given occasion he would see that the blindfolded person got the right lot. That is the meaning of, *disposing is of the Lord*.

PROVERBS 17

Verse 1. I can offer no better comments on this verse than those on ch. 15: 17.

Verse 2. A son would normally rank above a servant. However, Solomon was so favorable to wisdom as being the most desirable trait that he used it in his comparison of the servant and the son. If the servant is wise and the son is foolish, the former will be preferred by the father to the latter, even to placing him in a position of rule. The master will go even further than that; he will make the wise servant a sharer with the son in the inheritance of the estate.

Verse 3. Fining pots and furnaces are used to separate the silver and gold from the dross with which they are mixed in their native state in the ground. The intense heat will cause the refuse matter to dissolve and disappear, leaving only the pure metals that have withstood the fire. This is used to illustrate any tests that tend to prove what is good and what is refuse in the lives of men. The Lord is the one who puts man through the refinery of trials and afflictions to determine whether his heart is true to Him. Peter writes about these fiery trials in 1 Pe. 4: 12.

Verse 4. Liars and other wicked people will relish the speech of other falsifiers because it encourages their wicked ways.

Verse 5. For the first part of this verse see my comments on ch. 14: 31. *Unpunished* is rendered "held innocent" in the margin of the Bible and the lexicon agrees with it. If a man takes pleasure in some misfortune coming to a poor man, it raises the suspicion that he may have had some

part in causing that misfortune. But since such a person would deserve to be punished, the text of the A.V. is correct also.

Verse 6. The mutual relation between parent and child is the point in this verse. There are people who profess to be followers of the Lord, and yet who regard children as a nuisance. If such persons will seriously consider this verse and other passages on the same subject, they will realize their need of repentance.

Verse 7. *Excellent* is from YETHE and Strong defines it, "an overhanging, i. e. (by implication) an excess, superiority." A fool might learn to pronounce words that were far weightier in meaning than his mind was able to grasp. Such a circumstance would be out of order. Likewise, but in a more serious sense, it would be improper for a prince (a leading man in the community) to be guilty of falsehood.

Verse 8. *Gift* is derived from a word that Strong defines, "A primitive root; to donate, i. e., to bribe." *Precious stone* is used in the sense of a "charm" or luck stone. Its owner thinks that *whithersoever it turneth*, wherever he uses it, he will be prospered. Leaving out the superstitious element, even, we know that a bribe has a tremendous influence on a person who accepts it.

Verse 9. The Lord does not ask us to give encouraging protection to transgression which we know another has committed. The second part of the verse will throw light on the subject. The thing that is condemned is *he that repeateth*. The covering that Solomon had in mind consists in not repeating or peddling the matter through the people.

Verse 10. Physical punishment is the only kind that a fool can understand, and it may take a great amount of it to get him corrected. A man of good sense will recognize the justness of reproof and will feel (mentally) the sting of it.

Verse 11. *Cruel* is derived from a word that is defined, "to act harshly." "Desperate cases require desperate treatment" is a familiar saying, and it illustrates this verse. If a man acts the part of a rebel he will have to be handled roughly.

Verse 12. A maddened bear could destroy a man physically only, while a fool could bring him to moral and spiritual destruction.

Verse 13. In this verse we have two

rewards and two motives for them. If a man returns evil to one who has done him good it could be for no other motive than malice. The evil that would then be inflicted upon the malicious person would be done by an authorized man for the purpose of deserved punishment.

Verse 14. *Beginning* is a key word and will account for the comparison. If a man were to open a small sluice in a dike or make a small puncture in a tank of water, it would be only the *beginning* of the saturation; however, the extent of the damage done might be enormous. This is used to illustrate the sad result that might come from the first contentious word, therefore the first word should not be spoken.

Verse 15. This is a very brief but complete statement of the Lord's view of equity or fairness. It gives us the principle of responsibility in our relation to the conduct of others. If a man justifies a wicked person it indicates that he would have done the same thing the wicked man did had he been in his place. On the other hand, if he condemns a good man's conduct it shows that he would *not* have done as the good man did had he been in his place.

Verse 16. *Wherefore* is a Biblical way of asking why? A fool might have plenty of money and pretend he wants to spend it for wisdom or knowledge. Solomon's question is, "how come," or what is the use for such a person to buy information, seeing he does not have the *heart* (mind) to use it after he has it within his possession.

Verse 17. The key to this verse is the phrase *at all times*. A pretender might make a show of love occasionally when he has some "ax to grind," but the love of a true friend is constant. The second part of the verse is directly related to the first. In view of that it might well be worded, "and such a brother (friend) is born to be a helper in times of adversity." No person has been predestinated by the Lord as to the kind of man he will be. The course of human reproduction and nature has been left to the universal laws established in the beginning. Among the many kinds of characters that will be born there will be both those who are going to be good and those who are going to be bad. The idea of Solomon here is that when this certain kind of person was born, an inspired prophet could have said

that he was going to be "a friend in deed" to those who are "in need."

Verse 18. *Void of understanding* means he does not have or use common sense. Such a man knows no better than to *strike hands* or go on the bond with the other person. See my comments on this subject at ch. 6: 1-5.

Verse 19. The connection indicates that *transgression* and *strife* are used in a bad sense. A lover of such strife would logically be mixed up with transgression of righteous law. *Gate* is used figuratively to mean a man's personal interests. He should know that if he exalts himself he is only inviting his own downfall. (Luke 14: 11).

Verse 20. There is not much difference between *froward* and *perverse*. The first means to be stubbornly wayward and the second denotes the disposition to step aside from the right path. Either of the evils will bring grief to those who are guilty.

Verse 21. Solomon is not blaming the father of a fool; he is merely offering a comment on the situation. With his multitude of wives no doubt he had such offspring and he had experienced the sorrow coming from such a source.

Verse 22. We should avoid extremes on all subjects, and that of disease and medicine is no exception. Doubtless the mind has a great effect over the body, and many "diseases" are more imaginary than real. Such cases can be healed without the use of literal medication. We need not accept the extreme theories of the "drugless" healers of various creeds and cults.

Verse 23. *Bosom* is used figuratively, meaning confidential or intimate. The verse denotes the taking of a bribe secretly as pay for defeating justice.

Verse 24. *Before him* and *ends of the earth* are the contrasting terms in this verse. A man who uses good sense can recognize the wise thing as if it were right *before* his eyes. The fool is as blind to it as if he and his eyes were as widely separated as the ends of the earth are from each other.

Verse 25. I have practically explained this verse at ch. 10: 1.

Verse 26. *Strike* means to treat harshly, literally or figuratively, according to Strong's lexicon. The idea of the verse is that we should not impose on the just and noble men in trying to get our "rights."

Verse 27. Many times he who knows the most says the least. *Understanding* means good judgment and the man who uses it shows the right spirit.

Verse 28. I know of no more fitting place to quote a familiar saying: "Don't expose your ignorance," than the present verse. If a fool will get credit for wisdom he does not have by remaining quiet, it shows the good sense of not "speaking out of turn."

PROVERBS 18

Verse 1. The context indicates this man's *desire* is to pry into another's business. He thinks he can best do so by pulling off from the group and acting as a spy.

Verse 2. *Discover* is from a Hebrew word that means to expose something shamefully. The verse means a fool is not interested in matters of importance, but acts as if he wanted to strip his heart naked so that others could see how ignorant he is.

Verse 3. *Contempt* is the spirit of disrespect and belittling, and that is what is manifested when the wicked come upon the scene. *Cometh* is implied in the second clause. *Ignominy* means shame, and *reproach* means scorn. The clause therefore is as if it were worded, "with shame comes scorn." A wicked man has nothing to justify his life of shame, so he seeks to counteract his disgrace by scorn or scoffing for those who are good. It is exactly the thought Paul sets forth in 2 Tim. 3: 3, last 6 words.

Verse 4. The importance of saying the right thing at the right time has been one of the outstanding subjects of this book. Moreover, we have frequently been reminded by various passages in the Bible that if a man's speech is according to wisdom his conduct will likely be the same. Hence this verse compares it to pools (*deep waters*) and flowing brooks; constant sources of the life-giving substance. The language shows, however, that Solomon was writing of the man who speaks words of wisdom.

Verse 5. The apostle Peter declared that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10: 34), and the same truth is taught by Solomon. It is especially wrong to allow our personal regard for one man to influence us against a righteous person.

Verse 6. It is the duty of God's servants to practice the right kind of contending in behalf of the truth

(Jude 3), but the *contention* and *strokes* of a fool are used in the sense of unfriendly attacks upon a man who is righteous.

Verse 7. A fool will not use common sense in his speech, consequently his mouth will get him into trouble sooner or later.

Verse 8. *Talebearer* is from an original that means a secret slanderer. Belly is generally translated "body," and refers to the principal portion of a human being. In other words, a secret slander will inflict a major injury upon a man, because he is unaware of the work of the whisperer until its deadly effect is felt.

Verse 9. A *slothful* man will not produce anything, and a *waster* destroys that which another has produced. *Brother* is used figuratively, meaning the two described men are alike in their principles of life.

Verse 10. Towers were used in times of danger and provided places of protection from the enemy. They are compared to the spiritual support that the name of the Lord offers to those who put their trust in Him.

Verse 11. The key to this verse is the phrase *his own conceit*. The thought is the rich man is so foolish he regards his wealth as his protection. He is not like the man in the preceding verse who trusts in the name of the Lord for shelter.

Verse 12. The *haughty* man corresponds to the proud in ch. 16: 18 and the thought is the same. The last clause is the same in effect as Luke 14: 11.

Verse 13. There is a logical reason for the conclusion in this verse. If a man makes his decision in a case before he has heard all the evidence he will likely decide it wrong. Then when the whole truth has been revealed his decision will be held up to ridicule and he will be brought to shame for his unfair procedure.

Verse 14. For an explanation of the first clause, see my comments at ch. 17: 22. If a man's body is affected it may be benefitted by the strength of his spirit or will power. But if it is his spirit that is hurt it is more serious, for the body has very little ability in healing the inner being.

Verse 15. Both clauses of this verse have virtually the same thought. A man who is already prudent or possessed with good judgment, will want to acquire knowledge which means

specific information on various subjects. In other words, a man might be naturally intelligent and have common sense and yet not know anything about certain subjects. But such a man will not be content until he obtains the information.

Verse 16. The main idea in this verse is that gifts will gain for a man the favors that true merit might not bring him. If this *gift* is in the nature of a bribe (which is too often the case), it is a transaction to be condemned.

Verse 17. *Searcheth* is from CHAQAR, which Strong defines, "A primitive root; properly to penetrate; hence to examine intimately." When a man presents "his side" of a controversy he is apt to keep back part of the truth, or present what he does offer in such a way as to make a false impression. If the matter is left just as the one "side" has been pictured it will seem to be right. But the other man penetrates the case and shows up the true state of affairs which may reverse the false impression that was made at first in the minds of the hearers. It is not fair to decide the issues in any controversy until both sides have been heard.

Verse 18. See the comments at ch. 16: 33 for explanation of the *lot*. If the parties to a controversy agree to leave it to the *lot*, the contention will be settled by it and thus it will be caused to *cease*. *Parteth between* means the same as when a person gets between two others who are having trouble. He "parts" them or causes them to stop their conflict; he acts as "peacemaker" between them.

Verse 19. *Offended* means to be driven away from one's brotherly friendship by unjust and harsh treatment. If a man thus mistreats his brother it will be difficult to win him back. The difficulty is compared to the feat of capturing a strong city, or of taking a castle whose doors are fastened with iron bars.

Verse 20. The key words of the verse are *satisfied* and *filled*. They are used in a very unusual sense, meaning to satiate or fill to the point of being gorged. If a man were to complain of feeling too full for comfort, he would be told that it was his own fault, that he was in that condition because of what he had taken through his mouth, and that no one was to be blamed but himself. Solomon is using the condition to illustrate a man's

responsibility for too unwise use of his tongue.

Verse 21. The first clause of this verse has the same meaning as the preceding verse but is more direct in the form of language used. What a man says may result either in *death* or *life*, depending on whether his words are wise or not. The second clause is practically the same as the preceding verse in its meaning.

Verse 22. The beneficial results of the marriage relation is the thought in this verse; it agrees with Gen. 2: 18.

Verse 23. In the vast domain of Solomon there were all classes of social conditions, and much of his writing consisted of mere statements of the facts without comment either way. However, the right and wrong features in many cases are so evident that the bare mention of the situation is enough. The observation we should make on this verse is that riches will tempt men to mistreat the poor.

