Proverbs - Commentaries by Simon Patrick

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 9:1-12

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1. “Wisdom troth budded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars.” Do not imagine that I commend unto you some meaner piece of knowledge or skill, but the most absolute and accomplished wisdom; whose worth and dignity is inexpressible. For as this great world I told you was built by wisdom in most excellent order and perfect beauty; so from every part of it we may learn what regard we ought to have, to her holy precepts which are taught everywhere, but especially in the school’s of the prophets.

2. “She hath killed her beasts: she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table.” There above all other places a most plentiful! provision is made for all hungry and thirsty souls (that are desirous to know what is good for themselves) who shall find no less life, and vigor, and strength, and joy communicated to them from her sacred instructions, than the body doth when it partakes of a liberal and most delicious feast.

3. “She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city.” For nothing is wanting there, but only guests to accept of her entertainment; unto which her attendants and ministers (persons of uncorrupted purity and sincerity) are sent to invite you, with a loud voice and earnest in-treaties: which cannot but he heard by whole cities and countries; unto whom the dwelling places of wisdom, and the food of souls lie openly exposed.

4. “Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him.” There is no man so silly but he may be welcome to it; or rather all such persons are desired to bethink themselves, how inconsiderately they have been seduced, and to forbear the prosecution of their foolish desires so long as to take advice of her. Let a man be never so much besotted with vice and wickedness, she doth not reject him, nor despair of him, if he will but hearken, when she makes this gracious motion to the whole knot of them.

5. “Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which 1 have mingled.” Draw near, consider, and lay to heart, the wholesome instructions which I propound to you: credit me so far as to rely upon the promise which I make you of the highest comfort, pleasure, and satisfaction, in embracing and obeying my precepts.

6. “Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.” Do but make a trial, by forsaking all ill company, and those childish desires, and senseless courses, of which you can give no account to yourselves; and immediately you shall have a taste of happiness, which will invite you to perfect it, by following hereafter the deliberate dictates of sober reason, and the grave counsels of prudent persons, who have discerning minds, and practice themselves what they commend to others.

7. “He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot.” As for those that deride religion and scoff at all good admonitions, it is in vain to meddle with them; for reproofs are fittest for such persons, and he who performs that charitable office, not only loses his labor, but is like to be requited with reproaches: whosoever he be that rebukes one of those impious wretches, hath commonly all the dirt thrown upon him, that their malice can rake together.

8. “Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.” Therefore men of that wicked temper wisdom doth not invite to her instructions, nor require her ministers to call upon them; but rather to pass them by, when they find by experience that they can do no good to such persons, but only draw their hatred upon themselves. From such it is wisdom to turn away, and bestow reproofs upon those who have so much understanding, as to see God’s ministers intend their good, and accordingly thank them for it, and give them opportunity to do them further service.

9. “Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.” For this is an undoubted maxim, that a man disposed to learn will grow wiser even by reprehension; and the instructions given to a man inclined to goodness, will make him better, and much improve him, not only in knowledge but in the practice of virtue (whereas a scorner grows worse by endeavors to reform him, and is only made more incapable of good advice, by being exasperated and imaged at it).

10. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding.” And the very first, and indeed the principal thing that is to be instilled into all men’s minds, without which they will learn nothing else, is a religious sense of the Divine Majesty, and an awful regard towards Him (as I have observed already more than once: ch. 1:7; 2:5; 8:13; but it cannot be too oft repeated). And next to this, that no knowledge deserves the name of understanding, but that which is delivered by the Holy men of God, and disposes us to devote ourselves unto Him in holy obedience.

11. “For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased. Other knowledge may make thee subtle and cunning in thy worldly affairs, but this alone can make thee happy. And this will certainly both prolong thy life, as I have frequently said, and lengthen it in health, peace, prosperity and pleasure.

12. “If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.” This is the true reason I invite thee so earnestly to imbibe my doctrine, not for my own sake, but for thine: who alone wilt either reap the profit of being truly virtuous; or suffer all the harm and mischief (which will not in the least redound to me) of thy profane scoffs and jeers at religion and goodness.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 9:13-19

13. “A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing.” Unto which profanity as there wants not temptations, so there is none more dangerous, I think, which makes me mention it so often, than the lewd and impious adulteress; who is no less bold and importunate, than she is bewitching and powerful! to besot the minds of her stupid lovers; but perfectly ignorant of God and religion, and a stranger to all the principles of venue.

14. “For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city.” Which she openly opposes, for (as if she would put a manifest affront upon them) in that very place where the ministers of wisdom call men to learn the fear of the Lord, she sits in state at the door of her house to divert their minds from all such thoughts, and drown them in sensual pleasures.

15. “To call passengers who go right on their ways.” That’s the very business of her life, to defeat all good designs; by drawing even those aside into her chambers of impurity, who were going straight forward to the schools of wisdom and goodness.

16. “Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him.” Whose words she no less impudently than profane returns, and tells them, It is not she but wisdom and virtue that makes men fools; by confining their desires, and denying them the liberties which she invites to come and enjoy in her embraces: where their dullness shall learn this unknown secret.

17. “Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.” That there are no pleasures comparable to those, which a man gets by stealth from them to whom they properly belong: no morsel so sweet, as that which is forbidden; but having been long desired, he finds at last a private opportunity, to taste of without danger.

18. “But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell.” But the poor deluded wretch considers not all this while (which have often already represented, and is all that I shall oppose to those sinful enticements) that she invites him to his utter ruin both of soul and body. And she sinks all those down who accept of her invitation, for the very bottom of that pit, where the old giants are, who corrupted mankind with such filthiness and violence, that they brought a deluge upon the earth (Gen. 6:4-5, 11).

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 8:10-19

10. “Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold.” They will not think me unreasonable, when I commend the very rebukes which I give them (though administered by some sharp affliction), and set such a high price upon them, as to advise everyone to accept them rather than silver; and to value the knowledge of God, and of themselves and of all things else (which these corrections teach them) above the choicest gold.

11. “For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.” For true wisdom is such an inestimable jewel, that the most precious pearls are trash to it: nor can our boundless fancies present anything to our wishes, that is worthy to come in competition with it.

12. “I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.” For what is there comparable to a prudent mind, which is not crafty to deceive, but so cautious as not to be deceived? And this I may boast is solely in my power to endow men with all; who ever give the safest, nay infallible advice, and direct men to discreet resolutions in the most difficult cases, than the subtlest head in the world, that consults not with me, can invent for his clients.

13. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do 1 hate.” And rules are as short as they are sure: for I teach men in the first place religiously to worship and stand in awe of the Divine Majesty: I further instruct them, if it do not make them abominate all manner of evil, though but in design: more particularly, I hate that vain opinion men have of their own abilities to compass their designs, which makes them forget God, and despise the wholesome advice of honest men; as I likewise do the use of all unlawful means, though the end be good; especially lying, calumny, detraction, breach of faith, which everyone must renounce who will have my friendship.

14. “Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength.” Who am the ablest counselor in all deliberations; and give men the most certain, solid and never failing advice, for the effecting their desires, or being contented with disappointments: for I comprehend whatsoever is fit to be done or omitted in all undertakings; and inspire men also with courage to persist in good resolutions, which are neither rashly taken nor wrongfully pursued.

15. “By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.” Kings themselves sit not fast on their thrones, though placed there by God Himself, unless they be ruled by me: the wisest senators cannot support themselves and them, but by persuading them to enact and execute just and merciful laws, for the government of their people.

16. “By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of The earth.” In vain do their great captains, or other ministers endeavor to defend them, but under the conduct and protection of my virtuous discipline: nobles, and all the judges of the land lose their authority, if they do not faithfully observe the rules that I prescribe them.

17. “I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.” Which are no less amiable than they are easily known; there needing no more to come acquainted with me, but only to love me; for they that love me are beloved of me; and as they will not fail to seek what they love, so they shall certainly find what they studiously seek.

18. “Riches and honor are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.” And together with me, they shall find such riches and honor, as shall add to the greatness, and splendor, and stability of their kingdoms and dignities: for not merely riches and honor are in my donation, but durable possessions; which will last the longer, because they are not gotten either by oppression, or by niggardice [stinginess]: for I teach men both to do justly and to love mercy also.

19. “My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver.” Whereby I bring them in greater treasures than gold, though never so massy [massive], never so refined; a revenue of higher value, than the purest and choicest silver in the world.

May you be in yourself so broken down that you must findOne who never break down.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 8:20-26

20. “I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment.’ For! set their minds and hearts aright; and in rich them with excellent thoughts; which teach them how to use those earthly goods, and govern themselves with such exactness in all their private transactions or public administrations; as never to swerve from the steady rules of justice and equity

21. “That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.” In order to their happy settlement in a state of eternal peace and substantial satisfaction; which 1 Confer on all those that sincerely love me and adhere unto me: whose souls I will fill as full with abundance of inestimable riches, as their treasuries are with silver, and gold, and all other stores.

22. “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old.” For the Lord Himself hath no greater riches than me, who lead men to a participation of Him and communion with Him with whom I was ever present (as well as always most dear unto Him) not only when He began to create this world; but before He made any of His works: when as yet there was nothing but Himself.

23. “I was set up from everlasting, front the beginning, or ever the earth was.” My sovereignty and dominion is from everlasting; and hath no superior to it: all antiquity comes infinitely short of mine; who was before the earth itself.

24. “When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water.” When as yet there were no depths I, Wisdom, was in God long before the sources and springs: whose excellent waters, which are of greater value than any other, owe their rise unto me, the unexhausted fountain of all things.

25. “Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth.” Who had a being before the mountains, from whence those waters run, were settled; or there was so much as a hillock to be seen in the earth.

26. “While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.” For as yet the Lord had not made the earth itself, much less adorned it, and put it into this form of lofty mountains and spacious plains: no, there was not so much as the first atom of this globe whereon you tread.

27. “When He prepared the heavens, I was there: when He set a compass upon the face of the depth.” But why do I speak of the earth alone? I was present when He disposed the heavens into this wonderful) order, wherein we behold them; as well as when He moved upon that confused abyss which they enclosed, and fashioned the earth into a regular shape.

28. “When He established the clouds above: when He strengthened the fountains of the deep.” When He made the warty clouds also, with admirable wisdom, so firm in the air, that they shall not fall down all together, but by drops upon the earth: and provided strong cisterns for the waters pent up there; from whence they gush out forcibly, and yet wear not away the passages He hath opened for them.

29. “When He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment: when He appointed the foundations of the earth.” When He prescribed also to the sea its limits, that the waters thereof (though they swell and toss up and down) shall not pass over the shores wherein He hath confined them: and when He settled the earth so steadfastly, like a building upon sure foundations, that it remains unmovable in the place He appointed for it.

30. “Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.” Then was I with Him, nay, very near unto Him; contriving all these things: nor had He any higher pleasure than me, who day by day, during the creation of the world, produced some lovely work or other; in which He rejoiced, to see how good and agreeable they were.

31. “Rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and may delights were with the sons of men.” More particularly, I displayed my skill in the vast variety of creatures, wherewith I have beautified this earth, wherein you dwell; which afford a most delightful! spectacle unto me, and unto all wise observers: who may see, that, above the rest, my principal thoughts were fixed upon the children of men in whom I delighted exceedingly (as the Lord doth in me), beholding them made in the image of God, and after His likeness, capable to converse with me.

32. “Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways.” Who may therefore justly expect (all these things considered) that you should cheerfully embrace my repeated counsels; and, as dutiful children, take the greatest pleasure in being obedient to them: for blessed, you cannot but see, blessed beyond all expression, are they who observe (as all other creatures do) the laws that I have prescribed them.

33. “Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.” Hearken, I beseech you, and yield to the voice of your own reason, and of God’s Holy Word and Spirit: which checks the irregular motions which you find at any time in you: and be so wise and considerate, as not to slight and reject it.

34. “Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.” But rather invite such instructions, by giving them thankful entertainment, and going thither where you may meet with them: for happy, more happy than can be expressed, is that man who not only hearkens obediently when he is told his duty, but makes it his business to be rightly informed; neglecting no opportunity, but constantly and diligently attending there, where he may be taught how he ought to live; most earnestly desiring to become my disciple, and to be governed by me.

35. “For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favor of the Lord.” In which, whatsoever pains he bestows, he shall not lose his labor: for as he shall not fail to find what he seeks, so he shall find with all, that I will make his life a perpetual pleasure to him; for I have demonstrated that he must needs be beloved of the Lord, to whom I am most nearly allied, and from Him shall obtain his heart’s desire.

36. “But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they flint hale tote love death.” From whence it is manifest, that he who violates my laws, doth the greatest injury unto his own soul: and whosoever they be that hate to be reproved for it, and can neither endure to

be told of their faults, nor receive any good advice, they love to be miserable, and willfully bring upon themselves utter destruction.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 8:1-9

1. “Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding pat firth her voice?”Can you then here after pretend ignorance, and say you never had any caution given you against these snares? Or rather, have I not the greatest reason to chide you for your stupidity in hearkening unto those secret allurements to the deeds of darkness; when their shamefulness is so apparent? and you have had so many open and loud admonitions given you to be wiser? and such serious and earnest endeavors have been used, by repeated instructions and reproofs to reclaim you from your folly?

2. “She standeth in the top of high places by the way in the places of the paths.” There is no public crier better heard and understood by all, when from an high place he makes proclamation to the people, than the rules of wisdom and venue are which do not lie concealed, nor can be altered at our pleasure; but present themselves continually to men’s thoughts wheresoever they go, being as plain as the highway, and remaining unmovable and fixed, notwithstanding all the attempts that have been made to subvert them.

3. “She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the corning in at the doors.” Let their business be what it will, whether in the courts of judgment, or among those that traffic in the city, or in their own private habitation, still they know what their duty is: which their own conscience, as well as God’s ministers, rings so continually in their ears; that they cannot avoid such information.

4. “Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man.” Which they hear as plainly and distinctly, as if wisdom itself should call to them from above, saying; hearken, O men, of whatsoever rank and condition you be: whether high or low, rich or poor; for my instructions are common to you all.

5. “O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.” Your fault is, that you are inconsiderate and easily cheated (chap. 7:21-22), or which is worse, stupidly bent to follow your sensual appetite; as if you had no better inclinations: but if you will attend, I will make you more circumspect and wary; and dispose you to be led by prudent counsels.

