

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

Commentary by A. R. FAUSSETT

INTRODUCTION

1. The Nature And Use Of Proverbs. — A proverb is a pithy sentence, concisely expressing some well-established truth susceptible of various illustrations and applications. The word is of Latin derivation, literally meaning *for a word, speech, or discourse*; that is, one expression for many. The *Hebrew* word for “proverb” (*mashal*) means a “comparison.” Many suppose it was used, because the form or matter of the proverb, or both, involved the idea of *comparison*. Most of the proverbs are in couplets or triplets, or some modifications of them, the members of which correspond in structure and length, as if arranged to be compared one with another. They illustrate the varieties of parallelism, a distinguishing feature of *Hebrew* poetry. Compare *Introduction* to Poetical Books. Many also clearly involve the idea of comparison in the sentiments expressed (compare ^{<1000>}Proverbs 12:1-10 25:10-15 26:1-9). Sometimes, however, the designed omission of one member of the comparison, exercising the reader’s sagacity or study for its supply, presents the proverb as a “riddle” or “dark saying” (compare ^{<1000>}Proverbs 30:15-33 1:6 ^{<9000>}Psalms 49:4). The sententious form of expression, which thus became a marked feature of the proverbial style, was also adopted for continuous discourse, even when not always preserving traces of comparison, either in form or matter (compare ^{<1000>}Proverbs 1:1-9:18). In ^{<25700>}Ezekiel 17:1 24:3, we find the same word properly translated “parable,” to designate an illustrative discourse. Then the *Greek* translators have used a word, *parabola* (“parable”), which the gospel writers (except John) employ for our Lord’s discourses of the same character, and which also seems to involve the idea of comparison, though that may not be its primary meaning. It might seem, therefore, that the proverbial and parabolic styles of writing were originally and essentially the same. The proverb is a “concentrated parable, and the parable an extension of the proverb by a full illustration.” The proverb is thus the moral or theme of a parable, which sometimes precedes it, as in ^{<10000>}Matthew 19:30 (compare ^{<10000>}Proverbs 20:1); or succeeds it, as in ^{<10000>}Matthew 22:1-16

◀217 Luke 15:1-10. The style being poetical, and adapted to the expression of a high order of poetical sentiment, such as prophecy, we find the same term used to designate such compositions (compare ◀217 Numbers 23:7 ◀310 Micah 2:4 ◀310 Habakkuk 2:6).

Though the *Hebrews* used the same term for proverb and parable, the *Greek* employs two, though the sacred writers have not always appeared to recognize a distinction. The term for proverb is, *paroimia*, which the *Greek* translators employ for the title of this book, evidently with special reference to the later definition of a proverb, as a trite, sententious form of speech, which appears to be the best meaning of the term. John uses the same term to designate our Savior's instructions, in view of their characteristic obscurity (compare ◀165 Proverbs 16:25-29, *Greek*), and even for his illustrative discourses (◀106 Proverbs 10:6), whose sense was not at once obvious to all his hearers. This form of instruction was well adapted to aid the learner. The parallel structure of sentences, the repetition, contrast, or comparison of thought, were all calculated to facilitate the efforts of memory; and precepts of practical wisdom which, extended into logical discourses, might have failed to make abiding impressions by reason of their length or complicated character, were thus compressed into pithy, and, for the most part, very plain statements. Such a mode of instruction has distinguished the written or traditional literature of all nations, and was, and still is, peculiarly current in the East.

In this book, however, we are supplied with a proverbial wisdom commended by the seal of divine inspiration. God has condescended to become our teacher on the practical affairs belonging to all the relations of life. He has adapted His instruction to the plain and unlettered, and presented, in this striking and impressive method, the great principles of duty to Him and to our fellow men. To the prime motive of all right conduct, the fear of God, are added all lawful and subordinate incentives, such as honor, interest, love, fear, and natural affection. Besides the terror excited by an apprehension of God's justly provoked judgments, we are warned against evil-doing by the exhibition of the inevitable temporal results of impiety, injustice, profligacy, idleness, laziness, indolence, drunkenness, and debauchery. To the rewards of true piety which follow in eternity, are promised the peace, security, love, and approbation of the good, and the comforts of a clear conscience, which render this life truly happy.

2. Inspiration And Authorship. — With no important exception, Jewish and Christian writers have received this book as the inspired production of Solomon. It is the first book of the Bible prefaced by the name of the author. The New Testament abounds with citations from the Proverbs. Its

intrinsic excellence commends it to us as the production of a higher authority than the apocryphal writings, such as Wisdom or Ecclesiasticus. Solomon lived five hundred years before the “seven wise men” of Greece, and seven hundred before the age of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. It is thus very evident, whatever theory of his sources of knowledge be adopted, that he did not draw upon any heathen repositories with which we are acquainted. It is far more probable, that by the various migrations, captivities, and dispersions of the Jews, heathen philosophers drew from this inspired fountain many of those streams which continue to refresh mankind amid the otherwise barren and parched deserts of profane literature.

As, however, the Psalms are ascribed to David, because he was the leading author, so the ascription of this book to Solomon is entirely consistent with the titles of the thirtieth and thirty-first chapters, which assign those chapters to Agur and Lemuel respectively. Of these persons we know nothing. This is not the place for discussing the various speculations respecting them. By a slight change of reading some propose to translate ^{<300E>}Proverbs 30:1: “The words of Agur, the son of her who was obeyed Massa,” that is, “the queen of Massa”; and ^{<300E>}Proverbs 31:1: “The words of Lemuel, king of Massa”; but to this the earliest versions are contradictory, and nothing other than the strongest exegetical necessity ought to be allowed to justify a departure from a well-established reading and version when nothing useful to our knowledge is gained. It is better to confess ignorance than indulge in useless conjectures.

It is probable that out of the “three thousand proverbs” (^{<100E>}1 Kings 4:32) which Solomon spoke, he selected and edited ^{<300E>}Proverbs 1:1-24:34 during his life. ^{<300E>}Proverbs 25:1-29:27 were also of his production, and copied out in the days of Hezekiah, by his “men,” perhaps the prophets Isaiah, Hosea, and Micah. Such a work was evidently in the spirit of this pious monarch, who set his heart so fully on a reformation of God’s worship. Learned men have endeavored to establish the theory that Solomon himself was only a collector; or that the other parts of the book, as these chapters, were also selections by later hands; but the reasons adduced to maintain these views have never appeared so satisfactory as to change the usual opinions on the subject, which have the sanction of the most ancient and reliable authorities.

3. Divisions Of The Book. — Such a work is, of course, not susceptible of any logical analysis. There are, however, some well-defined marks of division, so that very generally the book is divided into five or six parts.

1. The first contains nine chapters, in which are discussed and enforced by illustration, admonition, and encouragement the principles and blessings of

wisdom, and the pernicious schemes and practices of sinful persons. These chapters are introductory. With few specimens of the proper proverb, they are distinguished by its conciseness and terseness. The sentences follow very strictly the form of parallelism, and generally of the synonymous species, only forty of the synthetic and four (^{2182}Proverbs 3:32-35) of the antithetic appearing. The style is ornate, the figures bolder and fuller, and the illustrations more striking and extended.

2. The antithetic and synthetic parallelism to the exclusion of the synonymous distinguish ^{2182}Proverbs 10:1-22:16, and the verses are entirely unconnected, each containing a complete sense in itself.
3. ^{2126}Proverbs 22:16-24:34 present a series of admonitions as if addressed to a pupil, and generally each topic occupies two or more verses.
4. ^{2158}Proverbs 25:1-29:27 are entitled to be regarded as a distinct portion, for the reason given above as to its origin. The style is very much mixed; of the peculiarities, compare parts two and three.
5. ^{2181}Proverbs 30:1-33 is peculiar not only for its authorship, but as a specimen of the kind of proverb which has been described as “dark sayings” or “riddles.”
6. To a few pregnant but concise admonitions, suitable for a king, is added a most inimitable portraiture of female character. In both parts five and six the distinctive peculiarity of the original proverbial style gives place to the modifications already mentioned as marking a later composition, though both retain the concise and nervous method of stating truth, equally valuable for its deep impression and permanent retention by the memory.

CHAPTER 1

~~<1000>~~ PROVERBS 1:1-33.

After the title the writer defines the design and nature of the instructions of the book. He paternally invites attention to those instructions and warns his readers against the enticements of the wicked. In a beautiful personification, wisdom is then introduced in a most solemn and impressive manner, publicly inviting men to receive its teachings, warning those who reject, and encouraging those who accept, the proffered instructions.

1-4. (See *Introduction*, Part I).

2. *To know ... instruction* — literally, “for knowing,” that is, such is the design of these writings.

wisdom — or the use of the best means for the best ends, is generally employed in this book for true piety.

instruction — discipline, by which men are trained.

to perceive — literally, “for perceiving,” the design (as above)

understanding — that is, words which enable one to discern good and evil.

3. *To receive ... of wisdom* — For receiving that discipline which *discretion* imparts. The *Hebrew* for “wisdom” differs from that of ~~<1000>~~Proverbs 1:2, and denotes rather discreet counsel. Compare the opposite traits of the fool (~~<1000>~~Proverbs 16:22).

justice ... equity — all the attributes of one upright in all his relations to God and man.

4. *simple* — one easily led to good or evil; so the parallel.

young man — one inexperienced.

subtilty — or prudence (~~<1000>~~Proverbs 3:21 5:21).

discretion — literally, “device,” both qualities, either good or bad, according to their use. Here good, as they imply wariness by which to escape evil and find good.

5, 6. Such writings the wise, who pursue right ends by right means, will value.

learning — not the act, but matter of it.

wise counsels — or the art and principles of governing.

6. *To understand* — so as to ... such will be the result.

interpretation — (Compare *Margin*).

words of the wise — (Compare ^{<1002>}Proverbs 1:2).

dark sayings — (Compare ^{<9001>}Psalm 49:4 ^{<9165>}John 16:25; and see *Introduction*, Part I).

7. *The fear of the Lord* — the principle of true piety (compare ^{<1005>}Proverbs 2:5 14:26,27 ^{<8333>}Job 28:28 ^{<9341>}Psalm 34:11 111:10 ^{<4031>}Acts 9:31).

beginning — first part, foundation.

fools — the stupid and indifferent to God's character and government; hence the wicked.

8. *My son* — This paternal form denotes a tender regard for the reader. Filial sentiments rank next to piety towards God, and ensure most distinguished rewards (compare ^{<1067>}Proverbs 6:20 ^{<9002>}Ephesians 6:2,3).

9. On the figures of ^{<1009>}Proverbs 1:9, compare ^{<0440>}Genesis 41:42 ^{<2110>}Song of Solomon 1:10 4:9.

10-19. A solemn warning against temptation.

entice — literally, “open the way.”

consent ... not — Sin is in consenting or yielding to temptation, not in being tempted.

11-14. Murder and robbery are given as specific illustrations.

lay wait ... lurk privily — express an effort and hope for successful concealment.

swallow ... grave — utterly destroy the victim and traces of the crime (^{<0653>}Numbers 16:33 ^{<9515>}Psalm 55:15). Abundant rewards of villainy are promised as the fruits of this easy and safe course.

15, 16. The society of the wicked (way or path) is dangerous. Avoid the beginnings of sin (^{<1044>}Proverbs 4:14 ^{<9001>}Psalm 1:1 119:101).

17-19. Men warned ought to escape danger as birds instinctively avoid visibly spread nets. But stupid sinners rush to their own ruin (^{<31916>}Psalm 9:16), and, greedy of gain, succeed in the very schemes which destroy them (^{<51001>}1 Timothy 6:10), not only failing to catch others, but procuring their own destruction.

20-33. Some interpreters regard this address as the language of the Son of God under the name of Wisdom (compare ^{<2149>}Luke 11:49). Others think that wisdom, as the divine attribute specially employed in acts of counsel and admonition, is here personified, and represents God. In either case the address is a most solemn and divine admonition, whose matter and spirit are eminently evangelical and impressive (see on ^{<1081>}Proverbs 8:1).

Wisdom — literally, “Wisdoms,” the plural used either because of the unusual sense, or as indicative of the great excellency of wisdom (compare ^{<1081>}Proverbs 9:1).

streets — or most public places, not secretly.

21. The publicity further indicated by terms designating places of most common resort.

22. simple ones — (Compare ^{<1006>}Proverbs 1:4).

simplicity — implying ignorance.

scorners — (^{<1900>}Psalm 1:1) — who despise, as well as reject, truth.

fools — Though a different word is used from that of ^{<1007>}Proverbs 1:7, yet it is of the same meaning.

23. reproof — implying conviction deserving it (compare ^{<6108>}John 16:8, *Margin*).

pour out — abundantly impart.

my spirit — whether of wisdom personified, or of Christ, a divine agent.

24. stretched ... hand — Earnestness, especially in beseeching, is denoted by the figure (compare ^{<8113>}Job 11:13 ^{<9681>}Psalm 68:31 88:9).

25. set at naught — rejected as of no value.

would none of — literally, “were not willing or inclined to it.”

26, 27. In their extreme distress He will not only refuse help, but aggravate it by derision.

27. fear — the object of it.

desolation — literally, “a tumultuous noise,” denoting their utter confusion.

destruction — or calamity (^{<3126>}Proverbs 1:26) compared to a whirlwind, as to fatal rapidity.

distress — (^{<3003>}Psalm 4:1 44:11).

anguish — a state of inextricable oppression, the deepest despair.

28. Now no prayers or most diligent seeking will avail (^{<3187>}Proverbs 8:17).

29, 30. The sinner’s infatuated rejection brings his ruin.

31. *fruit ... way* — result of conduct (^{<2180>}Isaiah 3:10 ^{<3612>}Ezekiel 11:21 ^{<4162>}Romans 6:21 ^{<4017>}Galatians 6:7,8).

be filled — even to repletion (^{<3934>}Psalm 123:4).

32. *turning away* — that is, from the call of ^{<3123>}Proverbs 1:23.

simple — as in ^{<3122>}Proverbs 1:22.

prosperity — quiet, implying indifference.

33. *dwell safely* — literally, “in confidence” (^{<4620>}Deuteronomy 12:10).

be quiet — or at ease, in real prosperity.

from fear — without fear.

CHAPTER 2

PROVERBS 2:1-22.

Men are invited to seek wisdom because it teaches those principles by which they may obtain God's guidance and avoid the society and influence of the wicked, whose pernicious courses are described.

1-5. Diligence in hearing and praying for instruction must be used to secure the great principle of godliness, the fear of God.

hide ... with thee — lay up in store (compare ^{<2004>}Proverbs 7:1).

2. Listen attentively and reflect seriously (^{<2004>}Proverbs 1:24 ^{<4901>}Psalms 130:2).

understanding — right perception of truth.

3. *Yea, if* — literally, “When if,” that is, in such a case.

knowledge — or, “discrimination.”

understanding — as in ^{<2004>}Proverbs 2:2.

4. There must be earnest prayer and effort.

5. *understand* — or, “perceive intelligently.”

find — obtain.

6. *For* — God is ready (^{<5005>}James 1:5 4:8).

out of his mouth — by revelation from Him.

7. *sound wisdom* — literally, “substance,” opposed to what is fictitious. According to the context, this may be assistance, as here corresponding with

buckler — or safety, or wisdom, which procures it (compare ^{<2004>}Proverbs 3:21 8:14 18:1 ^{<8663>}Job 6:13 12:13).

layeth up — provides, ever ready.

8. *keepeth ... way* — God defends the right way, and those in it.

saints — objects of favor (compare ^{<3908>}Psalm 4:3, etc.). He guides and guards them.

9. *Then* — emphatic, in such a case.

righteousness ... path — all parts of duty to God and man.

10, 11. Idea of ^{<3189>}Proverbs 2:9, amplified; on terms, compare ^{<3182>}Proverbs 2:2 and ^{<3184>}Proverbs 2:4.

12-15. *To deliver* — as from great danger (^{<3185>}Proverbs 6:5).

way ... man — (^{<3908>}Psalm 1:1).

froward things — perversity (^{<3184>}Proverbs 6:14 23:23), what is opposed to truth.

13. *paths of uprightness* — or, “plainness.”

walk — habitually act;

14. and that with pleasure, in ignorance of good and pursuit of evil.

frowardness — Not only their own perversity, but that of others is their delight. They love most the worst things.

15. *crooked* — tortuous, unprincipled.

froward — literally, (they) are going back, not only aside from right, but opposite to it.

16-19. Deliverance from another danger.

the strange woman — This term is often used for harlot, or loose woman (^{<3710>}Judges 11:1,2), married (^{<3108>}Proverbs 7:5,19) or not (^{<3110>}1 Kings 11:1), so called, because such were, perhaps at first, foreigners, though “strange” may also denote whatever is opposed to right or proper, as “strange fire” (^{<3488>}Numbers 3:4); “strange incense” (^{<3219>}Exodus 30:9).

flattereth — literally, “smooths.”

her words — (^{<3189>}Psalm 5:9).