Verse 24. If a man expects to have friends he must be friendly himself, and not *answer roughly* as in the preceding verse. The general connection indicates a friendship that is created by actual deeds of benevolence, and not merely one that is somewhat forced from a sense of fleshly relationship. A *brother* may be more or less near a man because of the relationship, but such friendship is likely to vary or even be broken off. But a friendship that springs from appreciation of practical helpfulness is likely to be more deeply seated and lasting than one based only on blood relationship. That is the kind of *friend* (the one who had been really helped) that *sticketh closer than a brother* (the one who was only his fleshly relation and had that for his motive). In direct connection with this noted but much-misapplied passage the reader should study Prov. 27: 10 and James 2: 15, 16.

PROVERBS 19

Verse 1. Solomon was the richest man in the world, yet he made many statements in favor of the poor. Not that poverty is necessarily a virtue; but the poor as a rule are humble, and if they combine that with *integrity*, which means constancy in the right, they are to be commended above other classes.

Verse 2. *Soul* means the person as a whole, which is in a state of real want if there is not the quality of knowl-

edge. *Hasteth* denotes a man who is rash and does not have care as to where he goes; does not "walk circumspectly" (Eph. 5: 15).

Verse 3. *Perverteth* is a step sideways, which Solomon says is caused by a man's foolishness. *Freteth* is from ZAPH, which Strong defines, "A primitive root; properly to boil up, i. e. (figuratively) to be peevish or angry." When a man goes wrong he frequently tries to show a grudge against someone or something, and blame it thereupon.

Verse 4. The advantage of wealth over poverty, from a worldly standpoint, is the subject of this verse. Solomon has made such statements frequently without special comment in many instances. But he has expressed himself also in other places in such a way as to indicate his disapproval of such use of riches.

Verse 5. There is very little difference between a *false witness* and one who *speaketh lies*. The former is one who is placed on a witness stand and then falsifies.

Verse 6. The advantage of wealth and social prestige is the subject of this verse. The question of whether that advantage is used or abused is not considered, the verse being merely a statement of facts.

Verse 7. *Hate* is used in the sense of belittle or slight. A man's near relatives will often shun him if he is poor regardless of that kinship. And if those who are that closely connected with him stand aloof from him, it may be expected that people who are merely fellow associates will do so. *They are wanting* means the poor man's words will not be able to win back the association of those who have shunned him on account of his needy condition, lest they be called upon to assist him.

Verse 8. *Wisdom* and *understanding* are regarded in the same light, being qualities that will benefit the soul or entire being of man.

Verse 9. *Shall perish* corresponds with *not escape* in v. 5; otherwise the two verses are identical in wording and meaning.

Verse 10. *Delight* is from TAANUGAH, Strong defines with the one word "luxury." The verse means it is not *seemly* or fitting for a fool to be given luxury; he could not appreciate it. It is still more inappropriate for a servant to be given some authority over a man

of distinction and special standing in the community.

Verse 11. In James 1: 19 the advice is given to be "slow to wrath" and that is the teaching here. If a man is discreet he will *defer* (postpone) the exercise of his wrath. The chances are that after he has "cooled off" he will see the *transgression* in a calmer frame of mind and will overlook it.

Verse 12. The same person may show two opposite temperaments, compared here to a lion's roar and the dew. The subject of a king may feel one or the other from him, depending on whether he is pleasing or displeasing to the ruler.

Verse 13. No one should be "proud" of his children or of anything else; but a father would be happy to have a wise son. By the same token, a father would regard a foolish son as a calamity upon him and his family. The second clause is worded more completely in ch. 27: 15 which I request the reader to see. We have all heard the continuous and monotonous drip, drip, drip of the rain off of the eaves, on a long, dark, blustery, dreary, chilly day, and can realize the comparison to a quarrelsome, nagging wife. A man who has a silly son and a nagging wife would have to possess the patience of Job to endure it and keep his own temper sweet.

Verse 14. A man may inherit earthly possessions from his earthly ancestors, and such blessings are not to be regarded as of little worth. But above all such good things, Solomon regarded a prudent (sensible) wife as a favor from the Lord. It was He who designed the form and temperament and other qualities of woman so as to meet completely all of the needs of man.

Verse 15. *Slothfulness* is laziness and that will cause a man to be *idle*. The result of it all is like a continuous slumber. Of course while a man is sleeping he is not producing any substance, and so will finally be brought to hunger.

Verse 16. All of the commandments of God are for man's benefit, hence to keep them means to do what is necessary for his *soul* or whole being. According to the connection *his ways* means the ways of the Lord as set forth in the commandments. To *despise* them means to treat them lightly and fail to obey them.

Verse 17. The key word is *lendeth* because what a person lends he ex-

pects to receive back. Thus the writer gives us the wholesome thought that what a man bestows upon the poor is not gone forever. Also, it is not the poor man to whom the benefit was loaned who will repay it, but it is the Lord. This beautiful thought was set forth by Jesus as recorded in Luke 14: 12-14.

Verse 18. To *chasten* means to correct by instruction or bodily punishment or both, depending upon the urgency of the case. See ch. 13: 24; 22: 15; 23: 13, 14; 29: 15. *For his crying* is an erroneous translation and seems to mean the parent should not stop punishing his child just because he is crying. The phrase should be worded, "in view of his threatened ruin." Please read the second half of the verse with the closing words translated as above and you will get the intended meaning.

Verse 19. If a man gets into trouble because of his "uncontrolled temper," it is unwise to try to get him released from his just punishment. If one does, the wrathful man will likely soon give way to his temper again and it will have to be done all over. It is better to let such a man "sweat it out."

Verse 20. *Counsel* has special reference to advice and *instruction* means information on how to apply the advice. The man who observes these words will find in the end that he has acted wisely.

Verse 21. Solomon is contrasting the *counsel* (advice) of the Lord with all the *devices* (schemes or plans) of man. The former is to be preferred because it will stand the test of time and all strains that can be put upon it.

Verse 22. The most desirable thing any man can offer another is kindness. For this reason a *poor man* who is kind is better than one who is wealthy but untruthful.

Verse 23. To *fear* the Lord means to respect him, and he who does so will want to obey him. Such conduct will result in spiritual life that will be satisfactory. No real evil can befall one who serves the Lord, even though he might suffer temporally.

Verse 24. The point in the verse is to give a strong description of a slothful (lazy) man. Such a person would be too indolent even to feed himself. The apparent incorrectness of this statement will be explained by the words *will not* in the verse. They mean

he does not feed himself willingly but does it rather than starve.

Verse 25. The thought in this verse is similar to that in ch. 17: 10. A *scorner* is one who shows an overbearing attitude toward the truth. Such a man can be chastised only by bodily punishment. When it is done the *simple* or "silly" persons will be induced to *beware*, which Strong defines as "to be cunning" or inclined to run or dodge. That will be about all the good he will get out of seeing the other man punished. But a man of *understanding*, a man of good sense, will be affected even by a reproof and will gain knowledge as a result of it.

Verse 26. The gist of this verse is that a son who does not have respect for his parents is guilty of shameful conduct.

Verse 27. *My son* is explained by the comments at ch. 1: 10. *To err* means to step aside from the pathway of knowledge.

Verse 28. This witness has no respect for righteous verdicts, hence he will deliver a false testimony. *Devoureth* usually means to destroy, but a wicked man would not want to do that to iniquity. The idea is that he "just eats it" or lives on it.

Verse 29. Fools and scoffers cannot understand any lesson but those delivered with a rod; they must be made to feel since they will not hear.

PROVERBS 20

Verse 1. These articles of drink are inanimate objects and could not be said directly to mock or rage. It means the use of them will cause the consumer to act in that manner. There is no original for *strong* as a separate word, but the translators got the term from Hebrew of *drink*. It is from *shekar*, which Strong defines, "an intoxicant, i. e., intensely alcoholic liquor." The earliest and most common intoxicating drink in old times was fermented grape juice. But Smith's Bible Dictionary says the Jews later learned of other and stronger drinks, some made of barley and certain herbs. They are the ones meant in the various places in the Bible that mention *strong drink*. It would have a more violent effect on a man than fermented wine, hence the two words *mock* and *rage*.

Verse 2. For the first part of the verse see comments on ch. 19: 12. The man who resists the power of the king is working against himself.

Verse 3. Pride will often goad a fool into persistent meddling. It is no surrender of actual dignity to "calm down" when one sees he is wrong in a controversy.

Verse 4. A *stuggard* is a lazy man and does only what he thinks he has to do. An energetic man does not wait until the cold spring days are gone before he works the ground. Then when harvest time comes he has something to show for his industry.

Verse 5. *Counsel* means the advice a wise man is capable of giving. Such a person does not usually offer it voluntarily, but if another man will approach him with good sense he may draw out the advice from him.

Verse 6. This verse is similar to the preceding one. A man who really knows something is generally modest about it and not eager to display his wisdom.

Verse 7. *Integrity* means complete and continuous righteousness. If a man walks in that kind of life his children will be *blessed* or happy. The influence of such a father is sure to benefit his descendants.

Verse 8. We are to understand Solomon is considering the right kind of a king. He scatters evil with his eyes in that he sees it and his good judgment tells him what to do about it to bring about its removal.

Verse 9. Solomon's question in reality is an admission that even the best of men are apt to make mistakes. See 1 Ki. 8: 46 where he makes the same admission directly. In view of such universal weakness, it is all the more important that the king be a man of judgment so as to handle the mistakes of his subjects properly.

Verse 10. Among the "evils" a king will have to handle are the unfair dealings between some of his citizens. They may be using the wrong kind of scales in their business transactions and thus be defrauding each other.

Verse 11. "Actions speak louder than words" is a familiar saying that is as true of a child as of an adult. The motives in one's mind will show up as fruit in the outward conduct. This is all true whether it is good or evil that is considered. We do not have the right to judge the heart until we see that which proceeds from it.

Verse 12. The mere fact that the Lord is the maker of man's body is not all there is in this verse. The significant thing is the perfect qualifica-

tion of the different parts for the work expected of them. Had the ear sometimes been deaf and yet would show reaction to a thing because it was beautiful, then the creation would have been defective. And the success of these organs should convince us that their Maker must have ears and eyes also that can perform their office towards the children of men. In connection with this we would do well to read Ps. 94: 9.

Verse 13. The connection will show that Solomon is writing of the man who sleeps when he should be at work. We are sure this conclusion is correct from the many times he has spoken of the sluggard (lazy man).

Verse 14. *Naught* is from a word that means something bad or worth but little. The verse describes a man who talks down an article at the time of making the deal in order to get it at lower price than it is really worth. Then when he leaves the place with the article he will boast about his "good bargain." Such a transaction is an act of hypocrisy.

Verse 15. *Gold* and *rubies* are not represented as articles of no value, nor even of little value. But as a contrast the possession of lips that speak of knowledge are like jewels that outshine and overvalue all the precious metals or gems in the world.

Verse 16. In ch. 6: 1-5 Solomon lets us know his opinion of a man who will go on a bond for a stranger. In the present verse he has the same opinion, and even expresses it by advising against showing him any mercy. If he is so foolish as to do such a thing, then force him to make it good, even if you have to take his garment as payment on the pledge. The same treatment should be given a man who has become indebted to an immoral woman in consideration for her association with him.

Verse 17. Bread is used as an illustration or figure of speech. If a man relies on deceit for his accomplishments, he may think he is having a success for a time. The after effects, however, will be as objectionable as gravel would be in his mouth.

Verse 18. *Counsel* and *advice* mean about the same, except the first generally is thought of more as a co-operating of minds in forming a plan. It is always better to resort to it before proceeding with any important project, especially one of war.

Verse 19. *Talebearer* is from *BAKIYL* and Strong defines it, "a scandal-monger (as traveling about)." Solomon does not mean that in peddling his gossip the talebearer necessarily gives away any actual secret facts. It means such a person would have that motive and would make general scandal of any personal matters were he to get the least inkling of them. And in order to get a clue for such purpose he will pretend to be a friend and sympathizer in the hopes that one will confide an intimate matter in him. That is why the verse warns against having anything to do with the *flatterer*.

Verse 20. *Curseth* is from a word that means to make light and show disrespect. *Lamp be put out* is a figure of speech, meaning a son who will thus mistreat his parents will some day be covered with the darkest shame.

Verse 21. If a man inherits great riches he does not know how to handle it as a rule, and as a result such a person will soon "run through" with it. But if one comes into possession of wealth through his own industrious management, he naturally will know how to take care of it.

Verse 22. Personal vengeance is condemned in this verse. If one has been treated wrongfully, the Lord has provided a way in which such a person will get his "just deserts."

Verse 23. A balance is an instrument for weighing merchandise. It is used by placing a stone in one side that weighs the same as the desired article of trade. A false balance would be one in which the balancing point is not in the center, and *diverse* weights means stones of different weights, one to use in buying and the other in selling. Such arrangements are abomination to the Lord because they are dishonest.

Verse 24. The first clause is similar in thought to Ps. 37: 23; 119: 133. Man does not know how he should go, hence the Lord offers to show him.

