

Dew seemed to the Israelites a mysterious gift of Heaven, as indeed it is. That the skies should be stayed from yielding it was a special sign of Divine wrath...The favor of an Oriental monarch could not be more beneficently conceived than by saying that while his wrath is like the roaring of a lion, his favor is as the dew upon the grass."

V. 13. A man is in a bad way when his children are no good and his wife is a constant nagger. Concerning "calamity" "Pulpit Commentary" says, "Calamity in the Hebrew is in the plural number, as if to mark the many and continued sorrows which a bad son brings upon his father, how he causes evil after evil to harass and distress;" and of the contentions of a wife it says, "The flat roofs of Eastern houses, formed of planks loosely joined and covered with a coating of clay or plaster, were always subject to leakage in heavy rains. The irritating altercations and bickering of a cross-grained wife are compared to this continuous drip of water." A Scotch saying: "A leaky house and a scolding wife are two bad companions." Other passages on the foolish son: Prov. 10:1; 15:20; 17:21,25. Other passages on the contentious wife: Prov. 21:9; 27:15.

V. 14. We may get material inheritances from our parents (II Cor. 12:14), but a wise wife is a gift from God (Prov. 18:22). This saying is a bold contrast to v. 13: in this verse many blessings come to us because of our families ("inheritance from fathers" and a "prudent wife").

V. 15. Slothfulness, idleness, excessive sleep, and poverty are connected in this and other passages in Proverbs (6:9-11; 10:4; 20:13; 23:21). Two apt sayings: "Idleness is a living man's tomb" and "Sloth is the mother of poverty".

V. 16. A double contrast: "He that keepeth the commandment" vs. "he that is careless of his ways" and "keepeth his soul" vs. "shall die". One who is obedient to God is careful about his ways, and God blesses him with the salvation of his soul, but one who is disobedient to God is careless about his ways, and the wages of sin is and has always been death (Gen. 2:17; Isa. 1:19,20; Rom. 6:21,23; 8:6; Phil. 3:19; Jas. 1:15).

V. 17. The wording implies "giving to the poor". To "pity" is to feel for, to make their burden your burden, to be touched enough about their situation to stop what you are doing and help them. This we are taught to do: Luke 11:41; 12:33; Gal. 6:10; I John 3:17; Jas. 1:27; Matt. 25:35-36. Cornelius (Acts 10:2,4; and Dorcas (Acts 9:36) were alms givers. Give to

the poor, and God has promised to pick up the debt (Luke 14:12-14). Notice the message of Prov. 28:27.

V. 18. Correction administered in time without which the child's mischief becomes meanness, and the character becomes set in wickedness. Other passages teaching parental correction: Prov. 13:24; 23:13,14; 29:17. A German saying: "It is better that the child weep than the father." "Clarke": "It is better that the child may be caused to cry, when the correction may be healthful to his soul, than that the parent should cry afterwards, when the child is grown to man's estate, and his evil habits are sealed for life." Non-chastening parents finally give up on their children and seem content to await the inevitable (whatever may result in life for them, which in Old Testament days would have been death by stoning: Deut. 21:18-21). But this verse would condemn such parents.

V. 19. A man given to wrath always turns to it when things don't go as he would have them. It is a sign of a character-weakness: the inability to cope with either one's situation or one's limitations. A man who loses his temper is like a man who gets drunk: it won't be the last time. "Pulpit Commentary": "While his disposition is unchanged, all your efforts will be useless, and the help which you have given him will only make him think that he may continue to indulge his anger with impunity."

V. 20. One's wisdom is constituted of what one gains on his own and of what others seek to share. The more one has, the more apt he is to listen to what others would impart to him, and the less wisdom one has, the less apt he is to regard the good advice of others. "Pulpit Commentary": "Wisdom gathered and digested in youth is seen in the prudence and intelligence of manhood and of old age."

### TEST QUESTIONS OVER 19:11-20

1. What two qualities does it take to remain calm under pressure (v. 11)?
2. What is the significance of "glory" in v. 11?
3. Comment upon Palestine's "dew" (v. 12).
4. What is the significance of "calamity" being plural in Hebrew (v. 13)?
5. What is a wife's contentions compared to (v. 13)?
6. If one has a prudent wife, he should give ..... the credit (v. 14).

7. Find four things in v. 15 that go together.
8. What is the double contrast in v. 16?
9. What does it mean to "pity" the poor (v. 17)?
10. Name one Bible character commended for almsgiving (v. 17).
11. When should chastening be administered (v. 18)?
12. It is better for whom to weep (v. 18)?
13. What is periodic wrath a sign of (v. 19)?
14. Why should a young person especially listen to others (v. 20)?

## TEXT — 19:21-29

21. There are many devices in a man's heart;  
But the counsel of Jehovah, that shall stand.
22. That which maketh a man to be desired is his kindness;  
And a poor man is better than a liar.
23. The fear of Jehovah tendeth to life;  
And he that hath it shall abide satisfied;  
He shall not be visited with evil.
24. The sluggard burieth his hand in the dish,  
And will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.
25. Smite a scoffer, and the simple will learn prudence;  
And reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge.
26. He that doeth violence to his father, and chaseth away his mother,  
Is a son that causeth shame and bringeth reproach.
27. Cease, my son, to hear instruction  
Only to err from the words of knowledge.
28. A worthless witness mocketh at justice;  
And the mouth of the wicked swalloweth iniquity.
29. Judgments are prepared for scoffers,  
And stripes for the back of fools.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 19:21-29

1. What does the "counsel of Jehovah" mean in v. 21?
2. Why does kindness make one desired (v. 22)?
3. What is different about the construction of v. 23?
4. Are there actually people this lazy (v. 24), or is this a hyperbole?
5. Who are the "simple" in v. 25?

6. Why would anybody act like this (v. 26)?
7. Why do people accept false counsel (v. 27)?
8. Who is a "worthless witness (v. 28)?
9. Who are "scoffers" and "fools" in v. 29?

## PARAPHRASE OF 19:21-29

21. Man proposes, but God disposes.
22. Kindness makes a man attractive. And it is better to be poor than dishonest.
23. Reverence for God gives life, happiness, and protection from harm.
24. Some men are so lazy they won't even feed themselves!
25. Punish a mocker and others will learn from his example. Reprove a wise man and he will be the wiser.
26. A son who mistreats his father or mother is a public disgrace.
27. Stop listening to teaching that contradicts what you know is right.
28. A worthless witness cares nothing for truth--he enjoys his sinning too much.
29. Mockers and rebels shall be severely punished.

## COMMENTS ON 19:21-29

V. 21. It is not what man wants that always comes to pass but what God decrees (or allows). See Psa. 33:10,11; Prov. 16:1,2; Isa. 14:26,27; 46:10; Heb. 6:17. God "worketh all things after the counsel of his will" (Eph. 1:11). Men in a human council meeting thought they could stop Christianity (Acts 4:17), but they passed away, and the Word of God is still living, active, and powerful. Herod of Acts 12 took up against the church, killed James, and intended to kill Peter, but before the chapter was ended, he was dead, and in contrast to him Acts 12:24 says, "But the word of God grew and multiplied."

V. 22. This verse states that which we desire in people, and heading the list is "kindness". We like people who are kind; we like to be around them; their influence upon us is good. We appreciate their thoughtfulness; we appreciate their willingness to be helpful. We are comfortable and at-home in their presence. An unkind person is just the opposite of the above. The Bible says, "Be ye kind" (Eph. 4:32); "Love...is kind" (I Cor. 13:4). Concerning the second statement of the verse, this chapter has

already shown that people go from and do not want to claim close connections with the extremely poor (vs. 4,7), yet they prefer a poor man to a liar (compare v. 1). A man who will lie to others will lie to you. He is one you cannot trust, for he is not conscientious before God and with men. He makes a poor friend.

V. 23. This verse departs from Proverbs' customary two-line verses. Notice the three lines here. "Tendeth" shows the usual or general results of fearing Jehovah. It means, other things being equal, that one who fears God will live longer-not only longer, but he will reap more satisfaction from living than those who lack it, the reason being that he will have fewer hardships because of not being visited with evil from God. The "fear of Jehovah" takes us back to the first real saying in Proverbs: "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge" (1:7).

V. 24. Proverbs has much to say about lazy people: they spend much time sleeping (6:9; 24:30-34; 20:4; 26:13). This verse "out-lazies" the others as it pictures a man putting his hand into the dish to get something to eat and then being too lazy to lift it to his mouth (Prov. 26:15). When one is too lazy to feed himself, he is as lazy as he can get. Yet, all of life becomes a burden to the ambitionless person, the person with no purpose, no motivation. Arabic proverb: "He dies of hunger under the date tree."

V. 25. A scoffer is out of order whether he scoff at God or is plagued with the spirit of scoffing at people. He should be dealt with (the younger the better). The verse implies that even if he doesn't profit by it, the onlooking who might have taken up his ways will be affected for good (compare Deut. 13:10,11). Reproving a wise person definitely aids him, for he wishes to increase his learning, and he is wise enough to see the rightness of the rebuke (last part of Prov. 9:9). Prov. 21:11 is very similar to this verse in both of its statements: "When the scoffer is punished, the simple is made wise; And when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge."

V. 26. The language suggests that the "son" is a grown son, not a child. It is speaking of gross mistreatment of aged parents. While our present society has many instances of this in comparison to Bible days, this verse indicates that there were some bad offspring in Bible days. Remember that parents are to be honored, not thus dishonored. Such conduct causes "shame" to his suffering parents and "reproach" against his own name in

the community. Prov. 17:2 also speaks of a "son that causeth shame."

V. 27. It does no good to be exposed to good instruction if it is not going to be followed. There are those who seem to be listening to what you are telling them, but they are only being polite or do not wish to engage in open disagreement, for when they go their way they have not been changed by what they have heard. In time Christian teachers will cease instructing people if they will not be obedient (Acts 18:5,6).

V. 28. A "worthless witness" would include both a false witness (speaking lies) and one who refused to witness (would not tell what he knew). To do either is to mock rather than further justice. Justice dictates that the verdict be built upon the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. One the latter part of the verse: "Mischief is the object of his passionate desire: it is a real enjoyment to him to produce calamity; he swallows it eagerly as if it were a sweet fruit (Job 20:12; Isa. 28:4); he "drinketh it in like water" (Job 15:16)—("Lange").

V. 29. Another Hebrew parallelism: "judgments" and "stripes" go together as do "scoffers" and "fools". The verse is picturing an adult rather than a child, the "judgments" and "stripes" being public punishments. A child may be "foolish" (Prov. 22:15), but he is not a full-fledged "fool", but if one grows up, and his foolishness continues, and it is the recognized course of his life, then he is indeed a "fool". Other passages on such punishments: Prov. 10:13; 26:3.

## NOTICEABLE GROUPINGS IN CHAPTER 19

### *"Poor"*--

"Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity Than he that is perverse in his lips and is a fool" (v. 1).

"The poor is separated from his friend" (v. 4).

"All the brethren of the poor do hate him: How much more do his friends go far from him! He pursueth them with words, but they are gone" (v. 7).

"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto Jehovah" (v. 17).

"A poor man is better than a liar" (v. 22).

### *"Rich"*--

"Wealth added many friends" (v. 4).

"House and riches are an inheritance from fathers" (v. 14).

## CHAPTER 19

### *"Fools"--*

"Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity Than he that is perverse in his lips and is a fool" (v. 1).

"The foolishness of man subverteth his way" (v. 3).

"Delicate living is not seemly for a fool" (v. 10).

"A foolish son is the calamity of his father" (v. 13).

"Stripes for the back of fools" (v. 29).

### *"Speech"--*

"Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity Than he that is perverse in his lips" (v. 1).

"A false witness shall not be unpunished; And he that uttereth lies shall not escape" (v. 5).

"A false witness shall not be unpunished; And he that uttereth lies shall perish" (v. 9).

"The contentions of a wife are a continual dripping" (v. 13).

"A poor man is better than a liar" (v. 22).

"A worthless witness mocketh at justice; And the mouth of the wicked swalloweth iniquity" (v. 28).

### *"Knowledge"--*

"That the soul be without knowledge is not good" (v. 2).

"He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul: He that keepeth understanding shall find good" (v. 8).

"Hear counsel, and receive instruction, That thou mayest be wise in they latter end" (v. 20).

"Smite a scoffer, and the simple will learn prudence; And reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge" (v. 25).

### *"Scoffers"--*

"Smite a scoffer (v. 25).

"Judgments are prepared for scoffers" (v. 29).

### *"Anger"--*

"The discretion of a man maketh him slow to anger" (v. 11).

"The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion" (v. 12).

"A man of great wrath shall bear the penalty; For if thou deliver him, thou must do it yet again" (v. 19).

### *"Sons"--*

"A foolish son is the calamity of his father" (v. 13).

"Chasten thy son, seeing there is hope; And set not thy heart on his destruction" (v. 18).

"He that doeth violence to his father, and chaseth away his

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mother, Is a son that causeth shame and bringeth reproach” (v. 26).

“*Wife*”--

“The contentions of a wife are a continual dripping” (v. 13).

“A prudent wife is from Jehovah” (v. 14).

“*Slothfulness*”--

“Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; And the idle soul shall suffer hunger” (v. 15).

“The sluggard burieth his hand in the dish, And will not so much as bring it to his mouth again” (v. 24).

“*Heart*”--

“His heart fretteth against Jehovah” (v. 3).

“There are many devices in a man’s heart; But the counsel of Jehovah, that shall stand” (v. 21).



## TEXT — 20:1-10

1. Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler;  
And whosoever erreth thereby is not wise.
2. The terror of a king is as the roaring of a lion:  
He that provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own life.
3. It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife;  
But every fool will be quarrelling.
4. The sluggard will not plow by reason of the winter;  
Therefore he shall beg in harvest, and have nothing.
5. Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water;  
But a man of understanding will draw it out.
6. Most men will proclaim every one his own kindness;  
But a faithful man who can find?
7. A righteous man that walketh in his integrity,  
Blessed are his children after him.
8. A king that sitteth on the throne of judgment  
Scattereth away all evil with his eyes.
9. Who can say, I have made my heart clean,  
I am pure from my sin?
10. Diverse weights, and divers measures,  
Both of them alike are an abomination to Jehovah.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 20:1-10

1. According to v. 1 have we as a nation been "wise" to legalize strong drink?
2. Give a Bible instance of the truth of v. 2.
3. Cite other passages besides v. 3 that teach us to avoid strife.
4. What are other excuses besides v. 4 that sluggards might give for not doing a job?
5. He will draw it out of his own heart or out of the heart of another (v. 5)?
6. What is meant in v. 6 by a "faithful" man?
7. Why are the children of a righteous man blessed (v. 7)?
8. How does a king scatter away evil "with his eyes (v. 8)?
9. What is the evident answer to the questions in v. 9?
10. According to v. 10 with what is God displeased?

## PARAPHRASE OF 20:1-10

1. Wine gives false courage; hard liquor leads to brawls; what fools men are to let it master them, making them reel drunkenly down the street!
2. The king's fury is like that of a roaring lion; to rouse his anger is to risk your life.
3. It is an honor for a man to stay out of a fight. Only fools insist on quarreling.
4. If you won't plow in the cold you won't eat in the harvest.
5. Though good advice lies deep within a counselor's heart, the wise man will draw it out.
6. Most people will tell you what loyal friends they are, but are they telling the truth?
7. It is a wonderful heritage to have an honest father.
8. A king sitting as judge weighs all the evidence carefully, distinguishing the true from false.
9. Who can ever say, "I have cleansed my heart; I am sinless"?
10. The Lord despises every king of cheating.

## COMMENTS ON 20:1-10

V. 1. "Wine" as used in the Bible is not always intoxicating, but in this instance it is (note its connection with "strong drink" and also with what the verse says about it). It is a "mockery", mocking and making a fool out of its drinker with ridiculous and senseless conduct. Strong drink is a "brawler", leading to many quarrels and fights. One who drinks the stuff "ereth", is making a great mistake, sins, and he is "not wise." One can hardly err worse or be more unwise than to take up with strong drink. Oh, the sorrows, griefs, hardships, miseries, and you-name-it that strong drink has brought to the drinker, to his family, and to those who have been injured and killed just so that he could drink! For other passages see Gen. 9:21,22; Prov. 23:29,30; Isa. 28:7; Hos. 4:4. Strong drink is surely not for kings (Prov. 31:4,5), yet they have often been big drinkers. God was highly displeased at the drinking Belshazzar and his antics at the big party of Dan. 5. Every nation that has turned to wine has only weakened itself. A German saying: "More are drowned in the wine cup than in the ocean." Note the New Testament teaching in Eph. 5:18; Rom. 14:21.

V. 2. Being a king, Solomon included numerous sayings involving kings. He especially liked those that showed the importance of having the king's favor and avoiding his disfavor (Prov. 16:16; 19:12). I Kings 2 shows three men encountering Solomon's wrath and suffering death: Adonijah, Job, and Shemei.

V. 3. This verse shows that fools (not wise people) quarrel and engage in trouble while people of honor seek to avoid strife. "Follow peace with all men" (Heb. 12:14); "If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men" :Rom. 12:18); "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee" :Gen. 13:8). This does not mean we are to compromise God's Word in order to have peace. This is an altogether different field (Luke 14:51-58). 31-33

V. 4. The lazy, indolent person can always find an excuse for not working. It may be the cold weather (as in this verse), or it may be "too hot", "rainy," "it's too hard," "I don't know how," "I'm not feeling good," "somebody else will do it," "it's not important," "I'll do it later," etc. This is why some people have nothing.

V. 5. "Counsel" in this verse stands for deep wisdom (like water of a deep well). But "counsel" is no good unless you can get it from its possessor. People with little to offer us are generally free with their advice, but people who really have knowledge tend to be more conservative with giving unsolicited advice. In fact, sometimes it takes just the right person who goes at the right time and approaches the subject in just the right way to get such valuable counsel. This verse shows that where there's a will, a man of understanding will find the way to get it.

V. 6. The tendency of humanity is to tell those things that are personally commendable and to forget those things that are derogatory. As such we tell only a part of the story. A "faithful" man (one who tells it exactly as it is concerning himself) is almost impossible to find, according to the implication of this verse. There is much food for thought here for each of us.

V. 7. Everybody is blessed when a man lives right, but especially himself and his family. Since influence and environment are such strong factors in life, those who are the closest to a righteous person are the ones who receive the greatest blessings from their influence. "Integrity" is honesty, uprightness. Other passages showing that one's offspring is blessed by his righteousness and because of his righteousness: Psa. 37:25,26;

112:2.

V. 8. Not just any king, for some kings (like Ahab) have been the source and the multiplication of evil. But a good king is one who rules with a righteous sceptre, and his government praises the good and punishes the evil (I Pet. 2:13,14; Rom. 13:3).

V. 9. The implied answer is "nobody". We can make our hearts corrupt and our lives sinful, but we cannot dispel the guilt nor cleanse away our sin apart from God's mercy. Let us re-say it: Man cannot direct his own way successfully (Jer. 10:23), nor can he save himself by his own righteousness (Tit. 3:5), nor can he cleanse himself from a single sin (this verse). Notice how this is brought out in song: "Nothing in my hand I bring; simply to thy cross I cling; Naked, come to Thee for dress; helpless, look to Thee for grace; Foul, I to the fountain fly; Wash me, Saviour, or I die."

V. 10. Verse 23 reads similarly. Man employs such means to gain personal advantage even though its disadvantage to his fellowmen equals the advantage that it is to himself. It is unscrupulous gain. It is plain and intentional dishonesty. And it is abomination to God. See Deut. 25:13-16 and Prov. 11:1 also.

### TEST QUESTIONS OVER 20:1-10

1. How do we know that "wine" in v. 1 is intoxicating?
2. Comment upon "ereth" (v. 1).
4. Comment upon "not wise" (v. 1).
5. Name three men executed by King Solomon (v. 2).
6. Give some Bible statements showing that God wants us to be peaceable people (v. 3).
7. Why did the sluggard in v. 4 not want to plow?
8. Who is more apt to be free with counsel (v. 5)? Who more conservative with it?
9. Comment upon v. 6.
10. Give other passages besides v. 7 that show the blessings that come to children because of righteous parents.
11. What kind of king fulfills v. 8?
12. If Christ had not died, would there be any fountain for our sin (v. 9)?
13. Show from v. 10 that godliness extends to our business dealings.

## TEXT — 20:11-20

11. Even a child maketh himself known by his doings,  
Whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.
12. The hearing ear, and the seeing eye,  
Jehovah hath made even both of them.
13. Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty;  
Open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.
14. It is bad, it is bad, saith the buyer;  
But when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.
15. There is gold, and abundance of rubies;  
But the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.
16. Take his garment that is surety for a stranger;  
And hold him in pledge that is surety for foreigners.
17. Bread of falsehood is sweet to a man;  
But afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.
18. Every purpose is established by counsel;  
And by wise guidance make thou war.
19. He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets;  
Therefore company not with him that openeth wide his lips.
20. Whoso curseth his father or his mother,  
His lamp shall be put out in blackness of darkness.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 20:11-20

1. What is the force of the word "even" in v. 11?
2. Select some of the intricate workings of the eye or ear that would disprove evolution and uphold divine creation (v. 12).
3. While sleep is necessary, can one sleep too much (v. 13)?
4. Why does the buyer say, "It is bad, it is bad" (v. 14)?
5. When he goes his way, of what does he boast (v. 14)?
6. Why are lips of knowledge compared with a precious jewel (v. 15)?
7. Explain v. 16.
8. Show how sin is often "sweet" at the time but not so afterwards (v. 17).
9. Whose false guidance ruined Absalom (v. 18)?
10. Why not company with such a person (v. 19)?
11. What is meant by one's lamp being put out (v. 20)?

## PARAPHRASE OF 20:11-20

11. The character of even a child can be known by the way he acts--whether what he does is pure and right.
12. If you have good eyesight and good hearing, thank God who gave them to you.
13. If you love sleep, you will end in poverty. Stay awake, work hard, and there will be plenty to eat!
14. "Utterly worthless!" says the buyer as he haggles over the price. But afterwards he brags about his bargain!
15. Good sense is far more valuable than gold or precious jewels.
16. It is risky to make loans to strangers!
17. Some men enjoy cheating, but the cake they buy with such ill-gotten gain will turn to gravel in their mouths.
18. Don't go ahead with your plans without the advice of others; don't go to war until they agree.
19. Don't tell your secrets to a gossip unless you want them broadcast to the world.
20. God puts out the light of the man who curses his father or mother.

## COMMENTS ON 20:11-20

V. 11. The Bible says we can know what a person really is by what he does (Matt. 7:16; 12:35; I John 3:10; 2:29). This verse shows that people begin to take notice of one's behavior and to form an opinion concerning him even when he is a young child.

V. 12. Psa. 94:9 and Exo. 4:11 also affirm that God has made our equipment for seeing and hearing, and when one studies the intricacies of these valuable parts of our bodies, who else but God could make them? The theory of evolution is so inadequate to account for the origin of such sensitive, such intricate, such functional, parts of the human body. This is applicable not only to the eyes and ears but to all the body. R. G. Lee: "The most wonderful camera in all the world is the human eye. The most perfect telephone is the human ear. The most perfect violin is the human larynx. The most perfect telegraph system is the human nerves. The most wonderful chemical laboratories is the intestinal tract. The most wonderful thatch is the human hair. The most perfect filter is the human lung. The most perfect screen is the human eyelid. The most perfect pump

is the human heart."

V. 13. We know that a person can sleep too little for good health. But we can also sleep too much to get the necessary things done. Clark: "Sleep...is an indescribable blessing; but how often is it turned into a curse! It is like food: a certain measure of it restores and invigorates exhausted nature; more than that oppresses and destroys life." See Prov. 6:9-11; 19:15 also.

V. 14. If there is something wrong with an object one is seeking to buy, it is not out of place for the buyer to take that into consideration with the seller when making the purchase and agreeing upon the price, but this verse knows human nature all too well: to "knock" the product mercilessly and unrighteously as if it were no good, but when the purchase has been made at a small price, oh how the purchaser does brag to his friends of the deal he made! Beware, traders and buyers!

V. 15. Speaking of wisdom, Job 28:16-19 says, "It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. Gold and glass cannot equal it, neither shall it be exchanged for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral or of crystal: yea, the price of wisdom is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold." See Prov. 3:15; 8:11 for similar comparisons. This verse is not speaking of wisdom and knowledge held for oneself but shared with others.

V. 16. Prov. 27:13 is very similar. This is exactly what happens when one has made himself surety for another's debts who cannot pay. Prov. 22:26,27 warns against suretyship as do Prov. 6:1,2; 11:15; 17:18.

V. 17. The pleasures of sin seem great at the moment, but they can lead to very sorrowful consequences, and in the end to divine punishment in the lake of fire. Achan enjoyed much more the stealing of the forbidden from the spoils of Jéricho than he did the "afterwards" (Josh. 7:20-25). It seemed "sweet" to Joseph's brothers to sell him and get rid of him, but the "afterwards" of it was not good (Gen. 42:21,22). The philosophy of the evil woman of Prov. 9:17 is that "stolen waters of sweet", but the man who drinks "knoweth not that the dead are there; That her guests are in the depths of Sheol" (9:18). Look beyond the momentary pleasure derived from sin to the fearful consequences to which it leads (Heb. 10:31).

