

SIMPLE
STIMULATING
STUDIES

in
the
PROVERBS

Donald G. Hunt

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stimulating
studies
in the
Proverbs

By Donald G. Hunt

PLUS
WORKBOOK

(See Page 89)

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CONTENTS

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| The Place of Wisdom..... | 5 |
| The Human Tongue..... | 10 |
| Lazy People..... | 16 |
| The Cry of the Needy..... | 21 |
| The Problem of Pride..... | 26 |
| Anger Outlawed..... | 28 |
| Riches Discussed..... | 32 |
| Fools Considered..... | 38 |
| Lascivious Conduct..... | 44 |
| View of God..... | 49 |
| The Fear of the Lord..... | 54 |
| Correction..... | 57 |
| Parenthood..... | 61 |
| Two Kinds of Wives..... | 67 |
| Psychological Outlook..... | 72 |
| Things Abominable..... | 76 |
| Things Preferable..... | 81 |
| Honor as a Goal..... | 84 |

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The Place of Wisdom

Beyond the shadow of a doubt, the subject of wisdom receives more verses in the book of Proverbs than any other. Its author, Solomon, has his wisdom often referred in the Bible. He had much to say upon this subject, and it is to our advantage that the Spirit of God inspired him to give us so many fine things in the book of Proverbs about it.

Let us turn our attention to what it says about it.

I. MUCH WISDOM IS COUCHED IN WISE SA YINGS.

We are told in I Kings that Solomon spoke three thousand proverbs. Wise men of all ages have had their favorite sayings—all brief, but loaded with meaning and application. Paul in his writings talks of and coins sayings which he says are "faithful" or true and "worthy of all acceptance" or can be counted on.

Great truths are needed for everyday living, and they need to be well worded that they might always be remembered and used. The first verses of Proverbs tell us the purpose of proverbs: "The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel: to know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; to give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: to understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings" (1:1-6).

II. PARENTS IMPART WISDOM TO THEIR CHILDREN.

What a responsibility comes with parenthood!

The start that is given little ones is so important and will have such lasting results. Parents are a child's first teachers. 1:8,9 says, "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: for they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck." Just as Peter talks about godliness ornamenting holy women, so does keeping parents' commandments ornament the lives of children.

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

Every father should urge his children to seek knowledge. The passage 2:1-9 has many good thoughts in it upon this matter: "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity: yea, every good path."

III. AS PEOPLE MATURE, THEY SHOULD RECOGNIZE THE PLACE OF GOD IN THEIR WISDOM.

Unless people learn to respect the wisdom of their parents, they seldom respect the wisdom of

God and His Word when they grow up. The importance of respecting God is evident. 1:7 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction." When people fear the Lord, they are teachable; they recognize their dependence upon God; they regard His Word as the source of their knowledge.

9:10 says, "The knowledge of the holy is understanding." Yes, it is understanding to know the holy. When one has a knowledge of God, he is a well posted man.

13:13 is a great verse: "Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded."

IV. MEN OFTEN NEED UNDERSTANDING WHEN THEY DO NOT HAVE IT.

Wisdom is personified in the early part of Proverbs. 1:20-31 is an example: "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their

own way, and be filled with their own devices."

V. THE BLESSINGS OF WISDOM.

We should appreciate the splendid words concerning the desirableness of wisdom in 4:5-13: "Get wisdom, get understanding; forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee. Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many. I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble. Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go; keep her; for she is thy life."

2:10-17 is another fine passage showing the usefulness of wisdom: "When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: to deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things; who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness; who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked; whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths: to deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words." Nothing like wisdom can preserve a person from crooked men and wicked women.

VI. FINAL THOUGHTS ON WISDOM.

Before we conclude, we would like to call your attention to a number of other smaller passages on the subject of wisdom.

12:8: "A man shall be commended according to his wisdom." Other things being as they should be, a man of wisdom is a well respected man. His advice is often sought, His word carries weight. His very person embodies a dignity.

13:20: "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." This passage shows the importance of proper association. Choosing fools as one's companions does not lead to great things in one's life, but walking with wise men does.

19:2 "That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good." Here is a real appeal to be an informed soul, to know the things we should, to appreciate the privileges of learning and to take advantage of them.

19:27: "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." There is false knowledge that leads astray. In this passage, the father warns the son about receiving false instruction and counsel.

24:3-5: "Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches. A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength." Yes, wisdom is strength, and knowledge leads to many victories.

And last, but not least, 23:23: "Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding." "Buy the truth"—obtain it at all costs! "Sell it not"—don't part with it at any price!

The Human Tongue

Of all the subjects that can be named, the subject of the tongue is one that needs to be considered about the most. This important part of our bodies can get so far out of line at times, and the terrible havoc that the tongue has done cannot be completely recorded. On the other hand, the good that has been done through words is likewise inestimable.

Exclusive of Proverbs, when preachers go to the Bible to prepare messages on the tongue, the book of James, the book of Ephesians, and the book of Matthew are among the chief sources of material. But, Proverbs discusses this subject more fully than any other book of the Bible—so much so that all the material found elsewhere in the Bible does not nearly equal the material found alone in it.

Let us, then, anticipate our consideration of this subject.

I. THE RIGHT USE OF THE TONGUE IS PRAISED IN PROVERBS.

"The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life" (10:11). If you are a righteous person, don't fear to speak, for your mouth is a well of life to others. "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life" (15:4). The tongue can be important when it is called a tree of life. "The tongue of the just is as choice silver (10:20). The value of the tongue of the just is well described.

But, if the tongue is to be a blessing, it doesn't speak before it is ready to speak. "The heart of the righteous studieth to answer" (16:28). Sometimes it takes quite a bit of studying to know what to say and how to say it. "The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips" (16:23). The

reason the wise have wise lips is that their hearts teach their mouths. That is why 10:32 says, "The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable," and why 15:2 says, "The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright."

Right talking is as important as right doing. We could no more dispense with good talking than we could with good deeds. While the words of the unwise tear down and do damage, the words of the wise build up. 10:21 says, "The lips of the righteous feed many," and 10:31 says, "The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom." 15:7 reiterates the fact: "The lips of the wise disperse knowledge." One can tell when a tornado has gone through a community by the damage done. One can tell in the Midwest that we live in the days of bull-dozers by the many large ponds here and there. Even so, one can tell what kind of parental teaching, what kind of school teachers, and what kind of preaching a community has had by spending some time mingling among the people. Remember "the lips of the wise disperse knowledge".

Many people are so crude in their speech. Vulgarities are common. Anger also exhibits itself in their words. In contrast, Proverbs says, "The words of the pure are pleasant words." The virtuous woman of Prov. 31 has that which all persons should strive for: "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness" (31:26). A premium is placed upon pleasant words in the following statement: "Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones" (16:24). Why, then, will people continue with their hateful ways? with their coarse words? with their unguarded speech?

Other people appreciate us when we have the right use of our speech, and so will we. "A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken

in due season, how good is it!" (15:23). "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (25:11). Again: "A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth" (13:2). And 24:26 says, "Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer."

II. THE WRONG USE OF THE TONGUE IS POINTED OUT IN PROVERBS.

The piece of toast has two sides—the buttered side and the burned side! Did you ever get hold of a piece of toast like that? We have been considering the good side (the buttered side), but now we turn the toast over, and see something altogether different. This is the burned side that is not so good.

First that we consider is the matter of lying. 6:17 starts us off with strong language by saying "a lying tongue" is one of the things the Lord hates. 12:22 says, "Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight." You who do not deal squarely with your fellowmen, listen to these strong statements from God's Word! On the other hand, maybe you are one who has been lied about and misrepresented. Naturally, people believe what they have been told about you. The hurt seems more than you can bear. But, we have a saying that says the truth will come out, and it usually will. Patiently bide your time, live aright, falsehood will run its course, and people will forget what was even said about you. 12:19 says, "The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment".

Next let us consider the damage that people can do with their tongues. How cutting words can be! "There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword" (12:18), and we need no comments to understand that verse. I know of no truer words than those expressed in 15:1: "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up strife." Gentleness of speech is a goal to strive for. It will allay and

calm troubles. But, if one responds with grievous words, there will be strife the more. This will prove to be true in the home, on the street, or in the church. Doesn't this that follows remind you of some people? "An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire" (16:27). Again, "A hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbor" (11:9), and 12:6 says, "The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood." What terrible damage is done yearly by the unspiritual, ungodly words of people.

But, what are the means used to do this damage? Some use flattery: "A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet" (29:5); "A flattering tongue worketh ruin" (26:28). When people flatter, they are merely buttering a person before they eat him. Preachers have suffered more flattery by hypocrites working evil behind their backs than any other class. But, others employ false witness as their weapon. Somebody has to MAKE UP that which is not true. How true is the triple description of the false witness in 25:18: "A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow. The maul pounds you to pieces; the sword cuts you to pieces; the arrow hits your vitals. With so many lies told about good people, there must be more false witnesses than we realize. "A false witness that speaketh lies" is another one of those things 6:19 says the Lord hates, and it is placed in that verse just before the words, "And he that soweth discord among brethren." to which it leads.

Talebearing (usually the second person in a false-witness deal—the false witness spins the yarn, and the talebearer carries it) also comes in for treatment among the trouble-makers of Proverbs. "The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. Burning lips and a wicked heart (Note—how often they go to-

gether!) are like a potsherd covered with silver dross. He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him; when he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart" (26:22-25). At times, it appears that the talebearer may also be carrying that which is true, but which should not be told. "He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips." "A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter" (11:13). Some things need to be kept quiet. The faithful spirit will keep quiet; the talebearer won't. The talebearer fills an important role in trouble, so much so that 26:20 says, "Where no wood, is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth."

The "whisperer" also comes in for treatment in Proverbs. He is the person who goes behind one's back and to but one or two persons at a time and confidently says that which ought to be kept quiet. While he has asked all to promise to say nothing about it, he himself goes from person to person saying the same thing and asking each one to say nothing about it. Other times, he causes trouble between two people by whispering to only a person or two at the most. His potential damage is to be read about in 16:28, where it says, "A whisperer separateth chief friends." There probably are not two people who cannot be separated by a whisperer, so deadly and so deceitful are his workings that the damage is done, and each party supposes the other one has said or done what has been attributed to him by the whisperer.

Lastly, we deal with the matter of over-talking, incessant talking, gabbing. Proverbs has much to say about it. "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise" (10:19). This is a strong statement, affirming that one who talks much will be sure to sin with his lips.

Listen again: "He that hath knowledge spareth his words; and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit. Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding" (17:27,28). When the man who normally says little speaks, people listen because he is viewed as a thinker who has something worth hearing. Respect for one's judgment will be built faster by talking less than by talking much. 29:11 says, "A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards. The man with little understanding tells his business to everybody where ever he goes. And 29:20 says, "Seest thou a man who is hasty in his words? (a man who talks before he thinks) There is more hope of a fool than of him." And finally, "He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction" (13:3).

Let no one conclude that there is not a grave need to consider seriously every one of these statements from Proverbs concerning our speech. This is a field in which there is much cultivation yet to be done. To the extent that one has been bridling his tongue and directing it in proper ways, to that extent has he been looked upon as wise, godly, and successful. And to the extent that one has allowed his tongue to go free and loose, to that extent has he gotten himself in trouble, and to that extent has he failed as a Christian. May God help us, then, in this matter, and may we employ the best of judgment in the use of this wonderful gift of God that can be as greatly perverted through misuse as can be used to the glory of God and to the profit of ourselves and others.

Lazy People

I recall hearing the story of a man who grew lazier and lazier with the passing of time. His family could get him to do nothing. Things finally got so bad that the two grown sons finally decided to take him out and shoot him. They loaded him in the wagon and put a tarpaulin over him as they started away. As they drove down the road, they met a neighbor who asked them what they had under the tarpaulin. They told him. The neighbor said he hated to see them do that and that he would help get their father back on his feet. He said, "Here's a bushel of corn that I will give him." From under the cover came the voice of the father, "Is it shelled?" It wasn't. The old man said, "Drive on."

It is hard for us to imagine anyone that lazy, yet the book of Proverbs says substantially the same thing. "A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom (Revised Version says, "burieth his hand in the dish"), and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again" (19:24).

"Sloth" (from which we get "slothful") and "slug" (from which we get "sluggard") are roots that come to us from Middle English, both meaning "slow". That slow moving, lifeless animal in the zoo that spends his days hanging from branches upside down we call a "sloth", and that slow moving, snail-like worm we call a "slug" because they are so slow. And the book of Proverbs repeatedly speaks of certain people as "slothful" and as "sluggards" because of their lack of ambition, because they are so extremely and needlessly slow. In fact, that book has much to say upon the subject.

I. LAZY PEOPLE WILL BE SLEEPING WHEN THEY OUGHT TO BE WORKING.

10:5 speaks of "sleeping in harvest", and it says

that he who does that is a son who causeth shame. Sleep is an essential, but the Bible does not sanction people sleeping when it is time to be up doing the work.