Verse 25. *Devoureth* is from *YALA* and Strong's lexicon defines it, "to blurt or utter inconsiderately." *Make enquiry* would be to reconsider. The verse means a man rashly makes a promise to God, then afterward calls it in question and even thinks of breaking his vow.

Verse 26. *Wheels* are parts of vehicles used in warfare or other vigorous activities. A wise king will be

hard on wicked men and will drive them away.

Verse 27. When God formed the spirit of man within him (Zech. 12: 1), he lighted the *candle* or lamp by which the human being could seek for information. This search for information concerns the entire *belly* or body and all of its interests.

Verse 28. *Mercy* at the expense of *truth* is wrong, and the king who shows such mercy is endangering his own throne. But if he holds to the truth in all of his dealings with his subjects, his throne will be respected and supported by them.

Verse 29. Another word for *glory* is ornament, and Solomon regarded the strength of a young man as his chief ornament. For the second clause of the verse see ch. 16: 31.

Verse 30. Blueness is the black-and-blue condition that comes after a wound. It is nature's way of scattering the evil effects of the wound. It is the effort of the blood to absorb the congestion by taking it up through the circulation. This healing process of a literal wound is compared to the good effects of chastisement on the *inward* or spiritual parts of the *belly*, that is, the whole being of man.

PROVERBS 21

Verse 1. The Lord has full control of the works of creation. The same is true of the heart of the king. It would have been well had Solomon always recognized that.

Verse 2. It is the natural thing for man to justify his own conduct. If such a standard of right and wrong were admitted, there would be about as many rules of conduct as there are men. For that reason the Lord has "taken over" the right to direct.

Verse 3. *Judgment* means a verdict in a controversy, and *justice* means the verdict will be right and fair to all. Such treatment of one's fellow man is acceptable to God. But it is objectionable to Him for a man to defraud another and then think to make up for it by a material sacrifice or other service to the Lord. See Isa. 1: 10-17; 3: 13-15; Matt. 23: 14 which deals with this same subject.

Verse 4. A *high look* is the product of a *proud heart* on the same principle that deeds are its product (Mark 7: 2-23). This entire verse is on the evil of pride in any of its forms. *Plowing* is derived from a word that means to

gleam or glisten, and is used in an unusual application here. The showy appearance of a freshly made furrow is used to compare the pretentious work of a wicked man which is sinful.

Verse 5. Thoughtful activity constitutes diligence, and it will result in useful production. Activity that is rash and not directed by thoughtfulness will be a failure.

Verse 6. Possessions obtained by fraud will prove to be *vanity* or unenduring. To practice such things is like being tossed to and fro, and will finally lead to ruin.

Verse 7. *Destroy* is from a word that means to chew or irritate. If a man obtains goods by robbery he will likely refuse to *do judgment* or make things right with those from whom he has taken the articles. But the retaining of them will not benefit him. Their very presence will irritate him, knowing he has in his possession the things that belong to another and that were obtained dishonestly.

Verse 8. The main purpose of this verse is to show a contrast between a bad man and a good man. One is *froward* or wavering, and his conduct is *strange*, which means it is like a foreigner. The other has a *pure* (unmixed) manner of life which is right.

Verse 9. Houses had flat roofs in olden times, and they were used in various ways, although not the most desirable part of a building. *Wide house* is from an original that means the extent or roominess of society. Solomon means he would rather live alone in a small part of the roof of some building, than to be in society if he had to put up with a *brawling* or quarrelsome woman.

Verse 10. *The soul* or entire being of the wicked has only one desire, and that is to do evil. Such a man is not interested in the welfare of his neighbor.

Verse 11. A scorner is a fool and has to be punished before he will learn his lesson and be wise. The man who is wise or uses good sense needs only to be instructed, and he will receive the knowledge offered him.

Verse 12. *House of the wicked* as a phrase refers to the general conduct and situation of the forces of wickedness. The righteous people might not have the power to prevent such a condition, but they can and will *consider* it, and Strong defines the word to inspect or take close notice of. But God is the great Judge with power to act,

and he will do more than inspect the house of wickedness; he will destroy it.

Verse 13. A man who turns a deaf ear to the worthy poor may succeed for a time. However, a condition much worse than temporal needs will overtake him and then it will be too late for him to cry for mercy. See the lesson taught in Matt. 18: 23-35.

Verse 14. This *gift* is a bribe and Solomon merely states the influence of such a gift without making any comment thereon. See my comments on a like passage, ch. 17: 8.

Verse 15. The greatest kind of joy possible in this life is that which comes from doing right. The only reward that is waiting for the workers of iniquity is their own ruin, which is a "reward" that will not have any enjoyment.

Verse 16. *Congregation* is used in the sense of group. If a man strays away from the path of understanding he will get lost amid the group who are dead in sin.

Verse 17. Both *pleasure* (idle pastime), and dissipation, *wine and oil* which means expensive living, will bring a man to want.

Verse 18. *For* is used in the sense of "instead." The evil people of earth will have to pay the ransom for their wrong doing, but the righteous will pay no penalty.

Verse 19. This verse has practically the same thought as verse 9.

Verse 20. Oil and other desirable things of value will be reserved by those who use wisdom with them. A supply may be seen at any time because they will not be wasted.

Verse 21. "Like produces like" is a true human saying, and "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap" is an inspired one. Both sayings express the thought of this verse.

Verse 22. This concerns a city that has been made *mighty* or strong with walls of fortification. A *wise man* will devise some means for *scaling* or climbing the wall and taking the city into his possession or control.

Verse 23. The thought in this verse is similar to that in ch. 16: 32 which see. It is set forth also in James 3: 2. The correctness of this verse is so evident that it scarcely needs any comment. A great many serious troubles

have their start in unwise remarks and expressions from evil imaginations.

Verse 24. The leading terms in this verse are the same in thought, therefore their repetition is for the purpose of emphasis. When a man *scorns* or scoffs at a proposition, it is because he has no just grounds for opposing it, but is too proud to admit it, or even to try to make any logical reply.

Verse 25. The chief desire of a *slothful* (lazy) man is to be at ease. As a result he will not provide for his own needs and will finally die of hunger.

Verse 26. The slothful man spends whole days longing for the possessions of others, but is too indolent to work for the like and hence will be brought to shameful want. A righteous man will labor to produce the things he needs for himself, and he will also "have to give to him that needeth." (Eph. 4: 28.)

Verse 27. A wicked man is not invited to participate in sacrificial services even if the articles offered are rightfully his possessions. And his service is especially objectionable if the things proposed for sacrifices have been obtained by fraud.

Verse 28. When it is seen that a witness is going to give false testimony he will be shut off. A witness should repeat truthfully what he has learned. One source of such learning is the things he has heard. *Heareth* is from SHAMA and Strong defines it, "a primitive root; to hear intelligently (often by implication of attention, obedience, etc.)." So a witness who has *heard* in this manner will be accepted and will be permitted to *speak constantly*. That is, his testimony will not be shut off as was that of the false witness.

Verse 29. *Directeth* is rendered "considereth" in the margin of the Bible and the lexicon agrees. The verse means a wicked man does not care how he acts or walks. A righteous man will consider his way; will try to "walk circumspectly." (Eph. 5: 15.)

Verse 30. Nothing that man may plan in opposition to the Lord will succeed.

Verse 31. The horse was preeminently the most useful and desirable of all beasts for service in war. However, even the horse and all other equipment would be a failure unless the Lord favored the action.

PROVERBS 22

Verse 1. Riches can fade away or be stolen and leave the owner with nothing. A good name and a friendship based thereon will be out of the reach of a thief, and is not subject to decay.

Verse 2. Since God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10: 34), the rich and poor stand on equal footing in His sight.

Verse 3. A *prudent* man is one who uses precaution in his every activity. He will thus watch his step and so will observe any sign of danger and thus will stop before encountering it. The other kind just goes blindly on and falls into the trap.

Verse 4. The kind of *fear* that counts is respect for the Lord, and such fear is always connected with a meek and humble mind. This attitude tends to attain to the good things mentioned in this verse.

Verse 5. *Froward* means to be stubbornly wayward. In stepping from the right path the traveler will get caught in the wild growth of thorns and in the traps set by the enemy, for such things are usually off of but near the beaten pathway.

Verse 6. Much discussion and speculation has been had over this verse. The English word *should* occurs over 300 times in the A.V. of the Old Testament, but it has no original word in a single instance; it has been wholly supplied by the translators. The word *go* is from *PEH*, which is defined by Strong, "The mouth (as the means of blowing), whether literally or figuratively (particularly speech); specifically edge, portion or side; adverbially (with preposition) according to." It has been rendered "according" 22 times in the A.V. So the first clause should read, "Train up a child according to the way." *When he is old* means if he has been constant in the way all of his life until old age, then at that time he will not depart. The Bible does not contradict facts. It is maintained that if a person becomes wayward in old age it proves he has not been properly trained, else he never would have done wrong in the latter years. But 1 Ki. 11: 1, 4 and Ezk. 18: 24 shows us that a man who had been properly trained may turn from the right finally. So the reasonable conclusion is that Solomon was not giving a precept but was stating what takes place as a rule; and the passages just cited show this rule, like many others, may have some exceptions.

Verse 7. This is another passage where Solomon is merely stating some facts and not offering any precept. However, the form of the language and the general teaching elsewhere indicates that he was unfavorable to the conditions named.

Verse 8. *Vanity* is defined "nothingness" in the lexicon of Strong. If a man sows iniquity he will have a harvest that will amount to nothing according to this clause. *Anger* is defined by Strong as an "outburst of passion." *Rod* is used figuratively, meaning the appearance of passion. But it will fail to accomplish the evil purpose of such a performer because the Lord will interfere with his plans.

Verse 9. *Bountiful eye* means to look with compassion on the poor, and with a general purpose of supplying his needs. Such a man will be *blessed* of the Lord and will be appreciated by the one receiving the favors so graciously.

Verse 10. A *scorner* is one who has no just cause for his opposition but is too proud and stubborn to admit it; consequently he shows his evil spirit by making light of what he does not like. The advice of Solomon is to *cast out* or exclude such a person from the association of good people and they can then have peace.

Verse 11. A *pure heart* is one that is unmixed with evil thoughts. Such a man will speak or use *his lips* with *favor*, which means kindness and other favorable sentiments. A person like this will have the friendship of the king.

Verse 12. The Lord can see everything that exists, whether visible or invisible to us. Out of all such matters He will recognize and preserve that which is according to knowledge that is good. By the same token that which is seen with the transgressors will be overthrown.

Verse 13. There is nothing objectionable to one's being afraid of a lion; but only a slothful (lazy) man would use such fear to excuse his inactivity.

Verse 14. *Strange woman* means one outside of the proper association; specifically an immoral woman. (See chapter 7.) *Deep pit* means she uses words that flatter and deceive her victim. The last clause is worded in reversal of the thought. It signifies that a man who will let such a woman deceive him is abhorred of the Lord.

Verse 15. *Rod of correction* may not

always call for a literal rod but it does mean that primarily. Ch. 13: 24; 23: 13, 14; 29: 15 shows that Solomon favored the use of a literal rod when other means of correction failed.

Verse 16. The two actions named in this verse are different in form but will have the same effect. The man who takes away the belongings of the poor will be left in want as a punishment. He who gives to the rich will be wasting his goods on one who does not need them, and such people will not show any appreciation by returning the favor, and hence the foolish man will be brought to want in this case.

Verse 17. *Bow down thine ear* means to listen humbly and attentively. After hearing words of the wise king, then make a hearty application of the knowledge.

Verse 18. The antecedent of *them* is "words" in the preceding verse. If wise words are stored up within a person, they will be fitting expressions for his lips.

Verse 19. The pronoun *thy* refers to the good man indicated in v. 17. The great motive of Solomon was that a man should trust in the Lord. As a help for that purpose he made known to the listening ear the words of wisdom.

Verse 20. The things Solomon wrote were *excellent*, which means they were more valuable than others. *Counsels* constituted words of advice on the right use to be made of the *knowledge gained*.

Verse 21. Solomon wished to make his words so plain that he with a listening ear could understand them. This was for the further purpose that he might *answer* or repeat the words to others. (2 Tim. 2: 2.)

Verse 22. Do not take advantage of a poor man because he is poor and cannot help himself. Many cities were walled and persons wishing to enter had to come to the gate. Among the special purposes of these gates was that of using them as places of public resort. At such places the unfortunate persons would gather, hoping to obtain some favor from the passing throngs. Our verse requests that no oppression should be put on such afflicted individuals.

Verse 23. The Lord has always had compassion for the poor. If any men should take advantage of these poor people at the gate by taking from them

what little they have, God will *spoil* or take from them all that they have.

Verse 24. *Friendship* is from a Hebrew word that means association of a more or less permanent nature. If a man shows himself to be given to anger it is unwise to become intimate or enter into any association with him.