V. 18. This saying was given for those days when God had an earthly nation (Israel) and when their wars with the

idolatrous was a part of God's plan (a 1500 year period--from Moses onward). Other verses on the same subject and for the same period: Prov. 15:22; 24:6; Luke 14:31. Absalom was not wise in accepting Hushai's false counsel in preference to Ahithophel's wise counsel from his standpoint (II Sam. 17:1-14; 18:6-15). Just as they looked to "counsel" in their warfare, even so should we seek out good advice in pursuing major proposals.

V. 19. The first statement is found also in Prov. 11:13. A talebearer revealeth secrets wherever he goes. But be assured as he tells you the secrets of others that he in turn will reveal your secrets to the next ones to whom he talks. "Therefore company not with him," says this verse's conclusion, and a good conclusion it is! Proverbs has nothing good to say about the "talebearer" and the "whisperer", and what a poor way to live! Surely there is something far higher to live for than to be a talebearer and a gossip.

V. 20. Other Scriptures about cursing and belittling one's parents: Exo. 21:17; Lev. 20:9; Matt. 15:4. Other passages on one's lamp being put out: Prov. 24:20; Job 18:5,6. They always kept a small light burning in their houses at night, for utter darkness was one of the things they feared the most. The "lamp" of one's life, one's household, one's future lineage, would be cut off if he cursed his parents.

### TEST QUESTIONS OVER 20:11-20

1. How early do people begin forming an opinion about us (v. 11)?
2. Why does the theory of evolution fall far short of explaining the abilities of the ear and eye (v. 12)?
3. What are the dangers of getting either too little or too much sleep (v. 13)?
4. Why do traders and buyers need v. 14?
5. How does v. 15 describe the lips of knowledge?
6. What passages besides v. 16 contain teachings on suretyship?
7. What word is so important in v. 17?
8. What kind of "counsel" was v. 18 originally dealing with?
9. Why is it wise not to be a companion of a secret-revealer (v. 19)?
10. Why did the ancients customarily leave a small light burning at night (v. 20)?



## TEXT — 20:21-30

21. An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning;  
But the end thereof shall not be blessed.
22. Say not thou, I will recompense evil:  
Wait for Jehovah, and he will save thee.
23. Diverse weights are an abomination to Jehovah;  
And a false balance is not good.
24. A man's goings are of Jehovah;  
How then can man understand his way?
25. It is a snare to a man rashly to say, It is holy,  
And after vows to make inquiry.
26. A wise king winnoweth the wicked,  
And bringeth the threshingwheel over them.
27. The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah,  
Searching all his innermost parts.
28. Kindness and truth preserve the king;  
And his throne is upholden by kindness.
29. The glory of young men is their strength;  
And the beauty of old men is the hoary head.
30. Stripes that wound cleanse away evil;  
And strokes reach the innermost parts.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 20:21-30

1. Give a Bible example of one who misspent his inheritance money (v. 21).
2. Compare v. 22 with Abigail's advice to David in I Sam. 25:9-31.
3. What previous verse in this chapter teaches the same as v. 23?
4. What man in the last part of Genesis could look back and see the truth stated in v. 24?
5. What does Eccl. 5:4,5 say about making vows (v. 25)?
6. What should be any ruler's attitude and action toward wickedness (v. 26)?
7. Is v. 27 referring to the conscience?
8. Are kings usually thought of as "kind" (v. 28)?
9. Illustrate the statement about young men in v. 29.
10. Illustrate the statement about old men in v. 29.
11. Is the statement in v. 30 still true?

## PARAPHRASE OF 20:21-30

21. A fortune can be made from cheating, but there is a curse that goes with it.
22. Don't repay evil for evil. Wait for the Lord to handle the matter.
23. The Lord loathes all cheating and dishonesty.
24. Since the Lord is directing our steps, why try to understand everything that happens along the way?
25. It is foolish and rash to make a promise to the Lord before counting the cost.
26. A wise king stamps out crime by severe punishment.
27. A man's conscience is the Lord's searchlight exposing his hidden motives.
28. If a king is kind, honest and fair, his kingdom stands secure.
29. The glory of young men is their strength; of old men, their experience.
30. Punishment that hurts chases evil from the heart.

## COMMENTS ON 20:21-30

V. 21. Sometimes an inheritance immediately places into a person's hands more money than he has ever had in his possession at any one time. He didn't work for it; he didn't save it; but now all at once it is his. If the person is wise, it can be a great blessing as he thankfully receives it, as he carefully invests or uses it, and as he realizes the value of it. But "come easy, go easy" is so often the rule, and a short time of luxurious living (while it lasts; can make it a curse to him as he gets himself into a standard of living that he cannot maintain by his own earnings after the inheritance money is blown. A common laborer went through an inheritance of \$200,000 in six months. He didn't want to go back to working, so he and a woman teamed up and kidnapped a rich man's son, killed him, and collected the ransom money. They were executed by the state of Missouri. Others, like the Prodigal Son, get involved in sinful, indulgent living that they had never known before.

V. 22. Prov. 24:29 also forbids one saying he will take vengeance. I Thess. 5:15 and I Pet. 3:9 also forbid our vengeance-taking and teaches us to render good for their evil. Deut. 32:35,36 promises that God will take care of executing vengeance on the wrongdoer, saving us the trouble, keeping us from making

some mistakes, and being sure the wrongdoer will get just what he should receive. Paul reminds us of this in Rom. 12:19,20, promising that by our doing good to them, some of them will be turned from enmity to friendship (v. 21). Abigail believed this and persuaded David (I Sam. 25:9-34), and thereafter David appeared to be completely convinced of the rightness of this procedure (I Sam. 26:7-10; II Sam. 16:5-12).

V. 23. Similar to v. 10. God's great displeasure with crooked dishonest dealings with one's fellowmen is again expressed.

V. 24. That Jehovah leads in our lives, see Prov. 16:9 and Psa. 37:23. Since we cannot successfully direct our own ways (Jer. 10:23), we should ask God to do it for us (Prov. 3:6; Psa. 37:4,5). At the time we may not see the hand of the Lord at work as we will see it later (consider Gen. 50:20). Paul and Silas must have had this faith, for in answering the Macedonian call of Acts 16:9, they were soon in jail in Macedonia, but we see no complaining in them but praying and singing praises to God (Acts 16:25), and great good came out of their actual imprisonment (Acts 16:26-34).

V. 25. We should always think before acting, and when vowing before God this verse shows that one should be sure he is going to carry through before promising. And so agrees Eccl. 5:4,5. We should work to get people to make sacred decisions, but we do not want to pressure them into saying something that they will not have the faith, reverence, and determination to carry out. Many a persuasive, out-going, personality-man has gotten people baptized who were not really ready on their own to live the Christ-directed life.

V. 26. "Winnoweth" and "threshingwheel" refer to their threshing the grain and by rough-handling their separating the grain from the rest. Whippings (punishments) have often been referred to by the word "threshing". Solomon (and God who inspired his including this statement in the Proverbs) knew that the wicked should be dealt with as such, and so should every ruler of any level (parent, judge, school principal, church leader, etc.). Put "ruler" for "king", and this statement makes sense in an extended way to every realm of leadership.

V. 27. I Cor. 2:11 speaks of this "spirit of man": "Who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him?" That which man has from Jehovah that animals are not credited with having and that searches out one's innermost thoughts is the conscience. Man has this important

facility within him because God wanted him to have it. When one's conscience operates, his thoughts either "accuse" or "excuse" him for his actions (Rom. 2:15), depending upon whether he has violated or carried out what he understands to be right. The conscience is a "Siamese twin" of one's intellect: whatever one's intellect tells him is right or wrong, his conscience accepts the same position and works accordingly (Acts 26:9-11; 23:1).

V. 28. There have been many unkind kings; in fact, it has been common for man to abuse his place of power. Except for David's unkindness to Uriah, he was a living model of a king who wanted to be kind and good to his subjects, to his men, and to his repentant enemies, and who sought to rule with the absolute truth in mind. Note the similar promise in Prov. 29:14. Such a king, though, is not looked upon as "kind" by those who do wrong (v. 26).

V. 29. It is natural for young men to glory in their strength. Their bodies are young, healthy, working, nimble, capable, etc., and because of this, competitive athletics are common for that age. They wrestle, lift weights, run, play football and other types of ball, etc. And because of this strength sometimes they forget that life can be taken from them without a warning, and sometimes they abuse their bodies to the undoing of their comfort in older years. But in time that strength will naturally be replaced with the gray and then the white hair of old age, which is said by this verse to be beautiful. It symbolizes length of days, rich experiences, knowledge and wisdom, and many years of usefulness, all of which add up to a respect that is normally forthcoming (Prov. 16:31).

V. 30. "Stripes" and "strokes" have to do with correcting and punishing those who have done evil. This verse presents the following parallels: "stripes" and "strokes" go together as do "cleanse away evil" and "reach the innermost parts". When such are applied severely enough ("wound"), they do reach the seat of evil (The "innermost parts"). Words of instruction should always precede the wounds of discipline, but words are too weak to reach some people; the only language that some people can get anything out of at all is that of severe discipline. When a congregation no longer deals with the evil committed within it; when a home does not discipline its disobedient children; and when a government does not punish the wrongdoer, it is bad for

everybody; the individual himself, the church, the home, and society.

### TEST QUESTIONS OVER 20:21-30

1. Tell how the truth of v. 21 was observed in a man in Missouri?
2. From whom did David learn the truth contained in v. 22?
3. How many times in this chapter has God dealt with crookedness in business (v. 23)?
4. What wonderful assurance does v. 24 bring to us?
5. The comments connected v. 25 with what teaching in Eccl.?
6. According to v. 26 what does a wise king do about wickedness?
7. What is conscience a "Siamese twin" to (v. 27)?
8. King David seems to have been a very kind ruler except when (v. 28)?
9. Give examples of young men glorying in their strength (v. 29)?
10. How many times is punishing the wicked brought up in this chapter (v. 30)?

### NOTICEABLE GROUPINGS IN CHAPTER 20

#### *"King"*--

"The terror of a king is as the roaring of a lion" (v. 2).

"A king that sitteth on the throne of judgment Scattereth away all evil with his eyes" (v.8).

"A wise king winnoweth the wicked, And bringeth the threshingwheel over them" (v. 26).

"Kindness and truth preserve the king; And his throne is upholden by kindness" (v. 28).

#### *"Laziness"*--

"The sluggard will not plow by reason of the winter; Therefore he shall beg in harvest, and have nothing" (v. 4).

"Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; Open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread" (v. 13).

#### *"Business dishonesty"*--

"Diverse weights, and diverse measures, Both of them alike are an abomination to Jehovah" (v. 10).

"It is bad, it is bad, saith the buyer; But when he is gone

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his way, then he boasteth" (v. 14).

"Diverse weights are an abomination to Jehovah; And a false balance is not good" (v. 23).

### *"Speech"--*

"Most men will proclaim every one his own kindness; But a faithful man who can find?" (v. 6).

"It is bad, it is bad, saith the buyer; But when he is gone his way, then he boasteth" (v. 14).

"The lips of knowledge are a precious jewel" (v. 15).

"He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets; Therefore company not with him that openeth wide his lips" (v. 19).

"Whoso curseth his father or his mother, His lamp shall be put out in blackness of darkness" (v. 20).

"It is a snare to a man rashly to say, It is holy, And after vows to make inquiry" (v. 25).

### *"Outcome"--*

"The terror of the king is as the roaring of a lion: he that provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own life" (v. 2).

"The sluggard will not plow by reason of the winter; Therefore he shall beg in harvest, and have nothing" (v. 4).

"A righteous man that walketh in his integrity, Blessed are his children after him" (v. 7).

"Bread of falsehood is sweet to a man; But afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel" (v. 17).

"Whoso curseth his father or his mother, His lamp shall be put out in blackness of darkness" (v. 20).

"An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning; But the end thereof shall not be blessed" (v. 21).

### *"Counsel"--*

"Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; But a man of understanding will draw it out" (v. 5).

"Every purpose is established by counsel; And by wise guidance make thou war" (v. 18).

### *"Great questions"--*

"A faithful man who can find?" (v. 6).

"Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" (v. 9).

### *"Jehovah"--*

"Diverse weights, and diverse measures, Both of them alike

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are an abomination to Jehovah" (v. 10).

"The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, Jehovah hath made even both of them" (v. 12).

"Say not thou, I will recompense evil: Wait for Jehovah, and he will save thee" (v. 22).

"Diverse weights are an abomination to Jehovah" (v. 23).

"A man's goings are of Jehovah" (v. 24).

"The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah" (v. 27).

### *"Kindness"--*

"Most men will proclaim every one his own kindness" (v. 6).

"Kindness and truth preserve the king; And his throne is upholden by kindness" (v. 28).

### *"Knowledge"--*

"Counsel in the heart of man is like keep water; But a man of understanding will draw it out" (v. 5).

"The lips of knowledge are a precious jewel" (v. 15).

## PONDERING THE PROVERBS

### LAZINESS LOSES OUT

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

Yes, over and over in Proverbs, it says that the slothful man "hath nothing". There is an honorable poverty, and the Bible so recognizes it. But, poverty that comes through slothfulness is not honorable—it is dishonorable in every way.

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

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

Be diligent, not lazy, the Proverbs would say!



## TEXT — 21:1-10

1. The king's heart is in the hand of Jehovah as the water-courses:  
He turneth it whithersoever he will.
2. Every way of a man is right in his own eyes;  
But Jehovah weigheth the hearts.
3. To do righteousness and justice  
Is more acceptable to Jehovah than sacrifice.
4. A high look, and a proud heart,  
Even the lamp of the wicked, is sin.
5. The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness;  
But every one that is hasty hasteth only to want.
6. The getting of treasures by a lying tongue  
Is a vapor driven to and fro by them that seek death.
7. The violence of the wicked shall sweep them away,  
Because they refuse to do justice.
8. The way of him that is laden with guilt is exceeding crooked;  
But as for the pure, his work is right.
9. It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop,  
Than with a contentious woman in a wide house.
10. The soul of the wicked desireth evil:  
His neighbor findeth no favor in his eyes.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 21:1-10

1. Is v. 1 always true or only when God specially wills it for the fulfillment of some special purpose?
2. Does v. 2 imply that God draws a different conclusion from us in the matter?
3. Is v. 3 frowning on religious ceremony or stating that such is not a substitute for righteousness but a supplement to it?
4. What does "lamp of the wicked" mean (v. 4)?
5. What is the main contrast in v. 5?
6. How could one get treasures by lying (v. 6)?
7. What are some examples of v. 7 from history?
8. Illustrate v. 8 by Herod and Herodias.
9. How could one live in the corner of a housetop (v. 9)?
10. Is the second clause in v. 10 one of the evils of the first clause, or is it the result of that clause?

## PARAPHRASE OF 21:1-10

1. Just as water is turned into irrigation ditches, so the Lord directs the king's thoughts. He turns them wherever He wants to.
2. We can justify our every deed but God looks at our motives.
3. God is more pleased when we are just and fair than when we give Him gifts.
4. Pride, lust, and evil actions are all sin.
5. Steady plodding brings prosperity; hasty speculation brings poverty.
6. Dishonest gain will never last, so why take the risk?
7. Because the wicked are unfair, their violence boomerangs and destroys them.
8. A man is known by his actions; an evil man lives an evil life; a good man lives a godly life.
9. It is better to live in the corner of an attic than with a crabby woman in a lovely home.
10. An evil man loves to harm others; being a good neighbor is out of his line.

## COMMENTS ON 21:1-10

V. 1. "Clarke": "There is an allusion here to the eastern method of watering their lands. Several canals are dug from one stream; and by opening a particular sluice, the husbandman can direct a stream to whatever part he pleases." We should not conclude from this that everything any king does is of the Lord (this would make God responsible for the many evils of government); yet when God gets ready to affect a king's heart, He is able to do so (Ezra 1:1; 7:6; 7:27; Neh. 1:11; 2:4-8)."

V. 2. This is very similar to Prov. 16:2. Most people are too quick to claim credit (and are offended if they are not given it) and too slow to accept guilt. That God accurately weighs each person (beginning with the heart) See Prov. 24:12; Luke 16:15; Dan. 5:27.

V. 3. There are all kinds of people in the world: some who are both righteous and religious (the godly); some who seek to be righteous but are not religious (the moralist); some who are not careful about righteousness but do try to be religious (the hypocrite); and some who are neither righteous nor religious (the out-and-out wicked). This verse is dealing with the third-listed

group above (the hypocrite). We all fall short of the perfection of God (Rom. 3:23), but with our religion we are to be as righteous and as just as we can be, and if we aren't, God is highly displeased with us (Isa. 1:11,15; Hos. 6:6; Mic. 6:7,8) Prov. 15:8).

V. 4. This verse deals with pride and the prosperity of the proud. A "high look" is one of the outward expressions of a "proud heart". Over and over does God speak His displeasure with man's exalted opinion of himself (Prov. 6:16,17; Dan. 4:29-37). "Pulpit Commentary": "Lamp is...a metaphor for prosperity and happiness (II Sam. 22:29; I Kings 11:36); and it is here said that the sinner's outward prosperity and joyousness, springing from no good source, being founded in self, and not resting in virtue and godliness, are in themselves sinful and displeasing to God."

V. 5. This verse speaks of the "thoughts" of the diligent, Prov. 10:4 of the "hand" of the diligent, and Prov. 13:4 of the "soul" of the diligent, and all three verses testify to their mutual prosperity. "Diligent" (as it stands in contrast with "hasty") evidently means the honest, hard-working, patient person who steadily builds up his holdings; "hasty" evidently applies to the person who is a get-rich-quick-any-way type of person condemned by I Tim. 6:9,10. Even small communities have known examples of those who were out for the "fast-buck" who ended up in poverty and want, and cities contain many such examples.

V. 6. Connect this verse with v. 5. Getting treasures by "lying" would be parallel to "treasures of wickedness" in Prov. 10:2 and "wealth gotten by vanity" in Prov. 13:11. In all three verses the result is similar: "vapor driven to and fro" (this verse), "profit nothing" (10:2), and "shall be diminished" (13:11). Such people come to "seek death" (this verse), and the suicide-rate is exceedingly high among the world's wealthy.

V. 7. Even this verse may be related to vs. 5,6. The "violent" are those who injure others; such refuse to think of "justice". "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:52). Is this not the story of conquerors who later find their own type of violence sweeping them helpless away?

V. 8. "Evil men wax worse and worse" (II Tim. 3:13). Such was the story of King Ahab, Herod and Herodias, and many others. One fellow was said to be so crooked that when he died, they didn't dig a grave for him—they just screwed him into the ground! "Laden" shows that guilt is a terrible load. Jesus

said to the sinfully weary, "Come unto me, all ye that...are heavy laden, and I will give you rest...unto your souls" (Matt. 11:28,29). The "pure" present a welcome contrast; Much is said in a few words: "his work is right"--it is like it ought to be. And may such increase!

V. 9. Their housetops were flat. Gathering his few things together and living in the corner of the flat housetop, inconvenient as it would be, is proverbially said to be preferred to living down in the commodious house with a woman who is cantankerous. Prov. 25:24 and v. 19 of this chapter are similar. The unpleasantness of dwelling with a contentious woman is also mentioned in Prov. 19:13 and Prov. 27:15. Some women can be blessed with the very finest of material things and yet be anything but happy; they can be anything but a joy to come home to. In our day of permissive divorce courts such contentions lead to divorces.

V. 10. The wicked man does not respect God's law, for he "desireth evil" instead of good, nor does he respect his fellow-man, for "his neighbor findeth no favor in his eyes". The wicked man is not prompted by a reverence for God, by a respect for God's law, by holy aspirations. He has his desire set upon evil. "They that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh" (Rom. 8:5); "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God" (Rom. 8:7). "The wicked...sleep not, except they do evil; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall" (Prov. 4:14-16). The person who has no good word for anyone is not honorable himself; this is why "his neighbor findeth no favor in his eyes".

### TEST QUESTIONS OVER 21:1-10

1. What is meant by "watercourses" in v. 1?
2. Cite Bible instances in which God turned the hearts of kings in the direction He wanted them to go (v. 1).
3. Is God's evaluation of a person always the same as the person's own evaluation of himself (v. 2)?
4. What kind of person is v. 3 dealing with?
5. When do the wicked have a "high look" (v. 4)?
6. Contrast "diligent" and "hasty" as used in v. 5.
7. Contrast their outcomes (v. 5).
8. How can v. 6 be related to v. 5 and also to Prov. 10:2 and Prov. 13:11?
7. In keeping with v. 7 what usually happens to con-

querors?

8. Name some "crooked" characters in the Bible (v. 8).
10. Comment on "laden" in v. 8.
11. How could one dwell on a housetop (v. 9)?
12. How terrible does Proverbs show a contentious wife to be (v. 9)?
13. How does a man's wickedness show up in vo. 10?

#### TEXT — 21:11-20

11. When the scoffer is punished, the simple is made wise;  
And when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge.
12. The righteous man considereth the house of the wicked,  
How the wicked are overthrown to their ruin.
13. Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor,  
He also shall cry, but shall not be heard.
14. A gift in secret pacifieth anger;  
And a present in the bosom, strong wrath.
15. It is joy to the righteous to do justice;  
But it is a destruction to the workers of iniquity.
16. The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding  
Shall rest in the assembly of the dead.
17. He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man:  
He that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.
18. The wicked is a ransom for the righteous;  
And the treacherous cometh in the stead of the upright.
19. It is better to dwell in a desert land,  
Than with a contentious and fretful woman.
20. There is precious treasure and oil in the dwelling of the wise;  
But a foolish man swalloweth it up.

#### STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 21:11-20

1. What three classes of persons are mentioned in v. 11?
2. From what you know of yourself, in which class are you (v. 11)?
3. Does the truth of v. 12 help keep a righteous man in the way of the righteousness?
4. How is v. 13 a fulfillment of Gal. 6:7?
5. Does v. 14 present parallels at each point in the two clauses?
6. What is the antecedent word or thought of the "it" in the

second clause (v. 15)?

7. What picture do you get from the word "wandereth" in v. 16?
8. Why would pleasure make a man poor in Bible days (v. 17)?
9. How would "oil" enter into the picture in v. 17?
10. When is the wicked a ransom for the righteous (v. 18)?
11. What is meant by the last clause in v. 18?
12. Where else besides a desert is it better to dwell than with a contentious woman (v. 19)?
13. What does "swallow up" mean in v. 20?

### PARAPHRASE OF 21:11-20

11. The wise man learns by listening; the simpleton can learn only by seeing scorners punished.
12. The godly learn by watching ruin overtake the wicked.
13. He who shuts his ears to the cries of the poor will be ignored in his own time of need.
- 14,15. An angry man may be silenced by a bribe, while the good man loves truth and justice. But the evil man fears these beyond all else, for they spell his doom.
16. The man who strays away from common sense will end up dead!
17. A man who lives pleasure becomes poor; wine and luxury are not the way to riches.
18. The wicked will finally lose; the righteous will finally win.
19. Better to live in the desert than with a quarrelsome, complaining women.
20. The wise man saves for the future, but the foolish man spends whatever he gets.

### COMMENTS ON 21:11-20

V. 11. Prov. 19:25 sets forth similar truths. Even if punishment doesn't help the scoffer himself (and sometimes it doesn't), it will help the onlooking-simple who might have gotten into the same thing. God even commanded to smite certain sinners with death that others might be helped: Deut. 13:6-11; 17:8-13; 19:16-20; 21:18-21. When God smote Ananias and Sapphira, "great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things" (Acts 5:11), and you can be sure that nobody else was even tempted to do what they had done! When

Paul wrote that stern, corrective letter (I Cor.) to the Corinthian church, which resulted in its withdrawing from the incestuous man (I Cor. 5; II Cor. 2:4-7), it also did much for the congregation itself (II Cor. 7:8-11). The latter part of our verse shows that a wise man is easy to instruct and gains much from it (Prov. 14:6). Such is a teacher's joy. But it is hard to instruct those who do not want to listen (Heb. 5:11).

V. 12. In keeping with v. 11 this verse shows that the righteous person is also a wise person who learns not only from instruction (v. 11) but also from observation, not having to go through bitter experiences to learn (like Jonah). He notices what happens to the wicked, and he learns from it because he "considers" it or thinks upon it. Seeing what happens to the wicked is good reason not to choose their way!

V. 13. "Pulpit Commentary": "A two-fold retribution is threatened on the unmerciful man: he himself shall fall into distress, and shall appeal to his neighbors for help in vain." Oh, how quickly the tables of life can be turned! Those who refuse to help others today may stand in need of help tomorrow, but no help will be forthcoming. People who know how such a one has acted will not be touched to help him, and God will not move others to help him either. And oh, how bitter the cries when they are ours and when no one will listen!

V. 14. A triple parallel: "gift" and "present", "in secret" and "in the bosom", and "anger" and "strong wrath". "Pulpit Commentary": "A gift offered secretly to one incensed, whether personal enemy, judge, or prince, averts the consequences of the offence." Concerning "in the bosom" "Pulpit Commentary" remarks, "A present kept handy in the bosom of the petitioner's garment, ready to be transferred at a fitting moment." Though this is the way it often works, it is not right (I Sam. 12:3-5) 8:3; Amos 5:12).

V. 15. Prov. 10:29 sets forth similar truth. The righteous rejoice over justice (as does God), but not the workers of iniquity, for justice is their destruction. Jesus loved righteousness and hated iniquity (Heb. 1:9), and the Bible commands us to "abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Rom. 12:9). When we do this, we are for truth (facts) and honesty in dealing with cases brought before the court.