Listen to other proverbs on Lazy people's sleep: "Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep" (19:15). What causes some people to sleep so much? "Slothfulness." 26:14 says, "As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed." Say, if I were one of these persons who never wanted to get up in the morning, but who just rolls over and sleeps on and on, I would realize from these passages that the Bible does not approve my indolence.

But, listen again as God shames the sluggard. He says, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard," which is one of the most ambitious of all God's creation; "consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer and gathereth her food in the harvest"—the time of work, to store up, to make hay. "How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?" (6:6-9). How many parents have ambitionless, lifeless, dead-head children well described by the foregoing! Occasionally some woman gets married to a man just like that—she gets up before he does, gets the house warm, gets breakfast, and then can hardly get him up to eat it. What a sluggard! And there are men who have wives just as bad—the men have to get up and cook their own breakfasts and pack their own lunches. They don't even try to get the women up to eat with them. They would just sit there with one leg over the other, stooped over, and sip half a cup of coffee with uncombed hair and unwashed face. Men would rather eat by themselves than to have such an unpleasant breakfast partner.

II. LAZY PEOPLE FIND EASY EXCUSES TO KEEP FROM WORKING.

20:4 says, "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold." The responsible man knows the work

must be done. He realizes that cold days will come. He puts on extra clothes to keep him warm, eats good solid food, and goes on with his work and actually thinks less about the disagreeableness of the weather than the lazy man who sits around the stove and shivers every time somebody opens the door or the radio announcer tells how cold it is.

The sluggard who will not work because of the cold will find times when he will not work because it is hot, and other times because it is damp, and other times because it is too hard, and other times because the pay is not very high, and other times because he didn't get to bed very early last night, and other times because his head hurts, and other times because he would be the only one there, and other times because he would rather do something else, and other times because he is tired of work.

Hear another excuse from the lazy man, "The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets" (22:13). The implication is that there really isn't a lion without, but it is easy to imagine that there is so he won't have to go out.

III. LAZY PEOPLE KNOW ALL THE ANSWERS.

"The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason" (26:16). Those men with just enough ambition to get uptown to spend the day on some benches talking, whittling, and arguing have all the answers. They can tell the President how to run this country, yet nobody ever thought enough of their insight to have them put on any political ticket. They could tell the Secretary of Agriculture (whose problems relate to the corn farmer, the cotton farmer, the fruit farmer, the wheat farmer, the nut farmer, the hay farmer, the dairy farmer, the rancher, the poultryman, the nation's surpluses, and a hundred other large fields) just how to handle his job when they themselves cannot even have a respectable garden.

Those men who sit around the stove in the back of

a store and spit tobacco juice at the coal bucket are wise enough to be judges, preachers, inventors, and capitalists—to hear them talk. They are sluggards, who are too lazy to work, but not too lazy to talk. They have an inflated opinion of their thinking—that's why they have such hot arguments. They are "wise in their own conceits"—yes wiser than seven men who can render a reason, actually seven men who know something. The reason they are so sure about everything is that they have done very little themselves, for in doing one becomes more and more acquainted with the problems involved.

IV. LAZY PEOPLE ARE KIN TO GREAT WASTERS.

The Bible reveals waste to be a terrible thing. This is not a saying from the Bible, but it is surely true: "Wilful waste makes woeful want." We see that in the prodigal son. But, listen to what 18:9 says, "He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster." You can see how that would be: the waster destroys that which is produced while the slothful man fails to produce it in the first place.

There are those who are ambitious, but wasteful, and they think it is so terrible when people are lazy. On the other hand, there are those who talk about how wasteful some people are, but they themselves are too lazy to work. Proverbs says in the final analysis, both are brothers.

V. LAZY PEOPLE LET THEIR PLACES RUN DOWN.

Some people are builders and improvers where ever they go. Others merely occupy while everything goes to wrack and ruin. Some build up the soil while they reap greater profits from their land while others farm the ground to death or neglect it altogether.

Solomon tells of stopping to look at the place of a slothful man. He said, "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of un-

derstanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down" (24:30,31). It takes work to work a field. It takes work to tend a vineyard. The way thorns and nettles took over was a testimony to every considering passerby that such a field belonged to a lazy man. It took too much work to keep the fence up, so they had fallen apart.

Such indolence and its effect on one's place reminds one that this same Solomon said in another book (Ecclesiastes) that because of slothfulness a building rots and because of idleness a house falls in.

What a shame when people are too lazy to keep their places up, to keep things repaired and fixed, and to have things growing and green.

VI. LAZY PEOPLE USUALLY BECOME POOR PEOPLE.

10:4 says, "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich." Evidently because it is too much bother, "The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting," whereas "the substance of the diligent man is precious" (12:27). The diligent bear the rule, "but the slothful shall be under tribute (Revised Version says 'taskwork')" (12:24). Those who are at the bottom of the ladder are forever making uncomplimentary remarks and holding the worst of feelings toward those who go ahead. But, why are many people where they are today? The Bible tells you. It says, "Slothfulness!" 15:19 says, "The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns" (a rough, difficult way) "but the way of the righteous is made plain (Revised Version says 'a highway')." Notice that the "slothful" are contrasted from the "righteous" in this passage.

Yes, over and over in Proverbs, it says that the slothful man "hath nothing". There is an honorable poverty, and the Bible so recognizes it. But, pover-

ty that comes through slothfulness is not honorable—it is dishonorable in every way.

Woman, read about the ambitious woman in Prov. 31, better known to us as the "virtuous woman". What a model of excellence. Make that one of your favorite passages of Scripture. Read it often. Appreciate it. Be that kind of a woman yourself.

Men, listen to 22:29: Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean (Marginal reading is 'obscure') men." You have much to do with the pace that is set at your house, with the standard of living that is maintained, with the outlook upon life of your family.

Be diligent, not lazy, the Proverbs would say!

The Cry of the Needy

The book of Proverbs has much to say about the cry of the needy—the unfortunate needy. There is a difference between the unfortunate needy and the lazy needy treated in the foregoing sermon. The man who is lazy can help himself, and he is obligated to do so. But, the unfortunate needy need help, and we are commanded to give them that help. Usually you will see that people have a feeling for the unfortunate and will respond to their calamities, but they will not do a dime's worth of help for that man who is shiftless and will but drink up what is given.

I. TAKE KNOWLEDGE OF THE NEEDS OF THE NEEDY.

29:7 says, "The righteous considereth ('taketh

knowledge of"—R.V.) the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it." There are those who have never known what real shortage is. They have always had plenty, and they suppose they always will have plenty. It is hard for them to realize how "hard put" people can be and how helpless they are before such conditions. So they go their ways, not bothering themselves to look into people's conditions. But, 29:7 says the righteous look into their cases.

It is too easy for some people to be like the priest and the Levite, who did not want to be bothered with the needs of the needy. It takes time, it takes money, and it may even give one a headache to get next to the condition of the needy. No wonder, then, that it is "the righteous" who considers the cause of the needy.

In the fast pace of present-day living, let us not permit sickness to go on in our communities, and we not know anything about it. Let us not permit death to strike, and we not be there to help. Let us not permit tragedies to happen, and we not concern ourselves.

II. SOME TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PEOPLE'S POVERTY.

22:16 shows that some will take advantage of people's poverty-stricken condition: "He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want." 22:22 points out the same thing: "Rob not the poor because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate."

You might ask how people can do that. By asking (as is many times done) an unreasonable amount of security for a small loan. The man needs the money, so the rich will demand a mortgage on everything of value that a man has—oftentimes thousands of dollars worth of mortgage for five hundred dollars of loan. Then, if calamities hit the man, the rich can move in and clean out everything of value that the poor

man has. That is not right. That is wicked in God's sight.

The rich will other times do something against a poor man, knowing that the poor man doesn't have the money to hire an attorney. It would cost more to hire an attorney than the amount is actually worth.

11:26 speaks of a time of great shortage. The people are hungry. Some rich fellow has much corn. But, he is going to hold on to it for awhile, because it will bring even more exorbitant prices later on. That verse says, "He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him (but he doesn't care); but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it."

III. PEOPLE SHOULD NOT MAKE FUN OF THE POOR.

17:5 says, "Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished." There are those who make fun of the poor when in reality their sad condition is enough to make any thoughtful person weep. People will make fun of what they eat, how their children look, the crude way they have to do their work, and many other things about them.

In reality, people's hearts should be touched by the shortages of the unfortunate. They should weep when they see the shameful clothing of their little innocent children. They should feel sorry when they see the woman have to wash for that large family on a wash board and that man trying to make a living with a team that has one big horse and one little horse.

Children especially are so cruel in this way. Parents should not permit their children to laugh at the poverty-stricken. We teach our children that most people who live in filthy hovels are in that condition because they are not ambitious or because the father drinks the money up or because the people make foolish purchases. At the same time, there are peo-

ple so poor simply because of bad circumstances over which they have no power, and that it is a terrible, unchristian thing to laugh at people's calamities.

IV. GOD HAS COMMANDED US TO HELP THE NEEDY.

He says, "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee" (3: 27, 28). Anytime we are better off than somebody else, and he is in a pathetic condition, God calls upon us to help him. We don't have to have a lot in the bank, and we don't have to have our homes and our businesses all paid for before God expects us to step in and help.

Listen again: "He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he" (14:21). God says a person sins who does not help. There is more than one way to sin. Just because a person does not drink or smoke or curse does not mean he is not a sinner. If he doesn't help his needy neighbor, he is a sinner.

God says, "The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever" (29: 14). The poor man has often suffered in courts because he is poor. The poor man has nothing to bribe any of the officials with. God pronounced a blessing upon the king who would judge the poor fairly.

V. PEOPLE DO NOT LOSE BY HELPING THE NEEDY.

I like 19:17: "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he (God) pay him again." In other words, when one GIVES to the poor, he is actually LOANING to God, and God always pays up! We can surely trust the Lord. We do not help the needy just to be helped of the Lord, but in our own limitations when it seems

that we cannot do very much, it is comforting to know that if we help another, God Himself will bless us that we too might be able to make it through.

22:9 says, "He that hath a beautiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor."

11:24, 25 says, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." It is like sowing. A farmer can take a bushel of oats and scatter it over a portion of ground. It may look like he is throwing it away, but up come the plants, and in a few weeks he has many bushels of oats. If the generous person shall abound, then he has not lost by being thoughtful of others. He who has watered others will himself be watered.

VI. THE TABLES MAY BE REVERSED.

Sometimes the poor become financially solid. Sometimes the rich go under. Then what? What can the selfish, unbenevolent soul expect in the time of his own calamity? 21:13 answers: "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard." That won't be so funny then.

There is a time when a person has more friends than he knows what to do with. He doesn't make friends of the poverty-ridden man. Yet, in time to come, he may not have so many friends, and he may wish for the help that the once poverty-ridden man could now give him.

Thus, we see that Proverbs teaches us the same thing on this subject that is taught elsewhere in the Bible. It, however, is as fine a collection of verses upon this subject as can be found within the confines of one book. Memorize the Proverbs. Have them on your tongue, in your mind, and in your heart. They will help you do that which you are supposed to do at the time.

The Problem of Pride

The book of Proverbs, like all the other portions of God's Word, has nothing but utter condemnation for pride. Though it is a common sin, Proverbs nowhere suggests that there is any call or justification for it.

Pride is an attitude. God is not opposed to a person being a man of knowledge (how else could one be a teacher or a doctor or many other useful persons?), but He is opposed to that person being puffed up about it. God is not opposed to a person operating a successful business and making good money from it (especially if he uses the money properly), but He is opposed to him getting the big head over it and getting to trusting in his possessions instead of in God. God is not against people having a good home, but He is against them having a feeling of superiority as a result, thinking themselves to be too nice to associate with others. Yes, pride is an attitude. Let us look at

I. GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARD PRIDE.

16:5 says, "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord." 6:17 speaks similarly when it lists pride with other things that are abominations to Him. In this latter passage, it speaks of a "proud look". When people are proud in their hearts, you can see it in their countenances. Some of them take on an over-bearing appearance. Some will take on a smirking appearance. Some have an appearance of self-righteousness. You can tell by looking at some that they think they are better than others.

God's attitude is fully brought out in 15:25, when it says, "The Lord will destroy the house of the proud." So, a person had better be careful about contracting or keeping an attitude so contrary to the

wishes of God.

II. PRIDE IS LISTED AS A TROUBLE-MAKER.

"He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife" (28:25), and 13:10 says, "Only by pride cometh contention."

When one is proud, he is going to try to have his own way no matter what. He will not concede that he has been wrong or that he could even be wrong. He is a self-centered, conceited man who is going to ram-rod his way through anything (or anybody) that would resist him.

It should be easy to admit error when one sees his mistake, but pride will not permit a person to make such an admission. He would rather defend himself though in error than to concede the truth. Thus, trouble arises through pride. And there are other ways too in which pride causes trouble.