Verse 25. This verse states a reason for the advice in the preceding one. Intimacy with a high tempered man is likely to cultivate the same disposition in another. Paul taught this great truth in 1 Cor. 15: 33.

Verse 26. *Strike* is from TAQA and Strong defines it, "to become bondsman (by hand claspings)." The second clause is similar to the first except it is more specific. The "bondsman" may be standing good for any kind of obligation, while the other is making himself responsible for debts only. See my comments at ch. 6: 1-5.

Verse 27. The man for whose debts the surety was furnished may have been thought to be honest, and the obligation was assumed to make it possible for him to close a business transaction. However, he may prove to have been unworthy and the bondsman will be called upon, although his necessary articles of life may be his only assets. Therefore in justice to himself and his family he should refuse to become surety.

Verse 28. Let it be noted that the *landmark* had been set up by the fathers in ancient times, not a recent move on the part of some contentious neighbor as sometimes takes place. It is an established principle even in human law that a boundary that has been in use many years should be regarded as legal.

Verse 29. *Diligent* is from a word that is defined "quick; skilful." *Business* means "work" and *stand* means to have a position or employment. The verse means that a man who is a good workman will have employment with kings, and will not have to work for *mean* (ordinary) men. The moral is that a man should develop himself in some useful trade, then he can obtain desirable employment.

PROVERBS 23

Verse 1. One word in the definition of *consider* is "distinguish." The table of a ruler will have many articles of food and more varieties than any one man can even "sample." Solomon advises his reader to look over what is

before him and make some distinction between the dishes. That will be specified more fully later on.

Verse 2. The key word in this verse is *given*, which means "master." The meaning of the whole passage is that the guest should be master of his appetite. If he is, then he is invited to use the eating instrument to put food into his mouth.

Verse 3. This verse designates the distinction mentioned in v. 1. The *dainties* were the delicacies on the table of the ruler. They would be prepared so as to look attractive but would not really be wholesome food. There would be plenty of nourishing dishes on such a table, so that the man who wishes to take the advice of Solomon would have no need to eat of the *dainty* ones.

Verse 4. The word for *labor* is a strong one, meaning, "to gasp; hence to be exhausted, to tire, to toil." So the thought is a man should not wear himself out for the riches of this world, for that would not leave him any strength to acquire the more important things. *Own wisdom* refers to human ideas that are not according to the wisdom of the Lord and that are being offered by the wise king.

Verse 5. This verse is highly figurative, meaning the uncertainty of riches. They may be stolen, or lost, or come to naught by any of a number of other accidents. How foolish it is, then, for a man to exhaust himself striving after them.

Verse 6. Do not accept personal favors from an evil man. If he offers you his dainty food he is only seeking to get you into his grasp for some bad purpose.

Verse 7. *So is he* means the real character of the man is not apparent. When he uses his mouth to invite you to eat of his delicacy, he is only pretending to be hospitable. His heart does not mean it but is plotting to get some undue advantage.

Verse 8. This is another figurative passage. The *sweet* or flattering words of the evil man are mixed with his dainties, so to speak, and swallowed together. When this pretended giver of hospitality accomplishes his wicked purpose, it will be as if his deceitful words had fermented the delicacies and caused them to be vomited.

Verse 9. *Despise* means to belittle or underestimate. A fool will thus treat any words of wisdom offered to

him, hence the advice is not to waste any of them on him. Jesus taught the same lesson in Matt. 7: 6.

Verse 10. The first clause is explained at ch. 22: 28. The second means not to enter into these fields for the purpose of taking possession of the products.

Verse 11. God has always been considerate of the unfortunate. If a man seeks to take advantage of them in their helplessness he will feel the hand of the Lord against him and will be made to suffer for his heartless conduct.

Verse 12. *Apply thine heart* denotes that a hearty use will be made of the instruction that has been received, then open the ears to receive more.

Verse 13. *Beatest* is from NAKAH and Strong's definition is as follows: "a primitive root; to strike (lightly or severely, literally or figuratively)." *Die* is from MUWTH, which Strong defines, "a primitive root; to die (literally or figuratively); causatively to kill." We thus see that the beating does not necessarily call for harsh or brutal use of the stick, but only such use as to accomplish the correction needed. The dying refers to the moral and spiritual result of sin. The verse means that if the child is punished with the rod properly he will not come to this moral death. By the same token if he is not punished he will thus die. It is the same thought that is set forth in ch. 19: 18, and the reader is requested to see that place.

Verse 14. *Rod* has the same definition as in the preceding verse, and the teaching of the verse is the same as in that one.

Verse 15. Wisdom was the great specialty of Solomon. It was in perfect keeping with his interests, therefore, to be happy over the wisdom of others.

Verse 16. *Reins* is used in the sense of the mind. Solomon would rejoice not only when a young man had wisdom in his heart, but also if he used wisdom in his speech.

Verse 17. The leading principle of *envy* is to be grieved because of the good fortune of others. But sinners do not possess any real fortune, therefore they have nothing that one should envy. *Fear of the Lord* means respect for him.

Verse 18. *End* means the purpose or reward that is coming to those who fear the Lord. Such persons are as-

sured their expectation will *not be cut off*; will not fail.

Verse 19. The use of *son* is explained at ch. 1: 8. *The way* means the same as the word *way* in ch. 22: 6. A young man will be led aright in his pathway of life if he will follow the words of wisdom offered him by the king of Israel.

Verse 20. The young man is warned against association with drunkards and gluttons.

Verse 21. The two evils named here and in the preceding verse will bring a man to poverty because they are wasteful practices. *Drowsiness* is a state of inactivity that will bring a man to want because he will not be engaged in any productive occupation. That will be true whether his drowsiness is caused by his drinking or is just pure laziness.

Verse 22. A man's relation to his son should give him some jurisdiction over him, and he should therefore heed the advice of his father. While a wife is subject to her husband, when she is old her relation to a son should cause him to respect her.

Verse 23. When a man buys and sells the same article it is in view of making a profit. However, one could not sell the truth at a profit unless he had procured it for less than its value from some person who did not value it very much. But even in that case he should not sell it, for no full price can be placed upon the truth. The same things can truthfully be said of the other valuables mentioned in the verse.

Verse 24. A wise and righteous son or daughter is one of the greatest joys one can have in this life. He who has such should thank God every day, and use his every opportunity for helping such a child in his service to Him.

Verse 25. This verse is based on the truths of the preceding one. It is addressed to the son who is cited to the joy he can bestow upon his parents.

Verse 26. Giving his heart to the wise king means to listen wholeheartedly to his instruction. In addition, he should see that instruction as it is acted out in *my ways*, which means the manner of life carried out by Solomon. It must be understood this applies to the years before he became old and departed from the way himself.

Verse 27. A *strange* woman is one outside of the proper group, and such outside classes would include the im-

moral woman. *Deep ditch and narrow pit* are figures of speech and indicate that falling under the influence of such a wicked character as this *strange* woman is like sinking into a fatal depression.

Verse 28. The evil woman is as watchful after the unsuspecting young man as a wild beast is for his prey. She will appear before him unawares and he will be the victim of the surprise attack unless warned about it beforehand. See the complete description of such a character in the passages and comments at ch. 7: 6-27.

Verse 29. *Woe, sorrow and contentions* scarcely need any explanations. *Babbings* means wild and idle talk such as generally is heard from a drunken man.

Verse 30. Wine is a slow intoxicant and hence the reason for *tarrying long* at it. *Mixed* wine means a blending of wine with spices or liquids other than the juice of the grape. By seeking such a drink the imbibor would naturally drink longer of it because of its more enticing flavor, and this prolonged use of it would result in an extended state of intoxication.

Verse 31. When the juice is first pressed from the grape it has a certain amount of pulp in it which will give it a somewhat dark color. As the wine stands this pulp goes down as settlings or "lees" to the bottom of the glass and the liquid becomes a clear red. At the same time it begins to ferment which causes it to *move itself* or sparkle. It is then becoming more intoxicating, and the warning of the verse is not to use it after getting in that condition.

Verse 32. At first this sparkling wine will go down smoothly and seem not to have any harm in it. But in a little while the real effects will show up and its sting, both to the tongue and the general system, will be like that of a serpent.

Verse 33. Many crimes of immorality are committed by drunk men, and their acts are often attributed to their drunken condition.

Verse 34. A ship may be out in the midst of the sea and a storm be raging. At the same time a man is fastened to the top of a mast where he sleeps on as if no commotion was going on because he is so "dead to the world." Such a situation is used to illustrate the irresponsible state of mind in one who is under the influence of drink.

Verse 35. This verse describes a man just coming out of a long "spree." He begins to realize that something has been going on with him when he did not know it. He feels very uncomfortable and will decide to drink some more as a "sobering up" process. That is the meaning of the closing words *I will seek it yet again*.

PROVERBS 24

Verse 1. For comments on this verse see those at ch. 23: 17. Also consult the remarks on Ps. 37: 1.

Verse 2. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" said Jesus in Matt. 12: 34, and such is the thought in this verse. A wicked man first studies up some evil activity then talks about it to others.

Verse 3. *House* is used in the sense of household or an entire family group. Wisdom is more useful in establishing such than is riches or social advantage.

Verse 4. *Knowledge* is used in the same meaning as *wisdom* in the preceding verse. *Chambers* means apartments and the thought is that they will be supplied with various necessities of life as a result of this knowledge.

Verse 5. *Strength* is not always muscular or physical but often consists in the might of intelligence. It is thus understood that a wise man manifests the kind of strength to be preferred, and such a person will become stronger as he proceeds.

Verse 6. A really wise man is not so full of egotism that he will reject all advice offered him; instead, he will seek the cooperation of wise counselors. This procedure will insure the better preparation for war or other conditions of contest.

Verse 7. The gates of the cities were the meeting places of representative men. At such the wise men of various cities exchanged their counsels. However, a fool would have nothing to say at such times because the subjects discussed would be so much in accordance with wisdom that they would be "over his head."

Verse 8. To *devise* any plan is an activity of the mind and lips only. Yet such a man will be called a mischievous person because all active evil is generally started with the thoughts in the heart.

Verse 9. It is a sin even to think evil because the thoughts of the mind come out in words and deeds (Matt. 12: 34). If this foolish man has no

direct opportunity for carrying out his own thoughts, he will scornfully regard the work of others, and that will make him abominable in the eyes of good men.

Verse 10. It does not take much courage to appear firm when all things are favorable. If a man's strength is small he will *faint* or *falter* when *adversity* comes.

Verses 11, 12. If we see a person about to be drawn into a dangerous condition we should help to rescue him. We must not be like Cain who asked "am I my brother's keeper?" The Lord knows our heart and if we try to excuse our neglect on the ground we knew nothing about it we will not be able to deceive the Lord.

Verse 13. The entire product of honey is good food. The great fore-runner of Christ lived on a diet composed partly of honey. But Solomon was not putting himself up as a specialist on diet; he wished to lay a basis for comparison.

Verse 14. Here is the lesson of comparison. One principal method of reasoning is to go from the known to the unknown, or from the literal to the figurative. Any man will know upon trying it that honey is good to the taste and will contribute nourishment to his body. Then if an inspired man compares knowledge to honey he should see the lesson of how important it is to partake of this nourishment for *his soul*. The expectation that is based on knowledge will be well founded and *shall not be cut off*.

Verse 15. This verse is a simple charge upon the wicked man not to lurk about the premises of a righteous man. Such conduct could have no righteous purpose and would subject the door of it to suspicion in case of any future damage to the property.

Verse 16. *Seven* is used as a symbol of completeness and denotes the endurance of a just man. The mere fact of falling does not condemn one, but it is he who will not bestir himself after falling who will be considered the loser. A just man will not let his mistakes keep him down, but he will get up and "try, try again."

Verse 17. Solomon advised against envying a wicked man when he succeeds in his plans. He now warns against rejoicing when one's enemy fails and we will soon see why.

Verse 18. This verse should be considered in connection with the pre-

ceding. It indicates the enemy had fallen through the chastising hand of God, and it is always displeasing to Him when one takes pleasure from the punishment of another, even though it was merited chastisement.

Verse 19. See the comments at v. 1 and also at Ps. 37: 1.

Verse 20. Since an evil man will gain no reward, there is nothing about him to be worried about or envied.

Verse 21. It is significant that fear or respect for the *king* is preceded by fear for the *Lord*. All passages in the Bible that command obedience to anyone are made subject to the will of the Lord. When the requirements made by earthly persons conflict with the divine will, then "we ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5: 29.) *Given to change* means they want to change or alter the law of God and they should not be encouraged in such an unrighteous purpose.

Verse 22. *Them both* refers to the ruin that will come to them who disrespect the law *both* of the Lord and the king.

Verse 23. *These things* refers to the second clause of the verse. When called upon to pass judgment in a controversy between persons, the verdict should be based on the facts and not on the personality of either of the men involved.

