

PONDERING THE PROVERBS

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BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK

**PONDERING
THE
PROVERBS**

by
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INTRODUCTION

"Who wants to read an 'Introduction' to a book, especially to a commentary?" Nearly nobody. They are considered necessary for the studious but "too dry" for the average reader. May I ask, "Who, then, wants to write an 'Introduction' if nearly nobody is going to read it?" Well, maybe we can make this 'Introduction' different so it will be interesting both to write and to read. And shouldn't an 'Introduction' to such an interesting book as Proverbs be interestingly written?

As a book Proverbs is vastly different from the other books of the Bible. Nearly two-thirds of the 915 verses is devoted to short, pithy sayings (many great "memory verses") rather than extended, connected material. When Fred Smith was editing "The Plea", a magazine with small-size pages filled with sayings, poems, and short articles (a boon to those putting out "church bulletins"), in his readers' response column was one from O. L. Mankamyer: "You are putting out a good paper, but it is like reading the dictionary: it is always changing subjects." And Proverbs might be likened to a dictionary in that it (1) it is a very important book; and (2) it is always changing subjects. However, the first 9 chapters are extended material on wisdom, and there are also other sections especially devoted to subjects toward the end of the book.

As the first verse of Proverbs indicates, its authorship is attributed to Solomon. At just what stage of his life he compiled it, we cannot be sure, but we suppose that since he was a famous proverb collector and learner (I Kings 4:32), it was probably toward the latter part of his life. Yet since in his old age his idolatrous wives turned away his heart from worshipping Jehovah (I Kings 11:4), it seems that we should not place its composition too close to that period of declension, or that which he had just written did him no good. We would, therefore, think it was probably written when he was younger—possibly in the height of his health and vigor.

Chapters 25-29 contain proverbs that King Hezekiah's men were inspired to add to Solomon's writings. Chapter 30 is said to be the words of one "Agur". Chapter 31 contains some words of one "King Lemuel" which his mother taught him. Besides these clear notations, some think "the words of the wise" in 22:17 indicate that from there to the end of Chapter 24 is another section. The word "also" in 24:23 might so indicate.

Since Solomon is speaking to his son throughout the first 9 chapters, the material is in the "first person" grammatically (as is the material in 30:1-9, 18:20 and 31:1-9). But the big section of the "sayings" (all the rest of the book) is mostly in the "third person".

Proverbs' value to us who live in the Christian Age is greatly enhanced by the fact that it is basically non-dispensational wisdom.

When given the writing assignment, we were asked to write on the level of a sophomore in Bible training. This pleased me because I did not want to take all of the time (between 3 and 4 years of composition) and spend all of this effort to write a dry, boring book that would be consulted by a mere handful of dry intellectuals when I could hopefully write something that would be read by and appreciated by many more.

We have broken the material up into more or less 10 to 12 verse sections—about the length that might be covered in a Sunday morning or mid-week class. Each section begins with the "*Text* (from the American Standard version), is followed by "*Study Questions*" (which are meant to be answered before going to the helps of this book), then the "*Paraphrase*" (from "*Living Bible*" which in reality is not strictly a translation and should not be looked upon nor used as another version but as a "paraphrase" or the author's own rewording of the text—his own interpretation put into present-day expressions, making it somewhat of a small, concise commentary within this book), and the "*Comments*" by your present writer (which contains the heart of what your author can contribute to your understanding of this book), and finally the "*Test Questions*" (which cover both the "*Text*" and the "*Comments*"). "*Noticeable Groupings*" within the chapter is found at the end of Chapters 10-29 (the chapters that lend themselves to such—you should find some good use for the "*Groupings*" material proportionate to the time you spend studying through them).

Your author has employed many cross-references within his comments as he has always had a great interest in tying the Scriptures together. He has also quoted from earlier commentaries where they seemed to say it better than he thought he could, and to give you the value of others who have studied and written.

When asked to include a "*Subject Index*", your author was pleased, for he had several years ago spent a full year of work cataloging the book of Proverbs, and thus it took only five recent

weeks to make use of that previous work and to pass on to you something that has many study, teaching, and sermonic possibilities. Please give some time to the "*Index*" from these standpoints.

The noted and respected Thomas Campbell believed that Proverbs contained so much material that would help a person through life that he had his children memorize the entire book. His children had more time on their hands than ours as they lived before public-school days, but at the same time all parents would be wise to go through Proverbs and compile a list of those verses they would like their children to memorize. We have selected and included 52 such as a starter for those of every age to memorize.

Your writer's special interest in the book of Proverbs began when having completed his formal education for the ministry he began working his own way through the Bible. In time he came to the "Poetic" section of the Old Testament on which he spent an estimated five years of special study. At first I was attracted by some of the witty sayings and comparisons in Proverbs (like 26:17: "He that passeth by, and vexeth himself with strife belong not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears"). Then I began using various Proverbs in my messages. A lady who attended one of our Sacramento Gatherings about that time (back in the 1950's) said, "I'm going to have to study into the book of Proverbs. I didn't know that that book was so good." In the 1960's I wrote a book entitled, "Simple, Stimulating Studies in the Proverbs," which contains full-length studies (with only Proverb Scriptures used) on the following important subjects: "The Place of Wisdom"; "The Human Tongue;" "Lazy People;" "The Cry of the Needy;" "The Problem of Pride;" "Anger Outlawed;" "Riches Discussed;" "Fools Considered;" "Lascivious Conduct;" "View of God;" "The Fear of the Lord;" "Correction;" "Parenthood;" "Two Kinds of Wives;" "Psychological Outlook;" "Things Abominable;" "Things Preferable;" and "Honor as a Goal".

Since writing that book invitations have come to teach "Proverbs" in various camps, then the year of special index-work (previously mentioned) and then came the invitation to write this book for you. In receiving this invitation, I felt somewhat like David when offered King Saul's daughter Michael in marriage, "Seemeth it to you a light thing to be the king's son-in-law?" (I Sam. 18:23). And I say, "Seemeth it you a light thing to be chosen from all the possible writers to write

this commentary?" And while writing it, the additional thought has occurred that it is not known that any previous "Restoration" writer has ever compiled a "Commentary on Proverbs".

"When does a busy man find the time to write a commentary like this," one might ask. Usually in those early-morning hours when many others are still asleep. Most of the special research work, note-making, and actual writing have been done before breakfast. Rising at 5:00 a.m. (often at 4:00 a.m. down the "home-stretch"), he has studied and written before the rest of the family was up at 6:00 a.m. and before he became otherwise involved with the duties and thoughts of the day. He can well understand the same value placed upon this fresh part of the day by Alexander Campbell, Albert Barnes, and others who have written.

Though the "Introduction" is always in the front of a book, it is customarily the last thing written. That is as it should be, for one needs to have the material written before attempting to introduce it to his readers. In closing, a favorite Proverb again comes to mind that usually has at the completion of each school year of teaching, at the completion of meetings and large-scale rallies, and at the completion of various church building and home-remodeling projects with which I have been associated. At the end of this 3 to 4 year project, now in its last sentence, I agree, "The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul" (Prov. 13:19).

Ottumwa, Iowa, February 6, 1974

TEXT — 1:1-9

1. The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:
2. To know wisdom and instruction;
To discern the words of understanding;
3. To receive instruction in wise dealing,
In righteousness and justice and equity;
4. To give prudence to the simple,
To the young man knowledge and discretion;
5. That the wise man may hear, and increase in learning;
And that the man of understanding may attain unto
sound counsels;
6. To understand a proverb, and a figure,
The words of the wise, and their dark sayings.
7. The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge;
But the foolish despise wisdom and instruction.
8. My son, hear the instruction of thy father,
And forsake not the law of thy mother:
9. For they shall be a chaplet of grace unto thy head,
And chains about thy neck.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 1:1-9

1. Compile background informatin on Solomon besides the 2 things mentioned in v. 1.
2. What other books of the Bible did Solomon write?
3. The first purpose of Proverbs is to help one know (vs. 2-6).
4. What is the meaning of "discern" (v. 2)?
5. What is meant by "wise dealing" (v. 3)?
6. What is the meaning of "equity" (v. 3)?
7. What does "prudence" mean (v. 4)?
8. What would be the purpose of Proverbs to one who is already wise (v. 5)?
9. What is meant by "dark sayings" (v. 6)?
10. What is the first proverb (or wise saying) in the book v. 7?
11. What in v. 8 shows that mothers should join fathers in laying down the law to their children?
12. What was a "chaplet" (v. 9)?
13. What New Testament passages also describe virtues as ornaments (v. 9)?

PONDERING THE PROVERBS

PARAPHRASE OF 1:1-9

1. These are the proverbs of King Solomon of Israel, David's son:
- 2-6. He wrote them to teach his people how to live--how to act in every circumstance, for he wanted them to be understanding, just and fair in everything they did. "I want to make the simple-minded wise!" he said. "I want to warn young men about some problems they will face. I want those already wise to become the wiser and become leaders by exploring the depths of meaning in these nuggets of truth."
- 7-9. How does a man become wise? The first step is to trust and reverence the Lord! Only fools refuse to be taught. Listen to your father and mother. What you learn from them will stand you in good stead; it will gain you many honors.

COMMENTS ON 1:1-9

V. 1. A "proverb" is a wise saying. Solomon (the author of all the book except the final chapters) was famous for the proverbs that he spoke--and he spoke 3,000 of them (I Kings 4:32), which is more than we have in this book. "Solomon is the first of the sacred writers whose name stands at the head of his "works" ("Clarke"). Because the first 9 chapters of the book are extended material (chiefly on wisdom) rather than short sayings, though the title of the book is "Proverbs", 10:1 is where the actual "sayings" themselves begin (note that verse). Solomon was David's son by Bathsheba, who had been the wife of Uriah (Matt. 1:6). He became king of Israel during his father's final days of infirmity even though his brother Adonijah (Adonijah had a different mother than Solomon) had tried to beat him out of the kingship (I Kings 1:5-40).

V. 2. The purpose of this divine book is spelled out in a series of infinitives. "Wisdom" is the goal, and "instruction" is the method of gaining it. The end-result is that the listener himself will be able "to discern the words of understanding" by having this divine wisdom laid up in his mind and heart.

V. 3. The instruction to be given was to teach "wise dealing" (wisdom and prudence), "righteousness" (not show how to "beat somebody out of what was rightfully his"), and "justice and equity" (what is fair and honest). Oh, that all our education

were bent on making men right, honest, and upright and not merely to make them richer by whatever means they may follow to become such!

V. 4. Sayings (whether Biblical sayings or otherwise) are made by older, wiser people who have been over many of the roads of life and who desire to pass on portions of their knowledge to the younger and to the lesser experienced. Actually, then, when one knows, quotes, and follows time-honored sayings, he is actually speaking and being guided by a knowledge superior to that which he would know on his own.

V. 5. This verse goes a step farther: it shows that the wise and experienced also profit by the wisdom and sayings of others. Nobody is a first-hand expert in all fields so that he cannot profit by the wisdom of others in those fields in which he has not the opportunity to turn his special attention. But even if he has, he may still profit by the wisdom couched in such sayings of others. In fact, it is the wise who are always seeking to advance their knowledge, and a wise man is a joy to teach: "Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: Teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning" (Prov. 9:9).

V. 6. We live in a world where figures of speech, informed comparisons, big and technical words, etc. are often heard. If we are not posted in the understanding and handling of such, we can draw wrong conclusions, misuse words, and in general betray our ignorance. Thus, 26:7,9 both speak of a "parable in the mouth of fools". The Bible also employs the parabolic in its teachings ("I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old"--Psa. 78:2). Jesus spoke many things in parables and at times used language that confounded His hearers. Even the disciples were able to grasp the meaning of other forms of expression more readily: "Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no dark saying" (John 16:29). Prophecy (especially the book of Revelation) is written in such a way that one needs a good knowledge of history to understand its symbols and predictions. Peter acknowledges that Paul's writings contain "some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest" (II Peter 3:16).

V. 7. We might say that this verse contains the first actual proverb or saying in the book, and it rightfully begins where the whole Bible itself begins--with God (Jehovah). "The fear of the Lord signifies that religious reverence which every intelligent

being owes to his Creator...No man can ever become truly wise who does not begin with God" ("Clarke"). Other like passages of the fear of Jehovah as the beginning of wisdom: Prov. 9:10; Psa. 111:10; Job 28:28. The implied contrast within our verse is that the "foolish" do not "fear" Jehovah and, therefore, "despise wisdom and instruction." Note v. 1 for the connection between "wisdom" and "instruction". Those who do not fear come to despise. II Pet. 2:10 shows this: "...despise dominion. Daring, self-willed, they tremble not to rail at dignities." Special instructions, both in the Old and New Testaments, grow out of this fact: "Speak not in the hearing of a fool; For he will despise the wisdom of thy words" (Prov. 23:9): "Neither cast your pearls before swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you." (Matt. 7:6).

V. 8. Though Solomon had many wives and concubines (700 of the first and 300 of the second--I Kings 11:3), and we consequently assume numerous sons, it is a surprising fact that we know the name of only one of his sons (Rehoboam, who succeeded him on the throne in Jerusalem). It is likely that the material presented in Proverbs that says, "My son" (this verse: v. 15, 2:1; 3:1,3; 3:11; etc.), was originally Solomon's material to his son Rehoboam. However, the expression, "My sons" (plural), occurs four times in the book (4:1; 5:7; 7:24; 8:32), in which we have Solomon's teaching to all of his sons. Solomon employed "my son" in two noticeable ways: to begin with a section to make the teaching more personal to the son (as in 1:15; 6:3; and others. When he uses the expression to begin a section of material, he usually tells what listening to his instruction will mean to his life (see vs. 8,9; 3:1,2; 4:10; and others) before actually proceeding to present the section of material. One final thought on our verse: Both parents have important parts in a child's rearing--the "instruction of thy father", the "law of thy mother". In far too many homes the instruction and rearing of the children becomes the responsibility of but one instead of both, or the mother does the instructing, but the father is the disciplinarian who lays down the "law."

V. 9. A chaplet is a wreath or garland that the victor wore on his head. When Joseph was promoted to a ruler in Egypt, they "put a gold chain about his neck", he rode in Egypt's "second chariot", and they cried before him, "Bow the knee" (Gen. 41:43). Following the sound teachings of the father would

bring the son to great dignity as well as give a beauty to his life. The elements of good character are likened to spiritual ornaments. Women particularly are warned in physical charm: "Whose adorning let it not be the outward adorning of braiding the hair, and of wearing of jewels of gold, or of putting on apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (I Pet. 3:3,4). See I Tim. 2:9,10 and Prov. 3:22.

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 1:1-9

1. What is a "proverb" (v. 1)?
2. How many proverbs did Solomon speak (v. 1)?
3. What is the relation between "wisdom" and "instruction" (v. 2)?
4. What might be said of the character of the wisdom that Solomon was teaching to his son (v. 3)?
5. What can wise sayings do for a "young man" (v. 4)?
6. Who besides young men can also profit by wise sayings (v. 5)?
7. What are some Bible examples of "dark sayings" (v. 6)?
8. Comment on fools despising wisdom and instruction (v. 7).
9. Discuss "my son" as included in v. 8.
10. What does v. 9 say that following a father's instruction will bring?

TEXT — 1:10-19

10. My son, if sinners entice thee,
Consent thou not.
11. If they say, Come with us,
Let us lay in wait for blood;
Let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause;
12. Let us swallow them up alive as Sheol,
And whole, as those that go down into the pit;
13. We shall find all precious substance;
We shall fill our houses with spoil;
14. Thou shalt cast thy lot among us;
We will all have one purse:
15. My son, walk not thou in the way with them;
Refrain thy foot from their path:

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16. For their feet run to evil,
And they make haste to shed blood.
17. For in vain is the net spread
In the sight of any bird:
18. And these lay wait for their own blood;
They lurk privily for their own lives.
19. So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain;
It taketh away the life of the owners thereof.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 1:10-19

1. Why will sinners entice innocent people (v. 10)?
2. What are the three big words in v. 10?
3. What does "lurk privily" mean (v. 11)?
4. What does "Sheol" mean (v. 12)?
5. Is the second statement in v. 12 different from its first, or is it a restatement of it?
6. To what extent will selfishness go (v. 13)?
7. What does "cast thy lot" in v. 14 mean?
8. V. 15 is but an enlargement of what three important words already given?
9. What two words in v. 16 show their eagerness to do wrong?
10. What is the connection of v. 17 with this section of material?
11. Why for their "own" blood and lives (v. 18)?
12. Does sin end up the way it was planned (v. 19)?

PARAPHRASE OF 1:10-19

- 10-14. If young toughs tell you, "Come and join us"--turn your back on them! "We'll hide and rob and kill," they say; "Good or bad, we'll treat them all alike! And the loot we'll get! All kinds of stuff! Come on, throw in your lot with us; we'll split with you in equal shares."
- 15-19. Don't do it, son! Stay far from men like that, for crime is their way of life, and murder is their specialty. When a bird sees a trap being set, it stays away, but not these men; they trap themselves! They lay a booby trap for their own lives. Such is the fate of all who live by violence and murder. They will die a violent death.

COMMENTS ON 1:10-19

V. 10. This verse breaks down into two parts: sinners' attempt to mislead a young man and what he should do about it. Be assured that the world (sinners) will put pressure on every person to join them. Oh, the rosy picture that they can paint in the fantasies of a young person's mind! And to be different from the world would be to be "out of steps", "odd", and all that a young person does not really want to be. And so the invitation becomes inticement, and their urging becomes irresistible temptation. The only way a young person (or anybody else) can resist and overcome these pressures from the outside is by that which he has on the inside (parental instruction that has become personal conviction, faith in God, reverential fear, etc.). Oh, how Solomon pleads with his son, "Consent thou not." What important three words they are! This is what Joseph did when urged by Potiphar's wife: "he refused" and said, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen., 39:8,9). Oh, for more young men with the conviction, native honesty, and courage of Joseph! Daniel did the same (Dan. 1:8); so did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan.³ 4:17,18). We, too, are commanded to abstain from the world's evil: Eph. 5:7,11; I Thess. 5:22; II Tim. 2:19; Jas. 1:27.

V. 11. Often throughout the book Solomon warns against both evil men and evil women (both are mentioned in 2:12-17). The evil men are wicked oppressors out to get ill-gotten gain, and the evil women are immoral adulteresses. This chapter 1 warning is concereng going in with evil men to become an oppressor. This verse and the ones following put the enticement of v. 10 into words. Notice that the people to be hurt by them wouldn't deserve it ("the innocent"), nor would they expect or suspect it ("Let us lay in wait...let us lurk privily").

V. 12. "Sheol" is Hebrew, and "Hades" is Greek for the place of departed spirits. This verse employs Hebrew parallelism in which the two statements mean the same thing; that is, "Sheol" and "pit" are the same; "alive" and "whole" are the same; and "swallow" and "go down" are the same. Death is spoken of as "going down into the pit" in Psa. 28:1: "Unto thee, O Jehovah, will I call: My rock, be not thou deaf unto me; Lest if thou be silent unto me, I become like them that go down into the pit." Sheol is pictured in Prov. 30:15,16 as one of four things personified as never satisfied, that never says, "It is enough."

So, it was no small damage that these evil men planned to inflict and in which they were inviting the young man to participate.

V. 13. This is the part that was luring them on--the hope of gain. The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil (see I Tim. 6:10). As they passed from one robbery and murder to another, all they were thinking about was themselves. The "innocent" (v. 11) had worked to obtain the precious substance; the innocent had not found it amassed in one place as his robbers wanted to. They had patiently seen it grow and accumulate though hard work and saving ways; the robbers were wanting to "fill" their houses with it immediately.

V. 14. "Cast thy lot among us" meant that he would decide to go with them, he would trust his future and his outcome to their way of doing. "We will all have one purse" meant that he would share equally with them. But people who do will lie and cheat and rob and kill others might be untrue to their promise to him too. This was their final appeal to him to join them. What would his decision be?

V. 15. Oh, the concern of the father at this point! He realizes it is a decision-time for his son. Will he fall for their line, or will he go the way he has been taught from youth? He pleads, "My son, walk not thou in the way with them," and restated for emphasis and additional appeal: "Refrain thy foot from their path." This verse is really an enlargement upon "Consent thou not" in v. 10. Other verses on this subject: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked" (Psa. 1:1); "Enter not into the path of the wicked, And walk not in the way of evil men" (Prov. 4:14); "I have refrained my feet from every evil way" (Psa. 119:101).

V. 16. A good reason for Solomon's not wanting his son to take up with such "toughs". They "run" to evil; they "make haste" to shed blood. Ever notice that man is quick to get into iniquity, but he wants to take his time to get out of it? The reverse should be true. Two other passages say much the same thing: "Their feet run to evil, they make haste to shed innocent blood" (Isa. 59:7); "Their feet are swift to shed blood" (Rom. 3:15).

V. 17. The wicked are represented as lurking privily for the innocent. It is in this way alone that they can hope to destroy them and take their substance; for if their designs were known, proper precautions would be taken against them" ("Clarke"). In other words, "Son, can't you see what they are doing? Don't get

caught!"

V. 18. Their intention would be to hurt others, and they do for awhile, but in time justice catches up with them, and they pay with their lives! The father would have his son view his final outcome from the beginning, and the enticement to join up with the oppressors would not be so strong.

V. 19. Other passages also teach the sorrows and losses to be reaped by those greedy of gain: "He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house" (Prov. 15:27); "...which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Tim. 6:10). Instead of "getting", there is "losing". We note too that the "important" (his own life) is lost trying to gain the "unimportant" (material gain).

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 1:10-19

1. What are the two parts of v. 10?
2. What sin usually characterized "evil men" of Proverbs (v. 11)?
3. Cite the three parallels in v. 12.
4. What does I Tim. 6:10 say about the love of money (v. 13)?
5. Comment on the two parts of v. 14.
6. Why is the father so earnest in v. 15?
7. What should men reverse (v. 16)?
8. What should the son be able to see that evil men are actually doing when they paint such a rosy picture (v. 17)?
9. What would keep the enticement from being so strong (v. 18)?
10. What do oppressors "get", and what do they "lose" (v. 19)?

TEXT — 1:20-33

20. Wisdom crieth aloud in the street;
She uttereth her voice in the broad places;
21. She crieth in the chief place of concourse;
At the entrance of the gates,
In the city, she uttereth her words:
22. How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity?
And scoffers delight them in scoffing,

- And fools hate knowledge?
23. Turn you at my reproof:
Behold, I will pour out my spirit upon you;
I will make known my words unto you,
 24. Because I have called, and ye have refused;
I have stretched out my hand, and no man hath regarded.
 25. Be ye have set at nought all my counsel,
And would none of my reproof:
 26. I also will laugh in the day of your calamity;
I will mock when your fear cometh;
 27. When your fear cometh as a storm,
And your calamity cometh on as a whirlwind;
When distress and anguish come upon you.
 28. Then will they call upon men, but I will not answer;
They will seek me diligently, but they shall not find me.
 29. For that they hated knowledge,
And did not choose the fear of Jehovah.
 30. They would none of my counsel,
They despised all my reproof.
 31. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way,
And be filled with their own devices.
 32. For the backsliding of the simple shall slay them,
And the careless ease of fools shall destroy them.
 33. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell securely,
And shall be quiet without fear of evil.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 1:20-33

1. How does wisdom "cry" (v. 20)?
2. What does "concourse" mean (v. 21)?
3. Are the "simple ones", "scoffers," and "fools" different groups or the same group under different words (v. 22)?
4. Is v. 23 speaking of inspiration?
5. What is the antecedent of "I", "my", and "me" from v. 24 to the end of the chapter?
6. What does "set at nought" mean (v. 25)?
7. Will such a day as pictured in v. 26 come to the foolish?
8. How serious will things become for the foolish (v. 27)?
9. What sad news does v. 28 bear?
10. They should have knowledge instead of hated it (v. 29)?

11. The fear of Jehovah is something to be (v. 29)?
12. V. 30 is a restatement of what previous verse?
13. What is the meaning of "eat" in v. 31?
14. Find three parallel expressions in the two statements of v. 32.
15. What contrast belongs to those who will listen (v. 33)?