III. PRIDE LEADS DOWN-NOT UP.

"A man's pride shall bring him low" (29:23). There is a lot in that simple statement. A man's pride is actually self-exaltation. A proud man lifts himself up. But, this proverb so wisely says that his pride will actually bring him down in time. And it will. As 16:18 says, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."

Haman's pride brought his destruction. So did Nebuchadnezzar's make a beast of the field of him for seven years. Peter's trusting in his own moral strength led to his downfall, for he didn't watch and pray as he should have done. And the persons of the Bible, as well as the persons of any community, give one ample examples of this sad fact.

IV. PRIDE IS CONTRASTED WITH WISDOM.

A proud person glories in his exalted or inflated thoughts of himself. He thinks he is "it", or she

thinks she is "it". But, Proverbs lists pride as foolish and in a number of passages contrasts it with wisdom. 14:3 says, "In the mouth of the FOOLISH, is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them." 11:2 says, "When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom." And 13:10 says, "Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom." One is not well advised who is proud in heart. He has been using the wrong standard of measure. He is viewing himself in the light of his own thoughts, and they are warped. Anyone is foolish who views himself primarily in the light of his own thoughts. What God thinks of us is always right, and the common consensus of thought concerning us is also to be taken into consideration.

Let us see, then, that pride has no chance to get a start in our hearts. Let us pull out the first appearance of it lest it grow and take possession of our hearts.

Anger Outlawed

James tells us that the wrath of man works not the righteousness of God, and it doesn't. We can see why God would oppose the wrath of man. The book of Proverbs takes up this subject and treats it from a number of very understandable and practical ways.

As long as I have known men, I have seen anger. I have never believed anything else than that it is terribly wrong, and as long as I have preached, I have earnestly preached against it with all my might. Some of the richest verses on this important subject are found in Proverbs. Let us see what that great book says upon it.

I. SOME ARE ALWAYS STIRRING UP HARD FEELINGS.

"A wrathful man," 15:18 says, "stirreth up strife." Some make it a point to have a perpetual upset attitude toward one or more individuals; some toward the bulk of people. Some people are well described by the expression "a wrathful man".

Listen to the way another proverb is expressed: "Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood: so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife" (30:33). Some cannot rest unless they are in a fight. Some never go to church until a fight of some sort is on. Having little character, due to being unprincipled or unbalanced, they keep forcing wrath just as this proverb says, and trouble aplenty ensues. They thrive on that.

19:19 says, "A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment: for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again." If you try to help a man who has gotten himself in trouble because of his wrathful deeds, you will have opportunity to do the same thing many more times too, for his punishment will do him little good. Again and again, he will exhibit his wrath toward others. Life is too tame unless he is having trouble with others.

II. THE WISE TRY TO KEEP DOWN WRATH.

It is easy to get into trouble, but not always easy to get out. Following your lower nature, you will have a number of opportunities to "have it out" with others. Only by following the strict course of the spiritual can you hope to have the grace and patience necessary to overcome evil done to you by good done back. Proverbs praises the person who tries to avoid wrath.

19:11 says, "The discretion (good judgment) of a man deferreth (delays) his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression." A man's good judgment will cause him to be slow to anger. Such a one

will find it his glory to suffer wrongfully and like his Master to take it patiently. Do you glory in your desire to hold down trouble, or do you enjoy digging up evil and having trouble with your fellow men?

15:18 says, "He that is slow to anger appeaseth (stops) strife." You can see that God is pleased with the man slow to anger and praises him because he will cause strife to cease rather than to blaze.

III. WHAT PEOPLE SAY AND HOW THEY SAY IT ARE IMPORTANT.

I marvel not that some people have trouble. Their customary way of speaking is loud, thoughtless, and rough. Unless one controls his speech, the other person will have a time controlling his temper.

Listen to this great memory verse: "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (15:1). A "soft" answer is just the opposite of a "harsh" answer. Like the virtuous woman, "the law of kindness: should be in our mouths. Oh the cutting things that people sometimes say to the man at the store. It may be to a neighbor. It may be to some person in the church. And yet they claim to be Christians. There isn't much Christianity to a person who has an unbridled tongue.

All it takes sometimes to get into a real fight is to say the wrong word. Many times everything is all set for trouble, and if you do not guard your speech, you are going to stir up anger rather than turn it away.

IV. ANGRY MEN ARE OUTRAGEOUS MEN.

"Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous" (27:4). Yes, wrath is cruel; anger is outrageous, unreasonable. I know of no better way of stating it. "A furious man aboundeth in transgression" (29:22). He will fight. He will curse his fellow men. He will destroy property. He will lose all his influence for good. He

will violate everything involved in the term "brotherliness". Yes, he abounds in transgression.

Like a river at flood time, he is all "out of banks". He has no control over himself. He will throw anything he can get his hands on. He will say anything that comes into his mind. He cares not where he is nor who sees him. How well is he described in 25:28, "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls."

V. WE ARE NOT TO ASSOCIATE WITH A MAN IN HIS ANGER.

If we do, we are liable to get a cursing. We may become like him. 22:24 says, "Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go." Most of us don't need any special verse to cause us to leave such a person alone. Just plain common sense would say to select as our close friends those who are warm-hearted rather than hot-headed.

VI. BEING SLOW TO ANGER IS HELD UP AS A GREAT VIRTUE.

Listen to the number of times that Proverbs praises the man "slow to anger": "He that is SLOW TO WRATH is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly" (14:29); "A wrathful man stirreth up strife; but he that is SLOW TO ANGER appeaseth strife" (15:18). "The discretion of a man DEFERRETH his anger" (19:11). "He that is SLOW TO ANGER is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (16:32).

Who can read these verses and think a quick temper is something that God will tolerate? He praises and commends the man who is slow to anger, but He condemns the individual whose temper is like the firecracker—just waiting to blow up when someone

ignites the fuse.

There are so many who need this teaching from Proverbs. If you are one of them, let the Spirit convict your heart of the terribleness of this sin and its consequences. Make it a real burden of your heart that you may be able to overcome it. Confer with another about your decision, and pray together for a complete victory over it.

Riches Discussed

Here is another subject handled in a comprehensive way in the book of Proverbs. It is a subject vital to everyday living as well as being one that is extremely interesting to all. These proverbs give us God's mind on the subject of material possessions.

I. RICHES AND HONOR ARE OFTEN CONNECTED IN PROVERBS.

Notice these instances: "Length of days is in her (wisdom's) right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour" (3:16); "Riches and honour are with me (wisdom)" (8:18); "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life" (22:4); and, "A gracious woman retaineth honour: and strong men retain riches" (11:16).

These passages indicate that riches—like length of days and honor—are something to be desired, providing, of course, that one uses them in the right way and has a godly attitude toward them. In other words, just as one can thank God for honor that comes his way, so can he thank God for material things that are his. Thus, riches themselves are not sinful as sometimes we are led to suppose.

II. ACTUALLY, POVERTY IS OFTEN DE-SERVED, BEING BUT THE RESULT OF

PEOPLE'S LAZINESS, DIVERSION, AND
FOOLISHNESS.

6:9-11 blames some people's poverty on their laziness: "How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth (a hobo in those days), and thy want as an armed man." 10:4 again places the blame on indolence: "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand."

21:17 blames pleasure for other people's poverty: "He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man. he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich." Some are so pleasure-minded that they cannot keep their minds on their business enough to succeed. We have known others who wanted to hang around home for years, live off Dad, and while away their lives in pleasure. Such lack the ambition necessary to obtain material things. Others have drunk away a fortune.

21:20 blames a third thing—foolish spending: "There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise: but a foolish man spendeth it up." Have you ever noticed how short a time some people keep money when they get it? No matter how much they get, it is gone within a short time. They know nothing about how to take care of money. They do not conceive of investing it wisely that it might serve them later on and that they might be in a position to do more good because of it. It never enters their minds to save some of it for an operation, prolonged sickness, or death. Money to them is here today, but gone tomorrow.

Poverty, when it is a result of laziness, pleasure-seeking, or foolish spending, is uncalled for, is actually a shame, and because it is, we need not be surprised if people take an offish attitude toward us. Proverbs indicates that they will: "The poor is

hated even of his own neighbour; but the rich hath many friends" (14:20); "Wealth maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbour" (19:4); and, "All the brethren of the poor do hate him: how much more do his friends go far from him? he pursues them with words, yet they are wanting to him" (19:7).

The wealthy class may not render too many real Christians to the cause, but I think you will find those who are financially solid are among the staunchest of Christians today.

III. GOD BLESSES IN A MATERIAL WAY THOSE WHO DO HIS WILL.

I have always appreciated the commandment and the promise of 3:9,10: "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." In other words, if we will be fair with God, He will be more than fair with us. We can honor Him with our substance—we have to give it, of course, before it will honor Him. Furthermore, we are to honor Him with the firstfruits—not the left-overs. We are to honor Him with the firstfruits of all our increase—not merely a part of our increase. His promise is that we will have plenty.

Another promise: "The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself" (11:25). 11:28 makes this promise: "He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch."

Listen to this one: "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it" (10:22). The trouble with so many people's riches is that they have not been made rich because of God so blessing them, but because of sinful gain. But, the blessing of the Lord does make rich, and the good

thing about it is that He doesn't add any sorrow to us with it. The gain of the world, though, is oftentimes followed by many sorrows. 15:6 comments upon this very fact when it says, "In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble." 15:27 also says, "He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house."

Christians' goal is not necessarily great earthly possessions, but rather heavenly inheritance, yet at the same time, it is a comfort to know that we have a God in heaven who will so bless us that we can also enjoy earthly security.

IV. NATURALLY, THOUGH, A PERSON MUST DO HIS PART IN THE MATTER.

God will not bless us in the matter unless we do our part. 24:4 says, "By knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches." We must do our part as referred to as "knowledge" in this verse. The more one knows, the easier it is to get a good-paying job, and the more one knows, the better he is going to watch the spending of that which he earns.

Applying oneself in labor is also of utmost importance: "He that gathered by labor shall increase" (13:11). Many people have a good sales territory, but they don't work hard enough at it. Many farmers have good soil, but they don't get on the ball, so to speak, when they should and take care of things as they should in order to make the most. Many could handle a few more hogs or a few more head of cattle, but they don't because it will be a little bit more work. Yet, those extra ones may make the big difference. They are already living off what they are now handling. The extras would give them the extra, which would begin to add up. No wonder 10:4 says, "The hand of the diligent maketh rich."

V. PROVERBS KNOWS HOW PEOPLE DO.

The mind that guided the pens of the Bible writers knew people. We see it demonstrated in the following verses.

Listen to 20:14: "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer; but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth." To understand that, let us go to the second-hand car lot. A salesman comes in bragging to the boss about the fine car he just bought, but in order to do so, he found every scratch and every nick, he criticized the many miles on it, he told how much work they were going to have to put on the car before they could move it, etc. This matter of the buyer excessively depreciating the product he is purchasing and then gloating over how cheap he bought it is not new. It is as old as the Proverbs and older.

Listen to this one about the loan business, and you would think it was written in the twentieth century: "The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender" (22:7). Yes, to the tune of 6% or more today! The poor man needs money. He doesn't have the principal, yet he is going to have to repay the entire principal being borrowed and also pay a portion extra for interest. If he has not been able in the past to save money for this occasion, will he be able in the coming year to do so much better that he can not only pay the amount, but a sizable interest percentage on top of it? To do so, it keeps his nose to the grindstone as he is a servant to the lender.

We can also see the present truth in 18:23: "The poor useth intreaties; but the rich answereth roughly." Why does the poor use entreaties? He is trying to get some help out of the rich. He has to use entreaties. Why does the rich answer roughly? Because he is financially independent, and he delights in showing people his authority.

VI. PROVERBS EVEN INCLUDES SOME THOUGHTS ON INHERITANCES.

13:22 says, "A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children." Most people desire, if possible, to leave something to their children. In a sense, it is a final gift and remembrance, and it usually comes in mighty handy. Most of us will not have to worry about leaving a great lot to our children, but it is a desire that we might be able to leave them something that will bring help to them. Proverbs says it is a "good man" that does this. "Houses and riches." 19:14 says, "are the inheritance of fathers."

But, some people don't know what to do with money that is left them. 20:21 says, "An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed." A good example of that was the example of the man who kidnapped the Greenlease boy several years ago. In six months before the kidnapping, he went through \$200,000 left him. He had gotten so accustomed to spending money during that spree that he wasn't content to work for sensible earnings, so he conceived the kidnapping case as a means of obtaining much money without having to work. Every parent ought to be rearing up his sons and daughters in such a way that they will wisely use the money that may be left them.

VII. PROVERBS SETS FORTH THE IDEAL STATE.

The writer requested, "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain" (30:8, 9). There are dangers connected with having either too great an abundance or not enough. The rich may forget the Lord entirely, and the poor may feel driven to steal and other ungodly practices in order to get money. The writer said he preferred being neither rich on the one hand nor poor on the other. I personally believe that his idea

is actually the ideal way to live—to have plenty, but not more than one is able to have and maintain his spiritual balance.