Verse 24. Because of some personal attachment one might be influenced to take the part of a wicked man. That is what the previous verse was considering. He who does so will be condemned by all good people.

Verse 25. The righteous thing to do is to rebuke a man in wrong regardless of how prominent he may be or how much of a personal friend he may be to the judge.

Verse 26. Strong defines the original word for *kiss* as having both a literal and a figurative meaning. He who does the right thing with his lips in passing judgment will be approved by the good of all people who know of it. In that way they will *kiss* his lips; virtually "throw a kiss" toward his mouth in a gesture of approval.

Verse 27. This verse is certainly good business advice. The field produces a man's living and should receive first and the most attention. The house is not a source of income and hence should be attended to as a secondary consideration.

Verse 28. This does not forbid testifying even against a neighbor if the truth requires it. But it does prohibit so testifying *without cause*.

Verse 29. This verse sets forth the same principle that Paul taught in Rom. 12: 19 and 1 Thess. 5: 15, and Peter taught in 1 Pe. 3: 9. If a neighbor has been guilty of wrong-doing, it is proper to testify on the case in the public interest. However, even such testimony should not be given in the spirit of revenge for personal injury.

Verse 30. Solomon classed a *slothful* (lazy) man with one *void of understanding*. But this does not mean lack of intelligence as it is usually applied, for such a man might not be responsible for his lack of business enterprise. It has the meaning of feeling or concern. A lazy man lacks proper concern for his own interests.

Verse 31. The effect of the slothful man's lack of concern was seen in the unkempt appearance of his field, and the broken down condition of the wall.

Verse 32. Upon seeing the condition of this field, Solomon saw a basis for some warning and instruction for his readers and subjects.

Verses 33, 34. Here is the conclusion mentioned in the preceding paragraph. While a man is idly taking his ease his property loss will overtake him. A traveller is usually prepared to take care of himself, and so is one who is armed, so that whatever they see fit to attack they can take. This is used to illustrate the certainty of the attack of *poverty* and *want* upon a slothful man.

PROVERBS 25

Verse 1. It is not presumed that all of the proverbs of Solomon are recorded in the book bearing his name. 1 Ki. 4: 32 says "he spake three thousand proverbs," and the first word in the lexicon of Strong for "spake" is "to arrange." We know there are not that many proverbs in the book we are studying, hence it is a selection out of the group or arrangement previously made by the wise king. The copying was done under the reign of Hezekiah who was one of the best kings of Judah, and thus we are sure the work was correct and in accordance with the original work of Solomon.

Verse 2. The deepest of secrets are with God which fact is one of his chief evidences of glory. However, the Lord intended that man should learn some

of the hidden things of wisdom by *searching* which means to study and investigate. A wise king will therefore do himself great honor by making such investigation.

Verse 3. Among the subjects for the king to study is that of the extremes of height and depth of the heart of kings. It is compared to *heaven* (the sky) and *earth*, the two literal extremes in that part of the creation where kings live.

Verse 4. The *dross* is the useless and coarse matter that comes from the earth in which is mixed the silver. *Come forth* is from one original word and *vessel* is from a word that means "something prepared." *Finer* is the one whose business it is to refine precious metal by separating it from the dross. So the verse means that when the dross has been removed, the workman (the finer) will be rewarded by having something prepared for use.

Verse 5. The above is a true description of a material process, but it is given for the purpose of comparison. Wicked persons about the king are the dross and the throne is the silver. If the evil characters are removed from the place the throne will be recognized as a righteous institution.

Verse 6. It might be unobjectionable for a subject of a king to be in his presence, but he should not intrude voluntarily therein.

Verse 7. The only change that can come to one who is at the top is one of humility, while the man at the bottom has the possibility of being promoted. It is therefore a wise thing for a person to take a position of humility. Even if he is never given a higher place he will not be any worse off, and he might stand the chance of being raised. Jesus set forth this very lesson in Luke 14: 8-10.

Verse 8. This verse means a man should not rush into a controversy before he knows what the question is about and learns some of the facts connected with it.

Verse 9. If you have a difference with a neighbor you should talk to him about it; no one else should be told about it. This also was the teaching on the subject of personal differences and it is recorded in Matt. 18: 15.

Verse 10. If a third party is "let in" on the dispute he cannot know all of the particulars and may form a wrong conclusion and think the blame justly rests on the person approaching him

with the matter. If that is the case he will condemn the said person before others and he will receive a bad name which is the meaning of *infamy*.

Verse 11. Of course this verse is highly figurative, for the writer is not speaking of literal fruit. Yet we can understand how unattractive it would be to see a fruit beautifully colored and then placed in a field of some drab shade. On that principle a man might have a correct thought in a controversy, then damage its effects by speaking "out of turn." To avoid such a result he should observe the advice set forth in verses 8-10 above.

Verse 12. An ornament of gold will add pleasant attractiveness to the person of one who knows how to wear it, while a decoration of lead would be detracting. Likewise a proper word of reproof spoken to an appreciative ear and at the right moment will result in his moral improvement and attractiveness.

Verse 13. Snowfall in harvest time seems unlikely yet it is understandable how it could be obtained for the purpose of cooling drinking water. On this subject Smith's Bible Dictionary says: "Snow lies deep in the ravines of the highest ridge of Lebanon until the summer is far advanced, and indeed never wholly disappears; the summit of Hermon also perpetually glistens with frozen snow. From these sources probably the Jews obtained their supplies of ice for the purpose of cooling their beverages in summer." This refreshing effect of the snow is compared with the satisfactory results of a faithful messenger's services on behalf of his master.

Verse 14. A man might make an untruthful boast of some gift he claims to have made or proposes to make, thereby gaining some praise from those who hear him. And a black cloud with wind in a dry season may give hope of relief from the drought, but it "blows over" without leaving any rain to the disappointment of the sufferers. Likewise the prospects held out by false boasts of gifts soon are exposed and leave disappointment in the mind of the victim of deceit.

Verse 15. Patience in bearing with another will often win an argument. *Soft tongue*, etc., is the same thought expressed in the passage and comments at ch. 15: 1.

Verse 16. Honey is a pure food but is very rich and the advice is to eat as much as is sufficient (only). A man

should be master of his appetite in this matter as well as at the table of a ruler (ch. 23: 2).

Verse 17. In popular language this verse would mean to depart from a neighbor's house before "wearing out one's welcome. It is better to leave while the host is enjoying his company than to prolong the visit until he will rejoice when he leaves.

Verse 18. A *maul*, a *sword*, and an *arrow* are instruments of torture when used by a cruel hand. They are used as a comparison to the cruelty suffered when a man falsifies against his neighbor.

Verse 19. The disadvantage of a broken tooth or a crippled foot is not realized until one needs to use them. In like manner one's confidence in an unfaithful friend is not known to be misplaced until trouble arises and the need for a friend appears.

Verse 20. Appropriateness may well be considered the subject of this verse. Removing a garment when it is cold will result in a disagreeable reaction upon the body. Nitre is an opposite of vinegar which is an acid. If they are brought into contact with each other it will result in a disturbance. And if a man is depressed with some kind of heaviness he is in no mood to enjoy listening to songs. There are times when a man appreciates being left alone in his meditations.

Verses 21, 22. This paragraph is quoted by Paul in Rom. 12: 20. The slight difference is the last clause in our passage. The Lord will reward the one who does this because he did not usurp His business of taking vengeance of a literal kind. *Coals of fire* is figurative and the meaning is that by such kind treatment an enemy may be led to burn with shame at seeing he was not treated with "evil-for-evil" by the other.

Verse 23. *Away* has no word in the original and has been wholly supplied by the translators. *Driveth* is rendered "bringeth forth" in the margin of the Bible and it has been so rendered in other places in the A. V. That rendering also agrees with the reasoning of the second clause of the verse. The meaning of the verse is that as the north wind causes it to rain, so an angry countenance will provoke another to use a *backbiting* (gossiping) tongue.

Verse 24. This statement is explained at ch. 21: 9 which the reader should see.

Verse 25. This is practically the same thought as that in v. 13 of this chapter.

Verse 26. *Down* is not in the original and *falling* is from *mowt*, which Strong defines, "to waver." If a spring or fountain is troubled or stirred up it will become corrupted. So if a righteous man wavers at the influences of a wicked man it will corrupt his life. See the teaching of Paul in 1 Cor. 15: 33.

Verse 27. Overeating of honey is discussed at v. 16 and the thought is brought out that by such use of a good thing an undesirable result will follow. It is now used as a comparison in the case of a moral subject. *Search* is from *CHEQR*, which Strong defines, "examination, enumeration, deliberation." It means a man who thinks too much of his glory (even though he really has it), or "enumerates" it too much, which means he talks about it too much. Such conduct will destroy the glory in the minds of those who see it and become sickened over it.

Verse 28. We have this illustration used before at ch. 16: 32. A man who cannot or will not control his temper lays himself open to the just attacks of the public. That is why he is compared to a city that has lost all of its defenses.

PROVERBS 26

Verse 1. This does not contradict ch. 25: 13. That verse compares the cold of snow, while this means the snow falling in summer; it would seem out of place. It would also be unfitting to be raining when it was the time to be gathering the crop. Both conditions are compared to the unbecoming thing of bestowing honor on a fool.

Verse 2. Every effect must have a cause or it would not occur. The destination reached by the birds would not have been accomplished had they not furnished the cause by their own motions. Likewise, when a curse comes there is a cause for it even if we cannot see or understand what the cause might be.

Verse 3. The point in this and several other verses in the chapter is the appropriateness of using certain things in connection with others. A whip suggest to a horse what he should do, but an ass requires a bridle for his guidance. It is also proper to use a rod on the fool's back because the only

language he understands is the kind he can feel with his fleshly faculties.

Verses 4, 5. I have made one paragraph out of these verses because they might seem to be contradictory. The word *according* has no original but has been supplied by the translators. The first verse means not to deal with a fool in as silly a form as he speaks if you are giving your actual view of the matter. In that way you would seem to be as silly as he. The second verse means to use just as stupid a speech in answering him as he used, and in that way you might cause him to see how foolish he was. A little girl once set a good example of this verse. A man asked her if she was a boy or a girl, and she answered "a boy." Upon overhearing it her mother rebukingly asked her what she meant by such an answer. She said: "When you are asked a silly question you should give a silly answer."

Verse 6. The satisfaction derived from the services of a faithful messenger is the subject of ch. 25: 3. The opposite is the point in the present verse, and some severe language is used to illustrate it. If a man were to cut off his own feet he would not be prevented from delivering a proper message any more certainly than in sending it by a fool. It would be as rash as if he should drink something that is violently *damaging* to his personal health.

Verse 7. Appropriateness is again the subject under consideration. *Lame* is derived from a word that means to limp, implying that something is wrong with the legs. The explanation is in the words *are not equal* which comes from the one word *DALAL*. The definition of Strong is, "to slacken or be feeble." Such legs are not able to render the proper service to their owner. Likewise, a fool is not able to make the proper use of a *parable* which means a pithy maxim.

Verse 8. *Sling* is from *MARGEMATI* and Strong's definition is, "a stone-heap." *Stone* is derived from an original that means a good building stone. *Bindeth* is from *TSABAR* and Strong defines it, "a primitive root; to cramp." The first clause of the verse means a man jams a good building stone into a pile of ordinary stones which would make it look out of place. That would be like bestowing some honor on a fool; it would be very much misplaced.

Verse 9. If a drunkard should brandish a weapon in the form of a thorn

or bramble brush, he would likely injure himself on account of his irresponsible state of mind. Likewise a *parable* (pithy maxim) would be out of place in the mouth of a fool. His awkward use of it would do more harm than good.

Verse 10. The impropriety of certain conditions is again the thought of the verse. The word *God* is not in the original and does not belong to this passage. *Formed* is from a word that means to cause pain or grief or worry. *Rewardeth* is from *CAKAR* and Strong defines it, "a primitive root; to hire." The verse properly translated would read, "A great man (one who ought to know better) will cause some worry by hiring fools and transgressors." It is just another statement of fact that came under the observation of Solomon, which he considered as another unwise combination.

Verse 11. This passage is quoted in 2 Pe. 2: 22 and applied to a man deserting a life of righteousness and returning to his former life of sin. That constitutes an inspired comment on this proverb. Solomon classed the circumstances with his many other cases of unequal or inappropriate combinations.

Verse 12. *Conceit* is from *AYIN*, which Strong defines, "an eye, literally or figuratively." So the clause means a man who is wise in his own eyes; he might not be so considered by others. A fool (silly person) would at least not feel so important and hence might listen to advice, but the other man would scoff at offers of counsel.

Verse 13. There is good reason for fearing to meet a lion when it is known there is one along a pathway. The slothful (lazy) man does not know of it as a fact but uses it as an excuse for his unwillingness to go on an important errand.