6. “Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things.” Do not turn away your ears, but listen to my words; for I will teach you things most worthy of your notice and choice: which will conduct you safely in all the passages of your life; and lay before you such a plain, direct and easy path, that if you walk in it you shall not miss of being happy.

7. “For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips.” For I will utter nothing rashly, or contrary to the truth; all falsehood, deceit and whatsoever may do hurt, being so detestable to me, and so far from my thoughts, that the correction of such wickedness is the aim of my discourse.

8. “All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them.” Every word of which is exactly conformable to the rule of righteousness: there is nothing I enjoin or forbid merely to hamper and perplex you, or to abridge you of your just liberty: much less to misguide and pervert you, in the pursuit of what is good for you.

9. “They are all plan to Him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge. But whatsoever they may seem to inconsiderate and prejudiced minds, they will all manifestly appear equal and just unto him that uses his reason; and approve themselves as I said, exactly conformable to the strictest rules of righteousness, unto well-disposed minds; who will be at the pains to know the difference between right and wrong, or between that which is good and that which is evil for them.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 7:6-23

6. “For at the window of my house I looked through my casement.” Of which a memorable instance comes now into my mind; for looking one day from my chamber, through the lattices of the window of my palace.

7. “And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young Mind void of understanding,” I observed, among the undisciplined and inexperienced striplings of the city, one that was as childish and void of consideration, as he was youthful and eager in his desires.

8. “Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house.” Who, as if he had a mind to be undone, passed idly through the street, till he came to a corner, where naughty women use to haunt: walking in as stately a manner as he could devise, directly towards one of their houses.

9. “In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night.” It was in the twilight, while he might see his way and yet hope to be concealed: in the close of the day; which was followed by a night as dark as pitch, and fit for such works of darkness.

10. “And, behold, there met hint a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtle of heart.” There, on a sudden, I was surprised with the sight of a woman starting forth; who did not stay till he came up to her, but went to meet him, in a gaudy lascivious dress, apt to allure a weak young man: who thought presently she was in love with him; when her heart, as full of subtlety as his was of folly, is reserved only to herself.

11. “(She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house.” This is her character: she is full of talk, and of bold unseemly courtship; unruly and not to be controlled or broke of her will; idle also and always gadding abroad, as if she had no business (but with her foolish lovers) at home.

12. “Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.)” Sometime she stands before her door; and, if that will not do, she goes further into the streets and places of greatest concourse: and, more especially, waits at every corner (where she may look into two

streets at once) to ensnare such as are apt, like silly birds, to be taken by her.

13. “So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him.” At one of those corners (as I said) she met this young fool; and, contrary to all the rules of modesty, caught him hard about the neck and kissed him: and after these amorous caresses put on still a bolder face, and without any blushing, made this following speech to him.

14. “I have peace offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows.” I am a happy woman, in many blessings that God hath bestowed upon me, for which I have given Him solemn thanks this very day: and, as religion and custom bind me, I have provided as good a feast as those sacrifices would afford, which I formerly vowed and now have paid; having no want of anything but of some good company at home to rejoice with me.

15. “Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee.” Which made me go abroad to try if I could meet with thee (who art the very person whom I came to seek) that I might invite and earnestly beseech thee to be so kind as to bear me company: and, to my great joy, this is added to all my other happiness, that I have found thee speedily and most opportunely.

16. “I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt.” There shall no other pleasures be wanting when our feast is done; but from the table we will remove to my bed: which I have richly adorned with everything that may please the eye; and made it as soft also as heart can wish.

17. “I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.” Where thou shalt be entertained likewise with the sweetest perfumes, that ours or the neighboring countries could furnish me with all; such as myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon: wherewith I have sprinkled my bed, to render it more grateful to all thy senses.

18. “Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves.” Why do we waste our time then here in the street? Come along with me, and let us go thither; and there satisfy our desires to the full with love: we will solace ourselves with the sweetest pleasures; which shall not end till the morning light.

19. “For the goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey.” For there is no fear they should be interrupted or disturbed; the man (whom they call my husband) being from home, and not likely to return in haste: for he is gone to a place a great way off.

20. “He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed.” Where he hath much business to dispatch; which will detain him so long, that I am sure it will be full moon (and now the new doth scarce yet appear, v. 9) before he can be at home again.

21. “With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.” In the representing of these, and many other like specious pretenses (of great affection to him, of all sorts of pleasure, of secrecy, and safety in their enjoyments) she showed herself such a mistress of her art, that she bowed the heart of the young man to become her disciple: and, having wrought upon his inclinations, she pursued her advantage with so much cunning; that she rather compelled than attracted him, by her charming voice, and her soft alluring language.

22. “He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks.” For he made not the least objection, but away he went immediately, and followed her like a great calf (as we speak in our language) or a stupid ox; that fancies he is led to the pasture, when he is going to be killed: or like a fool, who takes it for an ornament, when the stocks are brought for his correction, to be clapped upon his legs.

23. “Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.” Just so he hastily threw himself into her embraces, and dream of nothing but pleasure; till, like a rash soldier that falls unexpectedly into an ambush, he received a mortal wound by that, which he fancied would be his highest satisfaction; or like a silly bird that greedy of the food which is laid to entice it, never minds the snare that is laid together with it. So he eagerly longing to taste of her feast and the following delights, had not so much as a thought, that this was a design upon his life; and would not end, but in miseries infinitely greater than all his joys.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 7:24-27

24. “Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth.” This is a true representation, my dear children (whom I love unfeignedly, not deceitfully like those harlots) of the folly and danger of these lewd courses, in which youth is prone to be engaged: and therefore do not look upon it as an idle speculation; but give diligent heed unto it, and be ruled by my advice.

25. “Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths.” Let not one of you so much as entertain a thought of going to such a woman; much less of consenting to her enticements: or if any of you have been so unhappy as to be engaged in her company, let him think it is too much that he hath adventured to turn aside out of the right way, and not wander till he hath utterly lost himself in those strange paths, and cannot find his way back again.

26. “For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her.” Do not presume of being safe in such courses, and of making a good retreat at last: for many have been the examples of no mean persons, who have fain in their reputation, their estates, their health, their comforts of life, and in truth have utterly perished by her: innumerable are the mighty men, both for valor and for wisdom whom she hath brought to ruin.

27. “Her house is the way to hell, going clown to the chambers of death.” In short, to follow her unto her house, as this young man did, is the direct way to hell: every step that is taken to her bed (unto which she invited him to ascend) is in truth a going down to the dismal’ chambers of death, and to the most horrid miseries.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 7:1-5

1. “My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee.” There is great reason then, my son, to repeat the caution I have often given thee, against this and other vices: and to beseech thee, to observe my instructions, and to lay up my commandments in such faithful] remembrance; that they may not fail to produce the fruit of obedience.

2. “Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye.” For if thou wilt be ruled by them, assure thy self (as I have said before in chap. 4:4) thou shalt enjoy long happiness. Therefore observe them carefully with a tender affection to them; and looking upon them as thy safest guide and director, consent as soon to wound the apple of thine eye, as in the least to violate any of my laws.

3. “Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart.” Do not merely read what I write, imagining thou canst have continual recourse to them here in this book; but be so well acquainted with them, as to have them (as we speak) at thy fingers ends: or rather, let them be transcribed from hence into thy very heart.

4. “Say unto wisdom, Thou an my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman.” There embrace them with ardent love; and set such an high esteem on wisdom, that thou mayest invite it more and more unto thee: till it be as familiar with thee as an only sister, born at the same time with thee; and thou understand and delight in all her precepts, as so near a kin t Iwo, that thou find them to be the very reason and sense of thine own mind.

5. “Thai they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words.” Which will be a powerful preservative to thee from the snares of the naughty woman: who, though her company be so pernicious that God would have thee perfectly estranged from her, as if she were not of the Commonwealth of Israel, yet hath powerful charms about her, to flatter those into her embraces, who are not heartily in love with wisdom.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 6:1-11

1. “My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger.” And now, my son, that no difference may arise between thy wife and thee; be advised by me, not to pass thy word rashly for the money which thy neighbor or friend borroweth of another: much less stand bound for a stranger, whose honesty or ability is unknown to thee.

2. “Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth.” Young men indeed think this no great matter: but if thou hast been so incautious, as to be drawn into such engagements, look upon thy self as no longer a free man; but hampered and enslaved in dangerous obligations.

3. “Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend.” And therefore, in that case, immediately follow the counsel which I now give thee, my son; do thy utmost endeavor to be discharged, by pressing thy friend forthwith to satisfy the debt, or to give thee security against the creditor: make no delay, and stick not, if need be, to cast down thy self before him on the ground, and beseech him as readily to grant thy request, as thou wast forward to comply with his: be not modest at all; nor cease to urge and importune him by thy self and by thy friends, till thou hast prevailed with him.

4. “Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids.” Be not quiet till this be accomplished; nor take so much as a wink of sleep till thou art eased of this care: which, if thou understandest thy self, may well disturb thy rest.

5. “Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler.” For thou art in the same condition with a young roe, or silly bird; that is taken in the toile of the hunter or the snare of the fowler: and therefore struggle, like them, with all thy might, to get loose (if it be possible) and to be released from the bond wherein thou art entangled.

6. “Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.” Nor is industry and diligence requisite in this alone, but in all thine affairs: to which therefore, if thou art slothful, I must excite thee by the example of the ants; whose orderly and unanimous diligence, in collecting and preserving food for themselves, if thou wilt mark and observe, thou mayest be ashamed to be an idle spectator of their labors; and learn hereafter to imitate their provident care.

7. “Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler” Which is the more remarkable, because they have none to lead and direct them (as mankind have), no overseer to exact their labors; no supreme governor to call them to an account for any negligence.

8. “Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.” And yet they never omit the opportunity they have in harvest, to make provision against the winter; but toil perpetually in gathering, and carrying food into the cells they have digged for it in the earth; where they lay it up and secure it with admirable art; that it may neither be injured by the weather, nor stolen from them by other creatures.

9. “How long will thou sleep; O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?” O the strange idleness of mankind! who have many monitors and governors, that call upon them again and again, and stir them up in vain to labor. What recklessness is this, which makes thee, O sluggard, indulge thy self in laziness and sloth? as if thou wast made for nothing else, but to sleep and take thine ease?

10. “Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep.” Rolling thy self in thy bed, and ridiculously desiring thy pains may be spared, and thou mayest be suffered still, without any disturbance, to enjoy a little more sleep; when thou hast loitered too long, and put off the care of thine affairs from time to time, till thou lust none left to do it in.

11. “So shall thy poverty come as one that travaileth, and thy want as an armed man” But poverty comes apace upon thee, and before thou art aware leaves thee as naked, as if thou wast strip t by a highway man nay, extreme want seizes on thee unavoidably, like an armed man, which thou canst find no means to resist.

“He satisfieth the longing souland filleth the hungry soul with goodness.’

Psalm 107:9

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 6:20-35

20. “My son, keep thy father’s commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother.” And here, my son, must remember thee of what I said in the beginning about a reverend regard unto thy parents; especially when they warn thee against such wickedness’s as these: do not make light of their admonitions; but observe the precepts of thy father, and let thy mother’s commands be a law to thee.

21. “Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck.” Fix them in thy mind, and link thy affections so fast to them, that they may not only be continually before thine eyes; but seem the greatest ornament to all thy words and actions, when they are ordered by their directions.

22. “When thou pest, it shall lead thee; when thou steepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.” Thou wilt find the benefit of giving early entertainment to such good counsel from thy parents, in every passage of thy whole life: for when thou goest about any business, it will guide thee to doe [do] it honestly and successfully; when thou liest down to sleep, it will make thee rest secure of the guardianship of the Divine Providence over thee; and, when thou awakest in the morning, suggest to thy thoughts how thou oughtest to behave thy self at home and abroad.

23. “For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.” In the darkest times and the most dubious cases, it will both direct and comfort thee: for every particular commandment of God (which they teach thee) is like a candle; and the whole law is like the light of the sun; to show thee thy way, and to exhilarate thy spirits, while thou walkest in it: nay, the severest reproofs, which correct thy errors and reduce thee to obedience, are the way to the greatest happiness.

24. “To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman.” As those instructions and reproofs, for instance, ought to be accounted, which preserve thee from being deluded by the flattering speeches, and enticements of a lewd woman: from whom thou oughtest perfectly to estrange thy self, as from a sink of all wickedness.

25. “Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids.” Let me advise thee again (though I have done it oft) not to gaze upon her beauty, or upon her fine attire; but suppress the very first desire, which a glance of her may have kindled in thy heart: do not consent to pursue it in the least; much less suffer thy self to be caught in the nets of her wanton eyes, and thereby drawn into her dangerous embraces.

26. “For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life.” For such is the cunning of a harlot, that having got a silly youth into her toils, she will hardly let him go, till she have reduced him to the extremist beggary: and if she be another man’s wife, a train [trap] is laid for that which is more precious by far than all the treasures he hath spent, namely, his dearest life; which he foolishly loses for the short pleasure of a sinful lust.

27. “Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?” He may think perhaps to enjoy his pleasure so privately, that none shall know it; but that’s as unlikely, as that a man should take fire secretly into his bosom, and so conceal it that it shall not break out and burn his clothes.

28. “Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?” Who ever heard that fire will doe Idol no hurt, because it is closely lodged? or that anybody ever walked barefoot upon red-hot coals, and his feet escaped from being burnt?

29. “So he that goeth in to his neighbor’s wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent.” Even so is it sottish folly to imagine that a man shall suffer nothing, who lies with his neighbor’s wife: let him be who he will that commits that crime, he shall not escape unpunished.

30. “Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry.” For he is not a common thief, who only steals a man’s goods, and that perhaps out of extreme necessity, merely to satisfy his hungry appetite, which he knows not otherwise how to fill: such an one we are apt to pity, and do not expose him to shame, by whipping him, and laying stripes upon his back.

31. “But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house.” But when he is found out, he shall only make as complete a restitution as the law requires, though that perhaps may be no less than all that he is worth.

32. “But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.” But the adulterer robs a man of his wife without any such necessity, there being other and honest ways to satisfy his desires: and therefore hath no excuse, but must be looked upon as a stupid fool void of common understanding; and when he is found out be punished, not merely in his estate, but with the loss of his life.