V. 16. "Wandereth out" of the way of understanding characterizes one who leaves, departs, goes astray from the established path. "Shall rest" in the assembly of the dead is used

ironically: such probably thought or boasted that he would find the good way, but it didn't end as he had invisioned, for the "rest" to which such departures lead is the rest of death. King Ahab knew better when he allowed Jezebel to acquire Naboth's vineyard for him as she did (I Kings 21:1-16), but it did him no good, leading to his death (I Kings 21:17-22). We should know the right way (Eph. 5:17), walk the right way (Jer. 6:16), and not forsake it (II Pet. 2:20,21). This verse reminds one of Jude's statement of "wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved for ever" (Jude 13). Men, like meteors that break off and go flying through space, soon come to their everlasting end!

V. 17. Another parallelism: "loveth pleasure" and "loveth wine and oil" mean the same as do "shall be a poor man" and "shall not be rich". To have "a good time" the world's way has always involved a constant expenditure of money (one cause of becoming poor), and such life also diverts one from his work and business interests (another cause). Oh, the multitude of pleasures for people today to get involved in and sidetracked by!

V. 18. "Ransom" in the first clause and "in the stead of" in the second show that something happens to the wicked that might have happened to the righteous or that results in a better state for the righteous. "Clarke": "God often in his judgments cuts off the wicked in order to prevent them from destroying the righteous. And in general we find that the wicked fall into the traps and pits they have digged for the righteous." Prov. 11:8 says, "The righteous is delivered out of trouble; And the wicked cometh in his stead." As wicked Babylon fell, God's people were blessed with liberation. By punishing the scorner, others are spared from falling into the same sin and suffering the same fate (Prov. 21:11,12).

V. 19. This is very similar to v. 9 and Prov. 25:24. There are some kinds of women who will ruin a man's life: a "contentious" woman (this verse); a "fretful" woman (this verse); and an "odious" woman (Prov. 30:23). Since it is "better" to dwell in a "desert" than with such a woman, is not this proverb saying that it is better not to be married than to be married to such a person? Since there is a noticeable percentage of people so married, should it not be some comfort to the unmarried that at least they are in the class that Proverbs says is "better" than that?

V. 20. Wisdom knows the earthly value of precious



treasure and oil (olive oil, which was so useful in Bible days). Men of God like Job, Abraham, David, and others were blessed with an abundance of these, yet they were apparently not selfish with them (did Abraham appear selfish in offering nephew Lot the choice of the land in Gen. 13:2-12?) but were willing to give to others from their store (Job. 31:16-23). The contrast within our verse shows that the "foolish" devours everything he gets his hands on. Is this not the way with many today? They draw big money per hour, blow it all in, and the slightest emergency proves to be a major calamity financially. The Bible says that we are (1) to labor (2) at honest occupations (3) so that we will have something left over above our own needs to give to those who are in need (Eph. 4:28).

### TEST QUESTIONS OVER 21:11-20

1. Who always profits when a scoffer is punished (v. 11)?
2. What is the wise person's response to instruction (v. 12)?
3. According to v. 12 a wise person not only learns from instruction but also from ..... .
4. Why do the righteous learn from the calamities that come upon the wicked (v. 12)?
5. What double calamity does v. 13 say will come upon the man who is unmerciful to the needy?
6. Comment upon "in the bosom" (v. 14).
7. Is v. 14 justifying bribes or observing why men often resort to them?
8. How do the righteous feel about "justice" (v. 15)?
9. Why do the workers of iniquity not rejoice over "justice" (v. 15)?
10. Cite Bible examples of men who "wandered out" of the way that they knew to be right and suffered the end mentioned in v. 16.
11. Cite the parallels in v. 17.
12. In what two ways can pleasure-lovers be made poor (v. 17)?
13. What did you understand from v. 18?
14. What is the single life of an unmarried person better than (v. 19)?
15. What is the difference between the "wise" and the "foolish" with reference to material things (v. 20)?

## TEXT — 21:21-31

21. He that followeth after righteousness and kindness  
Findeth life, righteousness, and honor.
22. A wise man scaleth the city of the mighty,  
And bringeth down the strength of the confidence  
thereof.
23. Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue  
Keepeth his soul from troubles.
24. The proud and haughty man, scoffer is his name;  
He worketh in the arrogance of pride.
25. The desire of the sluggard killeth him;  
For his hands refuse to labor.
26. There is that coveteth greedily all the day long;  
But the righteous giveth and withholdeth not.
27. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination;  
How much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked  
mind!
28. A false witness shall perish;  
But the man that heareth shall speak so as to endure.
29. A wicked man hardeneth his face;  
But as for the upright, he establisheth his ways.
30. There is no wisdom nor understanding  
Nor counsel against Jehovah.
31. The horse is prepared against the day of battle;  
But the victory is of Jehovah.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 21:21-31

1. What was Timothy told to "follow" after (v. 21)?
2. What book tells of a wise man who delivered his city from the enemy (v. 22)?
3. What play is made on the word "keepeth" in v. 23?
4. What five words in v. 24 really belong together?
5. "Killeth" him in what sense (v. 25)?
6. With which action is the righteous identified--being greedy or giving (v. 26)?
7. What is meant in v. 27 by one bringing his sacrifice with a wicked mind?
8. What will cause the false witness to perish (v. 28)?
9. Does v. 29 refer to the momentary look of a wicked man or the permanent hard-looking face that sin develops?

10. What other passages besides v. 31 show that it is God and not horses that make the difference in battle?

## PARAPHRASE OF 21:21-31

21. The man who tries to be good, loving and kind finds life, righteousness and honor.  
22. The wise man conquers the strong man and levels his defenses.  
23. Keep your mouth closed and you'll stay out of trouble.  
24. Mockers are proud, haughty and arrogant.  
25,26. The lazy man longs for many things but his hands refuse to work. He is greedy to get, while the godly love to give!  
27. God loathes the gifts of evil men, especially if they are trying to bribe Him!  
28. A false witness must be punished; an honest witness is safe.  
29. An evil man is stubborn, but a godly man will reconsider.  
30. No one, regardless of how shrewd or well-advised he is, can stand against the Lord.  
31. Go ahead and prepare for the conflict, but victory comes from God.

## COMMENTS ON 21:21-31

V. 21. "Young's Literal": "Whoso is pursuing righteousness..." This would suggest an earnest following after righteousness and kindness. Prov. 15:9 and I Tim. 6:11 also speak of following righteousness. Matt. 5:6 speaks of hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Matt. 6:33 says we should seek the kingdom of God and righteousness before everything else. Both in the seeking the right thing and in the promise of finding the good things of life, righteousness, and honor, this verse is quite similar to Rom. 2:6,7.

V. 22. This verse shows that wisdom is really might. Eccl. 9:13-16 tells of a single wise man who without great forces or great equipment was able to discomfit a mighty army. That wisdom is greater than might, consider the superior brute force of some of the ferocious animal world that man, who is inferior in physical strength, is able to subdue and handle through his superior wisdom.

V. 23. Prov. 13:3 contains a similar truth. A godly man

will keep his heart (Prov. 4:23), will keep himself in the love of God (Jude 21), will keep himself unspotted from the world (Jas. 1:27), and will keep his tongue (this verse). Would you keep yourself from many troubles? Then keep your mouth and your tongue. Most trouble springs from something that one says!

V. 24. Notice three words that go together: "proud," "haughty," and "arrogance". This verse speaks of his working; but what does he do? He scoffs! He laughs at religion, makes fun of godly people, etc. Peter predicted that such would show up in the last days (II Pet. 3:3,4).

V. 25. Prov. 13:4 also speaks of the "desire of the sluggard", saying that he "hath nothing". This verse explains why: "his hands refuse to labor." On his desire killing him, "Pulpit Commentary" suggests: "The mere wish, combined with no active exertion to secure its accomplishment, is fatal to soul, body, and fortune."

V. 26. This verse reflects two ways to live with reference to material things: (1) how can one get more for himself even at others' expense? and (2) how can one help others who are in need? The first majors on selfishness, the second on service. Psalms 37:26 and Psalm 112:9 blesses the giver.

V. 27. The first statement is also found in Prov. 15:8. God does not want people to substitute religious rites for actual righteousness: "To obey is better than sacrifice" (I Sam. 15:22). Thus, God deplores the sacrifice of people who are not trying to live right (Jer. 6:20; Amos 5:22; Isa. 1:11-15). To bring a sacrifice with a "wicked mind" must be to bring it with some motive to deceive God or to "buy God off" because of some sin being persisted in or because of some illegitimate gain from which he is bringing the sacrifice.

V. 28. Very similar to Prov. 19:5 and Prov. 19:9, both of which say, "A false witness shall not be unpunished." "So as to endure" in the second statement stands over against "shall perish" in the first, meaning that the true witness (one who speaks what he knows through his own seeing and hearing) will not be executed for perverting justice through lying such as will befall the false witness.

V. 29. Another contrast between the wicked and the upright in which the wicked hardens his face instead of repenting and having his ways established like the upright. "Septuagint": "An ungodly man shamelessly withstands with his face." This continued wickedness will bring destruction. After showing the

prosperity of the righteous, Psa. 1:4-6 says, "The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish."

V. 30. God may allow many things that are wrong to happen (until judgment), but when there is a known showdown between God and the forces of unrighteousness, His opposition always comes out on the short end. Aaron's rod that miraculously became a snake ate up those of Pharaoh's magicians (Exo. 7:10-12). When they tried to duplicate the plagues brought upon the land by Moses, they finally had to give up and acknowledge the supremacy of God (Exo. 8:19). Baal lost out to Jehovah on Mt. Carmel (I Kings 18:26-39). The people of Samaria could see the difference between Simon the sorcerer's fake miracles and Philip's genuine ones (Acts 8:6-13). Herod of Acts 12 began laying hands on the apostles, killing James and intending to do the same to Peter (vs. 1-3). But before the chapter was over, Herod was dead (vs. 21-23), and the very next verse shows God's triumph: "But the word of God grew and multiplied" (v. 24). As II Cor. 13:8 says, we cannot really do anything against the truth.

V. 31. Horses were used in Bible days for war and not for agricultural purposes. This verse shows that even if horses were used (representing human military might), Israel's victory really came from Jehovah and not the human arrangements. See the following passages that bear on the subject: Psa. 20:7; 33:17; Isa. 31:1; Psa. 3:8.

### TEST QUESTIONS OVER 21:21-31

1. How does the Bible represent a good person's quest for righteousness (v. 21)?
2. Give proof that wisdom is superior to brute force (v. 22).
3. What all is a godly person to "keep" (v. 23)?
4. What three words in v. 24 go together?
5. Why will the sluggard have nothing (v. 25)?
6. What two attitudes toward material things are found in v. 26?
7. What kind of people does God not want sacrificing (v. 27)?
8. What will not happen to the man who hardens his face (v. 29)?

9. Tell of instances in which God was purposely opposed to the defeat of His opposition (v. 30).
10. What does the Bible say about relying upon "horses" (v. 31)?

### NOTICEABLE GROUPINGS IN CHAPTER 21

#### *"Righteousness"--*

"To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to Jehovah than sacrifice" (v. 3).

"The righteous man considereth the house of the wicked, How the wicked are overthrown to their ruin" (v. 12).

"It is joy to the righteous to do justice" (v. 15).

"The wicked is a ransom for the righteous; And the treacherous cometh in the stead of the upright" (v. 18).

"He that followeth after righteousness and kindness Findeth life, righteousness, and honor" (v. 21).

"The righteous giveth and withholdeth not" (v. 26).

"The upright, he establisheth his ways" (v. 29).

#### *"Jehovah"--*

"The king's heart is in the hand of Jehovah as the water-courses: he turneth it whithersoever he will" (v. 1).

"Every way of a man is right in his own eyes; But Jehovah weigheth the hearts" (v. 2).

"To do righteousness and justice Is more acceptable to Jehovah than sacrifice" (v. 3).

"There is no wisdom nor understanding Nor counsel against Jehovah" (v. 30).

"The horse is prepared against the day of battle; But victory is of Jehovah" (v. 31).

#### *"Heart"--*

"The king's heart is in the hand of Jehovah as the water-courses: He turneth it whithersoever he will" (v. 1).

"Jehovah weigheth the hearts" (v. 2).

"A proud heart...is sin" (v. 4).

"The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination; How much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind!" (v. 27).

#### *"Tongue"--*

"The getting of treasures by a lying tongue Is a vapor driven to and fro by them that seek death" (v. 6).

"Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue Keepeth his soul

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from troubles" (v. 23).

"A false witness shall perish; But the man that heareth shall speak so as to endure" (v. 28).

### *"Wicked"--*

"The lamp of the wicked, is sin" (v. 4).

"The violence of the wicked shall sweep them away" (v. 7).

"The soul of the wicked desireth evil: His neighbor findeth no favor in his eyes" (v. 10).

"The wicked are overthrown to their ruin" (v. 12).

"To do justice...is a destruction to the workers of iniquity" (v. 15).

"The wicked is a ransom for the righteous" (v. 18).

"The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination" (v. 27).

"A wicked man hardeneth his face" (v. 29).

### *"Sacrifice"--*

"To do righteousness and justice Is more acceptable to Jehovah than sacrifice" (v. 3).

"The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination; How much more, when he bringeth with a wicked mind!" (v. 27).

### *"Pride"--*

"A high look, and a proud heart...is sin" (v. 4).

"The proud and haughty man, scoffer is his name; He worketh in the arrogance of pride" (v. 24).

### *"Wisdom"--*

"When the scoffer is punished, the simple is made wise; And when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge" (v. 11).

"There is precious treasure and oil in the dwelling of the wise" (v. 20).

"A wise man scaleth the city of the mighty, And bringeth down the strength of the confidence thereof" (v. 22).

### *"Death, destruction"--*

"The getting of treasures by a lying tongue Is a vapor driven to and fro by them that seek death" (v. 6).

"The violence of the wicked shall sweep them away" (v. 7).

"The wicked are overthrown to their ruin" (v. 12).

"Destruction to the workers of iniquity" (v. 15).

"The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding Shall rest in the assembly of the dead" (v. 16).

"A false witness shall perish" (v. 28).

## PONDERING THE PROVERBS

### *"Rich"--*

"The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness" (v. 5).

"The getting of treasures by a lying tongue Is a vapor driven to and fro by them that seek death" (v. 6).

"There is precious treasure and oil in the dwelling of the wise" (v. 20).

### *"Poor"--*

"Every one that is hasty hasteth only to want" (v. 5).

"Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, He also shall cry, but shall not be heard" (v. 13).

"He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: He that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich" (v. 17).

## "SLOW TO ANGER" IS GREAT VIRTUE

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

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

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



## TEXT — 22:1-10

1. A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches,  
And loving favor rather than silver and gold.
2. The rich and poor meet together;  
Jehovah is the maker of them all.
3. A prudent man seeth the evil, and hideth himself;  
But the simple pass on, and suffer for it.
4. The reward of humility and the fear of Jeohavh  
Is riches, and honor, and life.
5. Thorns and stars are in the way of the perverse:  
He that keepeth his soul shall be far from them.
6. Train up a child in the way he should go,  
And even when he is old he will not depart from it.
7. The rich ruleth over the poor;  
And the borrower is servant to the lender.
8. He that soweth iniquity shall reap calamity;  
And the rod of his wrath shall fail.
9. He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed;  
For he giveth of his bread to the poor.
10. Cast out the scoffer, and contention will go out;  
Yea, strife and ignominy will cease.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 22:1-10

1. Restate v. 1 in your own words.
2. What is the purpose of the statement in v. 2?
3. What does "evil" mean in v. 3?
4. What Bible characters were rewarded in keeping with v. 4:
5. What do "thorns" and "snares" stand for in v. 5?
6. What does another proverb say about a child left to help himself to grow up his own way instead of training him (v. 6)?
7. If a child does not turn out right, should we question God's promise in v. 26 or the parent's rearing?
8. Is v. 7 stating the way it is or the way it should be?
9. What is the game no one can win (v. 8)?
10. Why does v. 9 speak of one's "eye" being bountiful?
11. In Solomon's day, cast him out of what (v. 10)?

## PARAPHRASE OF 22:1-10

1. If you must choose, take a good name rather than great riches; for to be held in loving esteem is better than

silver and gold.

2. The rich and the poor are alike before the Lord who made them all.
3. A prudent man foresees the difficulties ahead and prepares for them; the simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences.
4. True humility and respect for the Lord lead a man to riches, honor and long life.
5. The rebel walks a thorny, treacherous road; the man who values his soul will stay away.
6. Teach a child to choose the right path, and when he is older he will remain upon it.
7. Just as the rich rules the poor, so the borrower is servant to the lender.
8. The unjust tyrant will reap disaster and his reign of terror shall end.
9. Happy is the generous man, the one who feeds the poor.
10. Throw out the mocker, and you will be rid of tension, fighting and quarrels.

#### COMMENTS ON 22:1-10

V. 1. Eccl. 7:1 is similar, saying a good name is better than "precious oil." Those who get rich through dishonest means choose riches rather than a good reputation. If it comes down to a choice, always choose a good name ("loving favor") to great riches ("Silver and gold"). Great possessions with no friends can be so cold and empty! There are many suicides among the rich too. An average living with many friends and the favor of God proves to be the happiest, most satisfying way to live.

V. 2. Prov. 29:13 speaks similarly concerning the two classes. Does God make them rich and poor, or is He the maker of them regardless of whether they are rich or poor? Probably the latter. In society they both help each other. "Pulpit Commentary" aptly remarks: "The labor of the poor makes the wealth of the rich; the wealth of the rich enables him to employ and aid the poor...The rich should not despise the poor (Prov. 14:31; 17:5) Job 31:15); the poor should not envy the rich (Prov. 3:31).

V. 3. This very saying is repeated in Prov. 27:12. An old saying: "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." A discerning

person can often foresee danger ahead, and his wisdom causes him to avoid it; but the simple, undiscerning person comes along, never realizing what is just ahead, and suffers the consequences. In the original, "prudent man" is singular while "the simple" is plural. "Hitzig" observes as a result: "Many simple ones are found for one prudent." And when something new (some fad) comes along that had dangerous involvements connected with it, many take up with it anyway, and you wonder if "Hitzig" isn't correct in his observation! A Cornish proverb: "He who will not be ruled by the rudder must be ruled by the rock."

V. 4. "humility" and the "fear of Jehovah" are here equated, for those who truly fear Jehovah are humble, submissive, and obedient to Him. The reward of such is threefold: riches, honor and long life. Here is the way that one can have both possessions and good reputation with life thrown in as a bonus. Abraham is a good example of all three. God "rewards" those who thus fear Him and do His will from humble hearts.

V. 5. What a contrast with v. 4! While the righteous reap riches, honor and life (v. 4), "Thorns" and "snares" await the perverse. Prov. 15:19 combines both groups: "The way of the sluggard is as a hedge of thorns; But the path of the upright is made a highway." The wicked are "perverse (perverted from what God has intended them to be). The godly are those who keep their souls; they shall avoid the thorns and snares that come upon the ungodly. Another reason (a sensible one) for being godly rather than ungodly.

V. 6. A commandment with a promise. The commandment: train up a child in the way he should go; the promise: even when he is old he will not depart from it. Such training requires many things: knowledge, wisdom, time, patience, determination and love. There are many failures in child-rearing because of lacking one or several of the above requirements. Child-training is something that is easy to neglect or try shortcuts with, but what a shame when the future of one's entire posterity is at stake! What is really more important? Eph. 6:4 commands this type of training. Timothy had been taught the Scriptures from a child (II Tim. 3:15); as a result the great faith that had dwelt in his mother and grandmother was in him also (II Tim. 1:5). No wonder that as a young man he was well reported of by his home congregation

(Lystra) and by other Christians in the area (Acts 16:1, 2). Other passages on child rearing: Prov. 1:8; 13:1; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13, 14; 29:15, 17.

V. 7. This is the way it is in life: the rich who have made financial successes are the ones who rule in governmental circles; they have power, influence and reputation that necessarily puts them at the helm. It is likely in this verse that the second statement is explanatory of the first; that is, the borrower (the poor) is servant to the lender (the rich). The borrower is limited in the amount he can borrow by the wishes of the lender; he must pay the interest-rate asked by the lender, or there will be no borrowing; he must pay it back in the time-limit set by the lender; and if he doesn't pay it back, the lender will do all he can to collect the equivalent (or more) from the borrower.

V. 8. It is a divine principle (law) that whatever a person sows in life, that he will reap in consequences (Gal. 6:7). If one sows good seeds, he will reap good (Gal. 6:8; Prov. 11:18); if he sows bad seeds, he will reap trouble (Gal. 6:8; Job 4:8; Hos. 10:13). The acts of sin may be pleasurable (Heb. 11:25), but the consequences are not (Prov. 5:8-13). Oftentimes one finds that the rod of wrath he planned for another falls upon himself instead.

V. 9. One with a "bountiful eye" is one who sees needs, who sees what he can do to alleviate the persons involved, and who generously gives of what he has. God's promise to such a liberal giver: he "shall be blessed." Similar promises: Prov. 11:25; Luke 6:38; 14:12-14; Prov. 19:17; II Cor. 9:6.

V. 10. Sometimes a circle of people is better off with one less person if that person be a scoffer, for one such person can keep a whole group in a continual state of contention, strife and ignominy (reproach). How terrible to be that warped a person!

### TEST QUESTIONS OVER 22:1-10

1. One should choose a good ..... over riches (v. 1)?
2. What are we to learn from v. 2?
3. What point was made that in the Hebrew "prudent man" is singular while "simple" is plural (v. 3)?
4. What is the three-fold reward of humbly fearing God (v. 4)?
5. What two things are promised in v. 5 to the perverse?

6. What is the command in v. 6? What is the promise?
7. How do the rich rule over the poor (v. 7)?
8. Comment upon the harvest of sin (v. 8).
9. Enlarge upon the person with a "bountiful eye" (v. 9).
10. When is a group of people better off with one less person in it (v. 10)?

## TEXT — 22:11-21

11. He that loveth pureness of heart,  
For the grace of his lips the king will be his friend.
12. The eyes of Jehovah preserve him that hath knowledge;  
But he overthroweth the words of the treacherous man.
13. The sluggard saith, There is a lion without;  
I shall be slain in the streets.
14. The mouth of strange women is a deep pit;  
He that is abhorred of Jehovah shall fall therein.
15. Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child;  
But the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.
16. He that oppresseth the poor to increase his gain,  
And he that giveth to the rich, shall only come to want.
17. Incline thine ear, and hear the words of the wise,  
And apply thy heart unto my knowledge.
18. For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee,  
If they be established together upon thy lips.
19. That thy trust may be in Jehovah,  
I have made them known to thee this day, even to thee.
20. Have not I written unto thee excellent things  
Of counsels and knowledge,
21. To make thee know the certainty of the words of truth,  
That thou mayest carry back words of truth to them  
that send thee?

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 22:11-21

1. What New Testament verse talks of pureness of heart also (v. 11)?
2. What blasphemous Assyrian king did God overthrow (v. 12)?
3. Do you really think there was a lion in the street (v. 13)?
4. What does God think of one who is guilty of adultery (v. 14)?
5. What are some examples of childhood foolishness (v.

15)?

6. What two classes will end up in need (v. 16)?
7. What does it mean to "incline" one's ear (v. 17)?
8. What is the antecedent of "it" in v. 18?
9. True knowledge should lead one to trust in whom (v. 19)?
10. What kind of teachings had the Proverb writer set forth (v. 20)?
11. Who had "sent" this person (v. 21)?

## PARAPHRASE OF 22:11-21

11. He who values grace and truth is the king's friend.
12. The Lord preserves the upright but ruins the plans of the wicked.
13. The lazy man is full of excuses. "I can't go to work!" he says. "If I go outside I might meet a lion in the street and be killed!"
14. A prostitute is a dangerous trap; those cursed of God are caught in it.
15. A youngster's heart is filled with rebellion, but punishment will drive it out of him.
16. He who gains by oppressing the poor or by bribing the rich shall end in poverty.
- 17-21. Listen to this wise advice; follow it closely, for it will do you good, and you can pass it on to others: Trust in the Lord. In the past, haven't I been right? Then believe what I am telling you now, and share it with others.

## COMMENTS ON 22:11-21

V. 11. What a beautiful, wonderful person is portrayed by the words "loveth pureness of heart" and "the grace of his lips", meaning a person with purity abiding in his heart and who has the ability to express himself in a courteous way. Kings may not always have been virtuous people, but they admired such. Even the wicked King Herod had a high regard for John the Baptist: "Herodias set herself against him, and desired to kill him; and she could not; for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him safe. And when he heard him, he was much perplexed; and he heard him gladly" (Mark 6:19, 20). Matt 5:8 also exalts purity of heart.

V. 12. The "eyes of Jehovah" here stand for his

knowledge of the affairs upon earth and of His providential workings resulting from what He sees. He preserves those who have knowledge, who use their God-created faculties to acquire enlightenment that He gives. It pleased Him that Solomon placed such a high value upon wisdom and knowledge (I Kings 3:9, 10; 4:29-34). God lamented in Hosea's day, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou has rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee" (Hos. 4:6). When God overthrew Sennacherib (II Kings 19:35), it was an instance of His overthrowing the words of the treacherous (II Kings 18:28-35).

V. 13. The same sluggard excuse for not going to work is in Prov. 26:13. Since wisdom would include one's physical safety, it is doubtful if there was a lion in the streets. All lazy people are full of excuses for not working, for they do not want to work. Just as where there's a will to do something, there is usually a way to do it, so where there is no will to work, there is usually a handy excuse for not doing it.