Verse 14. In looking for the point in a passage like this we know we must find something that will illustrate a lazy man. A door turns in a certain manner because the hinges force it to do so. A slothful man will turn over in bed even while he is asleep. This is not because he reasons that some motion of the body will be beneficial, but only because the involuntary muscles of his body act regardless of the indolent tendencies of his mind.

Verse 15. This verse is the basis for an old saying descriptive of a very slothful man namely: "He is too lazy

to feed himself if he could live without it." Fools and indolent persons were two characters that Solomon seemed especially to abhor.

Verse 16. It is a strange fact that sluggards (lazy men) are often very conceited. It probably is an "alibi" for their unwillingness to study. Why should they go to the trouble of studying when they already know more (as they pretend) than seven men who are able to *render a reason*. The phrase means to return a good reason or conclusion upon some important question that has been raised.

Verse 17. If a man was attacked by a dog he would have reason to defend himself. However, he would not do so by taking him by the ears with his hands. Therefore the man who would do so would only be inviting trouble by molesting a beast that might not have given him any trouble had he attended to his own business. It is compared to a man who intrudes himself into the affairs of another.

Verses 18, 19. A *mad* man means one who is insane and who might scatter the deadly things named as if it did not amount to anything. That would be like a man who would impose deceit on his neighbor and then laugh about it.

Verse 20. *Talebearer* means a gossip who keeps a disturbance going by spreading the matter. If all such would keep their tongues quiet a trouble would subside just as a fire will die down when the fuel is gone.

Verse 21. The two *coals* are from different originals. The first means char coals and hence they are fuel for the fire. The second means live embers and therefore the kind just ready for more fuel. This is used for the same purpose of illustration as the *talebearer* of the preceding verse.

Verse 22. A *talebearer* is a secret slanderer who goes about and peddles his tales. The most generally-used part of the definition for *belly* is, "the bosom or body of anything." It is used figuratively in this verse. The meaning is that a secret slanderer will cause injuries to the whole reputation of his victim.

Verse 23. The most of Solomon's illustrations are in the nature of contrasts showing especially the folly of inconsistency. In this verse he uses *burning lips* in a favorable sense, but as saying words that are not consistent with the wicked heart beneath the

words. A *potsherd* is a piece of pottery that has been broken. The vessel had been used over fire to separate silver from the dross, but even the dross would leave a silvery coating on the pottery, thereby hiding the real ugliness of the coarse pottery. It is used to illustrate the deceptive words on the *burning lips*.

Verse 24. This and some following verses proves the correctness of comments on the preceding verse about the burning lips. *Dissembleth* means to speak insincerely and such a man uses deception in his words. He speaks as if he were a friend when in reality he has hatred in his heart for the man to whom he speaks.

Verse 25. *Speaketh fair* means the same as *dissembleth* in the preceding verse. Solomon warns against such a character so that his reader may be saved from the deception. *Seven abominations* means his heart is completely abominable.

Verse 26. This man's hatred is hidden for the time by his smooth words. However, such a character will finally be exposed before the whole congregation.

Verse 27. This is a statement of a fact that human experiences have proved many times. But while it is primarily that form of speech, Solomon makes it with evident approval. If a man devises some evil plot against another it will be just for him to suffer the consequences of his own wickedness.

Verse 28. *Afflicted* means to be injured. The verse sets forth the idea that hatred is the motive of the man who lies about another. In order to accomplish his purpose he will use flattering words to deceive and lead his victim to his ruin.

PROVERBS 27

Verse 1. The thought is not to make statements of what one proposes to do tomorrow. That is not because the thing intended is wrong, but because no man knows even whether he will be living tomorrow. James was not considering the things expected to be done as evil in themselves when he wrote his advice in ch. 4: 13 of his epistle.

Verse 2. A man naturally might think well of himself, for a perfectly normal interest would cause him to place a favorable construction upon conditions. But he likely would be the only person having the same view or

at least it could be that way. So it would be the wise thing to wait until someone else spoke favorably of him and then he would know that at least two people agreed on the case.

Verse 3. *Heavy* and *weighty* may be used in either a good or bad sense depending on the connection. In this place the physical weight of sand and stones is used to make an impression on the reader. The comparison is to the burdensome effect of a fool's wrath. Since he is not a reasonable person he will continually nag his victim with his *wrath* which means senseless rage.

Verse 4. *Wrath* and *anger* in this passage are both used in a bad sense, but they are milder than some other terms spelled the same. *Envy* is used in the same sense as "jealousy" in most places of the Old Testament, and each of them is used as a definition of the other in Strong's lexicon. The leading idea in them both means to be displeased because someone else is being favored. It could be possible for jealousy to be right for it is said that God is jealous. But the connection in this verse shows Solomon is using the word in a bad sense. If a man is displeased over the fortune of a righteous person, he will not stop short of doing him all the damage he can. That is the reason for the second clause of this verse.

Verse 5. There could be no good reason for hiding genuine love for another, hence this means the case of mere pretended affection. Such will do no one any good for it cannot show him any advice concerning the proper conduct. But open *rebuks* which means correction will benefit one by pointing out the right way.

Verse 6. *Faithful* is from AMAN and the first definition of Strong is, "to build up or support." The general connection shows that *wounds* is used to mean some treatment that would be unpleasant. But coming from a friend it would be helpful though painful, even as a medical treatment might be. The best explanation of the second clause is in the case of Judas and Jesus (Matt. 26: 49, 50).

Verse 7. This describes a condition that is very natural and needs no explanation. The use that is made of it is that when people are not eager for spiritual food it is because they do not feel the need of it. The same thought was in the mind of Jesus when he spoke the wonderful words in Matt. 5: 6.

Verse 8. A bird could have a good reason for leaving her nest and would do so deliberately, but to wander means to leave it through the spirit of unrest or with the disposition to rove about. Such is like a man who departs from his proper course.

Verse 9. *Ointment* and *perfume* have very little if any material value, yet they may have a good effect as a result of the pleasing sensations. Likewise, the cold truth of advice or counsel should be of some benefit, but it will be more so if it is delivered in a *heartly* form; if offered in a "heart-to-heart" conversation.

Verse 10. *Friend* is from a word that means a person attached to another by the ties of association and acts of kindness. *Brother* means one attached mainly by fleshly relationship, but perhaps without any or much sentimental feeling which is sometimes the case with blood kindred. Such a relative might object to being disturbed by listening to a tale of woe concerning his *brother's* misfortune. On the other hand, this *friend*, having been previously disposed along the line of personal favors, would give a listening and sympathizing ear to it. See the comments at ch. 18: 24 on this thought.

Verse 11. A son's father or other instructor is held accountable (whether justly or not) for the conduct of that son. Solomon pleads for the young man to act with wisdom and thus cause rejoicing in the heart of the instructor.

Verse 12. A *prudent* man is one who is watchful as regards his pathway. In the language of Paul (Eph. 5: 15) he will "walk circumspectly" which means to watch his step. Such a person will see the danger ahead and will avoid it. The meaning of *simple* is to be easily misled, and that sort of person will go blindly on into the trap or other danger and will not realize it until it is too late.

Verse 13. This is verbatim the same as ch. 20: 16.

Verse 14. *Blessed* is used in the sense of expressing praise or adoration for another. The *loud voice* of praise roared out the first thing in the morning will be considered rather out of place. It will not be any advantage to the *friend* for the people might suspect some improper coalition between the two parties.

Verse 15. For comments on this verse see those at ch. 19: 13.

Verse 16. The translation of the words and the sentence construction of this verse is rather unusual. It should be noted that the preceding verse is the basis of this. The persistence in and the almost unavoidable nuisance of the woman described is the chief thought in both verses. *Hideth* means to check or hold under in the sense of control, and *ointment* means richness or something else of value, either of a material or moral nature. Hence the verse means that if a man tries to check her (the nagging woman of the preceding verse), he is using his good efforts (his ointment) in vain; he might as well try to stop the wind.

Verse 17. The effectiveness of association is the thought of this verse. If evil results from the wrong kind of companionship (1 Cor. 15: 33), it is no less true that the right kind will have a good effect.

Verse 18. The first clause is similar in thought to 2 Tim. 2: 6. It is all on the principle that the sowing must come before the reaping; labor before rest, and investment before profit. It is likewise expected of a servant that he wait on his master if he expects any reward.

Verse 19. This is practically like v. 17 but with a different illustration. It also adds the suggestion that a man will likely see some of the same qualities in his friend that he offers to him. If a person smiles into a reflector he will behold an image smiling at him.

Verse 20. The evil forces in the universe are never satisfied, neither are the eyes of man. The moral is that it will not stop the demands by merely gratifying them. However, we may have the satisfaction of a clear conscience if we deny to the evil forces what they demand.

Verse 21. Few men can endure praise, but those who can will come out with a stronger character than ever. It will serve as a refining process just as the fining pot separates the dross from the silver and gold.

Verse 22. This is an exceedingly strong illustration to show the stubbornness of a fool in his folly, that he will maintain it in spite of all efforts to drive it from him. To *bray* means to pound and a *pestle* is a hard stick or other instrument by which to do the pounding. A *mortar* is a strong vessel into which to place the thing that is to be pounded. If a fool could be thus

treated, figuratively, it would leave him still a fool.

Verse 23. The point in this verse is simply some advice toward being watchful over one's possessions. It is not enough to be industrious by way of production, but after the goods have been acquired they should be cared for.

Verse 24. Either material or immaterial possessions are subject to decay, therefore the best care should be taken of them. Furthermore, the most proper enjoyment of them should be had while they are still present.

Verse 25. This verse lists some of the productions of nature. They should be considered under the advice of the preceding verses.

Verse 26. These animals furnish clothing in two forms. The hair or wool could be woven into cloth, or the fleece could be cured and worn as a protection.

Verse 27. The goats furnished food for the body through their milk, while the hair could be shorn off and woven into fabrics to be made into garments.

PROVERBS 28

Verse 1. A sense of guilt causes the fear that results in the flight. It is equivalent to acknowledging some sin before any accusation has been made. It is one of the worst forms of panic, and was one of the evils threatened against the disobedience of the Jews (Lev. 26: 17). David wrote about the same subject and ascribed the same state of mind to those who deny the existence of God (Ps. 53: 5).

Verse 2. A prince is a leading person without official authority as a general thing. Such men are brought into prominence by the misdoings of a country. But one man of substantial kind of knowledge will insure the state of a nation.

Verse 3. A gentle shower will moisten the soil and produce food, but a flood will waste the land and leave no crop. This is compared to one poor man's oppressing another. The oppressor will obtain nothing by overpowering another man who has nothing to begin with for there will be nothing but poverty to greet him.

Verse 4. There is much important teaching in this verse and certain principles are set forth that are morally in force at all times and under all conditions and kinds of government. No wicked man is likely to respect the law, hence one such person

will praise another like him. The second clause shows it is the duty of good men not only to keep the law themselves, but to oppose all who disobey it. In other words, no man is a good citizen who is "neutral" when the law is being violated, for all such characters become lawless themselves in the eyes of lawmakers.

Verse 5. *Judgment* is from *MISPHAT* and Strong defines it, "a verdict (favorable or unfavorable) pronounced judicially, especially, a sentence or formal decree." *Understand* means to make a distinction between one thing and another that might appear similar if carelessly considered. The verse means an evil man will not make any distinction between various kinds of verdicts. He will class a just verdict with an unjust one because the former condemns his evil ways.

Verse 6. *Better* is used in the sense of being more desirable or satisfactory and not necessarily better morally. The Bible does not teach that poverty is equivalent to virtue and riches to vice. There are many instances of poor men who are wicked, and we have information of rich persons who were righteous. (Matt. 27: 57.) This verse means a poor man who is righteous is to be preferred before a wicked rich man.

Verse 7. True wisdom is manifested by respect for the law because such a life will develop a young man into a good citizen. But he who associates with lawless characters not only lays himself open to legal punishment, but brings disgrace upon his father who desires his children to be useful members of society.

Verse 8. The definition of Strong for the original of *usury* is, "interest on a debt." In modern usage it is said to mean unlawful interest, but the Bible does not make any such distinction. The connection in each case must determine whether a creditor has oppressed his debtor by the exaction of interest. But if it is so determined in any instance the fact cannot be taken from the definition of the word. In our verse the word is followed by *unjust* gain which is stated as different from usury. The conclusion of Solomon is that if a man accumulates wealth by taking advantage of the poor he will not get to keep it. Instead, it will finally come into possession of some person who will use it in helping the poor.

Verse 9. *Abomination* is from *TOWEBAH* and Strong defines it, "properly something disgusting, i. e., an abhorrence." It is disgusting to God for a man to pray if his life is generally passed in disregard of the law.