33. “A wound and dishonor shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.” And besides the quarrels and other troubles wherein this sin may engage him, his reputation shall receive a deadly wound; and it will make him infamous, as long as he lives and when he is dead: for while his name lasts it shall not be mentioned without reproach; but have a brand of disgrace set upon it, which shall never be blotted out.

34. “For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.” For no restitution can be made, or satisfaction given in this case, as there may be in the other; no prayers neither, or submissions shall prevail with the injured husband: whose justly provoked indignation rises up to a furious rage, which will not pity or spare the adulterer (though the public Justice should be asleep) when he finds an opportunity to be revenged.

35. “He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.” Though he may be willing to expiate his crime, and redeem his life at any rate, it will not be accepted; the largest gifts will be refused; and though greater and greater be still offered, they will not appease his wrath: which pursues the adulterer implacably, and never rests contented, but in his utter ruin.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 6:12-19

12. “A naughty person, a Wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth.” By which means thou mayest be tempted to become the worst of men, a perfect shark, void of all faith and honesty: whose mouth never speaks a word of truth; but makes it his business by lies, or flatteries, or slanders, or perjuries, to maintain himself in his idle courses.

13. “He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers.” His very eyes are instruments of deceit, or mischief; for he makes signs with them to his companions, when they are to play their pranks: or if that be too broad, he secretly treads upon their toes; or signifies his mind by the motion of his fingers; for every part of him is employed to make his wicked meaning understood.

14. “Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he sowed: discord.” How should it be other ways, when his heart is a shop, furnished with nothing but all manner of perverse inclinations; which are perpetually at work to contrive some mischief or other: and (if they can do nothing else) by casting suspicions into men’s minds one of another, to stir up hatred, dissention, strife, brawling, law suits, and all manner of discord; which are the destruction of families and kingdoms.

15. “Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy.” And shall prove his own utter ruin; which, for this very cause, shall sooner than he thinks of in a terrible manner come upon him: when he fancies he hath carried his matters so cunningly, that nobody discerns his villainy, he shall on a sudden be looked upon as the pest of mankind; and, like a vessel broken into little bits, be incurably undone.

16. “These six things cloth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto Him.” For among offenses of this kind, nothing is more odious to the Lord (who is the dispenser of rewards and punishments) nothing more opposite to the Divine Nature, and which He more severely punishes, than these six or seven things; which are commonly found in such loose companions, as I have now described.

17. “A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood.” First, pride and haughtiness of spirit; which swelling a man with a vain opinion of himself, make him contemn all others, and overlook them as below his notice. Secondly, falsehood, or treachery; which stick not at any lies, or flatteries, or calumnies. And thirdly, a violent, cruel disposition; which makes a man rather embrue [soak] his hands in the blood even of an innocent person, than not have him removed, who stands in the way of his designs.

18. “A heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief.” To which add the fountain of all these, and of those that follow, a mind that studies nothing but how by fraud or force (though never so injurious to others) to satisfy some desire of pleasure, covetousness, or revenge: which produces three other abominable vices. First, forwardness to execute such mischievous intentions and desires cheerfully, without any check or delay.

19. “A false witness than speaketh lies. and he that soweth discord wrong brethren.” Secondly, an atheistical impudence, which makes a man in open court (when he is upon his oath) testify any falsehood against his neighbor; and lastly, such malicious envy, as loves to make the dearest friends fall out; and takes pleasure to see those at variance, who ought to be most closely united in brotherly affection.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 5:15-23

15. “Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well.” Such are the fruitless moans of a man that path quite exhausted himself in those lewd courses, which show how much better it is to follow the advice which I now give thee: marry; and in a wife of thine own enjoy the please re thou desirest, and be content with them alone; innocent, chaste, and pure pleasures; as much different from the other, as the clear, waters of a wholesome fountain are from those of a dirty lake or puddle.

16. “Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets.” Of whom thou mayest have a law full issue, which thou neediest not be ashamed to own; but openly produce, and send them abroad, like streams from a spring, to serve the public good: nay, a numerous progeny may be derived from your happy society, and match into divers other honest families.

17. “Let them be only thine own, and not strangers’ with thee.” Children that acknowledge no other father, because they spring from one whom thou enjoyest (like a fountain in thine own ground) to thy self alone: being taught by thy confining thy self to her, never to admit any stranger to thy bed; but to keep it solely unto thee.

18. “Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.” Happy shall thine every way be in such a wife; whom I advice [advise] thee to take in thy youth, and avoiding those filthy cruel harlots (vs. 9) to solace thy self in her innocent and delight-full company: whereby thou wilt long preserve thy youth, which they speedily deflower (vs. 10).

19. “Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.” Love her and cherish her with a most tender affection; and let her always seem amiable in thine eyes: if thou wouldst recreate and disport thy self (as some are wont to do with young fawns, and other beautiful’ creatures of like kind) let it be with her, as the sweetest companion; in whose embraces take such satisfaction, as to forget all other, and to be excessively transported with her as long as you live.

20. “And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?” Consider, my son (vs. 1), what I say, and deny if thou canst, that it is an unaccountable folly to seek in a vile harlot (to whom thou oughtest to be as great a stranger, as to her religion) that which thou mayest more fully, more pleasantly, securely, and constantly, as well as more innocently, enjoy in a pious wife of thine own nation.

21. “For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He pondereth all his goings.” And which is most considerable, enjoy with the approbation and favor of the Lord: from whom no man can hide his most private actions, but He plainly sees and weighs all he doth, wheresoever he be; and will exactly proportion rewards and punishments, according as he behaves himself.

22. “His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.” If he be a wicked fornicator or adulterer, for instance, let him not think to escape, because he is so cunning that nobody observes him, or so powerful that hone can call him to account: for his own manifold iniquities shall arrest and apprehend him; and he shall need no other chains to bind and hold him fast, to answer for them to God.

23. “He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his (ally he shall go astray.” Whose sentence upon such a person is this; that he shall inevitably perish (vs. 5), because he refused to follow these instructions; and not only miss of his aim of being happy, but like men that wander from the right way, precipitate himself into unexpected ruin (vss. 9-11) because he was such an egregious fool, as to take no warning by all that could be said to him; but still to commit innumerable sins (vss. 13-14) though he as told the many inconveniencies, nay, mischief they would bring upon him.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 5:1-14

1. “My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding.” I cannot too often awaken thine attention, (whoever thou art that puttest thy self under my instruction.) Especially in things of such moment as I am going to treat of: and therefore again I beseech thee, both to mind diligently, and to consider what I take to be true wisdom, and more than ordinary prudence.

2. “That thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge.” Which if thou observest, it will make thee so skillfully and discreetly cautious, that thou shalt not only be able to preserve thy self from the most subtle and dangerous deceits; but upon occasion to advise others, and keep them from being cheated.

3. “For the lips of a strange woman drop as a honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil.” As too many are by the arts of an harlot, from whom thou oughtest to estrange thy self as much as if she were not of the commonwealth of Israel: for she pretending the greatest love, allures inexperienced youth by her flattering speeches, and sweet voice perhaps and songs, wherewith she enchants them; and making them believe they shall taste nothing but the most delicious pleasures, her soft and smooth enticements slip down glibly into their unwary hearts, which are taken with her.

4. “But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.” But the beginning of this love is not so sweet, as the conclusion is bitter; and therefore think of both together, and believe what I now tell thee without making a trial: that after a short pleasure follows long pain, by the impairing men’s health, strength, estates, and credit; which they cannot reflect upon without trouble and vexation, and (if she do not quite destroy their reason) be filled with remorse of conscience and anguish of spirit: for, like a sword that cuts on both sides, she wounds both soul and body.

5. “Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.” In short, leads those that follow her to an untimely, shamefully, and miserable end: to have ever so little to do with her, is to approach to certain and inevitable destruction; not only here, but in another world.

6. “Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her ways are movable, that thou canst not know them.” For though thou mayest think to make a retreat in time, thou wilt be deceived: she having more ways than thou canst ever know (winding and turning herself into a thousand shapes) to keep thee from so much as deliberating about thy return to a virtuous course of life.

7. “Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth.” All which considered should incline those that read these things, to be obedient to me: who do not desire to restrain them from anything that will make them happy; but in tender affection advise them, not to be enticed by her flatteries to depart from those fatherly counsels, which out of mere kindness I give unto them.

8. “Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house.” If all will not be governed by them, yet do thou, whose mind is awakened to attend unto me, wholly shun all familiarity with her; nay, so much as the least aspect towards her: avoid her as thou wouldst the plague; and be so far from going into her chamber, as not to come near the door of her house.

9. “Lest thou give thine honor unto others, and thy years unto the cruel.” Lest thou forfeit all the reputation, which perhaps thou hast got by worthy actions, and grow contemptible among thy friends and acquaintance; who see thee prefer the company of harlots, and their base attendants, before that of the most virtuous persons: and thereby thou lose, not only thy fame, but sacrifice the flower of thine age, and thy precious time, to one that doth not love thee a jot; but could see thee perish without any pity.

10. “Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labors be in the house of a stranger.” And that will be the issue of thy impurity; which wastes first the strength and vigor of thy body, and then thy money and estate, upon a strange family, perhaps of another country: whose filthy lusts are satiated at the expense of thy spirits; and whose house and table are furnished with the fruit of thy care and labors.

11. “And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed.” And when things are come to this pass, that thy credit, thy friends, thy precious time, thy health, thy estate, and the pleasure too are all gone, and nothing left but an heavy heart.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 4:1-13

1. “Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.” Listen then all ye, that are desirous to learn, unto the instructions which out of a paternal affection I bring from God unto you: hearken to them, though they correct your present manners; and let your mind be so attentive, that you may know what it is to have a right understanding in all things.

2. “For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law.” They are no frivolous or indifferent matters which I teach you; but the most excellent things, and absolutely necessary to your happiness: therefore do not merely attend to them, but strictly observe my precepts, as the law and rule of your life.

3. “For I was my father’s son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother.” Do as I myself did, who remember that when I was a child, the son of a most wise and pious father, and under the careful eye of an affectionate mother who loves me most dearly above all her children, and while I was soft and flexible and apt to receive good impressions, looked to my education with great circumspection.

4. “He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live.” My father was wont to tutor and instruct me (1 Chron. 28:8; 29:2) saying, “Mind my words and faithfully retain them, not only in thy memory, but in thy affections: observe my commandments, and thou shalt enjoy long happiness.”

5. “Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.” And this is the thing I require of thee; not so much to seek after riches, as to treasure up wisdom; and endeavor to understand how to behave thy self upon all occasions; and when thou art well informed in thy duty, do not forget it, nor turn aside from the way into which I will direct thee.

6. “Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee.” Quit all things in this world rather than forsake the precepts of wisdom; stick to them and they will preserve thee from innumerable mischief; love them sincerely, and they will be a stronger guard than money can procure thee.

7. “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.” And as there is nothing comparable to wisdom, so the first step to it is to know as much, and to prize it accordingly. Begin therefore to be wise by looking upon the fear of God as above all earthly possessions, and by being willing, if it were needful, to give all thou art worth to know what is pleasing to Him.

8. “Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honor, when thou dost embrace her.” Thou canst not speak nor think too highly of this wisdom, as thou shalt find by happy experience. For if thou magnify it above all things, it will raise thy esteem and make thee great in the world; yea, when thou entertainest it with ardent love, thou shalt become most illustrious in the sight of God and men.

9. “She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.” Whatsoever else thou hast to commend thee and gain thee honor, this shall add unto it, and make it far more amiable: the fairest ornaments or the most beautiful crown that can be set upon thy head, shall receive luster from hence; and be settled there the more securely.

10. “Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.” Thus my father was wont to discourse to me, as I do to thee, my son; whom I earnestly again entreat to consider what I say, and to believe it that thou may lead a long and happy life.

11. “I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths.” I have already taught thee and will still inform thee in the wisest course unto it; not in those crooked ways of fraud and falseness, etc., which many take; but in the directs paths of integrity and truth in which I intend, as I have done hitherto, to lead thee.

12. “When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.” And if thy actions and designs have no other rule, thou shalt be at ease, and free from those straits and difficulties which others meet withal: and in case thy business shall require haste, this will be the safest, as well as the most inoffensive (if not the shortest) way to accomplish thy ends.

13. “Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life.” Resolve to try it, and though it should be contrary to thy present sense, yet do not refuse this instruction which I give thee; but take such fast hold of it, as never for want of care and pains, to let it slip out of thy mind: keep it as a most precious treasure, for all thy happiness depends upon it.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 4:14-27

14. “Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.” And if thou really intendest to be guided by me, remember the advice I gave thee in the beginning (Ch. 1:10) not so much as to enter upon their wicked course of life, or to keep them company, who regard not God and are injurious to men; or if thou hast been seduced into it, be not persuaded by their seeming prosperity and thriving condition to continue in it.

15. “Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.” Avoid it therefore with a just abhorrence; come not near it, but get as far as thou canst from their society, and decline all occasions that might invite thee into it, as dangerous temptations.

16. “For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.” For as mischief is their business, so they pursue it with a restless diligence, there being those among them, for instance, that cannot be quiet, nor have any satisfaction till they have executed their villainous intentions, but perpetually disturb themselves, that they may ruin others.

17. “For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.” For they live by robbery and spoil, having no other meat and drink, but what is the fruit of rapine and violence, and not of their honest labors.

18. “But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” Which makes a wide difference between them and righteous men, whose pure and innocent life is full of honor as well as joy, which increases continually together with their virtue, proceeding (like the splendor of the sun, which nothing can extinguish, nor hinder in its course) till it come to the highest pitch of joy and glory

19. “The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.” Whereas those wicked people live most uncomfortably, as well as basely and vilely, going on blindly to their own destruction (of which they are in constant danger, and grows more and more upon them) and yet they know not, no more than men in thick darkness, what mischief it is that suddenly may befall them.

20. “My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.” Therefore I do not without reason once more repeat my request unto thee (vv. 1,10) that thou wilt give diligent heed to my advice, and seriously consider those exhortations, which proceed from a sincere affection to thy welfare.