PARAPHRASE OF 1:20-33

20-28. Wisdom shouts in the streets for a hearing. She calls out to the crowds along Main Street, and to the judges in their courts, and to everyone in all the land. "You simpletons!" she cries, "how long will you go on being fools? How long will you scoff at wisdom and fight the facts? Come here and listen to me! I'll pour out the spirit of Wisdom upon you, and make you wise. I have called you so often but still you won't come. I have pleaded, but all in vain. For you have spurned my counsel and reproof. Some day you'll be in trouble, and I'll laugh! Mock me, will you?--I'll mock you! When a storm of terror surrounds you, and when you are engulfed by anguish and distress, then I will not answer your cry for help. It will be too late though you search for me ever so anxiously.

29-33. "For you closed your eyes to the facts and did not choose to reverence and trust the Lord, and you turned your back on me, spurning my advice. That is why you must eat the bitter fruit of having your own way, and experience the full terrors of the pathway you have chosen. For you turned away from me--to death; your complacency will kill you, Fools! But all who listen to me shall live in peace and safety, unafraid."

COMMENTS ON 1:20-33

V. 20. From here to the end of the chapter (yes, and on beyond that) wisdom is personified as talking, teaching, crying, watching, and turning a deaf ear to people's cries when suffering from refusing her. Virtue itself is usually represented as a woman; so is wisdom here (note the "her"). Other verses that have wisdom crying or speaking: Prov. 8:1,3,4,6,7. Our verse tells of wisdom uttering her voice and crying aloud in the street and the broad places. Their streets were very narrow. Where two

streets met, they made a broad place (see Mark 11:4). Actually wisdom speaks everywhere if people will but listen. What have you learned today from life?

V. 21. "The chief place of concourse" is translated "at the head of the multitudes" ("Young's Literal") and "at the head of the thronged ways" ("American Bible Union Version"). "The entrance of the gates" would be where people entered or left the city and where legal transactions were conducted (Ruth 4:1-11). "In the city" would be where people lived. Vs. 20,21 shows that wisdom spoke to the ancients from every place (the street, the broad places, the chief place of concourse, the entrance of the gates, and in the city). Today wisdom also speaks to us from many places: it speaks from the juvenile court (on child-rearing; from the curse of alcholicism (asking, "Was Prohibition a failure after all?"), from tobacco-statistics, etc. What do tabacco statistics say? "Don't smoke!" Wisdom tells us it is a foolish habit (look at the effect upon your health); it is a wasteful habit (in outlay of money and in costs in minutes of life when added together; it is a bad habit (bad breath, spreading foul smell wherever one goes, causing others to cough from smoke, etc.).

V. 22. There are those who 'love' simplicity (ignorance), some who "delight" in scoffing at the truth and at righteousness and at those who hold them, and some who "hate" knowledge. Wisdom, God, parents, and godly people cannot help wondering, "How much longer will such people live that way?"

V. 23. The very question, "How long...will ye love simplicity...delight in scoffing...hate knowledge?" of v. 22 was itself a "reproof" to those addressed, the hope being to get them to "turn" or change. The height of wisdom which men have sometimes scoffed at and hated is Inspired Wisdom found within the Word of God. The language, "I will pour out my spirit," sounds like a parallel prediction with Joel 2:28, which was fulfilled in God's sending the Holy Spirit to inspire the apostles and prophets of New Testament times. Old Testament writers often "jumped in" such long-range prophecies without elaboration and sometimes without a close topic-connection with its surroundings. Thus, we take this to be a prediction of New Testament inspiration.

V. 24. Wisdom again speaks. "A pause may be imagined, and seems to be implied between this and the preceding verses (22 and 23), when the address passes into a new phase--from that

of invitation and promise to that of judgment and stern denunciation" ("Pulpit Commentary"). Other passages on God calling and speaking but men refusing to hearken: Isa. 65:12; Isa. 66:4; Jer. 7:13; Zech. 7:11.

V. 25. "Set at nought" means to treat as nothing. Men who reject God's "counsel" (His instructions, commandments, and prohibitions) usually do not listen to His "reproof" (correction of their ways) either. This verse's last statement is also found in v. 30. Luke 7:30 says, "The Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him (John the Baptist)." Why do men act as if they know more than God? Or, as if they don't have to bow down to God? Whatever the reason, it is both wrong and ruinous!

V. 26. That such a day of calamity is coming for the wicked is rightfully assumed. It is coming! Those who lack the fear of Jehovah and the wisdom that it brings (v. 7) will finally end up in a "fear" that they cannot escape! "The terrific nature of the punishment of the wicked is marked by a succession of terms all of terrible import--calamity, fear, desolation, destruction, distress and anguish (vs. 26,27)" ("Pulpit Commentary"). Wisdom here (and Jehovah in Psa. 2:4) is represented as laughing and mocking when such deserved calamity comes. Actually judgment will but return men's laughing and mocking upon them.

V. 27. What can be more fearful than overpowering storms in nature? These are used to depict the fear, distress, and anguish that will come upon those who have refused to follow wisdom's counsel. All of this was unforeseen when they were scoffing and refusing to listen to sound instruction.

V. 28. Now they will "turn" by the hardships that come upon them even though they wouldn't "turn" in obedience to v. 23. When men begin to reap the results of their own foolish choices, it does very little good to cry to God in the day of judgement! Other passages on His not listening to them and their cries: Job. 27:9; Isa. 1:15; Jer. 11:11; Jer. 14:12; Eze. 8:18. Oh, the desperation of calling when no one will answer! Had they sought God and wisdom diligently, they would have found a rich reward (Heb. 11:6).

V. 29. The reasons for their calamities are here given: they had "hated knowledge", and this helped bring the downfall of the Northern Kingdom ("My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou has rejected knowledge, I will also

reject thee"--Hos. 4:6), and they "did not choose the fear of Jehovah" (Job said the wicked say to God, "Depart from us; For we desire not the knowledge of thy ways"--Job 21:14). V. 22 also spoke of their hating knowledge.

V. 30. Further reasons for their calamities: they had refused God's way ("counsel") and had despised all the "reproof" He had sent them because of their disobedient ways. This verse is a restatement of v. 25.

V. 31. Just as Gal. 6:7 says people will reap what they have sown, so this verse says the wicked will eat what they have planted (v. 22); in judgment God will laugh, God will mock (v. 26). "When we are punished, the blameworthiness lies not with God, but with us sinners" ("Pulpit Commentary").

V. 32. The "simple" referred to in v. 22 are here pictured as "backsliding"--as "fools" they will return to their folly ("as a dog that returneth to his vomit, So is a fool that repeateth his folly"--Prov. 26:11; "If, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first...It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog turneth to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire"--II Pet. 2:20-22). For "careless ease" destroying one, consider the Rich Fool of Luke 12:19,20: "I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee"). The beginning of sin is "confidence" (v. 13); the end of sin is destruction (this verse).

V. 33. In contrast to the wicked this verse sets forth the security of the righteous who have hearkened to wisdom: "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:17); "What man is he that feareth Jehovah? He shall be instructed in the way that he shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease; And his seed shall inherit the land" (Psa. 25:12,13); "He shall never be moved; The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: His heart is fixed, trusting in Jehovah" (Psa. 112:6,7). "Evil" here is used in the sense of "trouble."

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 1:20-33

1. What is wisdom as personified busy doing (v. 20)?
2. What are some of the places where wisdom is crying today (v. 21)?
3. What question was raised in v. 22?
4. In v. 23 what was wisdom trying to get the disobedient to do?
5. Cite a passage where God called, but they did not listen (v. 24).
6. What is the difference between "counsel" and "reproof" (v. 25)?
7. Why will wisdom laugh and mock in the day of the foolish people's calamities (v. 26)?
8. How is the fear that comes upon the disobedient pictured (v. 27)?
9. Will these who once mocked in time "call" (v. 28)?
10. What reasons are given in vs. 29,30 for their destruction?
11. According to v. 31 their judgment will only visit what upon them?
12. In what other verse are "fools" and "backsliding" put together (v. 32)?
13. On what subject does the chapter close (v. 33)?

THE HUMAN TONGUE

Of all the subjects that can be named, the subject of the tongue is one that needs to be considered 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 that all the material found elsewhere in the Bible does not nearly equal the material found alone in it.

PONDERING THE PROVERBS

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 by 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."

CHAPTER 2

2:1-9

TEXT — 2:1-9

1. My son, if thou wilt receive my words,
And lay up my commandments with thee;
2. So as to incline thine ear unto wisdom,
And apply thy heart to understanding;
3. Yea if thou cry after discernment,
And lift up thy voice for understanding;
4. If thou seek her as silver,
And search for her as for hid treasures:
5. Then shalt thou understand the fear of Jehovah,
And find the knowledge of God.
6. For Jehovah giveth wisdom;
Out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding:
7. He layeth up sound wisdom for the upright;
He is a shield to them that walk in integrity;
8. That he may guard the paths of justice,
And preserve the way of his saints.
9. Then shalt thou understand righteousness and justice,
And equity, yea, every good path.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 2:1-9

1. Would you draw a distinction between "my words" and "my commandments" in v. 1?
2. What is heard by the ear must be considered in the (v. 2).
3. What words in v. 3 show earnestness in seeking knowledge?
4. How earnestly should knowledge be sought (v. 4)?
5. What knowledge should fathers especially want their sons to have (v. 5)?
6. Do the words of understanding come to man from God's mouth directly or by inspiration (v. 6)?
7. What does "integrity" mean (v. 7)?
8. What word in v. 7 goes along with "guard" and "preserve" in v. 8?
9. How different would the world be if everybody understood these things (v. 9)?

PARAPHRASE OF 2:1-9

- 1-5. Every young man who listens to me and obeys my in-

structions will be given wisdom and good sense. Yes, if you want better insight and discernment, and are searching for them as you would for lost money or hidden treasure, then wisdom will be given you and knowledge of God Himself; you will soon learn the importance of reverence for the Lord and of trusting Him.

- 6-9. For the Lord grants wisdom! His every word is a treasure of knowledge and understanding. He grants good sense to the godly--His saints. He is their shield, protecting them and guarding their pathway. He shows how to distinguish right from wrong, how to find the right decision every time.

COMMENTS ON 2:1-9

V. 1. Other chapters that begin with "My son": Chapters 3,5,6,7. We will point out the doublets as they occur in this and the following 4 verses: (1) receive my words; and (2) hide my commandments. Other passages on laying up parental instructions in one's heart: Prov. 4:21; 7:1. "The...if' is conditional, and serves to introduce the series of clauses (vs. 1-4) which lay down the conditions upon which the promises depend...There is a gradation in emphasis in the various terms here used...Just as 'commandments' is stronger than 'words,' so 'hide' is stronger than 'receive'...The Divine commands...are to be hidden in safe custody in the memory, in the understanding, in the conscience, and in the heart...The psalmist expresses the same idea in Psa. 119:11: "Thy word have I hid in my heart'" ("Pulpit Commentary").

V. 2. Doublet: (1) incline thine ear unto wisdom; and (2) apply thy heart to understanding. Solomon wanted his son to develop an inclination for wisdom ("incline"). Just as a ball will roll down an "incline", so if one is inclined toward wisdom will he assuredly "apply" his heart (put himself into getting understanding).

V. 3. Doublet: (1) cry after discernment; and (2) lift up thy voice for understanding. The picture in this verse is even stronger than "incline" in v. 4. Here the son is urged to "cry after", to "lift up" his voice for "discernment (the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, truth and error, wisdom and foolishness).

V. 4. The "ifs" in these first 4 verses might be thought of

as progressive as follows: if you receive and lay up my commandments (as a child); if you develop an inclination toward wisdom and develop an understanding heart (in youth); and if you cry after and seek for discernment and understanding (as an adult), v. 5 says it will be yours. "The comparison here made between the search for wisdom and the search for the hidden treasures of the earth was not unfamiliar to the Hebrew mind as it is found worked out with great beauty of detail in Job 28" ("Pulpit Commentary"). Prov. 3:14: "For the gaining of it is better than the gaining of silver, And the profit thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: And none of the things thou canst desire are to be compared unto her" (Prov. 3:14,15).

V. 5. If the conditions of vs. 1-4 are met, then this wonderful promise will apply: the son will understand the fear of Jehovah and will find the knowledge of God. And this fear of Jehovah will then lead to even more wisdom and knowledge (Prov. 1:7).

V. 6. If one seeks for wisdom according to vs. 1-4, then God will give it to him. Involved in this quest is to acknowledge God as the source of all wisdom and to go to Him for it: "If any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (Jas. 1:5). This is what Solomon did ("Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil"—I Kings 3:9), and God gave it to him ("Behold, I have done according to thy word: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there hath been none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee"—I Kings 3:12). In our section Solomon is merely teaching his son from his own experience.

V. 7. God gives wisdom as well as other blessings to the upright: "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psa. 84:11). As to God's being a shield to those who walk in integrity, Prov. 20:5 says, "He is a shield unto them that take refuge in him." "God is Himself a buckler or shield...This aspect of God's direct protecting power is met with in other parts of Scripture: Gen. 15:1; Psa. 33:20; Psa. 84:11; Psa. 89:18; Psa. 144:2" ("Pulpit Commentary").

V. 8. Yes, Jehovah guards the "paths of justice". Is it not remarkable that even though men themselves do not always do what is right that the old basics of what is right and wrong still

survive (such as love, kindness, truth-telling, the wrongness of killing, stealing, etc.)? He not only guards the paths of justice but particularly preserves the way of those who walk in those paths: "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous" (I Pet. 3:12); "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: He that keepeth thee will not slumber...Jehovah is thy keeper...Jehovah will keep thee from all evil; He will keep thy soul. Jehovah will keep thy going out and thy coming in" (Psa. 121:3-8); "He will keep the foot of his holy ones" (I Sam. 2:9). Note that even God's Old Testament people were called "saints", which means "holy ones".

V. 9. Here are things that every person should understand and not be confused about. If one so applies himself to get wisdom, God will bless him with it, and that will include an understanding of these basic things.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 2:1-9

1. What other chapters begin with "my son" (v. 1)?
2. How many of these opening verses contain doublets (v. 1)?
3. Comment upon "incline" and "apply" in v. 2.
4. Comment on the stronger words used in v. 3 than those used in v. 2.
5. Comment on the possible progressiveness of the "ifs" in vs. 1-4.
6. What great promise is found in v. 5?
7. How did Solomon himself get wisdom (v. 6)?
8. God gives wisdom to what group in v. 7?
9. Comment on God guarding the "paths of justice" (v. 8).
10. What will one understand if God blesses him with wisdom (v. 9)?

TEXT — 2:10-22

10. For wisdom shall enter into thy heart,
And knowledge shall be pleasant unto thy soul;
11. Discretion shall watch over thee;
Understanding shall keep thee:
12. To deliver thee from the way of evil,
From the men that speak perverse things;
13. Who forsake the paths of uprightness,
To walk in the ways of darkness;

14. Who rejoice to do evil,
And delight in the perverseness of evil;
15. Who are crooked in their ways,
And wayward in their paths:
16. To deliver thee from the strange woman,
Even from the foreigner that flattereth with her words;
17. That forsaketh the friend of her youth,
And forgetteth the covenant of her God:
18. For her house inclineth unto death,
And her paths unto the dead;
19. None that go unto her return again,
Neither do they attain unto the paths of life:
20. That thou mayest walk in the way of good men,
And keep the paths of the righteous.
21. For the upright shall dwell in the land,
And the perfect shall remain in it.
22. But the wicked shall be cut off from the land,
And the treacherous shall be rooted out of it.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 2:10-22

1. Knowledge should be (v. 10).
2. What is "discretion" (v. 11)?
3. Does true knowledge trust all persons indiscriminately (v. 12)?
4. What double sin were they guilty of (v. 13)?
5. What about their rejoicing (v. 14)?
6. Why do we speak of dishonest people as "crooked" (v. 15)?
7. Young men should be strongly warned to watch out for dishonest men and women (vs. 12,16).
8. What "covenant" (v. 17)?
9. Why mention her "house" (v. 18)?
10. They don't "return" in what sense (v. 19)?
11. What kind of men avoid such women (v. 20)?
12. What are the parallel words in v. 21?
13. What are the parallel words in v. 22?

PARAPHRASE OF 2:10-22

- 10-15. For wisdom and truth will enter the very center of your being, filling your life with joy. You will be given the sense to stay away from evil men who want you to

be their partners in crime--men who turn from God's ways to walk down dark and evil paths, and exult in doing wrong, for they thoroughly enjoy their sins. Everything they do is crooked and wrong.

16-19. Only wisdom from the Lord can save a man from the flattery of prostitutes; these girls have abandoned their husbands and flouted the laws of God. Their houses lie along the road to death and hell. The men who enter them are doomed. None of these men will ever be the same again.

20-22. Follow the steps of the godly instead, and stay on the right path, for only good men enjoy life to the full; evil men lose the good things they might have had; and they themselves shall be destroyed.

COMMENTS ON 2:10-22

V. 10. "'Shall enter' in the sense of permanent residence in the heart" ("Pulpit Commentary"). Col. 3:15 uses the same figure of speech concerning the Word of Christ and our hearts: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." "Dwell" in this verse means to "make a home for". The heart that has made wisdom its permanent inhabitant will be a soul blessed with pleasantness and satisfaction.

V. 11. When blessed with wisdom, "discretion" will be there to guard what we say, what we do, the policies we adopt, etc., and "understanding" will be there to keep us from small embarrassments and costly mistakes. Prov. 6:22 similarly says, "When thou wakest, it shall lead thee; When thou sleepest, it shall watch over thee."

V. 12. Wisdom will keep one from taking up with evil men (this verse) and with evil women (v. 16). The word "deliver" suggests that evil men are out to snare such young men into their plots and ways. The "perverse" speech of evil men is pointed out. There is a certain speech that goes with evil men—usually coarse words, vulgar words, irreverent words.

V. 13. Some of those now evil were once on the right road, for they forsook the "paths of uprightness". Probably as children they were taught the right way. Oh, how many drift from their childhood teachings into the "ways of darkness" (sin)! Those who walk in evil ways always try to get others to fall as they have, but how foolish to listen to them!

V. 14. The wicked become perverted; instead of grieving over evil, they rejoice in doing it. "It is as sport to a fool to do wickedness" (Prov. 10:23); "When thou doest evil, then thou rejoicest" (Jer. 11:15); "Who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they that practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practise them" (Rom. 1:32). We are forbidden to desire evil: "Abhor that which is evil" (Rom. 12:&); "Love not the world...the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain-glory of life" (I John 2:15,16).

V. 15. Instead of walking a straight and right course, they are further described as "crooked", and instead of staying on the right way, they are said to be "wayward" in their paths. Psa. 125:5 speaks of those who "turn aside unto their crooked ways". It is from this crookedness and waywardness that true wisdom will deliver a young man.

V. 16. A "strange" woman means one who is not his wife; she is a "foreigner" to him because she is not related to him in marriage. This is a warning against loose, lascivious living that ends in sexual misbehavior. Several chapters (or extended sections) are devoted to warning against such involvements (here; 5:1-23; 6:23-25; 7:4-27; 9:13-18). Our verse warns of her enticing words ("flattereth with her words"). Other verses do the same: "The lips of a strange woman drop honey, And her mouth is smoother than oil" (Prov. 5:3); "To keep thee from the evil woman, From the flattery of the foreigner's tongue" (Prov. 6:24); "With her much fair speech she causeth him to yield; with the flattering of her lips she forceth him along" (Prov. 7:21).

V. 17. Such a woman was once married, but she has forsaken her husband (here called "the friend of her youth"). What a poor one to get mixed up with! She is not only untrue to man (her husband), but she "forgetteth the covenant of her God" (God's covenant or law forbids her to leave her husband and live as she is living). But her actions show that she doesn't care what God says!

V. 18. Her "house" is referred to because this is where she "operates" her dirty business. Other passages on immorality and death: "Her feet go down to death; Her steps take hold on Sheol" (Prov. 5:5); "Her house is the way to Sheol, Going down to the chambers of death" (Prov. 7:27). The results are a bold contrast to her enticing promises: "As for him that is

void of understanding, she saith to him, stolen waters are sweet, And bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there; that her guests are in the depths of Sheol" (Prov. 9:16-18).

V. 19. "The difficulty which they who give themselves up to the indulgence of lust and passion encounter in extricating themselves makes the statement...an almost universal truth...It is as difficult to bring back a libidinous person to chastity as a dead man to life. This passage led some...to declare that the sin of adultery was unpardonable. Fornication was classed by the scholastic divines among the seven deadly sins" ("Pulpit Commentary").

V. 20. The "good men" of this verse are to be contrasted with the evil men of v. 12, and their good lives with the evil men who indulge with evil women.

V. 21. In contrast with "death" resulting from the indulgent life, this verse speaks of the good men getting to live on. Psa. 37 stresses this blessing of godliness: Those that wait for Jehovah, they shall inherit the land" (v. 9); "The meek shall inherit the land" (v. 11); "Such as are blessed of him shall inherit the land" (v. 22); "The righteous shall inherit the land, And dwell therein for ever" (v. 29).

V. 22. The doom of the wicked is again mentioned. This fact is also stressed in Psa. 37: "They shall soon be cut down like the grass" (v. 2); "Evil-doers shall be cut off" (v. 9); "Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be" (v. 10); "The arms of the wicked shall be broken" (v. 17); "The wicked shall perish, And the enemies of Jehovah shall be as the fat of lambs: They shall consume; in smoke shall they consume away" (v. 20); "They that are cursed of him shall be cut off" (v. 22); "The seed of the wicked shall be cut off" (v. 28); "I have seen the wicked in great power, And spreading himself like a green tree in its native soil. But one passed by, and, lo, he was not: Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found" (vs. 35,36); "As for the transgressors, they shall be destroyed together: The end of the wicked shall be cut off" (v. 38).

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 2:10-22

1. What does "shall enter" in v. 10 signify about wisdom?
2. From what will discretion and understanding keep us (v. 11)?

3. Comment on the perverse speech of evil men (v. 12).
4. Are there wicked men who once walked in the paths of uprightness (v. 13)? When?
5. How perverted do the wicked become (v. 14)?
6. "Crooked" is the opposite of what way to walk (v. 15)?
7. Comment on the wicked woman's use of words to ensnare men (v. 16).
8. To what two parties is such a woman untrue (v. 17)?
9. What other passages besides v. 18 say that her house leads to death?
10. What does v. 19 say about the difficulty involved in freeing oneself from such behavior once that he has begun it?
11. Who are the "good men" of v. 20?
12. What chapter has much to say about the long life of the righteous (v. 21)?
13. What chapter has much to say about the short life of the wicked (v. 22)?

FOOLS ARE KNOWN BY THEIR SPEECH

Listen to 15:14: "The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of the 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 everyone 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

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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."

"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 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 the 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: "Forsake 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.

TEXT — 3:1-12

1. My son, forget not my law;
But let thy heart keep my commandments:
2. For length of days, and years of life,
And peace, will they add to thee.
3. Let not kindness and truth forsake thee;
Bind them about thy neck;
Write them upon the tablet of thy heart:
4. So shalt thou find favor and good understanding
In the sight of God and man.
5. Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart,
And lean not upon thine own understanding:
6. In all thy ways acknowledge him,
And he will direct thy paths.
7. Be not wise in thine own eyes;
Fear Jehovah, and depart from evil:
8. It will be health to thy navel,
And marrow to thy bones.
9. Honor Jehovah with thy substance,
And with the first-fruits of all thine increase:
10. So shall thy barns be filled with plenty,
And thy vats shall overflow with new wine.
11. My son, despise not the chastening of Jehovah;
Neither be weary of his reproof:
12. For whom Jehovah loveth he reproveth,
Even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 3:1-12

1. Is remembering what parents said a part of obedience (v. 1)?
2. How desirable are the blessings of obedience mentioned in v. 2?
3. How would kindness and truth "forsake" one (v. 3)?
4. What Bible persons were said to have the favor of both God and man (v. 4)?
5. How would you relate the two statements of v. 5 to each other?
6. How can we "acknowledge" God (v. 6)?
7. What feelings does v. 7 reveal about those who are wise in their own eyes?

8. Apply the illustrations in v. 8.
9. Why does giving honor God (v. 9)?
10. Should God be given the first of our paycheck or what is left over from it (v. 9)?
11. What are "vats" (v. 10)?
12. Where is v. 11 quoted in the New Testament?
13. What motivates God to reprove (v. 12)?