17. *guide ... youth* — lawful husband (^{<3488>}Jeremiah 3:4).

covenant ... God — of marriage made in God’s name.

18. *inclineth* — sinks down (compare ^{<3483>}Numbers 13:31).

the dead — or shades of the departed (^{<3880>}Psalm 88:10).

19. that is, such as remain impenitent (compare ^{<391E>}Ecclesiastes 7:26).

paths of life — (^{<391E>}Psalm 16:11), opposed to paths unto the dead.

20. *That ... way of good* — that is, Such is the object of these warnings.

21, 22. (Compare ^{<391E>}Psalm 37:3,9,22,27).

22. *transgressors* — or impious rebels (compare ^{<391E>}Jeremiah 9:2).

rooted out — utterly destroyed, as trees plucked up by the roots.

CHAPTER 3

PROVERBS 3:1-35.

The study of truth commended. God must be feared, honored, and trusted, and filial submission, under chastisement, exhibited. The excellence of wisdom urged and illustrated by its place in the divine counsels. Piety enforced by a contrast of the destiny of the righteous and the wicked.

1. **law** [and] **commandments** — all divine instructions (see on ^{330F}Psalm 119:1 and ^{330F}Psalm 119:4).

let thine heart keep — or sincerely observe (^{304S}Proverbs 4:13 5:2).

2. **length ... life** — often promised as blessings (^{320F}Psalm 21:4 91:16).

peace — includes prosperity (^{303F}Psalm 125:5).

add — abound to thee.

3. **mercy and truth** — God's faithfulness to His promises is often expressed by these terms (^{325F}Psalm 25:10 57:3). As attributes of men, they express integrity in a wide sense (^{306F}Proverbs 16:6 20:28).

bind ... write ... heart — outwardly adorn and inwardly govern motives.

4. **favor** — grace, amiability (^{312F}Proverbs 22:11 ^{395F}Psalm 45:2); united with this,

a good understanding — (Compare *Margin*), a discrimination, which secures success.

in the sight ... man — such as God and man approve.

5. **Trust ... heart** — This is the center and marrow of true wisdom (^{312F}Proverbs 22:19 28:25). The positive duty has its corresponding negation in the admonition against self-confidence.

6. **ways** — (^{300F}Psalm 1:1).

acknowledge — by seeking His wise aid (^{306F}Proverbs 16:3 ^{397F}Psalm 37:5 ^{302S}Jeremiah 9:23,24).

direct — literally, "make plain" (compare ^{382S}Hebrews 12:13).

7. (Compare ^{<3170>}Proverbs 27:2 ^{<5216>}Romans 12:16).

fear ... evil — reverentially regarding His law.

8. *It* — This conduct.

health — (Compare *Margin*).

to thy navel — for all the organs of nourishment.

marrow — (Compare *Margin*).

bones — frame of body. True piety promotes bodily health.

9, 10. (Compare ^{<3112>}Proverbs 11:25 ^{<1239>}Exodus 23:19 ^{<5180>}Deuteronomy 18:4 ^{<3338>}Isaiah 32:8 ^{<4013>}2 Corinthians 9:13).

10. *presses* — or wine fats (^{<2124>}Joel 2:24 3:13).

11, 12. The true intent of afflictions considered; they do not contradict the assertion of the blessed state of the pious (^{<3817>}Job 5:17 ^{<5118>}Hebrews 12:5,6).

12. *he delighteth* — or receiveth as denoting reconciliation regarding the offense which produced chastisement.

13. *findeth* — literally, “reaches,” or “obtains by seeking.”

getteth — literally, “draws out,” as metals by digging.

14, 15. The figure of ^{<3083>}Proverbs 3:13 carried out.

it — that is, wisdom.

merchandise of silver — acquisition by trading.

fine gold — dug gold, solid as a nugget.

15. *rubies* — gems, or pearls.

16, 17. Wisdom personified as bringing the best blessings (compare ^{<4163>}Matthew 6:33 ^{<5008>}1 Timothy 4:8).

17. *Her ways* — such as she directs us to take.

18. Wisdom allegorized as

a tree of life — (^{<4009>}Genesis 2:9 3:22) whose fruit preserves life, gives all that makes living a blessing.

19, 20. The place of wisdom in the economy of creation and providence commends it to men, who, in proportion to their finite powers, may

possess this invaluable attribute, and are thus encouraged by the divine example of its use to seek its possession.

21. *sound wisdom* — (compare ^{<3027>}Proverbs 2:7).

let ... eyes — that is, these words of instruction.

22-24. assign reasons in their value for happiness and ornament, guidance and support in dangers, both when waking and sleeping.

25. *Be not* — or, “You shall not be.”

sudden fear — what causes it (^{<3027>}Proverbs 1:27), any unlooked-for evil (^{<3046>}Psalm 46:3 91:12 ^{<3044>}1 Peter 3:14).

desolation — (^{<3027>}Proverbs 1:27).

26. The reason; such as are objects of God’s favor.

be thy confidence — literally, “in thy confidence,” in the source of thy strength (compare Na 3:9, for the same construction, *Hebrew*).

27, 28. Promptly fulfill all obligations both of justice and charity (compare ^{<3025>}James 2:15,16).

29, 30. Do not abuse confidence and avoid litigation.

31. *oppressor* — or man of mischief. The destiny of successful evildoers warns against desiring their lot (^{<3501>}Psalm 37:1,2,35,36).

32-35. Reasons for the warning.

froward — (^{<3025>}Proverbs 2:15).

secret ... righteous — in their communion (^{<3030>}Amos 3:7).

33. *curse ... wicked* — It abides with them, and will be manifested.

34. The retribution of sinners, as in ^{<3026>}Psalm 18:26.

35. *inherit* — as a portion.

shame — or disgrace, as opposed to honor.

promotion — (Compare *Margin*); as honor for well-doing makes men conspicuous, so fools are signalized by disgrace.

CHAPTER 4

PROVERBS 4:1-27.

To an earnest call for attention to his teachings, the writer adds a commendation of wisdom, preceded and enforced by the counsels of his father and teacher. To this he adds a caution (against the devices of the wicked), and a series of exhortations to docility, integrity, and uprightness.

1, 2. (Compare ^{<3008>}Proverbs 1:8).

to know — in order to know.

doctrine — the matter of learning (^{<3005>}Proverbs 1:5), such as he had received (^{<2884>}Lamentations 3:1).

3. *father's son* — emphatic, a son specially regarded, and so called tender, as an object of special care (compare ^{<3277>}1 Chronicles 22:7 29:1); an idea further expressed by

only beloved — or, “as an only son” (^{<0202>}Genesis 22:2), though he had brothers (see on ^{<3385>}1 Chronicles 3:5).

4. *He taught* — or directed me.

retain — as well as receive.

keep ... and live — observe, that you may live (^{<3002>}Proverbs 7:2).

5. *Get* — as a possession not to be given up.

neither decline — that is, from obeying my word.

6. Not only accept but love wisdom, who will keep thee from evil, and evil from thee.

7. (Compare ^{<1838>}Job 28:28).

getting — or possession; a desire for wisdom is wise.

8. As you highly esteem her, she will raise you to honor.

embrace her — with fond affection.

9. *ornament* — such as the chaplet or wreath of conquerors.

deliver — (Compare ^{<0140>}Genesis 14:20). The allusion to a shield, contained in the *Hebrew*, suggests protection as well as honor (compare ^{<0106>}Proverbs 4:6).

10. (Compare ^{<0106>}Proverbs 2:1 3:2).

11,12. **way of wisdom** — which it prescribes.

led thee — literally, “caused thee to tread,” as a path (^{<0107>}Psalms 107:7).

not be straitened — have ample room (^{<0136>}Psalms 18:36).

13. (Compare ^{<0138>}Proverbs 3:18). The figure of laying hold with the hand suggests earnest effort.

14. (Compare ^{<0101>}Psalms 1:1). Avoid all temptations to the beginning of evil.

16, 17. The reason is found in the character of sinners, whose zeal to do evil is forcibly depicted (^{<0106>}Proverbs 6:4 ^{<0105>}Psalms 36:5). They live by flagrant vices (^{<0113>}Proverbs 1:13). Some prefer to render, “Their bread is wickedness, their drink violence” (compare ^{<0156>}Job 15:16 34:7).

18, 19. As shining light increases from twilight to noonday splendor, so the course of the just increases in purity, but that of the wicked is as thickest darkness, in which one knows not on what he stumbles.

20-22. (Compare ^{<0110>}Proverbs 4:10,13 ^{<0138>}Proverbs 3:8, etc.).

22. **health ... flesh** — by preserving from vices destructive of health.

23. **with all diligence** — or, “above,” or “more than all,” *custody* (compare *Margin*), all that is kept (compare ^{<0107>}Ezekiel 38:7), because the heart is the depository of all wisdom and the source of whatever affects life and character (^{<0125>}Matthew 12:35 15:19).

24. **a froward mouth** — that is, a mouth, or words of ill nature. The *Hebrew* word differs from that used (^{<0115>}Proverbs 2:15 3:32).

perverse — or, “quarreling.”

lips — or, “words.”

25. **Let ... before thee** — that is, pursue a sincere and direct purpose, avoiding temptations.

26. **Ponder** — Consider well; a wise course results from wise forethought.

27. (Compare ^{<3025>}Proverbs 4:25). Avoid all by-paths of evil
(^{<4827>}Deuteronomy 2:27 17:11). A life of integrity requires attention to heart,
speech, eyes, and conduct.

CHAPTER 5

PROVERBS 5:1-23.

A warning against the seductive arts of wicked women, enforced by considering the advantages of chastity, and the miserable end of the wicked.

1. This connection of *wisdom* and *understanding* is frequent (^{<310P>}Proverbs 2:2 3:7); the first denotes the use of wise means for wise ends; the other, the exercise of a proper discrimination in their discovery.

2. *regard* — or, “observe.”

keep — preserve constantly.

3. (Compare ^{<310P>}Proverbs 2:16). Her enticing promises are deceitful.

4. *her end* — literally, “her future,” in sense of reward, what follows (compare ^{<357P>}Psalms 37:37 73:17). Its nature is evinced by the use of figures, opposite those of ^{<310P>}Proverbs 5:3. The physical and moral suffering of the deluded profligate are notoriously terrible.

5. *feet ... , steps* — that is, course of life ends in death.

6. *her ways ... know* — Some prefer, “that she may not ponder the path of life,” etc.; but perhaps a better sense is, “her ways are varied, so as to prevent your knowledge of her true character, and so of true happiness.”

8, 9. Avoid the slightest temptation.

9. *thine honor* — in whatever consisting, strength (^{<310P>}Proverbs 3:13) or wealth.

thy years — by cutting them off in dissipation.

unto the cruel — for such the sensual are apt to become.

10. *wealth* — literally, “strength,” or the result of it.

labors — the fruit of thy painful exertions (^{<37P>}Psalms 127:2). There may be a reference to slavery, a commuted punishment for death due the adulterer (^{<1522>}Deuteronomy 22:22).

11. *at the last* — the end, or reward (compare ^{<310P>}Proverbs 5:4).

mourn — roar in pain.

flesh and ... body — the whole person under incurable disease.

12-14. The ruined sinner vainly laments his neglect of warning and his sad fate in being brought to public disgrace.

14. evil — for affliction, as in ^{<0180>}Genesis 19:20 49:15.

15-20. By figures, in which *well*, *cistern*, and *fountain* (^{<0165>}Proverbs 5:15,18) represent the wife, and *rivers of waters* (^{<0166>}Proverbs 5:16) the children, men are exhorted to constancy and satisfaction in lawful conjugal enjoyments. In ^{<0166>}Proverbs 5:16, *fountains* (in the plural) rather denote the produce or waters of a spring, literally, “what is from a spring,” and corresponds with “rivers of waters.”

17. only thine own — harlots’ children have no known father.

18. wife ... youth — married in youth.

19. loving ... roe — other figures for a wife from the well-known beauty of these animals.

breasts — (Compare ^{<0113>}Song of Solomon 1:13 ^{<0208>}Ezekiel 23:3,8).

ravished — literally, “intoxicated,” that is, fully satisfied.

21. The reason, God’s eye is on you,

22, 23. and He will cause sin to bring its punishment.

23. without instruction — literally, “in want of instruction,” having refused it (compare ^{<0138>}Job 13:18 ^{<0124>}Hebrews 11:24).

go astray — literally, “be drunken.” The word “ravished” (^{<0169>}Proverbs 5:19) here denotes fullness of punishment.

CHAPTER 6

PROVERBS 6:1-35.

After admonitions against suretyship and sloth (compare ^{<306>}Proverbs 6:6-8), the character and fate of the wicked generally are set forth, and the writer (^{<306>}Proverbs 6:20-35) resumes the warnings against incontinence, pointing out its certain and terrible results. This train of thought seems to intimate the kindred of these vices.

1,2. *if* — The condition extends through both verses.

be surety — art pledged.

stricken ... hand — bargained (compare ^{<377>}Job 17:3).

with a stranger — that is, for a friend (compare ^{<315>}Proverbs 11:15 17:18).

3. *come ... friend* — in his power.

humble ... sure thy friend — urge as a suppliant; that is, induce the friend to provide otherwise for his debt, or secure the surety.

4, 5. The danger requires promptness.

6-8. The improvident sluggards usually want sureties. Hence, such are advised to industry by the ant's example.

9, 10. Their conduct graphically described;

11. and the fruits of their self-indulgence and indolence presented.

as ... travellerh — literally, "one who walks backwards and forwards," that is, a highwayman.

armed man — that is, one prepared to destroy.

12. *A naughty person* — literally, "A man of Belial," or of worthlessness, that is, for good, and so depraved, or wicked (compare ^{<125>}1 Samuel 25:25 30:22, etc.). Idleness and vice are allied. Though indolent in acts, he actively and habitually (*walketh*) is ill-natured in speech (^{<104>}Proverbs 4:24).

13, 14. If, for fear of detection, he does not speak, he uses signs to carry on his intrigues. These signs are still so used in the East.

14. *Frowardness* — as in ^{<1014>}Proverbs 2:14.

deviseth — literally, “constructs, as an artisan.”

mischief — evil to others.

discord — especially litigation. Cunning is the talent of the weak and lazy.

15. *Suddenness* aggravates evil (compare ^{<1011>}Proverbs 6:11 ^{<1201>}Proverbs 29:1).

calamity — literally, “a crushing weight.”

broken — shattered as a potter’s vessel; utterly destroyed (^{<1409>}Psalms 2:9).

16-19. *six ... seven* — a mode of speaking to arrest attention (^{<1215>}Proverbs 30:15,18 ^{<1059>}Job 5:19).

17. *proud look* — literally, “eyes of loftiness” (^{<1406>}Psalms 131:1). Eyes, tongue, etc., for persons.

19. *speaketh* — literally, “breathes out,” habitually speaks (^{<1272>}Psalms 27:12 ^{<1401>}Acts 9:1).

20-23. (Compare ^{<1008>}Proverbs 1:8 3:3, etc.).

22. *it* — (compare ^{<1023>}Proverbs 6:23); denotes the instruction of parents (^{<1019>}Proverbs 6:20), to which all the qualities of a safe guide and guard and ready teacher are ascribed. It prevents the ingress of evil by supplying good thoughts, even in dreams (^{<1023>}Proverbs 3:21-23 ^{<1409>}Psalms 19:9 ^{<1019>}2 Peter 1:19).

23. *reproofs* — (^{<1023>}Proverbs 1:23) the convictions of error produced by instruction.

24. A specimen of its benefit. By appreciating truth, men are not affected by lying flattery.

25. One of the cautions of this instruction, avoid alluring beauty.

take — or, “ensnare.”

eyelids — By painting the lashes, women enhanced beauty.

26. The supplied words give a better sense than the old version: “The price of a whore is a piece of bread.”

adulteress — (Compare *Margin*), which the parallel and context (^{<1029>}Proverbs 6:29-35) sustain. Of similar results of this sin, compare ^{<1019>}Proverbs 5:9-12.

will hunt — alluding to the snares spread by harlots (compare ^{<3076>}Proverbs 7:6-8).

precious life — more valuable than all else.

27-29. The guilt and danger most obvious.

30, 31. Such a thief is pitied, though heavily punished.

31. sevenfold — (compare ^{<0220E>}Exodus 22:1-4), for many, ample (compare ^{<0084>}Genesis 4:24 ^{<0820>}Matthew 18:21), even if all his wealth is taken.

32. lacketh understanding — or, “heart”; destitute of moral principle and prudence.

33. dishonor — or, “shame,” as well as hurt of body (^{<3085>}Proverbs 3:35).

reproach ... away — No restitution will suffice;

34, 35. nor any terms of reconciliation be admitted.

regard — or, “accept” any ransom.

CHAPTER 7

PROVERBS 7:1-27.

The subject continued, by a delineation of the arts of strange women, as a caution to the unwary.