V. 14. Many times in Proverbs does the father warn the son about the wicked, immoral woman (Prov. 2:16; 5:3-23; 6:24-35; 7:5-27; 23:27, 28). Notice in the passages just cited how she uses her mouth (words and kisses) to break the young man down. Her mouth is said to be a "deep pit" into which men "fall," and usually they do not get out! That God hates this sin in a terrible way, notice the strong language: "He that is abhorred of Jehovah shall fall therein." Eccl. 7:26 says, "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."

V. 15. A child's actions often reflect lack of good judgment and his immaturity: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things" (I Cor. 13:11). Oh, the foolish, unwise, careless, thoughtless things that children will do! What will drive it far from him? Proper, severe punishment. Other passages teaching such punishment; Prov. 13:24; 19:18; 23:13, 14; 29:15. Many parents do not do as God commands, and that foolishness remains engrained in the natures and ways of their rebellious children.

V. 16. Proverbs shows that laziness and lack of industry can bring one to want (Prov. 6:9-11), but this verse shows that oppressing the poor to get gain and trying to bribe the rich for

one's own advantage can do the same. The man described in this verse is a man to beware of.

V. 17. The "sayings" (a new saying each verse) is noticeably interrupted here for a five verse section urging the son to listen to the good instruction that he is receiving. God has given us ears with which to listen to what others say to us; they should be used when the wise are speaking. He has given us hearts or minds that can apply what we hear to our lives. The double commandment of this verse, then, is "incline thine ear" and "apply thy heart."

V. 18. To live as v. 17 says brings a "pleasant" way to live. What we hear and apply we keep within us as knowledge, and they become proverbs or sayings upon our own lips.

V. 19. True knowledge should cause us to trust in God, who is the "First" (the cause) and the "Last" (the judge). Remember, "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7). That his son might come to trust in Jehovah was the purpose of the father's careful instruction.

V. 20. The father here refers to the quality of his instructions. Compare Prov. 4:1, 2; 8:6-8.

V. 21. As a young man grows up, he is going to be subjected to many ideas of people, some being diametrically opposed to others. It is easy for a youth in the state of immaturity to be "tossed to and fro" by such (Eph. 4:14). This is why it is so necessary that the truth that the father teaches be taught in such a way that his son is well grounded in that truth, for only as he knows the truth will he be able to detect the counterfeit. On the latter statement of the verse, if a son has been brought up to know truth, to respect it, and to tell it, when being sent by others on a responsible mission, he will be able to know what truth is, to evaluate the situation, and to bring back a true report.

### TEST QUESTIONS OVER 22:11-21

1. What king in Bible days respected a pure man with good teaching (v. 11)?
2. What does "eyes of Jehovah" stand for in v. 12?
3. Why does a sluggard offer excuses (v. 13)?
4. What word in the second statement of v. 14 goes with "deep pit" in the first statement?
5. How does the strange woman use her "mouth" to the destruction of men (v. 14)?



6. Cite some instances of childhood foolishness (v. 15).
7. What will drive foolishness from a child (v. 15)?
8. According to v. 16 what are two ways to become poor?
9. "Incline thine ....." and "apply thy ....." (v. 17).  
(v. 17).
10. What does it mean for wisdom to be established upon thy "lips" (v. 18)?
11. True knowledge should lead one to ..... in Jehovah (v. 19).
12. How good should one's counsel be (v. 20)?
13. Parental teachings should be so clear that youth would not be..... to and fro (v. 21).

## TEXT — 22:22-29

22. Rob not the poor, because he is poor;  
Neither oppress the afflicted in the gate:
23. For Jehovah will plead their cause,  
And despoil of life those that despoil them.
24. Make no friendship with a man that is given to anger;  
And with a wrathful man thou shalt not go:
25. Lest thou learn his ways,  
And get a snare to thy soul.
26. Be thou not one of them that strike hands,  
Or of them that are sureties for debts.
27. If thou has not wherewith to pay,  
Why should he take away thy bed from under thee?
28. Remove not the ancient landmark,  
Which thy fathers have set.
29. Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand  
before kings;  
He shall stand before mean men.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 22:22-29

1. Why would people rob the "poor" (v. 22)?
2. What other passages besides v. 23 show God's particular care for the unfortunate?
3. Why should one become a close friend to the unfortunate (v. 23)?
4. What are other verses besides v. 25 that indicate the power of evil influence?
5. What is meant in v. 26 by "strike hands"?

6. How could one lose his "bed" (v. 27)?
7. What is meant by "landmark" (v. 28)?
8. What Bible character came to stand before the king because of diligence (v. 29)?
9. Why is meant by "mean" in v. 29?

### PARAPHRASE OF 22:22-29

22,23 Don't rob the poor and sick! For the Lord is their defender. If you injure them He will punish You.

24,25. Keep away from angry, short-tempered men, lest you learn to be like them and endanger your soul.

26,27. Unless you have the extra cash on hand, don't countersign a note. Why risk everything you own? They'll even take your bed!

28. Do not move the ancient boundary marks. That is stealing.

29. Do you know a hard working man? He shall be successful and stand before kings!

### COMMENTS ON 22:22-29

V. 22. Both Old and New Testaments teach us to regard the unfortunate (Exo. 23:6; Jas. 1:27). Yet they are often oppressed (Zech. 7:10; Mal. 3:5; "In the gate" was where legal matters were settled (their "courthouse"). Sometimes the poor have not gotten their proper treatment in courts because of the other side had the money to bribe those in charge.

V. 23. In the absence of human defense God has promised to take up in their behalf and take away from those who took away from them. Other passages on the same subject: Psa. 12:5; 35:10; 68:5; 140:12; Prov. 23:10,11. God saw that King Ahab was despoiled for the vineyard he took away from Naboth (I Kings 21:1-14).

V. 24. Of all the people in the world with which to make companions, what a poor companion an angry, wrathful man is! But some people are that way (quick-tempered, no judgment, etc.), and some make friends with them.

V. 25. Like all companions, the close ties leave their influence (I. Cor. 15:33). Thus, one who had been blessed with a good spirit and a calm, cool disposition begins "flying off the handle" and going into a senseless rage when everything doesn't go just right. Why? Because he has been around just

such a man.

V. 26. Being "co-signer" for another's debts is warned against several times in Proverbs (6:1,2; 11:15; 17:18; 20:16).

V. 27. How do you know at the time of obligating yourself whether you will be able at the time of need to put up the necessary money? You may have to get along without things that are necessary to your own life (like a "bed").

V. 28. Prov. 23:10 also contains this prohibition. The original law behind this saying is in Deut. 19:14: "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's landmark, which they of old time have set, in thine inheritance which thou shalt inherit, in the land that Jehovah thy God giveth thee to possess it." It was one of the twelve special curses to be pronounced from Mt. Ebal: "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark. And all the people shall say, "Amen" (Deut. 27:17). This would be like removing steel stakes or buried rocks of surveyings today. It was even worse then because the official description of a property line is recorded at the courthouse today while in Bible days the landmark was all there was.

V. 29. A person diligent in business is one who is ambitious, industrious, and aggressive. They are men of application, and they will be numbered among the great and the known. Their lifetimes will be spent in major, not minor, concerns. Josphed tended to every business assigned to him (Gen. 39:1-6,21-23), and he stood before the Pharaoh (Gen. 41:39-44). David was diligent in caring for his father's sheep. In this he developed both skill and bravery in protecting them against ferocious animals, and this (together with his great faith in God) had much to do with his fighting and killing Goliath (I Sam. 17:32-37). This led to his relationship with King Saul and the army (I Sam. 18:2,5). Daniel was diligent in business (Dan. 6:4,5), and he was an important man in the administration of the following kings: Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius. The word "mean" in our verse means "insignificant." Paul used the same word in referring to his native city Tarsus (Acts 21:39).

### TEST QUESTIONS OVER 22:22-29

1. What law has God issued concerning the unfortunate (v. 22)?
2. What does "in the gate" mean in v. 22?
3. What has God said concerning those who oppress the

unfortunate (v. 23)?

4. What will happen to a person who makes an angry man his buddy (vs. 24,25)?
5. What does Proverbs warn about being surety for another's debts (v. 26)?
6. Why was it even more serious then to remove the ancient landmarks than to remove surveyor items now (v. 28)?
7. What does "mean" mean in v. 29?
8. Cite Bible characters who were "diligent in business" and who stood before kings as a result (v. 29).

### NOTICEABLE GROUPINGS IN CHAPTER 22

#### *"Rich"--*

"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, And loving favor rather than silver and gold" (v. 1).

"The reward of humility and the fear of Jehovah Is riches, and honor, and life" (v. 4).

#### *"Poor"--*

"The rich and the poor meet together: Jehovah is the maker of them all" (v. 2).

"The rich ruleth over the poor" (v. 7).

"He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; For he giveth of his bread to the poor" (v. 9).

"He that oppresseth the poor to increase his gain...shall come only to want" (v. 16).

"Rob not the poor because he is poor" (v. 22).

#### *"Jehovah"--*

"Jehovah is the maker of them all" (v. 2).

"The reward of...the fear of Jehovah Is riches, and honor, and life" (v. 4).

"The eyes of Jehovah preserve him that hath knowledge; But he overthroweth the words of the treacherous man" (v. 12).

"The mouth of strange women is a deep pit; He that is abhorred of Jehovah shall fall therein" (v. 14).

"That thy trust may be in Jehovah, I have made them known to thee this day" (v. 19).

"Jehovah will plead their cause, And despoil of life those that despoil them" (v. 23).

## CHAPTER 22

### *"Kings"--*

"He that loveth pureness of heart, For the grace of his lips the king will be his friend" (v. 11).

"Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings" (v. 29).

### *"Wisdom"--*

"A prudent man seeth the evil, and hideth himself" (v. 3).

"Incline thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, And apply thy heart unto my knowledge" (v. 17).

### *"Fools"--*

"The simple pass on, and suffer for it" (v. 3).

"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; But the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (v. 15).

### *"Punishment"--*

"Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse" (v. 5).

"He that soweth iniquity shall reap calamity" (v. 8).

"Jehovah...overthroweth the words of the treacherous man" (v. 12).

"He that oppresseth the poor to increase his gain, And he that giveth to the rich, shall come only to want" (v. 16).

"Jehovah will plead their cause, and Despoil of life those that despoil them" (v. 23).

### *"Reward"--*

"The reward of humility and the fear of Jehovah Is riches, and honor, and life" (v. 4).

"He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed" (v. 9).

"He that loveth pureness of heart, For the grace of his lips the king will be his friend" (v. 11).

"The eyes of Jehovah preserve him that hath knowledge" (v. 12).

"Seest thou a man diligent in business? He shall stand before kings" (v. 29).

### *"Children"--*

"Train up a child in the way he should go, And even when he is old he will not depart from it" (v. 6).

"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; But the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (v. 15).

## PONDERING THE PROVERBS

### MARRIAGE IS A GOOD STATE

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

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

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

## TEXT — 23:1-12

1. When thou sittest to eat with a ruler  
Consider diligently him that is before thee;
2. And put a knife to thy throat,  
If thou be a man given to appetite.
3. Be not desirous of his dainties;  
Seeing they are deceitful food.
4. Weary not thyself to be rich;  
Cease from thine own wisdom.
5. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?  
For riches certainly make themselves wings,  
Like an eagle that flieth toward heaven.
6. Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye,  
Neither desire thou his dainties:
7. For as he thinketh within himself, so is he:  
Eat and drink, saith he to thee;  
But his heart is not with thee.
8. The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up,  
And lose thy sweet words.
9. Speak not in the hearing of a fool;  
For he will despise the wisdom of thy words.
10. Remove not the ancient landmark;  
And enter not into the fields of the fatherless;
11. For their Redeemer is strong;  
He will plead their cause against thee.
12. Apply thy heart unto instruction,  
And thine ears to the words of knowledge.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 23:1-12

1. Why "consider" the ruler (v. 1)?
2. What does "put a knife to thy throat" mean (v. 2)?
3. What makes a ruler's food "deceitful meat" (v. 3)?
4. Is getting rich really a wearisome road (v. 4)?
5. What is meant in v. 5 by "that which is not"?
6. What is meant in v. 6 by an "evil eye"?
7. Restate the first clause in v. 7 in your own words.
8. Can a person act nice to you when he really doesn't feel that way (v. 7)?
9. What might be an illustration of v. 8?
10. What statement of Jesus in Matt. 7 does v. 9 seem to parallel?

11. Is there a connection the two clauses in v. 10?
12. Who is the "Redeemer" of the fatherless (v. 11)?
13. What is the difference between learning by instruction and learning by experience (v. 12)?

## PARAPHRASE OF 23:1-12

- 1-3. When dining with a rich man, be on your guard and don't stuff yourself, though it all tastes so good; for he is trying to bribe you, and no good is going to come of his invitation.
- 4-5. Don't worry yourself trying to get rich. Why waste your time? For riches can disappear as though they had the wings of a bird!
- 6-8. Don't become obligated to evil men; don't long for their favors and gifts. Their kindness is a trick; they want to use you as their pawn. The delicious food they serve will turn sour in your stomach and you will vomit it, and have to take back your words of appreciation for their "kindness".
9. Don't waste your breath on a rebel. He will despise the wisest advice.
- 10,11. Don't steal the land of defenseless orphans by moving their ancient boundary marks, for their Redeemer is strong; He Himself will accuse you.
12. Don't refuse to accept criticism; get all the help you can.

## COMMENTS ON 23:1-12

V. 1. The usual one-verse "saying" of Proverbs gives way here to an eight-verse set of instructions. To be invited to dine with a ruler "would be a great honor to a man of lowly birth, or to one of the middle class, to whom the manners of courts and palaces were practically unknown" ("Pulpit Commentary"). Since the invitation was extended not out of kingly politeness but with an ulterior motive (vs. 7,8), our verses suggest that the guest should consider (look into) the one who invited him rather than just the delicious food before him.

V. 2. In the presence of such a bountiful, delicious banquet, a man of appetite would be tempted to eat much more than he should. When away from home, one should act as if he had been away from home before. The ruler's ulterior motives in inviting him might be better fulfilled if the man ate and drank



beyond wisdom, for in that condition the host may be able to extract information from the guest that he would not otherwise be able to obtain (if this be his motive).

V. 3. A further warning. Dan. 1:8 also refers to the king's food as "dainties." They are "deceitful" food in that they have insincerely set before the man, and for him to eat to excess will somehow fulfill the ruler's purpose rather than the best interests of the man eating.

V. 4. By thus associating with a ruler, the guest may have thought that this was his first step toward the life of the rich. Or, having eaten of such pleasant food, the guest may have determined that he too will someday be rich. Here he is warned of the many weary years and hardships accompanying getting and being rich. So he is told to cease from his "own wisdom" which in the long run will not prove to be truly wise at all. Other warnings against aspiring to be rich: Matt. 6:19,20; John 6:27; I Tim. 6:7-10. Other warnings against following one's own wisdom: Prov. 3:5; Rom. 12:16.

V. 5. Riches are here spoken of as "that which is not". They are "uncertain" (I Tim. 6:17). They may be "here" today but "gone" tomorrow (through economic crashes, bad investments, etc.). Kings often had to empty their treasure houses to satisfy invading kings (I Kings 18:15,16). Consider also Eccl. 5:11,15,16.

V. 6. An "evil eye" here had to do with a covetous eye. Compare Deut. 15:9 for a similar use of it. Since this is a repetition of the warning in v. 3, the ruler's ulterior motive was his own personal gain to result from the man's being his guest.

V. 7. He would be invited to eat and drink, but it was not out of sheer hospitality. This is the deceitfulness mentioned in v. 3. This saying is warning us against this type of person. Rom. 12:9 ("Let love be without hypocrisy") warns us not to be this type of person ourselves. Our verse also shows it isn't what we say or do but the heart that determines the real person.

V. 8. The dainties were sweet and tasted good, but later he would be able to see through it all, and then he would vomit them up, so to speak. In other words, it was sweeter going down than coming up. Wisdom always says to look to the end of a matter, to the outcome, before one participates, invests, etc.

V. 9. Some people show they are fools by despising words of wisdom. We are obligated to share our understanding with those who do not understand, but when we find one who will not

listen, will not learn, will not appreciate, but will only laugh at and make fun of that which we say, it is time to turn away and go to someone who will listen (Acts 13:46; 18:5,6). Jesus said, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine" (Matt. 7:6). "Pulpit Commentary": "It is a mere casting of pearls before swine to speak to such a man of high aims, righteous motives, self-sacrifice."

V. 10. A "landmark" was usually a stone or a pillar of stones placed to mark out the boundary of one's land. This verse contains a prohibition against altering those. Deut. 19:14; 27:17; and Prov. 22:28 contain similar prohibitions. By moving (or removing) the landmark one could be claiming and using land that rightfully belonged to one's neighbor. This verse contains a special warning if the land taken belonged to the "fatherless".

V. 11. God will look out for the right of the orphaned, and He will not be easy on one who has taken land away from such. Prov. 22:23 says, "Jehovah will plead their cause, And despoil of life those that despoil thee."

V. 12. It is not merely hearing instruction but applying one's heart to what is being said that really adds learning and knowledge to one. The Bible does not favor a person going his way and finding out everything for himself; it emphasizes instruction and urges each one to learn all he can from the instruction of others.

### TEST QUESTIONS OVER 23:1-12

1. Why should one not eat too much when dining with a ruler (vs. 1-3)?
2. Where else in the Bible is king's food referred to as "dainties" (v. 3)?
3. Tell of the weariness of the rich (v. 4).
4. Cite another warning from the Bible about aspiring to be rich (v. 4).
5. Why are riches spoken of as "that which is not" (v. 5)?
6. V. 6 parallels what previous verse in this chapter?
7. How does v. 7 explain an expression in v. 3?
8. What was the end of those sweet morsels (v. 8)?
9. What statement of Jesus teaches the same thing as v. 9?
10. What did a landmark often consist of (v. 10)?
11. Whom will one encounter who would take financial advantage of the orphaned (v. 11)?

12. What two things are to be applied in getting knowledge (v. 12)?

## TEXT — 23:13-23

13. Withhold not correction from the child;  
For if thou beat him with the rod, he will not die.
14. Thou shalt beat him with the rod,  
And shalt deliver his soul from Sheol.
15. My son, if thy heart be wise,  
My hear will be glad, even mine.
16. Yea, my heart will rejoice  
When thy lips speak right things.
17. Let not thy heart envy sinners;  
But be thou in the fear of Jehovah all the day long:
18. For surely there is a reward;  
And thy hope shall not be cut off.
19. Hear thou, my son, and be wise,  
And guide thy heart in the way.
20. Be not among winebibbers,  
Among gluttonous eaters of flesh:
21. For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty;  
And drowsiness will clothe a man with rags.
22. Hearken unto thy father that begat thee,  
And despise not thy mother when she is old.
25. Buy the truth, and sell it not;  
Yea, wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 23:13-23

1. Does v. 13 sound like most people whip their children too hard or too easy?
2. What is meant by "Sheol" in v. 14?
3. How does Prov. 10:1 word the same truth as found in v. 15?
4. Is the opposite of v. 16 just as true (that parents' hearts weep when their children speak perverse things)?
5. Do the wicked want us to envy them (v. 17)?
6. Will a godly person in time have more than a sinner has now (v. 18)?
7. How many times in this chapter does it say, "My son" (v. 19)?
8. Why is this said so many times (v. 19)?

9. What is the wrong of winebibbing and gluttony (vs. 20,20)?
10. What is the relation of "drowsiness" to such habits (v. 21)?
11. What two crimes can one commit against parents (v. 22)?
12. What do "buy" and "sell" mean in v. 23?

### PARAPHRASE OF 23:13-23

- 13,14. Don't fail to correct your children; discipline won't hurt them! They won't die if you use a stick on them! Punishment will keep them out of hell.
- 15,16. My son, how I will rejoice if you become a man of common sense. Yes, my heart will thrill to your thoughtful, wise words.
- 17,18. Don't envy evil men but continue to reverence the Lord all the time, for surely you have a wonderful future ahead of you. There is hope for you yet!
- 19,21. O my son, be wise and stay in God's paths; don't carouse with drunkards and gluttons, for they are on their way to poverty. And remember that too much sleep clothes a man with rags.
22. Listen to your father's advice and don't despise an old mother's experience.
23. Get the facts at any price, and hold on tightly to all the good sense you can.

### COMMENTS ON 23:13-23

V. 13. Every child needs correction at times. He or she will not be correct in life without correction. At times this correction will have to be administered with the rod (whippings), and the language of our verse indicates that sometimes such must be administered with great severity.

V. 14. "Sheol" of the Old Testament was parallel with "Hades" of the New. When one dies, his spirit goes to "Sheol" ("Hades"). Instead of causing a child to die through physical chastisements (v. 13), such punishments will actually keep a child from a premature death through God's wrath or through a child's own foolishness or other ways.

V. 15. Other passages showing that good children bring joy to parents: Prov. 10:1; 23:24,25; 29:3. There is a play on words here: "If THY HEART be wise, MY HEART will be

glad." Oh, how parents wait for and look for evidences of their children's good qualities! Surely if children thought of this, how happy they could actually make their parents! And how we can make our heavenly Father pleased by our wisely doing His will!

V. 16. The wise "heart" of v. 15 will reflect itself in "lips" that speak right things. How much good judgment is reflected by wise words, excellent speech, etc.!

V. 17. To envy sinners is not to be fearing Jehovah properly. Other passages that warn against envying sinners: Psa. 37:1; Prov. 3:31; 24:1,19. Yet people at times do envy sinners (Psa. 73:3-7). But if one truly fears Jehovah, he will have no temptation to envy His enemies (sinners) upon whom God's wrath will ultimately fall.

V. 18. Yes, a godly person's reward is coming, and how great it will be! Such's hope will be fulfilled and not cut off: I Pet. 1:3-5; Psa. 37:37. "Pulpit Commentary": "The writer has a firm belief in the moral government of God and in a future life which shall rectify all anomalies." If the poor man of Luke 16 were tempted to envy the rich man, it would have been a mistake because he himself ended up so much better off (Luke 16:25).

V. 19. Again the father appeals for the son to be "wise". Remember, it is a "wise" son that makes a glad father (Prov. 10:1). Prov. 4:23 speaks of the necessity one keeping his heart with all diligence. We note here that one is not to let his heart wander wheresoever society, trends, fads, or friends may lead it, but one is responsible to "guide" his heart in the way it should go. Failure to do this has been a great weakness of mankind.

V. 20. The Bible sounds many warnings against taking up with wine and drunkenness: Isa. 5:22; Matt. 24:48-51; Luke 21:34; Rom. 13:13; Eph. 5:18. But gluttony is also noted here as wrong. Jesus' enemies tried to down Him by calling him a gluttonous man (Matt. 11:19). In affluent times many are guilty of both winebibbing and gluttony.

V. 21. It costs money to eat like a glutton and drink like a drunkard. Many a man has devoured and destroyed a small fortune in this way. He is also brought to poverty by not showing up for work or by not being able to hold his job. The "drowsiness" has to do with his sleeping off his drunkenness. What a perversion of life!

V. 22. We are to listen to the wisdom and instruction of our fathers (Prov. 1:8; Eph. 6:1). How many sorrows and mistakes young men can avoid by hearkening to their fathers!

Prodigals and know-it-alls don't listen; in time they will see that they should have listened. Concerning despising one's mother when she is old, "Pulpit Commentary" says, "When old age with its consequent infirmities comes upon thy mother, despise her not, but rather thank God for giving her long life, and profit by her love and long experience."

V. 23. "Truth," spoken of in this verse as "wisdom, and instruction, and understanding," is something to obtain at all costs and something not to part with regardless of what earthly or momentary gains one may get by doing so. "Pulpit Commentary": "Consider truth as a thing of the highest value, and spare no pains, cost, or sacrifice to obtain it, and, when gotten, keep it safe; do not barter it for earthly profit or the pleasures of sense; do not be reasoned out of it, or laughed out of it...do not part with it for any consideration."

### TEST QUESTIONS OVER 23:13-23

1. What great message to parents is carried in v. 13?
2. How many proper whippings keep a child from "Sheol" (v. 14)?
3. What play on words is found in v. 15?
4. What is the relationship between vs. 15 and 16?
5. Why should a godly person not envy a sinner (v. 17)?
6. What is the relationship between vs. 17 and 18?
7. What is wrong with letting one's mind wander wheresoever it will go (v. 19)?
8. What two sins of the body are forbidden in v. 20?
9. Why is a drunkard and glutton brought to poverty (v. 21)?
10. How can a young man avoid both sorrows and mistakes (v. 22)?
11. Why would a person despise a mother when she is old (v. 22)?
12. How do we "buy truth"? How do we "sell" it (v. 23)?

### TEXT — 23:24-35

24. The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice;  
And he that begetteth a wise child will have joy of him.
25. Let thy father and thy mother be glad,

- And let her that bare thee rejoice.
26. My son, give me thy heart;  
And let thine eyes delight in my ways.
27. For a harlot is a deep ditch;  
And a foreign woman is a narrow pit.
28. Yea, she lieth in wait as a robber,  
And increaseth the treacherous among men.
29. Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions?  
Who hath complaining? who hath wounds without cause?  
Who hath redness of eyes?
30. They that tarry long at the wine;  
They that go to seek out mixed wine.
31. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,  
When it sparkleth in the cup,  
When it goeth down smoothly:
32. At the last it biteth like a serpent,  
And stingeth like an adder.
33. Thine eyes shall behold strange things,  
And thy heart shall utter perverse things.
34. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst  
of the sea,  
Or as he that lieth upon the top of the mast.
35. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not  
hurt;  
They have beaten me, and I felt it not:  
When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 23:24-35

1. Did God feel this way concerning Jesus (v. 24)?
2. Is one's parents' happiness another motivation for doing right (v. 25)?
3. How would a son "give" his heart to his father (v. 26)?
4. Is v. 27 what the father was getting at in his previous statements?
5. What does the harlot "rob" from a person (v. 27)?
6. Show how that each of the six things in v. 29 befall a drinker?
7. Comment on tarrying "long" (v. 30).
8. Is there any significance to "red" here (v. 31)?
9. Can sinners stay the outcome of sin (v. 32)?
10. Comment upon imaginative things seen by the drunkard (v. 33).