PARAPHRASE OF 3:1-12

- 1-6. My son, never forget the things I've taught you. If you want a long and satisfying life, closely follow my instructions. Never forget to be truthful and kind. Hold these virtues tightly. Write them deep within your heart. If you want favor with both God and man, and a reputation for good judgment and common sense, then trust the Lord completely; don't ever trust yourself. In everything you do, put God first, and He will direct you and crown your efforts with success.
- 7,8. Don't be conceited, sure of your own wisdom. Instead trust and reverence the Lord, and turn your back on evil; when you do that, then you will be given renewed health and vitality.
- 9,10. Honor the Lord by giving Him the first part of all your income, and He will fill your barns with wheat and barley and overflow your vats with the finest wines.
- 11,12. Young man, do not resent it when God chastens and corrects you, for His punishment is proof of His love. Just as a father punishes a son he delights in to make him better, so the Lord corrects you.

COMMENTS ON 3:1-12

V. 1. In this and succeeding verses the material divides itself into 2-verse thoughts, the first verse giving the commandment and the second verse the promise or explanation. Check this for yourself. Too many children instead of not forgetting their parent's law and keeping the commandments get it backwards: they "keep forgetting" what they were told. If one remembers his father's instruction, his father should not have to keep reminding him of his duty. Remembering what one is told is a necessary part of obedience.

V. 2. The long life promised to the righteous is contrasted

with the shorter life of the wicked as set forth over and over again in Psa. 37. That it is natural to want to live is seen in the fact that people seek to extend their lives by medical and surgical means. "Peace" meant even more to them because of the warring world in which they lived. The blessings that come to the obedient, then, are major in importance.

V. 3. Being kind and always telling the truth would especially make for the life of peace promised in v. 2 (as far as the individual was concerned). If one loves, he is kind (I Cor. 13:4). "Brotherly kindness" is to be added to one's character (II Pet. 1:7; Eph. 4:32). Concerning "truth", "Pulpit Commentary" says it is that "absolute integrity of character, both in word and deed, which secures the unhesitating confidence of all." The son was to grace his life with them ("bind them about thy neck"), and he was to imbed them in the very fibre of his character ("write them upon the tablet of thy heart"). The heart is like a table or tablet on which can be written either good (II Cor. 3:3) or bad (Jer. 17:1).

V. 4. Both God and man will approve and appreciate one who follows kindness and truth. Concerning having the favor of both God and man, notice these passages: "The child Samuel grew on, and increased in favor both with Jehovah, and also with men" (I Sam. 2:26); "And Jesus advanced in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52); "He that herein serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men" (Rom. 14:18). Man's greatest happiness is attained when he has the favor of God and the respect of his fellowmen.

V. 5. Other commands to trust Jehovah: "Trust in Jehovah" (Psa. 37:3); "Commit thy way unto Jehovah; Trust also in him" (Psa. 37:5). "Trust" means to rely upon, put confidence in. This we need to do toward God and not to suppose that we are self-contained and self-sufficient of ourselves. Man makes a grave mistake when he does not pray, does not commit his way to God, and does not depend upon God. So often, though, men turn earthly assets and strong-points into occasions of pride and as a result fail to think of God. Thus, Jer. 9:23,24 says, "Thus saith Jehovah, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he hath understanding, and knoweth me." And I Tim. 6:17 says, "Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not highminded, nor have

their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God." See also Isa. 31:1; Psalms 20:7; Psalm 44:1-8; Psalm 118:8,9.

V. 6. "This expression covers the whole area of life's action...It guards against our acknowledging God in great crises and solemn acts of worship only...To acknowledge God is, therefore, to recognize in all our dealings and undertakings God's overruling providence" ("Pulpit Commentary"). "Begin, continue and end every work, purpose, and device with God. Earnestly pray for His direction at the commencement; look for His continual support in the progress; and so begin and continue that all may terminate in His glory...The great sin of the human race is their continual endeavor to live independently of God" ("Clarke"). Man's need of acknowledging God is well stated by Jeremiah in Jer. 10:23: "O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." By praying at the outset of the day, we acknowledge that a good day is dependent upon Him. By thanking God before we eat, we acknowledge that He has made the possession of food possible. By praying before we begin a trip, we acknowledge that His help is important in making the trip safely. And there are many other such examples of acknowledging Him in all our various ways, which carries His promise to direct our paths.

V. 7. Rom. 12:16 similarly warns, "Be not wise in your own conceits." Man doesn't have to possess very much knowledge, it seems, until it goes to his head: "Knowledge puffeth up" (I Cor. 8:1). Instead of thinking how great we are, we should be thinking of how great God is and how small we are and as a result "fear" Him and "depart from evil" instead of proudly living in sin. Job was one who "feared God, and turned away from evil" (Job 1:1). After enumerating some of man's sins in Rom. 3:10-17, the next verse (v. 18) seems to explain the whole matter: "There is no fear of God before their eyes". Verses 5-7 hang together: "trust" Jehovah (v. 5), "acknowledge" Him (v. 6), "fear" Him (v. 7) and don't lean on your "own understanding" (v. 5), don't be wise in your "own eyes" (v. 7).

V. 8. The results of obeying the parental instructions contained in vs. 5-7 are contained in those verses and in the 3 that follow: God will "direct" your paths (v. 6); you will "depart" from evil (v. 7); it will be "health" to you (this verse). The "marrow" in one's bones plays a very important part in

one's overall health. We may be ignorant of some lasting connection that the navel has with one's health after one's birth that it is spoken of so prominently. Could it here be used as a symbol of utter dependence upon God (raised in previous verses) that we must maintain in a spiritually healthy condition? "Clarke" explains the problem thus: "The central region of the body is taken as the representative of all the vital organs."

V. 9. "The injunctions also show that the honoring of God does not consist simply of lip-service, of humility and confidence in Him, but also of external worship, and incorporeal things" ("Pulpit Commentary"). Yes, God can be honored with substance (Material gain) if it be presented in the right spirit and in proportion to one's material blessings. Other passages on giving God the "first-fruits" of the harvest: Exo. 23:19; Deut. 26:1,2. Just as the Lord claims the first day of each week as His day (Rev. 1:10; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2), even so He claims the first portion of man's produce and earnings. Abel's acceptable sacrifice was the "firstlings" and the "fat" of his flock (Gen. 4:4). People who spend and spend and spend out of their paychecks and then give "something" out of what is left to God are likely to dishonor rather than "honor" Him with their gift. Tithers always give of the "first-fruits" rather than of the "left-overs"! Remember, too, that the first thing Noah did after the flood was not build a house for himself but an altar to God (Gen. 8:20); those who were scattered from Jerusalem are reported in their "preaching the word" rather than in their finding jobs for the support of themselves (Acts 8:1,4); and Jesus taught all of us to seek "first" the kingdom of God and its righteousness before what we are going to eat, drink, or wear (Matt. 6:31-33).

V. 10. Man is concerned about his own things and often leaves God out of his life and concerns or subordinates Him to an inferior place (second, third or fourth place). Here God promises to give man what he wants ("barns be filled with plenty...vats overflow") if he puts God first in his life. The "vats" were olive-oil vats or grape-juice vats. Similarly Deut. 28:8-12 says "Jehovah will command the blessing upon thee in thy barns, and in all that thou puttest thy hand unto...And Jehovah will make thee plenteous for good...in the fruit of thy ground...Jehovah will open unto thee his good treasure the heavens, to give the rain of thy land in its season, and to bless all the work of thy hand." In Mal. 3:10,11 God promised agri-

cultural blessings if they would honor Him with their tithes: "Bring ye the whole tithe into the store-house...and prove me now herewith, saith Jehovah of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall be not room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast its fruit before the time in the field."

V. 11. Immediately after telling of all the joyous blessings that God sends, we have another blessing listed, a blessing of a different nature, a blessing in disguise--chastening. Unlike the other blessings, it comes not because of obedience but disobedience; nor is it like other blessings, joyous at the time, but grievous, but it proves to be a blessing in the peaceful fruit that it brings to those who are corrected by it. "All chastening seemeth for the present not to be joyous but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness" (Heb. 12:11); "For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed good to them; but he for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness" (Heb. 12:10); "We are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world" (I Cor. 11:32). Our verse is similar to Job 5:17 ("Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: Therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty") and is quoted in Heb. 12:5,6. Solomon urges his son not to "despise" or belittle, not to disregard or misunderstand God's chastening nor to be weary of it, for it will bring blessings (Psa. 94:12).

V. 12. Satan tempts us because he seeks our destruction (I Pet. 5:8), and wicked people persecute us because they hate us (Luke 6:22), but God brings His hardship of chastening upon us because He loves us (this verse; Heb. 12:6; Rev. 3:19). His chastening is compared to the correction of our earthly parents (this verse; Deut. 8:5; Heb. 12:7-9). Solomon has to tell us that it is God's love that causes Him to chasten. People's idea of "love" is not always right. The preacher who forcefully condemns sin and falsehood is accused of having an unloving attitude (Yet he is working to save people). The parent who corrects his children is criticized as harsh and unloving, but both God who corrects His children and parents who correct theirs do so because of love and concern ("He that spareth the

rod hateth his son; But he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes"--Prov. 13:24).

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 3:1-12

1. What about the child who says to his parent, "I forgot that I was supposed to do that" (v. 1)?
2. What promises does v. 2 spell out for the obedient child?
3. To what is the heart likened in v. 3?
4. What two blessings come from being kind and always telling the truth (v. 4)?
5. In what does man have a tendency to trust instead of God (v. 5)?
6. What is the promise connected with acknowledging God in all our ways (v. 6)?
7. What does man often allow his little bit of knowledge to do to him (v. 7)?
8. What is the promise connected with fearing God and departing from evil instead of being wise in one's own conceit (v. 8)?
9. Comment upon v. 9.
10. What is the promise connected with giving God the first-fruits (v. 10)?
11. In what sense is chastening also a blessing (v. 11)?
12. Show how love is involved both in God's chastening of His children and in earthly parents' chastening of theirs (v. 12).

TEXT — 3:13-26

13. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom,
And the man that getteth understanding.
14. For the gaining of it is better than the gaining of silver,
And the profit thereof than fine gold.
15. She is more precious than rubies:
And none of the things thou canst desire are to be compared unto her.
16. Length of days is in her right hand;
In her left hand are riches and honor.
17. Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths are peace.
18. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her:
And happy is every one that retaineth her.

19. Jehovah by wisdom founded the earth;
By understanding he established the heavens.
20. By his knowledge the depths were broken up,
and the skies drop down the dew.
21. My son, let them not depart from thine eyes;
Keep sound wisdom and discretion:
22. So shall they be life unto thy soul,
And grace to thy neck.
23. Then shalt thou walk in thy way securely,
And thy foot shall not stumble.
24. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid:
Yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.
25. Be not afraid of sudden fear,
Neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh:
26. For Jehovah will be thy confidence,
And will keep thy foot from being taken.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 3:13-26

1. Why is the man who gets wisdom "happy" (v. 13)?
2. Why is the getting of wisdom better than the getting of treasures (v. 14)?
3. Give a synonym for "precious" as used in v. 15.
4. Compare the blessings mentioned in v. 16 with those mentioned in v. 2.
5. What two additional blessings of wisdom are promised in v. 17?
6. What is meant by "tree of life" in v. 18?
7. How is God's wisdom reflected in His creation (v. 19)?
8. What breaking up of depths is referred to in v. 20?
9. What does "keep" mean in v. 21?
10. Comment upon "grace" as used in v. 22.
11. What Hebrew parallelism do we have in v. 23?
12. What is there to fear about the night (v. 24)?
13. Why can a godly person be safe and secure from all alarms as the song, "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" says (v. 25)?
14. Where is a godly person's confidence placed (v. 26)?

PARAPHRASE OF 3:13-26

- 13-18. The man who knows right from wrong and has good judgment and common sense is happier than the man who is immensely rich! For such wisdom is far more

valuable than precious jewels. Nothing else compares with it. Wisdom gives a long, good life; riches; honor; pleasure; and peace. Wisdom is a tree of life to those who eat her fruit; happy is the man who keeps on eating it.

19. The Lord's wisdom founded the earth; his understanding established all the universe and space.
20. The deep foundations of the earth were broken open by His knowledge, and the skies poured down rain.
- 21-26. Have two goals--wisdom--that is, knowing and doing right--and common sense. Don't let them slip away, for they fill you with living energy and are a feather in your cap. They keep you safe from defeat and disaster and stumbling off the trail. With them on guard you can sleep without fear; and you need not be afraid of disaster or the plots of wicked men; for the Lord is with you; He protects you.

COMMENTS ON 3:13-26

V. 13. Vs. 13-20 go together, bidding the son to get wisdom and understanding for the rich blessings they bestow and reminding him that the Highest Himself employed wisdom in laying out the universe. He who finds wisdom gets understanding, and the finding is not so likely by accident as by searching. The whoso "findeth" wisdom of Prov. 8:35 is the one who has heard "instruction" (Prov. 8:33). Yes, a wise, an informed, an understanding person is a "happy" person, for he is blessed with the light of knowledge.

V. 14. God would have men seek wisdom as they seek earthly treasures: "If thou seek her as silver, And search for her as for hid treasures: Then shalt thou understand the fear of Jehovah, And find the knowledge of God" (Prov. 2:4,5); "My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; And my revenue than choice silver" (Prov. 8:19). Especially is the knowledge of God's Word so valuable: "I rejoice at thy word, As one that findeth great spoil" (Psa. 119:162); "The ordinances of Jehovah are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold" (Psa. 19:9,10).

V. 15. A similar passage comparing rubies and the value of wisdom: "Wisdom is better than rubies; And all the things that may be desired are not to be compared unto it" (Prov.

8:11). "Pulpit Commentary": "There is nothing--neither silver, gold, precious stones, nor anything precious--which is an equivalent to wisdom in value...When everything is put before us to choose from...like Solomon at Gibeon, we should prefer wisdom (I Kings 3:11-13)!"

V. 16. Both hands are full of great things and are stretched out to the person of true understanding. "The two hands, the right and the left, signify the abundance of Wisdom's gifts" ("Pulpit Commentary"). Wisdom claims, in Prov. 8:18, to have "riches and honor" to bestow. Long life, then, can be a result of wisdom. Riches, then, can be a product of wisdom. Honor, then, can come to those with wisdom.

V. 17. Here are two more great blessings of wisdom: "pleasantness" and "peace". Add these to riches and honor and long life, and who could ask for more as far as earthly life is concerned? Contrast such a life with one's life that is void of wisdom and is characterized by foolish ways.

V. 18. Like "Fountain of Youth" in our language, so "Tree of Life" in Bible days stood for something very desirable. The name was first used for one of the trees in the midst of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:9). God did not allow Adam and Eve to eat of this tree after they sinned (Gen. 3:22-24). In Rev. 2:7 it is said to be in the Paradise of God. The blessings of having wisdom are compared to eating from the tree of life! Our verse points out the importance both of laying hold upon (obtaining) wisdom and then of retaining it. Unfortunately, many never obtain it, and sadly some who have had it have not retained it later. So, we should work to possess it, and we should be careful not to let it get away from us. Even a small amount of folly can undo one's wisdom: "Dead flies cause the oil of the perfumer to send forth an evil odor; so doth a little folly outweigh wisdom and honor" (Eccl. 10:1).

V. 19. Always is man urged to be like God. The same is true concerning wisdom. After all these instructions on wisdom, Solomon now points out that God Himself is guided by wisdom. Other passages showing that God employed wisdom in creating the universe and life upon it: "O Jehovah, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all" (Psa. 104:24); Wisdom says, "When he established the heavens, I was there: When he set a circle upon the face of the deep, When he made the firm skies above, When the fountains of the deep became strong, When he gave to the sea its bound, That the waters

should not transgress his commandment, When he marked out the foundations of the earth; Then I was by him, as a master workman" (Prov. 8:27-30); "He hath established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding hath he stretch out the heavens" (Jer. 10:12). The marvels of creation continue to mystify the greatest minds in their depth and accuracy.

V. 20. The watering of the earth, so necessary to its vegetation and its support of both human and animal life, is here under consideration. Only God would know how to lay out and operate such a vast, continual system. There may be an illusion to the breaking up of the deep at the time of the Flood (Gen. 7:11); if so, it would still be saying that only God would know how to do such.

V. 21. Both statements mean the same: "them" is identified as "sound wisdom and discretion", and "let them not depart from thine eyes" is boiled down to the word "keep". It was the father's strong desire that his son would always keep his eyes upon the way of true wisdom both as a young man growing up and as a grown man. This good verse introduces material that runs through v. 26.

V. 22. The rewards of living by wisdom dominate this 6-verse section. This verse mentions two: "life" and "grace." "Life is used here in an all-inclusive sense of embracing more than lengthy existence a blessed and a spiritual life here. Other passages on an ornamented neck: "They shall be a chaplet of grace unto thy head, And chains about thy neck" (Prov. 1:9); "Bind them about thy neck" (Prov. 3:3); "Tie them about thy neck (Prov. 6:21). Prominent men wore golden chains around their necks: Belshazzar said, "Whosoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with purple, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom" (Dan. 5:7); "Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck" (Gen. 41:42).

V. 23. The promised rewards continue in this verse, this being a promise of safety and security. "As he who is accompanied by an escort proceeds on his way in safety, so you protected by God will pass your life in security; or, as Trapp, 'Thou shalt ever go under a double guard, 'the peace of God within thee (Phil. 4:7) and the 'power of God' without thee (I Pet. 1:5)'" ("Pulpit Commentary"). Prov. 10:9 speaks similarly:

"He that walketh uprightly walketh surely". Psa. 37:31 says, "The law of his God is in his heart; None of his steps shall slide." But contrast the ways of the wicked: Their way shall be unto them as slippery places in the darkness" (Jer. 23:12).

V. 24. One's safety and the resulting peace of mind are again stressed. Other passages on this peaceful condition: "I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid" (Lev. 26:6); "In peace will I both lay me down and sleep; For thou, Jehovah, alone makest me dwell in safety" (Psa. 4:8. Such lying down in peace and safety is employing the figure of sheep (Psa. 23:2). Words of a song: "Anywhere with Jesus I can safely go to sleep When the dark'ning shadows round about me creep."

V. 25. Again the blessing of safety, peace, and lack of fear is emphasized. "Sudden fear" would be that which strikes instantly, immediately, without advanced warning. Their world, even more than ours, was one of uncertainty: anything could happen at any time. Psa. 91:5,6 tunes us in on some of their uncertainties: "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, Nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor the pestilence that walketh in darkness, Nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday." As Christians we can sing, "What have I to dread? What have I to fear? Leaning on the everlasting arms. I have blessed peace with my Lord so near; Leaning on the everlasting arms."

V. 26. Jehovah will be the One in whom the believer places his confidence--he commits his way unto Him (Psa. 37:5). All the great "heroes of faith" in Heb. 11 had this one thing in common: their faith, their confidence, was in God. One with true wisdom, such as is urged in the previous verse of this chapter, will include God in everything (vs. 5,6). If one is wise at all, wisdom will teach him not to trust in his own wisdom, strength, or perfection but in the guidance, help, and mercy of God. Can we not say that confidence in God is never misplaced, but confidence apart from Him is always a false confidence that in time will let us down? The promise of our verse: He will "keep thy foot from being taken" shows there are many traps and snares along the way that God will keep us from getting into. After saying, "My help cometh from Jehovah" (Psa. 121:2), the Psalmist goes onto emphasize the "Keeping" work of God: "Jehovah is thy keeper...Jehovah will keep thee from all evil; He will keep thy soul. Jehovah will keep thy going out and thy

coming in From this time forth and for evermore" (Psa. 121:5-8). God's promise again: "A thousand shall fall at thy side, And ten thousand at thy right hand; But it shall not come nigh to thee" (Psa. 91:7).

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 3:12-16

1. Who is said in v. 13 to be the happy person?
2. Comment upon v. 14.
3. When did Solomon himself show that he placed the value of wisdom above everything else that he might have desired (v. 15)?
4. What does the mentioning of both hands in v. 16 signify?
5. Contrast the blessings of wisdom mentioned in v. 17 with the life of one who lacks wisdom.
6. What two thoughts are set forth by the two verbs in v. 18?
7. What is the purpose of switching from talking about the wisdom that human beings need to the wisdom that God employed in creating the universe (v. 19)?
8. What great work is mentioned in v. 20 that only God could do?
9. V. 21 introduces material that runs through what verse?
10. What all does the word "life" in v. 22 embrace?
11. What great promise is contained in v. 23?
12. What is again stressed in v. 24?
13. What would cause "sudden fear" (v. 25)?
14. What passage in Psa. emphasizes God's "keeping" work (v. 26)?

TEXT — 3:27-35

27. Withhold not good from them to whom it is due,
When it is in the power of thy hand to do it.
28. Say not unto thy neighbor, Go, and come again,
And to-morrow I will give;
When thou hast it by thee.
29. Devise not evil against thy neighbor,
Seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.
30. Strive not with a man without cause,
If he have done thee no harm.
31. Envy thou not the man of violence,
And choose none of his ways.

- 32. For the perverse is an abomination to Jehovah;
But his friendship is with the upright.
- 33. The curse of Jehovah is in the house of the wicked;
But he blesseth the habitation of the righteous.
- 34. Surely he scoffeth at the scoffers;
But he giveth grace unto the lowly.
- 35. The wise shall inherit glory;
But shame shall be the promotion of fools.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 3:27-35

- 1. Where did Jesus teach that to withhold good is actually evil (v. 27)?
- 2. Why would one put off to tomorrow giving help that he is able to give today (v. 28)?
- 3. Should a neighbor's security be one of our concerns (v. 29)?
- 4. Who especially needs the instruction found in v. 30?
- 5. What is listed in v. 31 as a possible cause of strife?
- 6. How are the violent of v. 31 described in v. 32?
- 7. According to v. 33 what does God do to those who are wicked?
- 8. Where in the New Testament is v. 34 quoted?
- 9. What do the wise have to look forward to (v. 35)?
- 10. What do fools have to look forward to (v. 35)?

PARAPHRASE OF 3:27-35

- 27-32. Don't withhold repayment of your debts. Don't say, "Some other time," if you can pay now. Don't plot against your neighbor; he is trusting you. Don't get into needless fights. Don't envy violent men. Don't copy their ways. For such men are an abomination to the Lord, but He gives His friendship to the godly.
- 33-35. The curse of God is on the wicked, but His blessing is on the upright. The Lord mocks at mockers, but helps the humble. The wise are promoted to honor, but fools are promoted to shame!

COMMENTS ON 3:27-35

V. 27. Beginning with this verse Solomon discusses our relationship with those about us. First of all, he says we should pay what we owe just as soon as we are able to do so. But this

verse is not limiting the subject to paying debts: it is talking about doing "good" to those about us—a subject set forth in several important places in the Bible: "Do good"—Psa. 37:3; "As we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of faith"—Gal. 6:10; Jesus "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil"—Acts 10:38. To learn the E, G, B, D, F, A lines of the musical staff, elementary teachers have long used the significant statement: "Every Good Boy Does Fine Always"—and it is true! A careful study of Mark 3:4 and its surrounding verses will show that it was "lawful" to do good on the Jewish sabbath (to heal a sick man) but harmful (or evil) not to. Jesus had the power to heal him, and He affirmed it would have been wrong not to do so. Everyone needs a growing conviction that what God has given him is to be used wherever needed and not merely squandered for his own selfish wants.

V. 28. This instruction refers back to v. 27. How many times people in urgent need have gone to someone of means and ability for help only to be put off until "tomorrow" or "next week" when it was only the slightest matter that could have been taken care of easily that kept them from giving the help that very day. God tells us not to dally with duty! We have a saying that says, "Don't put off to tomorrow what you can do today."

V. 29. At the bottom of every case of trouble, there is someone who got things mixed up or who purposely did wrong to begin it. Here is a commandment against purposely, knowingly devising evil and trouble for someone else. We have sayings that remind us to drive carefully and to live carefully, for the life we save may be our own. This verse, though, appeals strictly to our feelings of responsibility for the other person: take care of your neighbor, for he dwells securely through your dealings. But don't forget that trouble can be a two-way street: there is a sense in which you dwell securely by him.

V. 30. If everybody heeded this, there could be no strife except that which might arise from some misunderstanding. Remember that it takes somebody to start trouble before there can be trouble. Some people who seem to live in a state of strife really need this instruction, for they are chief offenders.

V. 31. Other similar passages: "Fret not thyself because

of evil-doers, Neither be thou envious against them that work unrighteousness" (Psa. 37:1); "I was envious at the arrogant, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked" (Psa. 73:3); "Be not thou envious against evil men; Neither desire to be with them" (Prov. 24:1). It is too bad that so many choose wrong models to follow. In this verse the father continues to warn his son about joining in with a life of violence (See Prov. 1:10-19; Prov. 2:12-15).