1-4. Similar calls (^{<3100F>}Proverbs 3:1-3 4:10, etc.).

2. *apple ... eye* — pupil of eye, a custody (^{<3102S>}Proverbs 4:23) of special value.

3. *Bind ... fingers* — as inscriptions on rings.

5. The design of the teaching (compare ^{<3106>}Proverbs 2:16 6:24).

6. *For* — or, “Since,” introducing an example to illustrate the warning, which, whether a narrative or a parable, is equally pertinent.

window — or, “opening”

looked — literally, “watched earnestly” (^{<3108S>}Judges 5:28).

casement — or, “lattice.”

7. *simple* — as in ^{<3100F>}Proverbs 1:4.

void of, etc. — (Compare ^{<3102>}Proverbs 6:32).

8. *her corner* — where she was usually found.

went ... house — implying, perhaps, confidence in himself by his manner, as denoted in the word

went — literally, “tread pompously.”

9. The time, twilight, ending in darkness.

black ... night — literally, “pupil,” or, “eye,” that is, middle of night.

10. *attire* — that of harlots was sometimes peculiar.

subtile — or, “wary,” “cunning.”

11, 12. *loud* — or, “noisy,” “bustling.”

stubborn — not submissive.

without ... streets, ... corner — (Compare ^{<5153>}1 Timothy 5:13 ^{<5155>}Titus 2:5).

13-15. The preparations for a feast do not necessarily imply peculiar religious professions. The offerer retained part of the victim for a feast (^{<5157>}Leviticus 3:9, etc.). This feast she professes was prepared for him whom she boldly addresses as one sought specially to partake of it.

16, 17. my bed — or, “couch,” adorned in the costliest manner.

17. bed — a place for sleeping.

18-20. There is no fear of discovery.

20. the day appointed — perhaps, literally, “a full moon,” that is, a fortnight’s time (compare ^{<5175>}Proverbs 7:19).

21. caused ... yield — or, “inclines.”

flattering — (Compare ^{<5183>}Proverbs 5:3).

forced him — by persuasion overcoming his scruples.

22. straightway — quickly, either as ignorant of danger, or incapable of resistance.

23. Till — He is now caught (^{<5185>}Proverbs 6:26).

24. The inferential admonition is followed (^{<5187>}Proverbs 7:26,27), by a more general allegation of the evils of this vice.

26, 27. Even the mightiest fail to resist her deathly allurements.

CHAPTER 8

PROVERBS 8:1-36.

Contrasted with sensual allurements are the advantages of divine wisdom, which publicly invites men, offers the best principles of life, and the most valuable benefits resulting from receiving her counsels. Her relation to the divine plans and acts is introduced, as in ^{<1019>}Proverbs 3:19,20, though more fully, to commend her desirableness for men, and the whole is closed by an assurance that those finding her find God's favor, and those neglecting ruin themselves. Many regard the passage as a description of the Son of God by the title, Wisdom, which the older Jews used (and by which He is called in ^{<2149>}Luke 11:49), as ^{<1008>}John 1:1, etc., describes Him by that of *Logos*, the Word. But the passage may be taken as a personification of wisdom: for,

- (1) Though described as with God, wisdom is not asserted to be God.
- (2) The use of personal attributes is equally consistent with a *personification*, as with the description of a real person.
- (3) The personal pronouns used accord with the gender (feminine) of wisdom constantly, and are never changed to that of the person meant, as sometimes occurs in a corresponding use of *spirit*, which is neuter in *Greek*, but to which masculine pronouns are often applied (^{<1304>}John 16:14), when the acts of the Holy Spirit are described.
- (4) Such a personification is agreeable to the style of this book (compare ^{<1029>}Proverbs 1:20 3:16,17 4:8 6:20-22 9:1-4), whereas no prophetic or other allusions to the Savior or the new dispensation are found among the quotations of this book in the New Testament, and unless this be such, none exist.
- (5) Nothing is lost as to the importance of this passage, which still remains a most ornate and also solemn and impressive teaching of inspiration on the value of wisdom.

1-4. The publicity and universality of the call contrast with the secrecy and intrigues of the wicked (^{<1008>}Proverbs 7:8, etc.).

5. *wisdom* — literally, “subtilty” in a good sense, or, “prudence.”

fools — as ^{<1022>}Proverbs 1:22.

6. *excellent things* — or, “plain,” “manifest.”

opening ... things — upright words.

7. *For ... truth* — literally, “My palate shall meditate,” or (as Orientals did) “mutter,” my thoughts expressed only to myself are truth.

wickedness — specially falsehood, as opposed to truth.

8. *in righteousness* — or, “righteous” (³⁹⁰⁸Psalm 9:8:11:7).

froward — literally, “twisted,” or contradictory, that is, to truth.

9. *plain ... understandeth* — easily seen by those who apply their minds.

that find — implying search.

10. *not silver* — preferable to it, so last clause implies comparison.

11. (Compare ³¹⁸⁴Proverbs 3:14,15).

12. *prudence* — as in ³¹⁸⁵Proverbs 8:5. The connection of “wisdom” and “prudence” is that of the dictates of sound wisdom and its application.

find ... inventions — or, “devices,” “discreet ways” (³¹⁰⁰Proverbs 1:4).

13. For such is the effect of the fear of God, by which hatred to evil preserves from it.

froward mouth — or, “speech” (³¹⁰²Proverbs 2:12 6:14).

14. It also gives the elements of good character in counsel.

sound wisdom — (³¹⁰⁷Proverbs 2:7).

I ... strength — or, “As for me, understanding is strength to me,” the source of power (³¹⁹⁶Ecclesiastes 9:16); good judgment gives more efficiency to actions;

15, 16. of which a wisely conducted government is an example.

17. *early* — or, “diligently,” which may include the usual sense of early in life.

18. *durable riches ... righteousness* — Such are the “riches,” enduring sources of happiness in moral possessions (compare ³¹⁸⁶Proverbs 3:16).

19. (Compare ³¹⁸¹Proverbs 8:11,3:16).

20, 21. The courses in which wisdom leads conduct to a true present prosperity (³¹³⁵Proverbs 23:5).

22-31. Strictly, God's attributes are part of Himself. Yet, to the poetical structure of the whole passage, this commendation of wisdom is entirely consonant. In order of time all His attributes are coincident and eternal as Himself. But to set forth the importance of wisdom as devising the products of benevolence and power, it is here assigned a precedence. As it has such in divine, so should it be desired in human, affairs (compare ^{<1089>}Proverbs 3:19).

possessed — or, “created”; in either sense, the idea of precedence.

in the beginning — or simply, “beginning,” in apposition with “me.”

before ... of old — preceding the most ancient deeds.

23. *I was set up* — ordained, or inaugurated (^{<1006>}Psalm 2:6). The other terms carry out the idea of the earliest antiquity, and illustrate it by the details of creation (^{<1034>}Proverbs 8:24-29).

24. *brought forth* — (Compare ^{<1012>}Psalm 90:2).

abounding — or, “laden with water.”

25. *settled* — that is, sunk in foundations.

26. *fields* — or, “out places,” “deserts,” as opposite to (habitable) “world.”

highest part — or, “sum,” all particles together,

27. *when he set ... depth* — marked out the circle, according to the popular idea of the earth, as circular, surrounded by depths on which the visible concave heavens rested.

28. *established ... deep* — that is, so as to sustain the waters above and repress those below the firmament (^{<10007>}Genesis 1:7-11 ^{<13018>}Job 26:8).

29. *commandment* — better, the shore, that is, of the sea.

foundations — figuratively denotes the solid structure (^{<13304>}Job 38:4 ^{<12412>}Psalm 24:2).

30, 31. *one brought up* — an object of special and pleasing regard. The bestowal of wisdom on men is represented by its finding a delightful residence and pleasing God.

32-36. Such an attribute men are urged to seek.

34. *watching ... waiting* — literally, “so as to watch”; wait, denoting a most sedulous attention.

35. (Compare ^{<0133>}Luke 13:23,24).

36. *sinneth ... me* — or better, “missing me,” as opposed to “finding” (^{<0185>}Proverbs 8:35).

love death — act as if they did (compare ^{<0179>}Proverbs 17:9).

CHAPTER 9

PROVERBS 9:1-18.

The commendation of wisdom is continued, under the figure of a liberal host, and its provisions under that of a feast (compare ^{<2146>}Luke 14:16-24). The character of those who are invited is followed by a contrasted description of the rejectors of good counsel; and with the invitations of wisdom are contrasted the allurements of the wicked woman.

1. *house* — (compare ^{<2088>}Proverbs 8:34).

her — or, “its” (the house).

seven pillars — the number seven for many, or a sufficiency (^{<2088>}Proverbs 6:31).

2. *mingled* — to enhance the flavor (^{<2123>}Proverbs 23:30 ^{<2162>}Isaiah 5:22).

furnished — literally, “set out,” “arranged.”

3. *maidens* — servants to invite (compare ^{<2088>}Psalms 68:11 ^{<2309>}Isaiah 40:9).

highest places — ridges of heights, conspicuous places.

4-6. (Compare ^{<2008>}Proverbs 1:4 6:32). Wisdom not only supplies right but forbids wrong principles.

7, 8. *shame* — (Compare ^{<2088>}Proverbs 3:35).

a blot — or, “stain on character.” Both terms denote the evil done by others to one whose faithfulness secures a wise man’s love.

9. The more a wise man learns, the more he loves wisdom.

10. (Compare ^{<2007>}Proverbs 1:7).

of the holy — literally, “holies,” persons or things, or both. This knowledge gives right perception.

11. (Compare ^{<2086>}Proverbs 3:16-18 4:10).

12. You are mainly concerned in your own conduct.

13. *foolish woman* — or literally, “woman of folly,” specially manifested by such as are described.

clamorous — or, “noisy” (^{<31071>}Proverbs 7:11).

knoweth nothing — literally, “knoweth not what,” that is, is right and proper.

14. *on a seat* — literally, “throne,” takes a prominent place, impudently and haughtily.

15, 16. to allure those who are right-minded, and who are addressed as in ^{<31004>}Proverbs 9:4, as

simple — that is, easily led (^{<31004>}Proverbs 1:4) and unsettled, though willing to do right.

17. The language of a proverb, meaning that forbidden delights are sweet and pleasant, as fruits of risk and danger.

18. (Compare ^{<31015>}Proverbs 2:18,19 7:27).

CHAPTER 10

PROVERBS 10:1-32.

Here begins the second part of the book, ^{<1001>}Proverbs 10:1-22:16, which, with the third, ^{<1216>}Proverbs 22:16-25:28, contains series of proverbs whose sense is complete in one or two verses, and which, having no logical connection, admit of no analysis. The parallelisms of ^{<1001>}Proverbs 10:1-15:33 are mostly antithetic; and those of ^{<1061>}Proverbs 16:1-22:16, synthetic. The evidences of art in the structure are very clear, and indicate, probably, a purpose of facilitating the labor of memorizing.

1. *wise* [and] *foolish* — as they follow or reject the precepts of wisdom.

maketh ... father — or, “gladdens a father.”

heaviness — or, “grief.”

2. *Treasures ... nothing* — that is, ill-gotten gains give no true happiness (compare ^{<1047>}Proverbs 4:17 ^{<1059>}Matthew 6:19).

righteousness — especially *beneficence* (^{<1339>}Psalm 112:9).

death — the greatest of all evils.

3. (Compare ^{<1376>}Psalm 37:16-20). The last clause is better: “He will repel the greedy desires of the wicked.”

4. *slack* — literally, “deceitful,” failing of its purpose (compare ^{<1016>}Hosea 7:16).

maketh rich — (compare ^{<1002>}Proverbs 10:22).

5. *son* — as ^{<1008>}Proverbs 1:8,10, and often.

sleepeth — in indolence, and not for rest.

causeth shame — literally, “is base” (compare ^{<1435>}Proverbs 14:35 17:2).

6. *Blessings* — literally, “Praises.” The last clause is better: “The mouth of the wicked covereth (or concealeth) violence (or mischievous devices)” to be executed in due time (^{<1359>}Psalm 5:9 10:7 ^{<1344>}Romans 3:14), and hence has no praises (compare ^{<1001>}Proverbs 10:11).

7. *blessed* — literally, “for a blessing,” or praise.

shall rot — literally, “be worm-eaten,” useless and disgusting.

8. *wise*, etc. — (compare ^{<1018>}Proverbs 9:8,9,16), opposed to

prating fool — or, “fool of lips of wicked language.”

fall — headlong, suddenly.

9. *perverteth his ways* — acts deceitfully.

known — discovered and punished.

10. Two vices contrasted; hypocrisy, or insinuating evil against one (^{<1013>}Proverbs 6:13 ^{<1019>}Psalms 35:19), and rashness of speech. In each case, the results are on the evildoers.

11. *a well* — or, “source” of good to himself and others (^{<1015>}John 7:37,38). On last clause, see on ^{<1016>}Proverbs 10:6.

12. *strifes* — or, “litigations.”

covereth — by forgiveness and forbearance.

13. *In the lips ... found* — hence, not beaten, as the wicked-speaking fool.

void of understanding — (^{<1017>}Proverbs 6:32 7:7).

14. *lay up knowledge* — that is, as treasures for good use.

mouth ... destruction — or, “as to the mouth,” etc., destruction is near; they expose themselves to evil by prating.

15. Both by trusting in “uncertain riches” (^{<1017>}1 Timothy 6:17), or by the evils of poverty (^{<1019>}Proverbs 30:9), men, not fearing God, fall into dangers.

16. The industry of the righteous is alone truly successful, while the earnings of the wicked tempt and lead to sin.

17. *keepeth* — observes (^{<1018>}Proverbs 3:18 4:22).

refuseth — or, “turns from reproof,” which might direct him aright.

18. Both vices must one day be known and punished, and hence their folly.

19. Much speech involves risk of sin; hence the wisdom of restraining the tongue (^{<1011>}Psalms 39:1 ^{<1025>}James 1:26).

20. Right speech is the fruit of a good heart, but the wicked show theirs to be useless.

21. Fools not only fail to benefit others, as do the righteous, but procure their own ruin (compare ^{<3001>}Proverbs 10:11,17 ^{<3006>}Hosea 4:6).

22. *it maketh*, etc. — “it” is emphatic. Riches from God are without the sorrow of ill-gotten wealth (compare ^{<2021>}Ecclesiastes 2:21-23 ^{<5019>}1 Timothy 6:9,10,17).

23. Sin is the pleasure of the wicked; wisdom that of the good.

24. *it* — the very thing. The wicked get dreaded evil; the righteous, desired good.

25. (Compare ^{<3909>}Psalm 1:4 37:9,10,36).

righteous ... foundation — well laid and firm (^{<4024>}Matthew 7:24,25).

26. that is, causes vexation.

27. (Compare ^{<3091>}Proverbs 9:11 ^{<3523>}Psalm 55:23).

28. *gladness* — in confidence of realizing it.

expectation ... perish — in disappointment.

29. *The way*, etc. — that is, God’s providence sustains the righteous and overthrows the wicked (^{<3849>}Hosea 14:9).

30. (Compare ^{<3113>}Proverbs 12:3 ^{<3539>}Psalm 37:9-11 102:28).

earth — or, “land of promise.”

31. *bringeth forth* — literally, “germinates” as a plant.

froward — (Compare ^{<3022>}Proverbs 2:12,14).

cut off — as an unproductive plant.

32. *know* — regard and provide for (^{<3906>}Psalm 1:6).

frowardness — all kinds of deceit and ill-nature. The word is plural.

CHAPTER 11

PROVERBS 11:1-31.

1. (Compare *Margin*). The Hebrews used stones for weights.

just — complete in measure.

2. Self-conceit is unteachable; the humble grow wise (compare ^{<2168>}Proverbs 16:18 18:12).

3. *guide* — to lead, as a shepherd (^{<2107>}Proverbs 6:7 ^{<1982>}Psalms 78:52).

perverseness — ill-nature.

destroy — with violence.

4. (Compare ^{<2102>}Proverbs 10:2).

wrath — that is, of God.

5. *direct* — or, “make plain”; wicked ways are not plain (^{<2137>}Proverbs 13:17).

6. *deliver them* — that is, from evil, which the wicked suffer by their own doings (^{<2152>}Proverbs 5:22 ^{<1916>}Psalms 9:16).

7. *expectation ... perish* — for death cuts short all his plans (^{<2165>}Luke 16:25).

hope of unjust — better, “hope of wealth,” or “power” (compare ^{<2119>}Isaiah 40:29, *Hebrew*). This gives an advance on the sentiment of the first clause. Even hopes of gain die with him.

8. Perhaps the *trouble* prepared by the wicked, and which he inherits (compare ^{<2106>}Proverbs 11:6).

9. (Compare ^{<1956>}Psalms 35:16 ^{<2112>}Daniel 11:32). The just is saved by superior discernment.

10, 11. The last may be a reason for the first. Together, they set forth the relative moral worth of good and bad men.