11. What is meant by v. 34?
12. What is the pathetic truth of v. 35's last statement?

## PARAPHRASE OF 23:24-35

- 24,25. The father of a godly man has cause for joy--what pleasure a wise son is! So give your parents joy!
- 26-28. O my son, trust my advice--stay away from prostitutes. For a prostitute is a deep and narrow grave. Like a robber, she waits for her victims as one after another become unfaithful to their wives.
- 29,30. Whose heart is filled with anguish and sorrow? Who is always fighting and quarreling? Who is the man with bloodshot eyes and many wounds? It is the one who spends long hours in the taverns, trying out new mixtures.
31. Don't let the sparkle and the smooth taste of strong wine deceive you.
32. For in the end it bites like a poisonous serpent; it stings like an adder.
33. You will see hallucinations and have delirium tremens, and you will say foolish, silly things that would embarrass you no end when sober.
34. You will stagger like a sailor tossed at sea, slinging to a swaying mast.
35. And afterwards you will say, "I didn't even know it when they beat me up...Let's go and have another drink!"

## COMMENTS ON 23:24-35

V. 24. Again the subject of parental joy comes up (see v. 15; Prov. 10:1; 15:20). Jesus brought joy to His Father (Matt. 3:17; 17:5), and so have good children down through the centuries. Notice how that righteousness and wisdom bring joy and rejoicing just as unrighteousness and foolishness bring sorrow.

V. 25. V. 24 spoke of the joy of the father of a good child; this verse speaks of the joy of both the father and the mother. Much of a mother's time and life is wrapped up in her children, and she is ever ready to rejoice over every success and attainment of her children.

V. 26. Since v. 27 begins with the explanatory word "for", this verse is introducing what that and later verses develop; namely, a solemn warning against the wicked, harlot woman (a



subject to which earlier sections devoted much material: 5:1-23; 6:20-35; 7:1-27). Notice, too, that the passages in chapters 5, 6, 7 are always introduced with a similar getting of the son's attention before beginning the actual material. This was to impress the son with what the father was saying.

V. 27. She is given a double description, both of which resemble: a "deep ditch" and a "narrow pit". She represents a danger to avoid. Prov. 22:14 similarly says, "The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit; He that is abhorred of Jehovah shall fall therein." Since there is nothing to gain by falling into a deep ditch and a narrow pit, Prov. 6:32 rightfully says, "He that committeth adultery with a woman is void of understanding." Look at the dangers brought on by one's disregarding this warning: Prov. 5:11; 6:32-34; 7:22,23,26,27.

V. 28. She is out working her trade (Prov. 7:12). Like a robber she does not lose an opportunity (Prov. 7:13-21). One such person "increaseth" the sinners upon earth, here called "the treacherous among men". Men who thus become unfaithful to wives might well be described as "treacherous"! Malachi shows that men who turn from the wives of their youth deal "treacherously" with them (Mal. 2:10,14-16).

V. 29. Six questions are raised that are answered in the next verse. From the consequences of drinking, the ancients suffered the same woes and sorrows as do moderns who imbibe. The drinker has "woe" in the physical problems brought on, in his social relations, in his finances, in his slavery to his habit, and in the punishment that awaits him (I Cor. 6:9,10; Gal. 5:19-21). The drinker has "sorrow" upon "sorrow" as does his family as a result of his drinking as do others whom he injures while intoxicated. The drinker knows "contentions", for many fights take place at taverns. The drinker knows "complaining", for he often complains of the way people treat him. The drinker has "wounds without cause", for if he stayed sober, he would not get into the trouble he does. The drinker has "redness of eyes", an outward commentary on the abuse that his body is inwardly suffering. Isa. 5:11,22 also uses "woe" in warning against strong drink: "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that tarry late into the night, till wine inflame them!...Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink." So does Hab. 2:15: "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink."

V. 30. The six questions raised in v. 29 are quickly and bluntly answered here: those who drink intoxicants. Time and its meaning seem to mean nothing to a drunkard, for he will spend hours drinking with others until they are drunken, and then he will sleep it off and seem not to care that he should be at his job instead of in bed. The expression "seek out" shows that drinkers go forth to get their booze; it is something they must obtain because of the habit they have developed and the appetite they have for booze.

V. 31. On "red", "Pulpit Commentary" says, "The wine of Palestine was chiefly red." Drinkers like the color; they like the sparkle in the glass; they like the taste. On going down smoothly, "Pulpit Commentary:" "The wine pleases the palate, and passes over it without roughness or harshness." This verse is a commandment to keep away from wine, to avoid even the temptation to drink, for to avoid drinking wine the verse says, "Don't even look upon it." The only way to keep out of any bad habit is to stay as far from it as one can while depending upon God to help him.

V. 32. No thinking person would ever start drinking if he considered the end of it. The booze companies don't tell him how it will end. The fellows who offer him his first drink and will laugh at him if he doesn't take it aren't thinking of drink's bitter end. But godly people are known for seeing what something produces, where it leads, and where it ends before they do it. Indeed wine "biteth like a serpent", and it "stingeth like an adder"; yet the habit is far from dying out. "Pulpit Commentary:" "Wine is like the subtle poison of a serpent, which affects the whole body, and produces the most fatal consequences." "Septuagint:" "At the last he stretches himself like one stricken by a serpent, and the venom is diffused through him as by a horned snake."

V. 33. A drunkard cannot trust his eyesight. Ever hear of a drunkard seeing two bridges before him and wondering which to drive over? And, oh, the foolish, the coarse, the vulgar, the wicked things that men say when drunk--things that embarrass polite society, that make youngsters laugh but angels weep!

V. 34. As a drunkard's whole system pitches and tosses and finally results in vomiting. His reeling, staggering, and uncertainty are referred to in Isa. 28:7,8: "These reel with wine, and stagger with strong drink...All tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean." Imagine trying to

sleep on top of a ship's mast! Such is comparable to a drunkard's physical feelings.

V. 35. "Pulpit Commentary": "The drunken man has been beaten...but the blows did not pain him; his condition has rendered him insensible to pain. He has some vague idea that he has suffered certain rough treatment at the hands of his companions, but it has made no impression on him." He will not be able to remember what happened to him while he was drunk. "When shall I awake?" refers to the prolonged sleep that his drunkenness has brought on. And yet in spite of all the woes and the sorrows and other bitter consequences that such a life has brought to him, you can be sure of this: when he does wake up, he won't have any more sense than to go out and seek it again (Isa. 56:12). What a tragedy!

### NOTICEABLE GROUPINGS IN CHAPTER 23

*"My son"--*

"My son, if thy heart be wise, My heart will be glad" (v. 15).

"Hear thou, my son, and be wise" (v. 19).

"My son, give me thy heart; And let thine eyes delight in my ways" (v. 26).

*"Parenthood"--*

"Withhold not correction from the child; For if thou beat him with the rod, he will not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, And shalt deliver his soul from Sheol" (vs. 13,14).

"Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, And despise not thy mother when she is old" (v. 22).

"The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice; And he that begetteth a wise child will have joy of him. Let thy father and thy mother be glad, And let her that bare thee rejoice" (vs. 24,25).

*"Wine"--*

"Be not among winebibbers...For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty" (vs. 20,21).

"Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? Who hath complaining? who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; They that go to seek out mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, When it sparkleth in the cup, When

## PONDERING THE PROVERBS

it goeth down smoothly: At the last it biteth like a serpent, And stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall be hold strange things, And thy heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, Or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, And I was not hurt; They have beaten me, and I felt it not: When shall I awake? I will seek it again" (vs. 29-35).

### *"Eating"--*

"When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, Consider diligently him that is before thee; And put a knife to thy throat, If thou be a man given to appetite. Be not desirous of his dainties; Seeing they are deceitful food" (vs. 1-3).

"Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, Neither desire thou his dainties: For as he thinketh within himself, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; But his heart is not with thee. The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up, And lose thy sweet words" (vs. 6-8).

### *"Deceit"--*

"Be not desirous of his dainties; Seeing they are deceitful food" (v. 3).

"Eat and drink, saith he to thee; But his heart is not with thee" (v. 7).

### *"Learning"--*

"Apply thy heart unto instruction, And thine ears to the words of knowledge" (v. 12).

"Buy the truth, and sell it not; Yea, wisdom, and instruction, and understanding" (v. 23).

## TEXT — 24:1-12

1. Be not thou envious against evil men;  
Neither desire to be with them:
2. For their heart studieth oppression,  
And their lips talk of mischief.
3. Through wisdom is a house builded;  
And by understanding it is established;
4. And by knowledge are the chambers filled  
With all precious and pleasant riches.
5. A wise man is strong;  
Yes, a man of knowledge increaseth might.
6. For by wise guidance thou shalt make thy war;  
And in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.
7. Wisdom is too high for a fool:  
He openeth not his mouth in the gate.
8. He that deviseth to do evil,  
Men shall call him a mischief-maker.
9. The thought of foolishness is sin;  
And the scoffer is an abomination to men.
10. If thou faint in the day of adversity,  
Thy strength is small.
11. Deliver them that are carried away unto death,  
And those that are ready to be slain see that thou  
hold back.
12. If thou sayest, Behold, we knew not this;  
Doth not he that weigheth the hearts consider it?  
And he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it?  
And shall not he render to every man according to his  
work?

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 24:1-12

1. Paraphrase the two statements in v. 1.
2. What kind of "evil men" is v. 2 talking about?
3. What is meant by "house" here (v. 3)?
4. Comment upon the two adjectives in v. 4.
5. According to v. 5 wisdom is .....
6. What kind of counselors did ancient kings rely  
upon (v. 6)?
7. Where did a "fool" not belong (v. 7)?
8. V. 8 might remind one of people "calling a spade a  
.....".

9. What is meant by the "thought of foolishness" in v. 9?
10. What percentage of people "faint" when adversity comes (v. 10)?
11. What is meant by "see that thou hold back" in v. 11?
12. What is the implication of the statement in v. 12 that "we knew not this"?

## PARAPHRASE OF 24:1-12

- 1,2. Don't envy godless men; don't even enjoy their company. For they spend their days plotting violence and cheating.
- 3,4. Any enterprise is built by wise planning, becomes strong through common sense, and profits wonderfully by keeping abreast of the facts.
5. A wise man is mightier than a strong man. Wisdom is mightier than strength.
6. Don't go to war without wise guidance; there is safety in many counselors.
7. Wisdom is too much for a rebel. He'll not be chosen as a counselor!
8. To plan evil is as wrong as doing it.
9. The rebel's schemes are sinful, and the mocker is the scourge of all mankind.
10. You are a poor specimen if you can't stand the pressure of adversity.
- 11,12. Rescue those who are unjustly sentenced to death; don't stand back and let them die. Don't try to disclaim responsibility by saying you didn't know about it. For God, who knows all hearts, knows yours, and He knows you knew! And he will reward everyone according to his deeds.

## COMMENTS ON 24:1-12

V. 1. Two prohibitions: don't desire to be like evil men and don't desire to run with them. If one doesn't envy them, he won't run with them, and if one doesn't run with them, he will not become like them. Other passages about not envying such: V. 19; Psa. 37:1; 73:3; Prov. 3:31; 23:17. Another passage about not desiring to be with evil people: Prov. 1:15.

V. 2. In Proverbs the expression "evil woman" usually is

referring to an adulterous woman and a "evil man" to oppressors (as in this verse). These evil men have their "heart" involved in their sin, and they "study" how to be successful in their wickedness. II Tim. 2:15 shows that the righteous should study to show themselves approved unto God.

V. 3. After two verses on the destructive way of the wicked, it is refreshing to come to two verses on building a house through wisdom, honesty, and diligence (vs. 3,4). Notice that "wisdom" is with the builder, not the destroyer. Oppressors who take the sword will perish by the sword (Matt. 26:52), not living out half of their days (Psa. 55:23). While these will be "cut off", the righteous will live on in the earth (Psa. 37:9).

V. 4. There is really a close relationship between "wisdom", "understanding," and "knowledge". Verse 5 says the first two build and establish the house while this verse says the last mentioned fills its chambers with riches. It is obvious that these verses are dealing with the house of the wealthy. Notice the two adjectives describing riches: "precious" and "pleasant". This is godly wealth, gained in the proper way and not by oppression. This makes such wealth "precious" to the possessor and "pleasant" also.

V. 5. The thought of wisdom is continued in this verse, this time stating that its possession makes one a strong man. Grammatically the verse is Hebrew parallelism in which the second statement is a restatement of the first. Other passages on the "might" of wisdom: Prov. 21:22; Eccl. 9:16. The section in which the last mentioned verse is found tells, "There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it. Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city" (Eccl. 9:14,15).

V. 6. The strength referred to in v. 5 was evidently military strength as this verse shows. The first statement of this verse is found in Prov. 20:18, and its last statement is found in Prov. 11:14. Prov. 15:22 is similar to the last statement. Kings kept courts of wise men to counsel them in time of war. David (and later Absalom) had Ahithophel (II Sam. 16:23), and Ahab had his prophets (I Kings 22:6).

V. 7. A fool does not have wisdom, or he would not be a fool, for the two are considered opposites (Prov. 11:29; 14:16; 17:24; 29:11). The "gate" was the place of official and legal business where wise men presided (Prov. 31:23). Because he does

not have wisdom, the fool will not be one of the elders of his city.

V. 8 The evil and wickedness that are in the world stem from the devil, but he works through human beings to bring them about; thus, there are those who devise evil. Such a one shall soon be known, and his persistence in such behavior will give him a reputation. Others may be slow in recognizing worth in an individual or in praising him, but they will not fail to notice his evil and in telling others about it. He will not fool them: "Men shall call him a mischiefmaker."

V. 9. We know that the act of foolishness is sin (IISam. 24:10); here we are told that even the thought (whether expressed in act or not) is likewise sin. By "thoughts" adultery is committed in the heart (Matt. 5:27,28). By "Thoughts" one who hates is guilty of murder before God (I John 3:15). A "scoffer" is one who not only rejects that which he should believe but who laughs at, makes fun at, that which he should believe and at those who do believe. He is also called a "mockers", which he is: "In the last days mockers shall come...saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" (II Pet. 3:3). Such will not only lose out with God, but they have already lost out with them ("The scoffer is an abomination to men").

V. 10. Adversity (Opposition, trials, reverses) test one's strength (faith, courage, emotional composure). Some can stand more adversity than others. We should all strive to be "strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might" (Eph. 6:10). No man should be content to remain weak, yet there are those who "faint" (lose heart, fall apart, give up) when hardships come. Such lack depth: "He hath not root in himself...when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway he stumbleth" (Matt. 13:21). Here is where determination and depth of character are important. One cannot be an overcomer without them. The world is divided into two classes: the "overcomers" and the "overcome".

V. 11. These are people who need delivering and who are evidently worthy. Those addressed also have the power to deliver them. Ability with opportunity represent responsibility to do so. "Hold back" those who would otherwise be slain. Sometimes people fail to save others for fear of getting themselves into troubles. But Christians will do their duty even if it involves laying down their lives (Gal. 6:2; Heb. 13:3; I John 3:16). Other passages to consult: Psa. 82:4; Isa. 58:6,7.

V. 12. People sometimes try to cover the reality of their



failures (to deliver people as in v. 11) by excusing themselves as if ignorant of the need. But this lie but adds another sin to the great sin of irresponsibility already committed. God knows the truth; He knows (weighs) the heart (Prov. 21:2). And He will someday punish a person for his neglect of duty. Other passages; Job 34:11; Psa. 62:12; Jer. 32:19; Rom. 2:6; Rev. 2:23; 22:12.

## TEST QUESTIONS OVER 24:1-12

1. What two prohibitions are contained in v. 1?
2. The expression "evil men" usually refers to what kind of men in Proverbs (v. 1)?
3. What three words in vs. 3,4 are closely related to each other?
4. What two things do vs. 3,4 say will be accomplished by the informed person?
5. What quality is extolled in v. 5?
6. According to v. 6 where in is safety?
7. What about a fool and the "gate" (v. 7)?
8. What name is given to the one devising evil (v. 8)?
9. Show how "thoughts" and "sin" go together (v. 9).
10. What does the Bible say about us if we faint amid trials (v. 10)?
11. What class of people are we to help (v. 11)?
12. Suppose that helping others would endanger ourselves (v. 11).
13. Instead of saying, "I have sinned," what do more people say about their failures (v. 12)?

## TEXT — 24:13-22

13. My son, eat thou honey, for it is good;  
And the droppings of the honeycomb, which are sweet  
to thy taste;
14. So shalt thou know wisdom to be unto thy soul;  
If thou hast found it, then shall there be a reward,  
And thy hope shall not be cut off.
15. Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the habitation of  
the righteous;  
Destroy not his resting-place.
16. For a righteous man falleth seven times, and  
riseth up again;  
But the wicked are overthrown by calamity.

17. Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth,  
And let not thy heart be glad when he is overthrown;
18. Lest Jehovah see it, and it displease him,  
And he turn away his wrath from him.
19. Fret not thyself because of evildoers;  
Neither be thou envious at the wicked:
20. For there shall be no reward to the evil man;  
The lamp of the wicked shall be put out.
21. My son, fear thou Jehovah and the king;  
And company not with them that are given to change:
22. For their calamity shall rise suddenly;  
And the destruction from them both, who knoweth it?

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 24:13-22

1. Why give this instruction (v. 13)?
2. Is v. 14 connected with v. 13?
3. Is the righteous aware at the first of such lying in wait for him (v. 15)?
4. Does "down" necessarily mean "out" for the righteous man (v. 16)?
5. How was David a good example of v. 17?
6. What all does God see (v. 18)?
7. What previous verse in this chapter is similar to v. 19?
8. What are the prospects for the evil man (v. 20)?
9. What two sovereigns are mentioned in v. 21?
10. What kind of "change" does v. 21 have in mind?
11. What is the meaning of the second clause in v. 22?

## PARAPHRASE OF 24:13-22

- 13,14. My son, honey whets the appetite, and so does wisdom! When you enjoy becoming wise, there is hope for you! A bright future lies ahead!
- 15,1 O evil man, leave the upright man alone, and quit trying to cheat him out of his rights. Don't you know that this good man, though you trip him up seven times, will each time rise again? But one calamity is enough to lay you low.
- 17,18. Do not rejoice when your enemy meets trouble. Let there be no gladness when he falls--for the Lord may be displeased with you and stop punishing him!
- 19,20. Don't envy the wicked. Don't covet his riches. For the

evil man has no future; his light will be snuffed out.

- 21,22. My son, watch your step before the Lord and the king, and don't associate with radicals. For you will go down with them to sudden disaster, and who knows where it all will end?

### COMMENTS ON 24:13-22

V. 13. The people of that day depended upon honey for their sweetening, and a good sweetener it was! Its properties are still highly acclaimed by health-people. Palestine was a land with an abundance of natural honey (Exo. 3:8).

V.14. The father would urge his son to seek, find, and know wisdom with the same eagerness with which he enjoyed the sweetness of honey. The sweetness of the wisdom found in the Word of God is compared with the sweetness of honey: Psa. 19:10; 119:103. The ending of this verse is much like Prov. 23:18. It shows the great reward and the hopeful life that wisdom brings to its possessor.

V. 15. The wicked are described as lying in wait for the righteous, seeking his ruination (Psa. 37:32). Whoever does this qualifies for the title "wicked man" used here. Every persecutor of the righteous would be included in what is said here.

V. 16. The righteous will have many trials, but he will prevail through the special help of God. Notice these interesting verses: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; But Jehovah delivereth him out of them all" (Psa. 34:19); "Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For Jehovah upholdeth him with his hand" (Psa. 37:24); "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, Jehovah will be a light unto me" (Mic. 7:8); "He will deliver thee in six troubles; Yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee" (Job. 5:19). In other words, as our expressions go, "you can't keep a good man down;" he may be "down", but he isn't "out". But notice that when the wicked fall, he is not promised to come back, for he has no personal God to whom to look for restoration.

V. 17. The natural man has a tendency to rejoice over his enemy's troubles (Psa. 35:15). Oba. 12 told Edom not to rejoice over Israël's fall. David prayed that his enemies would not be given the chance to rejoice over his calamities (Psa. 35:19). Job said he had not erred in this field (Job. 31:29). And David was a good example of one who did not rejoice over his enemies'

misfortunes: see him as he weeps over the death of Saul (II Sam. 1:11) and over the death of the revolting Absalom (II Sam. 18:33).

V. 18. God sees everything that takes place on the earth. He saw Adam and Eve's sin in the beginning, and He has seen every sin since. Rejoicing over an enemy's troubles or fall is displeasing to God to the point that in some way He will deal mercifully with him in the future as a result.

V. 19. Here we go again with the same instruction that must be more needful that we would realize (see v. 1 and Psalms 37:1 and Proverbs 23:17). Psalm 73:3 shows the tendency toward doing this: "I was envious at the arrogant, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked."

V. 20. Really there is nothing about the prosperous wicked to envy when we consider their end (no reward and his lamp put out). Both Bildad ("Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, And the spark of his fire shall not shine. The light shall be dark in his tent, And his lamp above him shall be put out" (Job 18:5,6) and Job ("How oft is it that the lamp of the wicked is put out?" Job 21:17) realized that God would deal with the wicked. Other passages on the light of the wicked going out: Proverbs 13:9; 20:20. The Psalmist in 73:3-16 quit envying the wicked when he went into the sanctuary and considered their "latter end" (v. 17;).

V. 21. Man is to respect both God's government and that government that is over him: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). I Peter 2:17 also says, "Fear God. Honor the king." We are to fear God because He possesses primary authority, and we are to fear the king because He possesses delegated authority from God: "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers...the powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God" (Romans 13:1,2). Those "given to change" are anarchists, revolutionists, who instead of being in subjection to the established power are found guilty of resisting it to the extent of trying to overthrow it.

V. 22. Whoever resists God, and whoever resists the government will ultimately be brought face to face with those whom they are resisting. And, oh, the severity of the ruin that will come as punishments from God and from civil authority! Who can describe it when it cannot be fully known?

## TEST QUESTIONS OVER 24:13-22

1. Comment upon honey as food, both then and now (v. 13).
2. How pleasant, how desirable, was wisdom to be to the son (vs. 13,14)?
3. What is a persecutor of the righteous called in v. 15?
4. Comment upon the righteous prevailing over trials (v. 16).
5. What natural tendency toward an enemy is one not to give in to (v. 17)?
6. What might happen if one rejoices over his enemy's calamity (v. 18)?
7. V. 19 warns against envying what class?
8. Why is it foolish to envy the wicked (v. 20)?
9. We are to fear God because he possesses ..... authority and the king because he has ..... authority (v. 21).
10. What is the end of those who revolt against properly constituted authority (v. 22)?

## TEXT — 24:23-34

23. These also are sayings of the wise.  
To have respect of persons in judgment is not good.
24. He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous,  
Peoples shall curse him, nations shall abhor him;
25. But to them that rebuke him shall be delight,  
And a good blessing shall come upon them.
26. He kisseth the lips  
Who giveth a right answer.
27. Prepare thy work without,  
And make it ready for thee in the field;  
And afterwards build thy house.
28. Be not a witness against thy neighbor without cause;  
And deceive not with thy lips.
29. Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me;  
I will render to the man according to his work.
30. I went by the field of the sluggard,  
And by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;
31. And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns,  
The face thereof was covered with nettles,  
And the stone wall thereof was broken down.
32. Then I beheld, and considered well;  
I saw, and received instruction:

33. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,  
A little folding of the hands to sleep;
34. So shall thy poverty come as a robber,  
And thy want as an armed man.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 24:23-34

1. Does the opening statement of v. 23 indicate some kind of change of authorship or material?
2. What did the law of Moses say concerning respect of persons (v. 23)?
3. Have people sometimes been more righteous than their leaders (v. 24)?
4. What would be the problem of their rebuking a ruler (v. 25)?
5. Kisses whose lips (v. 26)?
6. Prepare what "work" without (v. 27)?
7. In v. 28 don't deceive whom?
8. Should we do to others as they have done to us (v. 29)?
9. Does v. 30 imply that a sluggard is void of understanding?
10. What two things reflected his laziness (v. 31)?
11. V. 32 shows we can learn by the avenue of .....
12. What does a sluggard enjoy doing (v. 33)?
13. Is it a shame to be poor under these conditions (v. 34)?

## PARAPHRASE OF 24:23-34

- 23-25. It is wrong to sentence the poor, and let the rich go free. He who says to the wicked, "You are innocent," shall be cursed by many people of many nations; but blessings shall be showered on those who rebuke sin fearlessly.
26. It is an honor to receive a frank reply.
27. Develop your business first before building your house.
- 28,29. Don't testify spitefully against an innocent neighbor. Why lie about him? Don't say, "Now I can pay him back for all his meanness to me!"
- 30-32. I walked by the field of a certain lazy fellow and saw that it was overgrown with thorns, and covered with weeds; and its walls were broken down. Then, as I looked, I learned this lesson:
- 33,34. "A little extra sleep, A little more slumber, A little

folding of the hands to rest"--means that poverty will break in upon you suddenly like a robber, and violently like a bandit.