Verse 10. This verse considers a man who lays some plot or snare to wean a righteous person from the strait and narrow path. In some moment of carelessness he will become his own victim. As an encouragement to the better class of people they are promised the possession of good things.

Verse 11. Riches are deceptive according to the teaching of Jesus (Matt. 13: 22). A poor man, not being blinded by such deception, is able to point out the mistakes made by the rich man in trying to obtain and keep this world's goods.

Verse 12. *Hidden* is from *CHAPHAS*, which Strong defines, "to seek; causatively to conceal oneself or mask." The verse means that when righteous men are in the lead it brings glory and honor to the land and the people all rejoice. But if the leaders are wicked it causes the others to hide or "run to cover."

Verse 13. *Covereth his sins* means to deny the guilt or at least try to keep it from the knowledge of others. The greatest folly in such procedure is in thinking it is more important that man does not see our sins than it is for God not to see them. However, we know the Bible teaches it is impossible to hide from God. Therefore it is the part of wisdom as well as higher principles for a man to confess his wrongs, then show the sincerity of his confession by forsaking his sinful life. If he will do this he will receive the mercy of the Lord.

Verse 14. *Feareth* is used in the sense of respect, and such an attitude toward the Lord will always bring happiness to a man. To harden the heart means to be stubborn against the Lord, and that kind of a man will come to great loss.

Verse 15. The physical danger threatened by the actions of these vicious beasts illustrates the moral and spiritual effects of a wicked man who has rule over the people.

Verse 16. In contrast with the unwise prince is a man who hates covetousness. The meaning of the verse, then, is that a covetous prince will oppress others in his search for wealth.

because he cannot obtain it by the right treatment of others.

Verse 17. *Violence to the blood* means to be guilty of the blood of an innocent man. *Flee to the pit* is a figure of speech meaning he shall be put out of the way. *Let no man stay him* means no man should protect a man who is guilty of innocent blood.

Verse 18. A part of the definition of *saved* is "to be safe." It is general in its application, applying either to temporal or spiritual things. In reference to business interests if a man follows the rule of justice to all, his affairs will be safe. By the same token if he is *perverse* or stubbornly wavering in his dealings he shall meet with reverses and finally fall.

Verse 19. This is on the principle that there is no profit without investment; no rest without labor, and no harvest without the sowing.

Verse 20. A *faithful* man is one who is true to the rights of others. If he observes this in his search for the good things of life he will succeed. If he is active with only the gaining of wealth in mind, being forgetful of the interests of others, he will be considered unjust and will receive due punishment.

Verse 21. Peter said God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10: 34), and it is therefore Godlike for man not to make any such distinctions. A man who acts upon the consideration of the other man's personality only may be "bought off" by him with a trivial sum, which shows the unsound principles of his conduct in life.

Verse 22. This is practically the same as v. 20 which see.

Verse 23. For comments on this see those at ch. 27: 5, 6.

Verse 24. A destructive man would be regarded with disfavor by everyone. Such is the picture Solomon gives us of a man who thinks lightly of the act of robbing his parents. He is so indifferent and cruel toward them that he will take their possessions from them and then assert that no wrong has been done. Jesus had that kind of a man in mind according to Mark 7: 11, 12.

Verse 25. *Proud* and *trust* are the contrasting words in this verse. The thought is that pride is the cause of a man's distrust in the Lord. Such a character will not be satisfied except by contention with those who do have faith in Him.

Verse 26. This man is the same kind as one who is wise in his own conceit. See the comments at ch. 26: 12.

Verse 27. For the first clause see ch. 19: 17 and the comments thereon. *Hideth his eyes* means one who closes his eyes when in the presence of the poor so as not to see the need which he would know he should relieve.

Verse 28. This verse has exactly the same thoughts as v. 12.

PROVERBS 29

Verse 1. To *harden the neck* is a figurative expression for the act of becoming stubborn against all attempts to correct the erring one. *Without remedy* means there is no hope for a man who will not accept reproof. This serious truth is recorded also in ch. 15: 10 and the same thought is repeated frequently in Solomon's writings.

Verse 2. This verse is a repetition of ch. 28: 12 which was commented upon.

Verse 3. No father will be happy over a foolish son. And no son who is wise will spend his money on evil women.

Verse 4. A wise king will render his verdicts according to justice regardless of all personal interests; in such a manner he will keep his country united and firm. If he accepts *gifts* (bribes) he may appear to be the gainer for a short time, but the people will finally discover his corrupt practices and will revolt.

Verse 5. Flattery is different from just compliments. The former is a favorable comment bestowed on one who may not be worthy of it, and the purpose is to obtain some favor to which the flatterer is not entitled. The latter is a sincere word of encouragement for one who is living a life of genuine endeavor. But it also may happen that a good man will be the object of flattery. When such is the case he is warned that the flatterer is laying a plot to entangle him.

Verse 6. When an evil man does wrong he is not the only one affected; innocent people may be ensnared by it unless they take this warning. A righteous man may well sing and rejoice because he has no reason for being downcast.

Verse 7. The simple meaning of this verse is that a good man will be concerned about the welfare of poor people. A wicked man not only will not give

any help to the unfortunate, but will not take the trouble to learn about his condition.

Verse 8. *Scornful men* are those who mock or belittle the danger of invasion against a city. The wise men of the city will use discretion with the enemy and thus persuade him to retreat.

Verse 9. A foolish man will not appreciate anything that is said to him. It is therefore useless to waste any efforts upon him, for neither serious nor jovial speech will change him.

Verse 10. Murderers do not have any respect for the righteous man but will carry out their plot for blood regardless of his character. *Seek his soul* means to seek that which will be for the welfare of his soul or whole being.

Verse 11. This means the fool blurts out what is in his mind before considering it. The wise man takes time to meditate before speaking. He observes an old saying that says, "Think twice before you speak."

Verse 12. If a ruler judges his servants by everything that is said he will conclude they are all wicked. Jealous men will lie about the servants because they want the position of honor being enjoyed by them.

Verse 13. *Deceitful* is from a Hebrew word that Strong defines, "to crush." It means the man who oppresses the poor; and both classes are dependent on the Lord.

Verse 14. Righteousness is the firmest foundation for a throne. The king who does the right thing by his poor subjects will have their moral support which is more dependable than great armies or other physical forces.

Verse 15. This verse is like a number of others in this book and I request the reader to consult them with the comments offered. (Ch. 13: 24; 19: 18; 22: 15; 23: 13.)

Verse 16. The increase of transgressions keeps pace with that of wicked men. They will flourish for a time but the better class will live to see the wicked fall.

Verse 17. The original for *rest* means settle down in comfort and satisfaction. If the son is corrected he will cease his disorderly conduct.

Verse 18. *Vision* means law or revelation and without it the people would go astray. By that same token they who keep the law shall be happy in the knowledge of having done the right

thing toward their government and its rule of conduct.

Verse 19. This verse states a general rule that might have some exceptions. Some servants are obedient to the instructions of their master, while many others need to be corrected with punishment.

Verse 20. *Hasty* is used in the sense of being rash and unthoughtful. Such a man will not give another the time to offer instruction. That is the reason Solomon regards his case more hopeless than that of a fool.

Verse 21. *Delicately bringeth up* are all from PANAQ, which Strong defines, "to enervate," and that means to treat with too much indulgence. *Son* is from MANOWN, which Strong defines, "a continuator, i. e., heir." The verse means that if a man indulges his servant too much he will spoil him. This will finally encourage him to intrude beyond his proper place in the household, even to the extent of sharing in the estate as if he were a son.

Verse 22. There is no important difference between *angry* and *furios* but they are used for emphasis. The effect of them is also the same in the outcome because when a man *stirs up* strife he transgresses the rights of others.

Verse 23. The best comment I can offer here is that of Jesus in Matt. 23: 12.

Verse 24. A man may truly be said to hate himself when he does that which tends to his own destruction. A partnership with a thief makes one a partaker of his evil deeds, and he also must share in the punishment that will justly come upon him. When he hears curses expressed he will not *bewray* (report) it because he wishes to protect his wicked partner and that makes him likewise guilty of the curses expressed.

Verse 25. *Fear* is defined in the original as meaning either anxiety or reverence depending on the connection in which it is used. But in either sense it is unwise to exercise it on behalf of men. On the other hand it is safe always for one to put his trust in the Lord for he will never be disappointed.

Verse 26. The favor of a human ruler may be of little or no benefit, and at best can pertain to temporal things only. The *judgment* or instructive decisions that will be of lasting benefit to every man must come from the Lord.

Verse 27. "Birds of a feather flock together" is a human saying that is true. It is on that basis that opposites in character dislike each other. No man who is righteous can feel favorably toward a wicked one, and it is a compliment to a just man to be hated by one who is wicked.

PROVERBS 30

Verse 1. As to the identity of *Agur* and some other names mentioned in this and the following chapter, I will quote from Smith's Bible Dictionary: "Who was Agur, and who was Jakeh, are questions which have been often asked and never satisfactorily answered. All that can be said of the first is that he was an unknown Hebrew sage, the son of an equally unknown Jakeh, and that he lived after the time of Hezekiah. Lemuel, like Agur, is unknown." All of the translations I have seen include this and the following chapter in the Book of Proverbs and I am inclined to accept the scholarship of the world on this kind of subject. My comments, therefore, will be on the basis that the chapters are divinely approved. This verse sets out that Agur addressed his collection to certain men named in the verse.

Verse 2. *Brutish* means hungry; hungry for knowledge. Agur is complaining because he does not have the understanding of the ordinary man, as he seems to think.

Verse 3. In this verse Agur explains what it is for which he is hungry; it is to have knowledge of *the holy* by which he means that which is sacred. This kind of longing is to be commended, for it is what Jesus blessed in Matt. 5: 6.

Verse 4. This verse is a series of questions that are easily answered if one is willing to acknowledge the truth of the Bible. All things in the universe were made and are kept by the God of Heaven and his Son, and *his son's name* is Jesus. The verse is a glowing tribute to the greatness of the Almighty.

Verse 5. God's words are *pure* which means they are unmixed with any error. By the use of these words all may be preserved if they will put their trust in Him.

Verse 6. If the words of God are pure it will be impossible to add to them without producing a mixture. And such an action would imply that the word of God needed some human

wisdom to make it perfect which would not be true. Hence the man who did such a thing would make himself guilty of falsehood.

Verse 7. The word for *require* also means "request," and that is the sense in which it is used. Even that is more in the nature of stating his desire, for the thing he will soon mention would not be in the power of Ithiel and Ucal to grant, to whom this desire is addressed.

Verse 8. In this verse Agur specifies the things referred to in the preceding one. In that place he asked only for "two" things while in this he seems to mention more. But the two means the extreme either of which would be dangerous, namely, *poverty* and *riches*. He also wished to receive only the amount of food rightly coming to him or what he actually needed. This is the same thought Jesus had in mind in the passage of Matt. 6: 11 where the original for "daily" means "necessary."

Verse 9. Agur explains why he made the request of the preceding verse. Extreme poverty might tempt him to steal, and too much prosperity would fill him with pride or independence of feeling and make him deny the Lord.

Verse 10. A servant might actually be guilty of some misdeed, yet it would be better for his own master to discover it. There is something in human nature that prompts one to protect his own. A man might secretly know the accusation against his servant is true, yet he would resent any "outside interference."

Verse 11. *Generation* means offspring and the writer is thinking of a group of sons and daughters that did not measure up to the character rightly expected of it. A number of verses will specify some particulars in which the group failed; one was in showing disrespect for parents.

Verse 12. Self-righteousness was the fault of this group. It was similar to being wise in their own conceit, or feeling there was no need for instruction.

Verse 13. This verse describes one group that was tainted with pride or self-esteem. *Eyelids lifted up* refers to a movement of the eyes that indicated an overbearing attitude toward others.

Verse 14. This language is figurative and refers to the vicious treatment of the helpless at the hands of these greedy persons. This eating is considered in the same sense as certain

ones who "devoured widows' houses" in Matt. 23: 14.

Verse 15. *Horseleach* is a short form of leech which means a bloodsucking worm. *Daughters* is an indefinite rendering of a word that has a great variety of meanings. The sense here is that this leech has two of its kind that are always demanding more. While that thought was in the mind of the writer he notified the reader that he would tell him of three or four other things that are never satisfied.

Verse 16. The four things referred to are here named. The grave is mentioned because as long as the world stands there will be dead bodies to bury. The barren womb, unlike the mother of several children, will always be lacking in the thing it desires. The earth in time of drought is behind with its mission of producing plants and hence is in a state of unsatisfied desire. The fire is in this class because a flame is only the result of fuel previously supplied, and the crackling of the flames is a notice that unless more fuel is furnished the flames will die down.

Verse 17. There is no doubt that a child who will look with disrespect upon his parents deserves the severest of punishments. However, there is no reason for making a literal application of this verse. The severe language was used to picture the disgrace that would be deserving of one who thus treated his father and mother.