Some well-to-do people bank too much on their money. They think they can get away with anything merely because they have money. They can bluff their way through. They can hire the best lawyer. They can carry their case to the highest court. They can keep on with the trial indefinitely. As 18:11 says, "The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit." People may try that here, but that will not work when they face God. 11:14 says, "Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death." Riches may get a man places here, but they will cut no ice with God on the day of judgment. Then he will have wished he had sought the kingdom of God and righteousness first, for he would have had earthly provisions and would be prepared to stand before God.

Fools Considered

In some ways, to be called a fool cuts people deeper than to be called a sinner. They do not find it hard to accept the fact of having sinned, for they know that such but puts them into a class with all the rest of humanity, but when they are called a fool, that seems like a personal jab, which is not easily taken. But, the book of Proverbs uses the plainest talk in recognizing that many qualify themselves to be called fools, and it is the purpose of this message to consider some of those things that Proverbs says about fools.

I. FOOLS PAY NO ATTENTION TO WISDOM.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (1:7). "A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but

he that regardeth reproof is prudent" (15:5). Such a person will turn his back on the very instruction that would make something of him. He pays no attention to what others try to tell him. He goes on his way, not realizing he has turned his back upon sound counsel. 24:7 puts it so briefly, but so correctly. "Wisdom is too high for a fool."

12:15 says, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise." We have all seen living demonstrations of this. We may not always see fit to do everything that everybody tries to get us to do, but we should give sensible consideration to those things we are told. Probably most things we can accept, and we should.

10:8 continues, "The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall." And 29:9 says, "If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest." In this last passage, you will notice the usual responses given by fools to the wise efforts of others in their behalf—they will either get angry (rage) or make fun (laugh). Wisdom is too high for fools, but they don't know it.

II. FOOLS THINK IT IS SMART TO SIN.

"It is as sport to a fool to do mischief" (10:23). They think it is smart to cuss somebody out. Some think it is smart to smoke more cigarettes or drink more beers than others. One fool will brag to another fool about how many women he has had. Proverbs has well pin-pointed such people when it calls them fools.

We can surely see the truth of 14:9, "Fools make a mock at sin."

You try to get a fool to repent of his sinful ways, and he will make fun of you and laugh about sin. He is not about to give up his crowd and his fun. Nothing would be more miserable to him than to settle down and live the Christian life. To him, nothing would

be more miserable; therefore, to him, nothing is more unthinkable. 13:19 says, "It is abomination to fools to depart from evil." He doesn't think any evil is going to come upon him because of the way he is living. 14:16 puts it like this, "A wise man feareth and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident."

III. FOOLS ARE KNOWN BY THEIR SPEECH.

Listen to 15:14: "The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness." If you need any commentary on this verse, just go down to the corner store or to the garage or to the barber shop—just anywhere that men with time on their hands gather—and listen to them for ten minutes, and you will well understand the statement, "The mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness." The chances are, you will not hear one thing that will build you up or do you any good, but will hear a lot of vocal drivel that depicts nothing but shallowness of thought, and such will go on all day long!

Another vocal mark of a fool is that he tells everything he knows. 29:11 says, "A fool uttereth all his mind." He will freely talk concerning his financial matters or his business dealings. He will not hesitate to tell you how much money he has or how much he made or how much he sold his car for. For some reason, he wants everybody to know everything about him, so he tells everything he knows.

But, not only does he talk about his own things—he talks about everybody else's things too. And this gets him into trouble. 18:7 says, "A fool's mouth is his destruction."

Furthermore, a fool weaves into his conversation all the rude words, all the vulgar words, and all the latest delinquents' expressions. His speech is marked by all kinds of grammatical errors. Nothing of good literature is ever upon his tongue. No statement from the pen of David or from the pens of the

great secular writers ever is upon his lips. In short, 17:7 says, "Excellent speech becometh not a fool."

IV. FOOLS OFTEN FIND THEMSELVES IN TROUBLE.

"A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes" (18:6). To be whipped was a part of public correction in Bible times. Fools then as now were always getting themselves in difficulty with the law. They refused to be guided by the laws that had been made. That is why 19:29 says, "Judgments are prepared for scorers, and stripes for the back of fools."

Fools are usually trouble-makers. 20:3 says, "It is an honour for a man to cease from strife (and the wise usually try to avoid trouble as much as possible): but every fool will be meddling (quarrelling—R.V.)." The righteous try to get things settled as quickly as possible, but fools are always trying to stir up trouble and to keep the fires of contention burning.

A fool also has an ungoverned temper that is ready to explode at the slightest provocation. "A fool's wrath is presently known" (12:16). And it is an unreasonable wrath too. "A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both" (27:3). In fact, so unreasonable and so cruel can the wrath of a fool be that 17:12 says, "Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly."

V. THE WORTHLESS LIFE OF A FOOL.

While "a prudent man concealeth knowledge," the "heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness" (12:23). In keeping with the foregoing, 18:2 says, "A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover (or reveal) itself." And 13:16 similarly adds, "Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge: but a fool layeth open his folly."

Listen to this proverb, "The crown of the wise is their riches: but the foolishness of fools is folly" (14:24).

This next passage is better known for its appearance in Peter's writings. Notice the way it is worded in the book of Proverbs: "As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly" (26:11). This repulsive picture is God's picture of the life of the fool. Fools themselves are not aware that they appear this way.

"Delight (delicate living—R.V.) is not seemly for a fool" (19:10).

VI. WE ARE WARNED ABOUT TAKING UP WITH FOOLS.

How true is the statement made in 13:20, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." Why does God warn people about becoming a companion of fools? Because there are those who seem to know no better than to throw themselves into the direct influence of those whom God labels as fools. Anybody who has no more judgment than to take up with fools will probably not have enough judgment to preserve him from becoming like them.

Again God warns, "Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge" (14:7). This is more than a warning; it is a commandment. It shows that we must make judgment of others in order to know with whom to be companions and with whom not to be.

Especially do those who are younger (immature in judgment) and those who are known for being easily affected by their surroundings need to regard these true warnings from Proverbs.

VII. MOST FOOLS ARE HOPELESS OF IMPROVING.

26:3 says, "A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back." The fool has plenty of things to be corrected about, but correction usually doesn't accomplish what it should. "A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool" (17:10). It is a sad fact that one word of reproof to a wise person who will listen will actually do more good than one hundred stripes on the back of a fool.

This fact is brought out very vividly in 27:22: "Though thou shouldest bray (pound) a fool in a mortar (a bowl used for grinding grain) with a pestle (the beater), yet will not his foolishness depart from him." In other words, if one would beat on a fool like a person beating grain in grinding it, yet will a fool go on in his foolishness. Most men who serve prison terms go out and commit similar deeds that bring them right back to jail. The problem child in the first year of school is usually still a fool in his twelfth year.

How hopeless it sounds when God says in 23:9, "Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words." Stripes do him no good, and here we are told that words will do him no good. It is no wonder that God is going to consign all fools to hell. He has put up with their foolishness all the time here. Why should He put up with it forever? He won't!

Lascivious Conduct

The book of Proverbs majors in short sayings concerning various subjects. The subject usually changes with each verse. But, there are some subjects that received lengthy sections at a time. The subject of this present study is one of them. We are going to study the subject by sections.

I. FROM THE 2nd CHAPTER.

The father is speaking to the son. The chapter opens, "My son." He tells his son why he is giving him instruction. We cut in with the material beginning in verse 16: "To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her lips: which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God." Young men need to have a fear of going astray in this matter. The father warns the son of her flattering words. He knows they are dangerous to his son. The woman herself has forsaken her home teachings and has broken the law of her God. Such is the case today, too. Parents sit at home broken and ashamed of the actions of their own. God above is displeased.

The father tries to impress the son with the outcome: "Her house inclineth unto death, and her paths lead unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life" (verses 18, 19). This sin has some fatal consequences that people should fear.

II. FROM THE 5th CHAPTER.

Again the father warns the son of her enticing ways and of the outcome: "The lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is sweet-

er than oil: but her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell" (verses 3-5). There are many things that seem good at the time, but later bring such a recompense. This is one of them.

The father continues: "Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house: lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel: lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labours be in the house of a stranger; and thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, and say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof" (verses 8-12). What a time to see one's mistake--when his body is eaten up with disease, when others have his money, when his name is ruined, and when he can do nothing about it. That is why the father warns ahead of time. That is why he said, "Remove thy way FAR from her." A complete avoidance of her is the only safeguard. When people flirt with sin, it will catch them.

The father says, "Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets. Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee. Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe: let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love. And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?" Marriage is the privilege of each healthy person. "Drink out of your own well," the father says. "Rejoice with the wife of thy youth," he says. "Be ravished with her love." But, leave others alone, and expect others to leave your mate alone. What sound advice. Such advice leads to happy, satisfied living. Heeding it will stop divorcing, too.

III. FROM THE 6th CHAPTER.

The father is still speaking, and he says, "Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids" (verse 25). The beauty of a woman belongs to her own husband. She herself should so regard it. Do not think upon the beauty of another woman. Do not always be noticing her. If you pay attention to her, she soon will be paying attention to you, and she will "take thee with her eyelids". How Satan fills so many women's hearts with an excessive attention to beauty. Such women help bring the downfall of men in general.

More of the sad outcome: "By means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life" (verse 26). Harlotry has always been at a price. Borrowing the figure of "water" from the Proverbs, "Water is high priced." Frequent visits over the years have reduced many to utter poverty—just as this verse indicates.

Notice these piercing questions: "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent" (verses 27-29). All will pronounce him guilty. One has as much chance of getting away with this as he does when he takes fire into his bosom.

If it is a neighbor's wife that one has taken, how will he react? The next verses answer: "Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry; but if he be found, he shall restore seven-fold; he shall give all the substance of his house. In other words, for regular thievery, a suitable settlement can be made. But, notice about adultery: "But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonor shall he get; and his reproach

shall not be wiped away. For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts" (verses 32-35). Men who have fallen before this sin complain that people hold it over their heads. This is exactly what Proverbs said would happen. "Dis-honor shall he get... His reproach shall not be wiped away." The reward is a part of the sin. The man against whom the sin has been committed will never forget it. Nothing that one can do will ever atone for the deed in his eyes.

IV. FROM THE 7th CHAPTER.

The writer tells of a sad scene that he once beheld: "For at the window of my house I looked through my casement, and beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, passing through the street near her corner and he went the way to her house, in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night: and, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot and subtil of heart... She caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee" (verses 6-15), and the following verses show her enticing words, "I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until-the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves" (verses 16-18). Then she goes on to assure him that he need not fear about her husband coming home: "For the goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey: he hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed" (verses 19, 20). Oh the sadness in the next verses: "With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the

flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life" (verses 21-23). What is the lesson? Listen to the next verses) "Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death."

V. FROM THE 9th CHAPTER.

The fallen woman is called foolish, her victims simple: "A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple and knoweth nothing. For she sitteth at the door of her house, in a seat in the high places of the city, to call passengers who go right on their ways: whoso wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Stolen waters are sweet (and a lot of people think they are), and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there: and that her guests are in the depths of hell" (verses 13-18).

What shall we say, then, of these matters? First, enjoy your own wife—be both ravished and satisfied with her love and ways. Second, pay no attention to the beauty and ways of any other woman. Third, don't believe that "stolen waters" will be sweeter than the water you have at home. Fourth, don't suppose that you can side-step without being found out. Fifth, life will never be the same again if you do. Sixth, you will be guilty of a sin that is condemned throughout all the Bible—a sin that will lead you to a terrible hell forever.

View of God

Much is told us in Proverbs about God. Those of us who are children of God are always interested in any verses about our heavenly Father.

I. HE IS A GOD WHO CHASTENS.

"Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth: even as a father the son in whom he delighteth" (3:11, 12).

Just as any wise, loving, concerned parent corrects his child, so does God His. Sometimes we make mistakes in our discipline, but God doesn't. When we do wrong, we can be sure that God is not going to stand idly by and permit us to continue in the way of wrong-doing unchastened. He loves us too much to see us continue that way. When we fail to regard His will, He expects that we will regard His chastening.

II. HE IS A GOD WHO LEADS IN THE LIVES OF MEN.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (3: 5, 6). Here is a great passage urging us to lean upon God instead of trusting in our own selves. How we need this exhortation. While we understand God expects us to do what we can, so many times we overestimate our abilities and minimize our need of His special grace and help in our behalf. A few failures along the line will help our thinking along this line. We are to acknowledge God in everything and in every way, and as a reward we shall have His direction upon our lives. And what finer blessing could we have than that?

"A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps" (16:9). We make plans; we give

life the best thinking of which we are possible; we do our best toward a given end. But, lo, it doesn't work out that way at all! Why? The Lord had different plans, and He overruled our plans. Haven't you seen this happen in your own life at times? Even in this, we can see the love and the wisdom of God, for sometimes we do not know what is best for us; we do not have possession of all the facts involved; we do not see the outcome of our plans as He does. Thank God for His intervention!