V. 32. One who "devises evil" against his neighbor (v. 20), one who "strives" with a man who has done him no wrong (v. 30), one who "envies" the wicked (v. 30) is said in this verse to be "perverted"—he is doing what God never planned for a person to do. This verse tells of two contrasting classes of persons (the "perverse" and the "upright") and of God's contrasting attitudes toward them ("abomination" for the perverse and "friendship" with the upright). Passages on God's pleasure with the righteous: "The friendship of Jehovah is with them that fear him; And he will show them his covenant" (Psa. 25:14); "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you" (John 15:14); "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, And his ears unto their supplication" (I Pet. 3:12). Passages on God's displeasure with the wicked: "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God" (Jas. 4:4); "Alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works" (Col. 1:21); "He that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

V. 33. Another verse contrasting God's treatment of the wicked and the righteous. The law that they were under had a long list of curses in Deut.²⁷ 28:15-26 and a long list of blessings in Deut.²⁸ 27:3-6. God can send blessings upon people, or He can bring curses upon them. The basis on which God gives to each is set forth in Deut. 11:26-28: "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if ye shall hearken unto the commandments of Jehovah your God...and the curse, if ye shall not hearken unto the commandments of Jehovah your God." Psa. 37:22 says, "Such as are blessed of him shall inherit the land; And they that are cursed of him shall be cut off." One's relationship to God and His consequent attitude toward us is the main issue of life.

V. 34. A double contrast: "scoffeth" vs. "giveth" and "scoffers" vs. "the lowly". Scoffers are those who act as if they "know it all"; the lowly are those who recognize their deficiencies and who, as a result, trust in God and do not lean to their "own understanding" but who "acknowledge Him" in all their ways (vs. 5,6). Jas. 4:6 refers to this verse ("He giveth more grace. Wherefore the scripture saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble" as does I Pet. 5:5 ("God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble").

V. 35. A double contrast: "wise" vs. "fools" and "glory" vs. "shame." "The wise shall inherit glory"—what an inheritance to come into! Abraham was wise in following God's directions, and think of the glory he inherited as a result! Daniel was wise in his decision concerning the king's wine and dainties, and think of the glory he had before the book of Daniel closed! The Christian is the wise builder who builds his house upon the rock (Matt. 7:24-25), and the resulting Christian life is one of glory ("Ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory"—I Pet. 1:8), and he will have his eternity in glory! On the other hand "shame shall be the promotion of fools"—what a "promotion" to get! We detect irony in the use of "promotion" here. The fool has nothing to look forward to but "shame". A fool lives a shameful life, and his eternity will be one of "shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2). That which both the wise and the foolish come to will be because God will make it so!

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 3:27-35

1. Where else besides v. 27 does the Bible talk about doing good?
2. What is v. 28 condemning?
3. What reason is cited in v. 29 for not devising evil against one's neighbor?
4. Who especially needs the instruction in v. 30?
5. Whom does the father not want his son to envy (v. 31)?
6. Cite the double contrast in v. 32.
7. What chapter of the Old Testament contained lists of both blessings and curses (v. 33)?
8. What is the double contrast in v. 34?
9. How is the word "promotion" used in v. 35?

PONDERING THE PROVERBS

NOTICING 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. 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 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.

DISCRETION IN SPEAKING

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 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.

TEXT — 4:1-9

1. Hear my sons, the instruction of a father,
And attend to know understanding;
2. For I give you good doctrine;
Forsake ye not my law.
3. For I was a son unto my father,
Tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother.
4. And he taught me, and said unto me:
Let thy heart retain my words;
Keep my commandments, and live;
5. Get wisdom, get understanding;
Forget not, neither decline from the words of my
mouth;
6. Forsake her not, and she will preserve thee;
Love her, and she will keep thee.
7. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom;
Yea, with all thy getting get understanding.
8. Exalt her, and she will promote thee;
She will bring thee to honor, when thou dost embrace
her.
9. She will give to thy head a chaplet of grace;
A crown of beauty will she deliver to thee.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 4:1-9

1. Why the change from the usual "son" to "sons" in v. 1?
2. What does "doctrine" mean?
3. What does v. 3 show to be the way parents should feel concerning their children?
4. What kind of parent is described in v. 4?
5. How many times is "get" used in the book of Proverbs (v. 5)?
6. Reword v. 6.
7. Connect the thought of v. 7 with the author of Proverbs.
8. What will wisdom do for its possessor (v. 8)?
9. What was a chaplet (v. 9)?

PARAPHRASE OF 4:1-9

- 1-6. Young men, listen to me as you would to your father. Listen, and grow wise, for I speak the truth--don't turn away. For I, too, was once a man, tenderly loved by my

mother as an only child, and the companion of my father. He told me never to forget his words. "If you follow them," he said, "you will have a long and happy life." "Learn to be wise," he said, "and develop good judgment and common sense! I cannot over-emphasize this point." Cling to wisdom--she will protect you. Love her--she will guard you.

- 7-9. Determination to be wise is the first step toward becoming wise! And with your wisdom, develop common sense and good judgment. If you exalt wisdom, she will exalt you. Hold her fast and she will lead you to great honor; she will place a beautiful crown upon your head.

COMMENTS ON 4:1-9

V. 1. Only three times in the entire book does the author address his material to his "sons" (plural) instead of to his "son" (singular): here; 5:7; 7:24. No reason is easily discernible for the change at this and the other places. "Hear" is used many times in Proverbs as are "instruction" and "understanding". Similar passages: "My son, hear the instruction of thy father" (Prov. 1:8); "Come, ye children, hearken unto me" (Psa. 34:11); "Fathers...nuture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

V. 2. "Doctrine" means "teaching". The father is sure that his teaching is "good", for he has been over the road, has experienced much, has observed a lot, and has come to sound and studied conclusions, and he has the welfare of his children at heart. For the most part children normally accept their parents' teachings as good. Because what he was teaching was good, he insists that they not forsake his law.

V. 3. As Solomon instructs his own children, he recalls that he too was once a child, a son of his father David (who picked him to be his successor: I Kings 1:32-35) and tender and beloved in the sight of his mother (Bathsheba). Every grown-up should be able to look back upon his childhood days and feel this way about his parents. Our verse reminds us that those who are now fathers were once sons, and those who now teach were once taught.

V. 4. David took time to teach and prepare Solomon for the great task that was before him in life. Such a constant, several-years' task takes a father's time and attention, and it

involves a recognition of divine responsibility and a desire to see one's son grow up to be what he ought to be. Fathers should be more than sires and material providers for their children: "Fathers...nuture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). The direct quotation begins in this verse, but it is debatable just where the quotation ends. Some say the quotation runs to the end of the chapter; some say through v. 9 (where the Hebrew paragraph ends). As a conjecture we would place the end quotation at the conclusion of v. 9. David urged Solomon to keep his teachings within his heart, and he assured him of "life" as a result. Prov. 7:1,2 is very similar: "My son, keep my words, And lay up my commandments with thee. Keep my commandments and live."

V. 5. "Get" is used many times in the book of Proverbs. In English we might make a play on words within this verse by saying, "Get wisdom and understanding and forget not what I am teaching you." Good parents are ambitious for what their children will grow out to become--actually more so than the children themselves at the time.

V. 6. That which we "love", we do not "forsake". Therefore, David called upon Solomon to love wisdom, "forsake her not", and his promise was that wisdom would "preserve" and "keep" him. Wisdom would keep him from evil, from evil men, from evil women, from mistakes, from sorrows and disappointments, and from a sad ending. And it will do the same for each of us today! The forgetting in v. 5 would be unintentional while the forsaking in this verse could be done while realizing what one was doing.

V. 7. With all of thy getting of various things in life, be sure to get wisdom, and this Solomon did (I Kings 4:29-34; I Kings 10:1-7). The New Testament would teach that the salvation of one's soul is the principal thing in life, but Proverbs, preceding the Christian age, makes wisdom the principal thing, and yet there need not be a clash, for wisdom--true wisdom--will cause one to be saved: the "wise" man builds his house upon the rock of Christ (Matt. 7:24,25); a knowledge of God's Word causes one to be "wise unto salvation" (II Tim. 3:15). But how does one go about getting wisdom? First of all it must be sought by prayer (Jas. 1:5; I Kings 3:5-12), and then man must constantly sit at the feet of the three great "teachers". They are: (1) instruction (learning by listening to what others would teach us--Prov. 9:9); (2)

observation (learning by keeping one's eyes open, learning from the experiences of others--Psa. 37:25; Prov. 24:30-34); and (3) experience--learning from your own experiences--Phil. 4:10-12).

V. 8. The son would "exalt" wisdom by making it his chief concern, and his love for wisdom is couched in the words, "When thou dost embrace her." If he would exalt wisdom, wisdom would exalt him just as if he turned his back on wisdom, wisdom would turn her back upon him (Prov. 1:24-31). Learning cannot be over-emphasized unless one learns the wrong thing (Col. 2:8), unless one fails to add the other essentials to character-development (II Pet. 1:5-7), and unless one becomes conceited over his knowledge (Rom. 12:16). "Knowledge is power; and it is truly astonishing to see what influence true learning has. Nothing is so universally respected" ("Clarke").

V. 9. Wisdom will (in time) give or deliver to one's head a chaplet (wreath or garland) of grace, a crown of beauty. Similar passages: Prov. 1:9; Prov. 3:22. These promotions and honors among men is the exalting referred to in v. 8.

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 4:1-9

1. How many times does the author of Proverbs address his material to "sons" (plural) instead of to "son" (singular) (v. 1)?
2. How does the father know that his teaching is "good" (v. 2)?
3. Who were Solomon's father and mother (v. 3)?
4. What did David take time to do with reference to his Solomon (v. 4)?
5. What word in v. 5 is used many times in Proverbs?
6. What are some of the things David realized that wisdom would keep Solomon from (v. 6)?
7. Does there have to be a clash between "salvation" and "wisdom" (v. 7)?
8. What are man's 3 great "teachers" (v. 7)?
9. What commandment concerning wisdom is found in v. 8?
10. When will wisdom deliver chaplets and crowns to one's head (v. 9)?

TEXT — 4:10-19

10. Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings;
And the years of thy life shall be many.

11. I have taught thee in the way of wisdom;
I have led thee in paths of uprightness.
12. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened;
And if thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.
13. Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go:
Keep her; for she is thy life.
14. Enter not into the path of the wicked,
And walk not in the way of evil men.
15. Avoid it, pass not by it;
Turn from it, and pass on.
16. For they sleep not, except they do evil;
And their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some
to fall.
17. For they eat of the bread of wickedness,
And drink the wine of violence.
18. But the path of the righteous is as the dawning light,
That shineth more and more unto the perfect day.
19. The way of the wicked is as darkness:
They know not at what they stumble.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 4:10-19

1. Tie v. 10 in with the first commandment of the Ten Commandments that contains a promise.
2. What is the difference between "taught" and "led" in v. 11?
3. What does "straitened" mean (v. 12)?
4. What is the significance of taking "fast hold" of instruction (v. 13)?
5. What was the practical value of the Horatio Alger, Jr. books for boys years ago (v. 14)?
6. What 4 pointed instructions are given in v. 15?
7. According to v. 16 how perverse can some people get?
8. What is the "diet" of perverse people (v. 17)?
9. Comment upon "beautiful" in v. 18.
10. Living in sin is like walking in (v. 19).

PARAPHRASE OF 4:10-19

10. My son, listen to me and do as I say, and you will have a long, good life.
- 11-13. I would have you learn this great fact: that a life of

doing right is the wisest life there is. If you live that kind of life, you'll not limp or stumble as you run. Carry out my instructions; don't forget them, for they will lead you to real living.

14-17. Don't do as the wicked do. Avoid their haunts--turn away, go somewhere else, for evil men don't sleep until they've done their evil deed for the day. They can't rest unless they cause someone to stumble and fall. They eat wickedness and violence!

18,19. But the good man walks along in the ever brightening light of God's favor; the dawn gives way to morning splendor, while the evil man gropes and stumbles in the dark.

COMMENTS ON 4:10-19

V. 10. If our conjecture is right, the direct quotation of David's words to Solomon ended with v. 9, in which case we return to this verse in Solomon's words to his son. Just as Solomon had received the "sayings" of his father and had passed some of them on in vs. 4-9, so now he calls upon his son to receive his sayings. While his son Rehoboam did not demonstrate wisdom in I Kings 12:13,14, he was probably wise as a rule. Honoring one's parents by listening to them and doing as they teach carry the promise of length of life: here and in Exo. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-3; Prov. 3:2. Wisdom itself can be the means of lengthening one's life just as folly can shorten it. The promise of God can of itself lengthen it just as disobedience to His will can nullify the promise. But so can sin enter into the length of one's life: "Vice and intemperance impair the health and shorten the days of the wicked; while true religion, sobriety, and temperance prolong them. The principal part of our diseases spring from indolence, intemperance, and disorderly passions. Religion excites to industry, promotes sober habits, destroys evil passions, and harmonizes the soul; and thus, by preventing many diseases, necessarily prolongs life" ("Clarke").

V. 11. As a father he had "taught" with words, and he had "led" with example, and unless the latter combines with the former, a father is wasting his words. The inspired Luke was as much interested in what Jesus did as he was in what He said (Acts 1:1). Paul both taught and set an example (Acts 20:20,35).

Our verse indicates that the wisdom contained in teaching leads to uprightness of living.

V. 12. "Straitened" means "limited". Following the wisdom of parental teaching will lead to a full and not a limited life; life will open itself to a wise person. He may be born in obscurity but become a well known person of renown. He may begin at the bottom and end up on top. "Runnest" would signify "going fast"; "stumble" would signify an "abrupt stopping of that progress". Wisdom would keep one from becoming broken and ruined at the height of progress. *Psa. 18:36* is a similar verse: "Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, And my feet have not slipped."

V. 13. Do not dilly-dally about the matter of learning. Be in earnest about it. The wording of this verse shows how important instruction is. It is about like saying to a man overboard who cannot swim, "Take fast hold of the lifeline; let it not go; keep a tight hold on it, for it is thy life." How many of us fully grasp as we should the importance of learning?

V. 14. Neither begin ("enter not") nor continue ("walk not") in the way of the wicked. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked" (*Psa. 1:1*). "My son, walk not thou in the way with them; Refrain thy foot from their path" (*Prov. 1:15*). "Clarke": "Never associate with those whose life is irregular or sinful; never accompany them in any of their acts of transgression." One will never walk the way of an evil man unless he enters their path; to do so is to prefer their way to God's way. The Horatio Alger, Jr. series of books for boys was good for sounding the same warning, and they were good reading matter for growing, developing minds.

V. 15. How can one keep from entering the wrong path? Know that it is wrong, and then "avoid" it--stay away from it, stay as far away from it as you can (like you would a rattlesnake den or a vicious dog). Adam and Eve walked with God as long as they did not go near the forbidden tree. The careful Joseph tried never to be with the wicked wife of Potipher (*Gen. 39:10*). *Prov. 5:8* says, "Remove thy way from her, And come not nigh the door of her house."

V. 16. Some are so wicked that they live just as this verse says. Instead of living as a Christian ("To me to live is Christ"--*Phil 1:21*), to them to live is to "do evil" and to "cause some to fall" (others to join them in the sin-game). When an

older Christian woman was asked about the two men she was caring for, she said, "All they do is sit in front of the television all day, smoke their cigarettes, and run down the church of Christ." What a way to live! They know not God, and they are not obedient to the gospel; therefore, they will be punished with everlasting destruction: "...the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might" (II Thess. 1:7-9).

V. 17. "Violence" is the only item in some people's "diet" of life--this is what they "eat" and "drink" everyday. With such perverted "appetites", they have no "hunger" for God and no "thirst" for righteousness.

V. 18. "But" is set in contrast with the foregoing verse. Besides the way the wicked live, there is also a "path" that the righteous follow. This good path is illuminated with the light of God. When we begin in that path, it is like beholding the first rays of dawn; as we follow, the day gets brighter and brighter, and we can see the righteousness of God's way more and more; in time this path will bring us to the "perfect day" (eternity with God). "This verse contains a fine metaphor; it refers to the sun rising above the horizon and the increasing twilight till its beams shine full upon the earth" ("Clarke").

V. 19. In this verse about the wicked we are back in "darkness". Living in sin is like walking in darkness in which one can stumble and fall to his hurt because he could not see what there was to trip over. Jer. 23:12 talks of the wicked walking in "slippery places in the darkness" (can you think of anything more "scary"?). Jesus urged men to walk in His light to avoid the darkness that would come upon them if they didn't; He also said that "he that walketh in the darkness knoweth not whither he goeth" (John 12:35).

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 4:10-19

1. What promise does honoring one's parents and their teachings carry (v. 10)?
2. How important is example in a parent (v. 11)?
3. Comment on "runnest" in v. 12.
4. What comparison did the comments on v. 13 make?

5. What double prohibition is laid down in v. 14?
6. What young man in Gen. was careful to avoid the way of evil (v. 15)?
7. What will happen to those who are evil and do not know God in their lives (v. 16)?
8. How do the wicked show their perverted "appetites" (v. 17)?
9. What is the "perfect day" to which we hope someday to arrive (v. 18)?
10. What did Jesus say about the wicked and "darkness" (v. 19)?

TEXT — 4:20-27

20. My son, attend to my words;
Incline thine ear unto my sayings.
21. Let them not depart from thine eyes;
Keep them in the midst of thy heart.
22. For they are life unto those that find them,
And health to all their flesh.
23. Keep thy heart with all diligence;
For out of it are the issues of life.
24. Put away from thee a wayward mouth,
And perverse lips put far from thee.
25. Let thine eyes look right on,
And let thine eyelids look straight before thee.
26. Make level the path of thy feet,
And let all thy ways be established.
27. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left:
Remove thy foot from evil.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 4:20-27

1. Why does the father go over the same thought so often (v. 20)?
2. What 2 parts of a person are spoken of in v. 21?
3. Is v. 22 speaking literally or figuratively?
4. Memorize v. 23.
5. Find the parallels in v. 24.
6. What is the meaning of v. 25?
7. In life what should one be interested in as brought out in v. 26?
8. How much deviation from the proper path is allowed (v. 27)?

PARAPHRASE OF 4:20-27

20-22. Listen, son of mine, to what I say. Listen carefully. Keep these thoughts ever in mind; let them penetrate deep within your heart: for they will mean real life for you, and radiant health.

23-27. Above all else, guard your affections. For they influence everything else in your life. Spurn the careless kiss of a prostitute. Stay far from her. Look straight ahead; don't even turn your head to look. Watch your step. Stick to the path and be safe. Don't side-track; pull back your foot from danger.

COMMENTS ON 4:20-27

V. 20. Oh, the earnestness of the father's instructions and entreaties as he thinks upon these matters!

V. 21. That Rehoboam would keep what his father was teaching him ever before his eyes and ever in his heart was so important that Solomon mentions it so often in this section of the book. Prov. 3:21 is similar: "My son, let them not depart from thine eyes; Keep sound wisdom and discretion."

V. 22. The great physical blessings of "life" and "health" are promised if the son will follow the father's good teachings throughout life. Several times is "life" promised on this basis: "Length of days, and long life...shall they add to thee" (Prov. 3:2); "Length of days is in her right hand" (Prov. 3:16); "Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many" (Prov. 4:10). Prov. 3:8 also promises "health" on this basis: "It shall be health to thy naval and marrow to thy bones."

V. 23. Here is one of the best known, most memorized verses in all of Proverbs. The reason is obvious: the outward words and deeds and course of life are but the manifestation of what is in one's heart. Other passages: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things: and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matt. 12:34,35); "The things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart...Out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings" (Matt. 15:18,19); "Let each man do as he hath purposed in his heart" (II Cor. 4:7). The Pharisees kept the outside but neglected the inside. Jesus pointed out that if they cleaned the inside, the

outside would automatically be all right: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also" (Matt. 23:25,26).

V. 24. A "wayward" person is one who has gone astray, so a "wayward" mouth is a mouth that speaks wrong things. "Perverse lips" is but a repetition of the same type of mouth. Wrong speech is so detrimental and out of place that our verse says it should be "put away", "put far" away! So, say nothing wrong--don't even come close. In other words, use nothing that is out-and-out wrong and not even that which is "shady". One will be judged by his speech: "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:36,37).

V. 25. After urging the son's care of his "heart" in v. 23 and bidding him to put away "perverse lips" in v. 24, he now calls upon him to direct his "eyes" and not let them wander upon sights that would be detrimental. In the next 2 verses he will speak of his "feet". Especially when it comes to "women", this is such an important and right way to keep from lusting in one's heart (Matt. 5:28; II Pet. 2:14). Job said, "I made a covenant with mine eyes; How then should I look upon a virgin?" (Job 31:1). This is a covenant that every man needs to make with his eyes. Let his own wife be the "desire of" his "eyes" even as Ezekiel's wife was to his (Eze. 24:16,18).

V. 26. In everyday life we try to keep from falling. Every irregularity in the sidewalk and every object in the pathway is a potential stumblingblock that could result in a fall. In life we should avoid everything that would cause us to stumble and fall; we should want our ways to be "established."

V. 27. Don't deviate from the right path in either way. We have to be careful of ditches on both sides of the road. One who is in the ditch is going nowhere. Other passages: "Ye shall observe to do therefore as Jehovah your God hat commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left" (Deut. 5:32); "Thou shalt hearken unto the commandments of Jehovah thy God...to observe them and do them, and shalt not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right hand, or to the left" (Deut. 28:13,14); "Observe

to do according to all the law...turn not from it to the right hand or to the left" (Josh. 1:7). In putting away pride, we must be careful not to become sloven; in putting away rashness, we should not become soft; etc.

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 4:20-27

1. Find the parallels in v. 20.
2. Rehoboam was to keep his father's instructions before his and in the midst of his (v. 21).
3. What 2 blessings of obedience are promised in v. 22?
4. What great fact of life is contained in v. 23?
5. How seriously important is one's speech (v. 24)?
6. What was Job's covenant with his eyes (v. 25)?
7. Comment on v. 26.
8. What do you get from turning not to the "right hand" nor to the "left" (v. 27)?

LAZINESS IS WASTEFULNESS

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.

TEXT — 5:1-14

1. My son, attend unto my wisdom;
Incline thine ear to my understanding;
2. That thou mayest preserve discretion,
And that thy lips may keep knowledge.
3. For the lips of a strange woman drop honey,
And her mouth is smoother than oil;
4. But in the end she is bitter as wormwood,
Sharp as a two-edged sword.
5. Her feet go down to death;
Her steps take hold on Sheol;
6. So that she findeth not the level path of life:
Her ways are unstable, and she knoweth it not.
7. Now therefore, my sons, hearken unto me,
And depart not from the words of my mouth.
8. Remove thy way far from her,
And come not nigh to the door of her house;
9. Lest thou give honor unto others,
And thy years unto the cruel;
10. Lest strangers be filled with thy strength,
And thy labors be in the house of an alien,
11. And thou mourn at thy latter end,
When thy flesh and thy body are consumed,
12. And say, How have I hated instruction,
And my heart despised reproof;
13. Neither have I obeyed the voice of my teachers,
Nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!
14. I was well-nigh in all evil
In the midst of the assembly and congregation.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 5:1-14

1. Why should a father teach his son (v. 1)?
2. How does v. 2 say wisdom will show up?
3. Comment on the 2 figures used in v. 3.
4. How is the "end" in v. 4 different from what we read in v. 3?
5. Where does the evil woman's way go (v. 5)?
6. What kind of person is this woman (v. 6)?
7. What is the purpose of v. 7 being where it is?
8. Why is the instruction in v. 8 so pertinent?
9. How deeply does such a person usually get involved (v. 9)?

10. How would strangers be filled with his strength (v. 10)?
11. What does such living often do to one's body (v. 11)?
12. Whose instructions had not been heeded (v. 12)?
13. People learn, but sometimes it is too (v. 13).
14. What is the meaning of v. 14?