Verse 18. The wording that goes from 3 to 4 is only a peculiarity of the writer. No definite meaning is dependent on it since he does not always use it (v. 24). *Too* is not in the original and the verse means the things about to be mentioned are most wonderful and far beyond the full realization of the mind of the writer. He does not mean they are matters that cannot be explained at all, but they are so great as to deserve the greatest possible interest and admiration of man.

Verse 19. An eagle seems to be supported by nothing because the specific gravity of air as compared with that of the bird is not apparent, and the action of the earth's gravity in conjunction with the action created by a vacuum was not recognized in that day. The next item is the serpent, which by use of its peculiar bodily surface can cling to a rock as if fastened there by some adhesive. The third item is similar to the first in that it seems to defy the law of grav-

ity. The material composing a ship is heavier than water, hence it would sink were it not for the fact that the water is displaced, apparently, by a volume of air that is lighter than water. And the general comment on the three items is that they are wonderful and worthy of the greatest adoration because of Him who designed it all. The same awe-inspiring interest is expressed for the fourth item of this verse. *The way of a man with a maid*. The most popular idea formed about this clause is that it means the final intimacy between the sexes, but that is a great mistake. The last word is from *ALMAH*, which is used only 7 times in the Hebrew Old Testament. It is never used for a married woman, although the intimacy between a married couple would be just as "wonderful" as any were that the meaning of the writer. *Way* is from *DEREK* and the part of Strong's definition that applies here is, "a course of life or mode of action," and clearly does not refer to some specific act. All that the writer has in mind, therefore, takes place while the female is a virgin, and before the consummation of the intimacy toward which this "mode of action" was tending. Another way to express it is that it refers to the courtship of an ardent lover in trying to win the affections of the girl of his choice. A very beautiful picture of this may be seen in the long courtship and waiting time between Jacob and Rachel in Gen. 29. Let the reader consult that place and the comments offered thereon in the first volume of this COMMENTARY.

Verse 20. *Eateth*, etc., is used figuratively, because such indulgence is not connected with an adulterous woman any more than another. The idea is she gratifies herself as casually as if she were partaking of a common meal. A person eats and cleanses his mouth and it is all over with nothing to be concerned about afterward. This illustrates an adulterous woman; not one who has been seduced on an occasion and yielded to the temptation.

Verse 21. The writer gives us some more threes and fours for observation. See the comments at v. 18 on this form of speech.

Verse 22. Men experienced in the doings of public works tell us that a secondary foreman, one selected from the rank and file of employees, is more unreasonable than a regular overseer. It is on this principle that a servant

raised to the position of ruler will cause an unsatisfactory state of affairs. The overfed fool is like this servant in that he has been given an unusual treat or favor for which his experience has not fitted him and he thus conducts himself foolishly.

Verse 23. This is somewhat along the same line as the preceding verse. *Odious* means hateful and such a woman would certainly cause much unquietness. The second clause is similar in thought to the preceding verse. For a specific instance of this relationship of maid and mistress see the case of Hagar and Sarah in Gen. 16: 4.

Verse 24. In this verse the writer says nothing about "three" things, which shows it was merely an indifferent form of speech. In the sets of numerals now before us the purpose is to emphasize the success of small things when they use their opportunities according to wisdom.

Verse 25. For comments on this verse see those at ch. 6: 6.

Verse 26. Another name for *coney* is rockbadger. Smith's Bible Dictionary says its habit is to live in groups, "living in the caves and clefts of the rocks." *Feeble* is from two Hebrew words that mean "not powerful." The thought is that in spite of their physical weakness they are rugged in their manner of life and seek the crevices of the rocks for homes.

Verse 27. The point in this verse is one of cooperation. By mutual interest these insects proceed *by bands*, which is rendered "gathered together" in the margin of the Bible. They act on the principle "in union there is strength, in division there is weakness," which is an old and very true saying.

Verse 28. *Spider* is from a word that should have been translated "lizard." The technical meaning of the word is "that which clings to the ground." By its peculiar mode of life the lizard can creep unobserved into the very precincts of palaces.

Verse 29. The sets of threes and fours which follow point out the independence of certain beasts and human creatures.

Verse 30. The lion has been termed the "king of the jungle" because of his strength and activity. The reason man can tame or subdue this wild animal is in the fact of his superior intelligence.

Verse 31. *Greyhound* is from two

Hebrew words each of which simply means a swift runner, hence the marginal rendering gives us the horse. Any creature that is so formed that it can make speed and thus elude his pursuers would answer the thought of the writer. For this reason the he goat is included because of his independence in moving about at will. A king is mentioned because he has large forces to back up his authority thereby checking all attempts at rebellion.

Verse 32. This verse is some advice for those who had thought of opposing the forces described in the preceding verses. They are counseled to cease all boasting.

Verse 33. The circumstance of producing butter and blood by certain actions is used for an illustration. It is compared with the production of strife which is accomplished by certain activities also; that of wrath, which is temper in action.

PROVERBS 31

Verse 1. See the comments on v. 1 of the preceding chapter as to the identity and importance of *Lemuel*. The wise advice of a mother to her son would be very appropriate in a document devoted to the "wisest monarch of Israel."

Verse 2. *Lemuel's* mother had made some vows concerning her son (not recorded for us), and she is now asking him to listen as she speaks. The use of *what* is a peculiar form of speech telling him to heed her words.

Verse 3. The original for *strength* has a wide range of meanings. If a man spends his money on evil women he not only wastes the money, but loses in the strength of his body and his morals. A man owes a duty to his country as well as to himself; therefore he should not conduct himself in such a way as to endanger the throne by encouraging some form of rebellion.

Verse 4. On the difference between *wine* and *strong drink* see the comments at ch. 20: 1. This advice was offered to *Lemuel* because he was a king. (V. 1.)

Verse 5. Kings need always to be in their best frame of mind because of the responsibility of their position. However, they cannot be thus minded if they indulge in the use of liquors as a beverage.

Verse 6. *Strong drink* is a greater stimulant than *wine* (see comments

at ch. 20: 1), hence it is recommended as medicine in emergencies. *Wine* is mild and recommended as a cheering treatment for those who are in deep, bitter distress. This, however, would be different from drinking it just as a gratification for a dissipating habit such as is disapproved for kings in v. 4.

Verse 7. See the comments on the preceding verse.

Verse 8. *Dumb* is figurative and means that those who are about to be deprived of the right to plead their cause would be about as unfortunate as if they were dumb. Someone should speak for them and Lemuel is advised to do so.

Verse 9. Being a king in some sense not made known to us, Lemuel could take an official hand in seeing the poor and needy get their just deserts.

Verse 10. *Virtuous* is from a Hebrew word that means to be wise, able, and industrious. *Find* is from *MATS* and part of Strong's definition is "to acquire." *Who* is defined also by "whoever" in Strong's lexicon. It is as if the writer said, "Whoever finds or acquires an able and industrious wife has found something worth more than rubies." In Gen. 2: 18 God said it was not good for the man to be alone and that an "help meet" (suitable helper) would be provided for him. That was done, and the present chapter is one of the most excellent passages, describing the kind of companion God intended a woman to be for her husband.

Verse 11. *Need* means "lack" and *spoil* means booty or necessities of life. The verse means that such a wife will save her husband's earnings and not waste them.

Verse 12. Because of her thrifty habits she will be a benefit to her husband and as long as she lives, helping him meet the obligations of life.

Verse 13. This woman is not willing merely to work up the materials that are brought to her, she makes diligent search for them.

Verse 14. This means she does not stop at the most convenient sources for the things she needs for her family. If necessary she will go into distant places for them.

Verse 15. We should not think of this woman as a "hard-working, overburdened" person who is used as a slave. The fact that she has *maidens* at her service disproves such a conclusion. She is the beloved wife of a husband who appreciates her ability

and has provided her with a situation that enables her to do loving and honorable service to her household, day or night as the occasion demands.

Verse 16. Mention of a *field* might suggest the rugged occupation of a farmer which would seem inappropriate for a wife. This conclusion is not necessary, because one need of a field is to produce flax and wool for the spinning machine. Such would be more in the nature of a garden or truck patch and that is a common sight in the activities of the housewives in many communities.

Verse 17. This woman puts a belt around her waist, not for show or ornament, but to assist her in her work for the family. *Strengtheneth her arms* means "to be alert" according to Strong's definition. It means she sees that her arms are ever ready for the performance of ministrations for her loved ones.

Verse 18. In the wisdom of her transactions in dealing with commodities of life she realizes a profit. Her industrious activities keep her busy even into the night.

Verse 19. *Spindle* and *distaff* are parts of a spinning machine that is used in making yarn from flax and wool to be woven into fabrics for clothing.

Verse 20. This godly woman is unselfish and extends her services of mercy beyond the members of her own household.

Verse 21. The woman being considered in this remarkable chapter bravely faces the unpleasant weather to provide the things necessary for her family. By this industrious manner of life she has warm clothing made for all of her household.

Verse 22. *Tapestry* is not in the original as a separate word. Combined with the two words preceding it the original is *MARBAD* and the definition in the lexicon is, "a coverlet," which we understand to be a covering for a bed. *Silk* is from *SHESHIDY*, which Strong defines, "bleached stuff, i. e., white linen." *Purple* is a word referring to the brilliant color of the fabric rather than to the material from which it is woven. The verse means to show a fine taste of this wonderful woman and her interest in trying to please the eye of her husband.

Verse 23. The important cities of ancient times were walled and the entrances to them were through strong

gates that were closed at night. All communications with other cities of a diplomatic nature were conducted at these gates. For this reason it was that it was very significant to be known at those places, especially when one was admitted among the group of elders or seniors of the country. Had a man been connected with a family of questionable character he probably would not have been allowed to sit with these elders.

Verse 24. *Fine linen* is from CADIYN, which Strong defines, "from an unused root meaning to envelop; a wrapper, i. e., a shirt." *Girdles* is another name for belts which were worn as accessories of these wrappers. These garments were not for the use of her family especially, for it says she delivered them to the merchant, which means she put them on the market for a price as an income for the support of her children.

Verse 25. *Clothing* is from LEBUSH and Strong's definition is, "a garment, literal or figurative." *Strength* means security and praise, and *honor* means magnificent beauty. The verse means this good woman is adorned with all these qualities.

Verse 26. A woman who can accomplish the things accredited to this one would certainly be a wise person, and when she would speak it would be with wisdom. Her instructions for the guidance of others would be prompted by kindly motives.

Verse 27. *Bread of idleness* would be that produced by another while she was idling her own time away. She did not do this but rather was busy looking after the welfare of her family and producing bread for them by her own hands.

Verse 28. *Her children* would not be restricted to the offspring of her body, but all who became acquainted with her would regard her as having been a great blessing to the world. *Husband praiseth her* means he acknowledges her to have been a true wife and mother who had devoted her days to the welfare of her loved ones.

Verse 29. It is no great honor to be classed above ordinary people. But this woman is made to appear equal to the best; yea, to be above the best. The ones to which reference is made are those who had done *virtuously* which means they had acted with force and strength of character and in a beneficial manner for others.

Verse 30. *Favor* is used in the sense of outward kindness. Such demonstrations are often on the outside only and are deceitful. *Beauty* is derived from a word that means "to be bright" which is the reason it is here used as something vain. "All is not gold that glitters" is an old saying and similar in thought to the clause now being considered. In contrast with these uncertain and deceptive appearances, the writer mentions a woman who fears the Lord. There is something in the life of such a character that speaks for itself and leaves no doubt in the minds of witnesses, and hence they give her the praise due her as credit for her good deeds.

Verse 31. "Honor to whom honor is due" could properly be applied here. *Give her* is a phrase that is not complete without the word "credit" or its equivalent. The call is made to give this woman credit for the good things she has done with her hands. In other words, since "actions speak louder than words," the works which this woman performed while with the people will speak well for her and entitle her to the commendations of those who knew her and many of whom had profited by the things she did. All people coming and going should be told of the righteousness of this wife.

ECCLESIASTES 1

Verse 1. *Preacher* is the title of this book recognized in the text of the King James translation, which is a meaning of the original word for the title commonly placed at the head of the book. The word "preacher" is from GOMELETH and Strong defines it, "a (female) assembler (i. e., lecturer); abstractly preaching." We should not be confused by the word "female" in the definition, for in grammar that form does not always signify the sex of the person being considered. On this point the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia says, "though feminine in form, it is masculine in meaning." In order to understand many of the statements in this book we need to remember that Solomon is presenting the folly of living for this life of flesh only. He seems to advocate the claims of certain people whom we term materialists who teach that man is wholly mortal and will not exist after this earth life is over. The motive of such a theory is to gratify oneself in the indulgence of fleshly desire. Why not go on and have a good time, they ask, since all will be ended