21. “Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.” Read them over and over again, and keep them perpetually in mind; or rather preserve them studiously, and lay them up, as a most precious treasure, in the closest affections of thy heart.

22. “For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.” For they will make all those exceeding happy, both in body and soul, who become thoroughly acquainted with them, and, how various soever their temper and condition be, will prove an universal remedy for all their grievances and troubles.

23. “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” And charge thy self with this, above all other cares, to set such a strict guard upon the inward thoughts, motions and affections of thy soul (which are besieged with many enemies) that thy consent be never obtained to anything, which thou oughtest to refuse: for thy living well or ill depends on this; and such as thy caution and watchfulness is in this, such will the actions of thy life be, which flow from thence.

24. “Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.” And as they that defend a city against an enemy set a strong guard at the gates and posterns, so do thou upon thy ears and upon thy mouth: never speaking things contrary to truth, honesty, and religion thy self, nor listening unto those that do, but banishing both, as far as is possible, from thy familiarity

25. “Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.” The eyes also are dangerous inlets into the heart, and therefore watch them well that they do not gaze about, and fasten on every object that invites them, but be fixed upon one scope, as thy thoughts ought to be, from which let nothing divert them.

26. “Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.” And before thou fixes and resolves upon any action, examine and weigh it thoroughly, whether it be agreeable to the rule of life, and the end thou aims at: and so thou shalt be constant to thy self, and confirmed in a steadfast course of well doing.

27. “Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.” From which do not suffer thy self to be drawn aside, either to superstition on the one hand, or to contempt or neglect of religion on the other. Let neither love of friends nor hatred of enemies, neither hope of pleasure and gain, nor fear of pain and damage, neither prosperous nor cross events ever move thee to turn into either extremes from the rule of virtue, but, whatsoever inclination thou findest that way, do not proceed to commit the least sin against God or against thy neighbor.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 3:1-12

1. “My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments.” Let me then again entreat thee, whoever thou art that comest to learn of me (who loveth thee with a fatherly affection), not to be careless and negligent in the observance of these instructions: but remember them, and love them, and set thy self heartily to do whatsoever I command thee.

2. “For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.” For this is the surest way to that which all men naturally desire, and seek to attain: a long life, in firm health, vigor and strength; with all manner of happiness and prosperity (Deut. 30:18,20).

3. “Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart.” Of this thou canst not miss, if thou wilt be steadfastly good and just; for the infinite bounty of God, and His faithfulness to His promises will secure these blessings to thee: therefore let my commandments be ever before thine eyes; fix them in thy memory, and in thy affections, as if they were engraven upon thy heart; and look upon it as the greatest ornament to be obedient to them.

4. “So shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man.” Which is as much as if I had bidden thee acquire favor with God; and understand, on all occasions, what is good for thyself: ordering all thine affairs with such judgment and prudence, as to be in high esteem with Him and with men.

5. “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.” And assure thyself there is no rule of prudence like to this, to confide in God entirely; and to depend wholly on His providence for good success in well doing: not imagining that by thine own wit and policy, thou canst contrive such events as thou desirest, and bring about what thou designeth.

6. “In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.” No, in all thine undertakings both private and public, be sensible of His overruling power; observe His laws; and implore His favor and blessing; and He shall guide thee in thy proceedings; and bring them to a happy issue, as He in His wisdom sees best for thee.

7. “Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.” Never be guilty of such folly as to conceit about thine own wit to be so great that thou canst manage things thereby in thine own way (neglecting the rules that He hath prescribed thee) to thy satisfaction: but have a religious regard to Him, who can either disappoint or prosper thee, as He pleases; and fearing to offend His Majesty, avoid most cautiously those practices that He hath forbidden thee.

8. “It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.” This is the way to preserve a good habit both of soul and body: and in all conditions to remain un-dejected; nay, cheerful and fully satisfied, whatsoever happens.

9. “Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase.” As for example, there are those who think it prudence to save all they can; though it be by robbing God Himself: but, if thou wilt be truly wise and happy, honor Him in His ministers, by paying them their tithes duly; and bringing oblations to His house at the three solemn feasts (Ex. 23:14,15); together with the firstfruits of all that thine estate produces (Ex. 22:29, 30) in token of thy gratitude to Him, and that all thou hast is His, and cannot thrive without His blessing.

10. “So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.” Which He will shower upon thee abundantly; and convince thee, by lading the earth with fruit, and sending a seasonable as well as plentiful harvest and vintage, that this is the way, not to diminish, but to increase the estate which God hath given thee. (Deut. 28:4, 5; 2 Chron. 31:10.)

11. “My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of His correction.” And suppose it be His pleasure that any affliction should befall thee; my son (v. 1), let not that dissatisfy thee; nor make thee, either doubt of His gracious providence over thee, or out of impatience take any unlawful course to remove it from thee.

12. “For whom the Lord loveth He correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.” But rather submit unto it, as a part of His fatherly discipline, which cannot hurt thee; but only correct something that is amiss in thee: for we are sure He loves those that keep His commandments; and therefore nothing that proceeds from His love ought to be despised; or received with an abject mind; but duly esteemed by them, and raise their expectation of some good from the affliction: which should no more make Him suspected of any unkindness, than a tender parent is, when he whips the child in whom he delights; and to whom he wishes so well, that he will not let him be un-chastised.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 3:13-26

13. “Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.” Happy, more happy than can be expressed, is that man who attains to this degree of wisdom; and acquires (though it cost him the greatest pains and labor) such an understanding of God and belief of His providence, as, notwithstanding any troubles that befall him, still to adhere unto Him in faithful obedience. (v. 7.)

14. “For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.” If it were to be bought for money, one would purchase it at any rate: for the profit of it is infinitely to be preferred, before all the advantages that can be made by silver and gold.

15. “She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.” The most precious pearls are not so valuable: nor can our boundless fancy present anything to our wishes that is worthy to come in competition with it.

16. “Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor.” For true wisdom presents us, as we say, with both hands: teaching us in the first place such prudence and moderation, as by the divine blessing prolong our days (which none of those things can do for us) and in the next place, adds both riches and honor; which men foolishly and vainly seek to get and to keep by other means.

17. “Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” And besides all this, there is a singular pleasure, nay, the highest delight, in all the acts of virtue to which wisdom directs her followers: who are always, either in perfect safety by well-doing; or if any trouble come upon them, have that inward tranquility and satisfaction, which nothing else could give them.

18. “She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.” In short, wisdom leads into a paradise; and supplies the place of that tree of life, from whence our first parents were banished: that is, gives not only a present, but an immortal satisfaction, to all those that strongly apprehend and retain her precepts; and therefore I again pronounce him happy (v. 13) above all other men, and above all expression, who constantly and firmly adheres unto them.

19. “The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath He established the heavens.” For they are a participation of that wonderful wisdom and understanding, whereby the Lord settled the earth, in that place where it remains fixed; and disposed the heavenly bodies in that admirable and unchangeable order, which He would have us imitate.

20. “By His knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.” In works of mercy and goodness especially: whereby we plainly communicate with Him in that knowledge, by which the Lord made fountains of water gush out of the earth, for the use of all living creatures; and the clouds drop down plentifully their refreshing dews, for the cherishing of plants and grass, which in hot countries many times have no other moisture.

21. “My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion.” My son (to whom my affection is so great that I cannot but again repeat it, vv. 1,11) let me prevail with thee to fix these good instructions in thy mind: look upon them as the most solid wisdom, and the greatest cunning and policy; and accordingly observe them.

22. “So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck.” For they will revive and cheer thee, when other things fail thee: and enable thee also with acceptable words to comfort those, whom the fame of thy wisdom shall invite to learn of thee.

23. “Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble.” When thou goest abroad about thy business, thou shalt dispatch it the more cheerfully; because thou art sure of God’s providence over thee: and wisdom will direct thee to avoid those stumbling blocks, by which others fall into sin and danger.

24. “When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.” And when thou comest home to rest from thy labors, thou shalt not be troubled with fear of what may happen whilst thou art asleep; but (having nothing within to discompose thee) shalt lie down securely, and by a sound and sweet repose, be refreshed to return to thy employment.

25. “Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh.” In which, if thou shouldst be interrupted by any rumors and reports of unexpected and approaching danger, let not that disturb thee: no, though thou shouldst see the wicked ready to lay all waste, or the divine vengeance bringing utter desolation upon them for their wickedness.

26. “For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.” For a firm hope in the Lord shall be thy support, even when thou art in a tottering condition: nay, when thy skill quite fails thee, and thou knowest not what to do for thy safety; He shall so direct and guide thee, that thou shalt be preserved from falling into the hands of those that lie in wait to destroy thee.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 3:27-35

27. “Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.” And as it will give thee great security of mind and confidence in God at such a time, not to be conscious to thy self of any wrong done to thy neighbor by denying to pay thy just debts when thou art able, so the remembrance of having done good to others will be far greater. Therefore let me advise thee to take a special care not to withhold relief from those whose needs entitle them unto it, when thou canst not pretend disability, but hast where with all to do it.

28. “Say not unto thy neighbor, Go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.” And as thou wouldst not have God to defer His help in such distresses as I spake of (vv. 25,26), so do not thou put off thy neighbor when he begs a kindness of thee by saying, I cannot now, come another time, tomorrow thou shalt see what I will do for thee; when if thou hadst a heart to it, thou couldest supply him now as well as then. And who can tell what shall be tomorrow.

29. “Devise not evil against thy neighbor, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.” And let not the quietness of any man’s temper, much less the confidence he hath of thy honesty and goodness, tempt thee to contrive any mischief to him, for the more securely he relies on thy virtue, and the less mistrust he hath of any harm from thee, the greater wickedness it will be, so much as to have it in thy thoughts to do him any injury.

30. “Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm.” For instance, do not bring false actions against any neighbor nor vex him with causeless or unnecessary suits at law; no, nor so much as pretend a cause for quarreling and falling out with him, when he hath done nothing to deserve it of thee.

31. “Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.” And what though thou shouldst see men thrive by oppression and violence, let not that provoke thee to emulate them; that is, to wish thy self in their condition, by imitating them in any of their injurious proceedings.

32. “For the froward is abomination to the Lord: but His secret is with the righteous.” For he that perversely departs from all the rules of truth and justice, is above all expression abominable to the Lord; even in his highest prosperity: but the Lord is a friend to men of sincere integrity, who know the secret of His providence in raising those wicked oppressors so high, that they may have the more dreadful fall.

33. “The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but He blesseth the habitation of the just.” The evil doer is under the curse of the Lord, though he live in the most stately palace: but just and good men ought to look upon themselves as under His care and blessing, and therefore very happy in the meanest cottage.

34. “Surely He scorneth the scorners: but He giveth grace unto the lowly.” Those proud oppressors and scoffers at good men, He will undoubtedly, not only confound, but expose to scorn and make them ridiculous in the eyes of the world. But He will cause the humble, modest and meek (who bare even their insolent scoffs patiently) to be had in honor and highly esteemed.

35. “The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.” They may be despised and debased for a time, but in the issue they shall be accounted the only wise men, and leave an excellent never dying fame behind them, when those impious men shall be famous for nothing but the shame and disgrace that shall fall upon them.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 2:10-22

10. “When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul.” And when wisdom hath thus taken possession of thy very heart and affections; and thou findest an inward pleasure and satisfaction, by observing the rules of piety and all manner of virtue.

11. “Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee.” This alone will be a sufficient security to thee, and make thee unwilling to depart from them. For thy own experience will teach thee that it is the greatest cunning to go in those plain and open ways; and that no men understand their own interest so well as they that cannot be persuaded by any means to forsake them.

12. “To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things.” Though otherwise thou mightest be seduced into a wrong course, yet this will deliver thee from that danger; and not suffer thee to be perverted by the mouth of him, that would subtly insinuate his lewd principles into thee.

13. “Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness.” Though thou shouldst be assaulted by many of them, thou shalt easily discover their folly; in leaving the straight, plain and even paths of virtue, to walk blindly they know not whither in the perplexed ways of vice and wickedness.

14. “Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked.” Being so mad as to rejoice when they have done any mischief; and having no higher pleasure than to pervert others, and make them as bad as themselves.

15. “Whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths.” That is, to draw them aside, and entangle them in intricate ways, directly cross to their own interest, safety, and pleasure; for the whole course of their life is nothing else, but a shameful contradiction to their soberest reason and best understanding.

16. “To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words.” But such is that sweet satisfaction which (as I said in verses 10 and 11) thou wilt find in the affectionate love of true wisdom, that it will deliver thee, not only from the snares of wicked men; but which is more dangerous, of a naughty woman: whose company (though so pernicious that God would have thee perfectly estranged from her, as if she were not of the Commonwealth of Israel, yet) hath powerful charms in it, to flatter thee into her embraces.

17. “Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God.” Above all other, from that filthy adulteress, who is so lewd as to leave her husband (though a worthy and perhaps noble person) to whom she was joined in her youth, when love is in its greatest warmth, and took him for her guide and governor: but hath wickedly broken the laws of God, and violated the solemn vow of fidelity to him, which she made when they were married.

18. “For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead.” The least degree of that discretion which wisdom infuses, will teach thee to avoid her society, who loves no body, now that she hath forsaken him that had her first affection, but seeks the ruin of all that go to her house: where, by one means or other, they are in danger to meet with their grave, and be sent to keep company with those old giants; who corrupted mankind with such filthiness and violence, that they brought a deluge upon the earth (Gen. 6:4,5,11).

19. “None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.” And this is very remarkable, that it is rarely seen that anybody who is drawn into her impure embraces, ever gets out again: but she holds them all so fast by her enchantments, and they are so blinded and bewildered by her arts; that, like men who have quite lost their way in a strange country, they seldom or never can hit into it, and recover themselves, to a virtuous way of living.

20. “That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous.” In which the sincere love of wisdom (verses 11,12, etc.) will so secure thee; that escaping her snares, as well as those of wicked men, thou mayest imitate those excellent persons the patriarchs and prophets; and be preserved in the paths of those righteous men, who followed after them.

21. “For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.” Which is as much as to say, that thou mayest be perfectly happy: for men of integrity (according to God’s promise, Deut. 11:8,9,21) shall peaceably enjoy this good land which God hath given us; and they that study sincerely to please Him in all things, shall leave it in possession to their posterity after them.