PARAPHRASE OF 5:1-14

- 1-6. Listen to me, my son! I know what I am saying; listen! Watch yourself, lest you be indiscreet and betray some vital information. For the lips of a prostitute are as sweet as honey, and smooth flattery is her stock in trade. But afterwards only a bitter conscience is left to you, sharp as a double-edged sword. She leads you down to death and hell. For she does not know the path to life. She staggers down a crooked trail, and doesn't even realize where it leads.
- 7-14. Young men, listen to me, and never forget what I'm about to say: Run from her! Don't go near her house, lest you fall to her temptation and lose your honor, and give the remainder of your life to the cruel and merciless; lest strangers obtain your wealth, and you become a slave of foreigners. Lest afterwards you groan in anguish and in shame, when syphilis consumes your body, and you say, "Oh, if only I had listened! If only I had not demanded my own way! Oh, why wouldn't I take advice? Why was I so stupid? For now I must face public disgrace."

COMMENTS ON 5:1-14

V. 1. Life's experiences and learning bring to a father a degree of wisdom and understanding that he passes onto this children. Here is the same instruction found variously worded in Prov. 1:8; 2:1,2; 3:1; 3:21; 4:1,2; 4:10-13; 4:20,21; 6:20,21; 7:1-3; 7:24.

V. 2. "Discretion" is "good judgment in conduct and especially in speech". "Preserve" and "keep" are interchangeable in the two statements of this verse. Great care should be exercised in our speech so that it always reflects discretion and knowledge.

V. 3. Several lengthy sections of the first chapters of Proverbs are given to warning against immorality. Immorality has proven to be one of people's greatest pitfalls. Psa. 55:21 also speaks of wicked people's "smooth" speech ("smooth as butter,"

"softer than oil"), False teachers also employ "smooth and fair speech" to succeed at their perverse ways (Rom. 16:17,18). The warning of our verse about this woman's "lips" and "mouth" may be relative to her flattering words (see Prov. 2:16; Prov. 6:24), or it may be relative to her kisses (Prov. 7:13).

V. 4. Sinners fall for the pleasure involved while wisdom (the father in this verse) sees the "end". The bitter end of such indulgence ("bitter as wormwood", "sharp as a two-edged sword") is to be contrasted with the "honey" and "oil" of v. 3. Solomon said, "I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets and whose hands are bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her" (Eccl. 7:26).

V. 5. A triple parallel: "her feet" and "her steps", "go down" and "take hold on", and "death" and "Sheol". Before we go with somebody, it is the part of wisdom to find where she is going. Sin always leads to death: "In the day that thou eatest these of thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17); "They that practice such things are worthy of death" (Rom. 1:32); "As through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12); "the end of these things is death" (Rom. 6:23); "Sin and death" (Rom. 8:2); "Sin, when it is full grown, bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1:15). The body would come to "death" at which time the spirit would depart to "Sheol" (Hades). Prov. 7:27 says, "Her house is the way to Sheol, Going down to the chambers of death."

V. 6. Consider Prov. 4:26 in connection with this verse: "Make level the path of thy feet, And let all thy ways be established." Our verse says such a woman never knows this way: she is "unstable", undependable, and has nothing that she can hold onto. Man likes level ways to travel (they are so much easier than to be going up and going down hills), but such a woman knows nothing of the good road of life. And yet her kind has never neared extinction!

V. 7. Another return to "my sons" (plural) instead of the customary "my son" (singular). The plural is used 3 times in Proverbs: here, 4:1; 7:24. "Hearken to me," says the father and not to "her"! "Depart" from her but not from the "words of my mouth".

V. 8. The best way to keep from getting caught is to stay away from the trap. Quarantines are to keep people isolated

from the problem. Eve said they were not even to "touch" the tree (Gen. 3:3). We are told to "come...out from among them", to be "separate", not even to "touch" the unclean thing (II Cor. 6:17). The pure Josphe did not even want to be around the seductive Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39:10).

V. 9. Fornication is seldom a one-time matter (unless one repents). Usually (like with alcohol) one gets involved for "years", and his good name ("honor") is sacrificed. Immorality is "cruel" in what it does to the guilty, to his mate, and to his family.

V. 10. Others will have the substance earned through strength and labor. Prov. 6:26 says, "On account of a harlot a man is brought to a piece of bread." The Prodigal Son had devoured his inheritance with harlots (Luke 15:13,30).

V. 11. God has seen fit to visit immorality with the plague of various social diseases (venereal diseases such as syphilis, gonorrhea, and lymphogranuloma). The father had foreseen the mourning sure to come, but a young man might not consider it because of the sinful pleasure that precede it.

V. 12. A man suffering his last would have learned, but it would be too late to profit him. His father would probably be dead and gone by the time the prodigal wakened up to reality with a disease-ridden and ruined body, but his father's words would return to his mind with greater meaning. As he looks back, he sees that he actually "hated" and "despised" his father's instruction. Other instances of such: Prov. 1:25,29; Prov. 12:1.

V. 13. "Teachers" implies that others besides his father had tried to counsel him. Surely his mother would have been one of them ("Forsake not the law of thy mother"--Prov. 1:8). He had had good teachers (like many), but he was "smarter" than his teachers--he followed his own ways!

V. 14. "Such was my shamelessness that there was scarcely any wickedness which I did not commit, unrestrained even by the presence of the congregation and assembly. The fact which the ruined youth laments is the extent and audacity of his sins" ("Pulpit Commentary").

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 5:1-14

1. Where else in Proverbs is such instruction given (v. 1)?
2. What 2 words in v. 2 are interchangeable in meaning?
3. Where else besides v. 3 does the Bible warn about

“smooth” talk put out by evil people?

4. What in v. 4 is different from something in v. 3?
5. Where else besides v. 5 does the Bible connect death with sin?
6. Comment upon v. 6.
7. The father bids his son to hearken to him instead of to (v. 7).
8. The father bids the son to forsake instead of his instruction (v. 7).
9. How is the best way to keep from getting caught in a trap (v. 8)?
10. Comment on “years” in v. 9.
11. Comment on “honor” in v. 9.
12. Comment on “cruel” in v. 9.
13. Who wasted his substance with harlots (v. 10)?
14. What divine outcry against immorality shows forth in v. 11?
15. What mistake did the son make as he reflected on his case (v. 12)?
16. Comment on “teachers” (plural) (v. 13).
17. What is v. 14 talking about?

TEXT — 5:15-23

15. Drink waters out of thine own cistern,
And running waters out of thine own well.
16. Should thy springs be dispersed abroad,
And streams of water in the streets?
17. Let them be for thyself alone,
And not for strangers with thee.
18. Let thy fountain be blessed;
And rejoice in the wife of thy youth.
19. As a loving hind and a pleasant roe,
Let her breasts satisfy thee at all times;
And be thou ravished always with her love.
20. For why shouldest thou, my son, be ravished with a
strange woman,
And embrace the bosom of a foreigner?
21. For the ways of men are before the eyes of Jehovah;
And he maketh level all his paths.
22. His own iniquities shall take the wicked,
And he shall be holden with the cords of his sin.

23. He shall die for lack of instruction;
And in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 5:15-23

1. What does v. 15 mean?
2. What is the meaning of v. 16?
3. Is it all right for a man to share his wife with others (v. 17)?
4. V. 18 is a restatement of what previous verse?
5. What is a "hind", and what is a "roe" (v. 19)?
6. Why should one embrace the bosom of a foreigner and be ravished with a strange woman (v. 20)?
7. What does v. 21 mean?
8. How is the bondage of sin brought out in v. 22?
9. What is sin called in v. 23?

PARAPHRASE OF 5:15-23

- 15-21. Drink from your own well, my son--be faithful and true to your wife. Why should you beget children with women of the street? Why share your children with those outside your home? Let your manhood be a blessing, rejoice in the wife of your youth. Let her charms and tender embrace satisfy you. Let her love alone fill you with delight. Why delight yourself with prostitutes, embracing what isn't yours? For God is closely watching you, and He weighs carefully everything you do.
- 22,23. The wicked man is doomed by his own sins; they are ropes that catch and hold him. He shall die because he will not listen to the truth; he has let himself be led away into incredible folly.

COMMENTS ON 5:15-23

V. 15. Instead of carrying on immorally, he counsels his son to get married, have his own mate, and partake of his own well and cistern. This is what he will do in other fields of life. He will have his own garden--he will not steal out of his neighbor's garden. He will have his own flowers--he won't steal from his neighbor's flower garden. Heb. 13:4 says, "Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled"--that which is sin outside of marriage is innocent within the bounds of

marriage--"for fornicators and adulterers God will judge"--those who carry on immorally apart from or outside of the marriage bounds.

V. 16. "The figurative language is still continued, and under the terms 'fountains' and 'rivers of waters' are to be understood children, the legitimate issue of lawful marriage...The meaning appears to be: 'Let thy marriage be blessed with many children, who may go abroad for the public good'" ("Pulpit Commentary"). Psa. 127:3-5 pictures such: "Children are a heritage of Jehovah; And the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows in the hand of a mighty man, So are the children of youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them." And Psa. 128:3: "Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine, In the innermost parts of thy house; Thy children like olive plants, Round about thy table." The question form of our verse shows that a man should not beget illegitimate children.

V. 17. Do not consent to living with a wife who is unfaithful. This verse puts the thought into commandment form: it says, "Don't share your mate with anybody else;" and observation confirms that it seldom works out to keep living with an unfaithful mate in the hope that everything will ultimately turn out all right. Mate-trading is not only forbidden by this, but it is inevitably the ruin of marriage.

V. 18. This carries the same thought as v. 15, only in more explicit language. God has created you so you have all the possibilities of love and enjoyment at home. Eccl. 9:9 says, "Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest." But people who lacked the character, conviction and conscience to behave themselves during their courtships often tire of one another during the years of marriage, and then the same lack of character and control causes them to become "grumpy" with each other and to seek immoral connections with others.

V. 19. "Pulpit Commentary" says, "The loving hind and pleasant roe...descriptive of the grace and fascinating charms of the young wife...She is to be the object of thy love and devotion, the one in whom thine affections are to find the fulfillment of their desires." The correctness of the above is brought out by the fact that the "hind" and the "roe" enter often into the erotic poetry of the East.

V. 20. Two great thoughts involved here: (1) Be ravished with your own wife; embrace your own sweet wife; who should be dearer to you than the one who is for you alone? (2) Don't be

ravished by and don't embrace any other; it is wrong to do so; and the whole affair will let you down in time.

V. 21. Many passages show that no man, though he may try to slip around behind the back of his wife and carry on with some other woman, can conceal his deeds from God: "The eyes of Jehovah run to and fro throughout the whole earth" (II Chron. 16:9); "Doth not he see my ways?" (Job 31:4); "His eyes are upon the ways of a man, And he seeth all his goings" (Job 34:21); "The eyes of Jehovah are in every place, Keeping watch upon the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3); "Mine eyes are upon all their ways; they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity concealed from mine eyes" (Jer. 16:17); "...whose eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jer. 32:19); "They consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness; now have their own doings beset them about; they are before my face" (Hos. 7:2). For the statement, "he maketh level all his paths," the Margin seems to fit the context and sense better: He "weigheth carefully" all his paths.

V. 22. "Most people who follow unlawful pleasures think they can give them up whenever they please, but sin repeated becomes customary, custom soon engenders habit, and habit in the end assumes the form of necessity; the man becomes bound with his own cords and so is led captive by the devil at his will" ("Clarke"). Iniquity is like an outlaw who overpowers a person and then keeps him by chaining him. Christ came to release all such: "He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives" (Luke 4:18).

V. 23. Not that he didn't have instruction but that he had instruction that he didn't heed, for in v. 12 he admitted, "How have I hated instruction, And my heart despised reproof; Neither have I obeyed the voice of my teachers, Nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!" Sin is here called "folly" (a "great" folly) that takes one out of the path ("astray") like a lost and wandering sheep and gets one off-course (like a wandering star for whom the blackness of darkness is reserved forever--Jude 13). Both God and decent people have always considered fornication and adultery a "great" sin.

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 5:15-23

1. Is it wrong for husband and wife to enjoy the affectionate life (v. 15)?
2. What does v. 16 forbid in question-form?
3. Does God say it is all right to continue living with an unfaithful mate (v. 17)?
4. What previous verse in this chapter is saying the same as v. 18?
5. In what other literature were "hind" and "roe" used as symbolic of the grace and fascinating charms of love (v. 19)?
6. What is forbidden in v. 20?
7. Cite some other passages besides v. 21 that tell of God's all-seeing eye.
8. What does v. 22 emphasize about sin?
9. Why is fornication called "folly" in v. 23?

PONDERING THE PROVERBS

POSSESSION OF 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 cometh, 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 letdown 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).

TEXT — 6:1-11

1. My son, if thou art become surety for thy neighbor,
If thou hast stricken thy hands for a stranger;
2. Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth,
Thou art taken with the words of thy mouth.
3. Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself,
Seeing thou art come into the hand of thy neighbor:
Go, humble thyself, and importune thy neighbor;
4. Give not sleep to thine eyes,
Nor slumber to thine eyelids;
5. Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter,
And as a bird from the hand of the fowler.
6. Go to the ant, thou sluggard;
Consider her ways, and be wise:
7. Which having no chief,
Overseer, or ruler,
8. Provideth her bread in the summer,
And gathereth her food in the harvest.
9. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?
When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?
10. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep:
11. So shall thy poverty come as a robber,
And thy want as an armed man.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 6:1-11

1. What does it mean to "strike thy hands" (v. 1)?
2. What is the figure of being "snared" (v. 2)?
3. How does one "deliver" himself in this setting (v. 3)?
4. What does "importune" mean (v. 3)?
5. Give "no sleep" or give "not excessive sleep" to thy eyelids (v. 4)?
6. Who is a "fowler" (v. 5)?
7. For what is ant especially known (v. 6)?
8. Do ants have no leader (v. 7)?
9. Comment on the strange habits of ants (v. 8).
10. Is late-sleeping for healthy people encouraged in the Bible (v. 9)?
11. What word in v. 10 is emphatic?
12. Comment on the possessions of an armed man and a robber in the Bible days (v. 11).

PARAPHRASE OF 6:1-11

- 1-5. Son, if you endorse a note for someone you hardly know, guaranteeing his debt, you are in serious trouble. You may have trapped yourself by your agreement. Quick! Get out of it if you possibly can! Swallow your pride; don't let embarrassment stand in the way. Go and beg to have your name erased. Don't put it off. Do it now. Don't rest until you do. If you can get out of this trap you have saved yourself like a deer that escapes from a hunter, or a bird from the net.
- 6-11. Take a lesson from the ants, you lazy fellow. Learn from their ways and be wise! For though they have no king to make them work, yet they labor hard all summer, gathering food for the winter. But you--all you do is sleep. When will you wake up? "Let me sleep a little longer!" Sure, just a little more! And as you sleep, poverty creeps upon you like a robber and destroys you; want attacks you in full armor.

COMMENTS ON 6:1-11

V. 1. "Pulpit Commentary": "The sixth chapter embraces four distinct discourses, each of which is a warning. The subjects treated of are: (1) suretyship--vs. 1-5; (2) sloth--vs. 6-11; (3) malice--vs. 12-19; and (4) adultery--vs. 20 to the end." Our judgment would make "perverseness" the subject of vs. 12-19 instead of "malice". At first it would appear that the subject being treated in Chapter 5 and to which the author returns to in the last part of this chapter has been abruptly interrupted by these three non-related subjects. But "Pulpit Commentary" says, "The subject treated of in the preceding chapter is the happiness of the married life, and this is imperilled by incautious undertaking of suretyship, and suretyship, it is maintained induces sloth, while sloth leads to maliciousness. After treating of suretyship, sloth, and malice in succession, the teacher recurs to the former subject of his discourse, viz. impurity of life." "Clarke": "If thou pledge thyself in behalf of another, thou takest the burden off him, and placest it on thine own shoulders; and when he knows he has got one to stand between him and the demands of law and justice, he will feel little responsibility; his spirit of exertion will become crippled, and listlessness as to the event will be the consequences. His own character will suffer

little; his property nothing, for his friend bears all the burden." Other passages on suretyship: Prov. 11:15; 17:18; 20:16; 22:26; 27:18. From studying all of these verses "Clarke" comes to this conclusion on "suretyship": "Give what thou canst; but, except in extreme cases, be surety for no man."

V. 2. "Striking hands" then was like signing a contract now. Sometimes one later sees his mistake of going surety for a party.

V. 3. "My son" here shows the earnestness of the father's entreaty. He was to go to the creditor and agree to some kind of settlement that would release him from any further or future obligation. "Do it now!" says the father, and v. 4 continues the urgency of doing it immediately--do it before you have to stand good for your friend's debt.

V. 4. Don't spend any time sleeping--not even one night--until you have cleared yourself in the matter. This expression for doing something immediately is also used in Psa. 132:4,5: "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, Or slumber to mine eyelids; Until I find out a place for Jehovah."

V. 5. Continuing the figure of a "snare" raised in v. 2, he urges the son to take a lesson from the hunted roe or bird: they sense danger, they seek safety; they lose no time in doing so.

V. 6. Ants are well distributed and are everywhere known for ambitious activity. To speak of his sleep-loving son as a "sluggard" was not complementary (it means "lazy one"), but it was fitting. Solomon's use of animals ("roe" and "bird" in v. 5 and "ant" in this verse) is in keeping with Job 12:7: "Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; And the birds of the heavens, and they shall tell thee."

V. 7. The ant is a fitting representative of true ambition, for an ant does not have to have a boss to make her work. And when did you ever see one that wasn't working? Remember Aesop's fable about the ant and the grasshopper?

V. 8. While some who live in cold climates where ants become dormant during winter have argued that Proverbs is in error here in its representation of the habit of the ant, "Tristram" in "Pulpit Commentary" says, "Contrary to its habits in colder climates, the ant is not there dormant through the winter; and among the tamarisks of the Dead Sea it may be seen in January actively engaged in collecting the aphides and saccharine exudations...Two of the most common species of the Holy Land...are strictly seed-feeders and in summer lay up

large stores of grain for winter use."

V. 9. The same words as v. 9,10 are found in Prov. 24:33,34. Again he refers to his son as a sleeping " sluggard". He is such a contrast to the industrious ant. "Early to bed, early to rise Makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise" is an old saying not too well practiced by many modern youth who neither want to go to bed at night nor get up in the morning! Our verse is not arguing against a proper amount of sleep but against that over-sleeping that youth is sometimes guilty of (sleeping all morning if not called and made to get up). This is a good way to waste one's life and have little to show by way of accomplishment.

V. 10. The emphasis is on "little". Have you ever known an ambitionless young person to say, "Let me sleep a little longer;" or, "I'll get up in a little while"? But if left to him/her, the "little" becomes a "lot".

V. 11. A sluggard's poverty is also referred to in other passages: "He becometh poor that worketh with a slack hand" (Prov. 10:4); "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing" (Prov. 13:4); "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the winter; Therefore he shall beg in harvest, and have nothing" (Prov. 20:4). A "robber" was always in need, and an armed man was a poorly-paid man (compare Luke 3:14). In other words, a little sleep, a little slumber, and a little folding of the hands lead to a lot of poverty! "The expression, 'thy poverty' and 'thy want', represent the destitution of the sluggard as flowing directly from his own habit of self-indulgence" ("Pulpit Commentary").

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 6:1-11

1. Is there really a change of subjects beginning in v. 1?
2. Striking hands then was like now (v. 2).
3. What does "my son" in v. 3 indicate?
4. How soon was the son to go to the creditor (v. 4)?
5. What 3 things do the roe and bird do when the hunter comes around (v. 5)?
6. What uncomplimentary name did the father call his sleeping son (v. 6)?
7. What fable of Aesop does v. 7 recall to one's mind?
8. What discussion has arisen over what v. 8 says about the habit of the ant?

9. What about many modern youth and late-morning sleeping (v. 9)?
10. Give a modern statement or 2 of modern-day sleepers using "little" (v. 10).
11. Does the Bible represent a sluggard as one likely to become rich or to have to live in poverty (v. 11)?

TEXT — 6:12-22

12. A worthless person, a man of iniquity,
Is he that walketh with a perverse mouth;
13. That winketh with his eyes, that speaketh with his feet,
That maketh signs with his fingers;
14. In whose heart is perverseness,
Who deviseth evil continually,
Who soweth discord.
15. Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly;
On a sudden shall he be broken, and that without remedy.
16. There are six things which Jehovah hateth;
Yea, seven are which are an abomination unto him:
17. Haughty eyes, a lying tongue,
And hands that shed innocent blood;
18. A heart that deviseth wicked purposes,
Feet that are swift in running to mischief,
19. A false witness that uttereth lies,
And he that soweth discord among brethren.
20. My son, keep the commandment of thy father,
And forsake not the law of thy mother:
21. Bind them continually upon thy heart;
Tie them about thy neck.
22. When thou walkest, it shall lead thee;
When thou sleepest, it shall watch over thee;
And when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 6:12-22

1. "Worthless" is what sense (v. 12)?
2. Does v. 13 make winking a sin?
3. What is "discord" (v. 14)?
4. Where is the emphasis in v. 15?
5. Why not say "seven things" to begin with instead of the way v. 16 words it?

6. Comment on each item in v. 17.
7. Comment on each item in v. 18.
8. Comment on each item on v. 19.
9. What does "keep" mean in v. 20?
10. Comment on "bind" and "tie" as used in v. 21.
11. What within a person will do the 3 things mentioned in v. 22?

PARAPHRASE OF 6:12-22

- 12-15. Let me describe for you a worthless and a wicked man; first, he is a constant liar; he signals his true intentions to his friends with eyes and feet and finger. Next, his heart is full of rebellion. And he spends his time thinking of all the evil he can do, and stirring up discontent. But he will be destroyed suddenly, broken beyond hope of healing.
- 16-19. For there are six things which the Lord hates--no, seven: haughtiness, lying, murdering, plotting evil, eagerness to do wrong, a false witness, and sowing discord among brothers.
- 20-22. Young man, obey our father and your mother. Tie their instructions around your finger so you won't forget. Take to heart all of their advice. Every day and all night long their counsel will lead you and save you from harm; when you wake up in the morning, let their instructions guide you into the new day.

COMMENTS ON 6:12-22

V. 12. One with a perverse mouth is doubly described as a "man of iniquity" and a "worthless person". He is the former in that perverse speech is sinful; he is the latter in that he does neither God nor man good with his speech.

V. 13. One who gives you signals with his eyes, feet, and fingers to "speak" to some but to conceal what he is saying from others is a character to be on guard against. He too is described as being a "man of iniquity" and a "worthless person". Other references to this type of "winking": Psa. 35:19; Prov. 10:10.

V. 14. Such a "worthless", "iniquitous" man is further described as having a perverse heart, a heart that is continually devising some kind of evil (in this verse, "discord"). On Pentecost the apostles were all together with "one accord" (Acts

2:1)--unity, harmony. "Discord" is just the opposite. It can be "sown" among very dear friends by subtle-hearted person. Such takes time to grow, but in time it will produce such a crop. V. 19 also refers to sowing discord among brethren.

V. 15. He has plotted the downfall of others; he himself will meet his own destruction. The destruction is described in two ways: "suddenly" and "without remedy". Other passages on being ruined without any hope of remedy: II Chron. 36:16; Prov. 29:1; Jer. 19:11.

V. 16. God may love the world--the people (John 3:16), but there are things that He "hates". In fact, His hatred can run to holding things in "abomination" (detestable). Why the unusual construction here? Evidently not only to give emphatic position to sowing discord among brethren but to call particular attention to it.

V. 17. This verse shows that eyes, tongue, and hands can and do sin, and that God hates and holds in abomination sinful things done by them. "Haughty eyes" are also condemned in Psa. 18:27 and Psa. 101:5. A "lying tongue" is called a "deceitful tongue" in Psa. 120:2,3. "Pulpit Commentary" aptly observes, "Lying is the wilful perversion of truth, not only by speech but by any means whatever whereby a false impression is conveyed to the mind."

V. 18. Two more ways that one can displease God to the fullest: to have a heart that thinks up evil (evil intentions, evil plots against people, etc.) and to have feet that are quick to carry the above out. With so much evil in the world (I John 5:19)--all stemming, of course, from the devil--there are many such wicked hearts through which the devil works to cause it. Jer. 17:9 speaks of the heart being "corrupt". Prior to the Flood (and bringing it on) was the fact that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). The implication of John 2:23-25 is that what is "in man" is not good. On the last part of our verse Isa. 59:7 and Rom 3:15 say the same: "Their feet run to evil" and "Their feet are swift to shed blood".