### COMMENTS ON 24:23-34

V. 23. The opening statement indicates that the following verses form some kind of a section or collection of sayings included by Inspiration. We do not know to whom they belong as we do later groupings in Proverbs (See Prov. 25:1) 30:1; 31:1). The Bible has much to say about conducting court: "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, not honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor" (Lev. 19:15); "Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; ye shall hear the small and the great alike" (Deut. 1:17); "Thou shalt not wrest justice: thou shalt not respect persons; neither shalt thou take a bribe" (Deut. 16:19). See Prov. 18:5; 28:21 also.

V. 24. Vs. 24-26 are also talking of court cases. Through bribes, through respect of persons, through friendships and alliances, etc., justice sometimes gets perverted, and the guilty are freed. This verse says, "Peoples shall curse him, nations shall abhor him." Isa. 5:22,23 says, "Woe unto them...that justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!" And Prov. 17:15 says, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the righteous, Both of them alike are an abomination to Jehovah."

V. 25. People can usually tell when a judge is "bought off" and when he deals straightforwardly with a guilty case. They want him to rebuke the wicked, for he has it coming, and only by this means can crime be held in check in society. It is evident that the people were glad when the priest Jehoiada put down the wicked usurper Athaliah: "All the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet" (II Chron. 23:21).

V. 26. A judge giving a proper sentence to the wicked is so "in stride" with the thoughts and feelings of the people as one who kisses another.

V. 27. The Scriptures show that there is preparatory work to be done before the actual construction begins: "Which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it?" (Luke 14:28); "And the king commanded, and they hewed out great stones, costly stones, to lay the foundation of the house with wrought

stone. And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders and the Gebalites did fashion them, and prepared the timber and the stones to build the house" (I Kings 5:17,18).

V. 28. To do this would make one a "false witness", one who "lies". The 9th Commandment forbade this ("Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," Exo. 20:16) as does Eph. 4:25 ("Putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor"). Oh, how wicked to use one's lips purposely to deceive others, who will believe what is being said and which will result in needless grief, sorrow, and loss to the one being lied about! God did not give man the gift of speech for this purpose.

V. 29. Far too many people when wronged respond with an immediate desire to "get even"; they can think only of retaliation. But the Bible brings out that God, the Judge, will bring any retaliation that is to be brought; consequently, He commands us not to take vengeance ourselves: "Say not thou, I will recompense evil: Wait for Jehovah, and he will save thee" (Prov. 20:22); "Render to no man evil for evil...Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:17-19). Instead, Jesus' rule was: "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them" (Matt. 7:12).

V. 30. There has always been, and there will probably always be, a certain percentage of lazy people. They are also said to be "void of understanding"; in other words, one with good understanding will not be a sluggard. Such a person has a "field" (for wheat or some other crop) or a "vineyard" (of grapes) not because he wants to farm, not to take care of, etc. He may have come into possession of such by inheritance rather than by purchase.

V. 31. The sluggard did not plant a crop: thorns and nettles grew up and took over, and the stone wall around the vineyard to protect the vineyard was broken down here and there and had not been kept in a state of repair. Oh, the way that some people can neglect a place and let it run down! This condition existed because of a man's laziness.

V. 32. Who could keep from noticing the sad condition of both field and wall? The writer says he looked on the situation, pondered over it, and learned from it. Observation is one of wise people's greatest teachers!

V. 33. What did the onlooker learn? That a lazy person



loves to sleep too much.

V. 34. And he learned that such over-sleeping would result in a man's poverty. "Robbers" (armed men) usually had nothing, for they did not work, and what they got from robbing did not last them too long. Prov. 6:10,11 contains the same material as vs. 33,34. It is a shame to be poor because of one's refusal to work.

### TEST QUESTIONS OVER 24:23-34

1. What are some other passages on showing respect of persons (v. 23)?
2. Why would anybody pronounce the wicked as righteous (v. 24)?
3. What is the people's attitude toward a judge who lets a wicked man go free (v. 25)?
4. What about his giving a right verdict (v. 26)?
5. Give a Biblical example of v. 27.
6. Cite a Bible statement about telling a lie on another person. (V. 28).
7. What does the Bible say about our taking vengeance on others (v. 29)?
8. Why might a sluggard even have a field or a vineyard (vs. 30,31)?
9. What is evidence that the sluggard had not even bothered to plant a crop (v. 31)?
10. What is evidence that we cannot keep people from noticing our failures (v. 32)?
11. What did the sluggard do instead of work (v. 33)?
12. What other passage contains the same material as vs. 33,34?

### NOTICEABLE GROUPINGS IN CHAPTER 24

"Wisdom"--

"Through wisdom is a house builded; And by understanding it is established; And by knowledge are the chambers filled With all precious and pleasant riches" (vs. 3,4).

"A wise man is strong; Yea, a man of knowledge increaseth might" (v. 5).

"By wise guidance thou shalt make thy war" (v. 6).

"Wisdom is too high for a fool" (v. 7).

## PONDERING THE PROVERBS

"So shalt thou know wisdom to be unto thy soul" (v. 14).

*"Mischief"--*

"Their lips talk of mischief" (v. 2).

"He that deviseth to do evil, Men shall call him a mischief-maker" (v. 8).

*"Envious"--*

"Be not thou envious against evil men" (v. 1).

"Neither be thou envious at the wicked" (v. 19).

*"Wicked"--*

"Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the habitation of the righteous" (v. 15).

"The wicked are overthrown by calamity" (V. 16).

"Neither be thou envious at the wicked" (v. 19).

"The lamp of the wicked shall be put out" (20).

"He that saith unto the wicked, 'Thou art righteous, Peoples shall curse him' (v. 24).

*"Heart"--*

"Their heart studieth oppression" (v. 2).

"Doth not he that weigheth the hearts consider it?" (v. 12).

"Let not thy heart be glad when he is overthrown" (v. 17).

*"Tongue"--*

"He openeth not his mouth in the gate" (v. 7).

"The scoffer is an abomination to men" (v. 9).

"He kisseth the lips Who giveth a right answer" (v. 26).

"Be not a witness against thy neighbor without cause" (v. 28).

"Deceive not with thy lips" (v. 28).

*"Fool"--*

"Wisdom is too high for a fool" (v. 7).

"The thought of foolishness is sin" (v. 9).

"I went by the...vineyard of the man void of understanding" (v. 30).

*"Jehovah"--*

"Lest Jehovah see it, and it displease him" (v. 18).

"Fear thou Jehovah" (v. 21).

*"Abhor"--*

"The scoffer is an abomination to men" (v. 9).

"Nations shall abhor him" (v. 24).

## CHAPTER 24

### *"Don't"--*

"Be not thou envious against evil men" (v. 1).

"Lay not wait...against the habitation of the righteous" (v. 15).

"Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth" (v. 17).

"Fret not thyself because of evil-doers" (v. 19).

"Company not with them that are given to change" (v. 21).

"Be not a witness against thy neighbor without cause" (v. 28).

"Deceive not with thy lips" (v. 28).

"Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me" (v. 29).

### *"Commands"--*

"Deliver them that are carried away unto death" (v. 11).

"Eat thou honey, for it is good" (v. 13).

"Fear thou Jehovah and the king" (v. 21).

"Prepare thy work without, And make it ready for thee in the field" (v. 27).

## LAZY PEOPLE

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

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

"Sloth" (from which we get "slothful") and "slug" (from which we get "sluggard") are roots that come to us from Middle

## PONDERING THE PROVERBS

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

### LAZY PEOPLE'S PLACES SHOW IT

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

Solomon tells of stopping to look at the place of a slothful man. He said, "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down" (24:30,31). It takes work to work a field. It takes work to tend a vineyard. The way thorns and nettles took over was a testimony to every considering passerby that such a field belonged to a lazy man. It took too much work to keep the fence up, so they had fallen apart.

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

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

## TEXT — 25:1-10

1. These also are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.
2. It is the glory of God to conceal a thing;  
But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.
3. As the heavens for height, and the earth for depth,  
So the heart of kings is unsearchable.
4. Take away the dross from the silver,  
And there cometh forth a vessel for the refiner:
5. Take away the wicked from before the king,  
And his throne shall be established in righteousness.
6. Put not thyself forward in the presence of the king,  
And stand not in the place of great men:
7. For better is it that it be said unto thee, Come up hither,  
Than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince,  
Whom thine eyes have seen.
8. Go not forth hastily to strive,  
Lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof,  
When thy neighbor hath put thee to shame.
9. Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself,  
And disclose not the secret of another;
10. Lest he that heareth it revile thee,  
And thine infamy turn not away.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 25:1-10

1. Why would Hezekiah take a particular interest in Solomon's proverbs (v. 1)?
2. How long after Solomon did Hezekiah live (v. 1)?
4. Why is it a glory to God to conceal a matter (v. 2)?
5. What kind of things did kings search out (v. 2)?
6. What kind of proverbs is Hezekiah interested in so far (v. 3)?
7. What is "dross" (v. 4)?
8. Is there a connection between v. 5 and v. 4?
9. Why should one not put himself forward in the presence of a king (v. 6)?
10. What teaching of Jesus is v. 7 like?
11. What does Proverbs say about one who is hasty of spirit (v. 8)?

12. What did Jesus say that is similar to v. 9?
13. Who is the "he" of v. 10?
14. What does "Infamy" mean (v. 10)?

## PARAPHRASE OF 25:1-10

1. These proverbs of Solomon were discovered and copied by the aides of King Solomon of Judah:
- 2,3. It is God's privilege to conceal things, and the king's privilege to discover and invent. You cannot understand the height of heaven, the size of the earth or all that goes on in the king's mind!
- 4,5. When you remove dross from silver, you have sterling ready for the silversmith. When you remove corrupt men from the king's court, his reign will be just and fair.
- 6,7. Don't demand an audience with the king as though you were some powerful prince. It is better to wait for an invitation rather than to be sent back to the end of the line, publicly disgraced!
- 8,9,10. Don't be hot-headed and rush to court! You may start something you can't finish and go down before your neighbor in shameful defeat. So discuss the matter with him privately. Don't tell anyone else, lest he accuse you of slander and you can't withdraw what you said.

## COMMENTS ON 25:1-10

V. 1. Hezekiah was one of the best kings Judah had (II Kings 18:5,6). I Kings 4:32 says that Solomon spake 3,000 proverbs. Since there are not 3,000 in the book of Proverbs, Hezekiah's scribes (under his direction and by inspiration of God—since their work is included in the Old Testament that the Jews and Jesus accepted) copied the many good sayings found in chapters 25-29. This forms one of several appendixes to this book; other appendixes: 24:23-34; 30:1-33; 31:1-31. Hezekiah lived around 270 years after the death of Solomon. The prophet Isaiah was a contemporary of Hezekiah (II Kings 19:1-2), and he may have headed the project. If so, we can see why the material would be included in the Scriptures.

V. 2. This is the first of several verses concerning "kings", a subject that held unusual fascination for King Hezekiah, especially since Solomon was looked upon as such a great king. A king busies himself searching out a matter, looking into many

things, finding out what there is to find out; he is a human being and must if he is going to know, and he can because he has the men and the money of the kingdom at his disposal. But God doesn't have to search things out: He knows all about everything. While He has revealed many things to man in His Word, there is far more than He has reserved to Himself. Deut. 29:29 refers to this revealing and concealing: "The secret things belong unto Jehovah our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever."

V. 3. "Pulpit Commentary": "As you can never rise to the illimitable height of the heavens, as you can never penetrate to the immeasurable depth of the earth, so you can never fathom the heart of a king, can never find out what he really thinks." David was one who often surprised people with his pattern of thinking: II Sam. 1:1-16; 12:18-23; 16:5-12; 19:1-6; etc.

V. 4. Raw silver had to be refined to discard its alloy and impurities. When this dross was taken away, it was then ready to be made into a beautiful vessel.

V. 5. The language of this verse shows that it is the application of v. 4's illustration: the wicked men of a king's court are the "dross" that must be removed if that king's throne is to be established, "for the throne is established by righteousness" (Prov. 16:12). Oh, that our rulers today believed this and followed it! Ours would indeed be the ideal society to live in—such as they all seem to envision, talk about, and promise when they are running for office.

V. 6. A king is not one to presume upon. To force oneself upon a king is like a girl throwing herself at some boy. Just as she is out of order and becomes obnoxious to the boy whose favor she seeks, so will one defeat that which he seeks by trying to make himself too noticeable to the king, who will be smart enough to see what he is doing and who will not respect him for it.

V. 7. Once when Jesus was a guest in a Pharisee's house, He noticed how they clamored among themselves for the chief locations at the tables, and He said precisely the same thing: "When thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast, sit not down in the chief seat; lest haply a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him, and he that bade thee and him shall come and say to thee, Give this man place; and then thou shalt begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place; that when he that hath

bidden thee cometh, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher" (Luke 14:8-10).

V. 8. Our saying, "Think before you speak," is here applied to our actions. The verse appears to be describing a man with more temper than judgment; that is, he triggers a situation that overcomes him instead of the other person as he had planned. Often fiery hearts lack cool heads to know what to do after the wheels of trouble have been set in motion. The time to control strife is before it begins, as Prov. 17:14 observes: "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: Therefore leave off contention before there is quarrelling."

V. 9. Wisdom would dictate that if there is a serious matter to be taken up with a neighbor, you should discuss it with him alone instead of talking about it to everybody else. Two people can often settle a difference between them, but if you involve several people and he does too, the probability of getting the matter settled becomes more and more remote. Jesus taught the same thing: "If thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother" (Matt. 18:15).

V. 10. If you talk over with others things that should remain secret between you and your neighbor, you will no longer be trusted by people; you have destroyed their confidence in you, and they will tell what you have done. And confidence destroyed is hard to be regained. "Thine infamy turn not away." One of the best sets of instructions in the Bible is in Jas. 1:19: "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."

### TEST QUESTIONS OVER 25:1-10

1. What prophet was closely associated with King Hezekiah and may have headed the project of copying more of Solomon's proverbs for this book (v. 1)?
2. Altogether how many proverbs did Solomon speak (v. 1)?
3. Comment upon v. 2.
4. What king was used in the comments to illustrate v. 3?
5. Before one makes a silver vessel, what must he first do with the raw material (v. 4)?
6. What does v. 6 show the "dross" mentioned in v. 5 to represent?
7. What is wrong with forcing one's presence upon a king (v. 6)?



8. What is liable to happen if one exalts himself in the presence of a king (v. 6)?
9. What often happens to people who rush into strife (v. 8)?
10. If one has a just grievance with a neighbor, what important instruction is found in v. 9?
11. What will happen to you if you are known for revealing information that should be kept secret (vs. 9,10).

## TEXT — 25:11-19

11. A word fitly spoken  
Is like apples of gold in network of silver.
12. As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold,  
So is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear.
13. As the cold of snow in the time of harvest,  
So is a faithful messenger to them that send him;  
For he refresheth the soul of his masters.
14. As clouds and wind without rain,  
So is he that boasteth himself of his gifts falsely.
15. By long forbearing is a ruler persuaded,  
And a soft tongue breaketh the bone.
16. Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee,  
Lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.
17. Let thy foot be seldom in thy neighbor's house,  
Lest he be weary of thee, and hate thee.
18. A man that beareth false witness against his neighbor  
Is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow.
19. Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble  
Is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 25:11-19

1. What quality do some words possess (v. 11)?
2. Is v. 12 related to v. 11?
3. How would the "cold of snow" be refreshing in harvest (v. 13)?
4. What do people think of a person who boasts (v. 14)?
5. Contrast the action mentioned in v. 15 with that of v. 8.
6. Why are there several proverbs (24:13, this verse, and 25:27) about eating or not eating honey (v. 16)?
7. Have you ever known a person to wear his/her or even their welcome out (v. 17)?

8. Comment on the 3 items mentioned in v. 18.
9. What do you get from v. 19?

## PARAPHRASE OF 25:11-19

11. Timely advice is as lovely as golden apples in a silver basket.
12. It is a badge of honor to accept valid criticism.
13. A faithful employee is as refreshing as a cool day in the hot summertime.
14. One who doesn't give the gift he promised is like a cloud blowing over a desert without dropping any rain.
15. Be patient and you will finally win, for a soft tongue can break hard bones.
16. Do you like honey? Don't eat too much of it, or it will make you sick!
17. Don't visit your neighbor too often, or you will outwear your welcome!
18. Telling lies about someone is as harmful as hitting him with an axe, or wounding him with a sword, or shooting him with a sharp arrow.
19. Putting confidence in an unreliable man is like chewing with a sore tooth, or trying to run on a broken foot.

## COMMENTS ON 25:11-19

V. 11. A "word fitly spoken" would be the right thing said at the right time, in the right place, to the right person, in the right way, and for the right purpose. For something to be right, everything about it must be right. Is it any wonder, then, that Jas. 3:2 says, "If any stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man"? Research on "apples of gold in network of silver" is in order. Many contend for a "silver basket" containing beautiful orange fruit. Most writers contend that "apples" from the Hebrew word "tappuach") was not our apple but possibly the orange, or more probably the apricot. Tristram (writing in "Land of Israel") says, "I have no hesitation in expressing my conviction that the apricot alone is the 'apple' of Scripture... Everywhere the apricot is common; perhaps it is, with the single exception of the fig, the most abundant fruit of the country. In highlands and lowlands alike, by the shores of the Mediterranean and on the banks of the Jordan, in the nooks

of Judea, under the heights of Lebanon, in the recesses of Galilee, and in the glades of Gilead, the apricot flourishes and yields a crop of prodigious abundance. Its characteristics meet every condition of the 'tappauch' of Scripture." Then a word fitly spoken is as perfect as a beautiful, delicious group of golden apricots in a basket made of silver. See also Prov. 15:23.

V. 12. Just as they bestowed comeliness upon their faces by golden ornaments, so listening to parents' wise counsel and to wise reproofs would grace one's life (Prov. 1:9 and this verse). In the New Testament women especially are instructed to adorn and ornament their lives with spiritual beauty instead of majoring upon physical beauty (I Pet. 3:3-5; I Tim. 2:9,10).

V. 13. Not a snow storm (which would not occur at the season of harvest and which would be a calamity rather than a refreshing blessing) but likely a snow-cooled drink for the harvest workers. How would that be possible? "Clarke:" "In the East they have snow-houses—places dug under ground where they lay up snow for summer use." This snow was used to cool their summer drinks. To have a faithful messenger who could be counted upon was as refreshing to those who would send him as a cold drink in hot weather. Prov. 13:17 likens such a messenger to "health".

V. 14. "Boasteth himself of his gifts falsely" is translated by "Coverdale": "Whoso maketh great boasts, and giveth nothing," and the "Vulgate" translates: "A bragging man, who does not fulfill his promises." Such promises remind one of clouds and winds in dry weather, but no rain results. Jude 12 also refers to these clouds without water, carried along by winds" people. Some people make a big show with their words, but they do not come through with what they have promised—and sometimes they were promising to give it to God! Eccl. 5:5 says, "Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay." Therefore Eccl. 5:4 says, "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou vowest."

V. 15. One can defeat himself sometimes by being too "pushy". By being "hasty of spirit" we can sometimes "exalt folly" (Prov. 14:29) instead of success. We are commanded to "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (II Tim. 4:2). We are told in II Tim. 2:24,25 that "the Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach,

forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth." And we are told in Prov. 15:1 that a "soft answer turneth away wrath".

V. 16. Among the many spiritual and moral instructions we have in the Bible, there is an occasional instruction with reference to the physical or health-side of mankind. Such is this verse. Honey is good, actually great, for health (Prov. 24:13), but one should not eat so much of it that he gets turned against it permanently and thereafter wants none of it. Verse 27 warns, "It is not good to eat much honey." We should do that which is wise even in the physical realm of our being.

V. 17. Our common expressions, "Don't wear your welcome out" and "Familiarity breeds contempt", carry the same message. People have work to be done and business to be seen about. One who has nothing to do and keeps running over to the house of those who do soon makes his/her appearance an unwelcome sight. It is better to have the others say, "Come over," than to have them think, "I wish they would leave." The marginal reading is interesting: "Lest he be full of thee."

V. 18. The "paraphrase" says, "Telling lies about someone is as harmful as hitting him with an ax, or wounding him with a sword, or shooting him with a sharp arrow." Psa. 57:4 speaks of people "whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue is a sharp sword". Psa. 120:3,4 speaks of the tongue as "sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper". and Prov. 12:18 speaks of the rash tongue as the "piercings of a sword".

V. 19. Putting one's trust in an unreliable person lets him down in the day of trouble. This is why some people should not be given a church class to teach, why some people should not be entrusted with important business, etc. You cannot use a broken tooth nor count on a foot out of joint. Each person should want to be reliable, responsible, and trustworthy And each of us should be wise enough not to count upon the irresponsible.

#### TEST QUESTIONS OVER 25:11-19

1. Comment upon the "apples of gold" of v. 11.
2. What does God say in the New Testament about ornamenting (v. 12)?
3. Comment upon "snow in the time of harvest" in v. 13.
4. Comment upon "boasteth himself of his gifts falsely" (v. 14).

5. Elaborate upon "long forbearing" and a "soft tongue" in v. 15.
6. What is different about the instruction in v. 16?
7. What does the margin give in v. 17 for "lest he be weary of thee"?
8. How is the destructive tongue compared in v. 18?
9. What lesson do you receive from v. 19?

## TEXT — 25:20-28

20. As one that taketh off a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon soda,  
So is he that singeth songs to a heavy heart.
21. If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat;  
And if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:
22. For thou wilt heap coals of fire upon his head,  
And Jehovah will reward thee.
23. The north wind bringeth forth rain;  
So doth a backbiting tongue an angry countenance.
24. It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop,  
Than with a contentious woman in a wide house.
25. As cold waters to a thirsty soul,  
So is good news from a far country.
26. As a troubled fountain, and a corrupted spring,  
So is a righteous man that giveth way before the wicked.
27. It is not good to eat much honey;  
So for men to search out their own glory is grievous.
28. He whose spirit is without restraint  
Is like a city that is broken down and without walls.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 25:20-28

1. Comment on the comparisons in v. 20.
2. Where in the New Testament is v. 21 quoted?
3. What is the meaning of v. 22?
4. What is a "backsliding" tongue (v. 23)?
5. What other verses in Proverbs are similar to v. 24?
6. What kind of news would they look forward to from a "far country" (v. 25)?
7. What is a "troubled fountain" (v. 26)?
8. Give an example of one searching out his own glory (v. 27)?
9. What virtue is lacking in one whose spirit is without restraint (v. 28)?

## PARAPHRASE OF 25:20-28

20. Being happy-go-lucky around a person whose heart is heavy is as bad as stealing his jacket in cold weather, or rubbing salt in his wounds.
- 21,22. If your enemy is hungry, give him food! If he is thirsty, give him something to drink! This will make him feel ashamed of himself, and God will reward you.
23. As surely as a wind from the north brings cold, just as surely a retort causes anger!
24. It is better to live in a corner of an attic than in a beautiful home with a cranky, quarrelsome woman.
25. Good news from far away is like cold water to the thirsty.
26. If a godly man compromises with the wicked, it is like polluting a fountain or muddying a spring.
27. Just as it is harmful to eat too much honey, so also it is bad for men to think about all the honors they deserve!
28. A man without self-control is as defenseless as a city with broken-down walls.

## COMMENTS ON 25:20-28

V. 20. In case of light sorrow of disappointments, we may sing with such a one to cheer him up and pep him up, but in case of extreme sorrow (such as from death; we do not say to such a one, "Come on, let's all gather around the piano and sing and have a good time." Festive singing would be as out of order under those conditions as taking away a needed garment in cold weather and would meet with emotional resistance similar to what happens when you pour vinegar upon soda, and the two boil up. "Pulpit Commentary:" "The proverb gives three instances of what is wrong, incongruous, or unwise, the first two leading up to the third, which is the pith of the maxim."

V. 21. Both Old and New Testaments teach that we should treat one who has not been good to us as we would a friend. Old Testament: "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again" (Exo. 23:4); New Testament: "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you" (Matt. 5:44). Our verse and the one following are quoted in Rom. 12:20. If you, a godly person, are seeking to win an enemy through kindness, you may get nowhere by socially inviting him over for a meal. The matter may be different "if" he

is hungry (without food) or "if" he is thirsty (without drink); help offered him in dire circumstances when he might well expect you to disregard his condition or inwardly rejoice over his plight will not be refused (a drowning man will grasp a rope thrown to him regardless of who is on the other end). By such means, Rom. 12:21 shows, you may be able to overcome his evil done to you by your good done to him. How worthwhile! How both of you will rejoice!

V. 22. Counseling a woman about her difficult husband, a preacher asked her if she had tried "heaping colds of fire upon his head"; she said, "No, but I've tried boiling water, and that didn't work." The woman missed the point of this statement. "Clarke" rightfully observes: "Thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head—not to consume, but to melt him into kindness, a metaphor taken from smelting metallic ores: 'So artists melt the sullen ore of lead By heaping coals of fire upon its head.'" God has promised to reward such actions.

V. 23. Rainfall in the north of Palestine is heavier than in the south, so a wind from that direction would bring moisture (or from the west, where the sea is, Luke 12:54) while one from the south (which is desert) would only bring parching weather (Luke 12:55). Just as surely will a tongue that "bites a person behind his back" arouse an angry countenance in the one so spoken of/against. Backbiting is serious: it is mentioned in Rom. 1:30 among the awful sins of that chapter's long list; it is mentioned in II Cor. 12:20 as a part of church-trouble; Psa. 15:1-3 shows one must be free from it to dwell in God's tabernacle on His holy hill; and Psa. 101:5 says God will destroy one guilty of it.