22. “But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.” But such impious men, as I spoke of (according to what God Himself hath also denounced, Deut. 11:17 and other places) shall be cut down from the earth; where they may flourish, like a tree, for a time: nay, they that give themselves up to doe [do] wickedly, and keep no faith with God nor man, shall be plucked up, like a tree, by the very roots, and leave none to preserve their memory behind them.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 2:1-9

1. “My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee.” And now, my son, whose happiness I most heartily desire, let me tell thee for thy further encouragement that if thou dost entertain these exhortations, which I have now given thee, and keep these precepts in remembrance, for the same end that corn is sown and covered in the ground.

2. “So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding.” Listening with diligent attention, not to the enticements of such evil men as I have described, but to the counsels and instructions of wisdom; with sincere affection applying thy mind to understand thy duty

3. “Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding.” And moreover, if thou expresses such a desire of it, as men do of that which they most need, and without which they are in danger to perish: praying those that are able to inform thee, and beseeching God likewise with ardent devotion, that He would bring [make] thee acquainted with it.

4. “If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures.” If thou dost value this wisdom above the greatest treasures, and show [show] thy esteem of it by studious seeking for it, as covetous men do for money: laying hold upon all occasions of profiting in knowledge, and pursuing thy advantages (as they do) when thou meetest with them; not giving over thy labor presently, if thou findest not what thou desirest, but inquiring still, and sparing no pains to know what the will of the Lord is.

5. “Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.” Then thou shalt not fail to understand what it is to be truly religious; and that there is no wisdom comparable to it: and shalt find also what reason there is to reverence, worship and solicitously obey Him, who is the Almighty Creator, Governor, and Judge of all the world.

6. “For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.” For as wisdom, no less than all other good things is the gift of the Lord (without whom all our pains and study about it will be ineffectual) so there is no doubt He will bestow it on those who esteem it above all worldly goods, especially this most necessary part of it: which He hath already imparted to us by His prophets and men inspired, who have given us a true knowledge and understanding of Him.

7. “He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: He is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.” And have assured us, that He hath solid and durable blessings (transcending all the transitory things of this life) reserved in store for upright men: and will protect all those by His Almighty Providence, whose care it is to perform and complete obedience to Him in all things.

8. “He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of His saints.” That so He may preserve them in their integrity, and encourage them neither to swerve from the rules of justice, nor to cease to exercise mercy and kindness: for He hath a great favor to such pious persons, and will be their keeper and defender in such proceedings.

9. “Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.” By which thou shalt understand that justice and mercy in thy private dealings, and faithful discharge of thy trust in all public offices, and uprightness in every other virtue; and all of them the best, the most plain, easy, and natural way a man can take to be happy.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 1:24-33

24. “Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded.” If you refuse this offer, nay, go on obstinately to despise instruction, then hear the doom which God, whose voice wisdom is, passes upon you. Because I have pressed you often to amend [correct], and ye would not yield to me; nay, I have been very urgent and earnest with you (offering you my assistance, heaping upon you many benefits, and when they would doe [do] no good, laying on corrections, as well as showing you the way to happiness) and

none of you would so much as attend unto me.

25. “But ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof” But, quite contrary, set at naught all the good advices I gave you, as if they had been but vain and idle words; and slighted all my reproofs and threatening, as if they had been ridiculous, or of no moment.

26. “I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh.” Therefore I will repay you in your kind [in the same manner]; and as little regard what becomes of you, in the day of your calamity (which like a dismal cloud I will bring upon you unavoidably). I will be utterly unconcerned, when you know not which way to turn your selves; but are become the scorn of those, who shall see you quake and tremble at that, which before you would not fear at all.

27. “When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.” Though it prove such a dreadful calamity, as will lay all waste, it shall not move me to relieve you, but I will let it sweep you and all you have away like a whirlwind. And when you fall into the most pinching outward distresses, and into the forced anguish of mind, you shall evidently see, it was my pleasure to reduce you to those inextricable straits and pressures.

28. “Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.” For then (hearken all you that have not yet sinned to this degree of obstinacy) it will be very hard for these men not to think of me, whom before they would not regard. Nay, they shall cry to me for help, but I will send them none. They shall seek my favor importunately, but without the least success.

29. “For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.” Because, when time was, they hated that knowledge, of which now they are forced to be desirous, and when they were earnestly solicited to have some regard to God and to religion, they would not consent unto it.

30. “They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof” But (as was said before) rejected my good advice with such disdain, as if it had been a grievance to them, and slighted, nay contemned all those reproofs, whereby I would have reclaimed them from their impiety.

31. “Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.” Therefore, as it is just that men should reap what they sow, and eat such fruit as they plant, so these men shall suffer the punishments, which their wicked doings naturally produce. Nay, be glutted and surfeited [surfeited—indulged to excess] with the miserable effects of their own counsels and contrivances.

32. “For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.” For let them alone and they need no body but themselves to destroy them: their escaping dangers, only making them more audacious to run into them and their receiving daily additions of riches and honors, supplying their folly with means to hasten their undoing.

33. “But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.” Such a vast difference there is between wicked and virtuous men. For whoso follows my counsels, and takes the courses to which I direct him, shall even then be safe, and possess what he hath in peace, when he sees these fools come to ruin. Nay, he shall not be so much as disturbed with the fear of any mischief, but rest secure of a watchful Providence over him.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 1:20-23

20.“Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets.” Let me advise you therefore, rather to hearken to the manifold instructions of wisdom ; whose most excellent counsels you cannot but be as well acquainted with all, as you are with that which is proclaimed in the open streets. For you hear them in the plain dictates of your own consciences, in the laws of God, in the mouth of His prophets and ministers, in the admonitions and examples of good men, and in the course of His providence and wise government; which call upon you more earnestly and loudly, than these lewd seducers, to follow and obey them.

21.“She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words.” There is no place where this cry of virtue and piety is not heard; which is not ashamed of itself, nor lurks in darkness, like those impious seducers, but appears openly in the midst of the greatest crowds. No noise can drown its voice, no business, either public or private, can thrust by its reproofs; but still it interposes itself, and everybody, even those wicked men that flee from it, hear it calling to them.

22.“How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?” The call to them represents their unaccountable folly and stupidity, in such unanswerable questions as these. Is it not apparent by many examples, that such men as you are deceived and abused with vain hopes? Why then do you continue the cheat? Have you not played the fool long enough, but you will still act against your reason and against your interest? Where lies the pleasure of scoffing at religion and virtue, that you will never give it over? Is any man so wise, that he needs no monitor? Or is ignorance so laudable, that a man should hate those who would inform him?

23.“Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.” Do not turn away from such checks as these; but repent in time, and resolve to learn your duty. It is not too late, for if you will listen to the secret rebukes of your own consciences, and to the open reproofs of my prophets, and follow their directions, I will plentifully communicate my mind, and infuse the very sense of it into you. It is not hard to find, nor will I conceal anything of it, but plainly show [show] you all that I require of you.

Take your circumstances from the Lord andyour difficulties to the Lord.

Do not look at the people who persecute you,but at the reason why you are persecuted.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 1:1-19

Simon Patrick wrote these comments on Proverbs in 1683

1. “The Proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel;” This Book contains some notable and very useful sayings of that wise Prince, King Solomon, the son of that devout Prince, King David: by whose special appointment he succeeded him in the government of God’s peculiar people Israel, for which (according to David’s prayer in Psa. 72, and 1 Kings 3:9) God endued him with an extraordinary degree of understanding.

2. “To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;” The scope of them is to make a man know what it is to be truly wise, and instruct him how to avoid those errors which men are apt to fall into, or to correct them if he hath been misled and run into them, and to make him understand when good advice is given him, nay, to be able to give it unto others.

3. “To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;” For they will furnish him with the most excellent notions, and make him capable to understand things of highest concernment: both how to be just and good in all private transactions, and in public trusts and offices, to judge and act according to right and equity, and every other way, to be upright and exactly virtuous.

4. “To give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.” The most unskillful and incautious persons, may here learn to be circumspect and wary, and they who are childish and inconsiderate get so much knowledge, as to behave themselves with prudence and discretion.

5. “A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:” As for him that is wise already, he will not lose his labor in reading this Book, which will make him still wiser. And indeed it is principally designed for the improvement of him that is so wise, as to be willing to learn more: who shall both gain a clearer knowledge of what he understands, and also make such additions, that he shall be fit to be a counselor to kings, and govern the affairs of State in the greatest kingdoms.

6. “To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.” He shall comprehend the most useful maxims, and be able to express them also with the greatest elegance: the weightiest sayings of wise men shall be easy to him, and their most abstruse notions shall not be hidden from him.

7. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” In the first place then, let all, both simple and wise, look upon an awful [reverent] sense of God, a devout affection to Him, and fear to offend Him as the chiefest point, and the very foundation of all wisdom, without which men are but fools, and having no regard to their Creator, will despise the wisest instructions that I can give them.

8. “My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:” Next to God let me advise thee, my son (or whoever thou art that comest to learn of me in this Book) to reverence thy parents. And not only to hearken unto thy father, when he teaches thee to fear God, or tells thee that thou dost amiss, but to let thy mother’s commands be a law to thee, especially when she bids thee observe the directions of thy tutors and public instructors, unto whom she commits thee.

9. “For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.” But value their counsels more than the fairest ornaments thy parents can put upon thy head, or the most precious chains wherewith they can adorn thy neck: for they shall add a far greater grace unto thee, and make thee more acceptable both with God, and with all worthy men.

10. “My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.” There will be those who will make it their business to seduce thee from obedience, but remember, my son, that none can love thee so well as they, and therefore if lewd persons (who have no respect to God, or to their pious parents and instructors) persuade thee to bear them company, by no means yield to their greatest importunities, but flee their society.

11. “If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause:” They may represent perhaps what advantage it will be to thee, to join with them in the breach of the very next commandment, to that of honoring thy father and thy mother, saying, Come along with us to our lurking places, where nobody can see us, and from thence set upon a wealthy traveler, who is to go that way, and take away his life; what though he be innocent, we shall the more easily dispatch him, when he suspects no danger and hath given us no provocation.

12. “Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit:” And though he should have many servants or companions with him to defend him, let not that affright thee, for (they say) we are enough of us to kill them all with ease and in a moment, or to strangle them and bury them alive: so that none shall escape to tell any tales; nor shall they make any noise; nay, it shall not be known what is become of them.

13. “We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil:” The booty shall be great (they say), for we are sure to find vast treasures, and all manner of precious things: enough to enrich us all, and furnish our houses bravely; that we may live splendidly all our days.

14. “Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse:” Come in for a share of it, and thou shalt have as much of it as we, who have been longer at the trade, for we live like friends, among whom all things are common; there is but one purse among us all, in which everyone hath an equal interest.

15. “My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path:” But, my son (or whoever thou art that wilt learn of me) let them not prevail with thee, to go along with them, or to betake thy self to such a course of life, but if thou findest an inclination to it, stop it immediately, and stir not one step in their company, or after their example.

16. “For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood.” For it is not one single murder (or robbery) in which they will engage thee (though the guilt of that is too horrid to venture upon), but they will be always hurrying thee to some new mischief or other, and as soon as one mischief is over, they will be ready for, and make haste to commit another.

17. “Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.” Flee from their society therefore, now that I have given thee this warning, and be not so foolish and incautious as the silly birds, who use to run into the snare or the net, which they see the fowler lay before their eyes (Ch. 7:23).

18. “And they lay wait for their own blood; they lurk privily for their own lives.” For as he doth not lay his net in vain, but they are caught therein, so assure thy self these men are setting a trap for themselves, when they lie in wait to take away the lives of others: for they shall not always escape the hand of justice, but at last be taken and suffer, either by a special vengeance of God, or by His ministers, what they have deserved.

19. “So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof”Such is the fate of him that greedily endeavors to enrich himself by such wicked means. As the bird enticed by a little chass falls into a snare, which it doth not perceive; so he on a sudden loses his life, to satisfy a vain desire of worldly pelf [riches], which then he cannot enjoy.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 18:1-24

8. “The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.” A whisperer of false stories makes a great show of harmlesness, if not of love and kindness, when he backbites others; nay seems perhaps to doe it very unwillingly, with great grief of heart, and not without excuses for the persons, from whom he detracts: but his words give them the most deadly wound; and sink deep into the mind of those that hear them.

9. “He also that is slothfull in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.” There is so little difference between a slothfull man and a prodigal, that they may be called Brethren: for he that looks not after his business, must needs come to poverty, as well as he that is a spend-thrift.

10. “The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.” The Almighty power and goodness of the great Lord of the World, is the securest defense in all manner of dangers: unto which a vertuous man may have the confidence cheerfully to resort, and hope to find protection; nay, to be there as safe, as if he was in an impregnable fortress.

14. “The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?” There is a vast difference between outward and inward evils; for a manly spirit will support us under bodily sickness and outward afflictions: but if the mind itself have lost its courage, and become abject, cast down and oppressed with grief and sadness; it is not in the power of man to raise and lift it up.

19. “A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.” But there are no contentions so sharp and obstinate, as those among Brethren: who grow so refractory when they have transgressed against each other, that it is easier to take a strong City, or to break the barrs of a Castle; than it is to compose their differences, and remove all the obstructions that lie in the way to their hearty reconciliation.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 17:1-28

3.“The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the Lord trieth the hearts.” The art of man hath found out means to prove whether gold and silver be pure or no; but none can search into the secret thoughts, designs and inclinations of men’s Souls, but the Lord: who (as those metals are tried by fire) many times proves and discovers what they are by sharp afflictions and troubles.

8. “A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it: whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth.” A gift is so tempting that it can no more be refused, than a lovely Jewel by him to whom it is presented: and such is its power, it commonly prevails over all men, dispatches all business, carries all causes; and, in a word, effects whatsoever a man desires.

14. “The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with.” When men begin a quarrel or a difference they know not where it will end: For the very first breach is like cutting the banks of a river; which presently overflows the neighboring grounds, but cannot easily be reduced into its bounds again. It is best therefore to make peace immediately, before both parties be involved in such troubles, as, like a deluge of water, lay all desolate.

17. “A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” Time makes proof of a Friend; who, if he be sincere, loves not merely for a fit, nor alters with the change of one’s condition: but continues steadfast in adversity, as well as in prosperity; nay, in straits and distresses, shows himself more like a Brother than a Friend.