11. *By the blessing* — implying active benevolence.

12. *despiseth* — or, “reviles,” a course contrasted with the prudent silence of the wise.

holdeth his peace — as if neither hearing nor telling.

13. *tale-bearer* — (Compare *Margin*), one trading as a peddler in scandal, whose propensity to talk leads him to betray confidence.

14. *counsel* — the art of governing (^{<3005>}Proverbs 1:5).

counsellors — literally, “one giving counsel”; the participle used as a collective.

15. (Compare ^{<3005>}Proverbs 6:1).

suretiship — (Compare *Margin*), the actors put for the action, which may be lawfully hated.

16. *retaineth* — or literally, “lay hold of as a support.” Honor is to a feeble woman thus as valuable as riches to men.

17. *merciful* — kind to others; opposed to cruel. Such benefit themselves by doing good to others (compare ^{<3105>}Proverbs 24:5), while the cruel injure themselves as well as others.

flesh — that is, his body, by penuriousness (^{<5022>}Colossians 2:23).

18. *a deceitful work* — or, “wages,” which fail to satisfy, or flee away (^{<3002>}Proverbs 10:2 23:5).

sure reward — or, “gain,” as from trading (^{<3012>}Hosea 10:12 ^{<4008>}Galatians 6:8,9).

19. Inference from ^{<3018>}Proverbs 11:18 (compare ^{<3005>}Proverbs 11:5,6 ^{<3006>}Proverbs 10:16).

20. (Compare ^{<3005>}Proverbs 11:5).

froward — as in ^{<3015>}Proverbs 2:15, opposed to the simplicity and purity of the upright.

in their way — or, “conduct.”

21. The combined power of the wicked cannot free them from just punishment, while the unaided children of the righteous find deliverance by reason of their pious relationship (^{<4925>}Psalm 37:25,26).

22. Jewels were often suspended from the nose (^{<0247>}Genesis 24:47 ^{<2322>}Isaiah 3:21). Thus adorned, a hog disgusts less than a fair and indiscreet woman.

23. (Compare ^{<3008>}Proverbs 10:28).

wrath — is that of God.

24-31. The scope of the whole is a comment on ^{<3012>}Proverbs 11:23. Thus liberality, by God's blessing, secures increase, while penuriousness, instead of expected gain, procures poverty.

25. *liberal soul* — (Compare *Margin*).

made fat — prospers (^{<3185>}Proverbs 28:25 ^{<6325>}Deuteronomy 32:15 ^{<4168>}Luke 6:38).

watereth ... watered — a common figure for blessing.

26. Another example of the truth of ^{<3012>}Proverbs 11:23; the miser loses reputation, though he saves corn.

selleth it — that is at a fair price.

27. *good* [and] *mischief* — that is, of others.

procureth ... seeketh — implying success.

28. (Compare ^{<3015>}Proverbs 10:15 ^{<9006>}Psalms 49:6 ^{<5067>}1 Timothy 6:17).

righteous ... branch — (^{<5008>}Psalms 1:3 ^{<2478>}Jeremiah 17:8).

29. *troubleth* — as ^{<3157>}Proverbs 15:27 explains, by greediness for gain (compare ^{<3117>}Proverbs 11:17).

inherit ... wind — Even successful, his gains are of no real value. So the fool, thus acting, either comes to poverty, or heaps up for others.

30. *a tree of life* — Blessings to others proceed from the works of the righteous (^{<3188>}Proverbs 3:18).

winneth souls — (Compare *Margin*) to do them good as opposed to ^{<3025>}Proverbs 6:25 ^{<2438>}Ezekiel 13:18 (compare ^{<4150>}Luke 5:10).

31. *Behold* — Thus calling attention to the illustrations (compare ^{<3012>}Proverbs 11:23), the sentiment of which is confirmed even in time, not excluding future rewards and punishments.

CHAPTER 12

PROVERBS 12:1-28.

1. *loveth knowledge* — as the fruit of instruction or training (^{<2002>}Proverbs 1:2).

hateth reproof — (^{<2007>}Proverbs 10:17).

brutish — stupid, regardless of his own welfare (^{<990>}Psalms 49:10 73:22).

3. Wickedness cannot give permanent prosperity.

root ... not be moved — firm as a flourishing tree — (^{<3003>}Psalms 1:3 15:5 ^{<3173>}Jeremiah 17:8).

4. *A virtuous woman* — in the wide sense of well-disposed to all moral duties (^{<3110>}Proverbs 31:10).

maketh ashamed — that is, by misconduct.

rotteness — an incurable evil.

5. *thoughts* — or, “purposes.”

are right — literally, “are judgment,” that is, true decisions.

counsels — (Compare ^{<3114>}Proverbs 11:14).

deceit — contrary to truth and honesty.

6. *The words* — or, “expressed designs” of the wicked are for evil purposes.

the mouth — or, “words” of the righteous delivering instead of ensnaring men.

7. Such conduct brings a proper return, by the destruction of the wicked and well-being of the righteous and his family.

8. *despised* — as opposed to *commended* (^{<3112>}Proverbs 11:12).

perverse heart — or, “wicked principles,” as opposed to one of wisdom.

9. *despised* — held in little repute, obscure (^{<9823>}1 Samuel 18:23 ^{<2185>}Isaiah 3:5).

hath a servant — implying some means of honest living.

honoureth himself — is self-conceited.

10. *regardeth* — literally, “knoweth” (^{<3900>}Psalm 1:6).

mercies ... cruel — as acts of compassion ungraciously rendered to the needy. The righteous more regards a beast than the wicked a man.

11. The idler’s fate is the result of indolence and want of principle (^{<2062>}Proverbs 6:32 7:7).

12. *the wicked ... evil* — They love the crafty arts of deception.

the root ... fruit — their own resources supply them; or, it may be rendered: “He (God) giveth, or, sets (^{<3172>}Ezekiel 17:22) the root of the righteous,” and hence it is firm: or, the verb is impersonal; “As to the root ... it is firm” (^{<3179>}Proverbs 17:19).

13, 14. *The wicked is snared*, etc. — The sentiment expanded. While the wicked, such as liars, flatterers, etc., fall by their own words, the righteous are unhurt. Their good conduct makes friends, and God rewards them.

15. *The way ... eyes* — The fool is self-conceited (compare ^{<3100>}Proverbs 12:1 1:32 10:17 ^{<3187>}James 3:17).

16. *prudent ... shame* — He is slow to denounce his insulters (^{<3019>}James 1:19).

18. *speaketh* — literally, “speaketh hastily,” or indiscreetly (^{<3963>}Psalm 106:33), as an angry man retorts harsh and provoking invectives.

tongue ... health — by soothing and gentle language.

19. Words of truth are consistent, and stand all tests, while lies are soon discovered and exposed.

20. *that imagine* — or, “plan” (^{<3189>}Proverbs 3:29). They design a deceitful course, to which, with all its evils and dangers to others and themselves, the happiness of peace-makers is opposed (compare ^{<3189>}Matthew 5:9 ^{<3128>}Romans 12:18).

21. *no evil* — (as in ^{<3910>}Psalm 91:10), under God’s wise limitations (^{<3188>}Romans 8:28).

mischief — as penal evil.

22. *deal truly* — or, “faithfully,” that is, according to promises (compare ^{<3121>}John 3:21).

23. **concealeth** — by his modesty (^{<1004>}Proverbs 10:14 11:13).

heart ... proclaimeth — as his lips speak his thoughts (compare ^{<2108>}Ecclesiastes 10:3).

24. **slothful** — (Compare *Margin*), so called because he fails to meet his promises.

under tribute — not denoting legal taxes, but the obligation of dependence.

25. **a good word** — one of comfort.

26. **more excellent** — (Compare *Margin*); or, “more successful,” while the wicked fail; or, we may read it: “The righteous guides his friend, but,” etc., that is, The ability of the righteous to aid others is contrasted with the ruin to which the way of the wicked leads themselves.

27. (Compare ^{<3124>}Proverbs 12:24).

took in hunting — or, “his venison.” He does not improve his advantages.

the substance ... precious — or, “the wealth of a man of honor is being diligent,” or “diligence.”

precious — literally, “honor” (^{<2101>}Ecclesiastes 10:1).

28. (Compare ^{<3088>}Proverbs 8:8,20, etc.). A sentiment often stated; here first affirmatively, then negatively.

CHAPTER 13

PROVERBS 13:1-25.

1. (Compare ^{<3161>}Proverbs 6:1-5 10:1,17).

2. *shall eat* — that is, obtain (^{<3124>}Proverbs 12:14).

transgressors — as in ^{<3122>}Proverbs 2:22.

violence — or, “mischief” to themselves.

3. *He ... mouth ... life* — because evil speeches may provoke violence from others.

he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction — On last clause, compare ^{<3104>}Proverbs 10:14.

4. (Compare ^{<3121>}Proverbs 12:11,27).

5. *loathsome ... shame* — better, causeth shame and reproach (compare ^{<3193>}Proverbs 19:26), by slander, etc., which the righteous hates.

6. A sentiment of frequent recurrence, that piety benefits and sin injures.

7. In opposite ways men act hypocritically for gain of honor or wealth.

8. Riches save some from punishment, while others suffer because they will not heed the rebuke of sloth, which makes and keeps them poor.

9. *light ... lamp* — prosperity; the first, the greater, and it

rejoiceth — burns brightly, or continues, while the other, at best small, soon fails.

10. The obstinacy which attends self-conceit, produces contention, which the well-advised, thus evincing modesty, avoid.

11. *by vanity* — or, “nothingness,” that is, which is vain or useless to the public (as card playing or similar vices).

gathereth ... labor — (Compare *Margin*), little by little, laboriously.

12. *desire cometh* — is realized.

a tree of life — or, “cause of happiness.”

13. *the word* — that is, of advice, or, instruction (compare ^{<3027>}Proverbs 10:27 11:31).

14. (Compare ^{<3011>}Proverbs 10:11).

fountain — or, “source of life.”

to depart — (compare ^{<3002>}Proverbs 1:2-4), or, “for departing,” etc., and so gives life.

15. Right perception and action secure good will, while evil ways are difficult as a stony road. The wicked left of God find punishment of sin in sinning.

hard — or, “harsh” (compare *Hebrew*: ^{<1214>}Deuteronomy 21:4 ^{<2455>}Jeremiah 5:15).

16. *dealeth* — acts with foresight.

a fool ... folly — for want of caution.

17. *A wicked* — or, “unfaithful”

messenger falleth into mischief — or, “by mischief,” or “evil,” and so his errand fails. Contrasted is the character of the faithful, whose faithfulness benefits others.

18. (Compare ^{<3007>}Proverbs 10:17 12:1).

19. Self-denial, which fools will not endure, is essential to success.

20. The benefits of good and evil of bad society are contrasted.

21. (Compare ^{<3113>}Proverbs 11:31).

good ... repaid — or, “He (God) will repay good.”

22. *wealth ... just* — While good men’s estates remain in their families, God so orders that the gains of sinners enure to the just (compare ^{<3108>}Proverbs 28:8 ^{<1578>}Psalms 37:18,22,26, etc.).

23. The laboring poor prosper more than those who injudiciously or wickedly strive, by fraud and violence, to supersede the necessity of lawful labor.

24. *spareth* — or, “withholds.”

rod — of correction.

hateth — or, acts as if he hated him (compare ^{<1082>}Proverbs 3:12 8:36).

chasteneth ... betimes — or, “diligently seeks for him all useful discipline.”

25. The comparative temporal prosperity of the righteous and wicked, rather than contentment and discontent, is noted.

CHAPTER 14

PROVERBS 14:1-35.

1. **Every wise**, etc. — literally, “The wisdoms” (compare ^{<2100>}Proverbs 9:1) “of women,” plural, a distributive form of speech.

buildeth ... house — increases wealth, which the foolish, by mismanagement, lessen.

2. **uprightness** — is the fruit of fearing God, as falsehood and ill-nature (^{<2105>}Proverbs 2:15 ^{<2106>}3:32) of despising Him and His law.

3. **rod of pride** — that is, the punishment of pride, which they evince by their words. The words of the wise procure good to them.

4. **crib is clean** — empty; so “cleanness of teeth” denotes want of food (compare ^{<2106>}Amos 4:6). Men get the proper fruit of their doings (^{<2107>}Galatians 6:7).

5. **A faithful witness**, etc. — one tested to be such.

utter lies — or, “breathe out lies” — that is, habitually lies (^{<2108>}Proverbs 6:19; compare ^{<2109>}Acts 9:1). Or the sense is, that habitual truthfulness, or lying, will be evinced in witness-bearing.

6. An humble, teachable spirit succeeds in seeking (^{<2108>}Proverbs 8:9 ^{<2107>}John 7:17 ^{<2105>}James 1:5,6).

7. Avoid the society of those who cannot teach you.

8. Appearances deceive the thoughtless, but the prudent discriminate.

9. **Fools make a mock at sin** — or, “Sin deludes fools.”

righteous ... favor — that is, of God, instead of the punishment of sin.

10. Each one best knows his own sorrows or joys.

11. (Compare ^{<2107>}Proverbs 12:7). The contrast of the whole is enhanced by that of *house* and *tabernacle*, a permanent and a temporary dwelling.

12. **end thereof** — or, “reward,” what results (compare ^{<2108>}Proverbs 5:4).

ways of death — leading to it.

13. The preceding sentiment illustrated by the disappointments of a wicked or untimely joy.

14. *filled ... ways* — receive retribution (³¹⁰³Proverbs 1:31).

a good man ... himself — literally, “is away from such,” will not associate with him.

15. *The simple ... word* — He is credulous, not from love, but heedlessness (³¹³⁶Proverbs 13:16).

16. (Compare ³¹⁰⁷Proverbs 3:7 28:14).

rageth — acts proudly and conceitedly.

17. *He ... angry* — literally, “short of anger” (compare ³¹⁴⁹Proverbs 14:29, opposite idea).

man ... hated — that is, the deliberate evildoer is more hated than the rash.

18. *inherit* — as a portion (compare ³¹⁰⁵Proverbs 3:35).

are crowned — literally, “are surrounded with it,” abound in it.

19. Describes the humbling of the wicked by the punishment their sins incur.

20. This sad but true picture of human nature is not given approvingly, but only as a fact.

21. For such contempt of the poor is contrasted as sinful with the virtuous compassion of the good.

22. As usual, the interrogative negative strengthens the affirmative.

mercy and truth — that is, God’s (⁴⁵⁷⁸Psalms 57:3 61:7).

23. *labor* — painful diligence.

talk ... penury — idle and vain promises and plans.

24. (Compare ³¹⁰⁶Proverbs 3:16).

foolishness ... folly — Folly remains, or produces folly; it has no benefit.

25. *Life* often depends on truth-telling.

a deceitful ... lies — He that breathes out lies is deceit, not to be trusted (³¹⁴⁴Proverbs 14:5).

26. The blessings of piety descend to children (^{<1332>}Proverbs 13:22 20:7
^{<1216>}Exodus 20:6).

27. (Compare ^{<1344>}Proverbs 13:14).

fear of the Lord — or, “law of the wise,” is wisdom (^{<9810>}Psalm 111:10).

28. The teaching of a true political economy.

29. *slow ... understanding* — (Compare ^{<1447>}Proverbs 14:17).

hasty — (Compare ^{<1447>}Proverbs 14:17).

exalteth folly — makes it conspicuous, as if delighting to honor it.

30. *A sound heart* — both literally and figuratively, a source of health; in the latter sense, opposed to the known effect of evil passions on health.

31. *reproacheth his Maker* — who is the God of such, as well as of the rich (^{<1212>}Proverbs 22:2 ^{<3815>}Job 31:15; and specially ^{<1008>}1 Samuel 2:8
^{<4317>}Psalm 113:7).

32. *driven* — thrust out violently (compare ^{<4385>}Psalm 35:5,6).

hath hope — trusteth (^{<1002>}Proverbs 10:2 11:4 ^{<4102>}Psalm 2:12), implying assurance of help.

33. *resteth* — preserved in quietness for use, while fools blazon their folly (^{<1223>}Proverbs 12:23 13:16).

34. *Righteousness* — just principles and actions.

exalteth — raises to honor.

is a reproach — brings on them the ill-will of others (compare ^{<1336>}Proverbs 13:6).

35. *wise* — discreet or prudent.

causeth shame — (^{<1005>}Proverbs 10:5 12:4) acts basely.

CHAPTER 15

PROVERBS 15:1-33.

1. *soft* — tender or gentle.

turneth ... wrath — from any one.

stir up — as a smouldering fire is excited.

2. *useth ... aright* — commends knowledge by its proper use.

poureth out — utters abundantly (^{<31223>}Proverbs 12:23), and so disgusts others.

3. *beholding* — watching (compare ^{<31621>}Proverbs 5:21 ^{<34617>}Psalms 66:7).