V. 19. These two are "twins": bearing false witness and sowing discord among brethren. What an act (to utter lies about a person)! What an achievement (to divide good friends)! Jesus pronounces a blessing upon the "peacemaker" (Matt. 5:9), and this section shows the utter contempt that God has for the opposite of the peacemaker--the discord-sower. The 9th

Commandment (Exo. 20:16) forbade bearing false witness against one's neighbor, and yet it has often been done.

V. 20. The important instructions in v. 24-35 are introduced by vs. 20-23. Our verse is reminiscent of Prov. 1:8 ("My son, hear the instruction of thy father, And forsake not the law of thy mother") and parallel in instruction with Eph. 6:1 ("Children, obey your parents").

V. 21. "Bind" them and "tie" them would be to secure them in your heart and mind; don't let them get away. The "continually" would assure him of always having them to bless his life. Similarly does Prov. 3:3 say, "Bind them about thy neck; Write them upon the tablet of thy heart," and Prov. 7:3 says, "Bind them upon thy fingers; Write them upon the tablet of thy heart."

V. 22. Such binding and tying would cause the understanding imparted to him to do three things for him: (1) lead him when he walked; (2) watch over him when he slept; and (3) talk with him when he awoke. In other words one's childhood teachings should accompany him at all times to instruct him constantly as to what to do (compare Prov. 3:23,24; Prov. 2:11). Even when one is older in life, memory and conscience will combine to say to him, "Dad always told me such-and-such;" and, "I can still hear Mother say such-and-such."

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 6:12-22

1. Comment on the person with a perverse mouth (v. 12).
2. What kind of person is v. 13 describing?
3. What kind of heart sows discord (v. 14)?
4. How is such a person's downfall described in v. 15?
5. What does God not love (v. 16)?
6. What all does "lying" include (v. 17)?
7. What other verses of Scripture go along with what is said in v. 18?
8. What commandment would be violated by bearing false witness (v. 19)?
9. What previous verse in Proverbs is v. 20 like?
10. What is the significance of "bind" and "tie" in v. 21?
11. How long will some childhood teachings remain with a person (v. 22)?

TEXT — 6:23-35

23. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light;
And reproofs of instruction are the way of life:
24. To keep thee from the evil woman,
From the flattery of the foreigner's tongue.
25. Lust not after her beauty in thy heart;
Neither let her take thee with her eyelids.
26. For on account of a harlot a man is brought to a piece of
bread;
And the adulteress hunteth for the precious life.
27. Can a man take fire in his bosom,
And his clothes be not burned?
28. Or can one walk upon hot coals,
And his feet not be scorched?
29. So he that goeth in to his neighbor's wife;
Whosoever toucheth her shall not be unpunished.
30. Men do not despise a thief, if he steal
To satisfy himself when he is hungry:
31. But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold;
He shall give all the substance of his house.
32. He that committeth adultery with a woman is void of
understanding:
He doeth it who would destroy his own soul.
33. Wounds and dishonor shall he get;
And his reproach shall not be wiped away.
34. For jealousy is the rage of a man;
And he will not spare in the day of vengeance.
35. He will not regard any ransom;
Neither will he rest content, though thou givest many
gifts.

TEST QUESTION OVER 6:23-35

1. What is there about parental teachings that are like a lamp or light (v. 23)?
2. How many times (different sections) in Proverbs does the author warn of wicked women (v. 24)?
3. What is "lust" (v. 25)?
4. What does "precious life" in v. 26 mean?
5. What does v. 27 mean?
6. Does v. 28 teach the same as v. 27?

7. Has society been right in thinking that adultery is a terrible sin (v. 28)?
8. Does v. 30 condone stealing?
9. What did the law of Moses teach about restitution (v. 31)?
10. What reflects such a man's lack of understanding (v. 32)?
11. What about an adulterer's reputation (v. 33)?
12. Who is the angry man of v. 34?
13. Whose gifts will such a man refuse (v. 35)?

PARAPHRASE OF 6:23-35

- 23,24. For their advice is a beam of light directed into the dark corners of your mind to warn you of danger and to give you a good life. Their counsel will keep you far away from prostitutes with all their flatteries.
- 25-31. Don't lust for her beauty. Don't let her coyness seduce you. For a prostitute will bring a man to poverty, and an adulteress may cost him his very life. Can a man hold fire against his chest and not be burned? Can he walk on hot coals and not blister his feet? So it is with the man who commits adultery with another man's wife. He shall not go unpunished for this sin. Excuses might even be found for a thief, if he steals when he is starving! But even so, he is fined seven times as much as he stole, though it may mean selling everything in his house to pay it back.
- 32-35. But the man who commits adultery is an utter fool, for he destroys his own soul. Wounds and constant disgrace are his lot, for the woman's husband will be furious in his jealousy, and he will have no mercy on you in his day of vengeance. You won't be able to buy him off no matter what you offer.

COMMENTS ON 6:23-35

V. 23. The three statements of the verse are progressive: the commandment is a "lamp"; the law is "light"; and reproofs of instruction are the "way of life". The truth is always enlightening and shows the way to go: "The commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Psa. 19:8); "The opening of thy words giveth light" (Psa. 119:130); "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, And light unto my path" (Psa. 119:105); Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me

shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

V. 24. Oh, the importance of the young man growing up and not being taken in by the "evil woman" and her flattering tongue! Her "flattery" is warned against several times: "To deliver thee from the strange woman, Even from the foreigner that flattereth with her words" (Prov. 2:16); "The lips of a strange woman drop honey, And her mouth is smoother than oil" (Prov. 5:3); "That they may keep thee from the strange woman, From the foreigner that flattereth with her words" (Prov. 7:5).

V. 25. "Lust" in this passage is that burning desire for intimacies with her. It is that which gets into the "heart", and it reminds us of Jas. 1:14,15, which says that "a man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin." It was "lust" in Amnon's heart for his half-sister Tamar that caused him to do what he did (II Sam. 13:1-14). Because of this Job made a covenant with his "eyes" so that he would not think on a maid (Job 31:1). "Pulpit Commentary" says, "The admonition is a warning to repress the very first inclination to unchaste desires." To harbor such lustful, unchaste thoughts and feelings in one's heart is to be guilty of adultery-in-the-heart before God (Matt. 5:28). To create this lust in men's hearts there are women who both subtly and openly go out of their way to attract the attention of men. The wicked Jezebel "painted her eyes" in an attempt to buy Jehu off from his military designs about her and her family (II Kings 9:30).

V. 26. "From this verse onward to the end of the chapter the discourse consists of a series of arguments...exhibiting the evil consequences of such indulgence" ("Pulpit Commentary"). Many sinful habits have cost men a lot of money over the years (prostitution, gambling, drunkenness, smoking, etc.). Bible passages showing the financial outlay of immoral living: Prov. 29:3; Luke 15:13,30; Gen. 38:13-17. The evil consequences brought to mankind by a money-making harlot are of no concern to her (she "hunteth for the precious life").

V. 27. The answer is "no". Just as getting too close to a fire is inviting destruction by blaze, so getting involved with an immoral woman is a sure way to absolute ruin! This is a sin that no person can get away with. See v. 29 where the word "so" leads to the application of this question's answer.

V. 28. The answer again is "no", and v. 29 applies to this

verse just as it does to v. 27.

V. 29. One can no more commit adultery with his neighbor's wife and get away with it unpunished than one can take fire into his bosom and his clothes not be burned or walk upon hot coals and his feet not be scorched. Who will punish him? (1) her husband: "Jealousy is the rage of a man; and 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" (Prov. 6:34,35); (2) society: "Wounds and dishonor shall he get; And his reproach shall not be wiped away" (Prov. 6:33); and (3) God: "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Ga. 5:19-21).

V. 30. Even though a thief will be punished upon being caught (v. 31), yet men are somewhat understanding if he stole out of extreme hunger.

V. 31. But even then he will still be punished. The law of Moses required a fourfold restitution of stolen sheep and a fivefold restitution for stolen oxen (Exo. 22:1). Zacchaeus spoke of restoring fourfold (Luke 19:8). Possibly in Solomon's day they had increased the penalty to a sevenfold restitution. Actually one might lose everything he had making the restitution ("he shall give all the substance of his house"). V. 35 shows that the injured husband of the woman will not take any form of restitution for a man having taken her.

V. 32. Adultery is "an unwarrantable invasion of his neighbor's rights" ("Pulpit Commentary"). Other passages connect such action with a lack of understanding: Prov. 7:7; Prov. 9:4; Prov. 9:16. "Lust has displaced right reason" ("Pulpit Commentary"). God's displeasure with adultery is seen in His commanding the guilty parties to be put to death under the Old Testament (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22) and in His condemning the same to everlasting destruction today (I Cor. 6:9-10; Rev. 22:15).

V. 33. "Wounds" may be those inflicted by the enraged husband as mentioned in v. 34; they may be referring to the wounds received by being stoned to death according to the law of Moses; or they may be associated with "dishonor" with which it is joined by "and". People will "talk" about such a person, and the guilty may deplore that fact, but it is right here in the Bible that those guilty of adultery get themselves a reproach, and that reproach will not cease. Even after a person is dead or has settled down to a proper behavior, people will still remember

him as "the man who stole So-and-so's wife". God Himself was still talking about David's sin with Bathsheba in Matt. 1:6.

V. 34. The worst feelings of anger are kindled in the man whose wife has been taken by someone else. Because of this there have been vicious fist fights, knife-stabbings, and shootings.

V. 35. Nothing that the guilty man can do to try to make amends or to appease the man whose wife he took will work. We must face the fact that there is something about adultery that is different from any other sin that man can commit, and it's that way whether people like it or not!

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 6:23-35

1. Comment upon v. 23.
2. What does v. 24 warn the young man about?
3. What 2 things does v. 25 warn him about?
4. What does v. 26 warn him about?
5. What is the answer to vs. 27,28?
6. From what 3 sources can a man expect punishment for his adultery (v. 29)?
7. From vs. 30-35 show that society looks upon adultery as worse than stealing.
8. What 2 things does v. 32 affirm about the man who commits adultery?
9. Comment upon the truthfulness of v. 33.
10. Comment upon the truthfulness of vs. 34,35.

PONDERING THE PROVERBS

CHILDREN RECEIVE INSTRUCTION

"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 are 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 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.

TEXT — 7:1-12

1. My son, keep my words,
And lay up my commandments with thee.
2. Keep my commandments and live;
And my law as the apple of thine eye.
3. Bind them upon thy fingers;
Write them upon the tablet of thy heart.
4. Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister;
And call understanding thy kinswoman;
5. That they may keep thee from the strange woman,
From the foreigner that flattereth with her words.
6. For at the window of my house
I looked forth through my lattice;
7. And I beheld among the simple ones,
I discerned among the youths,
A young man void of understanding,
8. Passing through the street near her corner;
And he went the way to her house,
9. In the twilight, in the evening of the day,
In the middle of the night and in the darkness.
10. And, behold, there met him a woman
With the attire of a harlot, and wily of heart.
11. (She is clamorous and wilful;
Her feet abide not in her house:
12. Now she is in the streets, now in the broad places,
And lieth in wait at every corner.)

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 7:1-12

1. Contrast the child who regards his parents' teachings with one who does not (v. 1).
2. What is the "apple" of the eye (v. 2)?
3. Why is "heart" used for "mind" so many times in the Bible (v. 3)?
4. Why are graces and virtues often misrepresented in sculpturing, art, and literature as women (v. 4)?
5. Yet v. 5 shows that women may be as well as virtuous.
6. Describe such a window of their times as is suggested in v. 6.
7. Are we all "simple" when young (v. 7)?

8. What verse in Proverbs says to stay completely away from her (v. 8)?
9. What does the Bible say about sinning and "darkness" (v. 9)?
10. Why is her heart described as "wily" (v. 10)?
11. Why is she also described as "clamorous" (v. 11)?
12. What were their "broad places" (v. 12)?

PARAPHRASE OF 7:1-12

- 1-5. Follow my advice, my son; always keep it in mind and stick to it. Obey me and live! Guard my words as your most precious possession. Write them down, and also keep them deep within your heart. Love wisdom like a sweetheart; make her a beloved member of your family. Let her hold you back from visiting a prostitute, from listening to her flattery.
- 6-12. I was looking out the window of my house one day, and saw a simple-minded lad, a young man lacking common sense, walking at twilight down the street to the house of this wayward girl, a prostitute. She approached him, saucy and pert, and dressed seductively. She was the brash, coarse type, seen often in the streets and markets, soliciting at every corner for men to be her lovers.

COMMENTS ON 7:1-12

V. 1. Before the father begins this lengthy warning against his son's getting involved with a wicked woman, he urges him to be obedient to what he is teaching him. Why does the father go over and over this warning in Proverbs? Because he is "training up" his son in the way that he should go the promise for which is, "He will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6).

V. 2. The "apple" of the eye is the pupil of the eye ("Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary"). To keep something "as the apple of thine eye" was a proverbial expression for anything particularly precious and liable to be injured unless guarded with scrupulous care" ("Pulpit Commentary"). The expression is used also in Deut. 32:10; Psa. 17:8; Zech. 2:8. What does one guard or keep any more than his eye? The father's promise was that if his son would keep his commandments as he would his eye, he would "live" and not be cut off from the living as a wicked

person (Psa. 37:1,2).

V. 3. "Bind" means to "tie". The thought of his binding his father's instructions upon his fingers seems similiar to our talk of "tying a string on our finger" when we don't want to forget something. The heart is here spoken of as a "tablet", a writing surface. And indeed the heart is a place to lay up things precious and dear: Mary did so concerning many things said about her son Jesus and said by Him (Luke 2:19; Luke 2:51); we are told to write God's Word upon our hearts (Heb. 8:10; Psa. 119:11).

V. 4. Claim a close relationship with those women "Wisdom" and "Understanding", and such relationship will keep one from any relationship with the wicked, immoral woman about to be discussed (beginning in the next verse--v. 5). Note that the young man who got involved with her did not make "Understanding" his close relative, for v. 7 says he was "void of understanding". From antiquity many virtues have been portrayed in sculpturing, art, and literature as women. It does seem that many virtues can reach their highest pinnacle in womanhood or if lacking can be sacrificed the most my womanhood.

V. 5. "Keep my words," says the father in v. 1, "that they may keep thee from the strange woman" (this verse). "Pulpit Commentary" aptly observes: "When the heart is filled with the love of what is good, it is armed against the seductions of evil pleasure or whatever may entice the soul from God and duty." Prov. 2:16 and Prov. 6:24 also speak of being kept from the evil woman--she is someone to avoid!

V. 6. "To show the greatness of the danger presented by the seductions of the temptress, the writer introduces...an actual example of what had passed before his own eyes" ("Pulpit Commentary"). Latticework was used over windows and other areas by crossing laths over each other for privacy (so one could look out without being seen), to keep the welcome flow of breeze coming in while keeping the hot rays of the sun out, and for decorative purposes. It was through such that the father had looked out upon the sad spectacle that he mentions.

V. 7. "The 'simple' are the inexperienced, who are easily led astray" ("Pulpit Commentary"). Other passages connecting the "simple" and those "void of understanding" with immorality: "He that commiteth adultery with a woman is void of

understanding" (Prov. 6:23³²); "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: As for him that is void of understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat ye of my bread, And drink of the wine which I have mingled. Leave off, ye simple ones, and live; And walk in the way of understanding" (Prov. 9:4-6); "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither; And as for him that is void of understanding, she saith to him, Stolen waters are sweet" (Prov. 9:16,17). This verse shows that what one does is known and read by others.

V. 8. He wasn't aware of how dangerous it was to him to be found in her area. This verse sounds like he purposely went to her house with the idea of immorality, but the pressure she put on him (beginning in v. 13) does not bear this out.

V. 9. Wickedness seems to "come to life" when darkness begins to set in: "The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, Saying, No eye shall see me" (Job 24:15); "They that are drunken are drunken in the night" (I Thess. 5:7). The devil's dens of iniquity are all open at night.

V. 10. "Her attire catches the eye at once and identifies her--compare Gen. 38:14. In Rev. 17:4 the harlot is arrayed in purple and scarlet and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls; and in the present case the female is dressed in some conspicuous garments, very different from the sober clothing of the pure and modest" ("Pulpit Commentary"). "Wily" means "subtle". She cannot be believed: her "lures" are in reality all "lies"!

V. 11. Prov. 9:13 also mentions her being "clamorous", meaning loud and boisterous--something that a good woman is not (I Pet. 3:4). This is why she is so forward. Being "wilful" means she is stubborn and disobedient. "Ungovernable...In Hos. 4:16...the same word is used of a wild heifer that will not submit its neck to the yoke" ("Lange"). She does not stay in the house, for she is out working her dirty trade.

V. 12. She knows no shame. She goes out where people are to snare men.

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 7:1-12

1. Why does the father go over and over this warning in Proverbs (v. 1)?
2. On what basis does the father promise "life" to his son in v. 2?
3. What expression do we have that sounds like v. 3?

4. Who made a "tablet" out of her heart (v. 3)?
5. What relationship should the son develop (v. 4)?
6. What relationship should he avoid (v. 4)?
7. Keeping his father's words should keep the son from (v. 5).
8. Why does the father introduce an actual example beginning in v. 6?
9. What other passages connect a lack of understanding with committing immoral acts (v. 7)?
10. Interpret the simple youth's being in her area (v. 8).
11. What about wickedness and night (v. 9)?
12. How did a harlot dress (v. 10)?
13. Comment on her being "wilful" (v. 11).
14. Why is she out in the streets and broad places (v. 12)?

TEXT — 7:13-27

13. So she caught him, and kissed him,
And with an impudent face she said unto him:
14. Sacrifices of peace-offerings are with me;
This day have I paid my vows.
15. Therefore came I forth to meet thee,
Diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee.
16. I have spread my couch with carpets of tapestry,
With striped cloths of the yarn of Egypt.
17. I have perfumed by bed
With myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
18. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning;
Let us solace ourselves with loves.
19. For the man is not at home;
He is gone a long journey:
20. He hath taken a bag of money with him;
He will come home at the full moon.
21. With her much fair speech she causeth him to yield,
With the flattering of her lips she forceth him along.
22. He goeth after her straightway,
As an ox goeth to the slaughter,
Or as one in fetters to the correction of the fool;
23. Till an arrow strike through his liver;
As a bird hasteth to the snare,
And knoweth not that it is for his life.
24. Now therefore, my sons, hearken unto me,

And attend to the words of my mouth.

25. Let not thy heart decline to her ways;
Go not astray in her paths.
26. For she hath cast down many wounded:
Yea, all her slain are a mighty host.
27. Her house is the way to Sheol,
Going down to the chambers of death.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 7:13-27

1. Why is face described as "impudent" (v. 13)?
2. What is v. 14's connection with the subject under consideration (v. 14)?
3. Was she really looking for him personally (v. 15)?
4. Why all of this (v. 16)?
5. Would we put cinnamon in our beds (v. 17)?
6. What young man in the Bible successfully resisted such talk (v. 18)?
7. Was she, then, a married woman (v. 19)?
8. Why tell him what she did in v. 20?
9. Does the fact that he did not give in easily indicate that he knew it was wrong (v. 21)?
10. Was this his view at the moment (v. 22)?
11. When would this have been (v. 23)?
12. Would the father's words help the young man resist such (v. 24)?
13. The act of sin is preceded by the to sin (v. 25).
14. Was he the first to fall for her talk and to suffer the consequences (v. 26)?
15. What does sin lead to (v. 27)?

PARAPHRASE OF 7:13-27

- 13-20. She put her arms around him and kissed him, and with a saucy look she said, "I've decided to forget our quarrel! I was just coming to look for you and here you are! My bed is spread with lovely, colored sheets of finest linen imported from Egypt, perfumed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. Come on, let's take our fill of love until morning, for my husband is away on a long trip. He has taken a wallet full of money with him, and won't return for several days."
- 21-23. So she seduced him with her pretty speech, her

coaxing and her wheedling, until he yielded to her. He couldn't resist her flattery. He followed her as an ox going to the butcher, or as a stag that is trapped, waiting to be killed with an arrow through its heart. He was as a bird flying into a snare, not knowing the fate awaiting it there.

- 24-27. Listen to me, young men, and not only listen but obey. Don't let your desires get out of hand; don't let yourself think about her; don't go near her; stay away from where she walks, lest she tempt you and seduce you. For she has been the ruin of multitudes--a vast host of men have been her victims. If you want to find the road to hell, look for her house.

COMMENTS ON 7:13-27

V. 13. Very reminiscent of Potiphar's wife: "She caught him by his garment saying, Lie with me" (Gen. 39:12). On "impudent face" the Hebrew indicates that "she strengthened her countenance, assumed the most confident look she could, endeavored to appear friendly and sincere" ("Clarke").

V. 14. When one had made a peace-offering to God, he (she) was allowed to take of portion of the meat home (Lev. 3:1-5). She was planning a delicious meal (a banquet for two) to which she invites the young man. "The religious nature of the feast is utterly ignored or forgotten. The shameless woman uses the opportunity simply as a convenience for her sin ("Pulpit Commentary").

V. 15. Here is an instance of "flattery" that is so characteristic of her and which is warned against several times: "That flattereth with her words" (Prov. 2:16); "To keep thee from the evil woman, From the flattery" (6:24). Notice that "flattery" is always connected with the early part of each instance--with the alluring phase of her operation.

V. 16. Wicked women have employed every means involving beauty, fragrance, etc., beautifying themselves, their clothing, and their quarters to entice men. Bait for the trap!

V. 17. And here comes the fragrance!

V. 18. All of this is to get him to "come". Dealing with the Hebrew, "Clarke" says, "Let us revel in the breasts," for the first statement; for the second: "Let us gratify each other with loves, with the utmost delights." And then he remarks: "This

does not half express the original, but I forbear...The original itself is too gross to be literally translated, but quite in character as coming from the mouth of an abandoned woman."

V. 19. She takes care of any fear that he might have of her "husband". The young man would realize that "Jealousy is the rage of a man; And 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" (Prov. 6:34,35). But she begins assuring him that her husband will know nothing about the matter: he is "not at home"; he has gone on a "long journey".

V. 20. The assurances continue: he has plenty of "money" with him for his long trip (probably a merchandising trip); he will not be home again until the "full moon". Sinners always have everything taken care of, they think, but have you not noticed that they still get caught every so often? The trouble is, they think no further than not getting caught by people. But all the while God is watching and on judgment will open the book of each person's life and judge him (or her) out of those books according to one's works (Rev. 20:12).

V. 21. What about her flattery of him? What about her tapestried couch? What about her perfumed bed? What about her assurances that it was safe? All this caused him to "yield". "The lips of a strange woman drop honey, And her mouth is smoother than oil" (Prov. 5:3). The young man evidently didn't give in easily, knowing it would be wrong. But how many times temptation wins over knowledge! "Clarke" observes, "With her blandishments and lascivious talk, she overcame all his scruples and constrained him to yield." This would appear to be the first time he had yielded to this temptation--but it would it be the last time? But he isn't the only one: "She hath cast down many wounded" (v. 26).

V. 22. Once a person has given in inwardly, there is nothing to keep him from proceeding to the evil act itself: "He goeth after her straightway". But how does he go? He sees himself as one on the verge of satisfying his curiosity concerning what happens in sex, of one who is about to experience life's greatest thrill in an exciting setting. The pleasure, not the punishment, of sin is uppermost in his mind at the moment. But in reality he is going as an "ox goeth to the slaughter" ("Her house inclineth unto death, And her paths unto the dead" (Prov. 2:18); "Her mouth is smoother than oil: But in the end

she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; Her steps take hold on Sheol" (Prov. 5:3-5); "He knoweth not that the dead are there; That her guests are in the depths of Sheol" (Prov. 9:18). Our verse also indicates that he is in for a "beating", for he goes after her "as one in fetters to the correction of the fool".

V. 23. Other figures of suffering and death continue: an arrow through the liver, a bird caught in a trap. With all the promises that sin makes and with what actually follows, no wonder Heb. 3:13 speaks of the "deceitfulness" of sin, and the devil (who is behind every temptation) is proven to be the "liar" that Jesus said he was (John 8:44). The mess he is getting his life into, the shame that he will bear in honorable society, the trouble he will involve himself in with sinned-against husbands throughout the years, the danger he will bring to the stability of his own house, the disease he will encounter in his own body, the early death he will bring upon himself, and the eternal Hell in which he will suffer forever and ever are the real outcomes of such sin.

V. 24. Here Solomon speaks to all of his "sons". He wants all of them to listen to the urgent appeal he is about to make in the succeeding verses.