28. “Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips, is esteemed a man of understanding.” Such a vertue it is to be silent, that he who understands nothing is deemed wise, as long as he holds his peace: and he whose mind hath such power over his mouth, as to keep it shut, that nothing may suddenly and impetuously go out, is wise indeed.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 16:17-33

17. “The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.” This is the constant aim and endeavor of upright men, the beaten path, as we may call it, in which they travel, to decline everything that is evil: and he who makes this his care, looking well to all his actions, that he doe nothing amiss, looks well to himself, and preserves his soul and body from destruction.

18. “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” Insolent behavior is the forerunner of utter destruction: and when men lift up themselves in their own thoughts, and over-look all others with contempt, they are in the greatest danger to stumble; and not to see that which will give them such a grievous downfall, as will break them all to shivers.

22. “Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools is folly.” A clear understanding and right judgment of things, like an inexhaustible spring, gives perpetual comfort and satisfaction to him in whom it is; and makes him very usefull unto others: but the learning of fools is frivolous and vain; and therefore, if they undertake to instruct others, they onely make them like themselves.

28. “A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.” Others of them have such a perversness in their spirit, that it is their business to disturb the world, and raise dissentions among those that would live in peace; by backbiting, detracting, and whispering false stories: making a breach even between princes and people, husband and wife, nay, the dearest friends and familiars, if they hearken to their tales.

32. “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.” He that can suppress the vehement motions of anger, deserves more praise than those mighty men who quell the enemies that oppose them; and he that hath power to govern all his own inclinations, affections and passions by reason, hath a nobler empire than he that subdues cities and countries by force of arms.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 16:1-16

2. “All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits.” Such is the blindness of self-love, that men can find no fault in themselves; but imagine all that they contrive and doe to be free from blame: which, when the Lord examines, who searches into the very intentions of men’s hearts, is found to be very defective, if not vicious.

3. “Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.” When thou undertakest anything, implore the Divine blessing; and committing the success of it to God’s providence, leave it to Him to give what issue to it He pleases: which is the surest way to have thy honest designs accomplished.

7. “When a man’s ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.” The best to have our enemies reconciled unto us is for us first to be reconciled unto God: for such is the reverence men bear to virtue, and such is the love which the Lord hath to virtuous persons, that when all their designs and actions are such as He approves: He inclines even those that were their foes to become their friends.

9. “A man’s heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps.” The mind of man designs an end, and contrives what means to use, and reckons perhaps what success they will have: but the Lord determines what the event shall be, and orders his motions perhaps to such an issue as never came into his thoughts.

11. “A just weight and balance are the Lord’s: all the weights of the bag are His work.” And it is worthy of His care, that there be no corruption in private, no more than in publick justice; for it also is of divine institution; the great Lord of all requiring just and equal dealings in all our commerce one with another; which He hath ordained should be managed with scrupulous integrity, in the smallest as well as in the greatest matters.

16. “How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!” But after all is done, to get so much wisedom as to know the difference between good and evil, and to understand how to behave a man’s self upon all occasions; is, beyond all expression, better and more to be chosen than the greatest treasures of gold and silver, which either the favor of princes can give, or his own industry acquire.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 15:16-33

17. “Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.” The meanest fare with the love of him that invites, and with agreement among the guests, is much better than the most sumptuous entertainment of him that hates us; or among those that quarrel and contend, even then when all differences should be forgotten.

18. “A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.” A man prone to wrath will easily disturb the most peaceable company, being apt to quarrel for very trifles: but a meek and patient person is so far from raising strife, that he will endeavor to compose it, when he finds it is begun by others.

24. “The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.” The way to be perfectly happy, a truly wise man sees, is to raise his thoughts, desires and hopes above this earth, and to have respect to God in all his actions.

25. “The Lord will destroy the house of the proud: but He will establish the border of the widow.” Trust not in riches and power, but in the great Lord of the world, who possesses and disposes all things; for He will overturn the family of haughty men (who forgetting Him, trample upon their inferiors) though never so strongly supported: but will preserve the poor widow, who hath no helper in her right; when such insolent persons invade it.

26. “The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.” For the Lord abhors all wicked designs, and mischievous contrivances: but the kind consultations and discourses of such as seek the welfare and comfort of others, are no less pleasing to Him than they are pure.

28. “The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.” A good man thinks it is soon enough to speak when he is asked about a business; and deliberates within himself to speak nothing that is not to the purpose: but bad men are rash and forward to utter their mind; and generally doe more hurt than good.

31. “The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise.” He that lends an attentive ear to wholesome reproof, and is obedient to it, is to be numbered among the wise; and shall at last be able to give good instructions unto others.

32. “He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.” And whosoever he be that refuseth, much more that contemneth, such instructions and reproofs, he sets his own soul at naught; and despiseth the means of his safety: but he that diligently hearkens to it, knows what is good for himself; and keeps his soul from being lost for want of understanding.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 15:1-15

3. “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” There is nothing either in heaven or earth that can escape the knowledge of God: who is everywhere; and observes the most secret motions and actions of men, both good and bad.

6. “In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.” A truly just and mercifull man is very rich, whether he hath little or much; because he is well contented, and what he hath is likely to continue in his family: but there is much disquiet and trouble in the greatest revenues of the wicked; which can neither stay long with him, nor give him satisfaction while he enjoys them.

10. “Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die.” Sharp and grievous punishments shall be inflicted on him that forsakes the virtuous path in which he began to tread: for he is not easily reclaimed; because it is unpleasing to him to hear of his faults; and in time he hates reproof, and then must certainly perish.

13. “A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.” When the mind of a man is inwardly satisfied and full of joy, it doth good to his body too; as appears in his cheerful countenance: but when grief or sorrow seizes on the heart, it dejects, enfeebles and breaks the most courageous spirit.

15. “All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.” All the days of a poor man are full of anxiety and trouble; especially if, when any affliction befalls him, he be discontented with his condition, and cannot bear with disappointments: but a good heart, and cheerfull spirit is a cure for this; especially a mind conscious to itself of designing well, whatsoever the success prove, is a perpetual comfort, and a higher satisfaction than the most delicious banquet of the rich and prosperous.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 14:18-35

21. “He that despiseth his neighbor sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.” But let such men know that it is a greater sin than they imagine, and shall be severely punished to overlook their poor neighbor, and deny him their charitable relief: which whosoever compassionately affords him, not onely doth a good deed, but shall be amply rewarded for it.

23. “In all labor there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.” If a man take pains in any honest employment, though never so mean, it will bring him in some profit: but to spend one’s time in talking onely, and perhaps boasting what he can doe, tends to nothing but to make a man a beggar.

29. “He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.” He declares himself to be a great man, and to abound with prudence, who is not soon provoked to anger by reproaches or ill usage: by which if a man be hastily inflamed, he exposes his folly, and makes it apparent to every body.

30. “A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones.” There is nothing conduces more to health and happiness than a quiet, gentle and contented mind: but envy, and such like fretfull passions, is as miserable a torment and consuming disease as rottenness in the bones.

31. “He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoreth Him hath mercy on the poor.” He that defrauds or oppresses the poor, forgets God, who can reduce him to the same condition; nay, affronts His Majesty, who hath promised to be the Defender of such helpless people: therefore whosoever hath any respect to God, will be so far from injuring, that he will show mercy and doe good to him that is needy.

32. “The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death.” When a wicked man falls into calamity, his heart fails him, and he is driven away from all his confidences, like the chaff before the wind, by the conscience of his own wickedness: but a righteous man is not dismayed in the greatest dangers; but remains steady and confident, even in death itself.

33. “Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding: but that which is in the midst of fools is made known.” A prudent person makes no unseasonable demonstration of his wisdom; but lets it lie quiet in his own mind, till there be a fitting opportunity to doe good with it: whereas fools cannot contain themselves, but presently vent whatsoever they know, though never so small, in every company whereinto they come.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 14:1-17

1. “Every wise Woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.”He hath a great treasure, whosoever he be, that hath a wise and virtuous wife; for she alone by her diligence and prudent administration, is able to raise her family, and increase its riches and reputation: but she that is foolish, and void of goodness, by her negligence, ill management, and luxury, without any other assistance, will lay it low, and waste all that bath been gotten by her predecessor’s care.

2. “He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the Loa but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth Him.” He that sincerely discharges his duty in all the actions of his life, hath a due regard and reverence to the Lord; from which all virtue flows: but he that cares not what he doth, so he

cloth but satisfy his own lusts, which is the very fountain of all wickedness; lives in a profane contempt of His Majesty.

3. “In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them. A fool is so insolent that he boldly calumniates hitters maliciously false charges] and wounds the reputation of others, though it come home at last, with a terrible back-blow up In himself: but wise men are careful] of their words, not to offend, much less abuse the meanest person; and thereby they remain in safety.

4. “Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox.” If the fields lie fallow and be neglected, a famine must needs follow: but good husbandry bestowed upon them makes great plenty.

5. “A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies.” A person of integrity will not be prevailed with all, either for fear or favor, to justify the least untruth: but a man of no conscience, who hath accustomed himself to lying, cares not how many falsehoods he testifies; which he utters without any difficulty.

6. “A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth.” He that scoffs and jeers at everything he reads or hears, would be thought wise; but loses all his pains, which perhaps he takes, to be so: when a serious person, who doth not think himself too wise to learn, easily and quickly attains the knowledge of things necessary, and useful for him.

7. “Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge.” Observe a fool (and a wicked man is no better) as diligently as thou pleases, and thou shalt never learn any good from him: and therefore it is best to flee the company of such persons, whose discourse thou perceivest tends to nothing but vice and mischief.

8. “The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit.” The greatest cunning and subtlety that a truly wise and good man studies, is to understand what he ought to do, and what to avoid, upon all occasions: but all the skill of wicked men, such is their folly, lies in cheating tricks, and in devising arts of circumvention and deceit.

9. “Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favor.” Lewd men, as if it were but a sport, care not what injury they do their neighbors, and when they have done, laugh at those that talk to them of making satisfaction: but among men exactly virtuous there is nothing but good will, which makes them live without offense, or presently reconcile themselves to those they have offended.

10. “The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.” Nobody can know what another suffers, so well as he himself: and he alone is privy to the greatness of that joy, which springs from the happy conclusion of his sufferings.

11. “The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish.” Men of sincere integrity are happier in a mean cottage, than the wicked are in their palaces: for, when the great and potent families of those wicked men are overturned, the despicable family of the sincerely pious shall flourish and grow illustrious.

12. “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end there of are the ways of death.” Examine everything strictly and impartially, and be not led merely by thy appetite: for that makes many actions seem innocent, which in the issue prove deadly destructive.

13. “Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful: and the end of that mirth is heaviness.” Do not think that every one that laughs is merry, or that profuse and immoderate joy is true pleasure; for it leaves the heart more heavy and sad afterward, especially when the mind reflects upon it: nay, such is the vanity of this present life, there is no joy without a mixture of sorrow; which oft-times treads so close upon its heels, that it immediately follows.

14. “The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied front himself.” He that, to avoid a danger, revolts from those virtuous courses, unto which he knows he ought to have adhered, shall bring upon himself misery enough, by his own devices: but a truly good man is, even in this, far-superior to him, that though he should suffer, his on integrity and the clearness and quietness of his conscience, gives him abundant satisfaction.

15. “The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.” It is a mark of great silliness to be credulous; that is, to take all those for friends who make profession of it, and easily to follow every one’s advice: for a prudent man proceeds cautiously; examining, before he trusts; and considering well, before he does as he is advised.

16. “A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.” A wise man being admonished of his error, and of his danger, is afraid of incurring the Divine displeasure; and instantly starts back from that evil way, into which he was entering, or wherein he was engaged: but a fool storms at those that would stop him in his course, and proceeds boldly and securely to his own ruin.

17. “He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.” He whose anger is presently kindled, and breaks out when he is offended, may do such things, when the fit is upon him, as none but a fool would be guilty of; but he is nothing so bad as him, who suppressing his wrath, lets it boil in his breast, and deliberately contrives how to take a cruel revenge: for most men are inclined to pity the weakness of him that is hasty, but this man’s wickedness is odious, and execrable [detestable] unto all.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 13:13-25

13. “Whoso despiseth the word shall he destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shone reworded.” He that despises the good admonitions or counsels that are given him, is his own enemy, and destroys himself: but he that reverently submits to the divine commandment makes God his Friend, who will reward him for it.

14. “The law of the wise is a fountain of lift to depart from the snares of death.” The instructions of a good man ought to be as a law to him that receives them; for like the water of a perpetual spring, they are most beneficial: especially to preserve him from those pernicious and destructive principles whereby too many are ensnared,

15. “Good understanding giveth favor: but the way of transgressors is hard.” A prudent, pious and regular behavior, is most amiable and acceptable to all men: but the conversation of such as live by no law but their own lusts, like rough way, is grievously uneasy.

16. “Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge: but a fool layeth open his folly.” All prudent persons are so cautious not to discredit themselves, that they undertake nothing but with due deliberation, and what they understand: but a fool discovers his weakness to be greater than was thought, by rash meddling with matters out of his reach.

17. “A wicked messenger falleth into mischief: but a faithful ambassador is health.” A messenger, or a minister, that wickedly betrays his trust, is so injurious to (his prince or) him that employs him, that he shall not escape a just punishment: but he that faithfully dischargeth this office (healing suppose, or preventing differences and breaches) procures safety to himself, as well as to the person that used his service.

18. “Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honored.” He that proudly rejects instruction, and disdains to be checked in his lewd courses, is likely to be a beggar, and exposed to the public scorn: but he that is so humble as to give a due regard to reproof, and to correct his errors, not only gains a just esteem, but is likely to rise unto dignity and honor.

19. “The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul: but it is abomination to fools to depart from evil.” It is an high satisfaction to enjoy what we earnestly desire: but fools herein defeat themselves; being so wedded to their wickedness, that they will not quit it, if that must be the condition of their being so happy.

20. “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.” He that keeps company with wise and good men is likely to be so himself; that is, to be happy: but he who associates himself with the wicked, shall be as certainly ruined, as he will be unavoidably infected with their wickedness.