4. *A wholesome tongue* — (Compare *Margin*), pacifying and soothing language.

tree of life — (^{<31818>}Proverbs 3:18 11:30).

perverseness therein — cross, ill-natured language.

breach ... spirit — (compare ^{<2614>}Isaiah 65:14, *Hebrew*), grieves, instead of appeasing.

5. (Compare ^{<31013>}Proverbs 4:1 10:17 13:1-18).

is prudent — acts discreetly.

6. *treasure* — implying utility.

trouble — vexation and affliction.

7. (Compare ^{<31013>}Proverbs 10:20,21).

heart ... not so — not right, or vain.

8, 9. *The sacrifice* [and] *prayer* — are acts of worship.

way ... followeth ... righteousness — denote conduct. God's regard for the worship and deeds of the righteous and wicked respectively, so stated in ^{<34617>}Psalms 50:17 ^{<20111>}Isaiah 1:11.

10. (Compare ^{<31017>}Proverbs 10:17).

the way — that in which God would have him to go (^{<2103>}Proverbs 2:13 ^{<4311>}Psalms 119:1).

11. *Hell* — (^{<2160>}Psalms 16:10).

destruction — or, “Abaddon,” the place of the destroyer. All the unseen world is open to God, much more men’s hearts.

12. (Compare ^{<3108>}Proverbs 9:8).

go unto the wise — to be instructed.

13. *maketh ... countenance* — or, “benefits the countenance.”

spirit is broken — and so the countenance is sad.

14. (Compare ^{<3121>}Proverbs 10:21,22). The wise grow wiser, the fools more foolish (^{<1109>}Proverbs 9:9).

15. The state of the heart governs the outward condition.

evil — sad, contrasted with the cheerfulness of a feast.

16. *trouble* — agitation, implying the anxieties and perplexities attending wealth held by worldlings (^{<2168>}Proverbs 16:18 ^{<5106>}1 Timothy 6:6).

17. *dinner* — or, “allowance” (^{<1230>}2 Kings 25:30) —

of herbs — and that the plainest.

and hatred — (compare ^{<1002>}Proverbs 10:12,18).

18. (Compare ^{<1129>}Proverbs 14:29 16:32).

19. The difficulties of the slothful result from want of energy; the righteous find a

plain [and open] *way* — literally, “a highway,” by diligence (^{<1901>}1 Samuel 10:7 ^{<4003>}Psalms 1:3).

20. (Compare ^{<3101>}Proverbs 10:1).

21. *walketh uprightly* — and so finds his joy (^{<3106>}Proverbs 3:6 10:23).

22. *Without counsel* — or, “deliberation,” implying a wise deference to the opinions of the wise and good, contrasted with rashness.

23. Good advice blesses the giver and receiver.

24. (Compare ^{<5102>}Colossians 3:2). Holy purposes prevent sinning, and so its evils.

25. The most desolate who have God's aid have more permanent good than the self-reliant sinner (^{<31022>}Proverbs 2:22 12:7).

border — or, “boundary for possessions” (^{<397854>}Psalms 78:54).

26. *are pleasant words* — that is, pleasing to God (^{<31088>}Proverbs 8:8,9).

27. (Compare ^{<31117>}Proverbs 11:17). Avarice brings trouble to him and his.

hateth gifts — or, “bribes” (^{<10238>}Exodus 23:8 ^{<39555>}Psalms 15:5), and is not avaricious.

28. (Compare ^{<31544>}Proverbs 15:14 ^{<31011>}Proverbs 10:11). Caution is the fruit of wisdom; rashness of folly.

29. *far ... wicked* — in His love and favor (^{<39221>}Psalms 22:11 119:155).

30. *light of the eyes* — (^{<31339>}Proverbs 13:9). What gives light rejoiceth the heart, by relieving from anxiety as to our course; so

good report — or, “doctrine” (^{<2309>}Isaiah 28:9 53:1),

maketh ... fat — or, “gives prosperity” (^{<31083>}Proverbs 3:13-17 9:11). The last clause is illustrated by the first.

31, 32. (Compare ^{<31017>}Proverbs 10:17).

reproof of life — which leads to life.

abideth ... wise — is numbered among them.

32. *refuseth* — or, “neglects,” “passes by” (^{<31025>}Proverbs 1:25 4:15).

despiseth ... soul — so acts as if esteeming its interests of no value.

33. *The fear ... wisdom* — Wisdom instructs in true piety.

before ... humility — (compare ^{<10226>}Luke 24:26 ^{<31011>}1 Peter 1:11); opposite (compare ^{<31068>}Proverbs 16:18).

CHAPTER 16

PROVERBS 16:1-33.

1. *preparations* — schemes.

in man — or literally, “to man,” belonging, or pertaining to him.

the answer ... Lord — The efficient ordering is from God: “Man proposes; God disposes.”

2. *clean* — or, “faultless.”

weigheth — or, “tries,” “judges,” implying that they are faulty
(^{<216>}Proverbs 21:2 24:12).

3. (Compare *Margin*). Rely on God for success to your lawful purposes.

4. *for himself* — “for its answer,” or “purpose,” that is, according to God’s plan; the wicked are for the day of evil (^{<194>}Psalm 49:5 ^{<247>}Jeremiah 17:18); sinning and suffering answer to each other, are indissolubly united.

5. (Compare ^{<318>}Proverbs 3:32).

6. *By mercy and truth* — that is, God’s (^{<350>}Psalm 85:10); He effects the atonement, or covering of sin; and the principles of true piety incline men to depart from evil; or, “mercy” and “truth” may be man’s, indicative of the gracious tempers which work instrumentally in procuring pardon.

purged — expiated (as in ^{<163>}Leviticus 16:33 ^{<270>}Isaiah 27:9, *Hebrew*).

7. Persecutions, of course, excepted.

8. (Compare ^{<316>}Proverbs 15:6,16,17).

9. (Compare ^{<318>}Proverbs 16:3).

directeth — establisheth.

10. The last clause depends on the first, expressing the importance of equity in decisions, so authoritative.

11. *are the Lord’s ... his work* — that is, what He has ordered, and hence should be observed by men.

12. Rulers are rightly expected, by their position, to hate evil; for their power is sustained by righteousness.

13. A specification of the general sentiment of ^{<1162>}Proverbs 16:12.

14. This wrath, so terrible and certain, like *messengers of death* (^{<1125>}1 Kings 2:25), can be appeased by the wise.

15. *light of ... countenance* — favor (^{<1006>}Psalm 4:6).

life — preserves it, or gives blessings which make it valuable.

the latter rain — fell just before harvest and matured the crop; hence specially valuable (^{<1514>}Deuteronomy 11:14).

16. (Compare ^{<1016>}Proverbs 3:16 4:5).

17. *The highway* — A common, plain road represents the habitual course of the righteous in departing from evil.

keepeth — observes.

18, 19. (Compare ^{<1533>}Proverbs 15:33). Haughtiness and pride imply self-confidence which produces carelessness, and hence

a fall — literally, “sliding.”

19. *divide the spoil* — that is, conquer. Avoid the society of the proud (^{<1006>}James 4:6).

20. *handleth a matter* — wisely considers “the word,” that is, of God (compare ^{<1533>}Proverbs 13:13).

trusteth — (Compare ^{<1112>}Psalm 2:12 118:8,9).

21. *wise in heart* — who rightly consider duty.

sweetness of the lips — eloquent discourse, persuades and instructs others.

22. *Understanding* — or, “discretion,” is a constant source of blessing (^{<1534>}Proverbs 13:14), benefiting others; but fools’ best efforts are folly.

23. The heart is the source of wisdom flowing from the mouth.

24. (Compare ^{<1535>}Proverbs 15:26). Gentle, kind words, by soothing the mind, give the body health.

25. (Compare ^{<1412>}Proverbs 14:2).

26. Diligence is a duty due to one’s self, for his wants require labor.

27. *ungodly man* — (Compare ^{<3162>}Proverbs 6:12).

diggeth up evil — labors for it.

in his lips ... fire — His words are calumniating (^{<3016>}James 3:6).

28. (Compare ^{<3164>}Proverbs 6:14 10:31).

whisperer — prater, talebearer (^{<3038>}Proverbs 18:8 26:20).

29. *violent man* — or, “man of mischief” (^{<3183>}Proverbs 3:31).

enticeth — (^{<3110>}Proverbs 1:10).

30. *He shutteth his eyes* — denoting deep thought (^{<3606>}Psalm 64:6).

moving his lips — or, “biting his lips” — a determined purpose (^{<3183>}Proverbs 6:13).

31. (Compare ^{<3119>}Proverbs 20:29).

if — or, which may be supplied properly, or without it the sense is as in ^{<3186>}Proverbs 3:16 4:10, that piety is blessed with long life.

32. (Compare ^{<3149>}Proverbs 14:29).

taketh a city — that is, by fighting.

33. Seemingly the most fortuitous events are ordered by God.

CHAPTER 17

PROVERBS 17:1-28.

1. **sacrifices** — or, “feasts” made with part of them (compare ^{<2074>}Proverbs 7:14 ^{<1808>}Leviticus 2:3 7:31).
with — literally, “of.”
strife — its product, or attendant.
2. (Compare ^{<2045>}Proverbs 14:35).
causeth shame — (^{<2005>}Proverbs 10:5).
shall ... inheritance — that is, share a brother’s part (compare ^{<10704>}Numbers 27:4,7).
3. God only knows, as He tries (^{<19116>}Psalms 12:6 66:10) the heart.
4. Wicked doers and speakers alike delight in calumny.
5. (Compare ^{<2045>}Proverbs 14:31).
glad at calamities — rejoicing in others’ evil. Such are rightly punished by God, who knows their hearts.
6. Prolonged posterity is a blessing, its cutting off a curse (^{<2132>}Proverbs 13:22 ^{<19493>}Psalms 109:13-15), hence children may glory in virtuous ancestry.
7. **Excellent speech** — (Compare *Margin*). Such language as ill suits a fool, as lying (ought to suit) a prince (^{<21622>}Proverbs 16:12,13).
8. One so corrupt as to take a bribe evinces his high estimate of it by subjection to its influence (^{<20816>}Proverbs 18:16 19:6).
9. **seeketh love** — (Compare *Margin*). The contrast is between the peace-maker and tale-bearer.
10. Reproof more affects the wise than severe scourging, fools.
11. Such meet just retribution (^{<10251>}1 Kings 2:25).
a cruel messenger — one to inflict it.
12. They are less rational in anger than wild beasts.

13. (Compare ^{<300F>}Psalm 7:4 35:12).

evil — injury to another (^{<316F>}Proverbs 13:21).

14. *letteth ... water* — as a breach in a dam.

before ... meddled with — before strife has become sharp, or, by an explanation better suiting the figure, before it *rolls on*, or increases.

15. *abomination ... Lord* — as reversing His method of acting (^{<308F>}Proverbs 3:32 12:2).

16. Though wealth cannot buy wisdom for those who do not love it, yet wisdom procures wealth (^{<316F>}Proverbs 3:16 14:24).

17. To the second of these parallel clauses, there is an accession of meaning, that is, that a brother's love is specially seen in adversity.

18. (Compare ^{<306F>}Proverbs 6:1-5 11:15).

in the presence, etc. — that is, he either fails to consult his friend, or to follow his advice.

19. *strife* — contention is, and leads to, sin.

he that exalteth his gate — gratifies a vain love of costly building.

seeketh — or, “findeth,” as if he sought (compare “loveth death,” ^{<308F>}Proverbs 8:36).

20. The second clause advances on the first. The ill-natured fail of good, and the cavilling and fault-finding incur evil.

21. (Compare ^{<316F>}Proverbs 23:24). Different words are rendered by “fool,” both denoting stupidity and impiety.

22. (Compare ^{<308F>}Proverbs 14:30 15:13). The effect of the mind on the body is well known.

medicine — or, “body,” which better corresponds with “bone.”

drieth — as if the marrow were exhausted.

23. *a gift ... bosom* — Money and other valuables were borne in a fold of the garment, called the bosom.

to pervert — that is, by bribery.

24. *Wisdom ... him* — ever an object of regard, while a fool's affections are unsettled.

25. *a grief* — or cross, vexation (compare ³¹⁷²Proverbs 17:21 ³¹⁰³Proverbs 10:1).

26. *Also* — that is, Equally to be avoided are other sins: punishing good subjects, or resisting good rulers.

27, 28. Prudence of speech is commended as is an excellent or calm spirit, not excited to vain conversation.

CHAPTER 18

PROVERBS 18:1-24.

1. **Through desire ... seeketh** — that is, seeks selfish gratification.

intermeddleth ... wisdom — or, “rushes on” (³¹⁷⁴Proverbs 17:14) against all wisdom, or what is valuable (³¹¹⁷Proverbs 2:7).

2. **that his heart ... itself** — that is, takes pleasure in revealing his folly (³¹²³Proverbs 12:23 15:2).

3. So surely are sin and punishment connected (³¹⁶⁴Proverbs 16:4).

wicked, for “wickedness,” answers to

ignominy, or the state of such; and

contempt, the feeling of others to them; and to

reproach, a manifestation of contempt.

4. Wise speech is like an exhaustless stream of benefit.

5. **accept the person** — (Compare ³³³²Psalms 82:2). “It is not good” is to be supplied before “to overthrow.”

6, 7. The quarrelsome bring trouble on themselves. Their rash language ensnares them (³¹¹²Proverbs 6:2).

8. (Compare ³¹⁶³Proverbs 16:28).

as wounds — not sustained by the *Hebrew*; better, as “sweet morsels,” which men gladly swallow.

innermost ... belly — the mind, or heart (compare ³¹¹⁷Proverbs 20:27-30 ³¹²⁴Psalms 22:14).

9. One by failing to get, the other by wasting wealth, grows poor.

waster — literally, “master of washing,” a prodigal.

10. **name of the Lord** — manifested perfections (³³³²Psalms 8:1 20:2), as faithfulness, power, mercy, etc., on which men rely.

is safe — literally, “set on high, out of danger” (³³³²Psalms 18:2 91:4).

11. contrasts with ^{<180F}Proverbs 18:10 (compare ^{<1005}Proverbs 10:15). Such is a vain trust (compare ^{<936}Psalms 73:6).

12. (Compare ^{<1539}Proverbs 15:33 16:18).

13. Hasty speech evinces self-conceit, and ensures shame (^{<1812}Proverbs 26:12).

14. *infirmity* — bodily sickness, or outward evil. The *spirit*, which sustains, being *wounded*, no support is left, except, as implied, in God.

15. (Compare ^{<1005}Proverbs 1:5,15,31).

16. (Compare ^{<1708}Proverbs 17:8,23). Disapproval of the fact stated is implied.

17. One-sided statements are not reliable.

searcheth — thoroughly (^{<1709}Proverbs 17:9,19).

18. *The lot* — whose disposal is of God (^{<1603}Proverbs 16:13), may, properly used, be a right mode of settling disputes.

19. No feuds so difficult of adjustment as those of relatives; hence great care should be used to avoid them.

20. (Compare ^{<1214}Proverbs 12:14 13:2). Men's words are the *fruit*, or, *increase of his lips*, and when good, benefit them.

satisfied with — (Compare ^{<1013}Proverbs 1:31 14:14).

21. *Death and life* — or, the greatest evil and good.

that love it — that is, the tongue, or its use for good or evil.

eat ... fruit — (Compare ^{<1819}Proverbs 18:19 ^{<1019}James 1:19).

22. The old versions supply "good" before the "wife," as the last clause and ^{<1814}Proverbs 19:14 imply (compare ^{<1810}Proverbs 31:10).

23. *the rich ... roughly* — He is tolerated because rich, implying that the estimate of men by wealth is wrong.

24. *A man ... friendly* — better, "A man ... (is) to, or, may triumph (^{<1989}Psalms 108:9), or, shout for joy (^{<1951}Psalms 5:11), that is, may congratulate himself." Indeed, there is a Friend who is better than a brother; such is the "Friend of sinners" [^{<1019}Matthew 11:19 ^{<1734}Luke 7:34], who may have been before the writer's mind.

CHAPTER 19

PROVERBS 19:1-29.

1. (Compare ^{<2186>}Proverbs 28:6). “Rich” for *fool* here. Integrity is better than riches (^{<2156>}Proverbs 15:16,17 16:8).

2. The last illustrates the first clause. Rashness, the result of ignorance, brings trouble.

3. *perverteth ... way* — turns him back from right (^{<2136>}Proverbs 13:6 ^{<3013>}James 1:13); and he blames God for his failures.

4. (Compare ^{<2147>}Proverbs 14:20). Such facts are often adduced with implied disapprobation.

5. Compare ^{<2169>}Proverbs 19:9, where *perish* explains *not escape* here (compare ^{<4809>}Psalms 88:9,10).

8. (Compare *Margin*; ^{<2152>}Proverbs 15:32).

loveth ... soul — or, “himself,” which he evinces by regarding his best interests.

keepeth — or, “regards.”