"The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (18:10). The fortified cities of the Old Testament world not only had walls, but also towers. They fought to keep the enemy outside their walls, but when they broke through the gates or battered down the walls, they took refuge in their towers. You may possibly recall in the book of Judges how the men of Thebez sought refuge in their tower from the anger of wicked Abimilech. In that particular instance, their tower did them no good, but our God is a tower that never fails. Oh how we need a place of refuge to which we can flee! How glad we are that God is not only a loving daily provider, but also a place of resort for us during the fury of life! "The righteous runneth into it, and is safe."

We close our thoughts on what the Lord does for us by reading 2:7,8: "He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints."

III. HE IS THE CREATOR OF ALL PERSONS.

"The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all" (22:2). The rich may feel superior to the poor, but they need to remember that God is the poor man's God just as much as He is their God. They should not overlook the fact that the poor man is rich in the fact that he too is a recipient of

God's love and concern. On the other hand, the poor many times hate the rich, but they need to remember that God is just as much concerned about the soul of the rich as He is their souls. All have been created in the image of God, and we have gone a long way in living right in the earth when we come to regard each person as one who bears the image of God. Because of this fact, we are to have a regard and a love for each individual.

"The poor and the deceitful man meet together: the Lord lighteneth both their eyes" (29:13). God does not rejoice in their deceitfulness, but He bears with them in His great longsuffering and loving kindness, hoping that the time will come when they will be what they should be. That we too might not abandon people without any future hope whom God continues to sustain!

IV. HE HAS CREATED AND SUSTAINS THE UNIVERSE ABOUT US.

The thought that all things came into existence through millions of years of struggle via the evolutionary route is all too common today. That all things merely govern themselves in a natural way without any personal God behind it all seems even more common. But, both concepts are wrong. Proverbs is strong on the fact of God's creation, and it also shows that He governs His universe today: "The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew" (3:19:20).

V. HE SEES ALL THAT TAKES PLACE.

When people do things they don't want to be seen doing, they should remember 15:3. When they have thoughts in their hearts that are not godly, they should remember 15:3. When they go places they know they shouldn't go, they should remember 15:3.

When they have done good, but nobody seems to take notice of it, they should remember 15:3. When they have been condemned for doing what is right, they should take heart from 15:3.

That great verse says, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

There is no place we can go where the eyes of the Lord are not present. Jonah tried to flee from the presence of the Lord, but his failure stands as a fact that such is impossible to do. His eyes are everywhere, and they see everything that goes on regardless of whether it is good or bad. This is all so necessary if He is to bring every person and everything into judgment, and toward that we are all moving! Let us not forget it.

VI. HE HATES SIN, BUT HE DELIGHTS IN THE RIGHTEOUS.

Often times you will hear people say God hates sin, but they have all too indefinite a concept of what is a sin. To them, God hates sin in the abstract. But, passages like 6:16-19 help us understand that God hates given acts and given attitudes that are sinful. Listen to that passage: "These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren." God hates every one of those things regardless of in whom they are found. Other passages in Proverbs point out other things that are abominable to God also.

But, just as God hates the way of the wicked, so does He delight in the way of the godly: "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight. The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord: but he

loveth him that followeth after righteousness" (15: 8, 9). The same thing is brought out in 15:29: "The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous." It is put in the strongest language in 3:33: "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just."

Sometimes teachers are accused of having pets. Many times it merely boils down to this: those who get good grades; those who are permitted to run errands for her are those who have their work done; those whom she does not have to call down all the time are those who behave themselves; those who do not have to stay in after school are those who have been obedient throughout the day. The charge of "pets" usually comes from the bottom of the cup!

God is no respecter of persons, but He is a respecter of righteousness, and when one seeks to live according to the will of God, regardless of who he is, he will find the blessing of the Lord upon his habitation, but if one flaunts the will of God, regardless of who he is or of how good he has been in the past, he will find that he has incurred the wrath of God upon him, which will bring His curse and not His approving blessings.

We thank and praise God for what we learn of Him in Proverbs. He is a God just like He ought to be, and those who view Him from the paths of obedience agree.

The Fear of the Lord

24:21 says, "Fear thou the Lord and the king." Our fear for God in a divine sense might be paralleled by our fear for a king in an earthly sense. The fear that we are called upon to have toward God is a regard for His greatness, a respect for His governing will, and a terror if we violate His law. Men in Solomon's day were taught the necessity of respecting the king over them, the rightness of honoring his law, and the fearfulness attending violating his dictates.

This great book of Proverbs has considerable to say regarding man's fear of the Lord. We are discussing its material under four heads.

I. THE FEAR OF THE LORD MAKES ONE TEACHABLE.

1:7 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction." When one has a reverential respect for God, he fears not to hear the Word of God. He is not a Smart Alex who acts as if he knows more than God. Yet, there are some that way. God can tell them nothing. They are "know-it-alls". They are like the ancients spoken of in Romans who did not glorify God in their minds, but turned away from the knowledge of God and as a result became foolish in their imaginations which caused their foolish hearts to be darkened. If the fear of the Lord is the BEGINNING of knowledge, some people don't know very much.

II. THE FEAR OF THE LORD MAKES ONE HOLY.

"Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil" (3:7). When one does evil, he breaks the law of God. He fears doing wrong against God in the same way he fears violating the law of the king. That one who continues in sin does not really

fear God.

"The fear of the Lord is to hate evil" (8:13). like the completeness of Bible ways. If evil is wrong (and it is), and if evil brings punishment (and it does), then man is to acknowledge it as wrong, fear doing it, depart from it, and even turn to hate it. In addition to refraining from it, we must be against it. The fear of the Lord in our hearts will cause us to be sanctified in our lives.

14:16 says, "A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident." Some people cannot be warned. They will barge in anyway—many times just to see what will happen. In this matter of violating the will of God, they will find out!

The unholiness of this age but indicates the lack of fear of God of this age. The way that people argue against straight preaching in order to justify themselves in their sinful ways but indicates that such fear is lacking.

III. THE FEAR OF THE LORD MAKES ONE BLESSED.

We read, "The fear of the Lord prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened" (10:27). Other places in the Bible, God has indicated long life as one of the blessings of godliness. Foolishly people of the world talk about the importance of living fast even if they can't live long! Long life is something to appreciate as it comes to us from the hand of God—because we have feared Him and served Him.

In similar vein, 14:27 says, "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death." Sin and death are ever connected in the Bible. "The one who fears departs from evil, and the one who departs from evil escapes a premature death. There is beauty in the words. "fountain of

life," and that fountain is promised to those who fear God.

Listen to 19:23: "The fear of the Lord tendeth to life; and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil." In this verse, we see the same thing. We also see the satisfaction of living that comes. Long life itself is not enough. One can live in misery a long time. But, with long life, the fear of the Lord brings the kind of living that is satisfying. As the song writer wrote: "I'm living on the mountain Underneath the cloudless sky; I'm drinking at the fountain That never shall run dry; Oh yes, I'm feasting on the manna From a bountiful supply."

Yes, "happy is the man that feareth always: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief" (28:14).

IV. THE FEAR OF THE LORD MAKES ONE SAFE.

Solomon speaks to his son, "My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion: so shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken" (3:21-26). We love these promises to the righteous. They have nothing to be afraid of—those who truly fear God.

Those who have lived wisely and listened to wisdom have this promise from Wisdom itself: "Whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil" (1:33). Such passages indicate that evil overtakes people. As the righteous dwell safely, they can thank the Lord that they were wise enough to fear Him and to live for Him so they might escape those times and experiences.

29:25 says, "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe." Because of fearing men, people compromise with evil and thereby break the will of God. Such leads to the wages of sin. But, those who fear and trust the Lord go right ahead in obedience to His commandments and as a result are safe in the day when God deals with the wicked.

Let us examine our fear of God. Let us check our every act against it. Let us curb our words according to it. Let us live under the promise that no evil thing will befall us who abide in the shadow of the wings of the Almighty.

Correction

God believes in correction. He is not with the modern trend to let evil go unrebuked. He Himself is a corrector: "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth" (3:11, 12).

He says to fathers, "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell" (23:13, 14). He says, "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul" (29:17).

God says that people who believe in keeping His law believe in contending with the wicked, that those who pat the wicked on the back are the ones who depart from the law themselves: "They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them" (28:4).

These verses present but a sample of the many things said in the book of Proverbs on the subject of

correction. Let us look at some of the other things.

I. REBUKE IS DESIGNED TO DO GOOD.

"A reproof entereth more into a wise man than a hundred stripes into a fool" (17:10). "The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise" (15:31). "He that heareth reproof getteth understanding" (15:32). "Reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge" (19:25).

When we see a person of worth going astray, a rebuke properly given will usually be the means of saving him. There are times when all of us need counseling by others. The truly wise person will listen. That one who cannot be entreated is not wise. A proper rebuke administered at the proper time by the proper person in the proper way has been a life-long blessing to many a good person who was erring.

II. CORRECTION IS GRIEVOUS.

15:10 says, "Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way," and it is. It is not natural to be called down. The child wants to pout. The grown-up wants to sulk. All feel bad.

Because of this fact, few rebukes are actually administered. It is not our desire to make people feel bad. Probably half of the rebukes that are given are given to those whom people want to feel bad. They know that such will be the result.

In a sense, one takes his friendship with another into his hands when he speaks a correcting word to him. But, Proverbs says, "Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (27:5, 6). We all like the good will of others, but the foregoing passage says it is better for us to be rebuked by loving friends than to be purred over by someone who doesn't love us. That passage says, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." Because correction is grievous, we may feel we have been wounded, but God says that wounds when administered by one who

loves us are faithful, and 15:5 says we are prudent to regard such reproof: "He that regardeth reproof is prudent."

28:23 is bold to say, "He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue." We may think our best friends are those who keep their mouths shut and never say anything to us about our failings, and we may think that that person who will take us aside and talk to us about our mistakes is trying to butt his nose into our business, but when years have gone by, and that one who rebuked us has proven to be a real friend, he will rise in our esteem as a wonderful, helpful person, and those who said nothing to us to help us when we needed it turn out in our eyes to be weak, cowardly individuals after all.

III. NOT EVERYBODY WILL ACCEPT CORRECTION.

If everybody accepted correction in a good spirit and still loved us, it would be a simple thing to give another a talking to when he needed it. But, we know it is not always that way.

12:1 speaks of those who hate reproof. 5:12 speaks of the man who has dissipated his strength, thrown away his money, and lost his good name through immoral living as saying (after the fling is all over), "How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!"

Do not be discouraged, then, when you try to do your best to help someone, whether it be a wayward son or a friend, if they pay no attention to what you say, but continue in the path of sin.

IV. THE SAD OUTCOME OF DISREGARDING CORRECTION.

When people resist the good words of one who speaks correctingly, they may think they have vindicated themselves in what they have said by way of reply, but the future will show that such a one would have been wise to have listened instead of having talked the correction away.

The first chapters of Proverbs personify Wisdom. Wisdom cries, "Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you," (1:23) and Wisdom does through the lips of others. But, Wisdom says, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you" (verses 24-27). That folly that called forth the correction and that should have been turned from grows to its full end—and oh what a bitter end usually! What will people do in the time of their calamity? Wisdom again answers, "Then shall they call upon men but I will not answer; they will seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices" (verses 28-31).

V. A SCORNER DOES NOT MERIT A REBUKE.

A scorner is a mocker, and a mocker usually lacks either sincerity or sense. He either has a wicked heart or an empty head! If he has a wicked heart, he will not want to know what is right; if he lacks mentality, he will not be able to follow the wisdom of what you say. Therefore, 9:7,8 aptly says, "He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot. Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate

thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning." 13:1 says, "A scorner heareth not rebuke." And 15:12 says, "A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise."

In conclusion, it may be that there are individuals whom you have thus far refused to go to and speak correcting words. Consider your duty in the light of Proverbs. It may be that you have been corrected, but have not received it. Consider yourself in the light of Proverbs. Humble yourself and receive both the chastening of the Lord and the correction of your fellow-man. Hear this final, timely warning from the Proverbs; "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

Parenthood

Men feel a responsibility for providing the material needs of their households, and they put in many hours each week doing so. But, that is not the sole responsibility of the begetter to the begotten. Women take care of the cooking, washing, and housekeeping to the tune of many hours each day. But, these deeds do not fulfill the responsibility of the bearer to the born. If children had no side but the physical, the parental work would be well done by the above. But, with minds to be filled with a knowledge of the right, with characters to be started aright, and with souls to be guided, caring for the material side is but the beginning of parents' responsibility toward their offspring.

Proverbs, more than any other book of the Bible, has much to say upon parenthood, and it is the purpose of this message to bring forth some of that important teaching.

I. PROVERBS INTRODUCES TO US "TEACHING PARENTS".

Proverbs shows us parents who teach and warn their children. "My son," the writer says, "if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." And then he goes on to forewarn his son of the way they will approach him to get him to go in with them. But, the father adds, "Walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path" (1:10-15).

There was ever that instruction to trust in God. "My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion: so shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken" (3:21-26).