21. “Evil pursueth sinners: but to the righteous good shall be repaid.” The wickedness of sinners pursues them to their unavoidable destruction: and the good which righteous men do, will infallibly return into their own bosom, and reward them with many blessings.

22. “A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children’s children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.” A man that doeth good with his estate, takes the surest course to settle it upon his posterity for many generations: but the wealth of him, who regards nothing but his own sinful lusts and pleasures, shall be transferred from his family unto one that is truly virtuous.

23. “Much food is in the tillage of the poor: but there is that is destroyed for want of judgment.” A poor man, many times, makes a plentiful provision for himself and his family, out of a few acres of land; which he manages judiciously and honestly: but there is a sort of men, whose larger estates are wasted; either for want of skill to improve their ground, or because they do not pay the hireling his wages.

24. “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.” Fond affection, which makes a parent forbear to chastise his child for the faults that cannot otherwise be amended, is no better than hatred; for it helps to undo him: therefore he that truly loves his child must not be so indulgent; but as soon as ill inclinations begin to appear, while he is tender and flexible, give him early correction as well as admonition, before he have accustomed himself to the doing evil.

25. “The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul: but the belly of the wicked shall want.” A righteous man never wants satisfaction, because his desires are moderate, and he lives in a temperate use of God’s blessings: but wicked men, some of them bring themselves to extreme poverty, by their luxury and riot; and others of them are indigent even in the midst of the greatest abundance; because their desires are insatiable, and they never think they have enough.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 13:1-12

1. “A wise son heareth his father’s instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.” A good child will reverently receive and obey, both the instruction and the reprehension of his father: but there is no hope of him that laughs and scoffs when he is admonished or chidden [chided] for his faults.

2. “A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence.” He that speaks well of others, or gives them faithful counsel, shall reap the benefit thereof himself: and so shall they that perfidiously calumniate or deceive them, suffer themselves that injury which they desired to do their neighbors.

3. “He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.” It is worth a man’s pains to watch over his tongue; for he that carefully observes every word he speaks, preserves himself from much trouble and danger: but he that blurts out everything that comes into his head, not minding what he saith, is in the ready way to ruin.

4. “The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.” There is nothing gotten by sloth, neither riches, nor learning; which he in vain desires that will not labor for them: but the diligent and industrious shall never want satisfaction, but enjoy perhaps a great deal more than he desired.

5. “A righteous man hateth lying: but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame.” A good man not only avoids but hates all manner of falsehood, both in word and deed: but the wicked delights to abuse others with such abominable lies and frauds, as make him no less loathsome than a stinking carcass; and so contemptible, that he dare not show his face for shame.

6. “Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner.” The justice of all honest and upright designs will be a sufficient security to them: but all wicked contrivances are overthrown by their own iniquity.

7. “There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet bath great riches.” You will be deceived if you judge of men by the outward appearance; for there are those who have the vanity to make a great show in the world, when they are not worth a farthing: and others, who are so cunning as to dissemble their vast estates under the garb of poverty.

8. “The ransom of a man’s life are his riches: but the poor heareth not rebuke.” Rich men are not always so happy as they are imagined; for their wealth sometimes only serves to make them accused of high crimes, and then to bring them off with a huge sum of money which they pay to save their lives: but nobody is apt to find fault with the poor, or to bring any charge against them.

9. “The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.” The happiness of the just is great and illustrious, like the light of the sun; and increases still to their endless joy: but the happiness of the wicked is weak and dim, like the light of a candle; and will at last be utterly extinguished.

10. “Only by pride comet!: contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.” They that have an high conceit of themselves and will yield to none, declare their folly; in that they can do Idol nothing without strife and contention: but they that arc so humble as to be advised by others, doe all things prudently, in quietness and peace.

11. “Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labor shall increase.” Wealth ill gotten (by lying, gaming, cheating, etc.) soon wastes away: but what is gotten by honest labor swells to a greater heap, which molders not but still increases.

12. “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.” The delay of that which a man eagerly expects is such an affliction, that it differs little from a lingering disease: but when he enjoys what he bath long looked for, it restores him presently to his former vigor and liveliness.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 12:21-28

21. “There shall no coil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be filled with mischief” The divine Providence takes a peculiar care of good men, to avert the harm that the iniquity of the wicked intends them: which shall fan upon themselves in such abundance as to overwhelm them.

22. “Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are His delight.” It is thought no great matter if a man break his word, or any way deceive his neighbor; but know that this is a thing exceeding hateful! to the Divine Majesty: and on the contrary they that faithfully perform their promises, and in all things deal truly with their neighbors, are acceptable to Him.

23. “A prudent man concealeth knowledge; but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.” A prudent man conceals his knowledge, and will not make a show of being so wise as really he is: but a fool publishes his ignorance, as if he was ambitious that everyone should know he is a fool.

24. “The hand of the diligent shall hear rule: but the sloth shall he under tribute.” He that taketh pains in an honest employment shall take his ease at last; nay, raise himself to dominion and power: but he whose sloth make him live by shirking and deceit, shall bring that toil upon himself which he would avoid; when his poverty and villainy have reduced aim to be a slave.

25. “Heaviness in the heart of nun: maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad.” Anxious cares and solicitude how to lire depress the spirit of a man, otherwise magnanimous: but the kind and encouraging discourses of a friend (much more the gracious? promises of God) erect it; nay, make it glad.

26. “The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor: but the way of the wicked seduceth them.” As in other things, so in this a righteous Mall is more excellent than his neighbor, that he doth not delude himself with vain hopes; nor miss his end, as the wicked doth in all his designs.

27. “The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.” There is nothing more vile than a lazy fellow that lives by cheating; who, if he catch, shall not be able to keep his prey: but he is a valuable man, who by honest diligence getteth wealth; which shall durably remain with him.

28. “In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.” True goodness leads unto endless prosperity and happiness: nor is there any one action of virtue that tends to make a man miserable; as all manner of wickedness doth.

There is nothing more dangerous than for a soul tospeak of truth, when not living in that truth.It is the road to a fall.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 12:11-20

11. He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.” He that takes pains in an honest employment, suppose in tilling his land, shall find it requite him with sufficient, if not plentiful, provision for himself and his family: but he that is idle, falling into the company of loose and wicked persons, will find at last (by the desperate courses into which they will lead him) that he wants not only bread, but understanding.

12. “The wicked desireth the net of evil men: but the root of the righteous yieldeth frit.’ The wicked desires two things, first to do as much mischief as he can by his wiles and arts of deceiving, and then to be secure in his wickedness: but the righteous make everybody the better for them, and thereby enjoy that safety which the other have only in their wishes and desires.

13. “The wicked is snored by the transgression of his lips: but the just shall carte out of trouble.” The wicked ensnares himself by that deceitful! talk, wherewith he designed to have ensnared others: but the righteous escapes the danger; nay, by his prudent discourse avoids very great difficulties, wherein other-ways he might have been entangled.

14. “A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth: and the recompense of a man’s hands shall be rendered unto him.” There is no man gives good counsel and advice (especially in public affairs) but he shall reap the fruit of it abundantly himself: and there is not good work he doth for the benefit of others, but God will requite it, and make it turn to his own good account.

15. “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.” A fool is so conceited that he consults nobody but himself; for whatsoever he doeth, in his own opinion he is always in the right: but a wise man will not rely upon his own judgment alone; but suspecting himself, makes use of the sound advice of other men.

16. “A fool’s wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame.” A fool (like a beast) is no sooner provoked but he grows angry; and which is worse, it appears immediately in his countenance, words and actions: whereas a prudent man is not unseemly transported by his passion; but stifles his resentments, even of the most reproachful injuries that are done him.

17. “He that speaketh truth showeth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit.” He that freely and boldly speaks the truth and all the truth, and nothing but the truth, demonstrates himself an honest man and doth justice unto others: but he that conceals the truth or forges falsehoods, and testifies unto lies, declares himself both a deceitful and mischievous person.

18. “There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.” A cut-throat is not more pernicious than he; and they are not much better, whose business it is by secret calumnies to wound the reputation of their neighbors, or to make discords and divisions among them: which a good man uses all his skill to cure; persuading them to love, unity and peace.

19. “The lip of truth shall be established forever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment.” He that speaks the truth (being always conformable to himself) hath this advantage, that he can never be disproved, nor consequently discredited: but a liar, though he may at present be believed, is soon confuted; for he is apt to contradict himself and blast his own reputation forever.

19. “Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counselors of peace is jay.” They do but deceive themselves, who look for any satisfaction from dissentions and disturbances; which they cannot contrive without much fear and anxiety of mind: but as they are always cheerful who consult nothing but peace, concord, and happy settlement, so they will have great joy, whatsoever the issue be of such good designs.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 12:1-10

1. Whose loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish.” It is an excellent sign that a man will be wise and good, who not only patiently bears with those that tell him of his faults, but loves and is thankful for reproof: which he who not only declines but hates, and is thereby in raged, gives way to such brutish passions and desires that there is little hope he should ever be a man.

2. “A good man obtaineth favor of the Lord: but a man of wicked devices will he condemn.” He that studies how to do good to others attracts the good will and blessing of the Lord upon himself: but he who contrives mischievous designs, under a specious show of religion and the public good, shall be judged by Him who knows the heart, to suffer what he deserves.

3. “A man shall not be established by wickedness: but the root of the righteous shall not be moved.” For no man, though never so subtle or powerful!, shall be able to establish himself and his family who lays the foundation of his greatness in wickedness: but the righteous, like a tree that hath taken a deep root in the earth, though shaken with storms and tempests, shall remain unmovable in a flourishing estate.

4. “A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.” A wife that strenuously employs herself in her domestic affairs, and can prudently command her own passions and desires, is a singular ornament and honor to her husband, who may well glory in his happiness: but she whose laziness, or lasciviousness, or other infamous quality makes him down his head for shame, is an incurable grief and vexation, consuming him and all that he hath.

5. “The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit.” The designs of good men are managed with exact justice and truth: but the contrivances of the wicked are carried on with fraud, dissimulation, and all manner of deceit.

6. “The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood: but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them.” Nay (such is the height of their wickedness), they consult one with another, and lay plots to take away secretly the life of those who stand in the way of their designs: but men sincerely good give the best advice they can to deliver such innocent persons from their bloody snares.

7. “The wicked are overthrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand.” And God befriends them also, who not only defeats those wicked projectors in their designs, but so totally overthrows them and their families that no footstep of them remains: whereas He not only continues, but settles the just man’s family in a durable succession (as I have often said), when they that assaulted them are quite extinct.

8. “A matt shall be commended according to his wisdom: but he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised.” True prudence, directing a man to effect his ends by fair and honest means, will procure him the greatest esteem, and the most lasting praise: but he who contrives by fraud, and such like crooked ways, to attain his aim, shall fall into utter contempt, and be scorned by all as a foolish knave.

9. “He that is despised, and birth a servant, is better than he that honoreth himself, and Jacket!: bread.” He is far happier who makes no skew in the world, but bath a competent estate; than he who appears in great splendor and pomp abroad, but wants bread to eat when he is at borne.

10. “A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the lender mercies of the wicked are crud.” A good man takes care that his beast be well used, and have food and rest convenient for it; which is more than mere bent upon wickedness will do for their neighbors: for their very kindnesses, being treacherous, are a cruel cheat; nay, the highest expressions which they make of tenderness and compassion (whereby they induce others to repose a trust in them) are intended merely as a cover, for the mischief they mean more securely to do them.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 11:1-10

1. “A false balance is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is His delight.” It is not so small a sin as men imagine, to cheat their neighbors (though it be only in a little matter) but extremely hateful and detestable to the great Lord and Governor of the world: as on the other side, exactly just and equal dealing in all our commerce one with another, is highly pleasing to Him.

2. “When pride corneal, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.” Do not entertain an haughty conceit of thyself, nor insult ‘gloat] over others; for the folly of this appears, in drawing along with it that contempt and disgrace, which above all things such men would avoid: therefore be humble and modest; the wisdom of which is manifest, from the universal respect which it gains everywhere.

3. “The integrity of upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.” The integrity of those that uprightly observe the rules of Virtue, is their highest prudence, and safest guide, through all manner of difficulties and dangers: but the crafty wiliness of perfidious men, who will be tied unto no laws, is mere folly; and shall be so far From preserving them, that it shall prove their certain destruction.

4. “Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death.” Heaps of wealth, amassed by extortion or covetousness, shall as little avail as subtlety and cunning, when God in His righteous displeasure shall punish the world by a common calamity: but justice, accompanied with mercy (as bath been observed already), will befriend him that bath constantly practiced them, and rescue him even when there is no hope of safety.

5. “The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.” Remember this (and be not nauseated at the repetition of it, for it is a weighty truth) that there is no surer guide to direct men in the plain way to safety, or any other good, than a sincere and impartial observance of all God’s laws: but that the wicked shall perish by those very impious courses (of lies, breach of promises, perjuries, and oppression) whereby they think to greaten or to secure themselves.

6. “The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness.” Remember it I say (for it cannot be too often inculcated) that the virtue of unfeigned and entirely upright men shall be their preservative when they are in danger: but they that are governed wholly by their own depraved desires and interests, shall be entangled and inevitably perish in their own naughty contrivances.

7. “When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth.” Do not imagine therefore that they have the advantage of others, who are loose from all laws. They may seem so to have for the present; but beside what I have now said, it must be considered that death (and how suddenly doth that sometime overtake them) utterly destroys all their projects and hopes: whatsoever they expected to accomplish by their riches, or their power, or their friends, it perisheth together with them.

8. “The righteous is delivered mil of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead.” Nay, before that it is frequently seen, that a just man is unexpectedly drawn out of those straits and difficulties wherein he was perplexed, and the wicked (who perhaps brought him into them) takes the place which he bath left; falling into those very distresses, from which the just is happily freed.

9. “A hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbor: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.” And more than this, a good man hath this advantage by his wisdom, that it sometimes instructs many how to evade those snares, which the profane hypocrite, with counterfeit professions of friendship; lays to destroy his neighbors.

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

We see also in this how amiable virtue and how hateful! vice is, that the inhabitants of a city generally leap for joy when good men prosper and are advanced unto power: but are so far from pitying the downfall of the wicked, that they shout when they behold them tumbling from the high places to which they were raised.