10. (Compare ^{<2177>}Proverbs 17:7). The fool is incapable of properly using pleasure as knowledge, yet for him to have it is less incongruous than the undue elevation of servants. Let each abide in his calling (^{<4171>}1 Corinthians 7:20).

11. (Compare ^{<2142>}Proverbs 14:29 16:32). This inculcation of a forgiving spirit shows that true religion is always the same (^{<4182>}Matthew 5:22-24).

12. (Compare ^{<2164>}Proverbs 16:14,15 20:2). A motive to submission to lawful authority.

13. *calamity* — literally, “calamities,” varied and many.

continual dropping — a perpetual annoyance, wearing out patience.

14. A contrast of men’s gifts and God’s, who, though author of both blessings, confers the latter by His more special providence.

and — or, “but,” implying that the evils of ^{<3193>}Proverbs 19:13 are only avoided by His care.

15. a deep sleep — a state of utter indifference.

idle soul — or, “person” (compare ^{<3104>}Proverbs 10:4 12:24).

16. (Compare ^{<3107>}Proverbs 10:17 13:13).

despiset ... **ways** — opposed to keeping or observing, neglects (^{<3167>}Proverbs 16:17) (as unworthy of regard) his moral conduct.

17. (Compare ^{<3121>}Proverbs 14:21 ^{<4576>}Psalms 37:26).

hath pity — shown by acts (compare *Margin*).

18. (Compare ^{<3133>}Proverbs 13:24 23:13).

let not ... spare — literally, “do not lift up thy soul” (^{<4246>}Psalms 24:4 25:1), that is, do not desire to his death; a caution to passionate parents against angry chastisement.

19. Repeated efforts of kindness are lost on ill-natured persons.

20. (Compare ^{<3135>}Proverbs 13:18-20).

latter end — (^{<3151>}Proverbs 5:11). In youth prepare for age.

21. (Compare ^{<3161>}Proverbs 16:1,9 ^{<4330>}Psalms 33:10,11). The failure of man’s devices is implied.

22. desire — that is, to do good, indicates a kind disposition (^{<3123>}Proverbs 11:23); and the poor thus affected are better than liars, who say and do not.

23. The fear ... life — (Compare ^{<3182>}Proverbs 3:2).

abide — or, “remain contented” (^{<5008>}1 Timothy 4:8).

not visited with evil — (^{<3108>}Proverbs 10:3 ^{<4575>}Psalms 37:25), as a judgment, in which sense *visit* is often used (^{<4882>}Psalms 89:32 ^{<2165>}Jeremiah 6:15).

24. bosom — literally, a wide dish in which the hand was plunged in eating (^{<4123>}Matthew 26:23). Compare ^{<3185>}Proverbs 26:15, the sentiment expressed with equal irony and less exaggeration.

25. Such is the benefit of reproof; even the simple profit, much more the wise.

26. Unfilial conduct often condemned (^{<3172>}Proverbs 17:21-25 20:20 ^{<6218>}Deuteronomy 21:18,21).

27. Avoid whatever leads from truth.

28. *ungodly witness* — (Compare *Margin*), one false by bad principles (compare ⁴¹⁶²Proverbs 6:12).

scorneth judgment — sets at naught the dictates of justice.

devoureth — literally, “swalloweth,” as something delightful.

29. Their punishment is sure, fixed, and ready (compare ⁴¹⁸⁴Proverbs 3:34 10:13).

CHAPTER 20

PROVERBS 20:1-30.

1. *mockers* — scorner. Such men are made by wine.

strong drink — made by spicing wine (compare ^{<2151>}Isaiah 5:11,22); and it may include wine.

raging — or boisterous as a drunkard.

deceived — literally, “erring,” or reeling.

2. (Compare ^{<2092>}Proverbs 19:12). Men who resist authority injure themselves (^{<5132>}Romans 13:2).

3. *to cease from strife* — or, better, “to dwell from or without strife,” denoting the habit of life.

fool ... meddling — (^{<2074>}Proverbs 17:14).

4. *shall ... beg* — literally, “ask” (in this sense, ^{<1990>}Psalms 109:10).

5. *Counsel ... water* — that is, deeply hidden (^{<2084>}Proverbs 18:4 ^{<1932>}Psalms 13:2). The wise can discern well.

6. Boasters are unreliable.

goodness — or, “kind disposition.”

7. The conduct of good men proclaims their sound principles. God’s covenant and their good example secure blessing to their children (^{<2092>}Proverbs 4:26 ^{<1911>}Psalms 112:1,2).

8. As in ^{<2045>}Proverbs 14:35 16:10,15, this is the character of a good king, not of all kings.

9. The interrogation in the affirmative strengthens the implied negation (compare ^{<1854>}Job 15:14 ^{<2071>}Ecclesiastes 7:20).

10. Various measures, implying that some are wrong (compare ^{<2111>}Proverbs 11:1 16:11).

11. The conduct of children even is the best test of principle (compare ^{<2076>}Matthew 7:16).

12. Hence, of course, God will know all you do (^{<1949>}Psalm 94:9).

13. Activity and diligence contrasted with sloth (^{<1069>}Proverbs 6:9 10:11).

lest ... poverty — literally, “be deprived of inheritance.”

14. *when ... his way* — implying that he goes about boasting of his bargains.

15. The contrast denotes the greater value of knowledge (compare ^{<1084>}Proverbs 3:14-16).

16. *Take his garment* — implies severe exaction, justified by the surety’s rashness.

a strange woman — by some readings “strangers,” but the former here, and in ^{<1073>}Proverbs 27:13, is allowable, and strengthens the sense. The debauchee is less reliable than the merely careless.

17. *Bread ... sweet* — either as unlawfully (^{<1097>}Proverbs 9:17) or easily obtained.

mouth ... gravel — well expresses the pain and grief given at last.

18. (Compare ^{<1522>}Proverbs 15:22). Be careful and considerate in important plans.

19. Those who love to tell news will hardly keep secrets.

flattereth ... lips — (compare *Margin*; ^{<1010>}Proverbs 1:10).

meddle ... him — literally, “join,” or “associate with.”

20. *his lamp* — (Compare ^{<1339>}Proverbs 13:9 24:20).

21. *gotten hastily* — contrary to God’s providence (^{<1090>}Proverbs 28:20), implying its unjust or easy attainment; hence the man is punished, or spends freely what he got easily (compare ^{<1017>}Proverbs 20:17).

22. (Compare ^{<1974>}Psalm 27:14 ^{<527>}Romans 12:17-19).

23. (Compare ^{<1007>}Proverbs 20:10 ^{<1001>}Proverbs 11:1).

24. *Man’s goings* — literally, “Stately steppings of a strong man.”

a man — any common man.

understand — or, “perceive.”

25. *devoureth ... holy* — or, better, “who rashly speaks promises,” or “devotes what is holy,” consecrating any thing. This suits better the last clause, which expresses a similar view of the results of rashly vowing.

26. (Compare ^{<1008>}Proverbs 20:8).

bringeth ... over them — The wheel was used for threshing grain. The figure denotes severity (compare Amos 1:3).

27. *The spirit ... Lord* — Men’s minds are God’s gifts, and thus able to search one another (compare ^{<1005>}Proverbs 20:5 ^{<1008>}Proverbs 18:8,17 ^{<1011>}1 Corinthians 2:11).

28. (Compare ^{<1008>}Proverbs 3:3 16:6,12).

29. *The glory of young men ... the beauty of old men* — Each age has its peculiar excellence (^{<1068>}Proverbs 16:31).

30. *blueness* — literally, “joining,” the process of uniting the edges of a wound throws off purulent matter.

stripes ... belly — So punishment provides healing of soul (^{<1008>}Proverbs 18:8), by deterring from evil courses.

CHAPTER 21

PROVERBS 21:1-31.

1. **rivers** — irrigating channels (^{<490B>}Psalm 1:3), whose course was easily turned (compare ^{<6110>}Deuteronomy 11:10). God disposes even kings as He pleases (^{<2169>}Proverbs 16:9 ^{<4935>}Psalm 33:15).

2. (Compare ^{<2142>}Proverbs 14:2 16:2-25).

3. (Compare ^{<4907>}Psalm 50:7-15 ^{<2111>}Isaiah 1:11,17).

4. **high look** — (Compare *Margin*; ^{<4900>}Psalm 131:1).

proud heart — or, “heart of breadth,” one that is swollen (compare ^{<9A05>}Psalm 101:5).

ploughing — better “lamp,” a frequent figure for prosperity (^{<2107>}Proverbs 20:20); hence joy or delight.

5. The contrast is between steady industry and rashness (compare ^{<2162>}Proverbs 19:2).

6. **The getting** — or, “what is obtained” (compare ^{<8107>}Job 7:2 ^{<2213>}Jeremiah 22:13, *Hebrew*).

vanity ... to and fro — as fleeting as chaff or stubble in the wind (compare ^{<2107>}Proverbs 20:17-21 ^{<4920>}Psalm 62:10). Such gettings are unsatisfactory.

them ... death — act as if they did (^{<2186>}Proverbs 8:36 17:19).

7. **robbery** — or, “destruction,” especially oppression, of which they are authors.

shall destroy — literally, “cut with a saw” (^{<1079>}1 Kings 7:9), that is, utterly ruin them. Their sins shall be visited on them in kind.

to do judgment — what is just and right.

8. **of man** — any one; his way is opposed to truth, and also estranged from it. The pure proves himself such by his right conduct.

9. **corner** — a turret or arbor on the roof.

brawling — or contentious.

wide house — literally, “house of fellowship,” large enough for several families.

10. So strongly does he desire to do evil (^{<4910B>}Psalm 10:3 ^{<2081B>}Ecclesiastes 8:11), that he will not even spare his friend if in his way.

11. (Compare ^{<3192B>}Proverbs 19:25). That which the simple learn by the terrors of punishment, the wise learn by teaching.

12. (Compare ^{<4975B>}Psalm 37:35-38 73:17,20).

house — family or interests.

overthroweth — either supply “God” (compare ^{<3008B>}Proverbs 10:24), or the word is used impersonally.

13. The principles of retribution, often taught (compare ^{<4983B>}Psalm 18:26 ^{<4008B>}Matthew 7:1-12).

14. The effect of bribery (^{<3172B>}Proverbs 17:23) is enhanced by secrecy, as the bribed person does not wish his motives made known.

15. But the just love right and need no bribes. The wicked at last meet destruction, though for a time happy in concealing corruption.

16. **the way of understanding** — (Compare ^{<3126B>}Proverbs 12:26 14:22).

remain — that is, rest as at a journey’s end; death will be his unchanging home.

17. Costly luxuries impoverish.

18. (Compare ^{<3108B>}Proverbs 11:8). By suffering what they had devised for the righteous, or brought on them, the wicked became their ransom, in the usual sense of substitutes (compare ^{<0676B>}Joshua 7:26 ^{<7009B>}Esther 7:9).

19. (Compare ^{<3109B>}Proverbs 21:9).

wilderness — pasture, though uninhabitable ground (^{<4962B>}Psalm 65:12).

20. The wise, by diligence and care, lay up and increase wealth, while fools

spend — literally, “swallow it up,” greedily.

21. He who tries to act justly and kindly (^{<4944B>}Psalm 34:14) will prosper and obtain justice and honor.

22. “Wisdom is better than strength” (^{<2079B>}Ecclesiastes 7:19 9:15).

strength ... thereof — that in which they confide.

23. (Compare ^{<113>}Proverbs 13:2,3 ^{<118>}James 3:6-10).

24. The reproachful name is deserved by those who treat others with anger and contempt.

25. *desire* — that is of ease and idleness brings him to starvation.

26. The sin of covetousness marks the sluggard, as the virtue of benevolence the righteous.

27. God regards the heart, and hypocrisy is more odious than open inconsistency.

wicked mind — or, “design” (^{<100>}Proverbs 1:4).

28. (Compare ^{<115>}Proverbs 19:5).

that heareth — or heeds instruction, and so grows wise.

speaketh constantly — or sincerely (compare ^{<105>}Habakkuk 1:5), and hence is believed (^{<129>}Proverbs 12:19 ^{<119>}James 1:19).

29. *hardeneth his face* — is obstinate.

directeth ... way — considers it, and acts advisedly.

30, 31. Men’s best devices and reliances are vain compared with God’s, or without His aid (^{<132>}Proverbs 19:21 ^{<117>}Psalms 20:7 33:17).

CHAPTER 22

PROVERBS 22:1-29.

1. **A good name** — (^{<1808>}Job 30:8, *Hebrew*); “good” is supplied here from ^{<2008>}Ecclesiastes 7:1.
loving favor — kind regard, that is, of the wise and good.
2. Before God all are on the same footing (^{<2148>}Proverbs 14:31 17:5).
3. **are punished** — that is, for their temerity; for the evil is not necessarily punitive, as the *prudent* might otherwise be its objects.
4. **humility and the fear of the Lord** — are in apposition; one produces the other. On the results, compare ^{<2186>}Proverbs 3:16 8:18.
5. **he that ... them** — Those who properly watch over their own souls are thus preserved from the dangers which attend the way of perverse men (^{<2167>}Proverbs 16:17).
6. **Train** — initiate, or early instruct.
the way — literally, “his way,” that selected for him in which he should go; for early training secures habitual walking in it.
7. The influence of wealth sets aside moral distinctions is implied, and, of course, disapproved (compare ^{<2096>}Proverbs 19:6 21:14, etc.).
8. (Compare ^{<2118>}Proverbs 11:18 ^{<1949>}Psalms 109:16-20 ^{<1807>}Galatians 6:7,8).
the rod ... fail — His power to do evil will be destroyed.
9. **a bountiful eye** — that is, a beneficent disposition.
for he giveth ... poor — His acts prove it.
10. **Cast out** — or drive away. Scorners foster strife by taunts and revilings.
11. (Compare *Margin*).
pureness of heart — and gentle, kind words win favor, even from kings.
12. **preserve** — or guard.

knowledge — its principles and possessors.

overthroweth — utterly confounds and destroys the wicked.

13. Frivolous excuses satisfy the indolent man's conscience.

14. **The mouth** — or flattering speeches (^{<318B>}Proverbs 5:3 7:5) ensnare man, *as pits*, beasts. God makes their own sin their punishment.

15. **is bound** — or firmly fixed. Chastisement deters from crime and so leads to reformation of principle.

16. These two vices pertain to the same selfish feeling. Both are deservedly odious to God and incur punishment.

17. Here begins another division of the book, marked by those encouragements to the pursuit of wisdom, which are found in the earlier chapters. It will be observed that at ^{<322>}Proverbs 22:22-24:12, the proverbs are generally expressed in two verses instead of one (see *Introduction*).

18. These lessons must be laid up in the mind, and

fitted — or better, “fixed” in the lips so as to be ever ready.

19. **That ... Lord** — This is the design of the instruction.

20. **excellent things** — or probably of former times.

counsels and knowledge — both advice and instruction.

21. Specially he desires to secure accuracy, so that his pupil may teach others.

22, 23. Here follow ten precepts of two verses each. Though men fail to defend the poor, God will (^{<317B>}Proverbs 17:5 ^{<312B>}Psalm 12:5).

in the gate — place of public gathering (^{<388A>}Job 5:4 ^{<392>}Psalm 69:12).

24, 25. (Compare ^{<312>}Proverbs 2:12-15 4:14).

25. **a snare ... soul** — The unsuspecting are often misled by bad company.

26, 27. (Compare ^{<318B>}Proverbs 6:1 17:18).

27. **should he take**, etc. — that is, the creditor.

28. (Compare ^{<323>}Proverbs 23:10). Do not entrench on others (^{<354>}Deuteronomy 19:14 27:17).

29. Success rewards diligence (^{<310A>}Proverbs 10:4 21:5).

CHAPTER 23

PROVERBS 23:1-35.

1. Avoid the dangers of gluttony.

2. *put a knife* — an Eastern figure for putting restraint on the appetite.

3. *are deceitful meat* — though well tasted, injurious.

4, 5. (Compare ^{<5409>}1 Timothy 6:9,10).

thine own wisdom — which regards riches intrinsically as a blessing.

5. *Wilt ... eyes* — As the eyes fly after or seek riches, they are not, that is, either become transitory or unsatisfying; fully expressed by their flying away.

6-8. Beware of deceitful men, whose courtesies even you will repent of having accepted.

evil eye — or purpose (^{<3129>}Proverbs 22:9 ^{<6519>}Deuteronomy 15:9 ^{<4163>}Matthew 6:23).

8. *The morsel ... words* — that is, disgusted with his true character, all pleasant intercourse will be destroyed.

9. (Compare ^{<3198>}Proverbs 9:8). “Cast not your pearls before swine” (^{<4106>}Matthew 7:6).

10, 11. (Compare ^{<3122>}Proverbs 22:22,23).

11. *redeemer* — or avenger (^{<0225>}Leviticus 25:25,26 ^{<0652>}Numbers 35:12), hence advocate (^{<3825>}Job 19:25).

plead ... thee — (Compare ^{<3321>}Job 31:21 ^{<6810>}Psalms 35:1 68:5).