V. 25. Keep this type of thinking out of your "heart", and then you will not "go" after her. If you let your heart, it will decline to her ways and go in her paths. Only the strong teaching of parents can save young men from getting involved with such a woman sometime in life. Note the words "decline" (down) and "astray" (lost); to go that way is to go down and to lose one's way in life.

V. 26. One woman, but she has ruined many men; her slain are a mighty host; "The harlot...as a ruthless conqueror leaves a field of battle strewn with corpses" ("Pulpit Commentary"). If you do not realize the power that women can have over men, think of how this very thing overcame the strong man Samson (Judg. 16:1), how it was a pitfall for the great David on one occasion (II Sam. 11:2-4), and what Neh. 13:26 says about Solomon: "Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, and he was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did foreign women cause to sin." The author took nothing for granted as he warned his sons, and

today "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Cor. 10:12). So keep your eyes where they belong; keep your hands to yourself; don't flirt; don't think upon women; don't read about romance; don't be entertained by it.

V. 27. In deep-shaft coal mines there is a house built over the elevator. When one enters that house and gets on the elevator, it goes only one direction--down. And that's the way it is when one goes to the harlot's house. Other passages on this fact: Prov. 2:18; Prov. 5:5; Prov. 9:18.

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 7:13-27

1. What shows the unfeminine forwardness of this woman (v. 13)?
2. Was her religion helping her conduct (v. 14)?
3. In this instance what won out over knowledge (v. 14)?
4. V. 15 is an instance of warned against several times.
5. What "bait" does she throw at out in v. 16?
6. What "bait" in v. 17?
7. What does "Clarke" say about the Hebrew wording of v. 18?
8. What fear of his does she seek to allay in v. 19?
9. What additional assurance does she give in v. 20?
10. Did the young man survive her talk (v. 21)?
11. Was this probably his first time to be led into this sin (v. 21)?
12. Would it probably be his last (v. 21)?
13. Before he gave in outwardly, where did he give in (v. 22)?
14. What was uppermost in his mind at his moment of yielding (v. 22)?
15. His going after her is likened to what in v. 22?
16. To what in v. 23?
17. What word shows up in the plural in v. 24?
18. Comment on the words "decline" and "astray" in v. 25.
19. One woman, but victims (v. 26).
20. Who were some men who fell before this sin (v. 26)?
21. Her house is the way to (v. 27).

TEXT — 8:1-11

1. Doth not wisdom cry,
And understanding put forth her voice?
2. On the top of high places by the way,
Where the paths meet, she standeth;
3. Beside the gates, at the entry of the city,
At the coming in at the doors, she crieth aloud:
4. Unto you, O men, I call:
And my voice is to the sons of men.
5. O ye simple, understand prudence;
And, ye fools, be of an understanding heart.
6. Hear, for I will speak excellent things;
And the opening of my lips shall be right things.
7. For my mouth shall utter truth;
And wickedness is an abomination to my lips.
8. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness;
There is nothing crooked or perverse in them.
9. They are all plain to him that understandeth,
And right to them that find knowledge.
10. Receive my instruction, and not silver;
And knowledge rather than choice gold.
11. For wisdom is better than rubies;
And all the things that may be desired are not to be
compared unto it.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 8:1-11

1. What is the relationship between wisdom and understanding (v. 1)?
2. What is meant by "high places" here (v. 2)?
3. How does wisdom "cry" in these high places (v. 3)?
4. Why do men need great wisdom and understanding (v. 4)?
5. Would having an understanding heart raise these from being simpletons and fools (v. 5)?
6. Is true wisdom ever wrong (v. 6)?
7. Does wisdom ever compromise with wickedness (v. 7)?
8. How would a student of logic designate the two statements in v. 8?
9. Are some things plain to one person that are not to others (v. 9)?

10. In what other passages is wisdom valued greater than earthly treasures (v. 10)?
11. How were rubies used in those days (v. 11)?

PARAPHRASE OF 8:1-11

- 1-11. Can't you hear the voice of wisdom? She is standing at the city gates and at every fork in the road, and at the door of every house. Listen to what she says: "Listen, men!" she calls. "How foolish and naive you are! Let me give you understanding. O foolish ones, let me show you common sense! Listen to me! For I have important information for you. Everything I say is right and true, for I hate lies and every kind of deception. My advice is wholesome and good. There is nothing of evil in it. My words are plain and clear to anyone with half a mind--if it is only open! My instruction is far more valuable than silver or gold." For the value of wisdom is far above rubies; nothing can be compared with it.

COMMENTS ON 8:1-11

V. 1. Wisdom is again personified and is again feminine. Here is Hebrew parallelism in which the second line is a restatement of the first: "wisdom" and "knowledge" go together as do "cry" and "put forth her voice". This section is very similar to Prov. 1:20-22: "Wisdom crieth aloud in the street; She uttereth her voice in the broad places; She crieth in the chief place of concourse; At the entrance of the gates, In the city, she uttereth her words: How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? And scoffers delight them in scoffing, And fools hate knowledge?" In 1:20,21 the material is set forth in the declarative mood while 8:1 introduces the material with the interrogative mood. "The interrogative form, which expects an affirmative answer, is a mode of asserting a truth" ("Pulpit Commentary"). However, it is just the opposite in 1:22 and 8:5--Chapter 1 being interrogative and Chapter 8 exclamatory.

V. 2. "She takes her stand...in the most open and elevated parts of the city where she may be best seen and heard by all who pass by...where many paths converge, and where people meet from different quarters" ("Pulpit Commentary").

V. 3. By lifting up her voice in the gates and doors to the city, she would be heard by all who were coming in and by all

who were going out. It would be for the great who entered and for the lowly who entered. Nor does wisdom speak feebly--she crieth aloud! Most people know what is right and wrong, what is wise and foolish, what should and shouldn't be done. How thankful we should be that wisdom is that prominent!

V. 4. Wisdom and understanding were being spoken about in v. 1-3; now they themselves begin to speak, and their direct quotation runs from this verse through v. 10.

V. 5. More parallelism: "ye simple" and "ye fools" go together, and "understand prudence" and "be of an understanding heart" are parallels. The simple are "those not yet perverted but easily influenced for good or evil". This is where each person begins. If people do not acquire wisdom later on, then they are considered "fools". The interjection form (introduced by "O") shows the urgency of being directed in the right way. "Webster" says of "prudence": "Ability to regulate and discipline oneself through the exercise of the reason."

V. 6. Wisdom also claims to have imparted "excellent" things in Prov. 22:20: "Have I not written unto thee excellent things of counsels and knowledge?" Wisdom is never wrong but always "right". Those who would "excel" must always exalt wisdom.

V. 7. And "truth" is tied in with wisdom and excellence and righteousness. Wisdom always speaks the truth because wickedness (lying, deceit, etc.) is not only foreign to wisdom but is actually abominable to it. Oh, that each of us might be so wise that wickedness is abominable to our lips! Remember this when you find yourself involved in some church-trouble.

V. 8. Yes, and here comes "righteousness" to go along with or be a stronger expression of the "right things" of v. 6. And it is set over against or in contrast to "wickedness" in v. 7. The "all are" of the first statement is what logic calls a "universal positive", and the "nothing is" of the second statement is called a "universal negative". Both of these statements are "absolutes", showing that everything about wisdom is righteous, and nothing about it is wicked.

V. 9. While wisdom may be "too high for a fool" (Prov. 24:7), it is certainly obtainable to one who wishes to see and understand. Our verse describes the type of person we should all be: one who understands because he has been looking for knowledge. To all such, wisdom is "plain", clear, not difficult.

V. 10. With this verse closes the statement by wisdom and understanding that began in v. 4. More parallelism in this verse (find it). The opportunity to learn through "instruction" might be said to be a "silver" opportunity while the actual acquisition of "knowledge" through that instruction may be said to be a "golden" possession. Notice that a knowledge of the true and the right is here said to be a higher goal and a greater possession than wealth.

V. 11. The author of Proverbs here comments on the truthfulness of what wisdom and understanding affirmed in v. 10. He says the possession of wisdom is greater than possessing rubies--or anything else! Similar statements of such evaluation of wisdom: "How much better it is to get wisdom than gold! Yea, to get understanding is rather to be chosen than silver" (Prov. 16:16); "The gaining of it is better than the gaining of silver, And the profit thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: And none of the things thou canst desire are to be compared unto her" (Prov. 3:14,15); "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; Yea, with all thy getting get understanding" (Prov. 4:7). As valuable as wisdom is, it is not something that can be acquired by money (like some commodity): "It cannot be gotten for gold, Neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof" (Job 28:15). Euclid of Alexandria was right of long ago. Called the "father of Geometry", when his "king asked if there were not an easier way to learn geometry than by the study of the 'Elements' (Euclid's set of books), Euclid answered, 'There is no royal road to geometry' ("World Book Encyclopedia").

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 8:1-11

1. These first verses are very similar to what earlier section in Proverbs?
2. Comment on v. 2.
3. By whom would wisdom and understanding be heard, according to v. 3?
4. What begins in v. 4?
5. Comment on "ye simple" (v. 5).
6. Comment on "ye fools" (v. 5).
7. Can you find a quartet of qualities in vs. 6-8 that go together?
8. Comment upon those 4 qualities in their desirableness in

our lives.

9. Contrast v. 9 with Prov. 24:7.
10. What great comparative value is placed upon wisdom and understanding in vs. 10,11, both by their own statement and by the writer's comment?

TEXT — 8:12-21

12. I wisdom have made prudence my dwelling,
And find out knowledge and discretion.
13. The fear of Jehovah is to hate evil:
Pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way,
And the perverse mouth, do I hate.
14. Counsel is mine, and sound knowledge:
I am understanding; I have might.
15. By me kings reign,
And princes decree justice.
16. By me princes rule,
And nobles, even all the judges of the earth.
17. I love them that love me;
And those that seek me diligently shall find me.
18. Riches and honor are with me;
Yea, durable wealth and righteousness.
19. My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold;
And my revenue than choice silver.
20. I walk in the way of righteousness,
In the midst of the paths of justice;
21. That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance,
And that I may fill their treasuries.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 8:12-21

1. Whom did Paul say should be discreet (v. 12)?
2. What other passages show God to have likes and dislikes (v. 13)?
3. Show that understanding is power (v. 14).
4. Do people accept leadership whose wisdom they do not respect (v. 15)?
5. Does v. 16 mean there has never been a noble or judge who was not wise?
6. What is the adverb modifying "seek" in v. 17?
7. What are the parallel words within v. 18?

8. How did "gold", "fine gold," and "choice silver" sound to the ancients (v. 19)?
9. Is there any difference between "righteousness" and "justice" (v. 20)?
10. Cite an example in your own community of one to whom wisdom brought wealth (v. 21).

PARAPHRASE OF 8:12-21

- 12,13. Wisdom and good judgment live together, for wisdom knows where to discover knowledge and understanding. If anyone respects and fears God, he will hate evil. For wisdom hates pride, arrogance, corruption and deceit of every kind.
- 14-21. "I, Wisdom, give good advice and common sense. Because of my strength, kings reign in power. I show the judge who is right and who is wrong. Rulers rule well with my help. I love all who love me. Those who search for me shall surely find me. Unending riches, honor, justice and righteousness are mine to distribute. My gifts are better than the purest gold or sterling silver! My paths are those of justice and right. Those who love and follow me are indeed wealthy. I fill their treasuries.

COMMENTS ON 8:12-21

V. 12. Again personified wisdom speaks after a one-verse break. Its personification is carried a step farther by speaking of her as "dwelling" in prudence. Her quest for "knowledge" and "discretion" are successful.

V. 13. One hates evil who fears Jehovah because he views evil from God's viewpoint: he knows how wrong it is, how contrary to God, and what it will result in. Prov. 16:6 says, "By the fear of Jehovah men depart from evil." That God hates "pride and arrogancy", Prov. 6:16,17 says, "There are six things which Jehovah hateth; Yea, seven which are an abomination unto him: Haughty eyes..." The "evil way", by virtue of its location in the sentence, must be the wicked things that grow out of pride and arrogancy (like Prov. 13:10: "By pride cometh only contention"). A "perverse" mouth is a mouth that is perverted from its intended speech. That God also hates such a mouth, Prov. 4:24 says, "Perverse lips put far from thee".

V. 14. Wisdom's "counsel" should be heard because wisdom has "sound knowledge". Pardon us, but many who counsel with young people and others sometimes give the wierdest advice. In short, such should not be counselors at all. Understanding claims to possess "might", and indeed it does; it is power. With it, one is prepared; without it, one is defeated. "Clarke" observes: "It enables man to bring everything to his aid: to construct machines by which one man can do the work of hundreds." No wonder that "Bacon" said, "Knowledge is power."

V. 15. Saul may have been king, but when he was going so absolutely against wisdom in a case involving Jonathan, he found out that the people--not he--reigned under that condition (I Sam. 14:23-45). When Rehoboam was not wise in not listening to the advice of his elders, he did not rule the whole kingdom but lost control of ten-twelfths of it (I Kings 12:16,17).

V. 16. The thought of this verse is mostly a repetition of the thought in v. 15. Even parents will find out in time that unless their decisions make sense, their children will rebel and not submit to their rule.

V. 17. Wisdom is good to those who love it. Wisdom is something to be sought and to be sought diligently. This is the way Solomon sought it, and God answered his prayer for it (I Kings 3:9).

V. 18. Wisdom is more valuable than silver and gold (vs. 10,11) and cannot be purchased with gold or silver (Job 28:15), and yet credit it with bringing both riches and honor to its possessor. Since the wealth is spoken of in connection with "righteousness", it is spoken of as "durable" or enduring and not passing.

V. 19. While "gold", "fine gold", and "silver" are among the products of wisdom (see "riches" and "wealth" in v. 18), they must be among the lesser valued "fruit" of wisdom. Other fruits of wisdom must be considered greater. Some of them are mentioned in the next verse.

V. 20. One who walks with and by wisdom will walk in the way of "righteousness" and in the paths of "justice".

V. 21. Again the acquisition of wealth can be one of the results of having wisdom. "Fools" and "money" don't go together ("A fool and his money are soon parted," says an old saying), but wisdom and money do.

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 8:12-21

1. Note the personification of wisdom in v. 12.
2. Why does one who fears God hate evil (v. 13)?
3. What makes wisdom a good counselor (v. 14)?
4. How was King Saul unwise in dealing with his son Jonathan (v. 15)?
5. What about parents and unwise decisions (v. 16)?
6. To whom is wisdom good (v. 17)?
7. Can one be both righteous and wealthy (v. 18)?
8. Is wealth the greatest fruit of wisdom (v. 19)?
9. What way and paths does wisdom walk (v. 20)?
10. Comment on wisdom and wealth going together (v. 21).

TEXT — 8:22-36

22. Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of his way,
Before his works of old.
23. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning,
Before the earth was.
24. When there were no depths, I was brought forth,
When there were no fountains abounding with water.
25. Before the mountains were settled,
Before the hills was I brought forth;
26. While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields,
Nor the beginning of the dust of the world.
27. When he established the heavens, I was there:
When he set a circle upon the face of the deep,
28. When he made firm the skies above,
When the fountains of the deep became strong,
29. When he gave to the sea its bound,
That the waters should not transgress his commandment,
When he marked out the foundations of the earth;
30. Then I was by him, as a master workman;
And I was his daily delight,
Rejoicing always before him.
31. Rejoicing in his habitable earth;
And my delight was with the sons of men.
32. Now therefore, my sons, hearken unto me;
For blessed are they that keep my ways.
33. Hear instruction, and be wise,
And refuse it not.
34. Blessed is the man that heareth me,

- Watching daily at my gates,
 Waiting at the posts of my doors.
35. For whoso findeth me findeth life,
 And shall obtain favor of Jehovah.
36. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul:
 All they that hate me love death.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 8:22-36

1. Comment on God's wisdom (v. 22).
2. Are we to conceive of "everlasting" as having existed before time was (v. 23)?
3. What "fountains" are referred to in v. 24?
4. What is meant by the mountains being "settled" in v. 25?
5. Where else does the Bible tell of God's creating the universe (besides here in this section)?
6. What word in v. 27 is especially noticeable?
7. What is meant by "firm" in v. 28?
8. Is there a definite line where the ocean stops (v. 29)?
9. Who is the "master workman" in v. 30--wisdom or God?
10. Does "daily" refer to the creation-days of Gen. 1 (v. 30)?
11. What is the force of "habitable" in v. 31?
12. In what ways "blessed" (v. 32)?
13. Hear and be wise, but don't refuse and be (v. 33).
14. How does "watching" enter in (v. 34)?
15. What two blessings are promised in v. 35?
16. How can one sin against wisdom (v. 36)?

PARAPHRASE OF 8:22-36

- 22-26. The Lord formed me in the beginning, before He created anything else. From ages past, I am. I existed before the earth began. I lived before the oceans were created, before the springs bubbled forth their waters onto the earth; before the mountains and the hills were made. Yes, I was born before God made the earth and fields, and high plateaus.
- 27-32. I was there when He established the heavens and formed the great springs in the depths of the oceans. I was there when He set the limits of the seas and gave them His instructions not to spread beyond their

boundaries. I was there when He made the blueprint for the earth and oceans. I was always at His side like a little child. I was His constant delight, laughing and playing in His presence. And how happy I was with what He created--His wise world and all His family of mankind! And so, young men, listen to me, for how happy are all who follow my instructions.

33-36. Listen to my counsel--oh, don't refuse it--and be wise. Happy is the man who is so anxious to be with me that he watches for me daily at my gates, or waits for me outside my home! For whoever finds me finds life and wins approval from the Lord. But the one who misses me has injured himself irreparably. Those who refuse me show that they love death.

COMMENTS ON 8:22-36

V. 22. Wisdom is still speaking. Wisdom is not something new, something that only recently came along. It takes precedence in value over other things by virtue of its existence before there was anything here and because it is an attribute of God.

V. 23. Wisdom is "from everlasting", "from the beginning," "before the earth was." What else can claim existence that far back? Only those things that are other attributes of God (such as His "power"), for He alone existed.

V. 24. The Bible often divides the creation of the universe into three parts: heaven, earth and sea (Neh. 9:6; Exo. 20:11; Rev. 14:7; and others). Beginning with this verse these three are considered with being of shorter duration than wisdom: sea (this verse), earth (vs. 25,26), and heaven (v. 27).

V. 25. We use the mountains and hills as a gauge for comparing something that is old in our saying, "As old as the hills." But wisdom existed even before there were any hills!

V. 26. If wisdom had not been an attribute of God, earth would have been uninhabitable by man, there would have been nothing for him to eat or wear, etc.

V. 27. Isa. 40:22 also speaks of the "circle" of the earth.

V. 28. Ever hear a child ask, "What if the sky fell down upon us?" God made it "firm" over our heads. The "fountains of the deep" are the "springs of the sea" mentioned in Job 38:16. Their strength mentioned here was manifested in the days of

Noah when they burst forth at the special decree of God and, joined with the water that poured down for forty days and nights when the "windows of heaven" were opened, helped flood the earth until even the mountains were covered (Gen. 7:11,19).

V. 29. Go to any beach or seacoast, and you can observe the definite line where the ocean waters stop in their ebb and flow and in their swellings during great storms. Similarly does Job 38:8,10,11 say that God "shut up the sea with doors" and "marked out for it a bound, and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." The "foundation" of the earth (or "foundations" of the earth in Job 38:4) is evidently to be taken figuratively and not literally since the Bible speaks of God's hanging the earth on nothing--suspended it in space (Job 26:7). What, then, is meant by the foundation or foundations of the earth? "Clarke" takes a stab at the subject: "Those irreversible laws by which all motions are governed...the principles on which it is constructed, and the laws by which it is governed."

V. 30. God has His wisdom "with" Him in all of His creative acts. This is what made everything "good" that He created. See the reference to this after the various days of creation (Gen. 1:10,12, etc.). "Daily" in our verse is reminiscent of the creative days of Gen. 1.

V. 31. God made the earth as a dwellingplace (Isa. 45:18) whereas, as far as we know, the other planets were not so prepared. The finale of God's creation, the climax of it all, was the creation of man (Gen. 1:26), mentioned in our verse.

V. 32. If wisdom is that ancient; if wisdom is an eternal attribute of God; if wisdom was back there with God when everything was being created, then people should listen when wisdom speaks. In our verse wisdom says, "Hearken unto me...keep my ways," and a blessing is pronounced upon those who do.

V. 33. Another verse connecting our being wise with hearing, and not refusing, instruction. It is the foolish, not the wise, who refuse wisdom and instruction (Prov. 1:8).

V. 34. One who seeks wisdom lives in a state of expectation and anticipation. He watches and waits. "Waiting" is often involved in "watching" as in the cat patiently watching for a mouse or as in Christians watching for their Lord's return.

V. 35. A double blessing ultimately comes to those who through watching and waiting find wisdom: "life" (both here and

hereafter, both spiritual and eternal) and the "favor of Jehovah" (the greatest possession that one can have).

V. 36. One can sin against wisdom in several ways: by not desiring it, by not seeking after it, by not listening when it speaks, by not believing what it says, by not doing what it commands, by not desiring what it promises, and by not heeding its warnings. In which ever way or if in all ways one sins against wisdom, he is not merely wronging wisdom: he is wronging his own soul—he will be the one who suffers for it. Put very bluntly wisdom summarizes: "All they that hate me love death." This statement exemplifies the fact that truth itself is blunt, unflinching, unbending, no respecter of persons.

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 8:22-36

1. Wisdom is not something (v. 22).
2. In order to have existed as far back as wisdom, something had to be an attribute of (v. 23).
3. The Bible often divides the creation of the universe into what three divisions (v. 24)?
4. What is older than the hills (v. 25)?
5. Would the earth have been habitable by man if wisdom had not been with God in creating it (v. 26)?
6. What other passage speaks of the "circle" of the earth (v. 27)?
7. What does v. 28 assure us about the sky?
8. Where else are the "fountains of the deep" mentioned (v. 28)?
9. Cite the proof of the truth in v. 29 about the sea.
10. Is "foundation" in v. 29 to be taken literally or figuratively?
11. Tie up v. 30 with Gen. 1.
12. Comment on v. 31.
13. According to v. 32, why should we listen to wisdom?
14. Who receive and who do not receive instruction (v. 33)?
15. Give an example of "waiting and watching" (v. 34).
16. According to v. 35, why should we seek wisdom?
17. What two blunt statements does wisdom make in v. 36?

TEXT — 9:1-9

1. Wisdom hath builded her house;
She hath hewn out her seven pillars:
2. She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine;
She hath also furnished her table:
3. She hath sent forth her maidens;
She crieth upon the highest places of the city:
4. Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither:
As for him that is void of understanding, she saith to him
5. Come, eat ye of my bread,
And drink of the wine which I have mingled.
6. Leave off, ye simple ones, and live;
And walk in the way of understanding.
7. He that correcteth a scoffer getteth to himself reviling;
and he that reproveth a wicked man getteth himself a blot.
8. Reprove not a scoffer, lest he hate thee:
Reprove a wise man, and he will love thee.
9. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser:
Teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 9:1-9

1. What are the seven pillars of wisdom's house (v. 1)?
2. Does wisdom believe in mixed wine (v. 2)?
3. Who are wisdom's maidens (v. 3)?
4. Is wisdom beckoning the simple to sin like the harlot woman (v. 4)?
5. What is her bread and her wine (v. 5)?
6. "Leave off" what (v. 6)?
7. Who gives such a righteous man a blot (v. 7)?
8. What are the opposite results of reproofing a scoffer and a wise man (v. 8)?
9. Who profits from instruction (v. 9)?

PARAPHRASE OF 9:1-9

- 1-6. Wisdom hath built a palace supported on seven pillars, and has prepared a great banquet, and mixed the wines, and sent out her maidens inviting all to come. She calls from the busiest intersections in the city, "Come, you simple ones without good judgment; come to wisdom's

banquet and drink the wines that I have mixed. Leave behind your foolishness and begin to live; learn how to be wise.

- 7-9. If you rebuke a mocker, you will only get a smart retort; yes, he will snarl at you. So don't bother with him; he will only hate you for trying to help him. But a wise man, when rebuked, will love you all the more. Teach a wise man, and he will be the wiser; teach a good man, and he will learn more.