The writer tells his son, "I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live" (4:3, 4), and the writer was turning around and doing the same thing to his son—teaching him.

Some fathers do little more than bring the children into the world and bring the money home for their livelihood. Proverbs shows that a father is to be teacher too, not expecting the mother to do all the talking and all the rearing of the children. On the other hand, the woman is to be a teacher also: "For-sake not the law of thy mother" (1:8). She doesn't always wait till Dad comes home from work to tend to the disobedience of the children. She is strict with them also.

II. CHILDREN ARE TO RECEIVE THE INSTRUCTION OF PARENTS.

"Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law" (4:1, 2). A good father gives good doctrine—good teaching. His ways are right, and he is not going to misguide his child. 3:1 says, "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments." Remembering what they are told is just as important in the home as remembering what God has commanded us. People forget what God says and disobey; children forget what parents say and disobey. "I forgot," they say so often. They need to be taught to remember what they are told, and parents whose regulations regularly kicked around with this "I forgot" business are weak parents, who are in the process of failing already with their children.

How important are parental instructions? Listen to 6:21: "Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck." Listen again: "Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart" (7:3). "Bind" is a strong word. Children should "bind" their "parents' teachings upon their hearts, fingers, and all to remind them of what they are to do.

But, there are some children who will not listen. "A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent" (15:5). Children who will not listen are labeled "fools", and the outcome usually shows them to be such. While a wise son maketh "a glad father, a foolish man despiseth his mother" (15:20). 13:1 tells of the way that a wise son will listen to his father's instruction, and that there are sons who scorn every rebuke given. Yes, there will be outside forces, outside influences, that will seek to tear down our children. That is why the Proverb writer said, "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge" (19:27). What a text! Such sons and daughters come to no good end.

III. PARENTS ARE TO INFLICT BODILY PUNISHMENTS FOR DISOBEDIENCE.

A "scourge" was a whip. The Bible says that God "scourgeth" every son whom He receiveth (because no son is above correction), and that fathers of the flesh are to do the same thing to their children (for there has never yet been the perfect child except Jesus). But, with this teaching of bodily punishments, many people and the Bible part company. There is much infidelity today upon this point. In some cases, whole congregations have rebelled against this very practice so definitely taught in the Bible—but look at the children of those who oppose this Bible doctrine! Most of them have some of the sorriest children.

Listen to Proverbs: "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul" (29:17). Some parents have no rest because of the misdeeds of their children. They are always into something, always tearing up something, always breaking something, always doing something the parents don't want them to do; in short, they wear the parents out going from one thing to another. The right kind of correction, Proverbs says, will not only give you rest concerning your child, but the child will actually be a delight to your soul. What a difference! But, how is that correction to be done? Two ways, according to a companion verse in the same chapter: "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (verse 15). "Reproof" is "talking" correction, and the rod is "bodily" correction. Both are necessary; both are enjoined. A parent who talks but never acts in a bodily way is carrying out but part of what God has said, and a parent who is quick to whip, but slow to have a good talk with the disobedient son is but breeding trouble also. Do both.

"Foolishness is bound in the heart of the child," we are told in 22:15. What has God said will take it

out? The last part of the verse answers: "The rod of correction shall drive it far from him." But, some make the mistake of letting things go too far before they do anything. 19:18 says, "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." Of course, he will cry, and you may think you can't do it, but God says to inflict necessary punishment, and don't wait until it is too late to do it. Some have waited too long now. Don't others of you make the same mistake.

"Withhold not correction from the child," 23:13 says. Are you guilty of this? "Of course not," you say; "I talk to him." But, are you doing the kind of correcting that God is talking about in this passage? It continues by saying, "For if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod and shalt deliver his soul from hell." There are actually going to be many people lost simply because parents did not maintain the leadership of their lives as children, did not punish them when they needed it in the way that God said it was to be done. If you are being too soft with your children, wake up before it is too late!

IV. WHAT LISTENING TO PARENTAL INSTRUCTIONS RESULTS IN.

That child is not doing wrong who does what God says he should do. If he listens to his parental instructions (unless his parents be wicked), he will grow up to be a happy, useful, godly person—a good product of the home, a Christian man, a useful person, a credit to himself. In harmony with this, 3:1-4 points out, "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: for length of days and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: so shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man." Notice the blessings: (1) long life—this is also brought out in 4:10; (2) peace—good

days while you live; (3) favor in the sight of God; and (4) favor in the sight of man. Talk about a rounded life, this is it. This is the kind of life that results from good parental teachings carried out.

Many parental teachings are given ahead of time—given when they can be given. Because of parental teachings given, when evil presents itself, the child knows it is evil, and the word of the parents is right there saying, "Don't do it." This is what is meant in 6:20-24: "My son, keep thy father's commandment and forsake not the law of thy mother: bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee, when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: to keep thee from the evil woman," yes, and from any other evil that may present itself.

Parents will not always be around to see how the children live. Normally, they will precede them in death a number of years. Do you want to be sure they will go straight after you die? Parental attention while they are with you at home will assure those results, for 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

V. THE JOYS AND SORROWS ATTENDING THE OUTCOME OF PARENTHOOD.

10:1 says, "A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother." How true. Nothing should please man more than his children turning out right. Even when they turn out fair, how parents do brag! Nothing brings greater heaviness to a woman than to have her children go bad.

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

line, 17:21 says, "He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy."

Other passages that indicate how far children can go in abuse of their parents are: "He that wasteth his father (and some sons surely do), and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach" (19:26); "Whoso curseth his father or his mother (and some children will), his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness" (20:20).

But, back to the more pleasant side: "My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine" (23:15); "The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy in him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice" (23:24, 25); "My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth me" (27:11).

May every parent be posted on these great Proverbs, and may these Proverbs be guiding lights to parents everywhere in the rearing of their children. They reflect God's inspired wisdom upon the subject. Prefer God's wisdom to your own in this all-important matter.

Two Kinds of Wives

Of the many things the Proverb writer spoke to his son, one of them was about the matter of marriage. We can well imagine that what the book of Proverbs has to say upon this subject will be well said. Its truths should be taught to the sons of our day, and while the writer is speaking as a father to a son, in so many ways the truths are such that a mother could well use them in speaking to a daughter concerning men and marriage.

I. MARRIAGE IS A GOOD STATE.

There is too much levity concerning this subject of marriage. Of course, we cannot avoid some of the humorous things that happen and that are told, but the tone of things needs to be much more serious than it usually is when certain passages from the Bible on this subject are read or quoted. Here is a great passage that has experienced entirely too much humor: "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord" (18:22). Listening to levity-loving preaching read this to the emphasis that a wife is merely a "thing" leaves much to be desired when the author has no such thought in mind. The word "thing" is even in italics, which forbids any such meaning or emphasis. A wife is no more a "thing" than a husband is. If woman is a "thing", a man is a bigger "thing", for she came from man. What that verse is saying is that the person who finds a wife is finding something good or is getting into a good state of life. The latter part of that passage shows that God is pleased when people marry, provided of course they do not marry contrary to His will.

As people have married, so does their marriage usually go. If they have run off to get married, it usually isn't too long until one of them is running away from the other. If they have taken the Lord into their home, they have found His blessing abiding upon their home.

Yes, marriage is good. Ask the person who is properly married. He or she would not think of becoming unmarried at all. Even those who break away from a mate are soon found trying to make another home. Marriage is not the only state in which to live, but it is a mighty good one.

II. THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF WIVES.

12:4 is a wonderful passage, saying, "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that mak-

eth ashamed is as rottenness in his bones." There is the virtuous woman, and there is that one who makes her mate ashamed. The virtuous woman, distinguished for her many virtues of godliness, wisdom, patience, love, attractiveness, and care, is a crown to her husband. Such a wife actually promotes her husband to greater places. Many a man can thank a good wife for a part of his accomplishments in life. Some large companies today, before promoting a man to a high place investigate his wife first. They know she will have an influence and an effect upon him either for good or for bad. The wife that maketh ashamed, possibly for speaking out of turn, failing to keep the house in good order, or getting out of line in one way or another, is described as rottenness in his bones. When one has such a disease in his bones as rottenness, he isn't able to do very much, and the same is true of the man who has such a wife.

Another passage: "A prudent wife is from the Lord" (19:14). Any man with a good wife or any woman with a good husband should thank the Lord for it. God was having a hand in it. When it says a "prudent" wife, it also indicates that there is such a thing as a wife who is not prudent. It doesn't say where the non-prudent wife is from, but I have always thought that if a prudent wife is from the Lord, a non-prudent one must surely be from the devil. Ask the man who has one, and he will probably confirm it.

Yes, there are two kinds of wives just as there are two kinds of husbands.

III. FURTHER COMMENTS ON THE WRONG KIND OF WIFE.

31:31 says, "For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear," and the passage goes ahead to list these four. The third one is "an odious woman when she is married". An

"odious" person is a hateful person. We usually think of the feminine portion of humanity being distinguished for mellowness of spirit. For sweetness, and for kindness. But, this passage indicates that some of them are not so sweet.

27:15 says, "A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike." Some days it rains and rains and rains. There is no let-up. This passage says that a contentious woman is like that. She starts in with her fault-finding and nagging before breakfast. The husband has to listen to more griping at the breakfast table. When he leaves to go to work, she is boiling over, and when he comes home at night, she hasn't cooled off yet. She is ready to fuss away the entire evening. It is no wonder that some husbands prefer twin beds. I have known a few who preferred separate bedrooms. One case I knew of, they slept on separate floors—she downstairs; he upstairs.

21:9 again recognizes the unpleasantness of such a home when it says, "It is better to dwell in a corner of the house top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house."

IV. A WONDERFUL SECTION DEVOTED TO THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN.

Don't suppose that the writer of Proverbs has it in for the women and that he can say no good thing about them. In the 31st chapter, he has devoted one of his longest sections in the book to an unusual praise of the good woman. Good women appreciate this wonderful section, and they agree with the Proverb author concerning his feelings about non-virtuous women.

In verse 11, he states the great value of such a woman to her husband, family, and society in general: "Her price is far above rubies." Verses 11 and 12 show her faithfulness to her mate: "The heart of

her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life."

She is a woman known for the busy and useful life she leads: "She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land (she didn't marry just 'any old stick'). She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come" (verses 13-25).

She is known for the wisdom and kindness of her words: "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness" (verse 26). Because "she looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness," her children "arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her" (verses 27 and 28). While a woman may be useful in various ways, yet the family woman has excelled them all: "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all" (verse 29). And instead of living for favor, which is so often deceitful, and for beauty, which is said to be vain, the virtuous woman fears the Lord and is

praised because of it (verse 30). Yes, her own works shall praise her (verse 31).

Psychological Outlook

Billy Sunday used to say he knew God had a sense of humor "because He made the monkey and some of you people". Be that as it may, we do believe God intends for men and women to enjoy their sojourn upon the earth, and if they live the full life of obedience to God, they will be happy and blest.

The book of Proverbs, which treats so many subjects so well, has not overlooked this important field of one's psychological outlook upon life. Let us notice some of the things it includes on the subject.

I. PROVERBS CONTRASTS MERRY AND SAD HEARTS.

It says, "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken" (15:13). When one is happy on the inside, it will show up on the outside. We have a chorus that says, "If you're happy, and you know it, Then your face will surely show it," and it will. Proverbs says a merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, but the verse also says by sorrow of heart is the spirit broken. What a picture of one's spirit! Broken. No word can better describe the spirit when grief and sorrow leave one lifeless and hopeless.

Another verse says, "All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast" (15:15). There are days that the sun may shine, but its light fails to cheer the downcast. The birds may sing, but their song will find no appreciative response in the heart of the afflicted. All

the days of the afflicted are evil, are full of trouble. In contrast, the verse says that one of a merry heart has a continual feast. How better could life be expressed than to call it a continual feast? And that is what it is to the happy, cheerful person. But, unless one maintains a merry heart, it will not be much of a feast. How tragic that there are those who do not look on the bright side of things, but who always see the dark side!

Listen to yet another passage: "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones" (17:22). Any doctor would need no commentary to understand this verse. There is a definite connection between physical health and one's mental outlook upon life. When one has a cheerful disposition, the body has so much quicker response toward recovery, but when one gives up, it is mighty hard to pull him out of it. 18:14 possibly brings it out even more forcefully: "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?"

II. THINGS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO A PERSON'S HAPPINESS.

A man's own success has much to do with his possession of happiness. Listen to three verses upon this subject: "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" (12:14). When a person has said the right thing and has done the right thing, it brings him personal satisfaction, and he enjoys the reward of right doing. A second passage states it so well, when it says, "The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul" (13:19). When a person has launched out into a project and has accomplished it, how good it feels. To spend a day in carrying out well-laid-out plans is one of life's greatest joys, and for the most part, it is an everyday privilege. A third passage reads: "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire com-

eth, it is a tree of life" (13:12). When a person has planned for something and then finds that its realization cannot be at the time expected, it brings a let-down that is well described by the words, "maketh the heart sick." All of us have sometime known what it is to be sick of heart over a deferred hope. But, the passage says it is a tree of life to us when that desire is realized. So, our successes and failures have much to do with our happiness or our lack of it.