12. Here begins another series of precepts.

13, 14. While there is little danger that the use of the “divine ordinance of the rod” will produce bodily harm, there is great hope of spiritual good.

15, 16. The pleasure afforded the teacher by the pupil’s progress is a motive to diligence.

16. *my reins* — (Compare ^{<3009>}Psalm 7:9).

17, 18. (Compare *Margin*). The prosperity of the wicked is short.

18. *an end* — or, “hereafter,” another time, when apparent inequalities shall be adjusted (compare ^{<3028>}Psalm 37:28-38).

19-21. *guide ... way* — or direct thy thoughts to a right course of conduct (compare ^{<3004>}Proverbs 4:4 9:6).

20. *riotous ... flesh* — prodigal, or eating more than necessary. Instead of “their flesh” (compare *Margin*), better, “flesh to them,” that is, used for pleasure.

21. *drowsiness* — the dreamy sleep of the slothful.

22. *Hearken* — that is, obey (^{<3008>}Proverbs 1:8 ^{<3004>}Ephesians 6:1).

despise ... old — Adults revere the parents whom, as children, they once obeyed.

23. *Buy* — literally, “get” (^{<3006>}Proverbs 4:5).

truth — generally and specially as opposed to errors of all kinds.

24, 25. (Compare ^{<3001>}Proverbs 10:1 17:21,25).

26-35. A solemn warning against whoredom and drunkenness (^{<3041>}Hosea 4:11).

give me — This is the address of that divine wisdom so often presented (^{<3001>}Proverbs 8:1 9:3, etc.).

heart — confidence.

observe — keep.

my ways — such as I teach you (^{<3007>}Proverbs 3:17 9:6).

27, 28. *deep ditch* — a narrow pit, out of which it is hard to climb.

lieth in wait — to ensnare men into the pit, as hunters entrap game (compare ^{<3024>}Proverbs 22:14).

28. *increaseth ... transgressors* — (^{<3008>}Proverbs 5:8-10). The vice alluded to is peculiarly hardening to the heart.

29, 30. This picture is often sadly realized now.

mixed wine — (Compare ^{<3001>}Proverbs 9:2 ^{<3051>}Isaiah 5:11).

31. *when ... red* — the color denoting greater strength (compare ^{<0491>}Genesis 49:11 ^{<6324>}Deuteronomy 32:14).

giveth ... cup — literally, “gives its eye,” that is, sparkles.

moveth ... aright — Perhaps its foaming is meant.

32. The acute miseries resulting from drunkenness contrasted with the temptations.

33, 34. The moral effects: it inflames passion (^{<0181>}Genesis 19:31,35), lays open the heart, produces insensibility to the greatest dangers, and debars from reformation, under the severest sufferings.

35. *awake* — that is, from drunkenness (^{<0024>}Genesis 9:24). This is the language rather of acts than of the tongue.

CHAPTER 24

PROVERBS 24:1-34.

1, 2. (Compare ^{<1338>}Proverbs 23:3,17 ^{<1508>}Psalms 37:1).

2. *studieth* — meditateth.

talk ... mischief — Their expressed purposes are to do evil.

3, 4. (Compare ^{<1408>}Proverbs 14:1 ^{<2544>}Isaiah 54:14).

house — including the family.

4. *by knowledge ... riches* — (^{<1088>}Proverbs 8:18 21:20).

5, 6. The general statement (^{<2096>}Ecclesiastes 9:16,18) is specially illustrated (compare ^{<1222>}Proverbs 21:22 ^{<1548>}Psalms 144:1).

7. (Compare ^{<1446>}Proverbs 14:16).

in the gate — (Compare ^{<1222>}Proverbs 22:22).

8. So called even if he fails *to do evil*.

9. Same thought varied.

10. Literally, “If thou fail in the day of straits (*adversity*), strait (or, small) is thy strength,” which is then truly tested.

11, 12. Neglect of known duty is sin (^{<5047>}James 4:17).

ready — literally, “bowing down”

to be slain — that is, unjustly. God’s retributive justice cannot be avoided by professed ignorance.

13, 14. As delicious food whets the appetite, so should the rewards of wisdom excite us to seek it.

14. *reward* — literally, “after part,” the proper result (compare ^{<1238>}Proverbs 23:18 ^{<1575>}Psalms 37:37,38).

15, 16. The plots of the wicked against the good, though partially, shall not be fully successful (^{<1372>}Psalms 37:24); while the wicked, falling under penal evil, find no help.

16. *seven times* — often, or many (^{<2186>}Proverbs 6:16,31 9:1).

17, 18. Yet let none rejoice over the fate of evildoers, lest God punish their wrong spirit by relieving the sufferer (compare ^{<2176>}Proverbs 17:5 ^{<4812>}Job 31:29).

19, 20. (^{<4501>}Psalm 37:1,38 18:28).

20. *candle* — or, “prosperity”; it shall come to an end (^{<2139>}Proverbs 13:9 20:20).

21, 22. A warning against impiety and resistance to lawful rule (^{<6114>}Romans 13:1-7 ^{<6127>}1 Peter 2:17).

meddle ... change — (Compare *Margin*), literally, “mingle not yourself,” avoid the society of restless persons.

22. *their calamity*, etc. — either what God and the king inflict, or what *changers* and their company suffer; better the first.

23. *These ... wise* — literally, “are of the wise,” as authors (compare “Psalms of David,” *Hebrew*). “These” refers to the verses following, ^{<1124>}Proverbs 24:24-34.

to have respect — literally, “to discern faces,” show partiality,

24, 25. of which an example is justifying the wicked, to which is opposed, rebuking him, which has a blessing.

26. *kiss his lips* — love and obey, do homage (^{<4122>}Psalm 2:12 ^{<2181>}Song of Solomon 8:1).

right answer — literally, “plain words” (compare ^{<2189>}Proverbs 8:9), opposed to deceptive, or obscure.

27. *Prepare ... in the field* — Secure, by diligence, a proper support, and then build; provide necessaries, then comforts, to which a house rather pertained, in a mild climate, permitting the use of tents.

28. Do not speak even truth needlessly against any, and never falsehood.

29. Especially avoid retaliation (^{<4168>}Matthew 5:43-45 ^{<6127>}Romans 12:17).

30, 31. A striking picture of the effects of sloth.

32-34. From the folly of the sluggard learn wisdom (^{<2160>}Proverbs 6:10,11).

CHAPTER 25

PROVERBS 25:1-28.

1. The character of these proverbs sustains the title (see *Introduction*).

also — refers to the former part of the book.

copied out — literally, “transferred,” that is, from some other book to this; not given from memory.

2. God’s unsearchableness impresses us with awe (compare ²³⁶¹⁵Isaiah 45:15 ⁶¹¹³³Romans 11:33). But kings, being finite, should confer with wise counsellors;

3. Ye wisely keeping state secrets, which to common men are as inaccessible heights and depths.

4, 5. As separating impurities from ore leaves pure silver, so taking from a king wicked counsellors leaves a wise and beneficent government.

5. *before* — or, “in presence of,” as courtiers stood about a king.

6, 7. Do not intrude into the presence of the king, for the elevation of the humble is honorable, but the humbling of the proud disgraceful (²⁴⁴³Luke 14:8-10).

8. (Compare ²¹⁸³Proverbs 3:30).

lest ... shame — lest you do what you ought not, when shamed by defeat, or “lest thou art shut out from doing any thing.”

9, 10. (Compare ⁴¹⁶²⁵Matthew 5:25, *Margin*).

secret — that is, of your opponent, for his disadvantage, and so you be disgraced, not having discussed your difficulties with him.

11. *a word fitly* — literally, “quickly,” as wheels roll, just in time. The comparison *as apples ... silver* gives a like sense.

apples, etc. — either real apples of golden color, in a silver network basket, or imitations on silver embroidery.

12. Those who desire to know and do rightly, most highly esteem good counsel (^{<3199>}Proverbs 9:9 15:31). The listening ear is better than one hung with gold.

13. Snow from mountains was used to cool drinks; so refreshing is a faithful messenger (^{<3137>}Proverbs 13:17).

14. *clouds* — literally, “vapors” (^{<2103>}Jeremiah 10:13), clouds only in appearance.

a false gift — promised, but not given.

15. Gentleness and kindness overcome the most powerful and obstinate.

long forbearing — or, “slowness to anger” (^{<3149>}Proverbs 14:29 15:18).

16, 17. A comparison, as a surfeit of honey produces physical disgust, so your company, however agreeable in moderation, may, if excessive, lead your friend to hate you.

18. A *false witness* is as destructive to reputation, as such weapons to the body (^{<3183>}Proverbs 24:28).

bearth ... witness — literally, “answereth questions,” as before a judge, against his neighbor.

19. *Treachery* annoys as well as deceives.

20. Not only is the incongruity of songs (that is, joyful) and sadness meant, but an accession of sadness, by want of sympathy, is implied.

21, 22. (Compare ^{<4154>}Matthew 5:44 ^{<5121>}Romans 12:20). As metals are melted by heaping coals upon them, so is the heart softened by kindness.

23. Better, “As the north wind bringeth forth (^{<3911>}Psalms 90:2) or produces rain, so does a concealed or slandering tongue produce anger.”

24. (Compare ^{<3119>}Proverbs 21:9,19).

25. (Compare ^{<3153>}Proverbs 25:13).

good news — that is, of some loved interest or absent friend, the more grateful as coming from afar.

26. From troubled fountains and corrupt springs no healthy water is to be had, so when the righteous are oppressed by the wicked, their power for good is lessened or destroyed.

27. Satiety surfeits (³¹²⁵Proverbs 25:16); so men who are self-glorious find shame.

is not glory — “not” is supplied from the first clause, or “is grievous,” in which sense a similar word is used (³¹²⁷Proverbs 27:2).

28. Such are exposed to the incursions of evil thoughts and successful temptations.

CHAPTER 26

PROVERBS 26:1-28.

1. The incongruities of nature illustrate also those of the moral world. The fool's unworthiness is also implied (^{<2077>}Proverbs 17:7 19:10).
2. Though not obvious to us,

the bird — literally, “sparrow” — and
swallow — have an object in their motions, so penal evil falls on none without a reason.
3. The rod is as much needed by fools and as well suited to them, as whips and bridles are for beasts.
- 4, 5. *Answer not* — that is, approvingly by like folly.
5. *Answer* — by reproof.
6. A fool fails by folly as surely as if he were maimed.

drinketh damage — that is, gets it abundantly (^{<3856>}Job 15:16 34:7).
7. *legs ... equal* — or, “take away the legs,” or “the legs ... are weak.” In any case the idea is that they are the occasion of an awkwardness, such as the fool shows in using a parable or proverb (see *Introduction*; ^{<2077>}Proverbs 17:7).
8. A stone, bound in a sling, is useless; so honor, conferred on a fool, is thrown away.
9. As vexatious and unmanageable as a thorn in a drunkard's hand is a parable to a fool. He will be as apt to misuse is as to use it rightly.
10. Various versions of this are proposed (Compare *Margin*). Better perhaps — “Much He injures (or literally, “wounds”) all who reward,” etc., that is, society is injured by encouraging evil men.

transgressors — may be rendered “vagrants.” The word “God” is improperly supplied.
11. *returneth ... folly* — Though disgusting to others, the fool delights in his folly.

12. The self-conceited are taught with more difficulty than the stupid.

13. (Compare ^{<1213>}Proverbs 22:13).

14. (Compare ^{<1160>}Proverbs 6:10 24:33).

15. (Compare ^{<1129>}Proverbs 19:24).

16. The thoughtless being ignorant of their ignorance are conceited.

17. *meddleth* — as in ^{<1119>}Proverbs 20:19 24:21; as either holding a dog by the ears or letting him go involves danger, so success in another man's strife or failure involves a useless risk of reputation, does no good, and may do us harm.

18, 19. Such are reckless of results.

20, 21. The talebearers foster (^{<1163>}Proverbs 16:28), and the contentious excite, strife.

22. (Compare ^{<1138>}Proverbs 18:8).

23. *Warm professions* can no more give value to insincerity than silver coating to rude earthenware.

24. *dissembleth* — though an unusual sense of the word (compare *Margin*), is allowable, and better suits the context, which sets forth hypocrisy.

25. Sentiment of ^{<1134>}Proverbs 26:24 carried out.

seven abominations in his heart — that is, very many (compare ^{<1146>}Proverbs 24:16).

26, 27. Deceit will at last be exposed, and the wicked by their own arts often bring on retribution (compare ^{<1123>}Proverbs 12:13 ^{<1176>}Psalms 7:16 9:17, etc.).

28. Men hate those they injure.

A lying tongue — “lips” for the persons (compare ^{<1124>}Proverbs 4:24 ^{<1113>}Psalms 12:3).

CHAPTER 27

PROVERBS 27:1-27.

1. Do not confide implicitly in your plans (²¹⁶⁹Proverbs 16:9 19:21 ³⁰⁴³James 4:13-15).

2. Avoid self-praise.

3. *heavy* — The literal sense of “heavy,” applied to material subjects, illustrates its figurative, “grievous,” applied to moral.

a fool’s wrath — is unreasonable and excessive.

4. *envy* — or, “jealousy” (compare *Margin*; ²¹⁶⁸Proverbs 6:34), is more unappeasable than the simpler bad passions.

5, 6. *secret love* — not manifested in acts is useless; and even, if its exhibition by rebukes wounds us, such love is preferable to the frequent (compare *Margin*), and hence deceitful, kisses of an enemy.

7. The luxury of wealth confers less happiness than the healthy appetite of labor.

8. Such are not only out of place, but out of duty and in danger.

9. *rejoice the heart* — the organ of perceiving what pleases the senses.

sweetness ... counsel — or, “wise counsel is also pleasing.”

10. Adhere to tried friends. The ties of blood may be less reliable than those of genuine friendship.

11. The wisdom of children both reflects credit on parents and contributes to their aid in difficulties.

12, 13. (Compare ²¹⁶⁷Proverbs 20:16 22:3).

14. Excessive zeal in praising raises suspicions of selfishness.

15. (Compare ²¹⁶³Proverbs 19:13).

very ... day — literally “a day of showers.”

16. *hideth* — or, “restrains” (that is, tries to do it); is as fruitless an effort, as that of holding the wind.

the ointment of his right hand — the organ of power (^{<4970P>}Psalm 17:7 18:35). His right hand endeavors to repress perfume, but vainly. Some prefer: “His right hand comes on oil,” that is, “cannot take hold.” Such a woman cannot be tamed.

17. *a man sharpeneth ... friend* — that is, conversation promotes intelligence, which the face exhibits.

18. Diligence secures a reward, even for the humble servant.

19. We may see our characters in the developed tempers of others.

20. Men’s cupidity is as insatiable as the grave.

21. Praise tests character.

a man to his praise — according to his praise, as he bears it. Thus vain men seek it, weak men are inflated by it, wise men disregard it, etc.

22. The obstinate wickedness of such is incurable by the heaviest inflictions.

23, 24. *flocks* — constituted the staple of wealth. It is only by care and diligence that the most solid possessions can be perpetuated (^{<4938P>}Proverbs 23:5).

25-27. The fact that providential arrangements furnish the means of competence to those who properly use them is another motive to diligence (compare ^{<4969P>}Psalm 65:9-13).

The hay appeareth — literally, “Grass appeareth” (^{<805J>}Job 40:15 ^{<49A44P>}Psalm 104:14).

27. *household* — literally, “house,” the family (^{<4465>}Acts 16:15 ^{<4016>}1 Corinthians 1:16).

CHAPTER 28

PROVERBS 28:1-28.

1. A bad conscience makes men timid; the righteous are alone truly bold (^{<3140>}Proverbs 14:26 ^{<4970>}Psalm 27:1).
2. Anarchy producing contending rulers shortens the reign of each.
but by a man ... prolonged — or, “by a man of understanding — that is, a good ruler — he who knows or regards the right, that is, a good citizen, shall prolong (his days).” Good rulers are a blessing to the people. Bad government as a punishment for evil is contrasted with good as blessing to the good.
3. *A poor man*, etc. — Such, in power, exact more severely, and so leave subjects bare.
4. *They that forsake ... wicked* — Wrongdoers encourage one another.
5. (Compare ^{<4377>}John 7:17). Ignorance of moral truth is due to unwillingness to know it.
6. (Compare ^{<3006>}Proverbs 10:6). Riches cannot compensate for sin, nor the want of them affect integrity.
7. (Compare ^{<3075>}Proverbs 17:25).
riotous men — or, “gluttons” (^{<3230>}Proverbs 23:20,21).
8. *usury ... unjust gain* — (Compare *Margin*). The two terms, meaning nearly the same, may denote excessive interest. God’s providence directs the proper use of wealth.
9. (Compare ^{<3158>}Proverbs 15:8 21:27).
- hearing* — that is, obeying. God requires sincere worshippers (^{<4968>}Psalm 66:18 ^{<4024>}John 4:24).
10. (Compare ^{<3157>}Proverbs 26:27).
11. A poor but wise man can discover (and expose) the rich and self-conceited.