COMMENTS ON 9:1-9

V. 1. "The same wisdom speaks here who spoke in the preceding chapter. There she represented herself as manifest in all the works of God in the natural world--all being constructed according to counsels proceeding from an infinite understanding. Here she represents herself as the great potentate who was to rule all that she had constructed; and having an immense family to provide for had made an abundant provision and calls all to partake of it. This is the continuation of the parable begun in the preceding chapter, where wisdom is represented as a venerable lady whose real beauties and solid promises are opposed to the false allurements of pleasure, who was represented in the seventh chapter under the idea of a debauched and impudent woman. This one, to draw young men into her snares, describes the perfumes, the bed, and the festival which she had prepared. Wisdom acts in the same way but instead of the debauchery, the false pleasures, and the criminal connections which pleasure had promised offers her guests a strong, well-built, magnificent palace, chaste and solid pleasures, salutary instructions, and a life crowned with blessedness" ("Clarke"). Consider the contrast between the lady "wisdom" in vs. 1-12 and the "foolish woman" of vs. 13-18. Wisdom "builds" (v. 1), but immorality tears down. Both are inviting guests to come in (vs. 3-5 and vs. 14-17). Within their invitations both used the exact words at one point: "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him..." (v. 4 and v. 16). the wicked woman offers "stolen waters" and "bread eaten in secret" (v. 17), showing the illegitimacy of what she is offering while wisdom operates in legitimate wares and ways (in the open). The pleasure of sin is said to be "sweet" and "pleasant" (v. 17) while wisdom may impart some of its knowledge through reproof (v.

8). The guests of the immoral woman end in death (v. 18) while wisdom leads to life (v. 6). The "seven" pillars of wisdom may be the seven things mentioned in Jas. 3:17 concerning heavenly wisdom: (1) pure; (2) peaceable; (3) gentle; (4) easy to be entreated; (5) full of mercy and good fruits; (6) without variance; and (7) without hypocrisy, or "seven" may be used here as it so often is in the book of Revelation as an ideal number.

V. 2. In the preparation of her feast of good things, she had prepared her food and her beverage and had set the table. By "mingled her wine" is probably meant the mixing of the straight grape juice with the proper amount of water to make it a better tasting beverage (which the ancients among the Jews, Greeks, and Romans did). Since we are dealing with wisdom, the preceding seems more likely than that she added drugs to give it more potency.

V. 3. With everything ready she sends forth the maidens to call the guests to the feast. There have been times when maidens were employed to beckon the guests that the hour of banqueting had come.

V. 4. The wicked woman of v. 16 uses the same words in her invitation. Wisdom is pleased to call those who lack it, calling them to begin a life of wisdom. In a sense we all start "simple".

V. 5. We are told in Prov. 4:5 to "get wisdom", and this verse compares the gaining of wisdom as desirable and not miserable by using the figure of dining, something that people enjoy doing. For "mingled wine" see comments on v. 2.

V. 6. Put an end to living without wisdom; cease ignorance and folly. Adopt a new way: the way of understanding. All who make this change are glad they did.

V. 7. A triple parallel: "correcteth" and "reproved"; "scoffer" and "Wicked man"; and "getteth to himself reviling" and "getteth himself a blot". A scoffer will neither appreciate your sincere intention to help him nor allow himself to see the correctness of what you are saying to him. Instead of straightening up as a result of your proper rebuke, he will say all manner of evil about you, and you (the innocent) end up with a "blot".

V. 8. Reprove the wise but not the scoffer. The one will love you for it; the other will hate you. In harmony with this verse the Lord reproved Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:4) and chastens His children (Heb. 12:6), but He teaches us not to cast our pearls

before swine--scoffers (Matt. 7:6).

V. 9. The same good qualities of the wise man who accepted rebuke in v. 8 show up in this verse and justify the time and effort that it takes to instruct him. As a result of your efforts he will be "yet wiser" and "will increase in learning". This is satisfying to any instructor. Jesus' parabolic teaching resulted in "whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance" (Matt. 13:12).

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 9:1-9

1. Cite some of the contrasts between the woman Wisdom and the wicked woman in this chapter?
2. What three preparations are mentioned in v. 2?
3. What was probably involved in wisdom's "mixed wine" (v. 2)?
4. What phase of things is mentioned in v. 3?
5. In a sense do we all begin life "simple" (v. 4)?
6. What is gaining wisdom likened to doing in v. 5?
7. What important change is called for in v. 6?
8. Cite the triple parallel in v. 7.
9. How does the New Testament follow the instructions found in v. 8?
10. What is a teacher's joy (v. 9)?

TEXT — 9:10-18

10. The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom;
And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
11. For by me thy days shall be multiplied,
And the years of thy life shall be increased.
12. If thou are wise, thou art wise for thyself;
And if thou scoffest, thou alone shall bear it.
13. The foolish woman is clamorous;
She is simple, and knoweth nothing.
14. And she sitteth at the door of her house,
On a seat in the high places of the city,
15. To call to them that pass by,
Who go right on their ways:
16. Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither;
And as for him that is void of understanding, she saith to him,
17. Stolen waters are sweet,

- And bread eaten in secret is pleasant.
 18. But he knoweth not that the dead are there;
 That her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 9:10-18

1. Where is the opening statement of v. 10 first mentioned in Proverbs?
2. Where else in Proverbs is the truth in v. 11 found?
3. The "foolish woman" of v. 13 is to be contrasted with what other woman?
4. Is this low-down woman ashamed of herself and her business (v. 14)?
5. Are wicked people "evangelistic" for sin (v. 15)?
6. Who will get caught by such a wicked woman (v. 16)?
7. Do sinners believe what v. 17 says?
8. Why does v. 18 begin with "but"?

PARAPHRASE OF 9:10-18

- 10-12. For the reverence and fear of God are basic to all wisdom. Knowing God results in every other kind of understanding. Wisdom will make the hours of your day more profitable and the years of your life more fruitful. Wisdom is its own reward, and if you scorn her, you may only hurt yourself.
- 13-18. A prostitute is loud and brash, and never has enough of lust and shame. She sits at the door of her house or stands at the street corners of the city, whispering to men going by, and to those minding their own business. "Come home with me," she urges simpletons, "stolen melons are the sweetest; stolen apples taste the best!" But they don't realize that her former guests are now citizens of hell.

COMMENTS ON 9:10-18

V. 10. Other passages agreeing with the first statement: "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom" (Job 28:28); "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom" (Psa. 111:10); "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7). No one can be a person of real understanding who does not know the holy One in whom alone originally resided wisdom, knowledge, and

understanding. The Greeks were famous for their knowledge, but the Greeks through their philosophies "knew not God" (I Cor. 1:21). Paul (the writer of I Cor. 1:21) knew, for he had been to Athens and had beheld the famous city "full of idols" (Acts 17:16). Is it any wonder, then, that when he preached there the resurrection of the dead "some mocked" (Acts 17:32)? Nor do present-day philosophies that disregard the revelation of God in the Bible have an understanding of our holy God.

V. 11. "The parenthetical explanation being concluded in which wisdom has intimated why it is useless to appeal to the scorner and the wilful sinner, she now resumes the direct address interrupted at v. 7, presenting a forcible reason for the advice given in v. 6, though there is still some connection with v. 10 as it is from the wisdom that comes from the fear of the Lord that the blessings now mentioned spring" ("Pulpit Commentary"). Other passages on what imparts long life: "My son...let thy heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and years of life, And peace, will they add to thee" (Prov. 3:1,2); "The fear of Jehovah prolongeth days; But the years of the wicked shall be shortened" (Prov. 10:27).

V. 12. "Though thy example may be very useful to thy neighbors and friends, yet the chief benefit is to thyself. But if thou scorn-refuse to receive--the doctrines of wisdom, and die in thy sins, thou alone shalt suffer the vengeance of an offended God" ("Clarke"). There is a sense in which others let you be wise if it is your choice to be wise, and others let you scoff if that be your choice. Whatever your choice, the non-committee multitude will not join you. In other words, the scholar who is right tries to tell the others and is not always believed (at least, is not always "joined"), and the scoffer who is wrong tries to gain adherents to his way of thinking, and he runs into a similar reception.

V. 13. The "foolish woman" of this and following verses is in contrast to the woman "wisdom" of vs. 1-6. As this wicked woman has been fully identified in previous sections (2:16-19; 5:3-23; 6:24-35; 7:5-27), this section is speaking of the immoral woman. Our verse says she is "foolish", "clamorous", "simple", and "knoweth nothing". The Bible has no compliments for the adulteress (or the adulterer). She is "foolish" instead of wise, for it is much wiser to be happily married to a good man than to sell yourself for a few minutes to any man who comes along. She is "clamorous" (boisterous, loud, forward), which was pointed out in Prov. 7:11-13 wherein she was said not to remain in her

house but to get out on the street and aggressively proposition men. She is "simple", for her trade does not necessitate her to develop her mind, and little is a harlot concerned or involved in the concerns and the involvements of the community. She "knoweth nothing", for she either doesn't know or doesn't care what she is doing, how she is looked upon, what harm she is bringing to the homes and bodies and souls of others, and of what she is robbing herself of and ultimately bringing upon herself.

V. 14. She is forward, not bashful, in pushing her trade. She is bold and not ashamed.

V. 15. She gets out in the passing crowd and tries to get customers. But thank God, most people have enough sense to keep going "right on their ways" instead of stopping and getting involved with her. Those who do not fall for her are men who have been taught from youth to fear adultery, or who are happily married to good wives and have righteous children at home to whom they are examples, or who have committed themselves to a godly life that even if once guilty of such behavior will have no part in it.

V. 16. Anyone who will listen to her and go with her really isn't any wiser than she was described as being in v. 13. She employs the same words as wisdom uses (see v. 4); she is going to "educate" the "simple" who are "void of understanding". They will "learn" all right, but it will be the wrong thing, and the time will come when they will see that they listened to the wrong person: "Thou mourn at thy latter end, When thy flesh and thy body are consumed, And say, How have I hated instruction, And my heart despised reproof; Neither have I obeyed the voice of my teachers, Nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!" (Prov. 5:11-13).

V. 17. Hers is an invitation to commit adultery with her. She is referred to as "stolen waters", for she does not really belong to those who accept her invitation, for is she is married (as in Prov. 6:29 and as in Prov. 7:19,20), she belongs to her husband, and if she is unmarried she should belong to and save herself for the man whom she will later marry. God never intended that any woman would be to society like the old town-well of years ago or like the block of stock-salt in the cow pasture. A woman who does not save herself (or a man who does not save himself) for the mate that she (or he) will later marry really does not deserve a pure mate in marriage! It is only a

saying that "stolen melons are sweeter". Why should any man choose the arms and the bosom and the intimacies of an impure, ungodly woman to the sweet and attractive and good wife whom he has personally chosen and shared life with over the years? No, "stolen waters" are not better! Therefore, "drink waters out of thine own cistern, And running waters out of thine own well...Rejoice in the wife of thy youth. As a loving hind and a pleasant doe, Let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; And be thou ravished always with her love" (Prov. 5:15-19).

V. 18. The "sweetness" and the "pleasantness" that she promised in v. 17 end in "death"--just like all sin. Other passages connecting immorality with death: Prov. 2:18; Prov. 7:27. Other passages connecting sin with death: Rom 6:23; Jas. 1:15.

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 9:10-18

1. What success do philosophies of men have in common to a knowledge of God (v. 10)?
2. What great promise is contained in v. 11?
3. Comment on v. 12.
4. In what way is an immoral woman "foolish" (v. 13)?
5. In what way "simple" (v. 13)?
6. In what way "clamorous" (v. 13)?
7. In what way "knoweth nothing" (v. 13)?
8. What shows her forwardness (v. 14)?
9. Do most men of the crowd stop with her or pass right on (v. 15)?
10. Why will they do this (v. 15)?
11. What kind of "education" does the immoral woman give to the "simple" (v. 16)?
12. Why is she "stolen waters" if married (v. 17)?
13. Why also "stolen waters" if yet unmarried (v. 17)?
14. How does her praise of "sweetness and pleasantness" turn out (v. 18)?

TEXT — 10:1-11

1. The Proverbs of Solomon.
A wise son maketh a glad father;
But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.
2. Treasures of wickedness profit nothing;
But righteous delivereth from death.
3. Jehovah will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish;
But he thrusteth away the desire of the wicked.
4. He becometh poor that worketh with a slack hand;
But the hand of the diligent maketh rich.
5. He that gathereth in summer is a wise son;
But he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.
6. Blessings are upon the head of the righteous;
But violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.
7. The memory of the righteous is blessed;
But the name of the wicked shall rot.
8. The wise in heart will receive commandments;
But a prating fool shall fall.
9. He that walketh uprightly walketh surely;
But he that perverteth his ways shall be known.
10. He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow;
But a prating fool shall fall.
11. The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life;
But violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 10:1-11

1. Why say, "The proverbs of Solomon," here in the middle of the book (v. 1)?
2. Exemplify how wise children make glad parents (v. 1).
3. Exemplify how foolish children make sad parents (v. 1).
4. In what sense do treasures of wickedness profit nothing when many wicked are wealthy (v. 2)?
5. When does righteousness deliver one from death (v. 2)?
6. What does "soul" mean in v. 3?
7. What is a "slack hand" (v. 4)?
8. Why even bring "hand" into this verse (v. 4) that uses it twice?
9. Causeth shame to whom (v. 5)?
10. Whose "blessings" are upon the righteous (v. 6)?
11. How does violence cover the mouth of the wicked (v. 6)?

12. What is the significance of the word "rot" here in v. 7?
13. What does "prating" mean (v. 8)?
14. List ways that one might pervert his ways and be found out (v. 9).
15. In v. 10 what is wrong with winking?
16. How can one's mouth be a "fountain of life" (v. 11)?

PARAPHRASE OF 10:1-11

1. These are the proverbs of Solomon. Happy is the man with a level-headed son; sad the mother of a rebel.
2. Ill-gotten gain brings no lasting happiness; right living does.
3. The Lord will not let a good man starve to death, nor will He let the wicked man's riches continue forever.
4. Lazy men are soon poor; hard workers get rich.
5. A wise youth makes hay while the sun shines, but what a shame to see a lad who sleeps away his hour of opportunity.
6. The good man is covered with blessings from head to foot, but an evil man inwardly curses his luck.
7. We all have happy memories of good men gone to their reward, but the names of wicked men stink after them.
8. The wise man is glad to be instructed, but a self-sufficient fool falls flat on his face.
9. A good man has firm footing, but a crook will slip and fall.
10. Winking at sin leads to sorrow; bold reproof leads to peace.
11. There is living truth in what a good man says, but the mouth of the evil man is filled with curses.

COMMENTS ON 10:1-11

V. 1 After 9 chapters in this book called "Proverbs," aren't you surprised to see the heading, "The proverbs of Solomon," here? The explanation: a "proverb" is a wise saying. The first 9 chapters, while exalting and containing "wisdom", are not "sayings" but are extended topical material. The actual "sayings" begin here and will continue through chapter 29. The message of the verse: What we do as sons can affect the happiness or the heaviness of our parents, both while under their roof and after we leave it. The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) surely brought heaveniness upon his foolish departure and throughout his

waywardness and indulgence, but he brought happiness upon his penitent return. Other passages containing the same truth: Prov. 15:20; 17:21, 25; 19:13; 29:3,15. Thought for parents: The way you are now rearing your children will have much to do with your own future happiness or heaviness.

V. 2. Treasures of wickedness are riches gotten by wrong means. A Christian must follow only acceptable vocations: Eph. 4:28; marginal note on Tit. 3:8. "Better is a little, with righteousness, Than great revenues with injustice" (Prov. 16:8). Other similar references: Prov. 11:4; Psa. 34:10; 37:25; Dan. 4:27. And yet communities and families are usually more proud of their rich than they are of their righteous!

V. 3. "American Bible Union version": "Jehovah will not let the spirit of the righteous famish; But he repels the longing of the wicked." God so blesses the righteous that they do not faint. Consider David's praise of God in Psa. 23:1-6. And so states Paul in II Cor. 4:16. But equally so is God's face against those who do evil (I Pet. 3:12).

V. 4. The proper result of shiftlessness is to have nothing. God has willed that if a person will not work, he should not have things to eat (II Thess. 3:10). Some may become rich through crooked dealings, but others are prosperous through diligence. For similar material see Prov. 12:24; 13:4; 19:15; 21:5. In calling men to serve Him God has always called the busy people: Elisha plowing (I Kings 19:19-21), fishermen working (Matt. 4:18-22), Matthew sitting at his place of toll (Matt. 9:9), and Saul of Tarsus busy persecuting (Acts 26:10-18).

V. 5. This is related in content to v. 4. Also to v. 1. In life our actions commend others or embarrass them.

V. 6. "Clarke" comments: "As blessings shall be on the head of the just, so the violence of the wicked shall cover their face with shame and confusion. Their own violent dealings shall be visited upon them." V. 11 talks again of violence covering the mouth of the wicked.

V. 7. This verse speaks of the deceased. "The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance" (Psa. 112:6). Their virtues are extolled (Acts 9:36-39). But the bad things that a wicked person did are remembered long after he is dead. His name "rots" (gets worse) because that is the only side of him seemingly remembered and passed onto others. While we may call our children "Timothy", "Matthew", and other good Bible characters' names, yet we do not name them "Cain", "Ahab", or "Jezebel".

V. 8. Jesus also likened the obedient to the wise (Matt. 7:26, 27). Webster on "prate": "To talk, especially much and to little purpose; to chatter." Thus Young translates "a talkative fool". Diotrophes prated against the apostle John (III John 10). Such will "fall," sometimes as a consequence of his words even before he falls at the final judgment. V. 10 repeats the statement.

V. 9. Walks in "integrity" says "Young's Literal" and "Amplified." One who is walking in righteousness knows what he is doing, has assurance, and is safe. To pervert one's way is to divert it from what is right. One cannot do this without being found out, at least ultimately (dishonesty, adultery, embezzlement, etc.). Want to be known and noticed? Do wrong, and you will be. The righteous settle for "walketh surely". Prov. 28:18 is a parallel passage.

V. 10. This ends the same as v. 8. "Pulpit Commentary": Winking with the eye "is a sign of craft, malice, and complicity with other wicked comrades." Study Prov. 6:12-14 also. The first statement shows that wrongdoing brings sorrow to others; the second shows that it brings destruction to oneself.

V.11. The blessings brought by the mouth of the righteous is set in contrast to the sorrow and destruction brought by the wicked in v. 10. Psa. 37:30 also speaks of the "mouth of the righteous". People are helped by what good people say. This verse ends the same as v. 6.

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 10:1-11

1. What does a wise son make (v. 1)?
2. What does a foolish son make (v. 1)?
3. What was said about treasures of wickedness (v. 2)?
4. To what does a slack hand lead (v. 4)?
5. What was said about the hand of the diligent, (v. 4)?
6. What about the memory of the righteous (v. 7)?
7. What about the name of the wicked (v.7)?
8. What does "prating" mean (v. 8)?
9. Comment on "winking" as used in v. 9.
10. Of which are communities and families more proud--of their rich or their righteous (v. 9)?
11. Which spreads faster and farther--news of one's good deeds or bad deeds (v. 9)?
12. Which verse did the Paraphrase help you with the most?
13. Which verse did the Comments help you with the most?

TEXT — 10:12-22

12. Hatred stirreth up strifes;
But love covereth all transgressions.
13. In the lips of him that hath discernment wisdom is found;
But a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding.
14. Wise men lay up knowledge;
But the mouth of the foolish is a present destruction.
15. The rich man's wealth is his strong city;
The destruction of the poor is their poverty.
16. The labor of the righteous tendeth to life;
The increase of the wicked, to sin.
17. He is in the way of life that heedeth correction;
But he that forsaketh reproof erreth.
18. He that hideth hatred is of lying lips;
And he that uttereth a slander is a fool.
19. In the multitude of words there wanteth not transgression;
But he that refraineth his lips doeth wisely.
20. The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver;
The heart of the wicked is little worth.
21. The lips of the righteous feed many;
But the foolish die for lack of understanding.
22. The blessing of Jehovah, it maketh rich;
And he addeth no sorrow therewith.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 10:12-22

1. How does love "cover" transgressions (v. 12)?
2. What is meant by one having "discernment" (v. 13)?
3. Why don't more people "lay up knowledge" (v. 14)?
4. To whom is the mouth of fools a present destruction--to themselves or others (v. 14)?
5. What is meant by one's wealth being his "strong city" (v. 15)?
6. What kind of "life" does righteous labor lead to (v. 16)?
7. What is meant by the "increase" of the wicked (v. 16)?
8. What is meant by the "way of life" (v. 17)?
9. Name several persons in the Bible who forsook reproof (v. 17).
10. What might one say ("lying lips") who is concealing his hatred (v. 18)?

11. What two words in v. 18 are contrasts?
12. Why do a multitude of words result in transgression (v. 19)?
13. How is the tongue of the righteous like choice silver (v. 20)?
14. What other Bible passages speak of words' feeding people (v. 21)?
15. What kind of death does v. 21 have in mind?
16. Does the blessing of Jehovah make some people or all people rich (v. 22)? Explain.
17. What is implied by some riches when it says, "He addeth no sorrow therewith" (v. 22)?

PARAPHRASE OF 10:12-22

12. Hatred stirs old quarrels, but love overlooks insults.
13. Men with common sense are admired as counselors; those without it are beaten as servants.
14. A wise man holds his tongue. Only a fool blurts out everything he knows; that only leads to sorrow and trouble.
15. The rich man's wealth is his only strength. The poor man's poverty is his only curse.
16. The good man's earnings advance the cause of righteousness. The evil man squanders his on sin.
17. Anyone willing to be corrected is on the pathway to life. Anyone refusing has lost his chance.
18. To hate is to be a liar; to slander is to be a fool.
19. Don't talk so much. You keep putting your foot in your mouth. Be sensible and turn off the flow!
20. When a good man speaks, he is worth listening to, but the words of fools are a dime a dozen.
21. A godly man gives good advice, but a rebel is destroyed by lack of common sense.
22. The Lord's blessing is our greatest wealth. All our work adds nothing to it!

COMMENTS ON 10:12-22

V. 12. Hatred does not desire the fellowship of the one hated, does not wish the peace and the welfare of the one hated. Hatred must show itself, and the result is trouble and strife. Hatred will stir up strife by picking on all the small "talking points" that love would have overlooked (I Cor. 13:4). The soft

answer (of love) will turn away wrath, but the grievous words (of hatred) will stir up strife (Prov. 15:1). Other Scriptures on love's covering or concealing faults: Prov. 17:9; I Pet. 4:8.

V.13 One who is wise has "discerning lips"; that is, he knows what to say and what not to say, when to say it and when not to, how to say it and how not to, how much to say, where to say it and where not to, etc. Jesus' perfection was also seen in this, Peter's imperfection often exhibited itself in this (Matt. 16: 21-23; Luke 9:32-35; John 21:19-22. Proper speech is a crowning virtue (Jas. 3:2). During World War II Uncle Sam was shown on posters with his finger saying, "Sh-h-h." Another government poster during that war showed a big ship sinking and included these few words, "Somebody talked!" No wonder Prov. 26:3 says, "A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the back of fools."

V. 14. A wise man does more listening (taking in, "laying up") than he does talking; the fool, just the opposite. See Prov. 18:7; 21:23. Christians are taught to be "swift to hear" but "slow to speak" (Jas. 1:19).

V. 15. The opening statement is also in Prov. 18:11. "Strong city" means that in which he trusts. There are those who trust in their riches (Psa. 52:7). I Tim. 6:17 forbids it, and Jesus said such cannot enter heaven (Mark 10:24). Job recognized that to make riches one's "confidence" is to "deny" God (Job 31:24-28).

V. 16. The labor of the righteous is good for him: he enjoys his food, he sleeps well, he is healthy, and his mind is not troubled. Ecc. 5:12 says, "The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the fulness of the rich will not suffer him to sleep." The increase of the wicked is not good for him, for it but leads to sin. Luxury and licentious living often go together. Kings as a group (the wealthies in the land) were usually not godly. Eccl. 10: 17 says, "Happy art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!"

V. 17. In v. 16 labor led to "life"; in this verse heeding correction does. All people make mistakes and will be corrected: as children by parents (Heb. 12:9), school teachers, and other adults; later in life by employers, neighbors, mates, God's leaders, and even God through chastening (Heb. 12:5,6). David listened to what Abigail had to say, saw the wisdom of it, and wisely changed his course (I Sam. 26:32,33). For other passages on heeding