V. 24. The same is found, word for word, in Prov. 21:9. Prov. 21:19 agrees with the conclusion when it says, "It is better to dwell in a desert land, Than with a contentious and fretful woman." Prov. 19:31 says, "The contentions of a wife are a continual dropping." If there is anything that will "get a man" or that is obnoxious to a man, it is the nagging and continual harpings of a woman. Moral: Women, don't do it! Girls, don't develop it! Boys, don't marry it! Married men, you have a problem!

V. 25. In Bible days one received very little news from distant places (not like we do today). The welcomeness of a drink of cold water when thirsty and the refreshing relief it brings suggest that one's heart is refreshed or relieved (or both) from good news from relatives afar off, or in the case of kings good

news from his army fighting afar off.

V. 26. A drinking fountain whose waters have been riled up or a spring that has had something dead or putrid fall into it to corrupt it are examples of something once good and usable now hindered and hurt and no longer good. So is a righteous man who gets corrupted by wicked people. This can happen to men who go into politics, to men who become judges, to men who go into business pursuits, to young people who go to college, to preachers who go to work with certain congregations; in fact, to almost anybody.

V. 27. Anything good to eat (like honey) can be over-indulged in. The same warning with reference to honey, a delicacy to the ancients, was mentioned in v. 16. And anything natural, like searching into one's ancestry if it was prominent or gloating over one's accomplishments, is not good but grievous. Nobody likes to see another "stuck on himself". Rom. 12:16 says, "Be not wise in your own conceits." And Prov. 27:2 says, "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; A stranger, and not thine own lips." An old saying: "Self-brag stinks."

V. 28. Another great verse on the need of self-control. A city broken down by some greater power and left without walls is weakened to the point of being defenseless against attack, and when a person has lost his sense of personal restraint or self-control, he/she is open to temptation's attack. You are responsible for saying, "Yes," to God and, "No," to Satan; God built this responsibility into you when He created you with the right of choice. Restrain yourself! We put bits in horse's mouths to restrain them; we build fences around livestock to restrain them; and God has commanded each of us to exercise self-control overselves. Paul said, "I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected" (I Cor. 9:27). James wrote, "Be subject therefore unto God; but resist the devil" (Jas. 4:7). And Prov. 16:32 praises self-control: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; And he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city."

#### TEST QUESTIONS OVER 25:20-28

1. What does v. 20 mean, seeing that we sing songs at funerals?



2. Is the setting of v. 21 that of forcing ourselves socially upon one who does not like us, or what?
3. Give an example of heaping coals of fire upon an enemy's head (v. 22).
4. Why did a north wind bring Palestinians rain (v. 23)?
5. What does the Bible say about a "backbiting tongue" (v. 23)?
6. What terrible situation is v. 24 dealing with?
7. How did good news from family or army from afar affect the recipient (v. 25)?
8. What kind of person is v. 27 picturing?
9. How is one without self-control like a city without walls (v. 28)?

#### NOTICEABLE GROUPINGS IN CHAPTER 25

##### *"Kings"--*

"The glory of kings is to search out a matter" (v. 2).

"The heart of kings is unsearchable (v. 3).

"Take away the wicked from before the king, And his throne shall be established in righteousness" (v. 5).

"Put not thyself forward in the presence of the king, And stand not in the place of great men: For better is it that it be said unto thee, Come up hither, Than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince" (vs. 6,7).

"By long forbearing is a ruler persuaded" (v. 15).

##### *"As"--*

"As the heavens for height, and the earth for depth, So the heart of kings is unsearchable" (v. 3).

"As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, So is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear" (v. 12).

"As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, So is a faithful messenger to them that send him" (v. 13).

"As clouds and wind without rain, So is he that boasteth himself of his gifts falsely" (v. 14).

"As one that taketh off a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon soda, So is he that singeth songs to a heavy heart" (v. 20).

"As cold waters to a thirsty soul, So is good news from a far country" (v. 25).

"As a troubled fountain, and corrupted spring, So is good news from a far country" (v. 26).

## PONDERING THE PROVERBS

### *"It is"--*

"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; But the glory of kings is to search out a matter" (v. 2).

"It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, Than with a contentious woman in a wide house" (v. 24).

"It is not good to eat much honey; So for men to search out their own glory is grievous" (v. 27).

### *"Better"--*

"Better is it that it be said unto thee, Come up hither, Than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince" (v. 7).

"It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, Than with a contentious woman in a wide house" (v. 24).

### *"Commands"--*

"Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself, And disclose not the secret of another" (v. 9).

"Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee" (v. 16).

"Let thy foot be seldom in thy neighbor's house" (v. 17).

"If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; And if he be thirsty, give him water to drink" (v. 21).

### *"Prohibitions"--*

"Put not thyself forward in the presence of the king" (v. 6).

"Go not forth hastily to strive" (v. 8).

### *"Lest"--*

"Go not forth hastily to strive, Lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof" (v. 8).

"Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself, And disclose not the secret of another; Lest he that heareth it revile thee, And thine infamy turn not away" (vs. 9,10).

"Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, Lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it" (v. 16).

"Let thy foot be seldom in thy neighbor's house, Lest he be weary of thee, and hate thee" (v. 17).

### *"Tongue"--*

"Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself...disclose not the secret of another" (v. 9).

"A word fitly spoken Is like apples of gold in network of silver" (v. 11).

"As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, So is

## CHAPTER 25

a wise reprover upon an obedient ear" (v. 12).

"As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, So is a faithful messenger to them that send him" (v. 13).

"As clouds and wind without rain, So is he that boasteth himself of his gifts falsely" (v. 14).

"A soft tongue breaketh the bone" (v. 15).

"A man that beareth false witness against his neighbor Is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow" (v. 18).

"The north wind bringeth forth rain; So doth a backbiting tongue an angry countenance" (v. 23).

*"Like"--*

"Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble Is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint" (v. 19).

"A word fitly spoken Is like apples of gold in network of silver" (v. 11).

"He whose spirit is without restraint Is like a city that is broken down and without walls" (v. 28).

*"So" (by itself)--*

"The north wind bringeth forth rain; So doth a backbiting tongue an angry countenance" (v. 23).

"It is not good to eat much honey; So for men to search out their own glory is grievous" (v. 27).

## PONDERING THE PROVERBS

### JOYS AND SORROWS OF PARENTHOOD

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

"A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him" (17:25). Along the same line, 17:21 says, "He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy."

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

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

## TEXT — 26:1-9

1. As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest,  
So honor is not seemly for a fool.
2. As a sparrow in her wandering, as the swallow in her  
flying,  
So the curse that is causeless alighteth not.
3. A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass,  
And a rod for the back of fools.
4. Answer not a fool according to his folly,  
Lest thou also be like unto him.
5. Answer a fool according to his folly.  
Lest he be wise in his own conceit.
6. He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool  
Cutteth off his own feet, and drinketh in damage.
7. The legs of the lame hang loose;  
So is a parable in the mouth of fools.
8. As one that bindeth a stone in a sling,  
So is he that giveth honor to a fool.
9. As a thorn that goeth up into the hand of a drunkard,  
So is a parable in the mouth of fools.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 26:1-9

1. What does "seemly" mean (v. 1)?
2. Restate the last clause of v. 2 in your own words.
3. What does Psa. 32:9 say that fits in with v. 3?
4. What does v. 4 mean?
5. Why would God give the instruction of v. 5 after what He said in v. 4?
6. What is meant by "cutteth off his own feet" (v. 6)?
7. What can happen to a parable in the mouth of a fool (v. 7)?
8. What is the comparison in v. 8?
9. What is the comparison in v. 9?

## PARAPHRASE OF 26:1-9

1. Honor doesn't go with fools any more than snow with summertime or rain with harvest time!
2. An undeserved curse has no effect. Its intended victim will be no more harmed by it than by a sparrow or swallow flitting through the sky.

3. Guide a horse with a whip, a donkey with a bridle, and a rebel with a rod to his back!
- 4,5. When arguing with a rebel, don't use foolish arguments as he does, or you will become as foolish as he is! Prick his conceit with silly replies!
6. To trust a rebel to convey a message is as foolish as cutting off your feet and drinking poison!
7. In the mouth of a fool a proverb becomes as useless as a paralyzed leg.
8. Honoring a rebel will backfire like a stone tied to a sling-shot!
9. A rebel will misapply an illustration so that its point will no more be felt than a thorn in the hand of a drunkard.

#### COMMENTS ON 26:1-9

V. 1. A fool receives no honor nor does he have a sense of honor. The two go together as poorly as snow and summer and as rain and harvest. How many times a fool shows that he is a fool with poor rearing or a poor set of values by not joining in with giving honor to those to whom honor is due. Such a one is a poor one to marry, for neither will he bestow honor on his wife as I Pet. 3:7 and Prov. 31:28,29 teach.

V. 2. The ancients feared a curse pronounced by another. The point of the verse is, Do right, and you have nothing to fear from people's curses. At times it seems that some birds are aimlessly flying, just for the sake of flying, actually going nowhere. Even so a false curse will aimlessly go nowhere. In keeping with this verse are two eastern proverbs: "The jackal howls: will my old buffalo die?" "The dog barks--still the caravan passes: will the barking of the dog reach the skies?"

V. 3. Those who have worked around animals often use a whip because animals don't always do what they want them to do by other means. So, a whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the back of fools. We are told in Psa. 32:9, "Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding; Whose trappings must be bit and bridle to hold them in." Prov. 10:13 says, "A rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding."

V. 4. "Pulpit Commentary": "Do not lower yourself to the fool's level by answering his silly questions or arguing with him as if he were a sensible man...Instances may be seen in Matt. 21:23-25; 22:17-21; John 21:21,22."

V. 5. Since the writer of vs. 4,5 was inspired, and since their seemingly conflicting instructions are in successive verses, there is no possible charge of contradiction as disbelievers might urge if they were found in different chapters or in different books of the Bible. Being carried together they demand that we ascertain the "why" behind the two instructions. First of all, this verse shows that sometimes you answer a fool according to his folly, and v. 4 shows that sometimes you don't. In each instance you will have to be the judge when it is appropriate and wise to do so and when it isn't. Warburton says: "The reasons given why a fool should not be answered according to his folly is 'lest he (the answerer) should be like unto him'. The reason given why the fool should be answered according to his folly is 'lest he (the fool) should be wise in his own conceit'." As an example of this verse a certain preacher was asked a silly or useless or unanswerable question (like what were the names of Jesus' sisters), and he told the man he would find the answer in the second chapter of Jude!

V. 6. Prov. 25:13 speaks of the faithful messenger: "As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, So is a faithful messenger to them that send him; For he refresheth the soul of his masters." But this verse speaks of sending a message by a "fool". Chances are something will be bersirk: maybe he will never arrive with it; maybe he will get it all mixed up; etc. He will bring "damage" to the one sending him. By so doing he will "maim" (cut off the feet of) his business, prosperity, or self in some way. Prov. 25:19 warns about putting confidence in an unfaithful man.

V. 7. A lame man's legs are not sound and may be at least in part invalid, and so is a parable or a wise saying in the mouth of a fool. He will misapply the parable or the point of the saying. He will render the parable invalid.

V. 8. Most stones shot from a sling are more or less shot at random, actually wasted, reaching no vital destination (like killing a dangerous animal). "Clarke:" "It is entirely thrown away." Is not the same true of bestowing honor upon a fool? It is wasted upon one who does not appreciate it, does not know what to do with it, and will not be the better for it. To elevate a servant to a place of rulership is to bring trouble upon the world (Prov. 30:21, 22).

## TEST QUESTIONS OVER 26:1-8

1. What does a fool lack, according to v. 1?
2. How can a false curse and a flying bird be alike (v. 2)?
3. What about a horse or ass necessitates a whip at times (v. 3)?
4. Why should one not answer a fool according to his folly (v. 4)?
5. Why should one at other times answer a fool according to his folly (v. 5)?
6. What could happen by sending a message by a fool (v. 6)?
7. What about a parable in the mouths of fools (v. 7)?
8. Why should we not give honor to a fool (v. 8)?

## TEXT — 26:9-19

9. As a thorn that goeth up into the hand of a drunkard,  
So is a parable in the mouth of fools.
10. As an archer that woundeth all,  
So is he that hireth a fool and he that hireth them that  
pass by.
11. As a dog that returneth to his vomit,  
So is a fool that repeateth his folly.
12. Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit?  
There is more hope of a fool than of him.
13. The sluggard saith, There is a lion in the way;  
A lion is in the streets.
14. As the door turneth upon its hinges,  
So doth the sluggard upon his bed.
15. The sluggard burieth his hand in the dish;  
It wearieth him to bring it again to his mouth.
16. The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit  
Than seven men that can render a reason.
17. He that passeth by, and vexeth himself with strife be-  
longing not to him,  
Is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.
18. As a madman who casteth firebrands,  
Arrows, and death,
19. So is the man that deceiveth his neighbor,  
And saith, Am not I in sport?



## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 26:9-19

1. What is the comparison in v. 9?
2. What do you understand from the comparison in v. 10?
3. Where is v. 11 quoted in the New Testament?
4. After many passages degrading fools, where does v. 12 place the conceited person?
5. Why was the sluggard saying what v. 13 says?
6. What does the sluggard do a lot of (v. 14)?
7. Can a person be so lazy that he is a burden even to himself (v. 15)?
8. Why would a sluggard be as v. 16 says?
9. How can the two actions of v. 17 be compared?
10. Who is a "madman" in v. 18?
11. What is meant by "in sport" (v. 19)?

## PARAPHRASE OF 26:9-19

9. A rebel will misapply an illustration so that its point will no more be felt than a thorn in the hand of a drunkard.
10. The master may get better work from an untrained apprentice than from a skilled rebel!
11. As a dog returns to his vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.
12. There is one thing worse than a fool, and that is a man who is conceited.
13. The lazy man won't go out and work. "There might be a lion outside!" he says.
14. He sticks to his bed like a door to its hinges!
15. He is too tired even to lift his food from his dish to his mouth!
16. Yet in his own opinion he is smarter than seven wise men.
17. Yanking a dog's ears is no more foolish than interfering in an argument that isn't any of your business.
- 18,19. A man who is caught lying to his neighbor and says, "I was just fooling," is like a madman throwing around firebrands, arrows and death!

## COMMENTS ON 26:9-19

V. 9. "Pulpit Commentary:" "There is here no idea of a drunkard's hand being pierced with a thorn...but rather of his being armed with it." "Lange:" "When a drunkard carries and brandishes in his hand a sweet briar..." Would it be dangerous

for a drunkard to get a branch of a thorn bush in his hand and began hitting people with it? Is a parable in the mouth of a fool not also dangerous in another way?

V. 10. "Pulpit Commentary:" "A careless, random way of doing business, taking into one's service fools, or entrusting matters of importance to any chance loiterer, is as dangerous as shooting arrows about recklessly without caring whither they flew or whom they wounded."

V. 11. The Bible here and in II Pet. 2:20 (which quotes it) calls upon one of the most obnoxious sights in nature to teach us a lesson: that of a dog who has just given up (vomited) what he had partaken of and then turning around and eating it again. This verse applies it to a fool returning to his acts of foolishness while II Pet. 2:20 applies it to a backslider returning to his former sins.

V. 12. "Pulpit Commentary:" "Nothing so shuts the door against improvement as self-conceit. 'Woe unto them,' says Isa. 5:21, 'that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight.' Such persons, professing themselves wise, become fools (Rom. 1:22)...Touching conceit, the Oriental speaks of the fox finding his shadow very large, and of the wolf when alone thinking himself a lion." Rom. 12:3 says, "I say...to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think." Rom. 12:16: "Be not wise in your own conceits." Gal. 6:3: "If a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." This verse says there is more hope for a fool than for a conceited person; Prov. 29:20 says the same concerning a man hasty in his words.

V. 13. Prov. 22:13 says the same thing. Proverbs has much to say about laziness: 6:6-9; 10:4,5; 18:9; 19:15; 19:24; 20:4; 22:13; 24:30,31; 26:14; 26:16. That is a lot of material on the subject--more than any other Bible book gives to it.

V. 14. Just as a gate turns upon its hinges, so does the sluggard when aroused turn over (roll over onto his other side) for more sleep. Some of the other explanations given to this comparison are at least entertaining: the door turns on its hinges but goes nowhere; so does a sluggard upon his bed and goes nowhere; while the door opens to let the diligent go forth to their work, the sluggard turns upon his bed and sleeps on; the door creaks when moved, and so does the sluggard when aroused; etc.

V. 15. Prov. 19:24 says the same thing. It is hard for us to imagine people this lazy, but experience teaches one not to be too

surprised at anything!

V. 16. This verse sounds like what we call "park-bench authorities" and "sidewalk superintendents"--men who are doing nothing and who have no authority over a project, but who never question their judgment; they always know how it should have been done. Many times the uneducated who are lazy are cursed with the spirit of egotism. Ever try to tell them something? Quoting from your commentator's book, "Simple, Stimulating Studies in the Proverbs:" "Those men with just enough ambition to get up town to spend the day on some benches talking, whittling, and arguing have all the answers. They can tell the President how to run this country, yet nobody ever thought enough of their insight to have them put on any political ticket. They could tell the Secretary of Agriculture (whose problems relate to the corn farmer, the cotton farmer, the fruit farmer, the wheat farmer, the nut farmer, the hay farmer, the dairy farmer, the ranches, the poultryman, the nation's surpluses, and a hundred other large fields) just how to handle his job when they themselves cannot even have a respectable garden."

V. 17. Grabbing a dog by his ears is not recommended, for he will pull loose and turn on you. Nor is getting involved with other people's strife a good thing. Ever hear of the passerby who stopped to take a woman's part against her husband who was hitting her when she turned on her helper and beamed him over the head? This does not mean that one should never try to help those who are having trouble (How else could one be a peacemaker? Matt. 5:9). But this is a warning about meddling in other people's matters (I Pet. 4:15).

V. 18. This saying is different from others in Proverbs in that the dependent clause is in one verse and the independent in the next. The "madman" may be a man gone berserk or an insane man who gets hold of dangerous weapons and begins throwing them around and endangering the lives of his fellowmen.

V. 19. Just as the law will excuse an insane person for the damage he has caused (v. 18), so some whose mischievous conduct or wicked words have brought serious damage to another try to excuse themselves by saying, "I didn't mean to, I was just joking, etc." Too many people try to joke their way through life, and then if something happens that shouldn't, they say, "I didn't mean it."

## TEST QUESTIONS OVER 26:9-19

1. What verse in this chapter other than v. 9 spoke of a parable in the mouth of fools?
2. What is wrong about hiring just anybody (v. 10)?
3. How does II Pet. 2:20 apply to v. 11?
4. What does the Bible say about conceit (v. 12)?
5. Why does Proverbs have so much to say about laziness (v. 13)?
6. What are some of the ideas put forth concerning v. 14?
7. How lazy can a person get (v. 15)?
8. What kind of person do you visualize in v. 16?
9. What is like grabbing a dog by the ears (v. 17)?
10. What will a "madman" sometimes do (v. 18)?
11. How do some people try to excuse themselves from guilt in serious matters (v. 19)?

## TEXT — 26:20-28

20. For lack of wood the fire goeth out;  
And where there is no whisperer, contention ceaseth.
21. As coals are to hot embers, and wood to fire,  
So is a contentious man to inflame strife.
22. The words of a whisperer are as dainty morsels,  
And they go down into the innermost parts.
23. Fervent lips and a wicked heart  
Are like an earthen vessel overlaid with silver dross.
24. He that hateth dissembleth with his lips;  
But he layeth up deceit within him;
25. When he speaketh fair, believe him not;  
For there are seven abominations in his heart:
26. Though his hatred cover itself with guile,  
His wickedness shall be openly showed before the assembly.
27. Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein;  
And he that rolleth a stone, it shall return upon him.
28. A lying tongue hateth those whom it hath wounded;  
And a flattering mouth worketh ruin.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 26:20-28

1. A whisperer is to contention like ..... to a fire (v. 20).
2. Are there people who are actually given to working

- trouble (v. 21)?
3. How are they like "dainty morsels" (v. 22)?
  4. Explain the comparison in v. 23.
  5. What does "dissembleth" mean (v. 24)?
  6. Why "seven" (v. 25)?
  7. Reword v. 26 into your own words.
  8. Is v. 27 a new thought or a continuation of v. 26?
  9. What is flattery (v. 28)?

## PARAPHRASE OF 26:20-28

20. Fire goes out for lack of fuel, and tensions disappear when gossip stops.
21. A quarrelsome man starts fights as easily as a match sets fire to paper.
22. Gossip is a dainty morsel eaten with great relish.
23. Pretty words may hide a wicked heart, just as a pretty glaze covers a common clay pot.
- 24-26. A man with hate in his heart may sound pleasant enough, but don't believe him; for he is cursing you in his heart. Though he pretends to be so kind, his hatred will finally come to light for all to see.
27. The man who sets a trap for others will get caught in it himself. Roll a boulder down on someone, and it will roll back and crush you.
28. Flattery is a form of hatred and wounds cruelly.

## COMMENTS ON 26:20-28

V. 20. For a fire to continue it must have fuel. When wood is no longer put on the fire, it will go out as soon as its present supply is consumed. Even so whispering (derogatory talking in privacy) will keep trouble brewing. Sometimes the whisperer moves away (Woe to the place where he or she moves! It too will begin experiencing trouble.), dies, may get converted, or is cornered, confronted, and quieted, and the contention ceases. The scoffer also is a cause of continual contention until he is cast out (Prov. 22:10: "Cast out the scoffer, and contention will go out").

V. 21. The "whisperer" of v. 20 is referred to here as a "contentious" man in this verse, which he is. He may say he doesn't want trouble, but he is one to make trouble. He may say he loves everybody involved and is only doing his duty in trying to get things right, but he doesn't really love (Rom. 13:10), he is not doing his duty (Rom. 14:19), and he isn't getting things

right but making things wrong (Prov. 16:28). The figure of the fire is continued in this verse: note "coals", "hot embers," "wood to fire," and "inflame". Prov. 15:18 says, "A wrathful man stirreth up contention." The church needs to be stirred up all right, but not by contention!

V. 22. The same statement is found in Prov. 18:8. A "whisperer" is one who goes behind people's backs in talking about them, saying things that are not in the best interest of the ones being spoken about. The verse brings out the sad fact that people are willing to listen to such cowardly, wrong, reuous talk (they are "dainty morsels"). They are swallowed without question ("They go down into the innermost parts").

V. 23. "Pulpit Commentary:" "The next proverbs are concerned with hypocrisy...Silver dross (oxide of lead) is used to put a glaze on pottery...The comparatively worthless article (earthen vessel) is thus made to assume a finer appearance. Thus lips that seem to burn with affection and give the kiss of glowing love may mask a heart filled with envy and hatred. Judas kisses and words of friendship hide the bad feelings that lurk within."

V. 24. "Pulpit Commentary:" "The very word here used bears the meaning 'to make one's self unknown'...hence 'to make one's self unrecognizable'... The man cloaks his hatred with honeyed words...meditating all the time treachery in his heart." Adopting this as the mans allows the rest of the verse to flow and makes this verse go along with the other verses of this section.

V. 25. Yes, there are some people just this wicked; their hearts are full of abominations. Jer. 9:8 says, "There tongue is a deadly arrow; it speaketh deceit: one speaketh peaceably to his neighbor with his mouth, but in his heart he layeth wait for him." So we are not to believe everything some people say.

V. 26. Ultimately his sin will find him out as Num. 32:23 promises concerning sin ("your sin will find you out"). Somebody with influence, leadership, and wisdom will see through the "glaze" of deceit and will bring his actions out into the open, and the result is mentioned in v. 27.

V. 27. The pit or hole that such a one had been digging for someone else becomes the fate of the whispering, contentious deceiver himself. That this is often the deserved outcome of such perverted conduct, see Psalms 7:15,16; Psalm 9:15; Psalm 10:2; Proverbs 28:10; Ecclesiastes 10:8.

V. 28. In summary this verse affirms that this whispering

tongue was actually a "lying" tongue, actually hating those it was wounding, and that such a flattering tongue is calculated to work "ruin" to its victim. What a section of the misuse of the tongue we have just studied!

### TEST QUESTIONS OVER 26:20-28

1. Who is a "whisperer" (v. 20)?
2. What does a contentious man inflame (v. 21)?
3. Whose "innermost parts" (v. 22)?
4. What are "fervent lips" (v. 23)?
5. Adopting what meaning unlocks the sense of v. 24?
6. Why are we not to believe everything some people say (v. 25)?
7. By what means may people's true nature get brought out into the open (v. 26)?
8. Cite two other passages that teach the same as v. 27.
9. How does v. 28 summarize the matter of the previous verses?

### NOTICEABLE GROUPINGS IN CHAPTER 26

#### *Comparisons using "as"--*

"As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, So honor is not seemly for a fool" (v. 1).

"As the sparrow in her wandering, as the swallow in her flying, So the curse that is causeless alighteth not" (v. 2).

"As one that bindeth a stone in a sling, So is he that giveth honor to a fool" (v. 8).

"As a thorn that goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, So is a parable in the mouth of fools" (v. 9).

"As an archer that woundeth all, So is he that hireth a fool and he that hireth them that pass by" (v. 10).

"As a dog that returneth to his vomit, So is a fool that repeateth his folly" (v. 11).