12. *great glory* — or, cause for it to a people, for the righteous rejoice in good, and righteousness exalts a nation (^{<2148>}Proverbs 14:34).

a man ... hidden — that is, the good retire, or all kinds try to escape a wicked rule.

13. (Compare ^{<1938>}Psalm 32:3-5). Concealment of sin delivers none from God's wrath, but He shows mercy to the humble penitent (^{<1910>}Psalm 51:4).

14. *feareth* — that is, God, and so repents.

hardeneth his heart — makes himself insensible to sin, and so will not repent (^{<2146>}Proverbs 14:16 ^{<291>}1:1).

15. The rapacity and cruelty of such beasts well represent some wicked men (compare ^{<1902>}Psalm 7:2 ^{<1712>}17:12).

16. *The prince ... understanding* — that is, He does not perceive that oppression jeopard his success. Covetousness often produces oppression, hence the contrast.

17. *doeth violence ... blood*, etc. — or, that is oppressed by the blood of *life* (^{<0007>}Genesis 9:6), which he has taken.

to the pit — the grave or destruction (^{<2112>}Proverbs 1:12 ^{<1838>}Job 33:18-24 ^{<1437>}Psalm 143:7).

stay him — sustain or deliver him.

18. (Compare ^{<2109>}Proverbs 10:9 ^{<1720>}17:20). Double dealing is eventually fatal.

19. (Compare ^{<2104>}Proverbs 10:4 ^{<204>}20:4).

vain persons — idle, useless drones, implying that they are also wicked (^{<2121>}Proverbs 12:11 ^{<1904>}Psalm 26:4).

20. *maketh haste ... rich* — implying deceit or fraud (^{<2102>}Proverbs 20:21), and so opposed to "faithful" or reliable.

21. *respect of persons* — (^{<2123>}Proverbs 24:23). Such are led to evil by the slightest motive.

22. (Compare ^{<2180>}Proverbs 28:20).

evil eye — in the general sense of ^{<2136>}Proverbs 23:6, here more specific for covetousness (compare ^{<2119>}Proverbs 22:9 ^{<415>}Matthew 20:15).

poverty ... him — by God's providence.

23. (Compare ^{<3108>}Proverbs 9:8,9 27:5). Those benefited by reproof will love their monitors.

24. (Compare ^{<3109>}Matthew 15:4-6). Such, though heirs, are virtually thieves, to be ranked with highwaymen.

25. *of a proud heart* — literally, “puffed up of soul” — that is, self-confident, and hence overbearing and litigious.

made fat — or, “prosperous” (^{<3112>}Proverbs 11:25 16:20).

26. (Compare ^{<3116>}Proverbs 3:6-8).

walketh wisely — that is, trusting in God (^{<3127>}Proverbs 22:17-19).

27. (Compare ^{<3112>}Proverbs 11:24-26).

hideth his eyes — as the face (^{<3279>}Psalms 27:9 69:17), denotes inattention.

28. The elevation of the wicked to power drives men to seek refuge from tyranny (compare ^{<3132>}Proverbs 28:12 ^{<3111>}Proverbs 11:10 ^{<3118>}Psalms 12:8).

CHAPTER 29

PROVERBS 29:1-27.

1. **hardeneth ... neck** — obstinately refuses counsel (^{<2714>}2 Kings 17:14 ^{<4196>}Nehemiah 9:16).

destroyed — literally, “shivered” or “utterly broken to pieces.”

without remedy — literally, “without healing” or repairing.

2. (Compare ^{<3111>}Proverbs 11:10 28:28).

in authority — (Compare *Margin*), increased in power.

3. (Compare ^{<3106>}Proverbs 4:6,7 10:1, etc.).

4. **by judgment** — that is, righteous decisions, opposed to those procured by gifts (compare ^{<3121>}Proverbs 28:21), by which good government is perverted.

land — for nation.

5. (Compare ^{<3133>}Proverbs 26:28).

spreadeth ... feet — By misleading him as to his real character, the flatterer brings him to evil, prepared by himself or others.

6. **In** — or, “By”

the transgression — he is brought into difficulty (^{<3123>}Proverbs 12:13), but the righteous go on prospering, and so sing or rejoice.

7. **considereth** — literally, “knows,” as ^{<4100>}Psalms 1:6.

the cause — that is, in courts of justice (compare ^{<3194>}Proverbs 29:14). The voluntary neglect of it by the wicked (^{<3127>}Proverbs 28:27) occasions oppression.

8. **Scornful men** — those who contemptuously disregard God’s law.

bring — (Compare *Margin*), kindle strife.

turn away wrath — that is, “abate wrath.”

9. **contendeth** — that is, in law.

whether ... laugh — The fool, whether angry or good-humored, is unsettled; or referring the words to the wise man, the sense is, that all his efforts, severe or gentle, are unavailing to pacify the fool.

10. bloodthirsty — (Compare *Margin*), murderers (^{<4186>}Psalm 5:6 26:9).

hate, etc. — (^{<2011>}Proverbs 1:11 ^{<0604>}Genesis 3:4).

seek ... soul — that is, to preserve it.

11. (Compare ^{<3126>}Proverbs 12:16 16:32).

mind — or, “spirit,” for anger or any ill passion which the righteous restrain.

12. His servants imitate him.

13. (Compare ^{<3127>}Proverbs 22:2).

deceitful man — literally, “man of vexations,” an exactor.

the Lord ... their eyes — sustains their lives (^{<0427>}1 Samuel 14:27 ^{<4933>}Psalm 13:3); that is, both depend on Him, and He will do justice.

14. (Compare ^{<3128>}Proverbs 20:28 25:5). Such is the character of the King of kings (^{<3724>}Psalm 72:4,12).

15. (Compare ^{<3133>}Proverbs 13:24 23:13).

16. (Compare ^{<3134>}Proverbs 29:2,12 ^{<4910>}Psalm 12:1-8).

shall see ... fall — and triumph in it (^{<4874>}Psalm 37:34-38 58:10,11).

17. (Compare ^{<3135>}Proverbs 29:3,15 ^{<3138>}Proverbs 19:18).

give thee rest — peace and quiet (compare ^{<3139>}Proverbs 29:9).

18. no vision — instruction in God’s truth, which was by prophets, through visions (^{<0601>}1 Samuel 3:1).

people perish — (Compare *Margin*), are deprived of moral restraints.

keepeth the law — has, and observes, instruction (^{<3141>}Proverbs 14:11,34 ^{<4911>}Psalm 19:11).

19. A servant — who lacks good principle.

corrected — or discovered.

will not answer — that is, will not obey.

20. (Compare ^{<3116>}Proverbs 21:5).

hasty in ... words? — implying self-conceit (^{<3182>}Proverbs 26:12).

21. *become his son* — assume the place and privileges of one.

22. (Compare ^{<3158>}Proverbs 15:18). Such are delighted by discord and violence.

23. (Compare ^{<3168>}Proverbs 16:18 18:12).

honor ... spirit — or, “such shall lay hold on honor” (^{<3116>}Proverbs 11:16).

24. *hateth ... soul* — (Compare ^{<3188>}Proverbs 8:36).

heareth cursing — (^{<3188>}Leviticus 5:1), risks the punishment, rather than reveal truth.

25. *The fear ... snare* — involves men in difficulty (compare ^{<3196>}Proverbs 29:6).

shall be safe — (Compare *Margin*; ^{<3180>}Proverbs 18:10).

26. (Compare *Margin*; ^{<3278>}Psalms 27:8). God alone will and can do exact justice.

27. (Compare ^{<3182>}Proverbs 3:32). On last clause, compare ^{<3196>}Proverbs 29:16 ^{<3372>}Psalms 37:12.

CHAPTER 30

PROVERBS 30:1-33.

1. This is the title of this chapter (see *Introduction*).

the prophecy — literally, “the burden” (compare ^{<301>}Isaiah 13:1 ^{<3015>}Zechariah 9:1), used for any divine instruction; not necessarily a prediction, which was only a kind of prophecy (^{<1357>}1 Chronicles 15:27, “a song”). Prophets were inspired men, who spoke for God to man, or for man to God (^{<0207>}Genesis 20:7 ^{<0714>}Exodus 7:14,15,16). Such, also, were the New Testament prophets. In a general sense, Gad, Nathan, and others were such, who were divine teachers, though we do not learn that they ever predicted.

the man spake — literally, “the saying of the man”; an expression used to denote any solemn and important announcement (compare ^{<1212>}2 Samuel 23:1 ^{<1211>}Psalms 36:1 110:1 ^{<2124>}Isaiah 1:24, etc.). Ithiel and Ucal were perhaps pupils.

2-4. **brutish** — stupid, a strong term to denote his lowly self-estimation; or he may speak of such as his natural condition, as contrasted with God’s all-seeing comprehensive knowledge and almighty power. The questions of this clause emphatically deny the attributes mentioned to be those of any creature, thus impressively strengthening the implied reference of the former to God (compare ^{<1512>}Deuteronomy 30:12-14 ^{<3012>}Isaiah 40:12 ^{<4018>}Ephesians 4:8).

5. (Compare ^{<9116>}Psalms 12:6 119:140).

6. **Add ... words** — implying that his sole reliance was on God’s all-sufficient teaching.

reprove thee — or, “convict thee” — and so the falsehood will appear.

7-9. A prayer for exemption from wickedness, and the extremes of poverty and riches, the *two things* mentioned. Contentment is implied as desired.

8. **vanity** — all sorts of sinful acts (^{<8111>}Job 11:11 ^{<2688>}Isaiah 5:18).

9. **be full ... deny** — that is, puffed up by the pride of prosperity.

take the name ... vain — This is not (*Hebrew*) the form (compare ^{<207>}Exodus 20:7), but “take” rather denotes laying violent hold on any thing; that is lest I assail God’s name or attributes, as justice, mercy, etc., which the poor are tempted to do.

10. Accuse not — Slander not (^{<107>}Psalms 10:7).

curse ... guilty — lest, however lowly, he be exasperated to turn on thee, and your guilt be made to appear.

11-14. Four kinds of hateful persons —

(1) graceless children,

(2) hypocrites,

(3) the proud,

(4) cruel oppressors (compare on ^{<104>}Proverbs 30:14 ^{<104>}Psalms 14:4 52:2)

— are now illustrated;

(1) ^{<105>}Proverbs 30:15,16, the insatiability of prodigal children and their fate;

(2) ^{<106>}Proverbs 30:17, hypocrisy, or the concealment of real character;

(3 and 4) ^{<108>}Proverbs 30:18-20, various examples of pride and oppression.

15, 16. horse leech — supposed by some to be the vampire (a fabulous creature), as being literally insatiable; but the other subjects mentioned must be taken as this, comparatively insatiable. The use of a fabulous creature agreeably to popular notions is not inconsistent with inspiration.

There are three ... yea, four — (Compare ^{<109>}Proverbs 6:16).

17. The eye — for the person, with reference to the use of the organ to express mockery and contempt, and also as that by which punishment is received.

the ravens ... eagles ... eat — either as dying unnaturally, or being left unburied, or both.

18-20. Hypocrisy is illustrated by four examples of the concealment of all methods or traces of action, and a pertinent example of double dealing in actual vice is added, that is, the *adulterous woman*.

20. *she eateth ... mouth* — that is, she hides the evidences of her shame and professes innocence.

21-23. Pride and cruelty, the undue exaltation of those unfit to hold power, produce those vices which disquiet society (compare ^{<1890>}Proverbs 19:10 28:3).

23. *heir ... mistress* — that is, takes her place as a wife (^{<1100>}Genesis 16:4).

24-31. These verses provide two classes of apt illustrations of various aspects of the moral world, which the reader is left to apply. By the first (^{<1815>}Proverbs 30:25-28), diligence and providence are commended; the success of these insignificant animals being due to their instinctive sagacity and activity, rather than strength. The other class (^{<1810>}Proverbs 30:30,31) provides similes for whatever is majestic or comely, uniting efficiency with gracefulness.

26. *conies* — mountain mice, or rabbits.

28. *spider* — tolerated, even in palaces, to destroy flies.

taketh ... hands — or, uses with activity the limbs provided for taking prey.

32. As none can hope, successfully, to resist such a king, suppress even the thought of an attempt.

lay ... hand upon thy mouth — “lay” is well supplied (^{<1715>}Judges 18:19 ^{<1810>}Job 29:9 40:4).

33. or other ills, as surely arise from devising evil as natural effects from natural causes.

CHAPTER 31

PROVERBS 31:1-31.

1. On the title of this, the sixth part of the book, see *Introduction*.

prophecy — (See on ^{<1808>}Proverbs 30:1).

2. *What, my son?* — that is, What shall I say? Repetitions denote earnestness.

son of my womb — as our phrase, “my own son,” a term of special affection.

son of my vows — as one dedicated to God; so the word “Lemuel” may mean.

3-9. Succinct but solemn warnings against vices to which kings are peculiarly tempted, as carnal pleasures and oppressive and unrighteous government are used to sustain sensual indulgence.

strength — mental and bodily resources for health and comfort.

thy ways — or course of life.

to that ... kings — literally, “to the destroying of kings,” avoid destructive pleasures (compare ^{<1089>}Proverbs 5:9 7:22,27 ^{<3011>}Hosea 4:11).

4, 5. Stimulants enfeeble reason, pervert the heart, and do not suit rulers, who need clear and steady minds, and well-governed affections (compare ^{<1089>}Proverbs 20:1 22:29).

pervert ... afflicted — They give unrighteous decisions against the poor.

6, 7. The proper use of such drinks is to restore tone to feeble bodies and depressed minds (compare ^{<19415>}Psalms 104:15).

8, 9. *Open ... cause* — Plead for those who cannot plead for themselves, as the orphan, stranger, etc. (compare ^{<19212>}Psalms 72:12 ^{<2017>}Isaiah 1:17).

appointed to destruction — who are otherwise ruined by their oppressors (compare ^{<1094>}Proverbs 29:14,16).

10-31. This exquisite picture of a truly lovely wife is conceived and drawn in accordance with the customs of Eastern nations, but its moral teachings

suit all climes. In *Hebrew* the verses begin with the letters of the *Hebrew* alphabet in order (compare *Introduction* to Poetical Books).

Who ... woman — The question implies that such are rare, though not entirely wanting (compare ^{<1822>}Proverbs 18:22 19:14).

virtuous — literally, “of strength,” that is, moral courage (compare ^{<1205>}Proverbs 12:4 ^{<1811>}Ruth 3:11).

her price, etc. — (compare ^{<1818>}Proverbs 3:15).

11. heart ... trust in her — He relies on her prudence and skill.

no need of spoil — does not lack profit or gain, especially, that obtained by the risk of war.

12. do ... good — contribute good to him.

13, 14. Ancient women of rank thus wrought with their hands; and such, indeed, were the customs of Western women a few centuries since. In the East also, the fabrics were articles of merchandise.

15. She diligently attends to expending as well as gathering wealth;

16. and hence has means to purchase property.

17, 18. To energy she adds a watchfulness in bargains, and a protracted and painful industry. The last clause may figuratively denote that her prosperity (compare ^{<1243>}Proverbs 24:20) is not short lived.

19. No work, however mean, if honest, is disdained.

20. Industry enables her to be charitable.

21. scarlet — or, “purple,” by reason of the dyes used, the best fabrics; as a matter of taste also; the color suits cold.

22. coverings of tapestry — or, “coverlets,” that is, for beds.

silk — or, “linen” (compare ^{<1261>}Exodus 26:1 27:9)

and purple — that is, the most costly goods.

23. in the gates — (compare ^{<1222>}Proverbs 22:22). His domestic comfort promotes his advancement in public dignity.

24. fine linen — or, “linen shirts,” or the material for them.

girdles — were often costly and highly valued (^{<1881>}2 Samuel 18:11).

delivereth — or, “giveth as a present” or “to sell.”

25. *Strength and honor* — *Strong* and *beautiful* is her clothing; or, figuratively, for moral character, vigorous and honorable.

shall rejoice ... come — in confidence of certain maintenance.

26. Her conversation is wise and gentle.

27. (Compare ^{<5154>}1 Timothy 5:14 ^{<5117>}Titus 2:5). She adds to her example a wise management of those under her control.

28. She is honored by those who best know her.

29. The words are those of her husband, praising her.

virtuously — (Compare ^{<5111>}Proverbs 31:10).

30. *Favour* — or, “Grace” of personal manner.

beauty — of face, or form (compare ^{<5112>}Proverbs 11:22). True piety alone commands permanent respect and affection (^{<5113>}1 Peter 3:3).

31. The result of her labor is her best eulogy. Nothing can add to the simple beauty of this admirable portrait. On the measure of its realization in the daughters of our own day rest untold results, in the domestic, and, therefore, the civil and religious, welfare of the people.