But, there are other things that enter in also. 15:30 says, "A good report maketh the bones fat," after it says, "The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart." Similarly does 25:25 report, "As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country, when one has been eagerly awaiting news, is just as exhilarating to his spirits.

Then, when one's spirit is bowed in sorrow, how good it is to have the comfort of another! 12:25 says, "Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good work maketh it glad." And 16:24 says, "Pleasant words are as any honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones." Such words, either uttered to us when our spirits need refreshment or uttered in the normal course of conversation, cast a spirit of cheerfulness about us which we all appreciate. Unpleasant words do quite the opposite.

A life of trust in God also brings happiness to a person. "He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he" (16:20).

III. THREE FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE SUBJECT.

The first is found in 14:10: "The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not inter-meddle with his joy." In other words, while others may sympathize with us, they do not experience the depth of our bitterness, and while they may be happy

with us over a matter, they cannot experience the rejoicing that floods our hearts. We know the things that cast us down better than anyone else does, and we know the joy that sweeps over our soul better than any other know it. Our emotions, then, at least in their depths are personal property into which others cannot fully enter.

Another thought is found in 14:13: "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness." Psychologists and psychiatrists recognize that the person who laughs much and laughs loudly may not be the person who is truly happy. Many laugh in an attempt to be happy whereas laughter should itself be but a reflexion of a happiness that already exists. There are those who seem to be the life of a party when they are with a group, but when they get home, how dejected they can get! Proverbs recognized this fact long ago. The Bible is an up-to-date book on all these things.

We close with a consideration of 24:10: "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small." Adversities will come, and usually they will go. Happy, then, is the person who can weather them while they last. In a sense, this verse seems to be chiding us if we let circumstances of adversity overcome us. It says our strength is small. Proverbs would have us overcome and withstand that we might be strong individuals.

Things Abominable

6:16-19 tells us of six things that God hates—yea, seven that are actually abominable to Him. They are listed as follows: (1) a proud look; (2) a lying tongue (3) hands that shed innocent blood; (4) a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations; (5) feet that are swift in running to mischief; (6) a false witness; and (7) one who sows discord among brethren. An abomination is something that is utterly detestable, something that one cannot stand. The Bible elsewhere tells us that God is grieved with men's sins, but Proverbs tells us that men's lives can be so wicked that they are an outright abomination to Him. The above seven things find themselves all too often in the everyday lives of too many people—pride, lying, injustice, and trouble-making. If they are so abominable to God, we should guard that none of them be a part of our lives.

You would suppose from said passage that only seven things are actually abominations to God, but when you get to picking through Proverbs, you find still others. Those things that personally receive statements all of their own, we are considering in this message.

I. DISHONESTY IN BUSINESS MATTERS.

Hear how the eleventh chapter opens: "A false balance is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is his delight." This verse has to do with their system of weighing in those days.

If one will read the books of the prophets, he will see how much stress those God-sent men placed on honest dealings man-to-man. Some of the sternest warnings in those books were issued to those who were cheating their fellowmen. All of that crooked-

ness did not end with the Mosaic dispensation. Graft is still a common thing—sometimes even among those who are church people. Much goes on in the name of good business that ought to be done in the name of dishonesty.

In my grade school history book, there was a picture of white men cheating the Indians out of their furs. The man weighing the furs would put his own foot on the scale with the weights, and more and more furs had to be put on the other side to make it balance. Butchers will cut off a piece of meat, toss it onto the scale, and take it off and begin wrapping it up before the scale has stopped. That will not be an accurate weigh, and you know which way the amount will be marked! Brethren, these and other dishonesties are abominations to the Lord. A Christian can have no part in them. Whoever does is a dishonest thief.

II. THE PROUD.

Very plainly does 16:5 say, "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished."

Man is no more wrong than when he thinks himself really to be someone. God knows otherwise. God has spoken otherwise. There are so many things that man does not know, so many things that he cannot do, so many ways in which he is imperfect. God sees all those failures. A proud man doesn't.

Man with an inflated idea of himself is like a person who has no musical education, has never attended a real music concert, has not come in contact with those who really know music, but who takes the bench to play with an air of great swelling importance. One is present who is well schooled in the matter of music. He sees the poor use of the hands, the wrong posture of the body. He hears those mistakes that are made. As he sits and listens and at the same time beholds the arrogance of the one play-

ing, he well knows the feelings to be completely out of place, and musically it is disgusting—abominable—to him. The same is true of God when He sees the arrogance of man amid the many imperfections of man.

He realizes, too, that it is not the proud who submit to Him in obedience, but the humble. Those with a self-contained feeling do not call upon God, do not look to Him, do not lean upon Him. Man, fed by the goodness of God, clothed by the mercy of God, kept alive by the power of God, going on as he does as if there were no God cannot help but arouse a feeling of disgust and indignation within God.

III. LYING LIPS.

"Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight" (12:22). What a difference between being abominable to God and delighting Him!

The Bible labels the devil as a liar and the FATHER of lying. When, then, a person's lips lie, the devil is controlling his heart. The devil has fathered the lie. Do you realize this?

God and the devil are against each other in every way. God hates the devil and his works, and He hates to see a person taking up the ways of the devil, which he does when he lies.

Actually the foundation of all society is truthfulness. The element of "trust" (believing the other party) is a part of our homes, our business dealings, our everyday lives in the community. When lying enters in, we cannot be trusted. We actually undermine homes, business, and others—a thing that is mighty grave. God knows it, and He abhors it.

IV. HYPOCRITICAL RELIGION.

15:8,9 says, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the up-

right is his delight. The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness." Think of it—"the sacrifice of the wicked!" What business does the wicked man have sacrificing to God? Every religious act is to be a manifestation of some acceptable attitude—like gratitude, reverence, contrition. Godly people are to approach God. The wicked are an abomination to Him. God delights in the prayer of the upright, but He cannot stand the hypocritical offerings of the wicked.

21:27 says, "The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?" The wicked have a motive for sacrificing. God hates even their motives for so doing; He knows they are not worthy motives.

One of the better known proverbs in this field is 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." If men do not hear God's law, why should God hear their prayers? If they do not try to carry out God's wishes, why should He theirs? That one who disregards what God says and who prays God to do certain things for him, even his prayer is out of place—it is abomination to God.

V. JUSTIFIERS OF THE WICKED AND CON- DEMNNERS OF THE JUST.

"He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord" (17:15). The wicked are to be condemned both in the judgment of God and of men. The just are justified of God and should be of men. But, when people justify the wicked, they are justifying those whom God condemns, and when they condemn the just, they are saying God is wrong. This is abomination to God, and you can see why.

There are many who approve people in their sins. Every form of evil is justified by somebody. Yet, God condemns evil. God wants people to believe Him,

to disapprove of those things that He disapproves, to take HIS side. Not only does this function in the field of men's habits, but those who are deceiving people with "other gospels" are received as "angels of light" when they are bringing destruction to souls.

And, of course, there are people who condemn the just—those who separate themselves from the evil, those who try to lead souls to Christ, those who preach the true gospel, those who try to keep the leaven of evil out of the congregation. God uses those whom the world so often condemns. Those who take God's side, He takes their side, and those opposing God's people will be opposed by Him.

VI. THE THOUGHTS OF THE WICKED.

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

The wicked have thoughts. They are usually expressing them too. You talk to them about Jesus, and you will see that they have thoughts. But, they are not the kinds of thoughts that God would have. They are thoughts that do not agree with God's thoughts. They are thoughts that lead away from God rather than to Him. They are thoughts that degrade instead of inspire. They are thoughts that oppose God rather than submit to Him.

Because of the way that wicked people think, it is hard to help them, it is hard to deal with them for God. God knows this. The just deplore the way of the wicked, and the feeling is mutual—the wicked deplore the way of the righteous (29:27). God deplores the way of the wicked and would have them turn from it immediately.

VII. STUBBORNNESS.

"For the froward (stubborn, obstinate) is abomination to the Lord" (2:32). "They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord: but such as are upright in their way are his delight" (11:20).

We use the words "to" and "fro". "To" means going "toward"; "fro" means going "from". "Froward" is the opposite of "toward". God wants us to come to Him—not go from Him. Therefore, the stubborn are called the "froward".

There is much downright stubbornness in people. Just as soon as they think you are trying to get them to do something, no matter how good it is or how important it is, they set themselves against doing it. They are stubborn. They are froward. They are an abomination to God as a result.

Wives try to get husbands to do right. Children try to get parents to do right. Preachers try to get congregations to do right. Christians try to get others to do right. What do they meet? Frowardness. God hates it. It is an abomination to Him. Can you see why it is?

Anything is abominable to God that is not as it should be! Everything pronounced an abomination in Proverbs is something that is not as it should be. God is consistent in His disgust. We can see why He reacts as He does. May we be of a sound mind to desire to be a delight to God rather than an abomination!

Things Preferable

A proper evaluation of things is one of the important things of life. The Hebrew author tells us of the great choice of Moses and the way he preferred to be God's servant rather than to live the life of ease as an Egyptian prince. Every great man of God has had to make important decisions, and those decisions are many times based upon the proper evaluation of things.

Let us turn our attention to those passages in

Proverbs that tell us one thing is better than another in order that we might have a proper evaluation of things.

I. WISDOM IS BETTER.

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is BETTER than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is MORE PRECIOUS than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are NOT TO BE COMPARED unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her" (3:13-18).

What a great passage that is! Man thinks of material gain. Proverbs is not blind to the place of material things, but it says the merchandise and the gain of wisdom are better than that of silver, gold, rubies, and all other earthly things that one can desire. That passage pictures Wisdom's two hands full of great blessings: length of life in her right hand and riches and honor in her left. It also points out that wisdom leads the way to pleasantness and peace and is a tree of life. No wonder, then, that the passage says, "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding."

II. RIGHTEOUSNESS IS BETTER.

Religion is all right with some people until an opportunity to make more money comes along. Then gain is chosen instead of godliness. Listen to the verdict of Proverbs: "BETTER is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich" (28:6); "BETTER is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith" (15:16); "BETTER is a little with righteousness than great revenues without

right" (16:8). Keep these things in mind when thinking of working on Sunday instead of going to church meetings, when contemplating opening a tavern, and when selling tobacco products in your place of business.

Sometimes people will lie for the sake of gain. Listen to what God says in 19:22, "A poor man is BETTER than a liar."

III. PEACE IS BETTER.

Homes, supposedly founded on love, are many times scenes of bitterness. They may be places of royal furnishings and that spread a fine table, but 15:17 says, "BETTER is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." The writer continues: "It is BETTER to dwell in a corner of the house top, than with a brawling woman (or brawling man!) in a wide house" (21:9). And 21:19 says much the same thing, and we give it to you by way of emphasis: "It is BETTER to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman (or such a man!)." (The writer being a man and writing for his son approaches the subject from a man's point of view, but the contrast is just as true from the women's standpoint).

It is fine to be married unless one is not properly married. Then, one could hardly find himself in a worse situation. You can see the way that peace in the home is emphasized in Proverbs.

17:1 says something that many congregations today need to hear: "BETTER is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife." A sacrifice or offering to God should be offered by those who are at peace among themselves. Otherwise, it will do no good. If we cannot love those among whom we dwell, we cannot love God above.

IV. SELF-CONTROL IS BETTER.

One of the overlooked verses in Proverbs is 16:32, which reads: "He that is slow to anger is BETTER than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." Many a militarist has been able to subdue his own spirit and to exercise virtuous self-control. It would be better to be a saint of God living in self-control and never be heard of than to be a high-strung, hot-tempered victor in the wars and have one's name written into the books of history. 16:19 says, "BETTER it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud." Strive, then, to be of the meek and controlled who live on, or who in Jesus' and David's messages "inherit the earth", than to be of the proud, uncontrolled who get cut off much before their time.

Let us appreciate the way that Proverbs exalts these four things—wisdom, righteousness, peace, and self-control—and let us ourselves place that same evaluation upon them that Proverbs does. By choosing the better, we shall be the better.

Honor as a Goal

All should have a sense of honor. All should desire to be honorable. All should both recognize it and appreciate it in others. We sing, "Honor them, the faithful few; All hail to Daniel's band." We also sing, "A place of honor is reserved For you at the Master's side."

This subject of honor is also covered by numerous proverbs, and believing that one cannot have character who does not have a just appreciation of the subject of true honor, we go into this present study with you.

I. HONOR IS SOMETHING EARNED BY THE INDIVIDUAL.

We honor the person who can do what we cannot do or what we have not done. Let a ball club have a Mickey Mantle who can drive the ball clear out of the stadium, and the stands will fill up. Our state fairs and livestock shows honor those men who produce the finest animals. We pay tribute to men like J. Edgar Hoover who have devoted their lives to fighting crime. Men like Edison, Pasteur, Pfister, and others are famous because of their contributions to the welfare of mankind in various ways.