"As the door turneth upon its hinges, So doth the sluggard upon his bed" (v. 14).

"As a madman who casteth firebrands, Arrows, and death, So is the man that deceiveth his neighbor, And saith, Am not I in sport?" (vs. 18,19).

"As coals are to hot embers, and wood to fire, So is a contentious man to inflame strife" (v. 21).

"The words of a whisperer are as dainty morsels, And they

## PONDERING THE PROVERBS

go down into the innermost parts" (v. 22).

### *"Fools"--*

"Honor is not seemly for a fool" (v. 1).

"A rod for the back of fools" (v. 3).

"Answer not a fool according to his folly, Lest thou also be like unto him" (v. 4).

"Answer a fool according to his folly, Lest he be wise in his own conceit" (v. 5).

"He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool Cutteth off his own feet, and drinketh in damage" (v. 6).

"The legs of the lame hang loose; So is a parable in the mouth of fools" (v. 7).

"As one that bindeth a stone in a sling, So is he that giveth honor to a fool" (v. 8).

"As a thorn that goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, So is a parable in mouth of fools" (v. 9).

"As an archer that woundeth all, So is he that hireth a fool" (v. 10).

"As a dog that returneth to his vomit, So is a fool that repeateth his folly" (v. 11).

"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him" (v. 12).

### *"Sluggard"--*

"The sluggard saith, There is a lion in the way" (v. 13).

"As the door turneth upon its hinges, So doth the sluggard upon his bed" (v. 14).

"The sluggard burieth his hand in the dish; It wearieth him to bring it again to his mouth" (v. 15).

"The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit Than seven men that can render a reason" (v. 16).

### *"Tongue"--*

"Answer not a fool according to his folly...Answer a fool according to his folly" (vs. 4,5).

"So is a parable in the mouth of fools" (vs. 7,9).

"Where there is no whisperer, contention ceaseth" (v. 20).

"The words of a whisperer are as dainty morsels, And they go down into the innermost parts" (v. 22).

"Fervent lips and a wicked heart Are like an earthen vessel overlaid with silver dross" (v. 23).

"He that hateth dissembleth with his lips; But he layeth up deceit within him: When he speaketh fair, believe him not"



## CHAPTER 26

(vs. 24,25).

"A lying tongue hateth those whom it hath wounded"  
(v. 28).

"A flattering mouth worketh ruin" (v. 28).

*"Honor"--*

"Honor is not seemly for a fool" (v. 1).

"As one that bindeth a stone in a sling, So is he that giveth  
honor to a fool" (v. 8).

*"Conceit"--*

"Answer a fool according to his folly, Lest he be wise in his  
own conceit" (v. 5).

"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more  
hope of a fool than of him" (v. 12).

"The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit Than seven men  
that can render a reason" (v. 16).

*Comparisons using "like"--*

"He that passeth by, and vexeth himself with strife belong  
not to him, Is like one that taketh a dog by the ears" (v. 17).

"Fervent lips and a wicked heart Are like an earthen vessel  
overlaid with silver dross" (v. 23).

*"Strife"--*

"He that passeth by, and vexeth himself with strife  
belonging not to him, Is like one that taketh a dog by the  
ears" (v. 17).

"Where there is no whisperer, contention ceaseth" (v. 20).

"So is a contentious man to inflame strife" (v. 21).

*"Deceit"--*

"So is a man that deceiveth his neighbor" (v. 19).

"He layeth up deceit within him" (v. 24).

"When he speaketh fair, believe him not; For there are  
seven abominations in his heart" (v. 25).

"His hatred cover itself with guile" (v. 26).

"A flattering mouth worketh ruin" (v. 28).

## PONDERING THE PROVERBS

### WISDOM COUCHED IN WISE SAYINGS

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

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

## TEXT — 27:1-9

1. Boast not thyself of tomorrow;  
For thou knowest now what a day may bring forth.
2. Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth;  
A stranger, and not thine own lips.
3. A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty;  
But a fool's vexation is heavier than they both.
4. Wrath is cruel, and anger is overwhelming;  
But who is able to stand before jealousy?
5. Better is open rebuke  
Than love that is hidden.
6. Faithful are the wounds of a friend;  
But the kisses of an enemy are profuse.
7. The full soul loatheth a honeycomb;  
But to the hungry every bitter thing is sweet.
8. As a bird that wandereth from her nest,  
So is a man that wandereth from his place.
9. Oil and perfume rejoice the heart;  
So doth the sweetness of a man's friend that cometh of  
hearty counsel.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 27:1-9

1. What would boasting consist of in v. 1?
2. What New Testament passage elaborates upon v. 1?
3. Why is such instruction necessary (v. 2)?
4. Why does God not want us to praise ourselves (v. 3)?
5. Heavier than what (v. 3)?
6. Do you detect the similarities and differences in the structure of vs. 3,4?
7. Better in what sense or senses (v. 5)?
8. Faithful in what sense (v. 6)?
9. What does "profuse" mean (v. 6)?
10. What does "loatheth" mean (v. 7)?
11. What is the comparison in v. 8?
12. What does the last statement of v. 9 mean?

## PARAPHRASE OF 27:1-9

1. Don't brag about your plans for tomorrow--wait and see what happens.
2. Don't praise yourself; let others do it!
3. A rebel's frustrations are heavier than sand and rocks.

4. Jealousy is more dangerous and cruel than anger.
5. Open rebuke is better than hidden love!
6. Wounds from a friend are better than kisses from an enemy!
7. Even honey seems tasteless to a man who is full; but if he is hungry, he'll eat anything!
8. A man who strays from home is like a bird that wanders from its nest.
9. Friendly suggestions are as pleasant as perfume.

#### COMMENTS ON 27:1-9

V. 1. Jas. 4:13-16 is an elaboration upon this verse: "Come now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into this city, and spend a year there, and trade, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that. But now ye glory in your vauntings: all such glorying is evil." The rich fool in the parable was boasting himself of "tomorrow" ("The ground of certain rich men brought forth plentifully: and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry" Luke 12:16-19) when actually he had no "tomorrow" ("God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee"--Luke 12:20). "Pulpit Commentary:" "He boasts himself of tomorrow who counts upon it presumptuously, settles that he will do this or that, as if his life were in his own power, and he could make sure of time. This is blindness and arrogance."

V. 2. An old German proverb: "Self-brag stinks." How much better it sounded for the elders of the Jews, when entreating Jesus to come heal the centurion's servant to say, "He is worthy that thou shouldest do this for him" (Luke 7:4), than for the man himself to have said, "I am worthy that thou shouldest do this for me." There is that element of society that seems to think, "If I don't toot my own horn, it won't get tooted." We reply in the words of "Clarke" ("Self praise is no

commendation"). Jesus recognized the general truthfulness of this statement when He said, "If I bear witness of myself, (that is, if I am the only one saying good things about myself), my witness is not true" (John 5:32). Remember, too, that Prov. 25:27 frowned upon men's searching out their own glory.

V. 3. Work with stone or sand very long, and your hands, your legs and your back (in fact, your whole body) soon become weary and exhausted. But to be around a fool when vexed is even more wearying and exhausting. "Pulpit Commentary:" "The ill temper and anger of a headstrong fool, which he vents on those about him, are harder to endure than any material weight is to carry." Job 6:3 speaks of his grief and trials being heavier to bear than the sand of the sea. And Jewish literature contains this statement: "Sand and salt and a mass of iron are easier to bear than a man without understanding."

V. 4. Wrath and anger may arise and subside, but not so with jealousy. "Pulpit Commentary:" "These may be violent for a time, yet they will subside when they have spent themselves." It was such non-dying jealousy that caused Joseph's brothers to sell him: "The patriarchs, moved with jealousy against Joseph, sold him into Egypt" (Acts 7:9). One who commits adultery with another man's wife will probably encounter the never-dying jealousy of her husband mentioned in Prov. 6:35,35: "Jealousy is the rage of man; And he will not spare...He will not regard any ransom; Neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts."

V. 5. Christ said, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten" (Rev. 3:19). Prov. 13:24 says, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son" (no matter how much pretension of love he may claim); "But he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." It is in such a consideration that our verse exalts the love that rebukes over the love that does not. Thus gospel preachers and godly people who rebuke people for their sins really and truly love people more (and what they do is "better") than their pretended friends who say nothing about their sins and let them die and be lost.

V. 6. Therefore, this verse exalts the same love that administers correction over the deceitful kisses of an enemy. Judas's kiss didn't fool Jesus, but people have been fooled by the "nice" treatment of people who really didn't love them like the person who corrected them. Time will sometimes open people's eyes as to who were their true friends: "He that

rebuketh a man shall afterward find more favor than he that flattereth with the tongue" (Prov. 28:23). Notice the triple contrast in this verse: "faithful" vs. "deceitful"; "wounds" vs. "kisses"; and "friend" vs. "enemy".

V. 7. Benjamin Franklin: "A hungry man never saw poor bread." People who complain about food would probably not do so if really hungry. When one is really hungry, just plain bread or dry crackers taste good, but after one has eaten a big meal at a family get-together, just to mention eating will fulfill the fact of this verse: "The full soul loatheth a honeycomb." In a sense this is why some are not hungry for the gospel: they feel no need, so they have no desire.

V. 8. Though we do not think of it as normal, there are birds who abandon their nest, their natural surroundings, and go elsewhere with sad results. In like manner do some men become wanderers and prodigals (like the Prodigal Son in the parable, Luke 15). Time has proven that strength of character is more often developed in a family and in children if they settle down to one community and make it their home than to move about from place to place. This general observation reflected itself in our forefather's maxim: "A rolling stone gathers no moss."

V. 9. They anointed their faces with olive oil and put on perfume to make themselves happy and light-hearted and carefree. Psa. 104:15 refers to this practice. What is sweeter and more burden-lifting than the good advice and counsel of a trusted friend? How much better one feels who has been burdened!

#### TEST QUESTIONS OVER 27:1-9

1. What man in a parable of Jesus boasted himself of "tomorrow" (v. 1)?
2. What did the German proverb say about the person who brags on himself (v. 2)?
3. How wearying can a fool be to those around him (v. 3)?
4. How do wrath and anger differ from jealousy (v. 4)?
5. What unusual fact is stated in v. 5?
6. What is the triple contrast in v. 6?
7. How can the first part of v. 7 be applied to people's appetite for the gospel?
8. Is it advisable to be a "rolling stone" in society (v. 8)?
9. How do friends help lift our burdens (v. 9)?

## TEXT — 27:10-18

10. Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not;  
And go not to thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity:  
Better is a neighbor that is near than a brother far off.
11. My son, be wise, and make my heart glad,  
That I may answer him that reproacheth me.
12. A prudent man seeth the evil, and hideth himself;  
But the simple pass on, and suffer for it.
13. Take his garment that is surety for a stranger;  
And hold him in pledge that is surety for a foreign woman.
14. He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early  
in the morning,  
It shall be counted a curse to him.
15. A continual dropping in a very rainy day  
And a contentious woman are alike:
16. He that would restrain her restraineth the wind;  
And his right hand encountereth oil.
17. Iron sharpeneth iron;  
So a man sharpeneth the countenance of a friend.
18. Whoso keepeth the fig-tree shall eat the fruit thereof;  
And he that regardeth his master shall be honored.
19. As in water face answereth to face,  
So the heart of man to man.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 27:10-18

1. How does v. 10 depart from the usual form of a verse in Proverbs?
2. What does v. 10 say about our friendship-ties?
3. In what sense should one not go into his brother's house during calamity (v. 10)?
4. What will people reproach a man because of his unfaithful children (v. 11)?
5. Illustrate v. 12 in various ways.
6. What is the meaning of v. 13?
7. What kind of person would bless his friend "with a loud voice (v. 14)?
8. Comment upon the comparison in v. 15.
9. What is meant by the last statement in v. 16?
10. Which iron sharpeneth iron (v. 17)?

11. Where does Paul state the same truth as in v. 18's first statement?

#### PARAPHRASE OF 27:10-18

10. Never abandon a friend--either yours or your father's. Then you won't need to go to a distant relative for help in your time of need.
11. My son, how happy I will be if you turn out to be sensible! It will be a public honor to me.
12. A sensible man watches for problems ahead and prepares to meet them. The simpleton never looks, and suffers the consequences.
13. The world's poorest credit risk is the man who agrees to pay a stranger's debts.
14. If you shout a pleasant greeting to a friend too early in the morning, he will count it as a curse!
- 15,16. A constant dripping on a rainy day and a cranky woman are much alike! You can no more stop her complaints than you can stop the wind or hold onto anything with oiled hands.
17. A friendly discussion is as stimulating as the sparks that fly when iron strikes iron.
18. A workman may eat from the orchard he tends; anyone should be rewarded who protects another's interests.

#### COMMENTS ON 27:10-18

V. 10. This verse contains three lines instead of the customary two. This is a great verse on friendship, even stating that we should value the long-time friendships of our family as well as those of friends we have personally made. On the puzzling statement about not going into your brother's house in time of trouble, "Pulpit Commentary" observes: "The mere blood-relationship, which is the result of circumstances over which one has had no control, is inferior to the affectionate connection which arises from moral considerations and is the effect of deliberate choice. We must remember, too, that the practice of polygamy, with the separate establishments of the various wives, greatly weakened the tie of brotherhood. There was little love between David's sons; and Jonathan was far dearer to David himself than any of his numerous brothers were."

V. 11. Saying "My son," and then urging him to listen to



what the father was about to say was common in the first part of Proverbs (1:8-10; 2:1, 3:1,2; 4:1,2; 5:1,2; 6:1,2; 7:1-3), but in this verse is the only time it appears in this latter part of the book. Good children are one of a man's best recommendations. A wise son not only makes a glad father (Prov. 10:1), but fathers with good children "shall not be put to shame, When they speak with their enemies in the gate" (Psa. 127:5). Many leaders, even in religion, have been put to shame by the bad behavior and reputation of their sons.

V. 12. This saying is also given in Prov. 22:3. A prudent man is a man who has his eyes open and sees (in this verse he foresees the evil coming), and he acts in wisdom (he hides himself from the evil rather than walking right into it). But the simple man doesn't see the evil, doesn't pay any attention to it, and he suffers for it. Picture evil as a trap that is set; there is as much difference between men who can and cannot be caught in the trap of evil as there is between animals. Mink, foxes and a few other animals are difficult to get into a trap--it can be sometimes done by shrewd and careful means. But no ingenuity is required for getting a possum or a skunk into a trap--just put the trap in the mouth of his den and he will step on it as thoughtlessly as he would on a stick. The truth of this verse is seen in people in regard to their physical, moral, spiritual and financial life.

V. 13. This verse is very similar to Prov. 20:16. If one has become surety for a stranger or for a foreign woman, the creditor should and will hold his garment in pledge just as he would the stranger's or the foreign woman's. Exo. 22:26 shows that they took one's garment as security when loaning money.

V. 14. Haven't you seen this character who talks louder than is appropriate seemingly with the idea of drawing non-related parties' attention to what he is saying or doing? And, oh, as he talks, how he casts his eyes here and there to get other people to listen to what he is saying! Very similar to the hypocrite of Matt. 6:2 sounding a trumpet among people just before giving alms to a poor person. Jesus said not to do it (Matt. 6:1,2). and if one dies, whatever praise he might get from men will be the only reward he will get (Matt. 6:2). To rise "early" to bless a friend was as much a part of the put-on righteousness as the blessing with a "loud voice".

V. 15. "The ill-constructed roofs of Eastern houses were very subject to leakage, being flat and formed of porous

material" ("Pulpit Commentary"). But even our own type of roof can spring a leak and "drip! drip! drip!" as long as there is water to drip. Such is unwelcome and wearying, and so are the contentions of a contentious woman. It is a poor way to treat a husband or anyone else. Prov. 19:13 says, "The contentions of a wife are a continual dropping."

V. 16. There was an old adage that said there are three things which cannot be hidden but always betray themselves: a woman, the wind, and ointment. This verse may have reference to this since it involves those three (all three) and nothing else. One has as much chance of stopping the wind as stopping the mouth of an angry, fretful and unreasonable woman. That's why most men married to such often say nothing back but keep on reading the paper or working at whatever they are doing. Their thought: "She'll run down in time" (like the wind). What is meant by the statement about "oil" is not so clear, some thinking it refers to the impossibility of concealing the smell of the ointment one has put on his hand and some that it refers to her slipping through his hand if he tries to do anything to her. "Clarke" confesses: "The Hebrew is very obscure and is variously translated." But we know whatever the figure, it would be attempting the impossible.

V. 17. "The proverb deals with the influence which men have upon one another" ("Pulpit Commentary"). See the harder steel file sharpen the softer steel knife edge, or watch the butcher as he sharpens his cutting knife by the use of polished steel. This is not to say that men do not use stones to sharpen knives, but the fact that they also use iron upon iron shows that things of the same material can also affect one another--just as men can affect men from sadness to gladness. And ability to cheer up a sorrowful human heart becomes a responsibility to do so. Thus, Jesus referred to our visiting the sick and those in prison (Matt. 25:36) and Heb. 12:12 to our lifting up the hands that hand down.

V. 18. One who carefully tends his fig tree will in time be rewarded for his patient effort, and one who faithfully serves his master will also find that he will be honored for it. Jesus is our Master, and to each who has faithfully served Him here on earth will hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matt. 25:21).

## TEST QUESTIONS OVER 27:10-18

1. Whose friend should we regard as well as a friend of our own making (v. 10)?
2. Why not go to your brother's house in a time of trouble but to a friend's (v. 10)?
3. How many times is "My son" used in the last part of Proverbs? how many times in the early part (v. 11)?
4. What is one of the best recommendations any man can have (v. 11)?
5. What does the prudent man see and do in v. 12? what about the simple?
6. What was sometimes taken as security for a debt (v. 13)?
7. While it is good to bless a friend, what is wrong in v. 14?
8. Who is compared with a leaky roof (v. 15)?
9. What about the statement about "oil" in v. 16?
10. What is impossible to do according to v. 16?
11. What is the lesson of v. 17?
12. What is our obligation to sorrowing, discouraged people about us (v. 17)?
13. V. 18 shows that righteous labor in time brings its .....

## TEXT — 27:19-27

19. As in water face answereth face,  
So the heart of man to man.
20. Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied;  
And the eyes of man are never satisfied.
21. The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold;  
And a man is tried by his praise.
22. Though thou shouldest bray a fool in mortar with a  
pestle along with bruised grain,  
Yet will not his foolishness depart from him.
23. Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks,  
And look well to thy herds:
24. For riches are not for ever;  
And doth the crown endure unto all generations?
25. The hay is carried, and the tender grass showeth itself,  
And the herbs of the mountains are gathered in.
26. The lambs are for thy clothing,  
And the goats are the price of the field;

27. And there will be goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household,  
And maintenance for thy maidens.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 27:19-27

1. Elaborate upon the comparison in v. 19.
2. What New Testament word from Greek is a parallel to "Sheol" in Hebrew (v. 20)?
3. What does "Abaddon" mean (v. 20)?
4. In what sense is the last statement of v. 21 true?
5. What do "bray", "mortar," and "pestle" in v. 22 mean?
6. Why such instruction as is found in v. 23?
7. Illustrate v. 24 by Charlemagne's offspring.
8. What is the point of v. 25?
9. What is the meaning of "the goats are the price of the field" (v. 20)?
10. Why did they not use cows' milk like we do (v. 27)?

## PARAPHRASE OF 27:19-27

19. A mirror reflects a man's face, but what he is really like is shown by the kind of friends he chooses.
20. Ambition and death are alike in this: neither is ever satisfied.
21. The purity of silver and gold can be tested in a crucible, but a man is tested by his reaction to men's praise.
22. You can't separate a rebel from his foolishness though you crush him to powder.
- 23,24. Riches can disappear fast. And the king's crown doesn't stay in his family forever--so watch your business interests closely.
- 25,26,27. Know the state of your flocks and your herds; then there will be lamb's wools enough for clothing, and goat's milk enough for food for all your household after the hay is harvested, and the new crop appears, and the mountain grasses are gathered in.

## COMMENTS ON 27:19-27

V. 19. See a man looking at himself in the water. It is almost as if he is talking to himself. Even so as people look at each other, it is almost as if a silent message is being sent between them.

V. 20. "Sheol" is the Hebrew word for the place of departed spirits (the same as "Hades" in Greek). "Abaddon" is the Hebrew word for destruction (the same as "Apollyon" in Greek; Both forms of the latter are found in Rev. 9:11. "Sheol and Abaddon" are used together also in Job 26:6 and Prov. 15:11. Just as death is personified here as never satisfied but always wanting more souls, so man's eyes are never satisfied. The more he has and sees, the more he wants. This fact is also mentioned in Eccl. 1:8. Heb. 2:5 uses this same language in describing the greediness of the Chaldeans.

V. 21. "As silver and gold are tried by the art of the refiner, so is a man's heart by the praise he receives. If he feel it not, he deserves it; if he be puffed up by it, he is worthless" ("Clarke"). "Pulpit Commentary": "As the processes of metallurgy test the precious metals, so a man's public reputation shows what he is really worth...As the crucible brings all impurities to the surface, so public opinion drags for all that is bad in a man, and he who stands this test is generally esteemed."

V. 22. "Bray...mortar...pestle"--these are strange words to our modern way of living. Whenever you put something into a container and pound or mash it with something in your hand, you are "braying" it, what you are braying it with is the "pestle", and the container is the "mortar". When our mothers used to mash potatoes by hand, that was the same figure, only we didn't use those words to apply to the action and the various pieces. This verse shows that no matter how you might beat on a confirmed fool, you cannot get rid of his foolishness. Consider the drunkard in Prov. 23:35 and Judah in Isa. 1:5 and Jer. 5:3.

V. 23. From here to the end of the chapter the material has to do with shepherding and agriculture except for the illustration in v. 24 that explains this present verse. This verse presents Hebrew parallelism in which the second statement is a restatement of the first. Whatever a person's business, he must "tend to business", or he will have no business to tend. The shepherd was ever counting his sheep to be sure they were all with the flock. If any was sick, he immediately cared for it.

V. 24. Just as riches or the crown could not be taken for granted, neither could one's flock and herd. Today's ten wealthiest men in the world may not all be wealthy in a few years. Those who rule today may be overthrown tomorrow. So

care and diligence must be watchwords even of a shepherd.

V. 25. One can see the diligence of the shepherd in providing food for his flock at the different seasons.

V. 26. This diligence pays off, for there is wool for the clothing, and from the sale of goats could the land be purchased for oneself.

V. 27. Additional reward for diligence: plenty of milk. They milked the goat whereas we milk the cow. On goats' milk "Geikie" says, "In most parts of Palestine goats' milk in every form makes, with eggs and bread, the main food of the people."

### NOTICEABLE GROUPINGS IN CHAPTER 27

#### *Comparisons using "as"--*

"As a bird that wandereth from her nest, So is a man that wandereth from his place" (v. 8).

"As in water face answereth to face, So the heart of man to man" (v. 19).

#### *"Friend"--*

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend" (v. 6).

"Oil and perfume rejoice the heart; So doth the sweetness of a man's friend that cometh of hearty counsel" (v. 9).

"Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not" (v. 10).

"He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, It shall be counted a curse to him" (v. 14).

"Iron sharpeneth iron; So a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend" (v. 17).

#### *"Praise"--*

"Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; A stranger, and not thine own lips" (v. 2).

"The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold; And a man is tried by his praise" (v. 21).

#### *"Fool"--*

"A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; But a fool's vexation is heavier than they both" (v. 3).

"The simple pass on, and suffer for it" (v. 12).

"Though they shouldest bray a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with bruised grain, Yet will not his foolishness depart from him" (v. 22).

#### *"Speech"--*

"Let another praise thee, and not thine own mouth" (v. 2).

## CHAPTER 27

"Better is open rebuke Than love that is hidden" (v. 5).

"He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, It shall be counted a curse to him" (v. 14).

"The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold; And a man is tried by his praise" (v. 21).

### HELP THE NEEDY

I like 19:17: "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he (God) pay him again." In other words, when one GIVES to the poor, he is actually LOANING to God, and God always pays up! We can surely trust the Lord. We do not help the needy just to be helped of the Lord, but in our own limitations when it seems that we cannot do very much, it is comforting to know that if we help another, God Himself will bless us that we too might be able to make it through.

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

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

## PONDERING THE PROVERBS

### WISDOM

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

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

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

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



## TEXT — 28:1-9

1. The wicked flee when no man pursueth;  
But the righteous are bold as a lion.
2. For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof;  
But by men of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged.
3. A needy man that oppresseth the poor  
Is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.
4. They that forsake the law praise the wicked;  
But such as keep the law contend with them.
5. Evil men understand not justice;  
But they that seek Jehovah understand all things.
6. Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity,  
Than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.
7. Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son;  
But he that is a companion of gluttons shameth his father.
8. He that augmenteth his substance by interest and increase,  
Gathereth it for him that hath pity on the poor.
9. He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law,  
Even his prayer is an abomination.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 28:1-9

1. Cite outstanding Bible examples of righteous men who were as bold as lions (v. 1).
2. What is the meaning of "for" in v. 2?
3. What is the implied contrast in v. 2?
4. Comment upon the comparison in v. 3.
5. Who praise the wicked (v. 4)?
6. What do the obedient do to the wicked (v. 4)?
7. Do evil men ever get into the field of judging (v. 5)?
8. V. 6 contrasts the honest ..... with the perverse .....
9. What is the implied contrast in v. 7?
10. What was God's law to Israel about usury (v. 8)?
11. What would be a modern example of one turning away his ear from hearing God's law (v. 9)?