The Holy Spirit makes us feel the love of the Father,He brings as into libertyby showing us not that we are little,but how great God is.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 11:11-20

11. “By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrow by the mouth of the wicked.” Men of unbiased virtue make a city flourish by the blessings they procure for it from heaven, by their prayers, by their prudent advice, their pious admonitions, and their constant study of the public good; but the wicked, by their blasphemies, their evil counsels, their pestilent maxims, their impious doctrines, whereby they corrupt men’s manners, utterly subvert the good estate thereof.

12. “He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbor: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace.” It is a great weakness to speak contemptuously of any man, or to render him ridiculous (for no man is so mean but he is sensible of despisal, and may find ways to show his resentment), therefore a thoroughly prudent person, whatsoever he thinks of others, saith nothing to their reproach.

13. “A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.” A man whose trade it is to ingratiate himself by defaming others, will not stick most treacherously to discover the secrets wherewith they have entrusted him: but a man whose mind is steadfastly fixed to be true and faithful to his neighbors, will study (though they have not desired him) to hide those things, which being known may prove injurious to them.

14. “Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.” Where prudent counselors are wanting a nation goes to wrack, as certainly as a ship cloth without a pilot: nor is one sufficient; but then a country is safe when there are many wise men to govern affairs that if one fail, there may be enow [enough that] still remain; or what one or two sees not, others may be able to discern.

15. “He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth suretyship is sure.” He is in great danger to be undone who stands bound to pay the debts of another man, especially of a stranger whose ability and honesty is unknown to him: and the way to be secure from that fear is not only to avoid such engagements oneself, but to abhor to see other men enter into them.

16. “A gracious woman retaineth honor: and strong men retain riches.” Beauty and virtue in a woman advances her to honor; as formidable strength and power in men advances them to riches: and as their principal care is to keep their treasures, so hers should be to preserve her reputation.

17. “The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.” He that hath an heart to be kind and bountiful unto his neighbors, will have this advantage by it, among many others, that he will not deny what is fit and convenient to himself: whereas the covetous and hard-hearted, as he hath no regard to his nearest relations, so he pinches his own flesh by his sordid way of living.

18. “The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.” He thinks perhaps hereby to raise himself, or his posterity to greatness, but like all other wicked men, will be deceived in his expectations; for the event of his actions never answers the design: but virtuous men shall infallibly reap the fruit of their pious, just and charitable labors.

19. “As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death.” Thus God orders it in His providence, and thus it is in the nature of things that virtue tends to make men happy: but the more eagerly any man pursues an evil thing, the more he is bent upon his own destruction.

20. “They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord: but such as are upright in their way are His delight.” Of all other men they are most odious to the Lord who pretend to justice, kindness and truth; but study and devise how to compass their ends, though it be by the wickedest means: as on the contrary, they whose exact observance of the rules of righteousness in the whole course of their lives, testify the integrity of their hearts, are highly in His favor and love.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 11:21-31

21. “Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.” Though the wicked endeavor to strengthen himself and his family by powerful leagues and confederacies, and his successors also have mighty associates to maintain his acquisitions, they shall not be able to defend themselves from the punishment their iniquity deserves but the posterity of the righteous need not be at such pains; but though deserted by men, escape the danger into which the other fail by the help of God alone.

22. “As a jewel of gold in a swine’s snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.” As a golden ring is ill placed in the snout of a swine, which is always muting in the mire: so is beauty ill bestowed on the body of a woman whose mind having lost all favor and relish of virtue, carries her from her husband to wallow in filthy lusts and adulterous pleasures.

23. “The desire of the righteous is only good: but the expectation of the wicked is wrath.” The righteous desire nothing but that it may be well with all men; but the wicked wish for trouble and disturbance, especially that they may execute their malice and wrath upon those whom they hate: and accordingly God will deal with them; good things shall be the portion of the righteous, but His just indignation shall frustrate the expectation of the wicked.

24. “There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.” You may see by this how miserably they are mistaken who imagine none so wise as the penurious; that you shall find here and there a man who communicates readily and liberally to the necessities of others; and yet his estate is so far from being impaired thereby, that it increases: when others who are so saving that they will part with nothing, no not upon the most just occasions, do not thrive at all, but by one means or other become beggars.

25. “The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself” Let not him therefore that bestows benefits imagine thereby he shall be impoverished, for it is the certain way to enrich himself: and the larger his charity is, and the more diffused for the refreshment of others, the greater the abundance shall be poured on him, and the abler still shall he grow to do more good.

26. “He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him: but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it.” He that hoardeth up corn in time of scarcity, on purpose to raise the price, shall fall into the popular hatred; and be loaded with many a curse: but he who then opens his granaries and sells at a moderate rate, shall not only have the peoples good word, but the blessing of God.

27. “He that diligently seeketh good procureth favor: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him.” He that from the time he riseth, studies nothing but to doe good to others, shall obtain favor both with God and man: but he whose business it is to doe mischief, shall draw upon himself the evil he deigns against others.

28. “He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.” He whose confidence in riches as the surest support and defense, makes him covetous, unjust and unmerciful, shall fall into decay like a withered leaf: but they whose pious dependence upon God, makes them just and charitable; like a flourishing tree, shall thrive and prosper.

29. “He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart.” He that makes and cherishes dissentions and factions in his own family (or kingdom) may by making a great bustle and stir, seem to be a notable man; but will not only be deceived in his expectations, but defame his government, and bring his estate to nothing: nay, it is oftentimes seen that he who is thus foolish, loses all his authority, and becomes a servant to him who administers his affairs with a more prudent care.

30. “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.” The benefit the world receives from a just and charitable man is so great that it may be compared to the fruit of the tree of life; which keeps mankind from being miserable: but he is the greatest benefactor of all who communicates wisdom so charitably and seasonably; that he draws souls to the love of virtue.

31. “Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner.” But who is there so good as to doe or to suffer no evil? And if God do not let the just and charitable men (mark what I say), they who are so useful, and beneficial to the world go without correction; who can think that the wicked, who is good for nothing, but obstinately contemns and breaks all laws of God and man shall escape the just punishment of his evil crimes?

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 10:1-11

1. “The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.” Let the father’s care in educating his children (especially his son the heir of his family) be equal to the joy he will have in their well doing: and let the mother beware that her indulgence do not spoil them; for they will have the greatest share in the heaviness, which their untowardness will give them.

2. “Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death.” This is more necessary than the care of heaping up riches for them (which many times tempt men to fraud and oppression), for though great treasures be gotten by such means, they will be so far from availing the owners in time of distress, that they will rather expose them to be a prey; when justice and mercy with a little wealth will procure safety and deliverance from the greatest dangers.

3. “The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but He casteth away the substance of the wicked.” The reason is, the Lord hath treasures in store for the just, especially for the merciful man; and will send him such supplies in his straits, that he shall not starve, but rather have enough: but He will drive the wicked out of their ill-gotten possessions, whereby they think to secure themselves from want.

4. “He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.” And next unto virtue let children be bred up to industry; without which indeed they cannot be virtuous: for both poverty and fraud are commonly the fruit of negligence and sloth; when an active diligence is wont to enrich men, without the help of deceit.

5. “He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.” Especially if prudence be added to diligence and opportunity be not neglected: for as he that makes hay (as we speak) while the sun shines is commended for his provident care; so he that by taking his ease, when he should gather the fruits of the earth, loses all the benefit of his former labors, is a shame to himself, and unto those that bred him.

6. “Blessings are upon the head of the just: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.” The blessings of heaven shall visibly descend in great plenty upon the just and merciful man: but their own iniquity shall violently overwhelm those, to their utter confusion, who wickedly defraud and oppress their neighbors.

7. “The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot.” And though envy may sometime cloud a good man for the present, yet after death an honorable mention shall be made of him; and he shall be commemorated with praises: when the memory of the wicked, who now perhaps are extolled, shall either perish or stink and be abominated.

8. “The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall.” He that is truly wise will thankfully receive such good advices as these, and avoid the dangers of which he is admonished: but he whose wisdom lies only in his tongue (which moves upon all occasions, and will not let him learn of others) ruins himself, even by his own imprudent prating.

9. “He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known.” He that deals sincerely in all his actions is both safe and secure: but he that relies upon fraud and tricks of deceiving shall find his cunning fail him at the last; and besides can never be secure that he shall not be detected and made a public reproach.

10. “He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow: but a prating fool shall fall.” But he especially, that under pretense of kindness betrays his neighbor, and gives the sign to others, when he would have them circumvent him, is a common grievance; and shall himself, in the end, feel the miserable effects of his falseness: for he is worse than a man, who openly professing his malice rails perpetually, and thereby, sooner hurts himself than others.

11. “The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.” The discourse of a good man (like a perpetual spring of wholesome water) always tends to the profit, comfort, and refreshment of those that receive it: but a wicked man, how fair soever his language be, doth but conceal the mischief, which (like pestilent waters out of a deep pit) he designs to produce when opportunity serves.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 10:10-21

12. “Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love coverall all sins.” Such is the difference between ‘hatred and love, that where all things are in quiet, hatred raises up disturbance and makes men quarrel about trifles; when love pacifies the minds of those that it finds provoked by real offenses, and composes all those contentions, for which there was too much occasion.

13. “In the lips of him that Birth understanding wisdom is pun& but a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding.” He that would be wise must seek the acquaintance of some intelligent person: but the most knowing person in the world cannot make him wise that is void of consideration; who will never learn, unless perhaps by some great affliction.

14. “Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.” Wise men treasure up knowledge, and reserve it till a fitting opportunity to make use of it: but a fool is always talking, and seldom opens his mouth but that it proves a present mischief to himself or others.

15. “The rich man’s wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty.” Riches are a powerful] defense to their owners against a great many evils, to which we are subject in this life; and naturally raise men’s minds and make them confident: whereas poverty exposes men to injuries and abuses; and is apt to depress and deject their spirits.

16. “The labor of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin.” Which is a great motive to an honest diligence; but then remember this, that the end of a virtuous man’s labors after riches is only that he may provide himself the necessaries of life, and that he may do good with them: but the great revenues, which perhaps are left to a wicked man by his ancestors without any pains of his own, are employed to satisfy his sinful lusts and passions.

17. “He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth.” He that carefully observes, and puts men in mind of these wholesome admonitions, which may teach them to correct and amend their lives, is in the way to make himself and others happy: but he that leaves off to give reproof encourages men in their errors; from which he, who shuns those that are wont to reprehend him, is never like to be reclaimed.

18. “He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool.” He that dissembleth his hatred, by great professions of friendship before one’s face, and then goes and vents it in slanders behind his back, may seem a cunning man; but is really an impious fool.

19. “In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.” Nor are calumny and flattery the only vices of the tongue; but much speaking is rarely innocent: therefore he that is sparing of his words, and considers well both when, and where, and what he speaks, is a truly prudent person.

20. “The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is Mile worth.” The words of such a man are exceeding valuable; because they are both solid and sincere: but let wicked men devise and study what they please, it will be good for little, or rather very mischievous.

21. “The lips of the righteous: feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom.” Many are preserved from perishing by the discourses of a good man: but a fool, for want of consideration, receives no benefit by them, and doth not so much as take care to save himself.

The Proverbs of Solomon, Proverbs 10:22-32

22. “The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it.” It is not merely men’s industry and provident care, to which they owe their riches; but the blessing of God prospering their endeavors: which when He favors, wealth flows in apace upon them; and is enjoyed also without anxious thoughts and labors.

23. “It is as sport to a fool to do mischief but a man of understanding bath wisdom.” A senseless sinner makes a jest of the most horrid impieties that can be committed by himself, or others: but a man that weighs things wisely considers that this is no laughing matter; and takes that pleasure in doing well, which fools take in mischievous wickedness.

24. “The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted.” Yet there is none so wicked but he is sometime afraid; and since this will not amend him, he shall feel what he fears: but this is the comfort of righteous men, who have reason to hope, that they shall at length obtain their desires.

25. “As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation.” Though the wicked, like a whirlwind, may bluster terribly, and overthrow all that stands in his way, yet he quickly vanishes, and destroys himself by his own violence: but the righteous, as he is fix and settled in his virtue, which is peaceable and quiet and makes no disturbance; so he enjoys the solid fruits of it in a durable and immovable felicity.

26. “As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him.” Vinegar is not more offensive to the teeth, nor smoke more vexatious to the eyes, than a remiss and negligent minister is to him that employs him, and relies upon him in a weighty business.

27. “The fear of the Lord prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.” The best way to prolong life is religiously to observe the laws of God: but wickedness generally (both by its own nature and by God’s righteous judgment) brings men to an untimely end.

28. “The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish.” And what a lamentable case is a wicked man in, when he finds himself unexpectedly undone? for this is another difference between a good man and a bad; that the hope of the former concludes in a joyful possession of what he waits for: but the other, failing of his expectation, ends his days in sadness and sorrow.

29. “The way of the Lord is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.” Whence it follows also that a faithful observance of the rules of virtue, which the Lord hath prescribed us, inspires the upright man with great courage and undaunted resolution, when any evil threatens him: but the workers of iniquity, being weak and feeble spirited, are terribly shaken, nay broken, with the fear of that destruction which is coming on them.

30. “The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth.” There is no way like piety, justice, and mercy, to establish a family in perpetual prosperity: but the wicked (how successful soever they may he for a time) shall not be able to settle themselves and their posterity, in the good land, which God hath given us.

31. “The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out.” The very discourse of a righteous man is so profitable to instruct others in wisdom, and goodness, that it shall be a means to perpetuate him, like a fruitful tree, in a flourishing condition: but he that uses his tongue perversely, to abuse or raise dissensions among his neighbors, shall be cut down, like a tree that cambers [cumbers] the ground.

32. “The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness,” The righteous knows very well, how to speak those things (and accustoms his mouth unto them) which are grateful to men, and yet not displeasing to Almighty God: but the wicked are odious to both; because they are skilled altogether in lying and flattery, fraud and calumny, and such like subtle, but detestable arts of doing mischief.

If we look to Him, all is simple; we see our way clearly,and we have motives that do not leave the soula prey to uncertainly.It is the double-minded man who isunstable in all his ways.

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