Men of genius who devote themselves to the over-all good of the human race are honored because they have merited that honor. Wisdom may not come to all in such a way as to make all geniuses, but Proverbs does say, "Exalt her (wisdom), and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee" (4:8, 9). 8:18 says, "Riches and honour are with me (wisdom); yea, durable riches and righteousness."

People respect the man who knows, unless he is smart acting about it. We respect the man who can help us with our problems. Proverbs recognizes this when it says, "Good understanding giveth favour" (13:15). Even God is pleased with a man of true wisdom: "Whoso findeth me (wisdom) findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord" (8:35).

This great book of Solomon also indicates that true honor belongs to those whose character is like it should be. "He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour" (21:21). We notice also 22:4: "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life."

In a sense, life affords us that for which we seek, and 11:27 says, "He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour." Many think it is terrible because

people don't think well of them. But, people must act right before people are going to think well of them. If one transgresses into some immoral act, he will find 6:33 is true, which says, "A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away."

Throughout the Bible is the teaching that respect is due our seniors. A good verse from Proverbs says, "The hoary head (white hair) is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness" (16:31). One of the failures of our present generation is failing to cause the youngsters to respect the aged as they should.

You will find, however, for the most part that people will respect a man if he tries to do right. When two people have been in trouble, the world will respect the one who says, "Let's bury the hatchet." (20:3 says, "It is an honour for a man to cease from strife." A person may have done wrong, but we respect anyone who will take correction properly: "He that regardeth reproof shall be honoured" (13:18).

Many want the honor, but not the toil and sweat and not the years of waiting before honor comes. What a great truth is contained in 15:33: "Before honour is humility." "She can't play," says someone listening to a child playing a piano number, but just wait. Later you may have to pay \$5.00 to get in to hear her play. "He can't bat," says a passerby concerning a boy in his first game, but he may become a very famous player in time. What you are undertaking for Jesus may look small and may evoke more smiles now than it does admiration, but if you are doing what is right, stick to it, remembering that "before honour is humility".

II. TRUE HONOR IS A HIGH GOAL THAT ALL SHOULD HAVE.

Society is burdened down with many slouches. Many are rude and crude. By them, those who are

kind are soft, and those who are honorable are despised. They do not honor the honorable nor do they seek to be honorable themselves. But, how can one read the passages in the foregoing section of this message without seeing that there is a true honor that is to be sought by all? But, listen to these verses from Proverbs that follow.

22:1, a verse whose truth should be indelibly written into the thought of every child, young person, and grown-up, says, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold." What a verse when men will sell their reputations for honesty for a little more money in a business deal! What a verse to teach young people in these days when so many of them don't care what their teachers think of them, don't care what older people think of them, and don't care what Christian people think of them!

Another verse that shows a good name is to be sought is 10:7: "The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot." How will people remember you? You say you don't care? Then, you have a spirit altogether different from the Bible passages we are reading. I like also the thought of 11:16, which says, "A gracious woman retaineth honour." You are glad to remember your mother as the good woman that she was, aren't you? You will almost fight if anybody dares to say anything against her. Well, why don't you try to live just as honorably as she did?

III. LET US NOT OVERLOOK THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING THE FAVOR OF GOD.

There are many passages that would urge upon us the obedient life with which God is well pleased. Many passages could be cited showing that the wicked are abominable to Him, that He hates the thoughts of the wicked, that He despises the way of the wicked. But, in closing, let us hear these two passages,

12:2 says, "A good man obtaineth favour of the Lord: but a man of wicked devices will he condemn". If you want the favor of God, you must live **right**, and nobody's favor should you desire to have more than the favor of God.

To the obedient child, the father in Proverbs assures, "So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man" (3:4).

Such studies as we have just had should have a very stimulating effect upon us, beckoning us to the higher life and to the better things in life through living as we ought to live.

The Place of Wisdom

1. How many proverbs did Solomon speak?
2. "The fear of the Lord is the _____ of knowledge; but _____ despise wisdom and instruction."
3. A person's earliest wisdom comes from his _____.
4. Where are some of the places that wisdom cries? _____
5. Does everyone listen to Wisdom? _____
6. Later when people try to call upon wisdom to help, what will they find? _____
7. "Wisdom is the _____ thing; therefore get wisdom."
8. "Take fast hold of _____; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy _____."
9. Wisdom will keep a young man from the way of evil _____ and will deliver him from the strange _____.
10. "A wise man is _____."
11. "_____ the truth, and it not."

The Human Tongue

1. "The heart of the righteous _____ to answer."
2. "The heart of the wise _____ his mouth."
3. "A man hath _____ by the answer of his mouth."
4. "A word _____ spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."
5. "The lip of truth shall be established _____; but a lying tongue is but for a _____."
6. "A hypocrite with his _____ destroyeth his neighbor."

7. "A _____ tongue worketh ruin."
8. Some people use their tongues to sow among brethren.
-
9. "A talebearer revealeth _____."
10. "Where no wood is, there the _____ goeth out, so where there is no _____, the strife ceaseth."
11. "A whisperer separateth chief _____."
-
12. "In the multitude of words, there wanteth not _____."

Lazy People

1. Our word "slothful" comes from an animal by the name of _____ that is known for _____.
2. Our word "sluggard" comes from a small animal by the name of _____ known for _____.
3. The sluggard is urged to learn the ambitious ways of what insect? _____
4. The sluggard will not plow when it is _____.
5. How wise is a sluggard in his own conceit? Wiser than _____.
6. The slothful is a "brother" to the _____.
-
7. When Solomon viewed the field of the slothful, he noticed _____.
-
8. A statement from Prov. relating laziness to poverty or diligence to wealth: _____.
-
9. The ambitiousness of the virtuous woman of Prov. 31 was shown in _____.
-
10. Concerning laziness and sleep, Prov. has this to say: _____.
-

11. The man diligent in business will stand before _____.

The Cry of the Needy

1. The difference between the lazy-needy and the unfortunate-needy: _____

2. The difference in attitude that people show toward these 2 groups: _____

3. What 2 men in a well known parable disregarded the needs of a helpless man?
and _____

4. An example of people's laughing at the poor: _____

5. A statement from Prov. showing people's taking advantage of people's poverty: _____

6. Giving to the worthy-poor is actually making a loan to _____.

7. What sure promise is connected with so doing? _____

8. If we stop our ears at the cry of the needy _____.

The Problem of Pride

1. Pride is a sinful _____.

2. God is not opposed to people's knowing, accomplishing, and properly possessing, but to their being _____ over it.

3. When people are proud in their hearts, you can see it in their _____.

4. The proud stirs up _____.

5. How does contention result from a person's pride? _____

6. Though a proud man lifts himself up, pride will bring him _____.

7. "Pride goeth before _____, and a haughty spirit before a _____."

8. Comment upon pride's being contrasted with wisdom. _____

Anger Outlawed

1. "A wrathful man stirreth up _____."

2. _____ defers a man's anger.

3. "A _____ answer turneth away wrath; but _____ words stir up anger."

4. Wrath and anger are described as being _____ and _____.

5. The angry person who has no rule over his spirit is like _____.

6. What are we not to become to an angry, furious person? _____

7. "He that is _____ to wrath is of great understanding; but he that is _____ of spirit exalteth folly."

8. Who is better than the mighty? _____

Riches Discussed

1. Riches and _____ are often connected in Proverbs.

2. Prov. blames much poverty upon 3 causes: _____, _____, _____.

3. Such poor are _____ even of their own relatives and neighbors.

4. "Honour the Lord with thy _____, and with the _____ of thine increase."

5. What promise from God goes with obeying the foregoing commandment? _____

6. Crooked business dealers _____
the product they are trying to buy and then
_____ about the good deal they just
made.

7. What does a good man leave to his
children's children? _____

8. Why did the Proverb writer not want
to be poor? _____

9. Why did he not want to be rich? _____

Fools Considered

1. Why is it probably more cutting to
be called a fool than a sinner? _____

2. _____ is too high for a fool.

3. The way of a fool is right in _____

4. Fools usually respond to correction
in 1 of 2 ways: _____ or _____.

5. "It is as sport to a fool to do _____

6. "The mouth of fools feedeth on _____

7. "A fool uttereth _____ his
mind."

8. "A fool's _____ is his
destruction."

9. A fool's mouth calls for _____.

10. "Every fool will be _____."

11. A fool's wrath is heavier than
what 2 things? _____ and _____.

12. A companion of fools will be _____

Lascivious Conduct

1. This teaching in Prov. has been given "to deliver thee from the strange _____, even from the stranger who _____ with her lips: which forsaketh the _____ of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her _____."

2. The immoral woman's house inclines to _____.

3. Contrast the strange woman's lips with the outcome: _____

4. Some of the results of lascivious behavior: _____

5. The best safeguard against getting involved with such a woman is _____.

6. "Drink waters out of thine _____ cistern, and running waters of thine _____ well...Let them be only _____ own, and not _____ s' with thee."

7. Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be _____?"

8. A man will accept no suitable settlement from the thief that steals his _____.

9. Going to a harlot's house is like an ox going to the _____.

10. The wicked woman says, "Stolen waters are _____."

View of God

1. Our God is a Father who _____ His erring children.

2. "_____ in the Lord with all thine heart: and _____ not to thine own understanding."

3. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall _____ thy paths."

4. The name of the Lord is like a strong _____, We run into it and are _____.

5. "The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the _____ of them all."

6. "The poor and the deceitful man meet together: the Lord _____ both their eyes."

7. The Lord not only created the universe, but He _____ it.

8. "The _____ of the Lord are in every place, beholding the _____ and the _____."

9. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an _____ to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his _____."

The Fear of the Lord

1. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of _____."

2. _____ despise wisdom and instruction.

3. "A wise man feareth, and departeth from _____."

4. The fear of the Lord prolongs _____.

5. How does the fear of the Lord keep us from other fears? _____

6. Thought question: What is a proper fear of the Lord based upon? _____

7. Thought question: What does the fear of the Lord cause us to do? _____

Correction

1. We are not to despise the Lord's correction administered in the form of _____

2. Parents are sometimes to use the _____ in correcting their children.

3. If we correct our children, they will give us _____.

4. If we keep God's law, we will _____ with the wicked concerning their ways.

5. Correction by words is called _____

6. Correction is _____ at the time.

7. "He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favor than he who _____"

8. How do we know that not everybody will receive correction? _____

9. What quality is speaking in Prov. 1, saying, "I have called, and ye refused... I will mock when your fear cometh?" _____

10. What is the outcome of reproving a scorner? _____

11. What is the outcome of rebuking a wise man? _____

Parenthood

1. Prove from Proverbs that the father is to be a teacher of his children. _____

2. Prove from Proverbs that the mother is also to teach the children. _____

3. Children are to h _____ what their parents say and are not to f _____ it.

7. "It is better to dwell in a corner of a house top, than with a _____ woman in a wide house."

8. The value of a virtuous wife is far above _____.

9. Tell of her ambitious activity: _____

10. Tell of her husband; _____

11. What 2 qualities characterize her speech? _____ and _____.

12. Who rise up and call her blessed?

13. Who praises her? _____

Psychological Outlook

1. "A merry _____ makes a cheerful countenance."

2. What breaks one's spirit? _____

3. Who has a continual feast? _____

4. A merry heart does good like _____

5. "The desire _____ is sweet to the soul."

6. Good news from a far country is like what?

7. What does the deferment of hope do?

8. To what extent can people share our sorrows and enter into our joys? _____

9. "If thou faint in the day of _____, thy strength is small."

Things Abominable

1. Five of the 7 things in Prov. 6: 16-19 that are abominable to the Lord: _____

_____, _____, _____,
_____, _____, _____.

2. What is abominable to the Lord in business matters? _____

3. The _____ in heart are an abomination to God.

4. " _____ lips are abomination to the Lord."

5. "The sacrifice of the _____ is an abomination to the Lord."

6. Whoever turns away his ear from hearing God's law, even his _____ will be an abomination to God.

7. The person who condemns the _____ and justifies the _____ is an abomination to God.

8. The _____ of the wicked are abominable to God.

9. Explain the word "froward" and show how it refers to the stubborn. _____

Things Preferable

1. "The merchandise of _____ is better than the merchandise of silver."

2. "Better is a _____ with righteousness than great revenues without right."

3. "A poor man is better than a _____"

4. "Better is a dinner of herbs where _____ is, than a stalled ox and _____ therewith."

5. "It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a _____ and _____ woman."

6. "Better is a dry morsel with _____ therewith, than a house full of sacrifices with _____."

7. "He that is slow to _____ is better than the mighty; and he that

ruleth his _____ than he that taketh
a city."

Honor as a Goal

1. Exalting _____ promotes
us and brings us to honor.
2. "It is an _____ for a man to
cease from strife."
3. What precedes honor? _____
4. A good name is worth more than
_____.
5. Whose memory is blessed? _____
6. Whose name will rot? _____
7. We should particularly seek the
honor of _____.



